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BUILDING STRONG®



Pabis takes command of New England District

See story on page 4

Yankee Voices



Col. (Ret.) Daniel M. Wilson, former New England Division Commander

Former Division Engineer Wilson passes away

Congratulations...

... to Jen Thalhauser, Programs/Project Management Division, on her selection as the North Atlantic Division nominee for Project Manager of the Year. Thalhauser received the nomination due to her leading the Boston Harbor Deepening project to deliver early and under budget. The final selection will be announced at a later date.

Sympathy...

...to **Jim Conway**, Resident Engineer, on the passing of his mother, **Carol J. Conway**. July 22.

... to the family of Regulatory retiree **Thomas Bruha**, who passed away July 31. Mr. Bruha retired with 32 years of federal service. In addition to his service with USACE, Mr. Bruha served his country faithfully in the U.S. Army.

Words Worth Repeating

"What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the winter-time. It is the little shadow which runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset."

— Crowfoot

Former New England District Commander, Col. (Ret.) Daniel M. Wilson, passed away July 13. Col. (Ret.) Wilson was the Commander of the New England Division from August 1988 to September 1990.

"I knew Col. Wilson as an employee in the New England Division, where he was our Division Commander," said Engineering and Project Management retiree Greg Buteau. "I thought he was a great leader who could see through the fog on issues. He was quiet, but when he spoke, he had pearls of wisdom. He had a soft smile and a twinkle in his eyes. I am proud to have served under his command."

Prior to coming to New England, Col. (Ret.) Wilson served as District Engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District. He held numerous responsibilities included command and staff assignments both in the United States and overseas. His major command assignments included serving as Company Commander, 116th Engineer Battalion (Combat), Idaho Army National Guard and Commander, 299th Engineer Battalion, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

His major staff assignments included serving as Executive Officer, 18th Engineer Brigade, Vietnam; Executive Officer, 10th Engineer Battalion, Germany; Chief, Troop Operations Division, U.S. Army Engineer Command, Germany; Facilities Engineer and Executive Officer, U.S. Army Executive Officer, U.S. Army SAFEGUARD System Site Aviation Command, North Dakota; Area and Deputy District Engineer, Middle East Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Al Batin, Saudi Arabia and Columbia, Maryland; Team Chief/Staff Leader, Combined Armed and Services Staff School, U.S. Army Command General and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Assistant Director of Civil Works, Pacific Area, Office of the Chief of Engineers, Washington, D.C.

Among his military awards are the Legion of Merit (two oak leaf clusters) Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (four oak leaf clusters), the Humanitarian Service Medal and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal.

Col. (Ret.) Wilson held a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Idaho State University and a master's degree in engineering management from the University of Missouri, Rolla. He was also a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College, the Armed Forces Staff College and the U.S. Army War College.

He was a native of Idaho Falls, Idaho. He is survived by his son, Greg Wilson and wife, Lisa; son Chris Wilson and wife, Susan; sister Nyla Peterlin; sister Betty Nichols; grandsons Ben, Josh, Cooper and James; granddaughters Sam, Emery, Kaitlin and Hanah and extended family and friends.



Scott Acone receives de Fleury Medal

Col. John A. Atilano II awarded Scott Acone, Deputy District Engineer for Programs/Project Management, with the Silver Order of the de Fleury Medal during his Commander's Coffee, July 11.

Acone received the honor in recognition of an entire professional career dedicated to the United States Army Engineer Regiment and the Corps of Engineers as it supports the Army and the citizens of the United States.

"Scott's professionalism, dedication and continual support to the nation have significantly increased the Army's readiness, improved partnerships, led innovative solutions and taken care of our people," read the citation signed by Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, Chief of Engineers.

The de Fleury Medal is the highest award for professional excellence in the Engineer Regiment. The de Fleury Medal honors and recognizes those individuals who have provided significant contributions to Army Engineering. The medal also emphasizes the history, customs, and traditions of the Corps of Engineers community.



Photo by Limea Shirley

Scott Acone receives the Silver de Fleury Medal from Col. John Atilano during the July Commander's Coffee.

District team welcomes new Deputy District Engineer

Lt. Col. David MacPhail became the Deputy Commander, New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in August 2023. Prior to this assignment, he served as the Senior Trainer for the Brigade Engineer Battalion "Raptor" Observer Coach Trainer Team at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. Lt. Col. MacPhail enlisted in the United States Army in 2002 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in USACE through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program in 2005.

Previous assignments include serving as the Brigade Engineer Battalion Executive Officer and Operations Officer Observer Coach Trainer at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. Operations and Executive Officer, 39th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault); S3 Planner, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault); Deputy Division Engineer, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Baghdad, Iraq; Deputy Area Engineer, Aberdeen Proving Ground; Project Engineer for the United States Medical Research Institute for Chemical Defense in the Baltimore District USACE; Commander, 84th Engineer Support

Company (Airborne), Assistant S-3, 2nd Engineer Brigade, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; Executive Officer, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Battalion (CBT) in Schweinfurt, Germany; Platoon Leader, Alpha Company, 9th Engineer Battalion (CBT), 2nd Brigade Combat Team in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08 in Baghdad, Iraq.

Lt. Col. MacPhail holds a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Florida; a Master of Science in Environmental Engineering from Missouri Science and Technology. Lieutenant Colonel MacPhail is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth Kansas.

Lt. Col. MacPhail's military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal (3 Oak Leaf Clusters), Joint Commendation Medal, Army Commendation Medal (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Achievement Medal (1 Oak Leaf Cluster), Iraqi Campaign Medal (2 Bronze Service Stars), Operation Inherent Resolve (1 Bronze Service Star), Humanitarian Service Medal (1 Bronze Service Star), Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Combat Action Badge and foreign parachutist badge from Chile.



Col. Justin Pabis PE, Col. John Lloyd and Col. John Atilano II stand in front of the stage at Faneuil Hall during the Change of Command ceremony.

Photos by Linea Shirley

Command flag changes hands during Boston ceremony

As has been a time-honored tradition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), New England District team said farewell to one commander and welcomed another during a Change of Command ceremony held July 28 at historic Faneuil Hall in Boston, Massachusetts.

Col. John A. Atilano II relinquished command to Col. Justin R. Pabis, PE, in front of invited guests and District team members. Col. John Lloyd, North Atlantic Division Commander, presided over the Change of Command while Lt. Col. Michael Carvelli, PE, Deputy District Engineer, served as master of ceremonies.

“From time immemorial, armies throughout the world conducted ceremonies to honor their heroes, to commemorate victory over an enemy, to celebrate special occasions, or to pay

homage to their fallen comrades,” said Lt. Col. Carvelli. “These ceremonies add color and pageantry to military life.”

Before handing over the command

flag, the New England District team paid tribute to both the outgoing and incoming commanders' families. Sally Rigione, Public Affairs, represented



Sally Rigione presents flowers to Dr. Daniella Atilano during the Change of Command ceremony.

some of the District's longest serving team members and presented a bouquet of three dozen roses to Dr. Daniella Atilano from her husband.

"Red and white are the engineer colors, so her bouquet is made up of two dozen red and one dozen white roses. In total it represents one rose for every month in command. The roses traditionally symbolize appreciation for the support and contributions made by loved ones," said Lt. Col. Carvelli.

The roses are in bloom, representing a flourished and successful command, according to Lt. Col. Carvelli.

Rigione presented challenge coins to John and Joseph Atilano. Col. Atilano presented his daughter Gianna a single red rose when he got home that night.

Abigail Thrall represented the District's new employees and presented Mrs. Pabis with a bouquet of yellow roses. Layla and Carlin Pabis received stuffies of the Red Sox green monster mascot, Wally, to welcome them to the District.

The New England District Ranger Color Guard began the official ceremony by presenting the colors.

"The colors you see moving forward symbolize the very souls of the United States and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," said Lt. Col. Carvelli.

The Change of Command ceremony itself is brief. In USACE, District Commanders entrust their Senior Civilian Advisor with the responsibility of the colors. Scott Acone, Deputy District Engineer of Programs and Project Management took the Command flag from the stand and passed it to the present Commander, Col. Atilano, who was entrusted with the command three years ago. Col. Atilano passed the colors to the Senior Commander, Col. John Lloyd, signifying the relinquishment of his command. Col. Lloyd then passed the colors to Col. Pabis, entrusting him with the responsibility and care of the District.



Matt Coleman leads the New England District Ranger Color Guard into Faneuil Hall to open the Change of Command ceremony.

Col. Pabis returned the flag to Acone, who returned it to its place in the stand.

After the ceremony, Col. Lloyd took to the podium and talked about his "mission-critical enablers" and their families. He told Dr. Daniella Atilano that she was the glue that held her family together and praised the Atilano children for their accomplishments in sports and their everyday activities. He talked about some of Col. Atilano's New England District career highlights -- the COVID 19 response, his work

with the Leadership Development Program, Boston Harbor, the Cape Cod Canal Bridge replacement plans, his work reenergizing the Emergency Management Program and his accomplishments as co-chair of the International Joint Commission St. Croix Watershed Board.

"Thank you again for your service to the District and the North Atlantic Division," he said. "I wish you and your family the very best in the days ahead."

When speaking about the Pabis



Col. John A. Atilano II (right) passes the command flag to Col. John Lloyd, relinquishing command of the New England District.

family, Col. Lloyd joked that it took the trade of a beloved baseball player to the Red Sox to get Mrs. Pabis to agree to come to New England. Unfortunately, the player was traded again. Col. Lloyd assured her that she would grow to love New England and the Red Sox in time. He also talked about all the sports that the Pabis children are involved in and praised the Pabis family for being a true sports family. Col. Lloyd mentioned that Col. Pabis is a Massachusetts native and that commanding the New England District is a homecoming for him. The North Atlantic Division commander highlighted the new Commander's previous assignments and accomplishments prior to coming to the District.

"To you and your family, welcome again to the New England District, and I greatly look forward to working with you on engineering solutions to the nation's toughest challenges," said Col. Lloyd.

In his remarks, Col. Atilano thanked his family for their support during his career.

"You are the foundation that sustains me in good times and in bad and I am forever grateful to have you all in my life, and I cannot begin to thank you for all the sacrifices you have made so that I could serve our country," he said.

He told the audience that his command of the New England District was like no other in his career with it starting amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Col. Atilano highlighted several projects that took place under his command: Boston Harbor, Piscataqua River dredging, work for the Vermont National Guard, housing for the Natick Soldier Systems, Muddy River, a new lab for the FDA, CRREL's Climatic Chamber, and many more.

The colonel also mentioned the floods that caused New England District projects held back about 61 billion gallons of water during a series



Col. John Lloyd, Col. Justin Pabis PE and Col. John Atilano II stand on the stage prior to remarks during the Change of Command ceremony.

of torrential rainstorms in July and credited the teams that worked on the floods for saving lives and property.

Col. Atilano praised the New England District's many state and federal partners and all the work the District accomplished with their assistance these last three years. He thanked Col. Lloyd for his unwavering support, his two military deputies – Lt. Col. Mark Gillman and Lt. Col. Michael Carvelli – for spearheading many of his initiatives at the District and Scott Acone, his civilian deputy, who was his trusted advisor, counselor, and friend.

Col. Atilano talked about a health crisis that hit his family and how members of the New England District team rallied around the Atilano's.

"Meal trains, notes of support, and giving me the time to focus on my family while we still worked tirelessly to deliver our program in the middle of a pandemic," he said. "I cannot begin to express my gratitude and I will forever be in your debt."

The former District Commander concluded his remarks by welcoming the Pabis family to the District and bidding farewell to the New England District team.

"Thank you again for your tireless efforts," he said. "You have made me

proud to be Commander of this District. Keep up the fantastic work in the future."

Col. Pabis rounded out the list of speakers at the day's event. He said he was excited to be returning to his native Massachusetts to command the New England District and thanked Col. Atilano and the New England District team for his warm welcome.

"Thank you for setting me up for success – I wish you nothing but the best on your next assignment and look forward to working with you in your role with FEMA," he said.

The new District Commander told Col. Lloyd he looked forward to working with him again. He thanked Mrs. Pabis for all the sacrifices she made to come to the New England and for caring for the family. He concluded the ceremony by telling the New England District team that he was humbled and honored to serve New England and the birthplace of USACE.

"I look forward to working closely with all of you in the coming months and years as we engineer solutions for our nation's toughest challenges," he said.

Col. Atilano's next assignment will be Defense Coordinating Officer for FEMA Region 1. Col. Pabis held a meet and greet for the New England District team on Aug. 1.

Atilano's receive honors at Faneuil Hall for service to the nation

Prior to the official Change of Command ceremony, Col. John A. Atilano II and his wife, Dr. Daniella Atilano, were honored during an awards ceremony held upstairs at Faneuil Hall in the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts museum and library, July 28.

Col. John Lloyd, North Atlantic Division Commander, hosted the awards ceremony. Attendees included the Atilano family, Col. Justin Pabis, Scott Acone, Deputy District Engineer for Programs/Project Management, Lt. Col. Michael Carvelli, Lt. Col. David MacPhail, Capt. Briana Karayinopulos, Capt. Jeremy Liker, Capt. Sarah Hoyt, Emily Berry, and Cadet Leo Puntillo.

Col. Atilano received two awards. The first being the Legion of Merit for exceptionally meritorious service as New England District Commander from June 2020 to July 2023.

"His superior leadership, dedication to service, and professional excellence set the standard for others to follow," said Col. Lloyd. Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon signed the award.

The Legion of Merit Award was followed by the presentation of the Army Engineer Association's Silver Order of the de Fleury Medal. According to the Association's website, the de Fleury medal is named for a French Engineer Francois Louis Tesseidre de Fleury, a French engineer who served with the American Army in its fight for independence from Britain during the American Revolutionary War. On October 1, 1779, de Fleury was praised for his valor by the men who had penned the Declaration of Independence and who would later sign the Constitution. For his intrepid behavior, the Continental Congress ordered that a medal be struck in his honor.

According to the citation, Col. Atilano received the de Fleury, "in recognition of his superior service to the United States Army Engineer Regiment as it supports the Army to assure mobility, enhance protection, enable expeditionary logistics and build capacity to provide commanders with the freedom of action required for unified land operations throughout the range of military operations in the multi-domain operational environment."

Acone assisted Col. Lloyd during the presentation by fastening the award around Col. Atilano's neck.

After the presentations to Col. Atilano, Dr. Daniella Atilano received the Army Engineer Association's Essayons Award for her inspirational leadership to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' regiment.

"Your efforts represent the Essayons spirit of 'Let Us Try' and the sacrifice, commitment and steadfast loyalty to your Engineer, the United States Army Corps of Engineers



Photo by Linnea Shirley

Scott Acone (left) assists Col. John Lloyd (right) in fastening the Silver de Fleury Medal during the awards ceremony.

Regiment and the United States Army," read Col. Lloyd, Lt. Gen. Spellmon signed the award. Col. Atilano had the honor of affixing the award around Dr. Atilano's neck.

In a letter that accompanied her award, Command Sergeant Major (Ret.) John H. Rather Director of Regimental Operations for the Army Engineer Association said that for every brave Soldier there is an equally brave partner standing by their side.

"Even though they didn't enlist in the military, spouses still serve their country," he wrote. "They are the family's anchor during military training, deployment, reintegration and reset. They are the unsung heroes who are essential to the strength of our Engineer Regiment, the Army and our nation."

In addition to the awards, Connecticut Congresswoman Jahana Hays sent a Special Congressional Recognition to Col. Atilano in recognition of his honorable service to the nation as Commander and District Engineer. "I want to join your community of family, friends and service members in offering my heartfelt appreciation for your unwavering dedication to our country," she wrote. "Take pride in all that you have accomplished through your career in the military. May the future bring you continued success."

Congresswoman Hays also sent a Special Congressional Recognition to Col. Pabis congratulating him on his command of the New England District.

Change of Command photos



The Atilano Family



Col. John Lloyd, Col. John Atilano II and Dr. Daniella Atilano.



The West Point Army Band plays during the Change of Command ceremony.



Col. John Lloyd gives his remarks during the ceremony.



The official party (Col. John Atilano II, Col. John Lloyd and Col. Justin Pabis PE) enters the hall to begin the ceremony.



Color Guard members David Grandy, Nicole Giles and Stephen Patchkofsky.



Abigail Thrall presents roses to Mrs. Pabis and Wally the Green Monster stuffedies to Carlin and Layla Pabis.



The Ranger Color Guard march into Faneuil Hall to post the colors.



Carlin and Layla Pabis join Lt. Col. Michael Carvelli on stage.



Col. Justin Pabis and his wife, Mrs. Kelly Pabis.



Photos by Tracy Dorgan

Col. John Atilano visits personnel and assesses damage at Ball Mountain Dam, Townshend Dam, and Winhall campground on Friday, July 14,

USACE Team fights floods in New England

Torrential downpours in mid-July inundated New England with massive amounts of rainfall. Vermont and New Hampshire received the largest impacts and the water levels rose behind all of the USACE dams in the Upper Connecticut River Basin.

During this storm, at their peaks, the seven USACE dams in the Upper Connecticut River Basin in Vermont and New Hampshire collectively

stored 60 billion gallons of storm water, which is equivalent to 91,000 olympic sized swimming pools, to mitigate downstream flooding. All affected dams operated as designed.

As a result of rising reservoir levels, all recreation areas in the Upper Connecticut River Basin were closed to the public, with Ball Mountain evacuating campers from its popular Winhall Brook Campground.

“Our number one priority continues to be the life, health and safety of all potentially affected by the flooding,” said Col. John A. Atilano II, New England District Commander.

The District’s Emergency Operations Center began working closely with Operations staff, the Dam Safety Program personnel, and the Reservoir Control Center to monitor the dams. Team members also coordinated with state and federal agencies, to include the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 1, National Weather Service (NWS) Weather Forecast Offices as well as the NWS Northeast River Forecast Center.

On July 11, the Reservoir Control Center in Concord, Massachusetts, assessed the status of the floodwaters and determined the Connecticut River was able to accept additional water. To provide space for the reservoirs to hold additional rain expected, at around 10 p.m., the Ball Mountain Dam team began slowly increasing the water being released from its reservoirs. The team at Townshend Dam released slow flows just before 1 a.m. on July 12.

During the flooding, team members at Ball Mountain, Townshend, North Springfield, Union Village, and North Hartland worked around the clock monitoring pool levels and downstream conditions. Team members at the other Upper Connecticut River Basin dams did not have to staff around the clock but kept a close eye on the water levels.

New England District technical experts on the ground in Vermont and at the Reservoir Control Center in Concord, Massachusetts, assessed the status of the floodwaters and determined the Connecticut River was able to accept additional water. Inspections took place at all the basin dams to ensure they remained in good working order. The inspections are routine during a flood event. Col. Atilano praised the efforts of all the



Ball Mountain Dam in May 2023 before the flooding.



Ball Mountain Dam holding back water during the July flood.

team members working the flood event.

“We have the brightest and most capable minds doing extraordinary work; this mission, as with all our projects and programs, would not be possible without our people,” said Col. Atilano.

In addition to the flood fighting efforts done by our teams at the USACE dams, FEMA activated the District’s debris and infrastructure missions during the flooding. Members of the team went out and assessed three water treatment plants. At the state level, Vermont requested technical assistance, and District experts assisted with modeling support to predict future pool levels at state dams. The New England District team posted dam updates through all its social media outlets

as well as press releases.

While pools were above normal water levels at many of our dams, the team continued to release water and lower the pools as allowed by the forecast. They continued to monitor the situation closely and took appropriate actions to ensure the safety of the public.

“I want to give a shout out to our dedicated Park Rangers, engineers, hydrologists, the Reservoir Control Center in Concord, Emergency Operations Center, geotechnical team, and all of the hard-working USACE New England team for their dedication and expertise during this event,” said Col. Atilano. “Outstanding work and I know the people of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut appreciate it!”



Surry Mountain Beach change house and rest room were under water during the flood.

Dredging up the past



Brig. Gen. Merdith Temple passes the command flag to Col. Curtis Thalken during the New England District Change of Command ceremony, July 8, 2005, in Faneuil Hall, Boston, Massachusetts.