BUILDING STRONG℠

Engineer Update

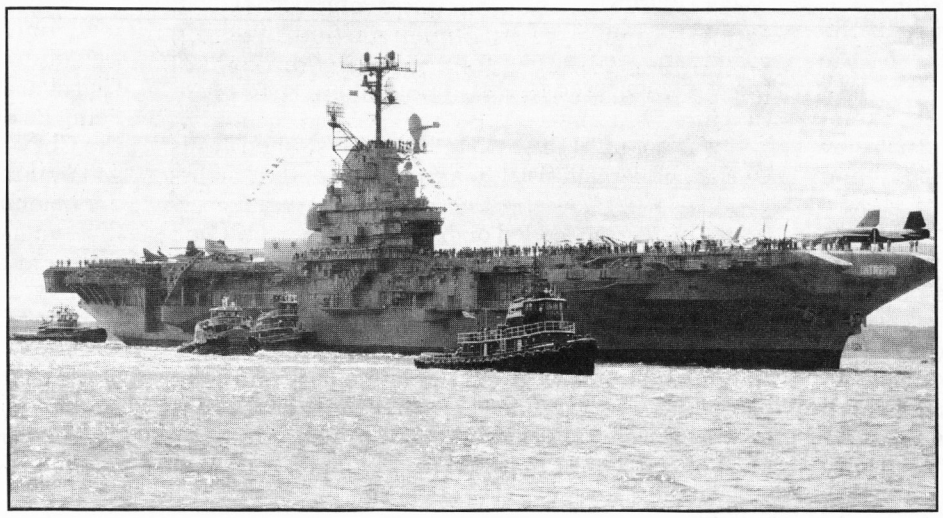
See more articles and photos at
www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/pubs/update.htm

Vol. 32 • No. 11 • November 2008

USS Intrepid now at permanent home

New York District helps move historic aircraft carrier

By JoAnne Castagna
New York District



Workboats escort the *USS Intrepid*, now the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, to her permanent berth in Manhattan. (Photo courtesy of New York District)

It was World War II and Felix Novelli, a 19-year-old airplane maintenance man at the time, was serving aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Intrepid*. One day out at sea, Novelli was walking on the fantail of the carrier when he saw a shipmate sobbing and asked him, "What's wrong, Mack?"

He responded, "I'm going home."

Novelli replied, "You should be happy."

"What about the guys I'm leaving behind," asked the sailor.

The *USS Intrepid* has sailed a long voyage since then, but on Oct. 2 she safely berthed at her permanent home. Originally slated to be scrapped, the *USS Intrepid* was instead decommissioned and converted into a museum docked in New York City. The old warship recently received a two-year bow-to-stern renovation in New Jersey and Staten Island. Its pier in Manhattan was also renovated.

On Oct. 2, Novelli and other *Intrepid* veterans remembered their lost brothers as they stood on the carrier's flight deck while she was towed bow-first back to her home at Pier 86 on the Hudson River on Manhattan's west side.

The aircraft carrier has been berthed at Pier 86 since 1982 after she was decommissioned and became the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum. The museum receives more than 750,000 visitors each year and is managed by the Intrepid Foundation, a charitable organization started by the Fisher construction and real estate family based in New York City.

Today, Novelli is 83 and lives in Southampton, N.Y., and believes the ship's restoration is important for future generations. "Kids need to know what happened. Ninety-nine percent don't know what went on," Novelli said.

The renovation holds great personal memories for him. Portions of the ship that were renovated were areas never seen before by the public, including the ship's lower decks where he spent time with his shipmates.

In addition, renovations were performed on the anchor chain room, living quarters, machine shop, and the museum's collection of aircraft, as well as the pier where the ship is berthed.

The *USS Intrepid* is one of the most distinguished warships in naval his-

Continued on page two

249th Soldiers support Task Force SAFE

By Lt. Col. Paul Olsen
249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power)

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 16 U.S. personnel have been electrocuted in Iraq — 10 Soldiers, five Marines, and one Department of Defense contractor.

In response to these fatalities, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I) stood up Task Force Safe Actions for Fire and Electricity (TF SAFE) Aug. 1 to mitigate the risk of accidental electrocution.

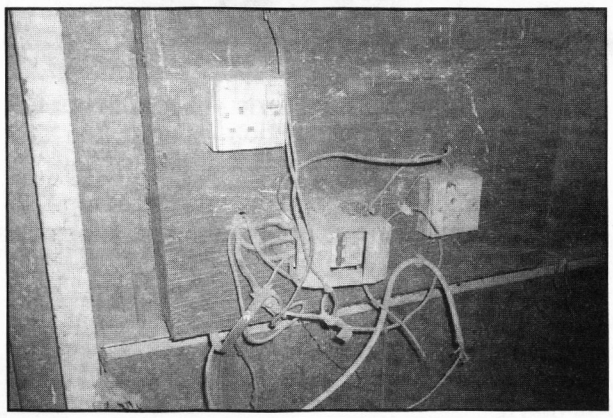
TF SAFE is a unique partnership among MNF-I, the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This partnership highlights the technical skills of its first responders, the noncommissioned officers (NCOs) of the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power).

Scoping the problem

Engineers and planners for TF SAFE are charged with examining the electrical safety of about 4,500 buildings, 85,000 temporary facilities, and about 250 contingency operating locations used by MNF-I personnel. USACE did not build any of the facilities that must be inspected.

To establish an immediate safety mindset among servicemembers in theater, the commander of TF SAFE, Maj. Gen. Tim McHale, also initiated a theater-wide awareness program to stop the use of unauthorized electrical equipment such as "daisy chained" power strips and illegal hot plates.

In addition, TF SAFE purchased tens of thousands pieces of certified equipment such as fuse-protected power strips and outlet adaptors. Servicemembers can exchange their old non-certified equipment for new certified gear at no cost.



This is an example of the substandard wiring that inspectors from the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) are finding in Iraq. (Photo courtesy of 249th Engineer Battalion)

Bonding and grounding

Most reported electrical shocks occurred while servicemembers conducted daily tasks in container express units, containerized housing units, and ablution units (hygiene facilities). In some cases, those shocks could have been avoided by placing proper electrical bonding and grounding systems.

A safely wired facility is bonded and grounded with a wiring system that permanently joins all metallic parts, and provides a safe path for electrical current to travel back to its source, or to the ground.

Therefore, it was imperative for Soldiers from the 249th to inspect the electrical wiring in facilities throughout Iraq with a focus on grounding and bonding to ensure that they met applicable building and safety codes.

Technical competence

The 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) is a versatile power generation battalion assigned to USACE to provide commercial-level power to military units and federal relief organizations during full-spectrum operations.

When ordered to deploy to TF SAFE, the battalion was experiencing an extremely high operational tempo. The battalion had just eight active platoons, and seven were operationally committed.

The equivalent of one platoon was supporting Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, including an emergency power plant installation. Four platoons were committed to Operation Iraqi Freedom, two already deployed and two replacing them. The equivalent of one platoon was preparing to deploy on a separate overseas mission, as well as other missions all over the world. One platoon was in reserve for Stateside natural disasters.

So the 249th had one remaining platoon available for TF SAFE.

On Sept. 6, 14 NCOs from Alpha Company traveled from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, to Winchester, Va., to attend a week-long deployment preparation course, plus an initial bonding and grounding instruction.

The platoon arrived in Kuwait Sept. 14 to certify

Continued on page six

Insights

History leads us from good to great

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

"Good to great" implies significant improvement. For most people, doing a good job is all that is expected. Anything else is foolish or unnecessary, and we often label excellence as overkill. I recall some years ago that I questioned one of my students about his lack of interest in class. He answered, "If the minimum wasn't good enough, it wouldn't be the minimum."

There are others in the world that content themselves with past accomplishments, thinking that they have already achieved their ultimate goals. When Albert Einstein developed his theory of relativity, the world was enraptured with his explanation of how the universe began. No one bothered to question his presuppositions and virtually accepted his theory as the answer to the space-time continuum.

Then a few years later, an unlikely source, a priest named Lamatre who happened to be a physicist, developed the theory that the universe started small and is in a constant state of expansion. He applauded Einstein, but he argued that his theory of relativity did not go far enough. As the years passed, we have found that Lamatre's theory has proven more accurate than Einstein's.

Going from good to great is nothing new. Twenty centuries ago, a man named Saul of Tarsus thought that he had reached spiritual perfection. Concerning the Jewish law (Torah), he considered himself perfect, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. By all spiritual measurements, Saul was an outstanding individual — a *good* man. He was so righteous that he persecuted those who differed in their assessment of the spiritual life.

It was not until the road to Damascus, when Jesus Christ challenged Saul to a life of faith, that he began to see just how short he was of spiritual perfection. Until Jesus called on him to change, Saul had missed out on the human capital necessary for a vital life, and he was in danger of wasting the few gifts and talents that he had on the pretense of self-proclaimed superiority.

Saul had failed to grasp the immensity and complexity of love's dynamic strength because he thought he was already there spiritually. So, where are you? Most of you will be tempted to say, "I'm a good person, a valued employee, and a wonderful companion. I'm there."

Do you truly believe that you are at the pinnacle of your career, your success, your spiritual maturity? Think again! Like Saul, perhaps you need to be challenged to exceed the requirements of your job, your career, your spiritual development.

Saul, after considering all that his conceit had denied him, allowed himself to envision the possibilities afforded him in faith. Through faith in what God could accomplish through him, Saul went from being an obscure Pharisee to the greatest apostle of the Christian church. He transformed from Saul, a *good* man, to Paul, a *great* man of Christ.

Remember that great people are often obscure individuals who fill a great need or who bridge a great chasm at the right place and at the right time. Let us strive to move from good to great. Let's make a difference.

(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.)

Intrepid

Continued from page one

tory. She began service during World War II. At that time Novelli witnessed numerous attacks.

"The sky was blackened with kamikaze," he said. "They wanted to sink a carrier and they kept on coming left and right, 200 or 300 each day. She was hit five times by kamikaze and by a suicide bomb."

The 925-foot-long ship saw action in the Korean and Vietnam wars. Just before the Vietnam War, Senator John McCain served on the *Intrepid*. The ship tracked Soviet submarines during the Cold War, and served as NASA's prime recovery vessel for Mercury and Gemini space capsules in the 1960s.

In 2006, the Intrepid Foundation decided to renovate the ship and rebuild Pier 86 where the ship is berthed. In the summer of 2006, the museum received a federal permit from New York District to dredge an access channel from the berthing area out to the main federal channel of the Hudson River to facilitate the moving of the vessel away from the pier to its renovation site.

That fall the dredging was completed, removing river mud that had accumulated around the ship. Soon after, an "Intrepid on Leave" celebration gave the ship an elaborate send-off to its temporary home. The vessels of several public service agencies were invited to escort the ship down river, including four USACE workboats that would lead the flotilla.

The decommissioned warship no longer has engines. So seven tugboats hooked up their towlines, throttled up their engines, and pulled the aircraft carrier stern-first all of 15 feet before the 27,100 ton ship literally got stuck in the mud.

Its four giant propellers, each 16 feet in diameter, dug into the river sediment and plowed up a "speed bump" of mud under the ship's fantail that prevented any further movement.

Museum officials immediately called numerous government agencies for help and a multi-agency team quickly formed including the Intrepid Foundation, state and city agencies, New York District, and Naval Sea Systems Command because of their unique knowledge and experience in freeing large ships.

The *USS Intrepid* during World War II with her full complement of aircraft. (Photo courtesy of New York District)

The team quickly executed a unique, highly visible dredging operation to remove compacted sediment from around the propellers and shafts. They worked around the clock, seven days a week until it was done. They only had 29 days to perform the work because then the next high tide would occur and provide an extra few feet of water to float *Intrepid* out.

The team devised a three-phase execution plan. First, dig the existing driveway deeper and wider, and add an access trench on the south side of the vessel from the stern to beyond the trapped propellers and shafts. Second, use a drag bar to rake sediment from under the stern. Finally, remove the remaining mud from under the ship's fantail.

After almost three weeks of work and removing about 39,000 cubic yards of river mud, the ship was again ready to be moved.

In December 2006, after fighting with high winds and swift currents, the 63-year-old ship was extracted with both great force and finesse by McAllister tugboats and escorted gracefully downriver by USACE harbor workboats, and New York City police boats and fireboats.

Now, two years later, *Intrepid* made its grand return back home.

To get her back, the multi-agency team joined forces again. USACE surveyed the 10-mile route for obstructions and cleared the pier's berth area. Col. Nello Tortora, New York District commander, said the Corps had the Navy's contractors clear a space about 110 feet wide and 30 feet deep alongside the rebuilt pier. The ship needs 30 feet of water to float, and the depth was 35 feet at high tide when the carrier docked.

In addition, U.S. Army divers currently training at the USACE Caven Point Marine Terminal in New Jersey assisted in surveying the ship's path for obstructions that would block her way home.

On Oct. 2, a gusty cool day, the aircraft carrier made its way back home, led by U.S. Coast Guard and USACE boats, and the same McAllister tugboats that freed it two years ago. Novelli, along with 230 other veterans, stood on the same deck where he served 60 years ago.

After leaving Staten Island, the carrier made a leisurely 10-mile voyage across New York Harbor and up the Hudson River to the rebuilt pier. The historic ship passed the Statue of Liberty as city fireboats sprayed streams of water dyed red and blue.

The carrier paused at Ground Zero, former location of the World Trade Center twin towers. The veterans unfurled a 60-by-30-foot American flag to salute those lost on Sept. 11, 2001, while New York Police Department buglers played "Taps" and the NYPD band played "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," often called the "Navy Hymn."

A short time later, the tugboats guided the *USS Intrepid* into her permanent berth at Pier 86.

The Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum officially opened to the public on Nov. 8. To learn more, please visit www.intrepidmuseum.org

ENGINEER UPDATE is an unofficial publication under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly by offset for the Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army. Letters to the editor are encouraged.

Deadline for submitting articles is the 15th of the month preceding publication. Subscriptions are available free of charge but must be requested in writing. Circulation: 35,000.

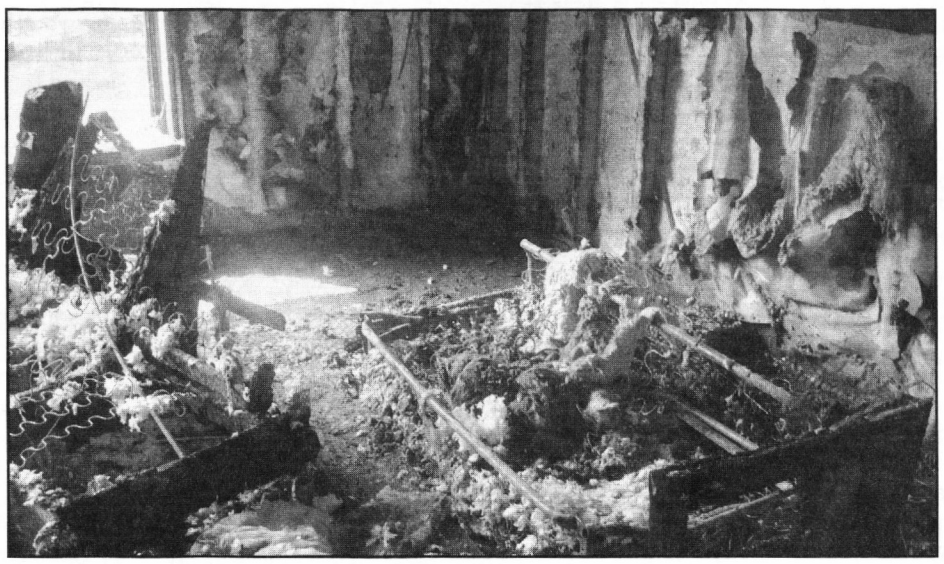
Address mail to: EDITOR, ENGINEER UPDATE, CEPA-C, Washington, D.C. 20314-1000. Telephone (202) 761-4285. Photographs are U.S. Army photos unless otherwise credited. Available on the Internet at http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/pubs/update.htm.

Commander, USACE.....Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp
Chief, Public Affairs.....Suzanne M. Fournier
Chief, Command Information.....Walter E. Pierce
Editor.....Bernard W. Tate

Fire escape

Good planning helps family survive devastating blaze

Article by Becky Proaps
Photo by Walter Zange
U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville



It took only seconds for the fire that started in Walter Zange's living room to sweep through the house. Fortunately, he had an escape plan that saved the lives of his wife and daughter.

It only takes a few seconds for a fire to destroy everything you own, but if you have an escape plan, your family will survive to tell the story. Just ask Walter Zange, a safety and occupational health specialist in the Environmental and Munitions Center of Expertise at Huntsville Center, who lost most of his family's possessions in a devastating house fire in September.

A short in an unused electrical outlet in the living room likely caused a spark and caught the couch, curtains, and wall on fire. Zange's wife Shirley and 3-year-old daughter Elizabeth were upstairs on the third floor when the smoke detector went off.

Fortunately, because Zange had an escape plan, they all got out unharmed.

"You need an escape plan and you have to practice it," Zange said. "I bought a fire ladder about six months ago and checked all the smoke detectors. Two of the three smoke detectors didn't work, so I replaced the batteries. If the smoke detector hadn't been working in the living room, by the time the smoke reached the bathroom where my wife was, it could have been too late."

Zange stressed that just having the ladder and smoke detectors aren't enough. It is important to have multiple plans for different situations, and to practice the emergency scenarios. The family had a plan that could apply if everyone was home, and they had a plan for the times Zange might not be home.

It happened that Zange was at work and his 6-year-old son Walter was at school when the fire occurred.

It is also important to know how everyone will react in a crisis.

"You have to find out if someone is going to freeze on the ladder," Zange said. "My wife is terrified of heights so I had to coach her into getting onto that ladder when we practiced. If someone can't do it, you have to figure out another way to get them out of the house. The children also have to know exactly what to do.

"One night after the children went to bed, I set off the smoke detector and we practiced," Zange said. "We actually went down the fire ladder, down the side of the house. My daughter did exactly what she was supposed to do when this happened. As soon as she got down she went straight to the mailbox and waited for her mom."

Zange reiterated several key points in developing an escape plan and preparing for such an event. He said finding the correct window for the fire ladder is important. It should be hung from a window above a flat, straight portion of the house because it is difficult to climb out over a garage.

If you have small children, keep a good rope with the ladder. You can tie the rope around their waists to lower them down if they are to small to climb, or as a safety precaution if they can climb down on their own.

Have a place to meet after each person gets out of the house. If everyone meets in a central location, accountability is much easier.

Also take inventory of personal belongings, furniture, and other valuable items in the house and keep it in a safe place. A CD or photographs in a safe deposit box, a fire-proof safe, or with relatives will make the inventory process with the insurance company much easier.

Unfortunately, Zange isn't the only Huntsville Center employee who has experienced such a tragedy. Brandon Hunt, contracting specialist in the Contracting Directorate, lost almost everything in an apartment fire a few months ago that started with a cigarette, cardboard boxes, and packing paper in his neighbor's apartment.

"I will never forget that day," Hunt said. "It was about 3 or 3:30 in the afternoon. I was in a rush to try to get something done when my cell phone kept ringing. I was hoping it could wait, but after three or four calls I decided I'd better call back. It was the apartment management office calling me saying there had been a fire and there was lots of damage.

"My heart sank," Hunt said. "Nothing in my apartment was burned, but most things were destroyed by water and smoke, which was everywhere. The roof above my apartment did burn in places, and there were many places where the ceiling caved in with fallen tile and insulation everywhere. I lost about 95 percent of my things. All that was salvageable were bicycles and some CDs, records, audio, and video tapes. I went in the apartment later to find a few things such as family heirlooms. Luckily I found most heirlooms, though not all."

Hunt strongly recommends that anyone living in an apartment purchase renter insurance.

"It's not that expensive, but replacing lost furniture is," Hunt said. "Also, if you smoke, please be vigilant about the possibility of starting a fire. It's a devastating experience and when Walter Zange came to thank me for the donation, I could sense the pain in his voice, because it was in mine.

"I'm slowly getting over the pain," Hunt said. "It's like you also lose a piece of your heart and soul when things you have purchased and treasured over the years are suddenly gone. The end of the fiscal year rush is helping take my mind off of it. But I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy."

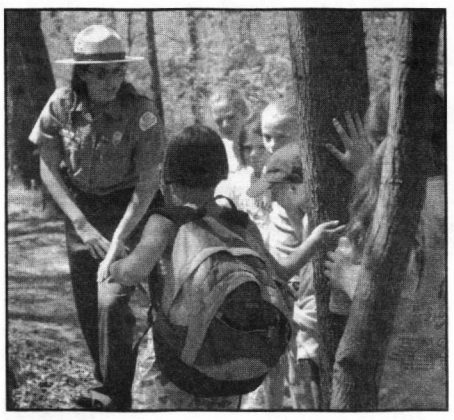
New campaign encourages kids and families to get outdoors

By Doug Garman
Headquarters

Encouraging children and their families to spend more time outdoors is the goal of a new national campaign launched Oct. 14 by the eight federal land and water management agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The new "Get Outdoors, It's Yours!" campaign will strive to raise awareness of the opportunities for America's youth to re-engage with nature on federal public lands and waterways. State and local land managers and nonprofit organizations from across the nation have also joined in supporting the campaign and to assist in spreading the word about the benefits of outdoor recreation, education, and stewardship.

The "Get Outdoors, It's Yours!" campaign launch included the signing of an interagency pledge of cooperation by USACE, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Geological Survey.



A Corp of Engineers park ranger leads a group of children on a nature hike. (USACE file photo)

The campaign launch also included airing a public service announcement in more than 10,000 movie theaters nationwide and the posting of a new Web site www.getoutdoorsitsyours.gov. This site links to agency Web sites and to information on destinations, programs, special events, and opportunities for education adventures.

As the nation's largest federal provider of outdoor and water-based recreation, the Corps' lakes, beaches, and other areas will play an important role in supporting this initiative by providing a wide array of opportunities to children and their families to experience nature firsthand.

USACE is no stranger to youth-in-nature programs. For the past 30 years, USACE and its many partners have conducted a number of youth-related programs, such as junior ranger programs, ranger camps, wildlife and nature walks and shows, outdoor water festivals, eco-meets, school field trips, and various stewardship and interpretive programs, to name a few.

The "Get Outdoors, It's Yours!" initiative will provide greater awareness for these programs and others, as well as encourage future environmental education opportunities at Corps lakes nationwide.

BUILDING STRONG℠

NWD has Afghanistan recruiting mission

Someday, our grandchildren will ask us, "Grandpa (or Grandma), what did you do in the great Global War on Terror?"

That's when we can look them in the eye and say with pride, "Well, I helped rebuild Afghanistan."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers asks for volunteers to assist its districts around the nation during all manner of disasters, the most visible being hurricane relief. But USACE also taps its people to help with America's missions overseas. One of these is the rebuilding the Afghan infrastructure through the construction and reconstruction of roads, irrigation systems, power generation and utilities, police and border patrol stations, medical facilities, schools, and other infrastructure.

'We need your talents...' "Northwestern Division is now the Corps' lead for coordinating volunteers from NWD, Pacific Ocean Division, and the centers and labs to fill deployment needs for this important work," said Brig. Gen. Bill Rapp, NWD commander. "I'm asking our professionals to step up for a tour of service in Afghanistan Engineer District. We need your talents and you'll make a positive difference in the world through your service."

AED currently has seven area offices, 22 resident offices, and six project offices, and will manage more than $2 billion in construction projects this year, which is twice as much as fiscal 2007. There are several hundred billets in which NWD employees are qualified to operate.

"The folks in Afghanistan Engineer District are doing great work building Afghan engineering and construction capacity, and helping establish a stable Afghan national government," said Col. Miroslav Kurka, deputy commander of NWD and former commander of AED. "This effort will greatly improve the lives of Afghan citizens and improve our nation's security."

Rewarding. "The year I spent in Afghanistan was by far the most rewarding experience in my career and the great adventure of my life," Kurka said. "I was part of history and I encourage anyone with skills and heart to volunteer for a tour with AED. I'm sure you'll find an assignment with AED challenging and rewarding."

Kurka's sentiments are echoed by Tracy Bell, who manages Portland District's emergency operations center.

"I encourage anyone who can deploy to Afghanistan for six-to-12 months to take advantage of the opportunity," said Bell, who served in-country from June to August. "Not only did I get the satisfaction of serving my country by supporting our reconstruction mission in Afghanistan, the Afghanistan citizens I met were grateful for the efforts that USACE is putting forth to not only assist them, but to educate them.

"The most difficult thing I did there was leave," Bell said. "I developed a strong friendship with many people. I felt secure the entire time I was in Afghanistan, and hope to deploy again soon."

Life changing. Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, chief of engineers, visited AED in late July to witness the progress being made thanks to Corps workers.

"This is a very important mission, and our part of it is to build facilities and capacity," Van Antwerp said. "Anyone who has deployed to Afghanistan or to Iraq will tell you that this changed their life. You get outside yourself and focus on working with a team that feels like a family, which is an incredible experience.

Growth. "AED is going to grow, and we're trying to get out in front with a workforce that can take on growth," Van Antwerp said. AED currently has 72 military and 229 civilian volunteers, and is projected to reach nearly 400 total by the end of 2008.

"We're at a place in time where we're writing the book," Van Antwerp continued. "We're using tried and true practices, but we're adapting those practices to a new environment that doesn't have time to wait. We need to do it now!

"Talk to an AED employee and ask, 'Why did you come, and why did you stay?' and you'll find out that it's something special," Van Antwerp said. "So come join them and be part of it."

Workers in NWD, POD, and the centers and labs are encouraged to join this historic undertaking and make a lasting contribution to getting Afghanistan back on its feet after years of hardship.

Persuasive. There are three persuasive reasons to step up:

First, the Corps has hundreds of jobs in a wide variety of specialties, so it is likely your specialty is represented.

Second, it's easy to apply. Just go to http://cpolwapp.belvoir.army.mil/coe-gwot/

Third, serving in Afghanistan Engineer District presents a unique opportunity for professional and personal challenge, adventure, and national service. Volunteers will experience a unique and different culture and serve overseas while being handsomely compensated for their efforts.

(Article written by Bruce Huffman of Afghanistan Engineer District and Bernard Tate of Headquarters.)

Why We Volunteer -- The Army Reservist

Engineer wanted to make a difference

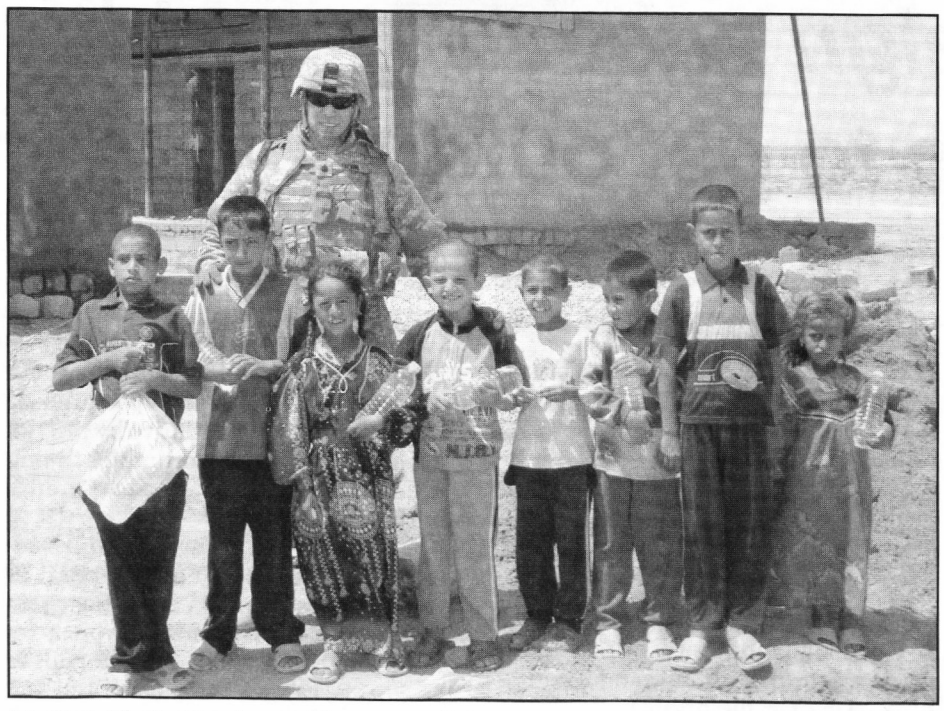
By LuAnne Fantasia
Gulf Region North District

Lt. Col. Mario Trevino wanted to make a difference, so he volunteered for a year in Iraq, arriving for duty last March.

Trevino is an Army reservist from Nokesville, Va. He is an engineer officer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Contingency Response Unit, a Reserve unit based at USACE Headquarters in Washington, D.C. In his civilian life, Trevino is the lodging program manager at the Navy Installations Command's Fleet and Family Readiness in Washington, D.C.

"The Corps is the most important part of the reconstruction efforts here in Iraq," Trevino said. "Since the time when U.S. troops arrived, rebuilding this country has required the expert and proven methods of construction that USACE offers, in addition to the expert and professional skills of more than 400 civilian and military volunteers who have answered the call of duty in our northern district."

Since Gulf Region Division's activation in 2004, the Kirkuk Area Office and its two resident offices have overseen project and construction management of 284 reconstruction projects in the Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah Provinces, totaling more than $446 million.



Lt. Col. Mario Trevino with some of the children at the dedication of a new school in Iraq. (Photo courtesy of Gulf Region Division)

"The predominant projects in our Kirkuk area have been 40 border forts along the Iraq/Iran border in neighboring Sulayminayah Province, 74 schools in both Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah provinces, and the recently completed Kirkuk-to-Bayji pipeline exclusion zone," said Trevino.

Begun in January 2007, the pipeline exclusion zone is 80 kilometers (about 50 miles) of razor wire, fence, and anti-vehicle ditches and berms that immediately reduced theft, attacks, and sabotage on the pipeline from the oil-rich fields of Kirkuk to the Bayji oil refinery. Today the project benefits the government of Iraq to the tune of $30 million daily.

On a more personal level, Trevino wanted to help make a difference for the Iraqi people, and he feels that he has. "I see that our efforts in Iraq have provided better facilities, new roads, and new water systems," Trevino said. "Those projects have given many Iraqi people a better life. I see joy in the children when we complete their new schools. They'll be the next generation for this country and I believe education is the key to their future."

Trevino said it has been his pleasure to meet and work with the local elders of many of the smaller villages, provincial governors and director generals in Kirkuk and Sulayminayah, and the Iraqi military leaders.

"The commanding general of the Iraqi military forces in the Sulayminayah Province recently asked our Gulf Region Division commanding general to help them develop a plan for an Iraqi equivalent of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," Trevino said. "I hope I can help complete a written plan for that before I leave in January."

"It has taken a long time for the coalition forces to build capacity within the Iraqi government and military," Trevino said. "We're still working at it, but we're getting closer than ever."

Why We Volunteer -- The Civilian

'It's great to be part of this effort.'

By John Connor
Gulf Region South District

"People back home ask why do we do it," said Tonya Myrick, a project manager in Iraq with Gulf Region Division. "Why do we give up our comfortable lives to come to a place where the norm is a seven-day work week, 12 hours a day most days?"

Why indeed! As Myrick noted, the temperature can soar to 130 degrees or more in the summer in southern Iraq where she works, feeling "like you're walking with a hair dryer pointed at you," and vicious dust storms can roar out of the desert without warning.

That's just the weather. There have been innumerable other challenges during her 22 months in Iraq including mortar and rocket attacks, which are much rarer these days than during her first deployment.

"Why do we do it?" asked Myrick, who is nearing the end of her second Iraq tour. "I think for me the answer would be to give the Iraqis a chance for things we take for granted — clean drinking water, electricity, drivable roads, and even a good education. I find it rewarding to see a project go from start to completion in only a few months.

"Don't get me wrong," Myrick added. "It takes a certain kind of personality to give up everything to come over here and endure these environmental and working conditions. But if you possess that personality, the rewards can be tremendous."

Back home Myrick works for Vicksburg District in the Regulatory Branch. She spent both of her Iraq tours with Gulf Region South (GRS) District, which provides reconstruction services in the nine southern provinces of Iraq. She said there is "a huge difference between my tours, both in job position and living conditions."

During her first tour in 2005, Myrick worked as a project engineer at Camp Echo in Qadisiyah Province with a staff of seven people. They had a small office on what is mainly a Polish army base. "We had nothing to start with — no desks, no chairs, no paper, no ink pens," she recalled. "Our hooches were the bare necessities, and the nearest bathroom and shower were a walk across the camp.

Tonya Myrick, a project manager in Gulf Region South District, is nearing the end of her second tour in Iraq. (Photo courtesy of Gulf Region Division)

"At Camp Echo, we were the boots on the ground," Myrick continued. "Our job was to start construction on projects once they were awarded at headquarters and see them through to completion."

For her second tour, which will total 17 months later this fall, Myrick works at GRS headquarters in Tallil on a former Iraqi airbase near Nasiriyah. She is a project manager for the Transportation and Communication Sector.

"I oversee all road, bridge, and telecommunication construction projects in Gulf Region South," she said. "We work directly with the Iraq officials, provincial reconstruction team engineers, military brigades, and field offices to develop scopes of work and award projects needed by the Iraqi people. Project managers are involved with the projects from the design phase until the project is completed. Being able to oversee a project from an idea to its actual construction is truly a great feeling."

Myrick said the living conditions on the GRS compound in Tallil "are as good as they get in Iraq. I now have a queen-sized bed, refrigerator, TV, microwave, and, most important, a private bathroom."

Working on the vocational training (votech) center rehabilitation program has been particularly rewarding for Myrick. She said there were several votech centers in the GRS area that were barely functioning due to years of neglect by the Saddam Hussein regime.

Rehabbing the centers became a focus of the U.S. Army's 360th Civil Affairs Brigade. Myrick said the basic idea is that educating Iraqis in construction trades would help them get jobs and support their families without turning to militias for financial aid.

"After rehabilitation, the centers went from offering one or two classes per semester helping 30 or 40 students to a curriculum with 20 or more classes involving more than 1,000 students," Myrick said. "Upon graduation, these students are using their new skills to get steady employment."

Myrick is also acting program lead for GRS' Civil Works and Energy Sector with a total program value of $458 million.

"So why do we do it," Myrick repeated. "We're making a difference here and it's great to be part of this effort."

Why We Volunteer -- The Former Marine

'I continue to hear the call to serve.'

By Patrick Swan
Northwestern Division

"Once a Marine, always a Marine," they say. While most former Marines never wear a uniform again, Tracy Bell did. Bell, who retired from the U.S. Marine Corps in 2002 after a 25-year career, volunteered for service in Afghanistan Engineer District.

At home, Bell manages Portland District's emergency operations center. In AED, she worked in the training and operations section from June to August. She helped write the standard operating procedure for the new civilian security contract.

Service was Bell's main motivation for volunteering for duty in Afghanistan.

"As a retired Marine, I continue to hear the call to serve our country," Bell said. "I also volunteered so that perhaps others serving on longer deployments would have an opportunity to take leave or an R&R that otherwise would leave a vacancy."

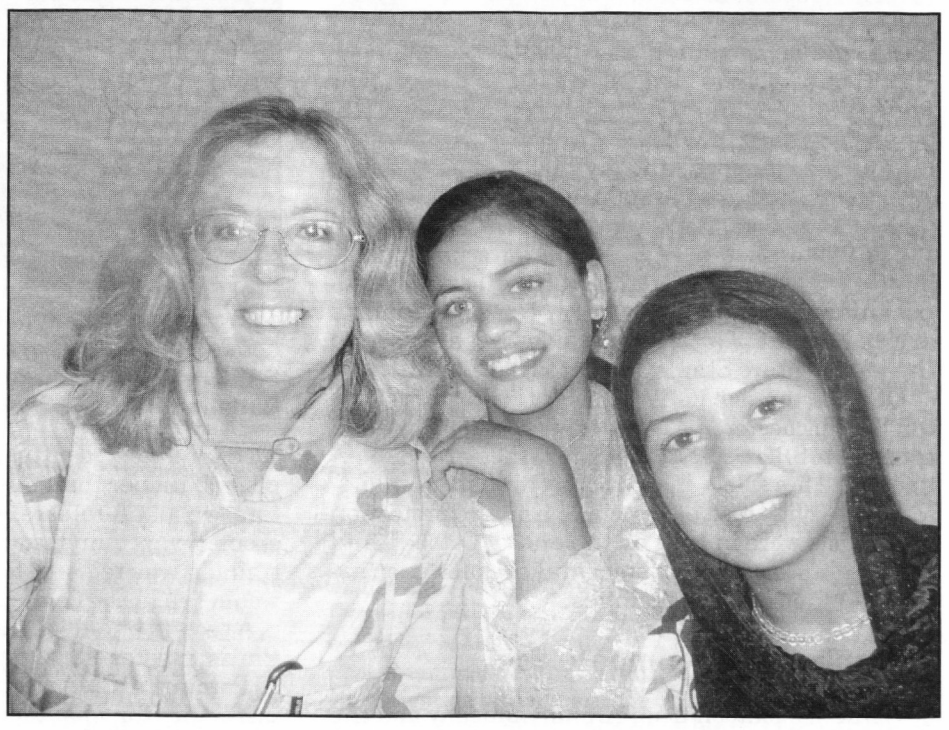
But there are other good reasons for deploying halfway around the world.

"There are financial incentives, such as 35 percent danger pay, 35 percent post differential pay, overtime, and so on," Bell said. "But there are many intangibles as well, such as patriotism, and the pride of belonging to a unique, skilled group of professionals, plus opportunities to improve your professional development.

"Not only did I get the satisfaction of serving my country by supporting our reconstruction mission in Afghanistan, the Afghans I met were grateful for the effort that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is putting forth to not only assist them, but to educate them," Bell said. "I believe the smartest thing that we're doing in Afghanistan is we are *not* rebuilding the country for them. We're mentoring and showing the citizens *how* to rebuild their country."

For those considering deployment,

Continued on page eight



Tracy Bell with two Afghan friends. (Photo courtesy of Tracy Bell)

HR corner

Viva Technology promotes science, engineering for Hispanic students

By Richard Gallegos and Fidel Rodriguez

The districts in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are often actively involved in numerous activities at local high schools to stimulate student interest and awareness in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Our nation is fast approaching a potential crisis in our ability to meet engineering and environmental challenges, so the need for a more comprehensive, structured approach to the promotion of STEM awareness among American youth is compelling.

USACE has a vital role to play in meeting this challenge. Working cooperatively with the private sector; other federal, state and local agencies; and universities, USACE has recently embarked upon a more structured and corporate approach toward promotion of STEM awareness through active involvement in the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corporation's (HENAAC) Viva Technology program.

Manual Arts High School near Los Angeles District had the pilot program for Viva Technology. The program engages inner city and rural middle and high school students, their parents, and teachers in the application of technology to stimulate interest, awareness, and improve academic achievement in STEM, which helps students succeed in college and enter STEM careers.

Understanding the importance of parent and teacher support, Viva Technology incorporates separate parent and teacher orientation modules as part of its program in both English and Spanish. The parent orientation explains what their children will learn from participating in the program; encourages an interest in STEM to positively impact their children's future; demonstrates how to successfully apply, navigate, and pay for a college education; and shows the potential career opportunities in the STEM fields.

The teacher orientation acquaints the targeted school's professional teaching staff with the goals and mission of Viva Technology through a review of the program's hands-on STEM competitions, activities, and speakers. Teachers also receive multi-media STEM teaching materials, designed by the Futures Channel, for use in their classrooms.

In the actual Viva Technology student event, selected students participate in hands-on team competitive activities that require them to design, build, and often operate physical models. Engineering students from local colleges and universities serve as student team coaches and mentors. Engineering professionals from sponsoring agencies also participate in the Viva event as speakers, presenters, and role models.

USACE has served as a formal Viva Technology partner in five separate Vivas, including our groundbreaking Viva Technology event at Roosevelt High School in East Los Angeles (Los Angeles District) in January 2005. Other USACE Viva Technology events include those held at the John F. Kennedy Magnet School in New York City (New York District), Englewood High School in Jacksonville, Fla. (Jacksonville District), and the 2004 HENAAC Conference Viva event in Pasadena, Calif. (South Pacific Division).

The Corps' most recent Viva Technology event, co-sponsored by Fort Worth District, was held Sept. 25 at the Highland High School in San Antonio. Eighty-five 9th grade Highland and Jefferson high school students were tasked with building a model nuts-and-bolts bridge under limited time constraints. During the competitive exercise, a real world situation was introduced requiring the execution of a design modification by the student teams.

The second exercise, "Dream Challenge," involved building a futuristic team product using common building materials from local home improvement stores (electrical light switch, PVC pipe, a paint pan, and so on). Each team had to present and sell its project before the assembled group, with Corps representatives serving as judges.

Viva Technology has expanded its program nationwide, and has held STEM awareness activities in more than 13 states, touching the lives of more than 35,000 inner city and rural middle and high school youth.

Its sponsors have included Shell Oil, Chevron, IBM, Motorola, Lucent Technologies, NASA, the Department of Defense, Raytheon, the CIA, British Petroleum, the Bureau of Reclamation, and USACE.

The Corps' next Viva Technology event will be at The Rice School in Houston, co-sponsored by Galveston District. Contact Fidel Rodriguez or Richard Gallegos if you want to implement a Viva Technology project in your district.

(Richard Gallegos is a member of human resources in South Pacific Division. Fidel Rodriguez is chief of Facilities Division at Headquarters, and HENAAC project delivery team program manager.)

Task Force Safe

Continued from page one

on theater-required warrior tasks and arrived at Camp Victory, part of the Victory Base Complex in Baghdad, on Sept. 19, one day ahead of schedule.

Two senior NCOs from Bravo Company at Fort Bragg, N.C., Master Sgt. Paul Vedros and Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Shetland, augmented TF SAFE to form its operations cell.

Electricians from industry and from USACE districts and divisions followed the 249th Engineer Battalion's Soldiers. Under a refined deployment plan, all inspectors first travel to the USACE Deployment Center in Winchester, Va., where they are uniformed, equipped, and given refresher training on bonding and grounding before deploying to the Victory Base Complex.

The 249th Soldiers and USACE government civilians are providing assistance until 70 master electricians and more than 30 fire protection specialists arrived as part of a task order contract awarded to the joint venture Stanley Baker Hill LLC (SBH).

USACE, through its Transatlantic Programs Center in Winchester, Va., awarded the $59.5 million contract to SBH Sept. 12 to support theater-wide electrical and fire safety inspections throughout Iraq.

These contracted electricians and fire protection specialists were in Iraq by the end of October, and will perform electrical system and fire protection assessments on existing facilities.

Organizational competence

While the platoon from Alpha Company and the initial USACE electricians were deploying to theater,

Sgt. Shane Basler (left) and Sgt. Timothy Florentino determine if a panel box is in compliance with applicable building and safety codes. This is part of their training for Task Force SAFE. (Photo courtesy of the 249th Engineer Battalion)

TF SAFE wasted no time in preparing to begin compliance inspections. Although the inbound inspectors were up-to-date with current bonding and grounding requirements, additional theater-specific training was required to prepare them for what they would see in the field.

A second one-week training course taught by Jim Childs, master electrician and certified inspector, and Al Patchin, DCMA electrical engineer, prepared the inspectors for what they would soon encounter. On Sept. 25, TF SAFE graduated its first class of 14 inspectors from the 249th Engineer Battalion.

The 14 Soldiers were divided into two groups to better address the two categories of TF SAFE inspections. Ten Soldiers would respond to facilities under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) contract to ensure contractor compliance with the NEC. Four would respond to facilities not under LOGCAP contract to oversee the repair of non-compliant electrical systems. CW3 Francis Belliard, the 249th's liaison officer, oversaw command and control, with assistance by Vedros and Shetland.

Using a 21-point inspection checklist, the NCOs from the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) inspected a large group of containerized housing units on Victory Base. They found that most of the units were not properly bonded -- they were missing a bonding jumper wire common to most compliant distribution panels.

Although this fault requires a 10-minute fix, it may be a common problem in the thousands of containerized housing units in theater.

Early inspection results from non-LOGCAP contingency operating locations suggested a more serious problem. Some electrical work at these small strategic bases was not in compliance with *any* electrical inspection code.

The mission of the 249th prime power Soldiers and the other USACE electrical inspectors and fire protection specialists is to identify the problems so that they can be corrected by the contractor responsible for the facility.

(Lt. Col. Paul Olsen is the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) commander. Bernard Tate of Headquarters contributed to this article.)

Around the Corps

General officer news

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko was promoted to his present rank on Oct. 9. Dorko, previous commander of Gulf Region Division, will be the deputy commanding general for military and international operations at Headquarters.

Presidential Rank Awards

Each year, the president recognizes a small group of career senior executives and senior career employees with the Presidential Rank Award. Recipients are leaders, professionals, and scientists who achieve results and demonstrate strength, integrity, industry, and commitment to excellence in public service.

Six USACE senior executives have received the 2008 Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Senior Executives. They are:

- Lester Dixon, director of Division Programs at South Atlantic Division
- Karen Durham-Aguilera, director of Task Force Hope
- Dr. Jeffrey Holland, deputy director of the Engineer Research and Development Center
- Wesley Miller, director of Resource Management, Headquarters
- Patricia Rivers, chief of Military Programs Program Integration Division, Headquarters
- Michael White, director of Division Programs at Great Lakes and Ohio River Division

Big catfish

On Oct. 5, Randy Fell, a deckhand on the motor vessel *Mississippi* and an avid fisherman, caught a 64-pound catfish.

The *MV Mississippi* was moored to load barges of concrete mattresses just south of the Mississippi River Bridge near Memphis, Tenn. Fell put out his Shakespeare rod and reel with a 50-pound-test line and a No.1 Eagle Claw hook. Fell discovered he had hooked a fish after the crew completed a practice fire drill. It took Fell and five crew mates to haul in the huge catfish.

It was the biggest fish Fell ever caught. "It will be cut into steaks and frozen," he said.

Correction

In the October *Engineer Update*, the new surgical hospital in Maysan Province is about 675,000 square feet. (A square meter is 10.76 square feet.)

Kisuk Cheung passes away

Kisuk "Charlie" Cheung, former chief of engineering at USACE Headquarters, died Oct. 2 in Honolulu following an extended illness.

Cheung, 79, first joined USACE in 1958 in Far East District. He worked in Korea 14 years, Alaska one year, and Honolulu for 21 years before going to Headquarters. He became a member of the Senior Executive Service in 1979 and retired from federal service in 1998 after 40 years of service with USACE.

Funeral services were held on Oct. 15 at the Nuuanu Memorial Park and Mortuary in Honolulu.

Foreign military sales

Construction is scheduled to begin at the end of this year on the first foreign military sale (FMS) project in Iraq. It will build new piers and a seawall at Umm Qasr in Al Basrah Province.

Leaders from Gulf Region Division, the Iraq navy, Iraq Ministry of Defense, contractors, and support staff met Oct. 16 to discuss the design for the first FMS project for USACE in Iraq. Foreign military sales is a program that allows the host country to pay the U.S. government for construction and supplies related to its military.

Representatives for the contractor, CCI Inc/PolyEarth Construction, International, provided a briefing on the design for the piers and seawall at Umm Qasr. The team agreed to meet again to make certain all parties are aware of the process and to ensure construction will meet the delivery of new Iraqi navy ships scheduled for late 2009.

Jefferson Hall

On Sept. 24, officials at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point cut the ribbon to open the new Thomas Jefferson Library and Learning Center. It is the first new academic building at the USMA in 36 years. The academy's existing library was built in 1964 and has undergone many renovations. The existing library also only had four meeting rooms.

After 10 years of planning, cadets began using the $61 million facility at the start of the 2008 academic year. It is north of the existing library at the center of the Cadet Academic Zone. The building's site in the academy's historic district required architects to tailor its exterior to match the granite facing of the surrounding structures.

The new facility will integrate library and learning center functions such as collections, user services, administration, collection development, technical services, staff support, public services, and support services. There are 10 meeting rooms, and wireless access to allow cadets to log onto the library's network with a laptop.

The old library will still be used. A renovation will convert the first floor and basement into an archive and special collections area. The rest of the building will be incorporated into Bartlet Hall next door, West Point's science and physics department.

Border Patrol station

New England District officials and their congressional and Border Patrol partners cut the ribbon on the new 50-agent Van Buren Border Patrol Station in Van Buren, Maine, Sept. 25.

The Architect-Engineer Resource Center in Fort Worth District initially requested NED to provide a new 25-agent Border Patrol station to replace the one in Van Buren. Changes during design resulted in the 50-agent station.

Building the station was not easy. The contractors had to contend with severe weather conditions that included temperatures 20 degrees below zero, and 200 inches of snow accumulation that year.

Park rangers receive bravery awards

Article by Bruce Hill
Photos by Jim Jaffe
Albuquerque District

Park rangers Alfred Chavez (left) and Eric Garner receive the Meritorious Civilian Service Award for Bravery from Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, chief of engineers, as their families watch.

Shooting victim Alfred Chavez and his lifesaving friend Eric Garner, both park rangers in Albuquerque District, received top awards for bravery Oct. 11 from Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, chief of engineers, during a ceremony in Albuquerque District.

"I have the distinct honor and privilege of awarding two of our park rangers the Meritorious Civilian Service Award for Bravery," Van Antwerp said. "This is one of the most satisfying moments of my career."

Chavez returned to work in August, eight months after suffering gunshot wounds while investigating a pump house intrusion at Abiquiu Dam in December 2007.

"It feels good to be able to go back to work and see if I can handle it," Chavez said. "I looked forward to returning to my friends at the office because they're like a second family to me."

Chavez was performing his routine duties near one of the dock areas at the lake when he noticed that someone had broken into one of the secured pump houses. As he investigated the intrusion, he encountered two men exiting a pump house. When he asked why they were there, one pulled a revolver from his waistband and fired two shots at Chavez.

Chavez felt the first round pass near his head, but the second round struck him just above the right knee. He stumbled to the ground and lay motionless while his attackers approached. Apparently assuming he was dead, the attackers fled the scene in a previously stolen vehicle.

Chavez then phoned for help and, with only minimal details received from the call, Garner sprang to action. Placing himself in an unknown degree of danger, Garner provided valuable lifesaving support to his friend and colleague, all while not knowing if or where the assailants lurked.

Chavez was airlifted to the University of New Mexico Hospital where he underwent surgery.

"These two rangers are the best examples of thinking less of themselves and more about others, and serve as models to all of us about the value of selfless service," Van Antwerp said. "They show the true character of the men and woman of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and we're proud to serve alongside of them."

Many people attended the ceremony, including the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works John Paul Woodley, Jr., commanders of South Pacific Division and Albuquerque District, many Albuquerque District and project employees, and the families of both Chavez and Garner.

A combined reward from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Corps Watch still stands at $20,000 for the capture of the two assailants, who remain at large.

Courthouses bring rule of law to Iraq

Article by Kendal Smith and Polli Keller
Photo by Kendal Smith
Gulf Region Division

"Iraq was the first country to introduce laws to the world, and now it is important to bring the rule of law back to Iraq," said Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on Sept. 10 during the opening ceremony of the Rusafa Justice Palace in Baghdad.

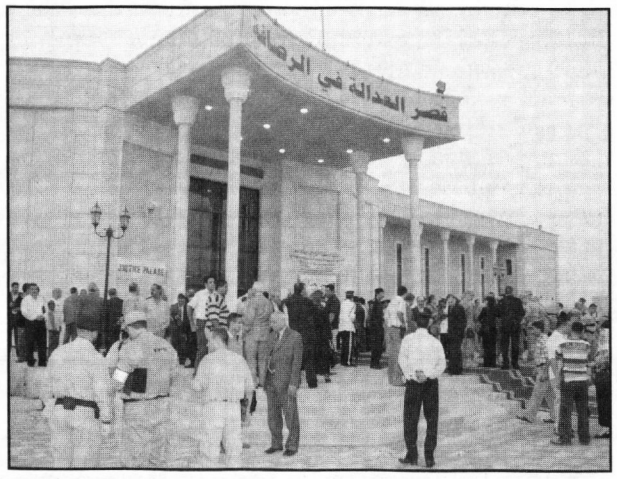
Justice and law are advancing throughout Iraq with the construction of courthouses and other judicial facilities. Two were dedicated in September.

Rusafa Justice Palace

"This is rightly called the Palace of Justice," said U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker during the Rusafa Justice Palace ceremony. "It was built by Iraqis for Iraqis. But as great as this building is, what it will be used for is even greater. In this palace the common man will receive justice."

The $11.3 million facility will serve about 1.2 million people in Rusafa Qada and adjacent areas east of the Tigris River. Local Iraqi construction companies built the project, with quality assurance by Gulf Region Central (GRC) District's Loyalty Resident Office.

The compound consists of a courthouse, a witness security facility, and 16 additional structures. Courtrooms, offices, and conference rooms for the High Judicial Council of Iraq are located in the two-story, 10,200-square-meter (109,140-square-foot) courthouse. Secure, apartment-style living quarters for about 150 witnesses, and offices for the judges and other legal advisers are located in the 4,000-square-meter (42,800-square-foot) witness security facility.



A crowd gathers for the opening ceremony at the Rustafa Justice Palace.

The two buildings are joined by an enclosed corridor that allows witnesses and court officials to move safely between the facilities. This structure is based on a generic courthouse design that serves as the model for all new courthouse construction in Iraq.

The compound also includes closed-circuit television, security cameras, and an outer force-protection wall with an entry control point and secure parking. Additional security measures include walk-thru metal detectors, ion detectors, and X-ray machines.

Anbar Judicial Complex

Rusafa is one major GRC judicial project. The other is phase one of the $21.5 million Anbar Judicial Compex in Ramadi, completed in October.

In the past, no Iraqi would have mistaken the Hurricane Point section of the Eurphrates River as a stronghold of justice. It was the site of palaces owned by Saddam Hussein and his sons, Uday and Qusay.

But times have changed.

The $21.5 million renovation and new construction at the Anbar Judicial Complex in the provincial capital of Ramadi is underway, and courtrooms and judges' chambers will be located in the palaces.

"Construction of the Anbar Judicial Complex will create a point of strength for security and law in Iraq," said Cmdr. Edward Danek, officer in charge of GRC's Ramadi resident office. "It's a profound moment to contemplate the changes in this province in the past year that make this construction possible. I'm grateful that we're a small part of this historic event."

The phase 1 renovation will transform two former palaces into individual 1,000-square-meter (10,700-square-foot) courthouses. Each one will contain a central courtroom, investigation offices, bathrooms, and judges' chambers. A smaller 500-square-meter (5,350-square-foot) courthouse will be a juvenile courtroom.

The renovation includes a pre-trial detention building, two 440-square-meter (4,708-square-foot) office buildings, and a cafeteria.

Phase 2, to be completed by the end of next June, is new construction. Housing for the justices and barracks for security guards will enable them to live in a secure environment. Also in this phase are plans for student billeting and classrooms to incorporate training for court reporting and paralegal workers. Training units for the guards and housing for the detainees will provide additional support structures.

Life support systems to be built include an electrical generator facility, a water treatment plant, a sewage treatment plant, plus facilities for refrigeration, laundry, a supply warehouse, and equipment storage.

Roads, bridges inspected in Tanzania

By Michael Fletcher
Omaha District

Four members of Omaha District traveled to Tanzania in June to inspect existing roads and bridges for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The team members were Danny Klima, civil engineer, Mark Huckle, civil engineer, Lyle Peterson, structural engineer, and Luke Wallace, biologist.

MCC is a federal agency that provides developmental assistance to qualifying countries that rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom. MCC has three interagency agreements with the Corps, which provides expertise in environmental, engineering, and other related services.

President George Bush and Tanzania President Jakaya Kikwete signed a five-year, $698 million MCC compact last February for the United Republic of Tanzania. The grant is intended for projects that will reduce poverty, stimulate economic growth, and increase household incomes through investments in transportation, energy, and water.

Technical services for supporting MCC with assessment of road designs for the transport sector project of the MCC compact with Tanzania were initiated through Transatlantic Programs Center (TAC) in Winchester, Va. To fulfill this tasking, TAC engaged Omaha District as the primary member of the project delivery team for providing expertise to perform the technical details of the work for MCC Tanzania.

The projects included upgrading more than 200 miles of dirt roads to Tanzania Trunk Road standards. During the rainy season from December to April, the roads are impassible. During the dry season, trucks and buses create large clouds of dust.

The Omaha District team, along with representatives from MCC and the Tanzanian Road Agency, flew from Dar es Salaam to the city of Songea in southwestern Tanzania. The team traveled for seven days in 4x4 Land Cruisers inspecting roads and bridges, making environmental assessments, and meeting with regional government officials.

"The roads we traveled were mostly unimproved dirt with a few short sections of paved two-lane road through towns," Klima said. "The roads are used as much for pedestrian traffic as for commercial trucks and small buses. Few people owned cars and many didn't even have a bicycle. The bicycles we did see were for carrying loads, often a huge load of firewood."

Kikwete has acknowledged that Tanzania has an inadequate transportation network to meet the needs of the country's widely dispersed population and that roads are essential for commerce and trade.

An improved road system would connect communities with schools and health clinics, and reduce transport costs of local farmers.

"In addition to reviewing the construction plans, we also conducted a social impact assessment," Wallace said. "I was there to review the impact to wetlands, vegetation, fish, wildlife, and the impact of large camps for road workers."

The MCC projects will upgrade three trunk roads. It is estimated that the compact will benefit about 4.8 million Tanzanians, either directly or indirectly.

After returning, the Omaha members prepared a due diligence report certifying that design plans were sufficient for the type of road construction and terrain.

Former Marine

Continued from page five

Bell says living conditions are good.

"The weather varies depending on where you are," she said. "In Kabul, where AED headquarters is located, you will experience four seasons due to it being 5,000 feet above sea level. It's warmer in the south around Kandahar and to the west near Kunduz.

"Those coming from a military background probably won't see much difference from what we had on any military base," she added. "The living conditions at Qalaa House (AED Headquarters) are great, and most USACE project sites offer one-person rooms for billeting. We had three hot meals a day, and fitness centers or equipment are available as well."

Bell also felt safe in Afghanistan.

"I felt secure the entire time," she said. "From the moment we left the airport in Kabul we had military protection. On the compound we also had local nationals who guard the compound and provide interpretative services. For employees who go to construction sites, they had contract security personnel and interpreters who traveled with them.

"Civilian personnel aren't authorized to be armed, so there would never be an instance where we would engage in combat," Bell said. "In AED, we're the clients and the Soldiers and local security provide protection. And although we're uniform, we are *not* treated as Soldiers. Mutual respect is shown to military, civilian employees, and contractors.

"I would encourage anyone who can to deploy to Afghanistan for six to 12 months to take advantage of the opportunity," Bell said. "Don't limit yourself to the published taskers, either. Talk to other deployees who have returned or are currently serving. There are a lot of opportunities — let AED know what you can do for them. I developed a strong friendship with many people and hope to deploy again soon. The most difficult thing I did in Afghanistan was leave."