

## Ike hammers Texas, USACE teams respond

By Ed Rivera and Kim Powell  
 Joint Field Office, Austin

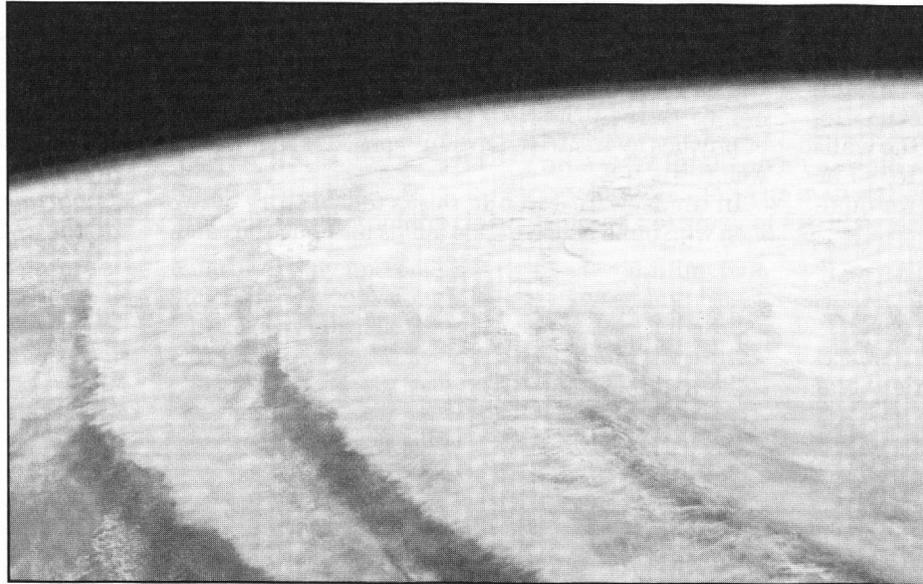
On the heels of Hurricane Gustav, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team is aggressively responding to the emergency needs of communities along the Texas and Louisiana Gulf coasts as an integral partner in the federal government's unified national response to Hurricane Ike.

More than 900 Corps people are engaged in four primary mission functions under the Emergency Support Function 3 (public works and engineering) of the National Response Framework:

- Support immediate response priorities.
- Sustain lives with temporary emergency power to critical public facilities.
- Provide water and ice.
- Assess and restore coastal protection and navigation infrastructure.

### Ready and responsive

No one can accurately predict the devastation a hurricane will bring. However, for those reeling from the af-



The crew of the International Space Station took this photo of Hurricane Ike from orbit 220 miles above the Earth. (NASA photo)

termath of Hurricane Ike, they can count on timely help from highly trained, caring Corps professionals from around the nation, all with substantial expertise in critical recovery and restoration missions.

Corps teams positioned themselves throughout Texas, including locations in Austin, San Antonio, and in Galveston District's Alternate Emer-

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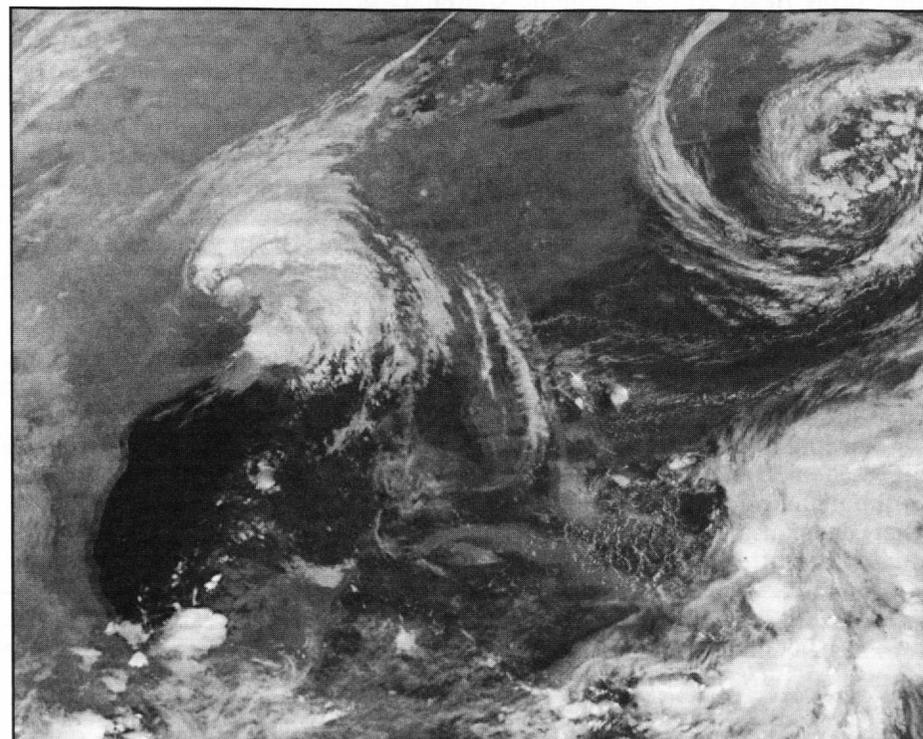
## Louisiana weathers Gustav, Corps people there to help

By Mark Davidson  
 St. Paul District  
 And George Stringham  
 St. Louis District

Although not as devastating as Hurricane Katrina and not as strong at landfall as initially feared, Hurricane Gustav still packed a powerful punch to south-central Louisiana Sept. 1.

As Gustav made landfall near Cocodrie, La., its 110 mph winds and torrential rains dumped up to 20 inches in southern and central Louisiana, pushing down trees, tearing down limbs and flooding much of the low-lying area. Though not as catastrophic at Katrina, Gustav left its mark on the region. Within hours, 33 parishes were declared disaster areas by President George Bush. According to Louisiana's Public Service Commission, 1.3 million Louisianans were without power following the storm.

While much of the national focus was on New Orleans and the performance



Hurricane Gustav comes ashore in Louisiana. (NASA photo)

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## Corps to register slogan: BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup>

By Bernard Tate  
 Headquarters

*That was easy.®  
 Good to the last drop.®  
 Just do it.®*

A good advertising slogan is a powerful tool — it can make the consumer immediately think of a product or a company without even hearing its name. Now BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> will create the same identity for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. And for the first time, the USACE slogan will be trademarked like the corporate slogans above.

BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> is the new USACE slogan, selected during the Summer Leaders Conference held in Pittsburgh Aug. 4-8. It replaces "Relevant, Ready, Responsive, Reliable" on every USACE product — the new Web site, brochures, magazines, newsletters, and more.

The new slogan was selected in a Corps-wide contest. More than 800 entries were submitted, and the senior leaders selected BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> partly for its connection to the current Army slogan, "Army Strong."

"We wanted to select something that would reach our internal team and external partners while demonstrating a strong connection to the Army," said Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, the chief of engineers. "We will continue to highlight our connection to the Army and what we do to make the Army strong. Likewise, we remain committed to make our organization strong so that we are built to last."

This is the first time that USACE has registered its slogan, and there are practical reasons for doing so.

"We have a trademark on the old castle from the 1850s, and a trademark on the new red-and-white castle with the words 'US

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## Insights

# 'Built to last' is a historic concept

By Col. Hanson Boney  
Chaplain, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Security is a primal need of humanity and is the main reason why people settled in communities early in history. In the ancient world, people placed their confidence in walled cities. Places like Jericho, Troy, and Babylon were virtually impregnable. Jericho, according to archaeological records, had walls so thick that no army breached them for more than 1,000 years.

Nehemiah took on the task of rebuilding Jerusalem's walls in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. He knew that the displaced Jewish population would not venture back to their homeland if the capital lacked protection. Nehemiah realized that rebuilding the walls was critical to revitalizing the Jewish state, so he urged his craftsmen and engineers to build for quality and longevity.

While physical security is important, it is also vital to secure ourselves spiritually. Nehemiah knew that Israel could not survive without the moral and spiritual foundations that made them unique.

So while Nehemiah rebuilt the walls, Ezra, the scribe, was busy rebuilding the spiritual foundations of Israel. He revisited the law (Torah) and reinstated the Sabbath observance, which solidified the sacred covenant vital to their identity as a people.

Many are attempting to build their lives without a relationship with God, but this will only bring frustration and despair. A life without God is devoid of hope and built on insecure foundations. Nehemiah and Ezra knew that one cannot really have a sense of physical security without spiritual security as well.

In the New Testament, Jesus tells a story of two men who build houses. One builds his house on sand.

When the storms came, the foundations washed away and the house collapsed.

The other man built his house on rock. When the rains came, his house did not fall. Why? Because he "built to last."

Security rests not on physical constraints alone, but on the power of God. A great hymn writer wrote, "On Christ, the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand."

Are you building your life for the long term? "Built to last" implies building for the future. As engineers, people expect us to build for the future. Let's not only build levees, bridges, dams, and buildings for the long term, let's build our lives for eternity.

*(The opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer and do not reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.)*

## AED Soldier awarded Purple Heart

Article and Photo  
By Bruce Huffman  
Afghanistan Engineer District

Maj. Dominic Ciaramitaro of the Afghanistan Engineer District (AED) received the Purple Heart for injuries sustained during an improvised explosive device (IED) attack on his convoy July 3 while returning from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers construction projects in Spin Boldak, Afghanistan. The IED attack occurred just three weeks before Ciaramitaro was scheduled to re-deploy to the U.S.

During the July 17 ceremony, he also received the Combat Action Badge, Bronze Star Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the NATO Medal for his superior performance as the officer in charge (OIC) of the USACE Kandahar Area Office where he was responsible for more than \$200 million in construction projects in the Kandahar region.

On July 3, Ciaramitaro left Forward Operating Base (FOB) Spin Boldak in route to Kandahar Air Field. In the vehicle with him were USACE personnel. Staff Sgt. Roberto Gonzales drove, Spec. Matthew Dishman manned the turret, and two USACE civilians, Mike Burke and Brian Gary, were in the back seat.

For protection, their Humvee was escorted between two Coyote armored vehicles driven by Canadian forces from Task Force Kandahar's reconnaissance squadron.

About 10 minutes into the trip, their Humvee was struck by a massive explosion on the front passenger side of the vehicle. After skidding to a stop, Ciaramitaro pulled Dishman safely from the turret and made sure the other



Col. Thomas O'Donovan, commander of Afghanistan Engineer District, pins the Purple Heart on Maj. Dominic Ciaramitaro.

passengers were okay. He instructed them to stay down while the smoke cleared, and ensured there was no small arms fire to follow.

As Canadian soldiers approached from the Coyotes, Ciaramitaro exited the vehicle and conducted five meter (16 foot) and 25 meter (82 foot) perimeter checks to establish security.

"The front right section of the Humvee was destroyed and no longer there, and there were several types of lubricants leaking onto the ground," said Ciaramitaro.

According to Burke, an AED civilian mechanical engineer, "I was awed by the manner in which he, and the other convoy members, put themselves in harm's way to ensure the safety of

the civilians in the convoy. I found his courage and professionalism while under enemy fire assuring and inspiring."

Ciaramitaro injured his thumb and left knee, but never realized the extent of his until he couldn't walk later.

During the ceremony, Ciaramitaro also received the Bronze Star Medal for his superior performance as the OIC of the AED Kandahar Area Office, a lieutenant colonel position, from Feb. 2 to Aug. 1. He made an immediate impact on the district by exhibiting leadership, mission focus, and technical proficiency by simultaneously filling several leadership positions.

In addition to serving as the OIC of the Kandahar Area Office, Ciaramitaro also assumed responsibility of the

Kandahar, Qalat, and Tirin Kowt resident offices. He successfully rekindled relationships among regional commands, task forces, and provincial reconstruction teams in the area, and synchronized AED construction projects with the maneuver units in the area.

He had personal oversight on more than 340 kilometers (210 miles) of roads, 60 Afghan National Police Headquarters facilities, and three Afghan National Army projects totaling more than \$200 million.

In addition to the IED attack, Ciaramitaro personally led the AED personnel in his charge during 10 Taliban rocket attacks on the coalition base in Kandahar. He coordinated several convoy and air missions to AED project sites, ensuring the safety of AED personnel.

The war in Afghanistan is intensifying, and Taliban attacks have increased about 40 percent from 2007, particularly in places like Kandahar near the border region of Pakistan.

"It's getting increasingly harder to inspect the projects," said Ciaramitaro. "But the contractors are there working, so we need to have a presence as well. Establishing security is paramount, and we're building Afghan National Army and police facilities to make that happen. Regardless of what the Taliban does, we're going forward, not backward."

"No one ever thinks things like this will happen to them," Ciaramitaro said, speaking of his Purple Heart. "I'm humbled to receive the recognition, but the real honor was leading this team in Kandahar."

Ciaramitaro has returned to his home station in Jacksonville District.



# Lab of the Year

## ERDC named Army's best research lab for 10th time

By Debbie Quimby  
Engineer Research & Development Center

For the second year in a row, the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) has been named the Army Large Research Laboratory of the Year. Dr. Thomas Killion, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology (ASA(AL&T)), made the announcement Sep. 21.

This is the fourth time in the seven years since the beginning of the Global War of Terror (GWOT) that ERDC has won the honor of being the Army's top research laboratory. ERDC has now won the Lab of the Year award 10 of the last 19 years, establishing a history of excellence in Army research.

ERDC is the R&D organization for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and consists of seven laboratories in four states, with more than 2,500 employees, \$1.2 billion in facilities, and an annual research program exceeding \$1 billion.

ERDC R&D provides critical support to the military not only through technology development, but also by working directly with Soldiers on the battlefield and at military installations. ERDC has many dual-use technologies that transfer to the civilian sector where customers such as the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security can tap into the expertise used by the Department of Defense.

"Our mission is to support our armed forces and the nation to make the world safer and better," said Dr. James Houston, ERDC director. "We're proud of the research we conduct and we think we do a great job. This award is proof that others feel the same."

ERDC has many strengths that make it a top Army laboratory, including its diverse research mission and world-class facilities to carry out that research. According to Houston, however, ERDC's strongest asset will always be its people.

"I say it every time that we are recognized for our accomplishments, but I mean it as much today as the first time I said it — our people are the strength of this organization," Houston said. "They're the heartbeat of ERDC. You can have the right facilities and the right equipment, but without the right people you may as well close your doors and go home. It's their knowledge and expertise that solve the challenges we're faced with today. This award belongs to them."

ERDC presented many research accomplishments to the Army in consideration for the Lab of the Year award, including:

- Leadership of the multi-agency forensics teams that determined what went wrong with the New Orleans levee system during Hurricane Katrina.
- Tunnel detection technologies to assist the Department of Homeland Security and State Department.
- Environmental work that led to the recovery of endangered species and the subsequent lifting of training restrictions on more than 140,000 acres of Army training lands.
- Support to more than 2,000 reachback requests annually from combat engineers in Iraq and Afghanistan through the tele-engineering technology developed by ERDC.

In addition to these accomplishments, ERDC was recognized for specific achievements in research, development, and in its continued support to GWOT.

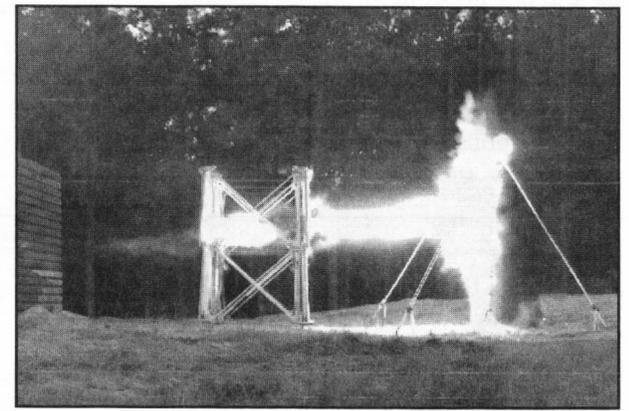
### Research

ERDC's major research accomplishment was carbon nanotube technology for military engineering. With a strength-to-weight ratio 750 times that of high-strength steel, the potential of carbon nanotube use has held great promise for years.

But there are no commercial products made of carbon nanotubes because they can typically be grown to



(Left) A Royal Australian Air Force C-17 lands on an airfield built in just 14 days to demonstrate Joint Rapid Airfield Construction technology. (Right) The modular protective system stops a rocket propelled grenade firing from the right. (Photos courtesy of ERDC)



lengths of only micrometers up to a few millimeters, which is not long enough for weaving strong fibers. They are also brittle, causing them to fail abruptly.

A team of researchers from ERDC and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology tackled the problem of the limited length of carbon nanotubes and has extended their growth significantly.

Researchers are also addressing the brittleness of nanotubes and have discovered that twisting nanotubes before putting them under tension produces a "superplastic" effect that greatly increases the strain they can handle before failure.

These major research advances provide a path forward for developing carbon nanotubes that can be used for combat engineering applications.

### Development

The holy grail of force projection is the ability to offload a combat brigade anywhere in the world in 96 hours, and put a division on the ground in 120 hours, but it has long been considered impossible to project these force levels within that time. There are sufficient aircraft to meet the time requirement, but *not* sufficient landing and offloading capabilities throughout much of the world.

To meet these force projection objectives, landing a combat brigade would require 250 C-17 sorties (landings and takeoffs) in 96 hours, while a division would require about 1,000 C-17 sorties in 120 hours. Most airfields in austere environments around the world are not equipped to handle such a task.

ERDC, working with university and private sector partners, proved the holy grail attainable through the Joint Rapid Airfield Construction (JRAC) program. JRAC provided engineering tools and systems to dramatically increase the military's contingency airfield upgrade and construction capabilities using advanced site selection technologies, enhanced construction methods, and new materials and techniques for rapid soil stabilization.

These technologies, used separately or as part of an integrated system, focused on reducing the engineering timeline, manpower requirements, and logistical footprint, while increasing system reliability.

ERDC successfully demonstrated the JRAC program during Exercise Talisman Saber in Australia, a military exercise involving thousands of American and Australian troops.

"In the outback, we had troops from all four U.S. services and the Australian army and air force who had never trained together, and had never built an airfield from scratch in 14 days, using lightweight equipment that can be air-dropped," Houston said. "We then demonstrated that with ERDC technology we could triple the normal aircraft throughput in 48 hours. Without ERDC technology, this would be impossible."

### Support to GWOT

ERDC was also recognized for saving the lives of Soldiers by providing new technologies to protect them and their facilities against rockets and mortars. The surge in Iraq exposed Soldiers to new threats as they left protected base camps and entered urban areas where they came under attack from close-in armor-piercing rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) and vehicle-borne explosive device (car bomb) attacks.

"The Army wanted a mobile system, so our researchers came up with the modular protective system, or MPS," said Houston.

The MPS is a lightweight system that uses ultra-high-strength, flexible concrete with ballistic performance that is comparable to ceramic armor, but at a fraction of the cost and weight.

"You set up a frame, slide these high-strength, lightweight panels in place, and quickly have a fortification or protective shield that reaches eight feet high and 10 feet long," Houston said. "You can put as many segments together as needed and four people can assemble one of the sections in 15 minutes. Within a couple of hours, you can put up a protective system that covers a large area and stops all kinds of weapons, from mortars to RPGs."

Mary Miller, director of technology for the ASA(AL&T) said, "ERDC's MPS is amazing. Kudos to the Corps for doing such a remarkable job."

MPS was fielded in 2008 to combat engineer units in Iraq. ERDC also developed elastomeric sheets that Soldiers can apply, much like wallpaper, to the inside of masonry buildings that increase blast resistance by a factor of 15.

These innovations have grown out of previous ERDC-developed blast protection technologies that played a significant role in protecting America from terrorist attacks. These blast protection technologies have been updated through continuous efforts by ERDC researchers and are now used to protect a wide variety of buildings and structures from attack.

"Our vision is to be the world's premier engineering and environmental sciences organization," Houston said. "To do that, we strive to be the best in specialized areas, to solve problems that others aren't attempting to tackle, and to hone the skills necessary to fulfill our mission. For ERDC, it's all about making the Army and the nation better and safer."

The Army Laboratory of the Year Award selection is based on a written report of specific accomplishments and about 60 metrics (for example, number of patents obtained in the year), an evaluation visit by selection panel members, and oral presentations with questions. The selection panel was made up of national experts from various research organizations in government, academia, and the private sector.

Houston accepted this year's award at a special award ceremony in Washington, D.C. Oct. 5.

# Hurricane Ike

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gency Operation Center at the Addicks and Barker reservoirs in Houston, which allowed them to be out of harm's way, but close enough to respond quickly to emergency needs determined by Texas and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

According to Brig. Gen. Kendall Cox, commander of Southwestern Division, Texas and FEMA officials did a great job determining where to pre-position supplies, personnel, and equipment. "Their ability to plan for, react to, and attack complex issues about where to place assets is tremendous," Cox said.

In hours of Ike's passing, ice and water trucks were going to distribution points, and teams were surveying damage to navigation channels, evaluating flood damage reduction structures, and assessing needs for generators, debris clean-up, and temporary roofing.

Teams have lived up to Corps standards, "This is what right looks like," Cox said.

**Navigation.** The Corps has responsibility for conducting and reporting channel condition surveys, removing sunken vessels, and performing maintenance dredging. About a week after the storm, all ports were open, or open with draft restrictions.

The Port of Houston is the second largest in the U.S. based on total tonnage. "We realize the importance of the area's waterways to the national economy," said Joe Hrametz, chief of the Galveston District's navigation branch. "Our goal was to give good service, and a quick response time."

The Corps had nearly 20 survey boats and other assets standing by to ensure timely surveying of ship channels and other waterways for shoaling and navigation hazards. Following a rigorous schedule, the Corps conducted hydrographic and side scan sonar surveys of the Houston/Galveston Bay complex and the Sabine Neches Waterway.

All navigation activities have been worked in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the ports, and the shipping industry based on a protocol developed about two years ago.

**Flood fight.** Ike-related storm surge and associated rainfall required USACE to monitor all Corps reservoirs, dams, and facilities along the storm path in Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, and Illinois. Areas, particularly in the Midwest that had experienced flooding earlier in the year, had high water levels that required regional flood damage reduction measures.

## Providing essentials

A disaster quickly focuses priorities upon essentials. For people who didn't evacuate, their basic needs for water and ice have been met by efforts managed by the Corps. For lifesaving groups, such as emergency health care facilities, shelters, and nursing homes, the basic need is electricity.

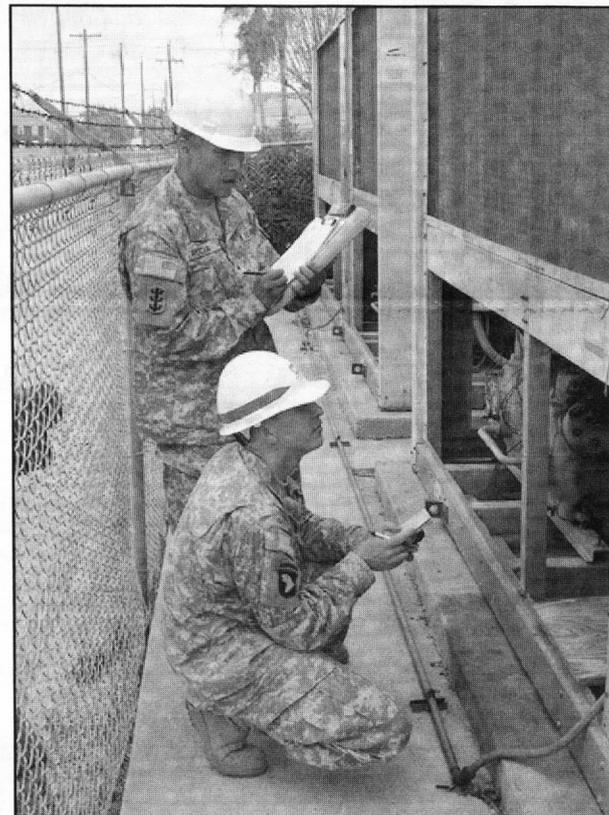
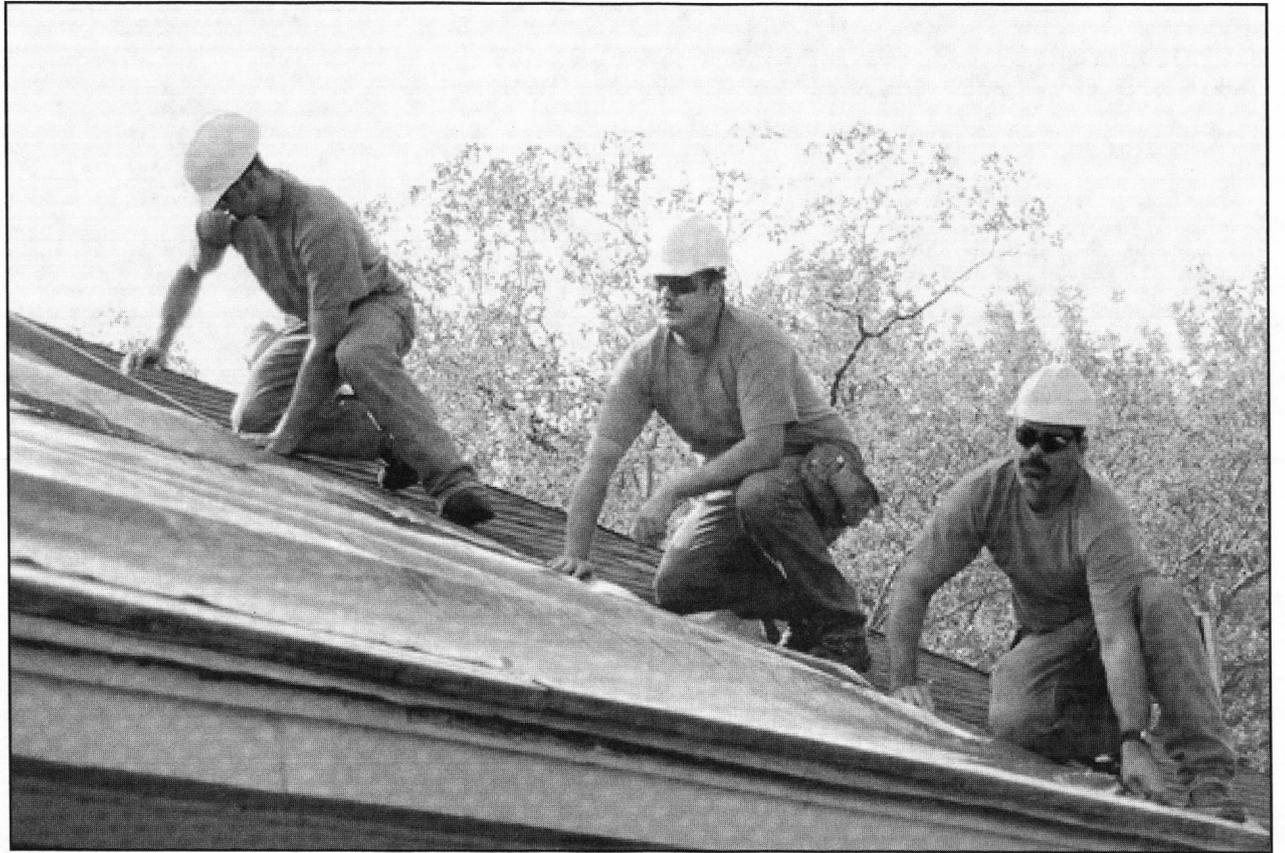
**Emergency power.** One of the most pervasive problems facing Texas after Ike has been the loss of power. While regional energy companies restore electricity, the Corps team worked to assess power needs and install generators where they were most needed, at hospitals, nursing homes, fire, and police stations.

FEMA has more than 200 generators in Texas, and the Corps installed about half, based on the state's highest priorities. The Corps has begun installing generators for second-tier priorities established by the state, and for water and waste water treatment systems.

**Water and ice.** The Corps supplemented Texas and Louisiana efforts to provide drinking water and ice. In addition, the Corps provided technical assistance to FEMA, state, and local officials in Texas on establishing and managing points of distribution.

## Expediting recovery

Even as disaster response actions were underway in the first days following Ike, the Corps has been



(Above) Operation Blue Roof is an iconic image of USACE disaster response. Contractors installed the first temporary plastic roof in Houston on Sept. 19. (Left) Sgt. Leandro Rocha (standing) and Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus Pilewski, both from the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power), check the electrical requirements for an air conditioning unit at the Island Community Center. (Above photo by Sean McCann, Pittsburgh District. Right photo by Brooks Hubbard IV, Los Angeles District)

clearance operations on Galveston Island. The Corps has contracted more than 80 trucks to clear right-of-ways along Interstate 45 for recovery teams to enter the city to assess impacts to infrastructure and to begin restoring essential public services and facilities.

That route started bringing residents back to the island when they had their first opportunity Sept. 24.

Additional trucks are being added as needed to clear debris. Once the right-of-ways are cleared, the debris team will begin clearing state highways on Galveston Island. The Corps has cleared sand from the main highway (Highway 87) on the Bolivar Peninsula.

Whether engaged as technical advisors on debris removal or ready to execute contingency contracting initiatives, the Corps debris removal team is ready to help clear pathways to aid Hurricane Ike victims in their recovery efforts.

**Temporary roofing.** Iconic "blue roofs" are an important aspect of the Corps' post-hurricane recovery efforts. Operation Blue Roof is a FEMA-sponsored initiative managed by the Corps. The program installs plastic sheeting as a temporary measure for residents with damaged roofs. The blue material used is sturdier than a tarp, designed to last for six months so that homeowners can still live in their home until they can get their roofs permanently fixed.

The first blue roof in Texas was installed in Houston on Sept. 19. The mission is in a rapid ramp-up phase with Corps representatives scattered throughout a 29-county region to help residents sign up.

"We received our mission tasking on Tuesday, moved out Wednesday, and installed the first blue roof Friday," said Ron Helton, temporary roofing action officer. "We set a high standard for ourselves, but when the team gives 110 percent, things get done."

**Critical public facilities.** The Corps is expecting significant activity to provide temporary facilities. In Galveston, there are anticipated actions to provide temporary facilities for its city hall, fire stations, and airport terminal. In Orange County, Texas, tentative plans are for setting up municipal buildings at a community college and an intermediate school.

planning for and responding to federal and state requests for supporting recovery efforts that will ensure a return to normalcy as soon as possible.

**Debris management.** In support of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the Corps' debris removal mission is divided into three phases:

**Phase one** — Support TxDOT in clearing roads and critical infrastructure with push-and-pile operations.

**Phase two** — Support TxDOT requirements with additional operations for removing debris cleared during the first phase.

**Phase three** — Support Texas county and municipal debris removal needs by assisting with contracting, training, quality assurance, and monitoring.

According to Col. Christopher Martin, commander of the Hurricane Ike Recovery Field Office, handling the debris mission in this manner requires collaboration among the state, counties and FEMA.

"This planned approach gives everyone greater flexibility and responsiveness to the debris removal mission," Martin said. "It also allows for the affected counties to use more of their local contractors and possibly reduce costs the jurisdiction may bear."

The Corps' debris mission began with emergency

# Hurricane Gustav

Continued from page one

of the hurricane and storm damage reduction system there, Corps officials in the Baton Rouge area were waiting for the worst to pass so they could access damages. In disasters like this, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can assign a variety of missions to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help communities recover from damages.

## Emergency power

Almost immediately, the Corps knew it would be tasked to provide emergency power to essentials like municipalities and first responders. Another mission that came into play early was to provide ice and water to emergency services, and later to neighborhoods as people returned to their homes.

Part of the emergency power team includes the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power), which was sent to Louisiana before Hurricane Gustav struck.

"We were assessing generator needs with state and FEMA officials as soon as we hit the ground before Hurricane Gustav," said Master Sgt. Dennis Diaz, one of two Soldiers in charge of the 249th's 18-man team.

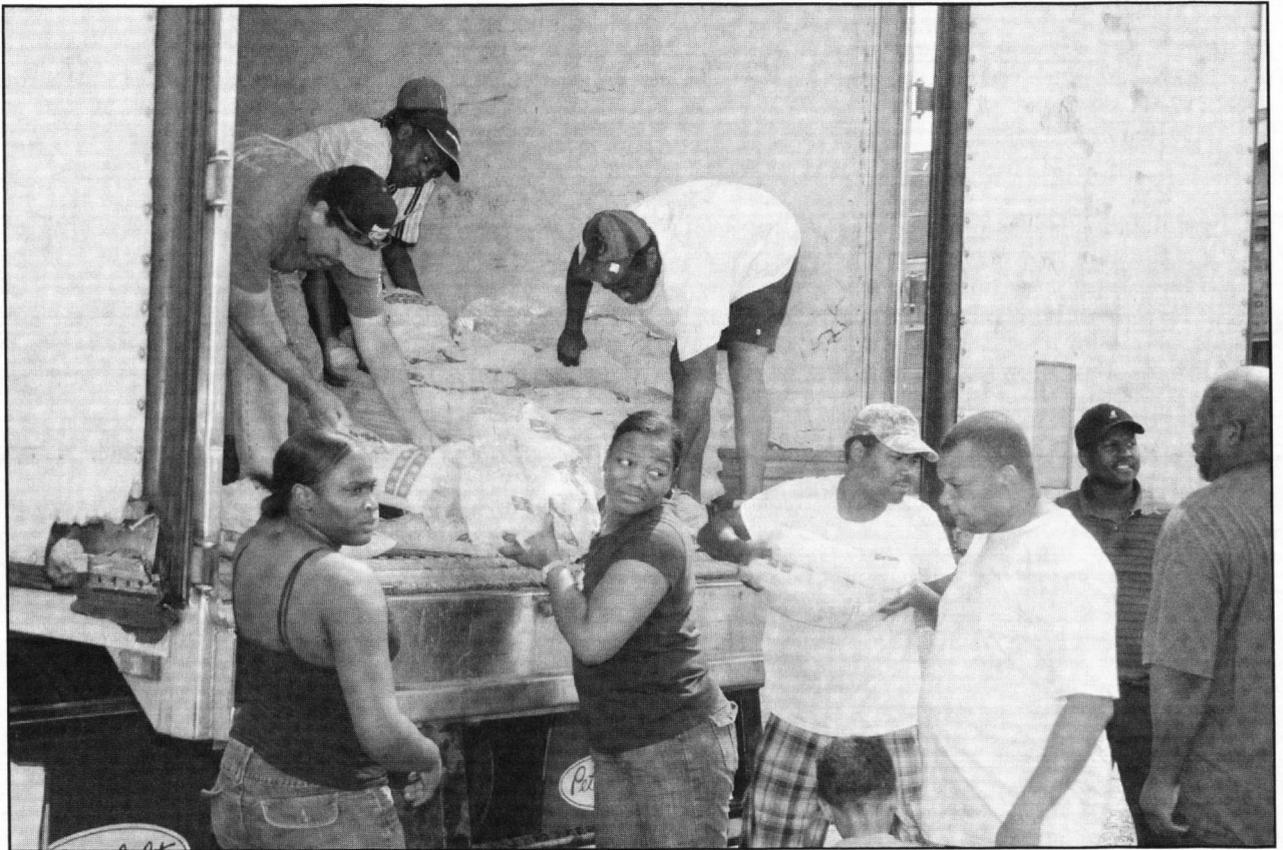
After Hurricane Gustav made landfall, state officials reported that 13 of the 14 main power lines in Louisiana were out and the last one was questionable. They estimated that it would take 15 days to get half of Louisiana back on the power grid, and another 15 days to get power to the rest of the state.

Chief Warrant Officer Richard Sweeting, the other 249th team leader, said two-man teams traveled all over southern Louisiana doing electrical inspections of facilities that requested a generator.

"Louisiana forwards generator requests to FEMA," Diaz said. "After FEMA and the state agree the facility needs a generator and both sign off, they forward the request to the Corps and we start our process."

Facilities looked at were hospitals, nursing homes, special needs facilities, water purification plants, sewage lift stations, shelters and evacuation centers, emergency operation centers, correctional facilities, court houses, police stations, and fire stations.

"Our assessment teams would visit each 'customer' that requested a generator," Diaz said. "They would tell us how much power they wanted. Then we would tell them how much power they actually needed. And



Volunteers unload ice in Napoleonville, La. Delivering water and ice is one of the Corps' missions during a disaster. (Photo by Alfred Dulaney, Vicksburg District)

then we would find them a generator that fit their needs and got that to them right away."

Mike Stewart, ESF-3 team lead, said, "The 249th Engineer Battalion personnel were a great asset to aid in the emergency power mission. They deployed on short notice, arrived ahead of the storm, and were available for the pre-planning process."

## Debris removal

Baltimore District's Ray McNeil is spearheading the Corps' limited involvement in debris removal by providing technical assistance to Louisiana through a joint task force of the state, FEMA, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, and USACE.

"We (the joint task force) want to speak in the same voice so that everybody gets the same message," McNeil explained. He added that another purpose of this task force is to ensure that local governments and parishes

understand the processes of how to properly dispose of the debris and how to get reimbursed, either from the state or from FEMA via the state.

"We're going out and visiting local governments and parishes across the state," McNeil said. "This is to make sure that they know how to properly take care of their debris as well as provide other assistance."

Some of the other assistance is:

- Provide checklists and guidelines for debris removal.
- Provide quality assessment monitoring and debris estimation training.
- Assist with contracting information (Stafford Act).
- Define scopes of proposals – request for proposals (RFP) to contractors.

"We've gotten a tremendous amount of support from the parishes and local governments," McNeil said. "They're looking for any assistance they can get."

## Operation Blue Roof

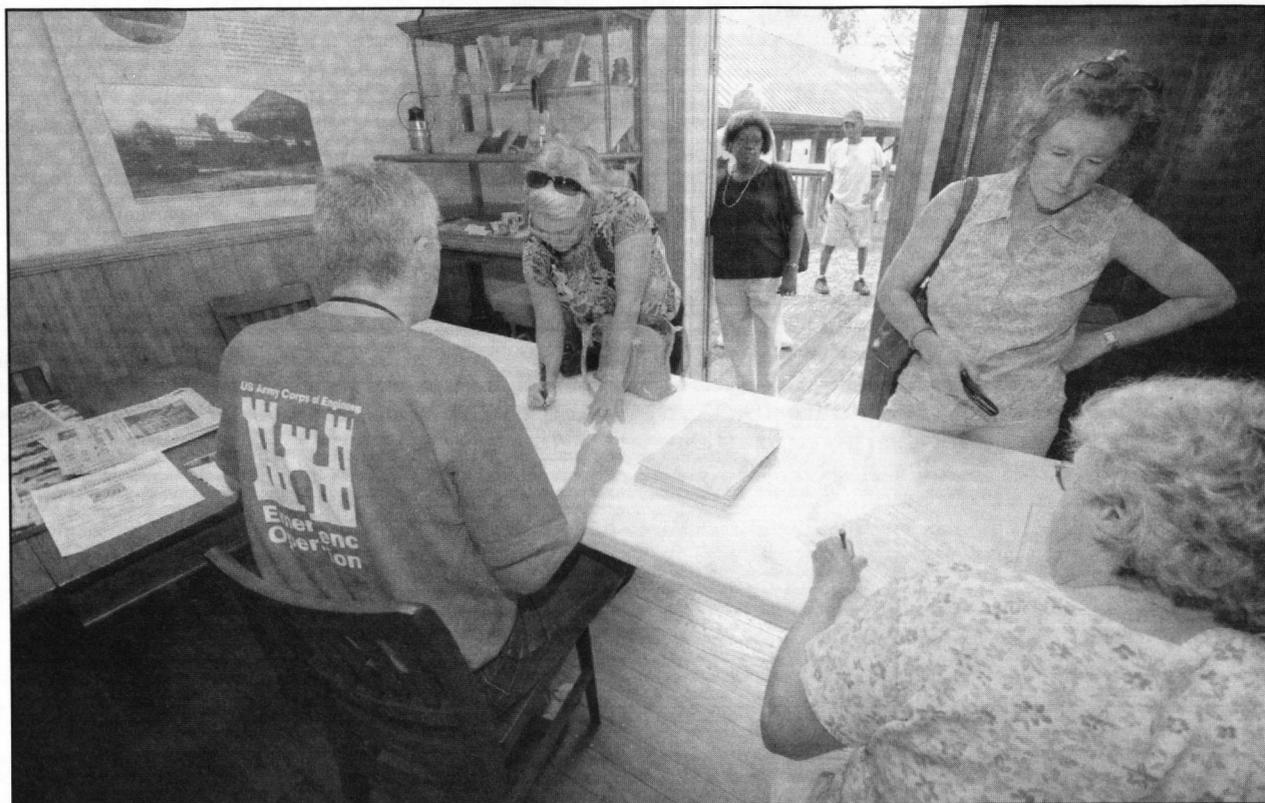
One of the most visible and appreciated missions that FEMA has assigned the Corps is Operation Blue Roof. As part of this mission, Corps' contractors will install blue plastic sheeting on roofs of homes that meet the criteria. The coverings are temporary and homeowners are encouraged to contact a roofing company as soon as possible for permanent repairs.

Right-of-entry collection sites are established in declared parishes that FEMA has accepted into the Blue Roof Program. Once accepted into the program, the Corps and parishes locate collection sites for the applications. The right-of-entry is required to allow Corps personnel and contractors onto the property and determine whether the residence qualifies for the program. If qualified, a temporary roof will be installed.

As of Sept. 12, 3,466 applications had been accepted, and 37 parishes have been accepted into the program.

Through Sept. 11, more than 300 Corps personnel from districts across the country have reported to Louisiana to support Hurricane Gustav. Most have moved into the newly-opened Recovery Field Office in Baton Rouge. There are also 17 employees deployed within the ESF-3 cell in the Joint Field Office as well. The Corps' mission, though, is far from over.

"Hurricane Gustav has left its mark down here," said Col. Jon Christensen, commander of the Louisiana Recovery Field Office. "The people down here are resilient and determined to get this storm behind them. We're proud to have an opportunity to help them get down the road to recovery."



Stephanie Soma (left) and Wengi Laviotte fill out right-of-entry forms for blue roof installation on their homes in Baton Rouge. USACE members Rick Topham (left) and Janelle Sanders assist them with their forms. (Photo by George Stringham, St. Louis District)

# Lake celebrates 10-year safety record

By Danny Martin  
Wilmington District

The number 10 has different meanings to different people. Some people may remember 10 as the age when they received their first bike. Other people may associate 10 with Bo Derek's famous movie.

This year at Philpott Lake in Wilmington District, the number 10 is a special number that we strove to achieve. As of Aug. 18, Philpott Lake reached a milestone of 10 years without a drowning.

A tremendous amount of preparation and dedication went into this accomplishment. Rangers coordinated interpretive programs, both on-site and outreach, to spread the word about water safety. They constantly kept a vigilant eye and ear out to immediately correct any potentially dangerous or unsafe condition.

Volunteers worked in the Visitor Assistance Center, distributing safety literature to the many visi-



Youngsters learn about life jackets at Philpott Lake. (Photo courtesy of Wilmington District)

tors. Other volunteer groups, such as Friends of Philpott and the Philpott - Fairy Stone Safety Council, conducted projects to better provide our visitors with safe recreational activities.

The park gate attendants constantly monitored the visitors who entered their park areas, reporting any would-be swimmer who may have had a few too many. Our contract employees who were mowing grass or cleaning a restroom always took the time to report any unsafe act or condition that they may have seen.

And finally, Philpott Lake is blessed with a management staff that puts safety above all else and that is always receptive to new ideas.

Now the year is coming to an end. Adults are back to jobs, children are back to school. Cool days hint of frost in the air and the close of recreation season.

But a new season is coming. Swimmers, boaters, campers, and picnickers will again flock to Philpott Lake, requiring watchful eyes to help keep them safe.

As for the Philpott staff, we will have a new special number to strive for. If you guessed 11, you're right!

(Danny Martin is a park ranger at Philpott Lake in Wilmington District.)

HR Corner

## USACE active in family action plan

The USACE Summer Leaders Conference of 2007 identified the need for USACE to become an active participant in the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP). AFAP is a grassroots process that identifies issues of concern to the Army family. It provides a forum for employees and family members to raise issues and make recommendations to improve Army family life.

Subsequently, at the USACE Winter Leaders Conference last February, AFAP program development objectives and milestones were established. One objective was for USACE to secure delegate seats to the Army AFAP Conference next January.

The second objective was for USACE to solicit AFAP issues from the workforce and, by Aug. 8, submit to

Army those that were beyond our authority to resolve.

The Army approved three delegate slots for USACE last March, and USACE submitted six issues for Army AFAP consideration. The six issues were gleaned from more than 70 that were submitted directly to USACE Headquarters via a USACE Web site fielded in July.

The six issues address:

- Tax exemptions for civilians deployed to support the Global War on Terror (an issue raised by many USACE employees).
- Inaccessibility of Army One Source to family members of deployed civilians.
- Need to provide easier access to military installations for deployed family members seeking on-base

family support services.

- Providing closed captioning on Armed Forces Network programs.
  - Amending death gratuity provisions to allow civilians with no immediate family members to designate 100 percent of the gratuity (now limited to 50 percent) to any designated person.
  - Development of systematic controls to ensure military assignments consider married couples who are both on active duty, in the active National Guard or Reserves, Army Reservists, and any combination.
- The command has accomplished a great deal in a short time, and is on its way to becoming an active voice in the Army Family Action Plan process.

## BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup>

Continued from page one

Army Corps of Engineers' under it," said Earl Baugher, senior intellectual property counselor with the Office of Counsel. "We do this because the public knows these symbols belong to the Corps of Engineers, and the Corps has a good reputation of building excellent projects.

"We don't want commercial companies latching on to those symbols and creating an image that they also create projects with the same excellence that we do," Baugher continued. "If we extend that idea to words, then BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> has the same association in the public mind. We don't want anyone using the slogan or the castle to gain credibility that they might not otherwise have. BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> will be associated with the Corps and our reputation, and we want to protect our image and our good name."

According to Thomas Taff, the Engineering Research & Development Center attorney handling this action, the benefits of registering a mark with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) include:

- Nationwide protection.
- The mark provides a warning to other business not to infringe on our slogan.
- Protection against counterfeiting.
- Confirms ownership.

The registration process can be a long one. According to Taff, the slogan would be registered by Scott Chafin, the Army's trademark attorney with the U.S. Army Legal Services Agency. Chafin prepares an application to register our slogan, and files the application with the USPTO. A trademark attorney at the USPTO examines the application and, assuming it passes muster, publishes it for opposition. If there is no opposition, then the Corps receives a notice of

allowance from the USPTO.

During this process, USPTO requires USACE to place a raised SM (for "service mark") on the slogan to demonstrate that we are using it "in commerce," which is a condition for registration. The service mark should be used whenever BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> is used "in commerce" (publicly), like a Web site.

Sometimes one sees TM (for trademark). This symbol is used when the slogan is on a product like a polo shirt. Once the slogan is used on products, a separate registration for a trademark in select classifications of goods may be necessary to insure the slogan is used properly on clothing, souvenirs, coffee cups, etc.

When the approval process is complete and USACE receives a notice of allowance from the USPTO, a ® (indicating registration) will be used with BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup>, as it is now with the castle images.

Taff does not know how long it will take USPTO to evaluate our application to register BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup>. The process will cost USACE several hundred dollars.

During the registration process and after, BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> will be used throughout USACE as a universal symbol of our organization in much the same way as the castle.

"I foresee it being used in any communication product where applicable," said Tesia Williams, a public affairs specialist in the USACE Public Affairs Office. "It could be used on a poster. A person could add it to their e-mail signature block. It will be used in PowerPoint presentations, brochures, pamphlets, publications, you name it. We'll use BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> across the board."

"We need to transition to BUILDING STRONG<sup>SM</sup> with the new branding as soon as your current prod-

ucts lose their shelf-life," Van Antwerp said. "The challenge is to become one Corps with one look, one slogan, and one identity."

Michael Rehak in Buffalo District and Scott Oglesby of Los Angeles District both submitted the winning entry in the slogan contest. Each received a 24-hour time-off award for submitting the winning slogan.

"I was surprised and flattered that they chose my slogan, and I consider it a great honor," said Oglesby, a management analyst. "We're part of the U.S. Army, and I wanted to tie in our mission with the Army slogan, 'Army Strong.' It conveys what the Corps wants to do, and it fits perfectly with the image that we want to present."

Oglesby has not used his time-off award. "We're pretty busy with the year-end closing. After that, I plan to take a long weekend and go someplace nice with my wife, perhaps the wine country of California."

Rehak was also surprised to win. "Col. Daniel Snead, the district commander, came in one morning a couple of minutes after I arrived and told me I had won," said Rehak, a resources management analyst. "I had forgotten all about entering, so it was a pleasant surprise to me."

Rehak retired from the Army after 25 years as a lieutenant colonel in the infantry, and he had the same inspiration as Oglesby.

"I was used to the slogan 'Army Strong,' and the Corps builds projects, and we're part of the Army," Rehak said. "It seemed so obvious that I was surprised it won. It just seemed to tie the Corps to the Army, so that's what I submitted."

Rehak has also not yet used his time-off award. "I'd like to take a Friday off and spend the day watching my grandson."

# Around the Corps

## C-17 ramp

Honolulu District broke ground for a flight line expansion project at Hickam Air Force Base Sept. 3. The project, awarded to San Juan Construction of Honolulu, is expected to be completed next August for \$15.5 million.

The project will add more than 40,000 square yards of aircraft parking space and access roads to Hickam's C-17 ramp. It will add five C-17 parking spaces, new light poles, and improve the drainage system and access road. This will expand the parking space for active duty and Air National Guard C-17 operations. The project will also enhance Hickam Fire Department operations by improving access to the flight line.

## Recreation award

Bradley Keshlear has received the Legends Award from the American Recreation Coalition. Keshlear is the recreation program manager of South Atlantic Division. In his 34-year career, Keshlear's willingness to develop and share innovative ideas profoundly affected the recreation management community. His diligent and proactive work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Water Safety Congress, and the Southeastern Tourism Council led to developing and adopting innovative national standards. Under his leadership, Corps projects throughout SAD became a source of pride to the surrounding communities and to USACE.

## Mitigation & ecosystem banking conference

"Banking under the New Rule" is the theme of the 12th National Mitigation & Ecosystem Banking Conference, scheduled for May 5-8, 2009 in Salt Lake City.

Attendees will learn how the new rule issued by USACE and EPA earlier this year impacts mitigation and ecosystem banking across the nation. USACE will provide a special workshop focused on implementing the new rule.

The conference is seeking presentations from experienced mitigation and conservation bankers, regulators, users, engineers, investors, environmental organizations, and others who have experience in the mitigation and ecosystem banking industry. Submissions are due Oct. 15.

Established 11 years ago to bring together key regulators, bankers, users, and providers of services in the mitigation, conservation, and ecosystem banking marketplace, the conference is known for the quality of its hands-on sessions, and its networking and business opportunities.

Sessions will include the new rule workshop; regulator, banker & user forums; banking primer & stream banking workshops; updates on regulations, rules, and litigation; plus field trips to ecosystem banks in the Salt Lake City area.

For more information about the conference, visit [www.mitigationbankingconference.com](http://www.mitigationbankingconference.com), or call (703) 548-5473.

## Bridge demolition

The McAlpine Locks and Dam modernization project reached a major milestone with the demolition of its outdated bascule bridge (a counterbalanced drawbridge). The bridge, in service since 1966, was removed Sept. 11. The modernization project is adding a 1,200x110-foot lock chamber to supplement the current 1,200x600-foot lock.

The old bridge provided vehicle access to Shippingport Island, home to the McAlpine Lock Maintenance Facility, the Louisville Repair Station, and the Louisville Gas and Electric hydropower generating facility. It also provided public access to the

island for fishermen, walkers, and bikers.

A new high-clearance concrete bridge allows both river and vehicular traffic to move simultaneously without interruption, which was often an issue with the bascule bridge. Lock operations will no longer impede vehicle traffic over the locks.

The lock replacement project is 96 percent complete and is expected to be finished next spring.

## Al Karkh Maternity Hospital

Al Karkh Maternity Hospital in Baghdad received two truckloads of medical equipment, which will speed the hospital's opening. Nearly \$600,000 was spent on repairs to a hospital that received no upgrades and little maintenance during the Saddam regime.

Improved security is helping. Dr. Eman Atta, Karkh's manager/hospital administrator, has worked at Karkh Maternity for only six months, but has seen the neighborhood around the hospital improve dramatically.

"It was bad here, so bad that I refused delivery of vital medical equipment until it was safe from those who would steal it," Atta said. One shipment of medical equipment including X-ray machines and other high-end gear was hijacked. "Stolen before it ever made it to the hospital. To keep this from happening again, Dr. Emad Sabry and I stored equipment in secret locations around Baghdad until security improved."

"We hope to open the hospital to inpatient care, surgeries, and deliveries in two months," said Sabry, an anesthesiologist and one of Karkh's 10 senior physicians. "The hospital still needs equipment - all types from beds to incubators to pharmaceuticals. The Ministry of Health has promised to provide these items."

The renovation included replacing the HVAC system, boilers, electrical, structural, reverse osmosis water purification system, new medical waste incinerator, medical gases center, nurse call system, data network, TV system, elevator upgrade, and fire alarm with a fire fighting extinguishing system.

## Al Kut markets

Al Kut's downtown business area will soon feature two modern complexes for fresh meat and fish. A new \$2.7 million, 1,500 square meter fish market will include space for 24 fish shops with cold storage, a cafeteria, coffee shop, central courtyard, exterior sidewalks, and parking lot.

Located nearby will be a new \$2.4 million, 2,000 square meter meat market housing 25 butcher shops with cold storage, coffee shop, central courtyard with two fountains, exterior sidewalks, and parking lot.

"Those two new facilities will provide a real boost to Al Kut's economy," said Iraqi engineer Hussein Sabry with GRD. "They will employ 300 people and with the cold storage capability, residents will know they are getting a quality product."

Construction is scheduled to be complete next spring.

## Iraqi army command

Construction has started on the Iraqi army's new Al Maymona Location Command in Maysan Province. The \$31 million, 44-acre project includes dozens of structures providing office space, warehouses, fuel supply, a dining facility for 1,000 people, barracks, an ice factory, laundry, barber shop, medical clinic, fire station, and water and wastewater treatment.

"It will ensure Iraqi soldiers have the supplies they need as they improve security in our area," said Iraqi engineer Ali Abdul, overseeing the construction for GRD. "The first phase is scheduled to be completed in November, the final phase next February."

More than 60 local Iraqis are on the crew building

a 600 meter by 300 meter (656 by 328 yard) perimeter fence, and the footings for the 37 new buildings.

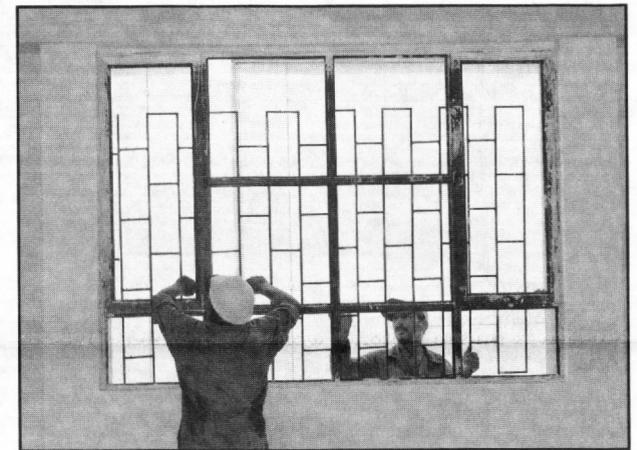
## New surgical hospital

A new \$12.7 million surgical hospital is under construction in Maysan Province.

"This project will provide the only modern surgical hospital in Maysan and is viewed by the Minister of Health as the single most important development here," said Iraqi engineer Ali Abdul who oversees the work for GRD.

The 62,500 square meter (205,000 square foot) hospital will include four operating rooms, delivery room, emergency room, pharmacy, labs, and a residence building for 16 doctors. The facility will house clinics for pediatrics, internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics-gynecology, dental, and nuclear medicine.

The new facility will serve 250,000 residents in Amarah, and also serve as a teaching hospital for students at Maysan University's Medical College. Construction of the new hospital is scheduled to be completed next August.



Iraqi workers install new windows in the Iskandariyah Vocational Technical School.

## Vocational technical school

Iraqis working on the vocational technical (vo-tech) school in Babil Province have a personal interest in ensuring the renovation is done right.

"Many of the carpenters, electricians, and masons on that construction crew attended Iskandariyah Vocational Technical School and know the value of its curriculum," said Iraqi engineer Ali Edreise with GRD. The \$4.5 million project is renovating classroom, the auditorium, and seven dormitories that will house up to 1,400 students.

"After Iraq's liberation in 2003, the school was ransacked and looted," Edreise said. "The furniture, doors, and windows were stolen, and the rooms had no water, electricity, or working restrooms. The renovations will allow students from outside the area to attend classes and learn new skills."

This is the third phase of improvements. In 2007 there was a \$600,000 electrical upgrade of the automotive and machinery shops, and a complete outfitting of the kitchen and dining facility. Earlier this year, new floors were installed in the grinding workshop, milling workshop, tools workshop, and turning workshop, plus new electrical connections and exhaust fans.

"Before 2007, Iskandariyah Vo-Tech offered only one course with about 30 students," Edreise said. "Today, the curriculum has 18 classes with more than 1,250 students. When the final phase is completed in December, the school will house and educate more than 4,000 students each year."

The curriculum includes computer operations and maintenance, sewing, hair care, welding, auto mechanics and body work, electrician fundamentals, and carpentry.



## Pentagon Memorial

The new Pentagon Memorial was dedicated Sept. 11, honoring those who died when terrorists hijacked American Airlines Flight 77 and crashed it into the Pentagon Sept. 11, 2001.

The memorial has 184 cantilevered benches – 59 for those in the airliner, 125 for those in the Pentagon. The benches are aligned along the flight path of the airliner toward the point of impact.

A name is engraved on the end of each bench. If a visitor faces the Pentagon while reading the name, that person was in the Pentagon. If he or she sees the sky while reading the name, that person was in the airliner.

Baltimore District managed the design selection for the memorial. The Pentagon Memorial team involved all stakeholders including the victims' families. The team handled site selection, the design competition, jury selection, family involvement, and media events. They successfully picked a design in just 15 months, from its inception five weeks after 9/11 to selection in February 2003.

(Photo by F.T. Eyre, HECSA)

# Top NCO on road listening to folks

Article by Bernard Tate  
Headquarters

Photo by Bruce Huffman  
Afghanistan Engineer District

*(Editor's note: During Command Sgt. Maj. Micheal Buxbaum's first interview with the "Engineer Update," he said that he would like to do a quarterly article to report on what he has seen in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This is the first in that series of interviews.)*

Command sergeants major don't spend much time in their offices. Their job is to watch over the morale and welfare of the Soldiers and civilian employees in their units.

But what happens when the command sergeant major has 35,000 people, mostly civilians, and they're spread from Europe to Korea, including two war zones? It means that USACE Command Sgt. Maj. Micheal Buxbaum has spent about 60 of the past 90 days on the road. His primary mission during these trips is to listen and learn from the USACE employees.

"The main thing that I tell everyone is that I'm their advocate," Buxbaum said. "Folks have concerns and issues that they want to raise, but sometimes they just don't know who to raise them to. I'm that person. I'm interested in hearing what they have to say — good, bad, or indifferent. I tell them, 'I don't have all the answers, but I can make sure that the right folks in Headquarters hear their issues so that we can help get them the answers.'"

"As I visit project sites, there's always something that someone wants to ask me," Buxbaum added. "That's what I go after; I want them to talk to me. Sometimes it's a little hard to get them to open up, but that's OK."

Buxbaum visited a lot of places during those 60 days of travel — the Summer Leaders Conference; the 416<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command; Fort Riley, Kan.; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; the Kansas City District headquarters; the 249<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Prime Power); and the Kiwanis Club in Richmond, Va., to name a few. But some experiences stand out.

In July, the command sergeant major visited the Afghanistan Engineer



**Command Sgt. Maj. Micheal Buxbaum on the road again, this time visiting USACE Soldiers and civilians deployed in Afghanistan.**

District with the chief of engineers.

"Great folks, motivated to be there," he said. "Sometimes when I go places, folks say, 'Hey sergeant major, this is messed up.' But I didn't hear any of that. Everyone was upbeat about what they're doing. When the only complaint I hear is about the chow in the dining facility, that normally means that everything else is going well."

Buxbaum later met with all the enlisted Soldiers at Qalaa House. He encouraged them to make sure "things are being done to standard and to know what right looks like," and to take care of USACE civilians in uniform in AED.

"Soldiers get specific training about what to do, for example, if we have incoming fire," Buxbaum explained. "I told the Soldiers to not assume that

everyone has the same level of training we do. Make sure our civilians in uniform all know what right looks like. If there's an incoming round, what's the correct response? We have the responsibility as Soldiers to make sure everyone around us is trained to the same level."

"I spent four or five days with Los Angeles District traveling along more than 600 miles of the border fence that we're provided project oversight for the Department of Homeland Security," Buxbaum continued. "Awesome project. It's going through just about every kind of terrain that you can imagine, from blowing sand dunes to the mountains and everything in between."

"I spent four days driving and talking with Border Patrol agents and com-

manders," Buxbaum said. "They just love what we're doing, and were excited about the entire project. Once the fence is completed it should help to reduce some of their work load by providing them with better visibility of what's going on, and it's going to make a huge impact on reducing the amount of drug and illegal immigration traffic."

Command sergeants major develop a sensitive antenna for troop morale, and Buxbaum has observed the morale of our civilian "troops" at the grass roots.

"I think morale is pretty good," he said. "With it getting close to the end of the fiscal year, everyone is working hard to make sure all projects committed so that construction can get started as soon as possible. So as you can imagine, things could get a little stressful, but everyone is committed and they tell me they'll meet the chief of engineers' intent on this one."

"I haven't run across anybody who is really looking to leave us," Buxbaum said. "You'll always run across folks who are just having a bad day. But for the most part, folks enjoy who they work with and they enjoy what they do. I really enjoy meeting all the folks from across the Corps. Talk about a diverse and interesting group of great Americans!"

For the future, Buxbaum's next big trip will be to Iraq to visit with the folks in GRD and as many projects as that time will allow. He'll also go to Mississippi Valley Division to spend some time with the crew of the mat sinking unit, and visit the crew of the dredge *Jadwin*. Add in the annual Association of the U.S. Army week in Washington, D.C., and a trip to Pacific Ocean Division and it will be another full month.

At the end of the interview, Buxbaum turned back to dealing with questions and issues that he'd heard in the field.

"I want people to know that I *do* listen to their questions, and I *will* help to get their questions answered," Buxbaum said as he pointed to his computer. "That's my job as *their* command sergeant major, to hear what they have to say, and to get answers for them."