



U.S. ARMY



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
New England District

# YANKEE ENGINEER

Volume 55, No. 12, September 2023

BUILDING STRONG®



## New England District announces Bourne Bridge maintenance work, lane closures

Story on page 4

# Yankee Voices

## Sympathy...

...to the family of Operations Retiree **Robert “Bob” Heald** who passed away Nov. 22, 2022. Bob retired from the New England District in 1999.

In addition to his time at the Corps of Engineers in New England, Mr. Heald served his country faithfully in the U.S. Army and was a Vietnam Veteran.

His obituary can be found here: <https://www.penbaypilot.com/article/robert-erwin-heald-obituary/168191>

... to the family of former NAD Commander, **Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Milton Hunter**, who passed away Aug. 5.

## Congratulations...

...to **Tony Silva**, Technical Lead, Engineering Division, on his retirement, Aug. 25.

## Words worth repeating

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

— Nelson Mandela



All of these boaters were "caught" practising boating safety and received water safety t-shirts.

## A dozen people “Get Caught” at Buffumville Lake practicing water safety

During Labor Day weekend, Buffumville Lake team members were out in force trying to catch people in the act of wearing their personal flotation devices (PDF) correctly. The team caught 12 individuals committing random acts of water safety and cited them with water safety t-shirts. The “Got Caught” initiative encourages members of the public to wear their PDFs while recreating at USACE projects. The Buffumville team “caught” approximately 30 adult individuals during the 2023 recreation season. Photos of the “offenders” were taken by Park Ranger Angela Erskine and seasonal Park Ranger Noah Tyler:



# Commander's Corner: Remembering the events on Sept. 11

by Col. Justin R. Pabis, PE  
Commander, New England District

Sept. 11 marks the anniversary of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. On that tragic day, nearly 3,000 people lost their lives when terrorists slammed two planes into the twin towers and one into the Pentagon. It's hard to fathom, but it could have been much worse had not the passengers and crew of a fourth hi-jacked plane attempted to retake it, ultimately crashing in a Shanksville, Pennsylvania field.



The attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon sparked acts of bravery in first responders who put aside their own safety to help others. As New Yorkers were running away from the World Trade Center to get to safety, many police and firefighters ran towards, and into, the buildings to try to get people out. Unfortunately, many of those heroes lost their lives in their attempt to save others

## Deputy Commander's Sends: Happy Labor Day!

by Lt. Col. David N. MacPhail  
Deputy Commander, New England District

I want to take a moment to recognize the annual Labor Day holiday. The Department of Labor notes that Labor Day is "an annual celebration of the social and economic achievements of American workers. The holiday is rooted in the late nineteenth century, when labor activists pushed for a federal holiday to recognize the many contributions workers have made to America's strength, prosperity, and well-being."



Employees here in the District are represented by two Union bargaining units, the National Federation of Federal Employees Local 1164, which represents most non-supervisory employees in the District outside of Cape Cod Canal, and the American Federation of Government

when the towers fell.

For those of you who are new to the New England District, like me, you should know that many of our own teammates rushed down to Ground Zero the day after the attacks to do anything and everything necessary to assist the people of New York. Two of our tugs and the crews of the M/V Wampanoag and the M/V Cataumet joined the growing fleet of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers vessels in shuttling personnel and dignitaries to disaster sites. Nearly 40 of our people from most of our Divisions and separate offices selflessly provided their services and expertise to aid in the disaster recovery operations. In addition to those who physically went to New York, many of our teammates stayed behind to backfill and support the work here at Concord Park and field offices, as well as supporting the work in New York. The Emergency Operations Center team worked around the clock from the day of the attack until the threat diminished. I'm proud to know that I command a District full of selfless people who answer the call for assistance.

Sept. 11, 2001, was a terrible day in American history, but we should never forget what happened and that our flag continues to fly strong and proud.

Thank you all for what you do each and every day for New England and the nation.

Employees Local 0230, which represents non-supervisory employees assigned to the Cape Cod Canal Field Office. Information about the Locals can be obtained from them by contacting their leadership. NFFE Local 1164 is led by their President, Mr. Keith Goulet, and AFGE Local 0230 is led by their President, Mr. John McCartin.

Although it's a day to celebrate the American worker, our mission at the New England District does not stop. Our teammates in the field will be out at our recreation sites representing New England District and assisting the public so that they may have an amazing day at our sites.

For those of us who have the day off, I want you to be safe while you are enjoying the beautiful weather, your barbecue, time on the water or however you choose to celebrate this weekend. I encourage you to make good decisions when out celebrating. Come back on Tuesday refreshed and ready to return so we can continue our important mission to New England and the United States of America.

Thank you for all you do!

# New England District announces Bourne Bridge maintenance work, lane closures

**By Bryan Purtell  
Public Affairs Office**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District announced that critical maintenance work and lane restrictions began in September on the Bourne Bridge spanning the Cape Cod Canal in Bourne, Massachusetts.

Beginning Sept. 18, vehicle travel over the bridge was reduced from the current two lanes in each direction to a single 12-foot-wide lane in each direction as roadway and bridge structural repairs are conducted. Lane restrictions will be in place 24 hours a day until the project is completed, and police details are on site when work is performed to assist with traffic.

R. Zoppo Corp. of Stoughton, Massachusetts, is the New England District's contractor. The maintenance work start date was weather dependent. USACE delayed the original project start date by a week to help ease traffic during the Cape Cod Canal Day festival scheduled to be held September 16 at Buzzards Bay Park.

Motorists planning to use the Bourne Bridge were told that travel delays are likely to occur during the morning and afternoon peak travel periods each day. Repair work and lane restrictions are scheduled to run through late November, weather permitting.

This maintenance work is critical to maintaining the structural integrity of the Bourne Bridge, a vital component to the transportation system of Cape Cod, the Islands and southeastern Massachusetts. Work includes concrete and pavement repairs on the bridge roadway, repair of deteriorated steel supports, maintenance of bridge joints,



Photo by John MacPherson

District contractor R. Zoppo Corporation performs maintenance work on the Bourne Bridge.

and repairs to the concrete abutment structures. Work crews are also performing maintenance work on the bridge lighting and drainage systems during this timeframe.

The Sagamore Bridge underwent

similar maintenance work in March of this year. Traffic signs and message boards are being used on the Bourne Bridge to help inform motorists about pending lane restrictions and bridge work.

# Command Sergeant Major Galick visits New England District

USACE Command Sergeant Major Douglas Galick visited the New England District and held a special coffee hour, Aug. 22, to introduce himself to the District team and to answer questions. Lt. Col. David MacPhail, Deputy District Commander, hosted the special hybrid coffee hour at Concord Park.

Command Sgt. Maj. Galick said when he visits the Districts and Divisions, he asks team members how they get their information and asks for ideas on how to improve communications between senior leaders and the team. He said he likes to get the pulse of each Division and District office because his priority is the people that make up the USACE Team.

“If we take care of our people, then our people can take care of the program,” he said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Galick said he loves seeing all of the USACE projects when he goes on visits, but his main concern is hearing from the Team.

“I am your Sergeant Major,” he said. “I work for you.”

Lt. Col. MacPhail asked questions provided to him by the audience. The first concerned all of the IT issues that the District has been having. Command Sgt. Maj. Galick said the USACE IT system is old. There has been an ongoing study on the problem, and he believes that USACE Leadership will be making a decision on a solution soon.

The next topic involved telework. Lt. Col. MacPhail said that one of the problems with telework is that leaders do not have face-to-face engagement with their teams. He asked the Command Sgt. Maj. If he knew where USACE is going in terms of telework. Command Sgt. Maj. Galick said that USACE knows that it is in competition for talent. Private industry and other agencies are in a better position than USACE to offer 100-percent telework as an incentive to work for them. He



Photo by Elizabeth Cosselin.

Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Galick and Lt. Col. David MacPhail, Deputy District Commander, hold a hybrid coffee hour at Concord Park

said that USACE’s current status is now probably the new normal and he didn’t see any policy changes in the near future. Command Sgt. Maj. Galick said that everyone knows the USACE Castle and that it is a great organization. He said he believes that USACE can recruit based on its reputation.

“Exciting work and a good work climate are how USACE retains the talent,” he said.

An audience member said that in New England the problem with getting people in the door is the pay and they asked if that was being addressed. Command Sgt. Maj. Galick said it was. He said USACE is looking at bonuses or direct hires and shortening the hiring timeline.

Lt. Col. MacPhail asked Command Sgt. Maj. Galick to expand on safety and communication. The Command Sgt. Maj. said that USACE communicates through process and policy orders. Leaders need to communicate. People are important. He also talked about conflict resolution and how it should be resolved at the lowest level if possible.

Command Sgt. Maj. Galick was asked what advice he would give to a new District team member. He encouraged new employees to ask questions and that doing so is not a sign of weakness. He advised new employees to know their purpose in the organization. “Why did the District

hire you? Embracing your purpose will help you focus on the things you got hired for,” he said.

Lt. Col. MacPhail asked Command Sgt. Maj. Galick his thoughts on mentorship. He said that he didn’t believe people could be successful without a mentor. He cautioned his audience to be careful who you pick as a mentor. Mentors should not try to craft mentees into being versions of themselves, he said. Instead, they should be crafting team members into being the best version of that themselves. He said it was okay to have more than one mentor.

The next question was lighter, asking Command Sgt. Maj. Galick which New England sports teams he follows. The native New Englander said that despite his upbringing in New Hampshire he was a Giants and Dodgers fan.

Lt. Col. MacPhail asked how he recharges after a long day and Command Sgt. Maj. Galick said he goes home to his family and fishes. He cautioned people not to overwork because when they do that, it affects both work and home.

The coffee ended with a brief award ceremony. Kim Russell and Emily Berry were both nominated by their supervisors and received challenge coins for their outstanding work for the District.



Photo by Capt. Jeremy Liker

Cadet Leo Puntillo spent a month with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District learning about engineering in the U.S. Army.

## ROTC Cadet spends internship at New England District

Some college students look forward to a relaxing summer away from studies and hanging out with friends and having fun. Cadet Leo Puntillo, a member of the Reserve Officers Training Corps at the University of Minnesota had other, more productive plans. ROTC prepares college students to become officers in the U.S. Armed Forces. ROTC students can earn a university degree tuition-free in exchange for an agreement to join the military after graduation.

Puntillo decided to take advantage of the ROTC's Engineering Internship Program (EIP) and traveled to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and spend a month in July to learn about engineering in the U.S. Army.

"I had not looked much into engineering in the Army before the internship, so I decided to do it as a way to learn about something in the Army I knew almost nothing about," he said.

Capt. Jeremy Liker, recently assigned to the New England District, said that the District annually receives one or two

cadets as part of the internship. The program is run by the U.S. Army Cadet Command with cooperation and partnership with USACE. Liker and Capt. Sarah Hoyt served as Puntillo's supervisors during his time with the District.

"We were both responsible for Cadet Puntillo's health, morale and well being while assigned to NAE," said Liker.

Liker said Capt. Briana Karanopolis created the cadet's itinerary before she left for another assignment, and he and Hoyt used that itinerary as a learning foundation for Puntillo's time at the District.

"Outside of the itinerary originally planned, Capt. Hoyt and I shared our experiences in the Army," he said. "We taught him what he should expect once he becomes a newly commissioned officer of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and what he should expect as a platoon leader."

Puntillo was impressed with everything he was learning. "USACE has one of the most unique mission sets of any unit in the Army I've ever seen," he said. "The overwhelming

civilian presence in USACE makes it one of the only units in the Army that directly impacts regular Americans to such a degree.”

Puntillo said the wide variety of missions he learned about highlighted just how many necessary functions USACE provided for both the U.S. Government and the American people. Both captains were new to the New England District as well and took the opportunity to not only mentor Puntillo, but to learn about USACE and all its operations.

“I had no idea how diverse USACE’s mission is and with that the diverse background of professionals in the District alone,” he said. “USACE is a big part of the Engineer Branch of the Army that a small percentage of green suiters get exposure too. It is also very incredible how much recreational land the Corps owns as part of project sites and the amount of tourism it receives from the local communities.”

During his internship, Puntillo got to visit some of the District’s projects. His favorite? Ball Mountain Dam. Although recent flooding left the project in need of clean-up, Puntillo said the Vermont project was still overwhelmingly beautiful.

“The scale of those mountains and the scenery was eye-opening to a mid-Westerner,” he said.

Puntillo said although he enjoyed touring the District’s projects, the best part of his internship was meeting and working with the New England District team.

“I thoroughly enjoyed meeting all the staff at NAE and receiving the great mentorship from Captains Liker and Hoyt,” he said.

Puntillo has returned to the University of Minnesota and is now a senior. When he graduates, he will receive his commission and move to a new unit in the U.S. Army Reserves as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. Puntillo believes that spending part of his summer in New England was time well spent. He



Photo by Capt. Sarah Hoyt

Cadet Leo Puntillo and Capt. Sarah Hoyt get a briefing from Mark Anderson at the MIT/Lincoln Labs project in Massachusetts.

was able to learn about the role engineering plays in the U.S. Army and the wide range of possibilities it holds for civilians and soldiers alike.

“Thank you to Col. Atilano, Col. Pabis and all the staff for letting a young cadet spend time at NAE! It was a fantastic summer!”



## Touring New England District projects

Col. Justin R. Pabis, New England District Commander (center) and the Honorable Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, get a briefing on the Cape Cod Canal bridges from Craig Martin (right) during his project tours.

# Dredging up the past



Photo by Bob Batt

Bob Heald, Brian Valiton, and Roger Parker enjoy each other's company during Roger Parker's retirement luncheon held at Hanscom Air Force Base in this August 1996 photo.