

# PALMETTO CASILE



Summer 2019  
Volume 12/Issue 2  
Charleston District



# Contents



03	From the Commander	10	Change of Command Stakeholders Reception
04	Working on the AIWW	12	Women Building Up Women
06	Elements of Pierce Terrace Elementary	14	Meet Our:
08	88th Change of Command Ceremony	16	Sunflowers Blooming

On the cover: Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd receives the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flag from Maj. Gen. Diana Holland during the Charleston District's Change of Command Ceremony on July 12. The passing of the flag from the previous commander, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Palazzini, to Holland and then to Honderd represents the transfer of command of the District. Photo by Senior Airman Thomas T. Charlton, photojournalist, Joint Base Charleston Public Affairs.

On the back: Sunflowers in mid-bloom at the St. Stephen powerhouse. The sunflowers serve several purposes including pollination for bees in the spring/summer and food for doves in the fall, which supports our annual Wounded Warrior Dove Hunt. Photo by Jesse Helton, Natural Resources Program Specialist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District.

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**News Magazine of the  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Charleston District  
Circulation: 1,100  
www.sac.usace.army.mil**



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# From the Commander

Greetings!

What an honor it is to become the Charleston District's 88<sup>th</sup> commander and district engineer. I join the ranks of an esteemed group of military officers who have served the Charleston community. I am in awe every time I walk by the office picture wall of past district commanders dating back to 1931. I also have the privilege of being the District's first female commander (page 12). This opportunity is one I take very seriously and I will give my best each day to this community, state and nation.

The District has an outstanding reputation throughout the Corps and after just these few short weeks, I can see why. Our team is an incredibly dedicated, professional and enthusiastic cadre who make a tremendous impact every day solving the state and nation's toughest engineering challenges. One of the most impressive things I have learned so far is that based on the size of the workforce and the size of the programs (civil works, military construction, and work with other agencies, to include the VA and the Marine Forces Reserves, just to name a few), the Charleston District has the fourth highest workload per capita in the entire Corps! Our employees are a small, but mighty, group who carry a heavy workload in support of our country. In fiscal year 2018, the District was ranked number 16 out of 43 USACE districts and was named a World-Class Place to Work.

I am excited to be back in South Carolina because I began my Army career at basic training at Fort Jackson. What a great turn of events that I am fortunate enough to come full circle and now lead the District that supports the 50,000 soldiers who train there each year with the construction and renovation of so many facilities that impact these soldiers (page 6).

I am not new to the Corps, as I served as the deputy commander for several districts and as a project manager where I learned about the variety that exists in our civil works program. Add to this multiple deployments in support of the Corps' emergency support function under FEMA and a contingency deployment to Afghanistan, where USACE served as the construction agent for Central Command. The combination of these experiences, my transition time with Lt. Col. Jeff Palazzini and my other 16 years serving the U.S. Army have prepared me well to take on this challenging assignment. The team saw much success under his command and I look forward to helping them complete this fiscal year and prepare for the next.



It will take me a few months to make the rounds and meet all of you, but getting to know my team members, customers and partners is high on my list of priorities. Relationships play a critical role in our success, and I look forward to building one with each of you. I want to hear about the ways you think we can improve our services, your feedback is important to me.

I know the next two years are going to fly by and I too will be a picture on the past wall of commanders, but I can think of nowhere I would rather be right now than this beautiful place you call the Lowcountry. Enjoy the rest of your summer and hopefully you will get some time out on the water to benefit from the dredging work we have performed on the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (page 4). I know I will!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Honderd".

Rachel Honderd, PMP  
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# WORKING ON THE AIWW

By Sean McBride

If you're enjoying your summer boating on the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway in Charleston (obviously while wearing your life jacket), you might have noticed a large machine with a lot of pipes trailing behind it. Or maybe you saw bulldozers pushing dirt around to make big piles. The Charleston District has had a lot of work going on in the AIWW lately.

"The Corps has the authority to maintain the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway," said Jeremy Johnson, project manager. "As part of that, we not only dredge the waterway to its authorized depth, but we also maintain placement areas for the dredged material we remove."

A cutterhead dredge recently removed 500,000 cubic yards of material from the bottom of the federal channel at Breach Inlet to restore that stretch of the AIWW to its authorized depth of 12 feet. This section is part of \$9.4 million in supplemental hurricane disaster funding to

remove approximately 1.5 million cubic yards of material from high shoaling areas between Charleston and Georgetown. Many of these sections haven't been dredged in 10 years. The Breach Inlet dredging was completed at the end of July and the entire project should be completed by the end of the year.

The material was pumped into the placement areas between the Isle of Palms and Sullivan's Island that had just been worked on. The perimeter dike walls were raised in three placement areas to create additional capacity for this project and what would be pumped in from future projects. Crews first raised the dikes in one area so that the dredging project could begin, then continued in the other two areas while the dredging project happened. This \$3.5 million project was completed in May.

"We haven't seen this amount of work on the AIWW in the previous 10 years," said Johnson. "The District is proud to



be able to keep the channel at a depth to allow for commercial and recreational boaters to pass through without issue.”

The dredging cycle consists of four parts: dredging, drying, ditching and diking. Material, like that from Breach Inlet, is pumped into a placement area where it is then left to dry out. Backhoes then come in to create ditches in the material to allow remaining water trapped inside to drain out.

Finally, bulldozers move dried material and compact it on existing dikes, raising the elevation of the perimeter of the placement area. This creates capacity for future pumping of material into placement areas, ensuring that the dredging cycle can continue into the future.

**Background photo is of work being done on the placement area to prepare for the dredging project.**

**Top left: Jeremy Johnson, project manager, gives media interviews about the project.**

**Bottom left: Dredged material from Breach Inlet is being pumped onto the placement area.**



# Elements of Pierce Terrace Elementary

By Sean McBride

The Charleston District is wrapping up the construction of Pierce Terrace Elementary School on Fort Jackson in Columbia, SC. Classes will be held in the new school beginning in January 2020. Here are some of the unique elements of the Department of Defense Education Activity 21st century school.



## Information Center

A modern day library that will offer students the opportunity to learn in a collaborative environment.



## Front Entrance

Students will enter the school through a warm, inviting architectural piece.



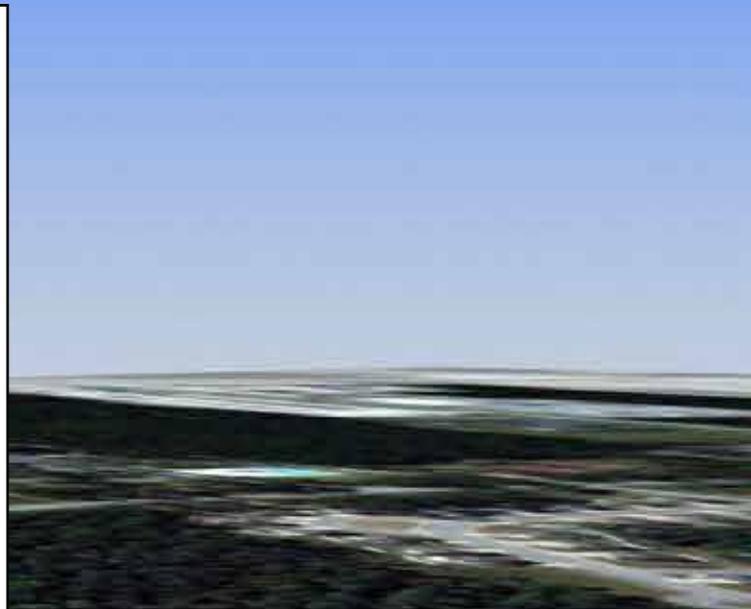
## Playground

Multiple playgrounds and swingsets have been installed as part of the push for students to be active outdoors.



### **Learning Kitchen**

These areas are for hands-on activities, intended for students to assist with science discoveries, math experiments, and other activities.



### **Learning Hub**

Shared learning areas for adjacent classrooms, containing moveable, light-weight furniture so teachers can change the area based on group size or specific activities.



### **Multi-Purpose Room**

Students will eat meals and enjoy performances and assemblies all in one spot that can be adjusted for each need. This is part of the idea for the school that all spaces can be adjusted to fit the new size of the student body each year or for any new activity.



# The 88th Change of Command Ceremony

Article by Sean McBride

Photos by Sara Corbett and Dennis Franklin, USACE and Senior Airman Thomas T. Charlton, JBC

On July 12, employees and stakeholders witnessed history as Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd assumed command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, as the District's first ever female commander.

Honderd became the 88<sup>th</sup> commander and district engineer of the Charleston District. She succeeded Lt. Col. Jeffrey Palazzini, whose new assignment is at the College of International Security Affairs at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C.

Nearly 200 people were in attendance to witness the historic event. Newly-promoted Maj. Gen. Diana Holland, USACE South Atlantic Division commander, presided over the ceremony.

"I look forward to meeting each of [our employees] and working shoulder-to-shoulder to accomplish our mission," said Honderd. "It is clear you are a group of professionals who take pride in serving the nation. You've got my commitment to provide the best leadership possible."

Honderd came to the District with a long list of previous USACE experience. She most recently served as deputy commander of the Rock Island District. She also served in the Seattle District as a civil works project manager, dam operating project manager and deputy command-

er. Honderd also served as deputy commander of the Kansas City and Afghanistan Districts.

Honderd's career is coming full circle, as she started her Army career in Basic Training at Fort Jackson. As district commander, she will now oversee the military construction program there, where the District is constructing and renovating several buildings and has done more than \$1 billion of work in the last 10 years.

"I find myself back in the place I started, a better Soldier, leader and person, ready to serve this team and the community," said Honderd. "There is no command I would rather have been assigned than the Charleston District."

Honderd will also be responsible for planning, engineering and constructing water resource projects, such as the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project, and administering laws for the protection of navigable waterways and regulatory actions for the state. She will oversee approximately 240 employees who are stationed throughout the state.

**Photos this page:** Maj. Gen. Diana Holland hands the Corps flag to Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd.

**Opposite page clockwise:** The color guard salutes the posted colors; Yvette Jenkins presents yellow roses to Honderd's parents as a symbol of welcome; Lt. Col. Jeffrey Palazzini passes the flag to Holland; Honderd addresses the audience; Cortney, Nicolas and Gabriela Palazzini reflect on their two years with the District.



*“There is no command I would rather have been assigned than the Charleston District.” -Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd*

# *Change of Command Stakeholders Reception*





Immediately after the Change of Command ceremony, a small reception is held for the new commander to meet and greet Charleston District employees, stakeholders and partners. The event is always well-attended and this year was no different as guests from all over the state of South Carolina came to welcome Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd. On the opposite page counterclockwise: As the new commander, Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd leads the official party out of the ceremony; Maj. (P) Paul Sipe, USACE, and Mayor Will Haynie, Town of Mount Pleasant; the color guard posts the colors. This page counterclockwise: Mayor John Tecklenberg, City of Charleston, and Honderd; Mayor Jane Darby, Town of Edisto Beach, Lisa Metheny, USACE, and Mayor Pro Tem Crawford Moore, Town of Edisto Beach; Maj. Gen. Diana Holland and Mayor Tim Goodwin, City of Folly Beach; Mayor Marilyn Hatley, City of North Myrtle Beach, Honderd and Mike Mahaney, City of North Myrtle Beach. Photos by Sara Corbett and Dennis Franklin, USACE and Senior Airman Thomas T. Charlton, JBC



# WOMEN BUILDING UP WOMEN

Article and photos by Sara Corbett

The Change of Command ceremony on July 12 brought several firsts for the Charleston District; the first female commander, the first time a female commanding general conducted the ceremony, and the first time the District has females simultaneously in the top three leadership positions.

“I am very excited about this historic occasion, because it shows how far we, as a society, have come,” said Lisa Metheney, Charleston District deputy of programs and project management and senior civilian. “We, as a government entity, are setting a great example for the rest of the business world, in that if you want to be successful, you have to have that balance in demographics.”

Maj. Gen. Diana Holland became the first female commander of the South Atlantic Division in July 2017, Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd took command of the District on July 12 as the first female commander, and Metheney became the first female senior civilian in January 2014. In addition to being the District’s first female commander, Honderd is also the first female commander of a district in SAD, which encompasses five districts along the southeast coast.

“I enjoy working in a team setting and I feel very fortunate to be joining such a great team of women leaders as the new District commander,” said Honderd.

This is a monumental milestone considering the size and workload of the District. With 240 employees, Charleston District is the second smallest district in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by number of employees, but the District ranked number 16 out of 43 districts in the size of the program they executed in fiscal year 2018. Based on the size of the workforce and the size of the program, the Charleston District is fourth per capita in the entire Corps.

“Numbers by themselves don’t tell the whole story, but they are indicative of what the bigger story is,” said Metheney. “That’s the way it is with our stats; our story is our people and what we do for the nation every day, whether it’s supporting the active duty warfighter, our reserves or whether we’re assisting Defense Logistics Agency or civil works projects, but all of that can be summed up in these statistics.”

Within those 240 employees, approximately 40 percent are females and of the 50 chiefs and senior chiefs, approximately 32 percent are female.

“When I go visit the big projects in SAD, many times the project manager is a woman,” said Holland. “We have a lot. Now it’s not 50/50, which is where it should be. However, I think that’s a reflection of while the stats may not be where they need to be, there are definitely opportunities when you prove your competence and the leadership of this organization is promoting that.”

As Holland points out the level of competency is important, and the District is fortunate that all three leaders have the necessary experience and education to make it one of the best districts in the Corps.

Holland is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy West Point and has a Master of Arts from Duke University and Master of Military Arts and Sciences from the Army Command and General Staff College and the School of Advanced Military Studies. Due to her education, experiences and leadership skills, she was recently promoted to Maj. Gen., which is no small feat.

“Of the 6,915 officers who were commissioned in 1990, Diana’s year group, 40 brigadier generals are on the 2019



promotion list, only 15 have been confirmed for promotion to major general,” said Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, at Holland’s recent promotion ceremony. “Diana is just one of two engineer general officers and so the fact that you are in a very small percentage, less than one percent, is a big, big deal.”

Honderd enlisted in the U.S. Army as an intelligence intercept analyst and electronic warfare specialist. After serving her first tour of duty as an enlisted Soldier, she was selected for the Green to Gold program and commissioned into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Augusta State University. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminology from Western Washington University, a Master’s in Public Administration from Augusta State University, and a Master’s of Science in Construction Management from the University of Washington. Not only has Honderd worked in several different Corps districts in a wide-variety of roles, she also has experience in the “operational-side,” which is the non-Corps side of the U.S. Army, giving her the capability and leadership skills needed to be a diverse commander.

“Rachel’s been going back and forth between the Army and Corps quite a bit,” said Holland. “She has a lot of experience in the Corps and that’s going to be a tremendous benefit to Charleston. Rachel will fit in seamlessly with the team here in Charleston.”

Metheney graduated from Marshall University with a Bachelor’s of Business Administration in Economics and followed that with a Master’s of Business Administration. She joined the Huntington District in 1993 as an economist and the Charleston District in 1999, where she quickly worked her way up to chief of programs and project management and finally to her current role as senior civilian.

“It’s the civilians that make the Corps of Engineers, what we are today, and it’s people like Lisa who are passionate and who are dedicated, and are not going to just settle for the status quo,” said Semonite.

While this is a first for the District, this is not the first time that Holland and Honderd have been the first females to lead an organization. Before taking command of SAD, Holland was the first female commandant of the Corps of Cadets at the U.S. Military Academy and, prior to that, the first female to be the deputy commanding general for support at Fort Drum, New York. Honderd was selected as one of the first three female lieutenants to be the company commander of a sapper unit while stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and, in this in position, she was also the only female in her entire company.

Despite the many recent firsts, this does not change the mission, service nor projects that the Charleston District provides, and will continue providing, nationwide.

“Regardless of who’s sitting in these three chairs, the District is always going to continue to serve the state and the nation,” said Metheney. “It’s very exciting that the three of us get to do it together and bring a different perspective to do that, but the Charleston District has been here since 1821, and will be here long after were all gone, and it is going to keep serving those who our mission is set to serve.”

**Top opposite: Lisa Metheney, Maj. Gen. Diana Holland and Lt. Col. Rachel Honderd stand in front of the Charleston District building.**

**Top: Metheney, Holland and Honderd at the recent Change of Command.**

**Explain your job in three sentences.**

I was appointed to this position January 1, 2019. It was a great way to start the new year! I lead and manage the small business programs for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District as chief of the small business office. I'm responsible for developing small businesses and maximizing their opportunities to participate in our procurements, ensuring a broad base of capable suppliers to support the Corps' missions and strengthening our nation's economic development. Small Business is the heart of the U.S. economy and a vital part of the Corps' acquisition process so I have a patriotic passion to serve small businesses in South Carolina as the point of contact for the District.

**What is the most unique thing you bring to the District?**

I have 30 years of the U.S. Army military experience and training serving from 1987-2017. I retired as a lieutenant colonel in the Army with 10 years of enlisted service and 20 years as an officer. I served in numerous contract acquisition positions during my last 12 years in the military, including contracting support brigade executive officer, contracts manager with Microsoft as part of the Army's Training with Industry Program, contracting team leader, contracting officer, contingency contracting officer, and TRADOC capability manager and assistant product manager. I'm also a veteran of Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom in Pakistan and Operation Freedom's Sentinel in Afghanistan. I think my unique history with the Army allows me to see both sides of the contracting process so I can best help small and disadvantaged businesses.

**What is the most rewarding part of your job?**

Contributing to the success of the District is what I strive for every day. It is very rewarding to help small businesses be able to compete for prime contracts and sub-contractor opportunities with large businesses.

**Highlight a notable milestone or memory in your career.**

Getting hired as the chief of the small business office with the District has been my most notable milestone. After a lot of reflection on what to do and where to live after a 30 year military career, I found my home.

**What goals do you have for your career at the Charleston District?**

My career goal is to remain in the District and continue to improve personally and professionally as a value-added member of the District. Continuing the success of the Charleston mission and exceeding the District's small business goals is also a priority. I look forward to getting more small businesses registered in our System for Award Management, which all contractors wishing to do business with the District must be registered in.

**What is something that most people don't know about you?**

I was born and raised in Ohio (like a lot of people who have moved to Charleston!).

A portrait of Wayne Hiatt, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, smiling. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue button-down shirt. The background is a blurred green foliage.

**Wayne Hiatt**  
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# OUR:

***Explain your job in three sentences.***

As chief of the contracting office, I am responsible for planning, managing, and executing all aspects of the Charleston District's acquisition program. Mission execution includes planning, managing, and executing contracts in the pre- and post-award stages in support of military, civil, environmental, and IIS programs. I accomplish these duties by leading a staff of extremely dedicated contracting professionals comprised of contract officers, contract specialists, procurement analysts and procurement technicians.

***What is the most unique thing you bring to the District?***

I'm not sure that it's unique, but I am one of the few people that can honestly say that I started my career as a GS-1, step 1! I began my career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as an office automation clerk part time when I was 16 years old.

***What is the most rewarding part of your job?***

One of the most rewarding parts of my job is the knowledge that what we do in some way touches every person in our country. There have been so many times in my life that I've been having a casual conversation and I've been able to educate the person I was talking with about how the Corps is involved in a project in one way or another. This has ranged from a simple camping trip at a lake in North Carolina to sitting down on the riverfront watching the vessels come into port.

***Highlight a notable milestone or memory in your career.***

To date, the most notable milestone in my career, other than coming to this amazing district, was when I received the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal at my going away ceremony in Wilmington. I was the first non-retiring recipient of the medal in the Wilmington District in more than 10 years. Knowing how much my work within the Wilmington District was appreciated was something that I will take with me and strive for wherever I am at.

***What goals do you have for your career at the Charleston District?***

My primary goal is to ensure that I do everything I can to facilitate the execution of our missions.

***What is something that most people don't know about you?***

Prior to having some knee problems, I was an avid tennis player. I grew up playing junior tournaments, was ranked in the top 10 in the state and even played in college before I decided I loved work so much that I wanted more hours than I could handle and still be on the team.

A portrait of Charlenne Figgins, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a blue top and a dark jacket, smiling slightly. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a building.

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*Summer at St. Stephen is in full bloom!*

