

PALMETTO CASLE

Fall 2015
Volume 7/Issue 3



From the Commander

Time flies! I cannot believe I have been in command for more than three months now. I have watched in awe as my team closed out another fiscal year with 680 actions worth a total of \$162 million in obligations and I continue to learn about all they have accomplished for our customers, stakeholders and our nation. We successfully obligated 100 percent of our customer's funding and we exceeded all of our small business goals.

I hope you enjoy this year-end issue. Its focus is people, which is quite appropriate, since the people who work for the Charleston District are what make this organization outstanding. It didn't take me long to see the dedication, professionalism and enthusiasm this team displays day in and day out. They are true public servants.

One of our biggest accomplishments last fiscal year was the completion of the Chief's Report for the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project. This was the first large navigation study in the nation to be completed from start to finish under the new USACE civil works streamlined process, intended to produce reports faster and at lower cost. As with any new process, there were many obstacles, kinks and constraints that had to be figured out by the team and I could not be more proud of them. The Chief's Report was signed on September 8th and is now at the Office of Management and Budget for the Administration's review before it is sent to Congress for authorization and appropriation consideration. The next step for the District is signing a design agreement with the South Carolina State Ports Authority so the Preconstruction Engineering and Design (PED) phase can begin. PED is anticipated to take 18- 24 months and I can assure you we will keep you informed on our progress and the exciting steps that lay ahead.

The recent flooding event that affected most of South Carolina was a time I saw my team rise to the occasion. The

District's Emergency Management Division responded immediately in support of the South Carolina Emergency Management Division and FEMA. We were able to coordinate support from the Corps of Engineers HQ's as well as personnel and technical assistance from four other districts. We had six engineers work in partnership with state Department of Health and Environmental Control officials to inspect 682 dams in order to ensure public safety. District volunteers joined several county emergency operations centers to help expedite local needs. Our regulatory office issued emergency permits as needed across the state and specifically in support of the city of Columbia allowing the creation of a dam within the breached Columbia Canal facilitating the operations of the city's water treatment plant. Without this work the city's drinking water supply to the public would have been drastically limited. While the flood has past, the Charleston District continues with the recovery effort as we conduct damage assessments of roads, canals and beaches in order to ensure the state of South Carolina's needs are met.

I am truly looking forward to new and exciting opportunities as we continue to work with and support our partners, but I also hope everyone has a chance to take some time and enjoy your friends and families as we embark upon the holiday season.

Matthew W. Luzzatto, P.E., PMP
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Commander and District Engineer
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Passion + Talent = U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The cover photo is a mosaic photo made from photos taken throughout the year, it symbolizes the dedication and pride that the Charleston District employees have as they serve Charleston, South Carolina and our nation.

Throughout this year-end issue, there are infographs displaying information about that specific subject area.

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The Environmental Lead for Post 45

By Sean McBride

Mark Messersmith, biologist, has been with the Charleston District's planning and environmental branch for seven years, but until the beginning of the feasibility phase of the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project, he had never worked on any project that was so challenging and complex.

Messersmith serves as the environmental lead for the Post 45 team, which consists of more than 40 people, both within the Charleston District and throughout the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' South Atlantic Division. In the last year, the team has worked extremely hard to get from the Draft Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement to the Final Report. After a public meeting was held to receive comments on the Draft Report in October 2014, Messersmith and the team had a lot to dive into.

"We spent the time between the draft and final reports collecting comments that had to be addressed with information that wasn't in the draft," said Messersmith. "Things like air quality, shoreline erosion, environmental justice, mitigation planning and environmental monitoring needed more information to

document our compliance with laws and regulations."

The majority of Messersmith's responsibility was compiling all the data and writing much of the Final Report. With Post 45 set to be the first project completed from start to finish under the Corps' new streamlined planning process, an emphasis was made to shorten the reports. This meant that the team had to focus on the most-critical aspects of the project, excluding certain components from the report, even though they had been studied. After receiving comments from people wanting to see the excluded components, Messersmith revised the documents to produce the Final Report.

"The biggest challenge with the Final Report was providing resource agencies the information they needed to make their decisions while working inside the guidance and policies of the Corps' new planning process," said Messersmith. "We have to maintain trust and transparency and need to make sure everyone knows that we've done what we can within the boundaries set for us."

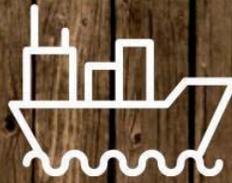
Charleston Harbor Post 45

Depth of Charleston Harbor

Future- 52 feet

2004- 45 feet

1994- 40 feet



Estimated Cost

\$509 million

Issued Post 45 Final Report and EIS



Signed by Chief of Engineers and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)



Left page: Mark Messersmith, biologist and environmental lead for Post 45

Top: Post 45 accomplishments.

Left: A core sample from the Charleston Harbor.

Right: A container ship at the Wando Pier.

While completing the Final Report, Messersmith had to understand the agencies' and public's concerns and address them as best as possible while still finding ways to streamline the document. The result was a document that was approximately 40 pages longer than the draft and provided more-detailed information on the areas of concern, including the mitigation plan.

"We'll be very hands-on with the mitigation monitoring during the preconstruction engineering and design phase," said Messersmith. "We've worked a lot with our federal agency partners to refine the monitoring plan to ensure all the requirements are met."

With the start of the PED phase looming, Messersmith and the Post 45 team still have studies on ship simulation, coastal modeling and beneficial use of dredged material. The beneficial use analysis will look at ways to use the material dredged from the bottom of Charleston Harbor in a way that is environmentally-friendly instead of just placing it in a traditional disposal area. This includes the creation of eight 33-acre reefs that will be constructed using the limestone rock that will be dredged from the harbor floor, among other ideas.

At the end of the project, most people will only see the final product of a harbor that is 52 feet deep, but without people like Messersmith diving into the details, we wouldn't get that far.

Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr.'s 40 years of work with the Corps



By Sean McBride

When Joseph P. Riley Jr. was sworn into the Office of Mayor of Charleston in December 1975, the city looked a lot different than it does now. Infrastructure was lacking, the land was less green and segregation was still very prominent. His work during the last 40 years has focused on many very visible projects, including integration of public housing, creation and beautification of parks, and increased popularity of tourism and events, just to name a few. A lifelong public servant, having served six years in the South Carolina House of Representatives prior to being elected mayor, Riley has worked hard to enhance the image of Charleston, and many of those efforts involved permitting actions made by the Charleston District. Projects such as the South Carolina Aquarium, Waterfront Park, Joe Riley Stadium, the Maritime Center and the City Marina were given Department of the Army permits for their impacts to waters of the United States. Each project had its own obstacles to face, but Riley is pleased with the outcome.

“There are many judgmental decisions that have to be made [by the Corps], and those decisions are made with 100 percent determination to make the best, fairest, wisest decision possible,” said Riley. “There were so many intersections of those projects where a decision could have been made to not move forward, but the end result is majestic public places in the spring and summer months.”

One of Riley’s most visible characteristics has always been his passion for the ideas he has championed. That has been evident to District personnel over the years.

“[Riley] was always actively involved in meetings and very eloquently gave his opinion on why the project was good for Charleston,” said Tina Hadden, chief of regulatory, who has worked on projects involving Riley for the last 33 years. “He doesn’t leave it to his engineers. He’s very involved and is always extremely respectful, even if we disagree on our positions.”

One example of Riley’s commitment to the District came in 1999 when Hurricane Floyd came through the area and caused damage to the District’s office, right next to Marion Square in the heart of downtown. The hurricane caused leaks and asbestos was revealed, causing District personnel to relocate. It was very important to Riley to keep the District on the Charleston downtown peninsula.

“The presence of the Corps of Engineers in Charleston is historic and essential to the continued growth and development of our community and economy in South Carolina,” said Riley. “We know the heritage of the Corps and it’s wonderful that it has continued in Charleston. It’s been a very prideful relationship for me.”

Riley continues to advocate for the District’s work to this day, using his scarce time with President Obama to talk about the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project. Riley said that the harbor deepening over the years have been “so important to the community” and that doing our due diligence in making the channels wider in the past is making the upcoming deepening more efficient.

Riley openly speaks about his support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as an organization, calling it a “blue-chip, four-star, special part of our national government.”

“It’s just a first-rate organization to work with and we’re really proud [to have them in Charleston],” said Riley.

For 40 years, the Charleston District has been working with Mayor Riley and the City of Charleston on many projects that have led to the city’s high rankings for tourism and places to live. The District is proud to have been a part of these projects and would like to wish Mayor Riley the best in his retirement.



Three Regulators Teaching Corps Prospect Courses

By Sean McBride

There are only about 40 people teaching PROSPECT courses for the Corps' regulatory program and three of them come from the Charleston District. Tina Hadden, Dr. Richard Darden and Steven Currie were all selected to teach different courses due to their vast subject knowledge and history in the profession.

PROSPECT, short for Proponent-Sponsored Engineer Corps Training, courses provide job-related training through technical and professional courses that meet the unique needs of the Corps. The program is managed by the USACE Learning Center in the Huntsville District and there are courses for just about every branch of the Corps. Courses are taught by Corps employees who are selected after a very competitive application process seeking the most highly-dedicated experts in their fields.

PROSPECT courses are very specific, offering Corps employees many different topics to continue their education. For instance, instead of a very broad course on regulatory as a whole, classes are focused on particular subject matter, such as Reg 4: Wetland Delineation and Identification, taught by Currie. The week-long class splits its time in the classroom and in the field where regulators come together to go through the wetland delineation manual, learn how to determine if an area is a wetland or not, and go through the complicated process of recording the field data necessary to fill out the required forms. Currie says that wetland delineation is not something that is taught in most colleges, so you have to learn by experience.

"I've always enjoyed teaching and my experience in the field of soil science can be useful to others," says Currie. "It's a benefit to the Corps to have highly-technical experts contributing to the understanding of a complicated subject."

Currie admits that a regulator's job is more often reviewing environmental consultant's reports than actually performing the work yourself. With as much water that covers the state of South Carolina as there is, it's impossible for a limited number of regulators in Charleston to evaluate the whole area. Of course, determining what areas you're responsible for is an entirely different PROSPECT course on its own. Titled Reg 2A: Scope of Analysis, Cultural Resources and Endangered Species, Darden teaches regulators how to review permit applications and what the appropriate level of review is for us.



Left to right: Steven Currie, Tina Hadden and Richard Darden





For instance, if someone is applying for a permit on a big piece of land, only work on part of that land may affect a wetland. If there is an endangered species located on the part of the project that affects wetlands, we would have to look at the impacts of the project on the endangered species. But, if the endangered species was on the other side of the large project area, it would not necessarily fall under our scope of analysis. The class teaches students how to make these determinations.

“It’s very difficult to grasp the concept of scope of analysis if you’re new to the Corps,” said Darden. “Being an instructor forces me to know the subject better than I ever could otherwise. I have to master the subject and be a student myself.”

Individual Corps districts can also pay to host an instructor to teach a PROSPECT course directly to their office. That’s what happened when Hadden was asked to travel to the

Alaska District to teach the Reg 2C: Coastal Projects class, where she taught Alaska District’s regulators how to effectively and efficiently evaluate projects proposing to impact coastal aquatic resources.

“I get personal satisfaction from teaching and have a desire to pass on my knowledge to other regulators,” says Hadden, who’s been with the Corps for 33 years. “In the exchange of information, you always learn something new.”

Altogether, Charleston District regulators have taught approximately 12 classes to regulators across the Corps, including six classes last year. Spreading knowledge to the future workforce is just one way the Charleston District is living the Corps mission.

*Note: After 33 years of service, Hadden retired on October 3rd. Travis Hughes was announced as the new chief of regulatory at print time. He will be highlighted in the next Palmetto Castle. He can be reached at 843-329-8044. Congratulations, Travis!



“In life, relationships are primary, everything else is secondary....”

Ron David, MDiv., PH.D., MD



Federal Executive Association’s First Stakeholders’ Drop-In

Article by Glenn Jeffries
Photos by Sara Corbett

Three mayors, state delegators, numerous city and county councilmen, five congressional staffers and more than 30 local federal agency leaders. Add a beautiful setting, some hot coffee and ham biscuits and what do you have? The Federal Executive Association’s first ever stakeholders’ drop-in. More than 80 public officials gathered with senior federal leaders at the Coast Guard Station on Tradd Street on a perfect fall day for a networking event aimed at strengthening relationships and building new partnerships. Charleston Mayor Joe Riley was the guest of honor and was presented with a silver tray for the support he has given the federal agencies over his 40 year tenure.

The purpose of the FEA is to promote coordination of agency programs for maximum public benefit, and foster acquaintances and good fellowship among management officials of departments, offices and agencies of the federal government performing official business in the tri-county area.

The FEA strives to promote a better understanding of each agency’s mission, discussing matters of mutual interest and working with the appropriate city, county and state officials on issues the government is involved in. The FEA also acts as a liaison between the management of industry and business and the management of the federal government to ensure a smooth working relationship. This event went a long way in helping the FEA achieve these goals.

Top: Mr. Scott Isaacks, director of Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center, Mayor Joseph Riley, Mrs. Glenn Jeffries, Col. Jimmy Canlas, vice commander of Joint Base Charleston pose after presenting Riley with a silver tray to thank him for supporting the local federal agencies.

Left: Cathy Crawford, district director for Senator Tim Scott, Jonathan Dix, constituent services representative for Senator Lindsey Graham, Josh Dix, field representative Congressman for Trey Gowdy and Tate Zeigler, government relations for South Carolina State Ports Authority enjoy catching up at the event.

Right: A community member (left) talks with Anna Johnson (right), Charleston County Council member.



Two Wounded Warriors scope out a good location for hunting.

Wings for Wounded Warriors

By Joe Moran, fisheries biologist

Shots were firing and birds were falling. That was the scene at the Inaugural Wounded Warrior Dove Hunt at the Charleston District's Cooper River Rediversion Project where five of our nation's heroes gathered for a day of fellowship and to test their hunting skills.

A chance of thunderstorms diminished the size of the group, but that left more doves for each Warrior. After receiving a greeting from Lt. Col. Matthew Luzzatto, Charleston District commander, and a safety briefing from Sgt. Thomas Spann, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement, the Warriors went over the plan. Sam Chappellear, SCDNR wildlife biologist, gave an overview of the field and Tim Fulmer, SCDNR wildlife technician, led the hunters to several marked locations. In the week leading up to the event, nearly 500 hunters in the area had taken more than 2,000 birds in their hunts.

The scene was quiet while the Warriors readied themselves in their positions. When a train rumbled down the nearby tracks and let off a warning whistle, doves took flight. Being trained marksmen from their days in military service, two Warriors nearly took their limit and each Warrior went home with birds.

SCDNR dove hunting regulations allow an individual hunter to take up to 15 doves in a day on specified Wildlife Management Areas. Under a long-term cooperative agreement, more than 95 percent of the District's 2,500 acre CRRP property is managed as a state Wildlife Management Area

by SCDNR. There are more than 90 acres of dove fields in this area, which has received perennial number one rankings for WMA dove hunting in South Carolina.

"We're very pleased with the turnout of this event," said Kate Brett, Wounded Warrior Project outreach coordinator. "The Warriors really appreciate the opportunities and, for some, these events are their first time back into the field since their injuries."

At the end of the day, each of the Warriors left happy and commented that it was the best dove field they had ever seen or heard of. They were very appreciative of the opportunity and vowed to return next year. In the short period they were together, you could see the immediate camaraderie.

"It was our pleasure and honor to give back to these Warriors who have sacrificed so much for our country," said Luzzatto. "We will work closely with our SCDNR partners to make this an annual event for even more Warriors in the future."

The Wounded Warrior Dove Hunt was the second event put on this year at the CRRP for Wounded Warriors after a highly-successful fishing tournament held in February. Continuing to provide high-quality experiences for some of our nation's heroes is a goal for the Charleston District in the next year.

2015 Fiscal Year In Review

\$ 262 million in expenditures | 46 new people joined the team

Average customer survey score



Depth of Charleston Harbor

Future- 52 feet

2004- 45 feet

1994- 40 feet



Issued Post 45 Final Report and EIS

Contracting

\$ 162 million in contract awards

Women-Owned



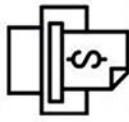
29.7%

HUBZone



18.8%

Small-Disadvantaged



51.8%

SD-Veteran Owned



5%

Every year, the Charleston District compiles a list of our accomplishments from the previous fiscal year. These include numbers about contracts, projects, personnel, community service and much more. In this infographic, you can see many of the highlights from various areas of our operations. For the full list of accomplishments, including specific projects we completed and are working on, regulatory permitting numbers, emergency management events, training, certifications, awards, community outreach, STEM, and much, much more, please visit our website at www.sac.usace.army.mil.

Issued our 400th construction contract of all time!

Regulatory

Issued **419** General Permits with **90%** issued in less than **60** days

Completed **1,117** jurisdictional determinations and **132** compliance inspections

Issued **64** Individual Permits with **50%** issued in less than **120** days



Community Service

Hosted two Wounded Warrior events



\$33,809,96 donated to charities through the Combined Federal Campaign

Hosted 2nd Annual Sweetgrass Pulling Day



262 pounds of food to Lowcountry Food Bank



100+ toys to Toys for Tots

Connect!

Social Media Numbers

784 likes



2,342 followers



131 followers



98,479 visits
2.1 million pageviews



100% Committed to the Mission

From students

Science, technology, engineering and math are a priority to the Charleston District. To increase the interest and promote a STEM career, the District hosted two seniors. While here they toured the Charleston Harbor on the SV Evans, spent a day in the field

Name: Josh Isaacks

School: Academic Magnet High School

Grade: 12th

1. What are your plans for next year?

Next year I plan on attending a four year university (most likely Clemson) and pursuing a four-year degree in some form of engineering.

2. Describe your internship experience in 10 words or less.

An invaluable experience detailing aspects of engineering with great people.

3. What was your biggest take away from your internship experience?

I was able to learn about a number of different fields, from the environmental engineers in regulatory to the civil engineers in navigation. This takeaway will allow me to help narrow down what type of engineering I will study in the future and create a clearer picture of what I would like to do for an occupation some day.

4. What was the most interesting thing you did during your internship?

The most interesting thing I did during my internship experience was either surveying the Charleston Harbor with the survey crew or touring the St. Stephen Powerhouse.

5. What is something you learned during your internship that you didn't previously know?

One thing I learned from this internship is the entire process of dredging the Charleston Harbor. I experienced surveying first-hand, which is then analyzed by the navigation branch, and took part in a conference call in which contractors bid on this job.

6. Has your time with the Charleston District changed how you are thinking about your future career?

My time with the Charleston District has changed what I thought about different professions as I was able to gain first-hand experience and really see what a handful of different occupations did day in and day out.

7. Would you recommend an internship with the Charleston District? If so, why?

I would highly recommend an internship with the Charleston District as it is an invaluable experience that really shows you how different data is collected and processed. It gives you the opportunity to experience a vast number of jobs that are incorporated in the Army Corps of Engineers and can give you further insight into what you want to be when you grow up. Additionally, it is a great opportunity to meet some extraordinary people and gain contacts that can help you find and discover future opportunities.

s' perspectives

performing wetland delineations with Regulatory, worked with GIS on mapping and visited Fort Jackson to learn about construction. It was a very successful visit and we wish them luck in their STEM path.

Name: CDT Lucas J. Garrett
School: University of Kentucky
Grade: Senior

1. What are your plans for next year?

Next year I plan to finish out my ROTC track and complete the rest of my engineering degree.

2. Describe your internship experience in 10 words or less.

An overall extraordinary experience that can appeal to anyone interested.

3. What was your biggest takeaway from your internship experience?

My largest takeaway was all the duties and responsibilities that the Corps is responsible for. All of the duties the Corps have that aren't only in the United States but in other countries and other bases as well.

4. What was the most interesting thing you did during your internship?

Riding on the Evans was a great experience. Being on the harbor was awesome and seeing Charleston from the harbor is a unique view. The survey vessel is the main source of information for the navigation team and for the dredging projects on the harbor. Without this information the harbor would not be able to function.

5. What is something you learned during your internship that you didn't previously know?

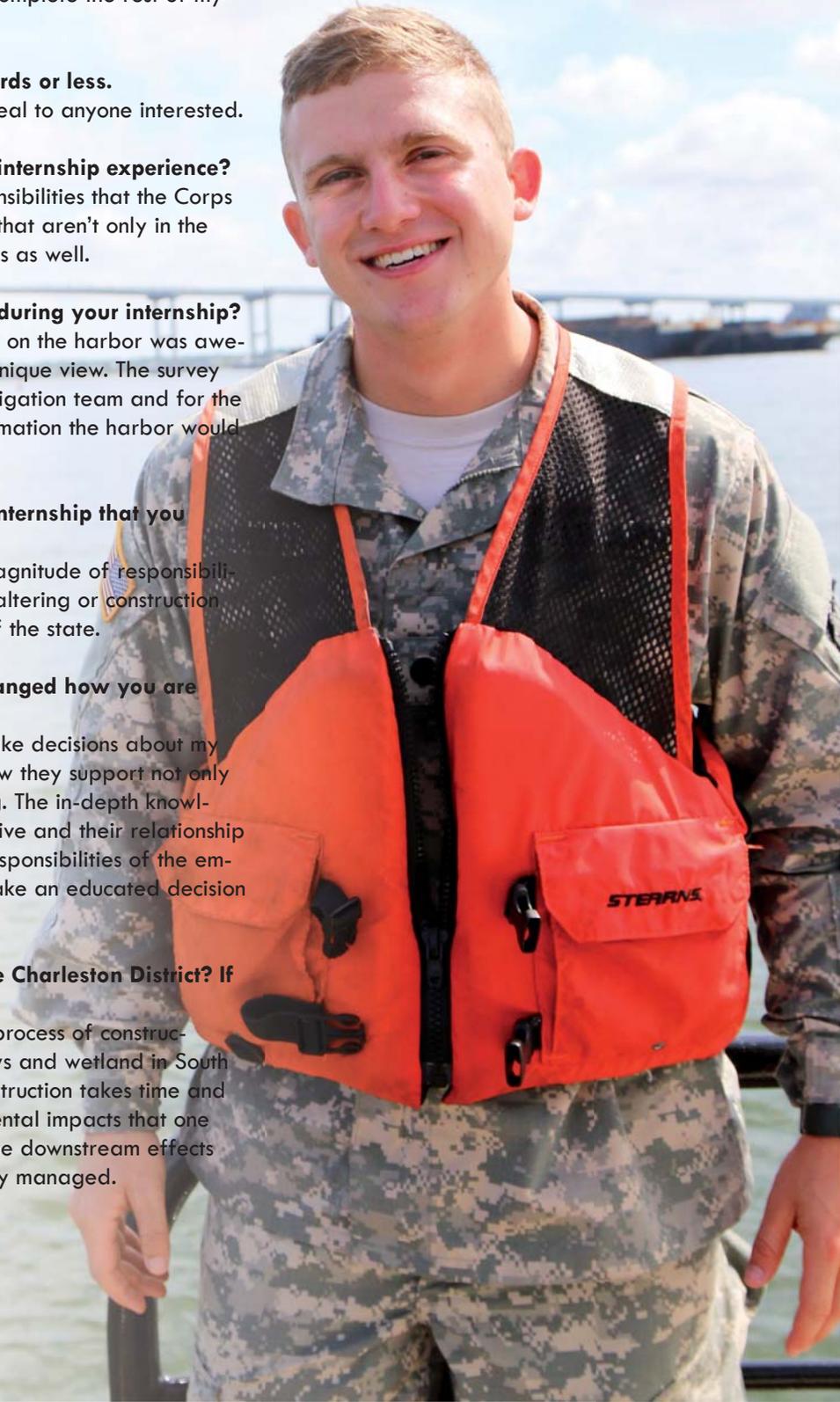
I am surprised in how diverse USACE is and the magnitude of responsibilities it has. The Corps is involved in almost all land altering or construction projects in South Carolina because of the nature of the state.

6. Has your time with the Charleston District changed how you are thinking about your future career?

It has given me the experience that I wanted to make decisions about my career path. Knowing what the Corps does and how they support not only the military but the civilian side of life is interesting. The in-depth knowledge required to accurately get permits is impressive and their relationship with DOT is extensive. Knowing all the roles and responsibilities of the employees is great knowledge and it allows me to make an educated decision about my future employment.

7. Would you recommend an internship with the Charleston District? If so, why?

Yes I would. This is a great opportunity to see the process of construction and regulation of anything upon the waterways and wetland in South Carolina. The process of allowing permits and construction takes time and the knowledge needed is important. The environmental impacts that one road or a dock can have on its surroundings and the downstream effects are large and could be catastrophic if not properly managed.





A day in the life of a Ft. Jackson Soldier

By Sean McBride (a fictional account of what a Basic Training Soldier might experience with projects constructed by the Charleston District)

Dear Journal,

Private Richards here. Man, today was a long day. I can't believe I reported here to Fort Jackson, in Columbia, S.C., for Basic Training almost eight weeks ago! Another three weeks to go though...

I haven't had time to write until now because I've been a little busy learning how to shoot, rappel, march drill and much more, so let me get you caught up on my day-to-day life here. I've been assigned to the 3rd Battalion of the 13th Infantry Regiment and am being housed in a huge Starship! Not one that flies around in space, but it's a newly-renovated facility here and I'm sharing a huge space filled with bunks for the few hours of sleep I get to share with my battalion of 1,200 Soldiers. The classrooms we use are right downstairs too, so that's pretty convenient. Before we started Basic, we spent a week in the newly renovated Reception Battalion barracks where we spent our days getting medical exams,

filling out paperwork, getting our Battle Buddy and, oh yeah... I don't have hair anymore.

Every day, I go to the Quad DFAC for breakfast, lunch and dinner to have a healthy, hot meal. No deep fryers in this joint... so I can't even get "fries with that." The Quad DFAC is pretty cool in that it is two two-story dining facilities attached to each other and can serve more than 5,200 of us Soldiers in only 90 minutes! That's good because our drill sergeant says, "If you're on time, you're late!" So we need to get in and out quick. He just finished Drill Sergeant School here at Fort Jackson and we're one of his first groups of Soldiers, so he's running us hard to prove himself.

I've been getting pretty good at shooting a rifle the last few weeks on the really awesome 16-lane Modified Record Firing Range here on base. I had never fired a

Military Support

Fort Jackson

- Executed 22 SRM projects for \$19.6 million
- Currently have 69 projects underway worth \$204 million
- Conducted 10,000 service calls under new \$7 million Facility Investment Services contract



81st RSC

- Executed 11 contracting actions for \$26.8 million
- Perform a full-suite of services, including construction, preventive maintenance, service call oversight, municipal services and IDIQ contracts

Joint Base Charleston

- Executed 25 contracting actions for \$3.5 million, several under the Job Order Contract



Interagency and International Support

- Executed 100 contract actions for \$21.3 million for Marine Forces Reserves
- Executed 76 contract actions for \$40.9 million for Defense Logistics Agency

Issued our 400th construction contract of all time!

weapon before, but I've learned all about how to disassemble, clean and reassemble a rifle, and how to hit moving targets at varying distances from different positions like lying down, kneeling and standing.

We also spend a lot of time working on our fitness. Every morning we do PT together as a group. We push each other a lot, especially on long runs or at the track during our PT tests, but I like it best when we get to go to the gym to lift weights or play basketball. We've also been working on hand-to-hand combat in the PT pits, which are filled with recycled, shredded pieces of tires. We spend a lot of time learning combatives in there and it's a nice outlet for our frustrations.

Let's see, what else have I been up to? Oh yeah, a couple of nights ago we did some work on the Night Infiltration Course. It's pretty incredible. We had to

low-crawl along the ground under and around obstacles while flares and live gunfire were flying above us. It was one of the most intense things I've done so far but I think it will really prepare us for battle situations.

After I'm done with Basic, I'll head into Advanced Individual Training. Not sure what I'll do yet, maybe Field Artillery School or Engineer School, but there is a new AIT complex here at Fort Jackson for Adjutant General School if I become a human resource specialist or finance technician.

Well, I guess that's about it for now. This has been pretty rough, but I'm growing, learning, and maturing a lot and I'm going to be a great Soldier. The drill sergeants here at Fort Jackson are tough, but they are making us the best that we can be so we can serve our nation!

Hooah! 13th IN! Forty Rounds! - Richards

Harvesting

Article and photos by Sara Corbett

As the sun starts to rise over the treetops at the St. Stephen Powerhouse and groups of harvesters methodically pull sweetgrass, a young girl is participating in pulling for the very first time and continuing her lineage.

Eleven-year-old Madison Horlback is just like any other pre-teen girl. She likes to hang out with her friends and play on her phone. But what sets her apart from other girls is that she is a sixth generation basket weaver. She is just beginning to learn the tradition and primarily sticks to weaving jewelry, such as earrings and bracelets.

"I just like the process," said Madison. "It's pretty interesting but sometimes it's hard because I didn't do this right, and have to rip this out, but it's pretty interesting."

Her mother, Karen, has been weaving baskets since she was six years old, but despite that had not pulled grass before either. She is excited to make something with the sweetgrass she pulled.

"I'll take it home and you have to dry it out and I'll make jewelry out of it," said Karen. "Maybe since it's my first pull with my own grass I'll think of something special I can design."

While this was Karen and Madison's first time pulling, it was the Charleston District's second year hosting the Sweetgrass Pulling Day. This year's pull was a little different from previous years, with the pull date so close to the tragedy at Mother Emanuel Church, this year's event was dedicated to the victims and a special sweetgrass cross was made, blessed and presented to the church.

The day started at 6:30 a.m. with sweetgrass basket weavers from around the Charleston area ready to pull sweetgrass before they head off to their "other" jobs. They will use the sweetgrass to continue the tradition of the iconic sweetgrass baskets.

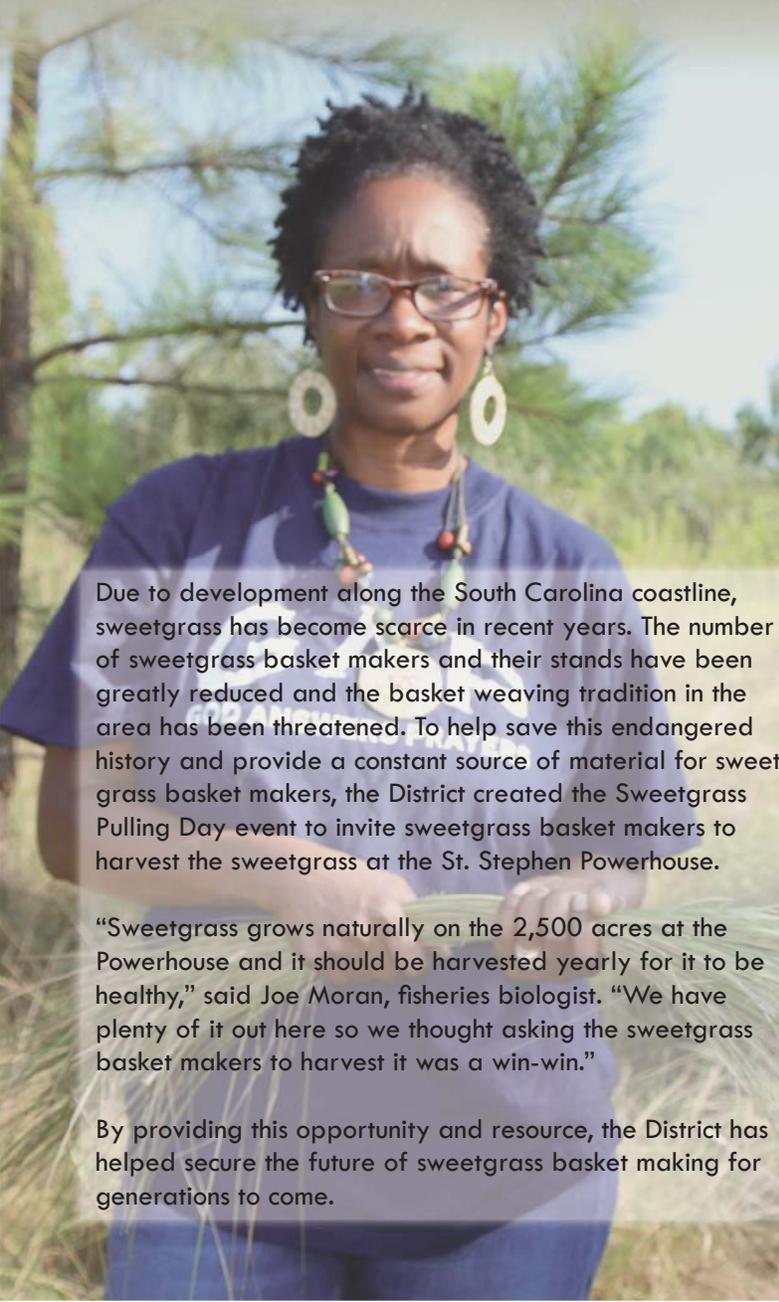
Sweetgrass basket makers and their baskets are an integral part of the Lowcountry's history that was first shaped by the captive Africans and brought to the southern United States. Through oral history of the African slaves, the basket making technique can be traced back to West Africa, their home. The sweetgrass basket has evolved from being an agricultural tool and storage for household items to famous artwork that hangs in the Smithsonian. Sweetgrass baskets and their makers are a vital part of Charleston, South Carolina and the nation's history. —————>



Top: Sweetgrass harvesters pull the grass.
Left: Joe Moran, fisheries biologist, presents Mr. Charles N. Williams, Trustee, Mrs. Lillian Coakley, member and sister of one of the victims, and Mr. Clifton M. Jones, Trustee, with a cross made and blessed for the Mother Emanuel Church.
Right: Madison Holback and her mother, Karen, harvested sweetgrass for the first time.



for the future



Due to development along the South Carolina coastline, sweetgrass has become scarce in recent years. The number of sweetgrass basket makers and their stands have been greatly reduced and the basket weaving tradition in the area has been threatened. To help save this endangered history and provide a constant source of material for sweetgrass basket makers, the District created the Sweetgrass Pulling Day event to invite sweetgrass basket makers to harvest the sweetgrass at the St. Stephen Powerhouse.

“Sweetgrass grows naturally on the 2,500 acres at the Powerhouse and it should be harvested yearly for it to be healthy,” said Joe Moran, fisheries biologist. “We have plenty of it out here so we thought asking the sweetgrass basket makers to harvest it was a win-win.”

By providing this opportunity and resource, the District has helped secure the future of sweetgrass basket making for generations to come.



ASA (CW) Jo-Ellen Darcy

Article by Glenn Jeffries

Photos by Sara Corbett

In October, the Charleston District was excited to host the Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) for the second time since she became the ASA in 2009. The day was packed with exciting events in which Darcy was able to see pieces of several projects and initiatives the District is currently working on.

Darcy began her day at the Francis Beidler Forest to highlight the success of the mitigation banking program that was used when the District issued the permit for the new Volvo production facility. Bobby Hitt, South Carolina Secretary of Commerce, and Norm Brunswig, Audubon Society, were on hand to tour the forest and walk along the boardwalk with her showcasing the swamp system with bottomland hardwoods, bald cypress and tupelo gum flats. The landscape compensatory mitigation for the Volvo project preserves and enhances more than 1,500 acres of aquatic resources within a total preservation and enhancement area of 2,496 acres in the Four Hole Swamp Watershed of the Edisto River Basin. Darcy's visit gave her a firsthand view of the high quality ecosystem protection that was incorporated into the Volvo permit. This project is a great example of how effective and time sensitive the permit process can be when an applicant works with the Corps prior to and during the process to ensure that all required information is available for public comment and review.

Darcy's next stop was to congratulate Mayor Joe Riley on his retirement and thank him for his 40 years of service to the city as a public servant and for the support he has given the Corps of Engineers over the years. They discussed several of the ongoing projects the city is involved in with the District and discussed the recent events that have occurred in the city. Immediately following, Darcy had lunch with the new Charleston County School Superintendent, Ms. Gerrita Postlewait, to discuss the Corps STEM initiatives. Darcy, a former elementary school teacher, is very engaged in the Corps' STEM program and offered the District's program to the



Visits Charleston District

students of Charleston County. For example, last year, more than 350 students visited the District's St. Stephen fish lift. This lift has been called one of the most important fish passage facilities on the east coast and passes more than 750,000 American shad and blueback herring each year. The Administration just announced its "Every Kid in a Park" initiative to give children a chance to explore and learn about the great outdoors. This program is aimed at fourth grade students so the District is excited about beginning a relationship with Charleston County Schools, as well as the other school districts in the area, and hopes to greatly increase its number of students visiting the fish passage next year.

Lastly, Darcy toured Charleston Harbor where she announced that her review of the Chief's Report for the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project was completed that week and it has been passed onto the Office of Management and Budget as part of the Administration's review. From there, it goes to Congress to be considered for authorization and appropriation.

Darcy's visit to Charleston was filled with opportunities to discuss the Charleston District's programs and initiatives with key leaders in the community and show Darcy some of the great work the District is doing in Charleston. Plus, she got to sample some of the area's fine food- a fried green tomato sandwich- which is always a great way to end a perfect Lowcountry day.

Left page top: ASA (CW) Jo-Ellen Darcy walked through Francis Beidler Forest with Sharon Richardson, Audobon South Carolina's executive director, to learn about the successful mitigation banking program that was used when the District issued a new permit for Volvo.

Left page middle: Brian Williams, chief, programs & civil project management, reviews the Post 45 project with Darcy.

Left bottom page: The group stopped at "The Meeting Tree" to recap the Volvo permit.

Top right: Darcy met with Ms. Gerrita Postlewait, Charleston County School Superintendent, to discuss the Corps STEM program.

Middle right: Darcy met with Mayor Joseph Riley to thank him for his 40 years of service.

Bottom right: Williams, Darcy, Bret Walters, chief planning, and Mark Messersmith, biologist, discussed the Post 45 project.



South Carolina Flood Response



Article by Sean McBride
Photos by Sara Corbett

Just how much water is 11 trillion gallons* exactly? It's roughly 636 16'x32' swimming pools. It's 130,370 Rose Bowls filled to the top. It's one-third of Lake Tahoe. It's also enough to end the drought in California. But those 11 trillion gallons of water actually came in the form of rain pouring down on the state of South Carolina, crippling most counties with epic flooding.

The damage sustained across South Carolina is yet to be completely determined. The flooding devastated farms, ruined homes, shut down businesses, forced highway closures and so much more. Additionally, many dams and canals were breached and washed away, sending even more water where it wasn't supposed to go.

That's where the Charleston District stood in to aid FEMA in response and recovery efforts from the storm. Per Homeland Security Presidential Directives, FEMA is the lead federal agency in disaster response, with the primary mission of reducing the loss of property and protecting the nation from all hazards. FEMA accomplishes this mission by building a comprehensive national incident management system by consolidating existing emergency response plans into a single, coordinated national response plan with government support from all levels. The Corps of Engineers' role is to serve as the lead federal agency for public works and engineering. The Charleston District had six engineers, working alongside SC Department of Health and Environmental Control officials, inspect 682 dams in South Carolina over the course of two weeks, to ensure public safety and the protection of property. The engineers determined the extent of the damage done to the dam and prioritized which dams could be saved or fixed quickly versus the ones that were totally washed out. The inspection results were entered into

a DHEC mobile app, along with photos, so the data points could be tracked using coordinates.

The District's coastal engineers supported FEMA's Preliminary Damage Assessment Teams in performing damage assessments on non-federal engineered beaches to capture the levels of damage and erosion along the coast of S.C.

The District's regulatory office issued an emergency permit to the City of Columbia to allow them to create a dam within the in-breached Columbia Canal in order to raise the water elevation for the water treatment plant's water intake. Without this work, the intake pipes would not have had the needed water for treatment and distribution of drinking water to the public. This emergency dam work also allowed for repairs of the downstream breach in the canal levees.

Additionally, the Charleston District had employees who volunteered to be liaison officers in select city and county emergency operations centers to help expedite the needs of local officials in a timely manner. The Emergency Operations Center at District headquarters was also buzzing, ensuring that logistics of operations across the state moved smoothly.

"Our emergency management team really rose to the occasion with this flooding event," said Gilbert Dent, chief of emergency management. "Our team worked non-stop across the state to do our part in protecting people and helping the public get their lives back to normal as quickly as possible."

The District also partnered with the Jacksonville District for the flood response mission as they aided the recovery efforts through the use of unmanned aerial systems to help



assess the condition of four breached dams, the municipal airport and the canal in the Columbia area. After obtaining all of the appropriate authorizations, the UAS team launched the “eBee” with the goal of acquiring, processing and providing high-resolution images to give decision makers a point-of-view they wouldn’t normally have.

The effects and recovery from this event will be seen over a long period of time, but the Charleston District will continue to be community partners with whatever is needed.

**water estimates conducted by Ryan Maue of USA Today*

Top: Cars and a road were washed out when a dam breached.

Left: Rocks are used to divert the Columbia Canal so the breached dam there can be repaired.

Bottom left: Columbia Canal dam breached during the flooding.

Bottom right: A Corps dam safety inspector and a South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control project manager inspect a breached dam.



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