US Army Corps of Engineers ®

TOWER TIMES

Rock Island District's News Magazine

August 2014

Summer Flooding Means Major River Clean Up

US Army Corps of Engineers ®
Rock Island District

TOWER TIMES

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August 2014

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Tower Times
Rock Island District, Clock Tower Building
P.O. Box 2004
Rock Island, IL 61204-2004
E-mail: cemvr-cc@usace.army.mil
Phone: (309) 794-4200

Commander: Col. Mark J. Deschenes
Deputy Commander: Lt. Col. Todd S. Reed
Chief, Corporate Communications: Ron Fournier
Editor: Samantha Heilig

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A message from....

Colonel Mark Deschenes, District Commander

District Once Again Proves Worth during recent flooding

After a year in which the Rock Island District responded to record flooding throughout our area of responsibility, 2014 was shaping up to be relatively quiet from a high water perspective. But then the month of June arrived and with it came significant rains, once again testing our flood response. And once again I was impressed with our team's efforts.

The rain started the last two weeks of June and continued into the first week of July. Most of Iowa and the northern half of Illinois experienced heavy rains during that time period. The Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, as well as other rivers within Iowa reached flood stage or greater. Record flooding was recorded at Tama and Marshalltown Iowa on the Iowa River. It wasn't long before the Operations Division was closing locks due to the high water. In a short amount of time all but one of our 12 locks and dams on the Mississippi River were closed to navigation.

The Rock Island District deployed flood teams to support communities and levee districts in the Iowa/Cedar River Basin, Mississippi River Basin and Illinois River Basin. An emergency temporary levee construction was executed at the agricultural non federal Lower Pleasant Valley Levee on the Sangamon River in Illinois. The privately constructed agricultural Pubic Law 84-99 active levee system titled Louisa County Levee District No.11 located along the Iowa River briefly overtopped on July 3 at several locations with no immediate apparent damages.

Our team was prepared to help the affected communities with supplies and engineering expertise. A total of 32 Flood Area Engineers were deployed to provide technical assistance throughout the District. Our emergency operations provided commodities to include 79,000 sandbags, 990 linear feet of HESCO barriers, 40 rolls of poly and 38 flood pumps.

I got my first real look at our flood fighting capability in spring 2013 during the record flooding on the Illinois River. As was the case then, I was very proud of how seamlessly the District carried out the mission in response to this year's flooding. From the boots-on-the-ground engineers, to the water control experts tracking critical data, to operations crews tending to the infrastructure; watching you all carry out emergency operations is extraordinary.

As I write this, all of our locks and dams have reopened for navigation, once again providing that essential vein of economic commerce. Although the flood waters are receding, we still have some work to do as four of the District's 2013 rehabilitation projects may have experienced additional damages due to the recent flooding. The District is preparing to perform those damage assessments.

Possibly lost in the relative chaos of emergency operations is the fact that we still have many other business lines that can't take a break in the wake of flooding. This year in particular it has become even more imperative that we are firing on all cylinders as we carry out the District's myriad missions.

We are not very far removed from the sequestration and furloughs that challenged our organization just last year. A few months ago we got very encouraging funding news in the form of the Omnibus Appropriation that included more than $5 billion for the Corps. The work plan, which followed shortly after the Omnibus Appropriation, slated more than $200 million for projects within the Rock Island District. Much of this funding influx is for infrastructure improvement but no one knows if this trend will continue as we move into the future.

The unknown future is why we must continue to execute as we have been these past few months. We must carry on with our reputation of being excellent stewards of the taxpayer's money.

More than anything, I have been most impressed with the entire District's ability to adapt to the emergency operations posture and still endeavor to execute an ever increasing workload brought on by the Omnibus Appropriation. Those at the higher headquarters have great confidence in the Rock Island District and that is no surprise to me. Thank you for building that confidence even while responding to this flood emergency. Your efforts continue to inspire me. Thank you for all you do and CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG.

Corps Day 2014

Employees Recognized for Great Work

The Employee of the Year Award was established to recognize exceptional employee contributions during the preceding calendar year. Each year the Incentive Awards Committee puts out a call for nominations, which are accepted in eight categories. Once submissions are reviewed by the committee they are ranked and rated. The numbers are tabulated and winners are chosen based on highest ranking. Winning nominations are then sent to the commander for approval. This award is the highest Rock Island District civilian award for federal employees supporting the Rock Island District.

Congratulations to the 2014 Employees of the Year!

Jennifer Mack
PROFESSIONAL

Mary A. Bartemeyer
TECHNICAL /ADMINISTRATIVE

Jeffry Brondyke
TRADES / CRAFTS

Sherri Richardson-duey
SUPERVISOR / MANAGER

John Burant
ENGINEER OF THE YEAR

Jeff McCrery
COMMUNITY SERVICE

Retirees from the Rock Island District gathered for a social hour at the Clock Tower building before Corps Day festivities began. *Photo by Samantha Heilig*

District employees and their families enjoyed a day of fun and food during the annual Corps Day picnic June 12.
Photos by Samantha Heilig

Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees

Col. Deschenes awards Arthur J. Klingerman the Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees award for providing 37 years of leadership in both engineering and planning for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District and Headquarters.
Photo by Samantha Heilig

Col. Deschenes awards George J. Mech the Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees award for providing 33 years of engineering expertise and leadership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, Geotechnical Branch.
Photo by Samantha Heilig

Crews Clean Up Mess on the Mighty Mississippi

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

The Mississippi and its tributaries, like the Des Moines and Iowa Rivers, are just starting to recover from high water. During flooding events, large amounts of debris will be flushed out of the river system and can be seen floating downstream from almost anywhere along the banks. When people talk about cleaning up after a Mississippi River flood, they usually talk of lots of mud, some piles of sand and a few stray logs here and there but employees from locks on the lower half of the District have a different idea of river clean up after a flood.

The lock and dam system, which was built to aid navigation on the Upper Mississippi River, wasn't designed to control flooding. During high water the gates at each dam are opened wide to allow water and debris to move though the system as efficiently as possible. This concept works for allowing large trees and other items to move past the gates on the dam but doesn't help to prevent a buildup behind the gates of the lock.

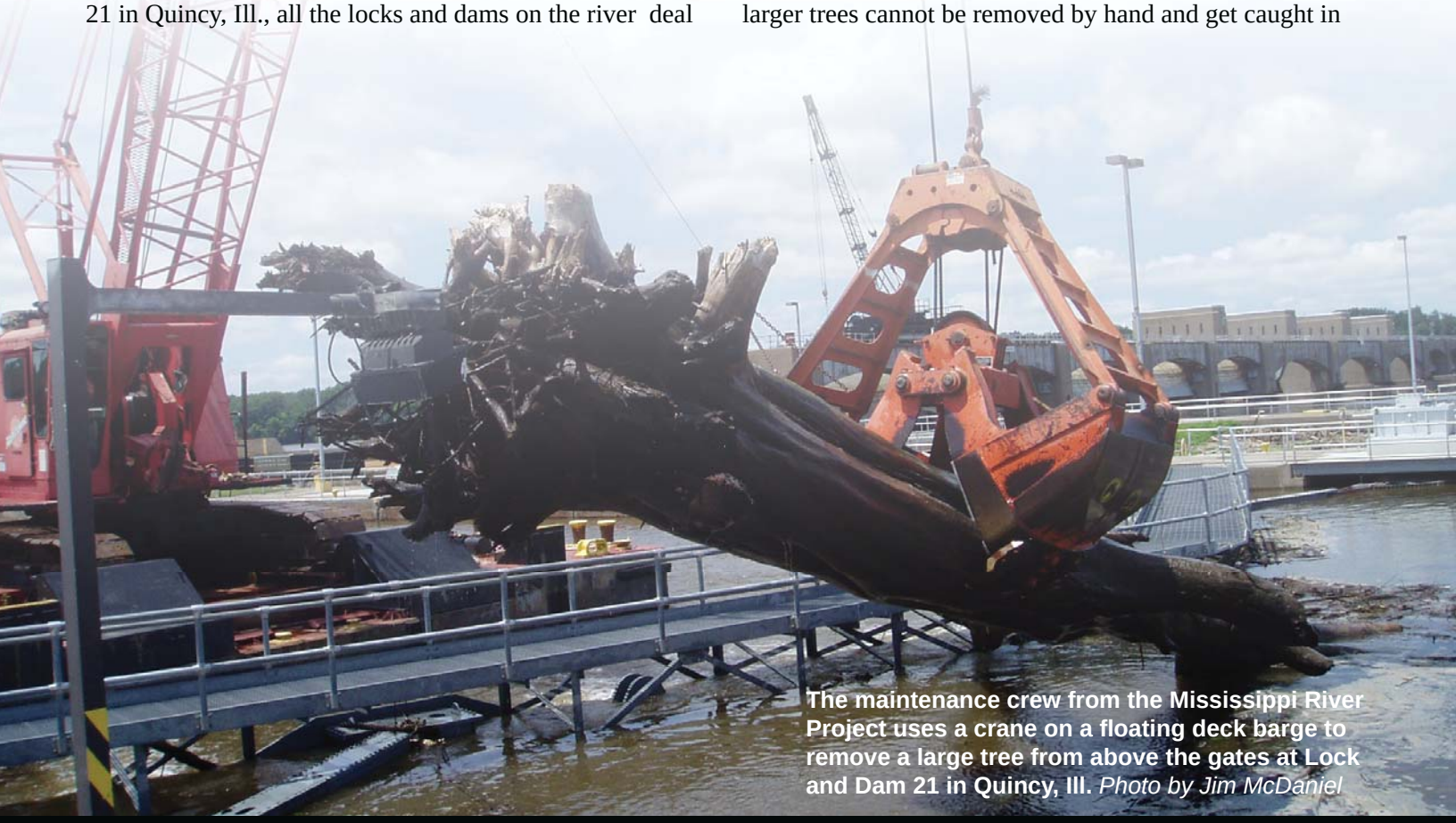
According to Jim McDaniel, Lockmaster, Lock and Dam 21 in Quincy, Ill., all the locks and dams on the river deal with debris but Lock 20, 21 and 22 below Keokuk, Iowa, get the worst build-up of all the facilities in the District. A primary reason for this is the Des Moines River drains into the Mississippi just below Lock and Dam 19 and flushes everything from its drainage basin into the larger river system.

Lockmasters at each location are in charge of dealing with the debris. "We take it one step at a time," says McDaniel.

The employees at the lock do much of the work by hand using chainsaws to cut up the logs that get stuck on the walls and pike poles to maneuver floating debris to areas where it can simply float downstream.

"We realize that we are just sending it down to the next lock where they will likely have to go through the same process to remove it, says McDaniel. "But that's about all we can do with such a large quantity of natural materials."

The Mississippi River Project Maintenance Section also gets involved in the clean up process. Much of the larger trees cannot be removed by hand and get caught in



The maintenance crew from the Mississippi River Project uses a crane on a floating deck barge to remove a large tree from above the gates at Lock and Dam 21 in Quincy, Ill. *Photo by Jim McDaniel*

the space above the miter gates. This prevents the locks from opening. The maintenance crew moves in with small towboats and cranes to manually lift these trees up and over the gates and the walls of the locks. This process can take days, even weeks, but the crew must remove every last piece or navigation on the Mississippi River remains halted.

Not all the debris is natural material; anything and everything floats downriver in a flood.

"We make a reasonable effort to remove the garbage if it's safe for us to do so," said McDaniel.

Employees must be very careful while removing items from the mess because they never know what they might find. Recently the employees from Lock and Dam 21 found a backpack filled with items used in a mobile meth lab. The backpack was immediately turned over to the county sheriff's office for further investigation and the staff was advised of how to properly clean up after handling the potentially hazardous waste.

Employees like McDaniel say they are used to this type of clean up process because it happens almost every spring when the river runs high.

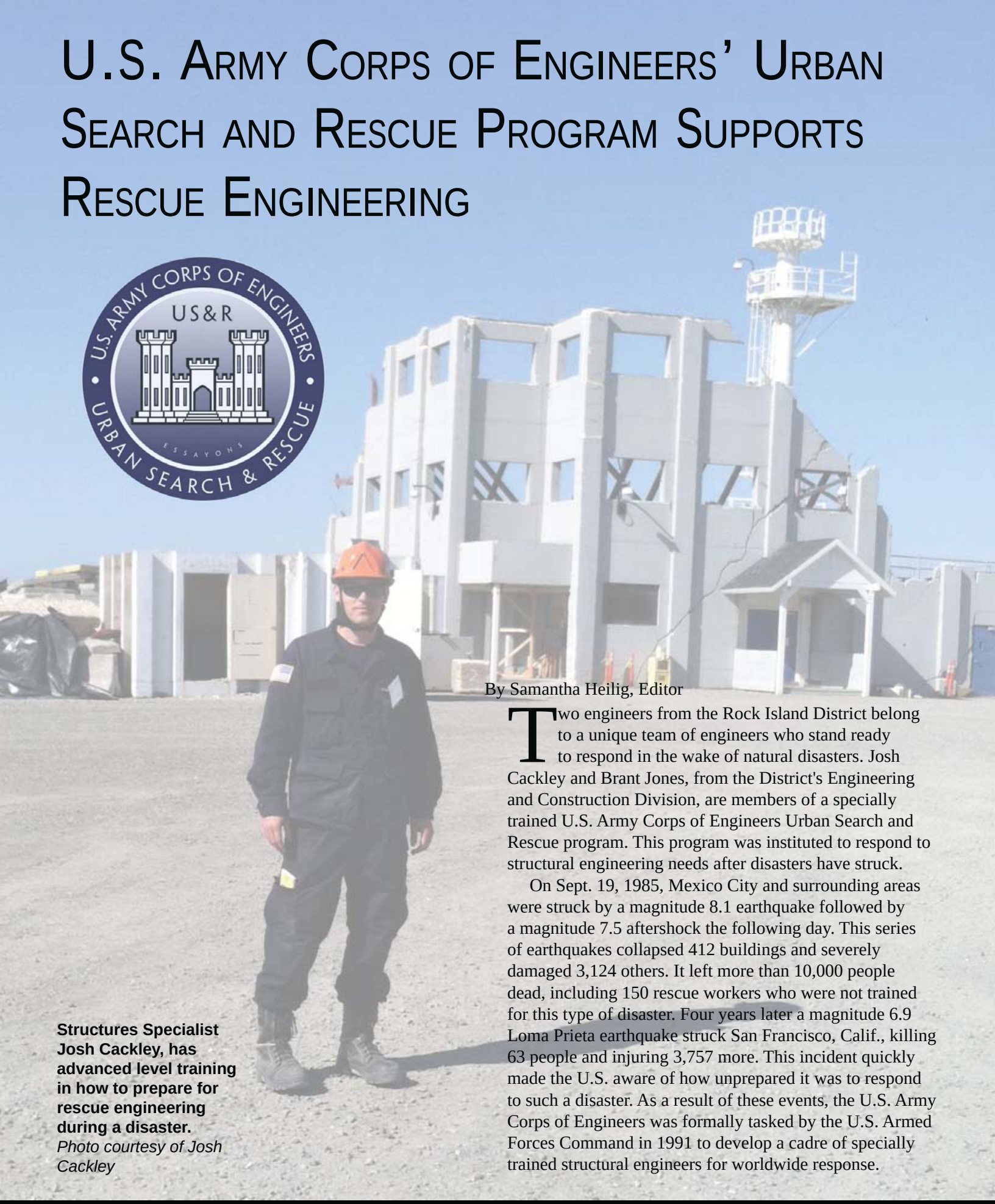
"The worst part is the dead fish," he said. "We just do our best to clean it up and get ready for whatever the river brings to us next."

Lock and dam operators often use chainsaws to remove drift wood from the wall at Lock and Dam 21. *Photo by Jim McDaniel*

Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day

Members of the Rock Island District show off their water safety gear on May 16 for *Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day.* The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has teamed up with the National Safe Boating Council to raise awareness of life jacket wear and boating safety across the country. *Photo by Joe Nobiling*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Urban Search and Rescue Program Supports Rescue Engineering



Structures Specialist Josh Cackley, has advanced level training in how to prepare for rescue engineering during a disaster.
Photo courtesy of Josh Cackley

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

Two engineers from the Rock Island District belong to a unique team of engineers who stand ready to respond in the wake of natural disasters. Josh Cackley and Brant Jones, from the District's Engineering and Construction Division, are members of a specially trained U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Urban Search and Rescue program. This program was instituted to respond to structural engineering needs after disasters have struck.

On Sept. 19, 1985, Mexico City and surrounding areas were struck by a magnitude 8.1 earthquake followed by a magnitude 7.5 aftershock the following day. This series of earthquakes collapsed 412 buildings and severely damaged 3,124 others. It left more than 10,000 people dead, including 150 rescue workers who were not trained for this type of disaster. Four years later a magnitude 6.9 Loma Prieta earthquake struck San Francisco, Calif., killing 63 people and injuring 3,757 more. This incident quickly made the U.S. aware of how unprepared it was to respond to such a disaster. As a result of these events, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was formally tasked by the U.S. Armed Forces Command in 1991 to develop a cadre of specially trained structural engineers for worldwide response.

Today, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Program deploys specially trained structural engineers to augment the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) US&R state task force teams, incident support teams and military technical rescue organizations during disaster response missions. Past major deployments include the Oklahoma City bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in 1995, the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center in 2001, and the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

Structures specialists (StS) like Cackley and Jones work as part of a 50-member cadre that provide technical support and advice to task force leaders and commanders to assess damage, mitigate hazards and assure mobility throughout a disaster site to enable rescue operations. They also serve in a similar capacity at the Rock Island Arsenal for emergency situations on the installation.

During a deployment, the teams can be working in hazardous conditions and damaged buildings on a regular basis.

"It is a dangerous job," said Cackley. "Training for these types of situations is necessary to make sure we are ready to go at any time."

Several different training levels, from basic to advanced, are available to the cadre members. Cackley recently attended the StS 2 advanced training level course which is recommended every five years for members of the US&R team. This five-day training course held at the NASA Ames Research Facility in Mountain View, Calif., was intended to simulate real-world deployment activities. It is a combination of classroom discussions, case studies, classroom and field exercises.

Being prepared is a major part of being on the US&R team.

"Once you are trained and ready for deployment you go on call every third month," Jones said.

The 50-member team is broken down into three groups: red, white, and blue which rotate on call status for disaster response.

"We maintain a rescue ready pack with needed supplies and equipment so that if the call comes in we can be ready to go in roughly six hours," said Jones.

A StS is responsible for many things during a disaster event. Safety comes first so the StS must first focus on providing task force personnel safety. This includes determining risk of collapse or injury to the rescue personnel and identifying entry and exit points for the damaged structures. The StS may also help identify locations for safe havens during aftershocks or further collapse. Rapid structure triage, a very quick assessment of the damaged buildings, is then used to determine risk of further collapse and where victims are likely to be located within the structure.

Specialists use this full scale load testing apparatus to test shoring options for use in a building collapse. *Photo courtesy of Josh Cackley*

"It can be tough, working with people in very stressful situations with heightened emotions and running on adrenaline until you can't go any longer," Cackley said. "Earthquakes are the most dangerous, as there is always the threat of aftershocks and the potential of further collapse."

Hazard mitigation is the last step in a disaster response. This process involves engineering solutions to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury to rescue personnel. Stabilizing buildings through the use of vertical and horizontal props called shoring, helps to prevent future collapse while cranes and other heavy equipment may be used to physically remove hazards from the scene.

"Many of the principles I use as a structural engineer apply whether I am designing a new structure or supporting a damaged one," said Cackley. "The biggest difference between working in the District office and working on the US&R team is that I have more time to think in the office than I will on the disaster scene."

The US&R teams carry a great amount of responsibility when assisting in these types of disaster situations. They must be trained in confined space entry, critical incident stress management, hazardous materials handling, water rescue, blood borne pathogens, respiratory protection, and CPR. Members must also receive a medical physical and seven different immunizations to remain eligible to deploy.

Although Cackley and Jones have not deployed since being accepted into the program, both said they are prepared and ready for response when the next earthquake, hurricane, tornado, flood or landslide occurs.

Spotlight on the District

Ed Zugel
Lock and Dam Equipment Mechanic

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

"Work hard and always try to do a perfect job."

These are the words of lock and dam equipment mechanic Ed Zugel who says this motto keeps him doing his best at whatever project he is assigned. Zugel, who has been working for the Corps since May 2011, takes great pride in his work and enjoys seeing results.

After spending a lifetime working in the trades and construction business he joined the Rock Island District at Lockport Lock and Dam and spent three years maintaining and repairing equipment, property and tools. Recently, in June 2014, he accepted a new position just downriver at Brandon Road Lock and Dam where he continues to work in repairs and maintenance.

"I love being outdoors and I like a challenge," said Zugel. "Fixing broken things around the lock and building stuff that will continue to stand long after I am gone is what I like most about my job."

Michael Walsh, Lockmaster, Lockport Lock and Dam speaks very highly of Zugel and his work.

"Ed has contributed to the facility in an exceptional way by building high quality control stands, completing excellent concrete repairs at several locations and assisting with office remodeling projects," Walsh said. Zugel's work helps to make facilities safer and easier to use and also saves the District money by eliminating the need for an outside contract.

Zugel says he made the change from private construction to working for the Corps of Engineers because of better job security. "I like the steady work and the unlikely chance for a layoff," says Zugel.

Working for the Corps also gave him the opportunity to work with a lot of great people, many of whom are veterans. Zugel served in the U.S. Army Reserve for eight years from 1984 until 1992.

"It is an honor to work alongside these veterans who have so many different talents to bring to the table," says Zugel.

In his spare time, Zugel likes to get outdoors and enjoys hiking, biking and traveling with his family. He and his wife Tina along with their two children Lauren and Kyle live in Channahon, Ill., not far from his hometown of Crest Hill, Ill.

Zugel was responsible for building two control structures like this while working at Lockport Lock on the Illinois River. *Photo by Michael Walsh*

SMART Scholarship Helps Employee Reach Her Goals

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

In December 2013, Jackie Clark, Regulatory Branch secretary for the Rock Island District, learned of an opportunity called the SMART scholarship that could help her attain her goals of furthering her career and completing a bachelor's degree while working for the Corps.

The Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship for Service Program was established by the Department of Defense (DoD) to support undergraduate and graduate students pursuing degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines.

Clark had a longtime goal of becoming a project manager but needed a bachelor's degree to meet the qualifications for the position. While working as a secretary, Clark started taking classes but could only manage a class or two while working full-time at the District office. Her supervisor, Ward Lenz, chief, Operations Division, Regulatory Branch, and Donna Jones, chief Regulatory, Illinois/Missouri Section, provided her the information about the scholarship and she immediately applied. She had only one week to get everything together including transcripts, a DD214 form, three letters of recommendation and a completed application.

Jackie Clark, one of only eight Corps of Engineers employees chosen nationwide, received a Science, Mathematics, and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship from the American Society for Engineering Education.
Photo by Samantha Heilig

There were 3,400 applicants and she had to make the top 50 percent to move on to the final selection. In March 2014, Clark learned that she had made the cut and anxiously awaited the next step which was to be selected for an interview. Soon after she was selected she received a call for the interview and on May 29 was awarded the SMART Scholarship. Only 110 scholarships were awarded this year and of those only eight went to U.S. Army Corps of Engineer employees.

"I'm super excited and thankful that I have the support of my family, supervisor, coworkers and friends," said Clark. "I wouldn't be able to do this without all of them."

The benefits of receiving this award are far above your typical scholarship payment. The SMART scholarship will not only pay for all of Clark's tuition and books, but will also pay her a stipend and 30 percent of her health insurance. This will allow her to go to school full-time and continue working part-time for the Corps.

Clark says that she plans to use the scholarship to complete her bachelor's degree in biology with a major in botany. She plans to complete her degree in the next two and one half years and continue to work for the District's Regulatory Branch.

Anyone interested in applying for the next round of scholarships can visit the website http://smart.asee.org/. The application period opens in August.

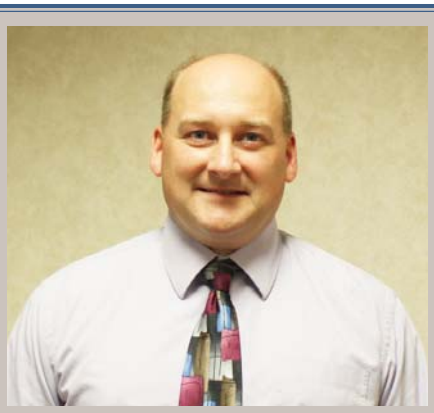
A New Face in Corporate Communications

(An Editorial Note by Samantha Heilig)

I am the new editor of the Tower Times, the Rock Island District's official publication that helps to tell our organization's outstanding story. After wearing my U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ranger hat as a Natural Resource Specialist at the Mississippi River Visitor center for 13 years, I was recently honored to be chosen to fill a role as a public affairs specialist with the District's Corporate Communications office.

I began my career with the Rock Island District in May 2001 as part of the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). After being hired on permanently I continued to develop skills and abilities that allowed me to branch out and get involved in many areas of the Mississippi River Project. One thing that has always remained a constant is my interest in communicating with others. I spent most of my days at the Visitor *(continued on Page 12)*

Andrew Leichty Named U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2014 Project Manager of the Year



By Samantha Heilig, Editor

A member of the Rock Island District has been recognized as one of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers top performers. Andrew Leichty, from the Program Management Branch, was awarded USACE Project Manager of the Year by the Corps' Program and Project Management Community of Practice.

This award is given annually to the Corps employee who has distinguished themself through professional excellence, achievements, and superior performance in project management. Leichty was nominated for the award for his superior accomplishments in managing several Rock Island District Projects including Mill Creek-South Slough Project, North Raccoon River Emergency Streambank Protection Project and several projects within the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Habitat Restoration Program. His effective leadership and management expertise resulted in successful completion of projects that have benefitted many communities within the District.

"It is truly an honor to receive this award but it is definitely a reflection of the quality people whom I work with in this District," said Leichty.

Growing up in southeast Iowa, Leichty acquired an interest in engineering from his father who ran a construction business. He attended Iowa State University and earned a degree in civil engineering which he used to work for companies in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and Kansas City, Mo., before joining the Rock Island District in 2002. Since that time he has made significant contributions to the work of the Corps on complex projects by working together with team members and customers to execute effective projects.

As a project manager for the District, Leichty leads projects through skillful participation and coordination with project delivery teams and customers. He coordinates work with his teams and customers to execute the work on schedule and within budget.

Leichty was nominated for his exceptional work by his supervisor Dennis Hamilton, Chief, Project Management Branch and Gary Meden, Chief, Programs and Project Management Division.

"He is known for providing clear and consistent direction to project delivery teams and managing his projects by working closely with the project sponsors," said Hamilton.

"He has gained an outstanding reputation with customers as a valuable partner and effective project manager. His willingness to take on new challenges and provide support and assistance to team members and others is exemplary," said Meden.

Outside of his work as project manager, Leichty stays busy getting involved in several other leadership roles. He has successfully completed the Rock Island District Leadership Development Program (LDP) and now serves as mentor for current LDP participants. He is also seen as a regional leader in project management as a member of the Quad City Chapter of the Project Management Institute and volunteers his time with Junior Achievement to mentor students.

On August 7, Leichty will attend the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Strategic Leaders Conference at Fort Belvoir, Va., where he will be presented his award.

(New Face continued)

Center talking with people about the river. I gave tours of the locks and dam to help inform the public about the Corps and its missions. I taught boating safety classes and gave programs to school children so that they could learn more about being safe on the water. I liked putting together newsletters, posters and other forms of printed materials simply because I liked keeping people informed.

When the opportunity to communicate with a new audience became available through joining the Corporate Communications office, I couldn't pass it up. It was bitter sweet leaving the Mississippi River Visitor Center because the people I worked with there were like family and the interactions I had with the public will be missed. I thank them for all they taught me and their support in my move to the new job. I look forward to the new opportunities that working for the District will bring and I will continue to do my best to always keep everyone informed.

SAFETY CORNER

One Text or Call Could Wreck it All

By Troy Larson, Safety Officer

Cell phones might be good for instant communication but they contribute to bad driving more and more everyday. It is clear that talking on a cell phone distracts a driver from seeing hazards and having the ability to respond quickly when needed. Have you ever gotten caught behind a slow vehicle, then pass it and see a cell phone conversation taking place? Then minutes later the driver speeds up and passes you because they are no longer on the phone. This scenario happens all the time and is aggravating to the non-distracted driver but the person talking on the phone was a real hazard and if you were not paying close attention you could have been the one in a bad position.

Drivers can't afford to be distracted by cell phone use or anything else for that matter. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in the United States released that there is an average of 92 people that die each day in motor vehicle crashes. That's one every 16 minutes!

Common driving distractions include:

- Cell phone use
- Reading or sending text messages
- Reaching for a moving object inside the vehicle
- Looking at an object or event outside of the vehicle
- Reading a newspaper, map, or document
- Applying makeup
- Playing with the GPS or other electronic gadget

The best way to end distracted driving is to educate people about the dangers it creates. Everyone including the driver, passengers and bystanders can be affected by these unsafe actions.

Here are some ways you can stay safe and drive free of distractions:

- Make necessary phone calls before you set out to drive.
- If you receive a call while driving, let the caller leave a message. When it is safe to do so, pull over and call the person back.
- Reinforce safe driving practices with family, friends, and coworkers.
- Consider how your children observe your unsafe habits while driving. Set a good example so they learn the importance of driving safe.

- Be aware that using a hands-free and voice-activated cell phone can still distract you.
- Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.
- Never read or send text messages while driving.
- Remember even things like eating, drinking, changing the radio station or vehicle temperature and digging items out of the glove box are considered distracted driving actions.
- Arguments and stressful conversations with passengers can also divert a driver's attention. Refrain from having these types of discussions while driving in the car.
- Fatigue and stress as well as driving under the influence of alcohol are also huge contributors to distracted driving. Make the choice not to drive if any of these things are an issue.

Keep in mind that these safe driving habits are important when driving on your own time and mandatory when driving or operating any motorized equipment during work hours. Don't let yourself get distracted while driving. Keep your mind on your driving; keep your eyes on the road, and keep your hands on the wheel! Your life and the life of others around you depends on it.

Around the District

Retirements ...

Jerry Rasmussen, lock and dam equipment mechanic for the Peoria Lock and Dam retired April 30 after dedicating more than 18 years of service to the federal government.

Sue Clevenstine, supervisory outdoor recreation planner for Operations Division, Technical Branch, retired May 2, after dedicating more than 32 years of service to the federal government.

Sherri Richardson-Duey, supervisory operations project manager at Lake Red Rock retired May 2, after dedicating more than 35 years of service to the federal government.

Nancy Vanderleest, budget analyst for the Resource Management Section retired May 2, after dedicating more than 35 years of service to the federal government.

Robert Willhite, community planner for the Program Management Division retired May 30, after dedicating more than 30 years of service to the federal government.

Steven Koening, lockmaster at Brandon Road Lock and Dam retired May 31, after dedicating more than 30 years of service to the federal government.

Donald Hocker, engineering equipment operator for Lake Red Rock retired May 31, after dedicating 30 years of service to the federal government.

Robert Lazenby, attorney for the District Office of Council retired May 31, after dedicating more than 28 years of service to the federal government.

John Burger, crane operator for the Illinois Waterway Project retired May 31, after dedicating more than 28 years of service to the federal government.

Terrance (Terry) Galick, lock and dam operator at Brandon Road Lock and Dam retired June 1, after dedicating more than 38 years of service to the federal government.

Douglas Davis, deputy procurement analyst for the Small Business Program retired June 30, after dedicating more than 39 years of service to the federal government.

Padmaker Srivastava, civil engineer for the Rock Island District retired June 30, after dedicating five years of service to the federal government.

William Pilkington, lock and dam operator from Lock and Dam 19 retired June 30, after dedicating 22 years of service to the federal government.

Patrick Waring, electronics mechanic for the Mississippi River Project retired June 30, after dedicating more than 32 years of service to the federal government.

Sympathy ...

Bonnie Bernat, 67, of East Moline, Ill., passed away April 30.

Bernat worked as a program analyst for the Engineering and Construction Division until her retirement in 2013.

Dorothy Brown, 87, of Davenport, Iowa, passed away May 20.

Brown retired from the Rock Island District as a budget analyst.

Fred Spires, 83, of Moline, Ill., passed away July 2.

Spires worked at Locks and Dam 14 on the Mississippi River for 26 years before retiring in 1989. He also served in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Congrats ...

Congratulations to **Jeff Nelson** and his wife Brenda, on the birth of a baby boy on May 16. Eli Jeffrey weighed five pounds, 13 ounces and was 19 inches long.

WHERE'S THIS?

Can you name where this is? If so, send your answer to Samantha.A.Heilig@usace.army.mil. The first correct answer will receive a special prize and be recognized in the next Tower Times.

May Answer - Dresden Island Lock and Dam in Morris, Ill.

Winner - Selwyn Valley, Brandon Road Lock and Dam

Support & Sacrifice for the Corps

Eric Aubrey Returns From Ninth Deployment in Ten Years

By Samantha Heilig, Editor

In the past 10 years Eric Aubrey has spent roughly 58 months deployed with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Transatlantic Afghanistan District (TAA). From 2004 to 2014 Aubrey has deployed nine times, being away from home at least a portion of every year. All of his deployments have been to Afghanistan with the TAA except for one deployment to Iraq.

"It just gets into your blood," Aubrey said. "You feel like you are doing something positive for the country and supporting the Corps mission at the same time."

Aubrey is part of the Engineering and Construction, Ordnance and Explosives Engineering Section with the Rock Island District. This section researches documentation related to chemical warfare material (CWM) in support of the Chemical Materials Agency (CMA). While working for the TAA, Aubrey served as a project manager, working with engineering, contracting and construction offices to develop request for proposal (RFP) packages for building new structures and facilities for the Afghan National Army. On a day-to-day basis, he worked with the customer to make sure needs were met while staying within the guidelines of the contract. He traveled periodically to the project sites and saw firsthand what types of changes were needed and dealt with security issues as they came about.

"The thing I liked most about the work in Afghanistan is that you got to see results," Aubrey said. "Things happened very fast there and you could watch a project from start to finish in just a single deployment."

Although the work shifts were long, working 70 to 80 hours per week, Aubrey said it was worth it.

"I feel that being deployed gives you an experience unlike anything else you can get while working in the U.S.," he said. "I believe that the TAA's mission is important and I saw improvement in how the Afghans were responding to the assistance.

"Operations and maintenance of all the projects we built, was a big concern during my first years being deployed," Aubrey said. "Here in the last couple of years, the Afghans are finally learning how to take care of their own facilities, which is a big step forward."

Although Afghanistan can be a dangerous environment, Aubrey said he was never overly concerned about his safety while deployed because interaction with the civilian population was limited. A few times Corps personnel were allowed to go out in to the community to provide donations of supplies to schools and orphanages.

According to Aubrey, his most frightening experience was during his return flight home this past May.

"We were flying out of the Kandahar Air Field when about 40 minutes into the flight passengers were notified that there was a problem with the plane and they had to shut down one engine," said Aubrey. "We were over the mountains so we had to fly back to Kandahar on one engine and land the plane. Thankfully it all ended well."

For the past 10 years, deployment has been a way of life for Aubrey. On his first trip he purchased a flag on which he has continued to embroider the dates of each deployment. Aubrey said, "My flag is now full and my time in Afghanistan is pretty much over."

He's not sure if he will deploy again because the work he has been doing for the TAA is now for the most part finished. He did say he would consider going again in the future if the right opportunity came up in a new location.

Project Manager Eric Aubrey displays his deployment flag. After nine deployments in 10 years he says it's full. *Photo courtesy of Eric Aubrey*

Thanks to all who are deployed to the Transatlantic District - Afghanistan (TAA)!

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, ROCK ISLAND
CLOCK TOWER BLDG. - P.O. BOX 2004
ROCK ISLAND, IL 61204-2004

Retirees Corner...

NARFE Service Center Closed

The National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) Service Center located in Bldg. 56, Room 105 on Arsenal Island closed May 30. The center had been staffed by volunteers from the National Active and Retired Federal Employees, Illinois, Blackhawk Chapter #338, and the Iowa, Davenport Chapter #279. Even though the physical office space will no longer exist, assistance to NARFE members, their families and survivors will continue with contacting the Office of Personnel Management concerning benefits and programs, such as civil service annuities, survivor benefits, life insurance, income tax-withholding from annuities and health insurance, and other important programs, such as Medicare, Social Security and veterans' benefits. Several volunteers are willing to help you, but initially you may contact one of the following to assist you with these issues.

Illinois - Blackhawk Chapter #338
Linda J. Bass, phone: (309) 949-3819, cell: (309) 235-7340, e-mail: bigbass1@mchsi.com
Iowa - Davenport Chapter #279
Mary Strassburger, phone: (563) 349-9697, e-mail: brn2shp@q.com

Retiree Common Access Cards (CAC) Now Available

Retired Department of the Army Civilians can be issued a hard plastic chipless CAC once the Civilian Personnel Management System (CPMS) loads the retirement file. This card allows a retiree to qualify for limited installation access and Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) facilities. The retiree's family members cannot receive a card, unless in an overseas command where an ID card is required and benefits are authorized.

Cards may be issued at the Rock Island District office after an employee has retired.
Follow the procedure below to acquire a retiree CAC:

1. Wait approximately three weeks until you receive your first retirement payment.
2. Locate any RAPIDS CAC site or visit the Rock Island District, Security and Law Enforcement office.
3. To Locate other RAPIDS CAC sites, visit: http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/appj/site?execution=e2s1

If you choose to have the Rock Island District create your CAC you will need to:

1. Set up an appointment by sending an e-mail to alyssa.a.kling@usace.army.mil or call (309) 794-5820.
2. The CAC facility is located at the Clock Tower front desk at the main entrance.
3. Be prepared with two forms of photo ID, such as a voter registration card, firearm owner identification card, drivers license, passport, etc.
4. The process takes about one half hour and the card will be issued that day. This facility is for Corp's employees only.

Follow the link to the MWR facilities site, to see what may be available to you. http://www.armymwr.com/