



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Alaska District

GOLD NUGGETS

'Building and preserving Alaska's future'

May 2011

62nd Engineer Detachment returns after serving in Iraq

By Curt Biberdorf
Public Affairs Office

The 62nd Engineer Detachment officially ended its first deployment by uncasing the unit's colors during a ceremony in the headquarters atrium April 27.

The eight-member engineer support team returned in March after spending one year in Iraq working as a project coordinator with 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division; 4th Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division and the Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Projects included working on water supply systems; renovating a health clinic, an indoor youth sports stadium and large municipal maintenance facility; procuring a portable ultrasonic water-metering systems; renovating the heating ventilation and air conditioning of a hospital and auditorium; constructing a boys school and solid-waste transfer system station; and assisting with sewer system vacuum pumping and jetting trucks.

"The reason why we took this assortment of projects was because there was an exceedingly-high level of public frustration with the apparent inability of the government of Iraq to provide these public services and facilities themselves," said Maj. James Thompson, detachment commander. "They were faltering in these areas and needed a jump start."

Iraq has progressed to the point that during the unit's deployment, Operation Iraqi Freedom transitioned to Operation New Dawn. Now the Iraqis are in charge of their future, and the United States is there to support their efforts, said Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander.

Every project the detachment took on was a critical component of the US Forces-Iraq commander's effort to wage the counterinsurgency campaign, and it transferred this fight to the Iraqis, Koenig said.

The 62nd Engineer Detachment is

a forward support engineering team-advance that deploys quickly and augments the engineer staff of other organizations. It consists of a military commander and noncommissioned officer-in-charge along with a civilian geographical information system specialist, contract specialist, and civil, electrical, environmental and mechanical engineers.

Two years ago, the Army started the effort to field these engineer detachments to execute a specific mission on the battlefield, Koenig said. Activated just weeks before deploying, the 62nd Engineer Detachment was also the first sent into combat.

"I can tell you right now that the concept has been proven, and it will be a model for field force engineering for the Corps of Engineers for years to

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Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Maj. James Thompson, 62nd Engineer Detachment commander (left), and Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, uncasing the unit's colors during a redeployment ceremony at district headquarters April 27. The event celebrated the return of the detachment after a yearlong deployment to Iraq.



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Members of the 62nd Engineer Detachment prepare to uncasing the unit colors during a celebration to mark their return during a redeployment ceremony at district headquarters April 27. They are Maj. James Thompson, commander; Doug Sterk, civil engineer; Reynaldo Singson, electrical engineer; George Cashman, mechanical engineer; Sgt. 1st Class Keith Baltoser, noncommissioned officer-in-charge; and Tom Baker, cartographer. Not attending the ceremony is Ron Jackson, contract specialist, who stayed in Iraq to assist the 34th Engineer Detachment during the transition of replacing the Alaska-based unit.

Return

Continued from Page 1

come," Koenig said.

Thompson said two acronyms summarized their activity in Iraq—BWT and ATA.

It was "By With Through" the full cooperation, knowledge and participation of as many agencies and officials as possible that they could build effective and integrated project development and delivery teams. "Advise Train Assist" described the role as a technical resource to their implementing partners, and their role as mentors and advisors on technical issues and project execution.

Iraq's educational institutions yield engineers and technicians as good as any, but after decades of sanctions and the ravages of war, the nation has smart people who have lacked the opportunity to fulfill their potential, said Thompson.

"They have always been in a position of extreme compromise and pressure to just 'make it work, get it done,'" he said. "They are geniuses at making incredible things with very few resources."

Working BWT the Ninewa Province enabled the Iraqi government to be better positioned to be self-supporting in the future. By completing various projects, the public frustration decreased by the time the detachment left. The redevelopment projects

enhanced the citizens faith in the government and fostered the belief that their directorates were doing the right things, said Thompson.

He spoke about the "first order" effects, which are direct results of completing projects, and "second order" effects, which are broader and longer-term benefits, such as showing the Iraqis how to execute projects on their own.

"Regardless of the momentary failures, the successes of a single project, we can all feel very good about the fact our second-order effects will continue to deliver for the Iraqi people well into the future," Thompson said. "For that, I'm very proud of what we've done on this tour."

Preparing the team for success was another facet of the deployment.

The district came together to ensure the detachment was ready to deploy and continued that support from home. Without family support, success is impossible, Koenig said.

"It was a lot of work. Getting there took an exceptional effort and getting back took an exceptional effort," Thompson said. "It takes this district to get us to where we need to be."

One of those areas was staffing as newly-hired employees arrived after the unit departed. Doug Sterk left his home in California to join the team as

the civil engineer. He had spent the previous 17 years as a self-employed engineer.

"Working in this environment is totally different," Sterk said. "The family separation was tough, but I learned a lot about myself and a lot about my team."

The detachment's accomplishments were recognized in a ceremony in Iraq. Thompson and Sgt. 1st Class Keith Baltozer, noncommissioned officer-in-charge, earned the Bronze Star Medal for their efforts, and civilian members received a similar award. Furthermore, Thompson said a campaign streamer will be attached to the guidon to signify that the detachment has gone to war, which is a special and rare occurrence for a new unit.

Looking ahead, Thompson will return to his civilian job in Washington state and Baltozer will also leave the unit as is common for military members to move every few years, but the civilians will stay in place just like other full-time employees. Team members will train and eventually deploy again where the Army needs them, Koenig said.

"This team has established a great legacy and laid a great foundation," he said. "We don't know exactly what the future holds for the next deployment, but we know the next team will come along and execute brilliantly and add to the legacy of the 62nd Engineer Detachment."



Generally impressed

Lt. Gen. Francis Wiercinski, U.S. Army Pacific commander, joins installation and district staff during a tour of the Warrior in Transition Complex under construction at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson April 28. Awarded in February 2010 to Watterson Construction Co., the project supports the mission of assisting wounded soldiers through the transition to military duty or civilian life. The complex consists of an 80-person barracks, soldier and family assistance center, company headquarters facility and battalion headquarters facility, and is scheduled for completion in December. Wiercinski said he was pleased with the mission that the battalion is accomplishing and complimented the complex under construction. (Photo by Col. Reinhard Koenig)

GOLD NUGGETS

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Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, (left) and Phil Santerre (far right), class advisor, congratulate Ken Andraschko, Kelly Davis, Sean Benjamin, Lisa Geist, Robert Fox, Denise Koopman and Ben Soiseth, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Leadership Development Program Level 2 graduates, after a ceremony at district headquarters April 11.

Team completes leadership program

By Curt Biberdorf
Public Affairs Office

With a government shutdown averted, USACE Leadership Development Program Level 2 participants received their certificates of completion without delay during a ceremony in the headquarters atrium April 11.

Eight employees completed the 18-month program designed to provide “participants with the first in a series of experiences that increase self-awareness and understanding of their individual talent potential, and the methods and approaches to develop them,” according to the Pacific Ocean Division ULDP Web site.

“We really appreciate the opportunity and believe it was really beneficial,” said Lisa Geist, physical scientist in Environmental Engineering and Level 2 graduate. “I encourage anyone interested to apply to the program.”

Each district’s class size ranges from five to eight students, and the curriculum involves about 200 work hours and 60 hours of personal time.

It consists of a strengths assessment and workshop, leadership training, organization training, project

management best practices review, several books to read, two one-page essays, journal entries and a team project. Students are expected to leave with a plan of how to apply what they learned.

“It was a great experience. We get to branch out from what we normally do,” said Ben Soiseth, Regulatory Division project manager.

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, talked about leadership and teams. The district is composed of a “team of teams.”

“Identify your role and make a connection to make the team better,” Koenig said. “(The graduates) will leave this team and make the team they are returning to that much better.”

The class traveled to Japan District for a one-week Office of Personnel Management-sponsored team-building and leadership seminar. For a class project, the group completed a quality metrics study, which proposed a method for project delivery teams to identify and resolve potential quality problems before they escalate, said Phil Santerre, Office of Counsel deputy chief and class advisor.

Class members briefed the corporate

board on the study, and “their effect will have a long-term benefit to the district,” Koenig said.

The other graduates were Ken Andraschko in the Programs and Project Management Division, Sean Benjamin in the Engineering Division, Jacob Sweet in the Engineering Division, Kelly Davis in Programs and Project Management Division, Robert Fox in the Engineering Division and Denise Koopman in the Office of Counsel.

The application period for the next Level 2 class is open through May 25. Lunchtime information sessions will be scheduled for interested applicants.

Nonsupervisory employees in grades of GS-12 or lower are eligible to apply. Supervisors should nominate individuals to participate in ULDP. Completion of Level 1 Basic Orientation is a prerequisite for Level 2.

Nominated applicants must submit an applicant profile, statement of interest, supervisory endorsement, ULDP agreement, essay and latest two performance appraisals to their supervisor to be forwarded to the class advisor before the deadline.

Visit the ULDP Web site at <https://intra.poj.usace.army.mil/uldp/>

'Third Thursday' opens with discussion on teamwork

By Curt Biberdorf
Public Affairs Office

Leadership through teamwork was discussed at the first Alaska District Family Readiness Group "Third Thursday" lunchtime event presented by Military and Family Life Consultants in the Talley Room April 21.

Jeff Sherman, licensed counselor with the consultants at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, spoke about the characteristics of a team leader.

Military and Family Life Consultants is a Department of Defense-sponsored program started in 2006 that gives service members, family members and civilian employees who work for the military access to free non-medical situational problem-solving, educational and counseling service by licensed counselors.

The counselors provide services to individuals, couples, families and groups. They can even arrange to speak with a particular team in the district. These consultants also are available for presentations at churches, schools or other organizations that have anyone connected to the military as part of their population, Sherman said.

The confidential service allows up to 12 sessions per topic. Counselors remain at an installation from one to six months, which helps to maintain confidentiality, he said.

For the first lunchtime session, his handout summarized 17 attributes of a successful leader, but he discussed four of these informally with the attendees, inviting their participation and feedback.

Leaders need to be adaptable. Change is inevitable, and people need to be aware of how they react to it.

"The only person you can change is yourself," Sherman said. "You may have to change to help the team."

Collaboration is another attribute of effective leaders, but perceptions can hinder.

"Everyone has different perceptions. If five people gave a report after observing a building on fire, you would get five different reports," he said.

Everything people experience goes through a "screen" or "net" to determine meaning or perception. Those experiences affect their perceptions, and people must be aware of

themselves, vulnerabilities and blind spots, Sherman said.

On commitment, people need meaning in their lives. He told the story of two bricklayers. One was complaining while the other was happy doing his job. The complainer said "I'm laying bricks," while the cheerful worker said he was "building a cathedral."

"Meaning is a huge factor on commitment," he said. "You need to see meaning in work. In leadership on a team, that is key."

Communication is another critical attribute.

"The big one here is do not isolate yourself from others," Sherman said. "It's a big problem in a lot of aspects of life."

He told a story about orphaned babies in Germany during World War II. Those adopted into homes were

surviving while babies in hospitals were dying. The hospital provided everything necessary for survival except the human interaction that adopted babies received.

"Not that that happens to us, but we need to interact with the people we work

with," he said. "In adults, those who are isolated, we find depression. Interaction is the key."

Ninety percent of communication is nonverbal. The verbal and nonverbal need to agree with each other, and when the messages are mixed is when teams struggle, Sherman said.

The last attribute he discussed was competence.

People think in pictures. They need those pictures individually and as a team to keep moving in the right direction.

In his experience, people tend to have vivid pictures of what is wrong in their lives but struggle to see anything about where they would like to be.

"That's why we say visionary leaders," Sherman said. "We need pictures. Effective leaders throughout history can paint a picture."

Topics planned each third Thursday in order from May through January.

They are: healthy living; predeployment and the single service member; redeployment and what to expect; time management strategies and helpful hints; working in teams; relaxation and stress relief; how to cope with winter blues; avoiding and stopping gossip; and conflict resolution.

"We need pictures. Effective leaders throughout history can paint a picture."

Jeff Sherman, licensed counselor

Military and Family Life Consultants



F-22 simulator offers new reality

By David Bedard
JBER Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Located in the 3rd Wing's Distributed Mission Operations Campus at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, the room which will eventually house the F-22 Raptor Full Mission Trainer simulator looks more like an F-117 Nighthawk stealth strike fighter turned inside out than the berth for a state-of-the-art simulator.

The walls, vents and even the large ceiling fans perched on the ceilings are covered in flat black paint. Gary Bruton, DMO project officer, said the paint scheme allows projection of a F-22 simulation in 360 degrees from top to bottom.

"It's like nothing else," he said with a grin. "It looks like a big PlayStation game."

The 3rd Operations Support Squadron leadership inspected the facility after it was turned over to their organization by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District that constructed the facility and prepared it for installation of the F-22 FMT.

During the 3rd OSS inspection, contract workers scurried about the facility laying much of the groundwork for the simulator that Bruton said will be fully mission-capable by January 2012.

Air Force lieutenant colonels Paul Greenlee, 3rd OSS director of operations, and Brian Baldwin, 3rd OSS fighter assistant director of operations, walked the corridors of the campus, gaining a full understanding of the infrastructure that will support the FMT.

They ducked under the silvery arteries of the FMT's air handler, which Bruton said closely regulates the temperature and humidity inside the simulator because of the needs of the system's precise electronics.

Baldwin said the F-22 FMT has been two years in the making and is part of the larger project of consolidating 3rd Wing DMO into one building.

"We are the premier DMO hub in (Pacific Air Forces)," he said. "In the Pacific, you don't have another place where you've got the capabilities that we have, where our C-17s (Globemaster III), F-22s, (E-3 Sentry

Airborne Warning And Controls System) and—potentially down the road—C-130s (Hercules), can all plug into the Distributed Mission Operations network and train with people in Japan, people in Hawaii, train with people in the Lower 48."

Bruton elaborated on the DMO network's capabilities, saying units from around the world representing all military services can participate in an exercise fully organized, staged and undertaken in a virtual world.

Bruton said the F-22 FMT will consist of a gantry-mounted cockpit suspended more than 20 feet above the floor. Projectors will paint the visuals of the simulation for both day and night conditions, even allowing the pilot to use night-vision goggles to navigate the fighter.

Though 525th and 90th fighter squadrons participate in force-on-force exercises in Alaska and around the world, Baldwin said the FMT will supplement these maneuvers with full simulations.

"There's a lot of great training we can do in the sim(ulator) that is really difficult to do in real life," he said. "Red Flags only happen so often. Northern Edge, these kinds of exercises are awesome, and you can't replace those, but because they're not here all the

time, this gives us the ability to train to the highest levels."

Though the FMT allows F-22 pilots to hone their advanced skills, Baldwin said the simulator can help with fundamentals as well.

"It also gives us the ability to train to the most basic levels for pilot proficiency without having to spend airplane flying hours and maintenance costs to get some of that training in the actual airplane," he explained. "Some of it can be done in the simulator, things like instrument training.

"With a lot of your building block tactical training, you can get better training in the sim without burning the gas," Baldwin continued. "Then, when you get to flying the airplane, you can put it all together at a higher level."

He said with the loss of F-15 Eagle fighters at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, dissimilar air combat training opportunities have become more difficult to come by, and F-22-on-F-22 exercises are unrealistic because no other country yet operates a fifth-generation stealth fighter.

With the FMT, Raptor pilots will be able to fly against the best Russian-made air superiority fighters as well as learn how to evade enemy air defenses.

This story was originally published in the Arctic Warrior newspaper.



U.S. Air Force photo by David Bedard
Air Force Lt. Col. Paul Greenlee, 3rd Operations Support Squadron director of operations, marvels at the mechanical room supporting the F-22 Raptor Full Mission Trainer at the Distributed Mission Operations Campus March 31. The FMT requires precise regulation of its temperature and humidity.

Deployee supports base transfer process

By Michael Bell

AED environmental officer

AFGHANISTAN ENGINEER DISTRICT-SOUTH — As part of a continuing battle space strategy to move U.S. Stryker brigades from Zabul province to western Afghanistan, U.S. forces are turning over Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) to the Romanian army.

The Romanians are mentoring Afghan National Army soldiers. The Afghanistan Engineer District-South Environmental and Real Estate offices are involved in the closure or transfer of bases from or to U.S. control.

An environmental site closure survey report must be conducted to identify environmentally-sensitive and hazardous waste areas that could impact military and civilian health.

Brian Johnson, Civil and Environmental Section chief, recognizes the importance of the district's involvement in base transfers.

"The orderly and seamless transfer of property from the United States to others builds credibility and trust," said Johnson. "We limit our liability by delineating environmental trouble spots and cleaning up after ourselves."

The Environmental Office is privileged to visit distant FOBs with unique populations and characteristics. The Zabul province populations are from the United States, Romania and Afghanistan.

These are close-knit groups who must rely on each other for survival. They use outdoor toilets, cook and clean outdoors, and take cold showers. Working generators are valuable, and fuel is flown in to keep them running. Computers and telephones are usually only for officers. Hot meals are typically served in the morning and evening with a set menu. Mail call is a huge event and supplies all of the luxuries.

I recall my recent visits to Atghar, Shamulzia and Mescall. When I prepare for trips, there is a sense of both dread and excitement because I don't know what to expect, especially when there is no Corps of Engineers presence. What should I take? Where do I stay? What do I eat? And, of course, is it dangerous?

The missions are coordinated with Stryker engineers who are well-prepared. We usually fly by helicopter.



Courtesy photo

Heather Moncrief, deployed as an environmental engineer in the Afghanistan Engineer District, sits at her workstation and bedroom at Forward Operating Base Lagman in Afghanistan's Zabul province. Moncrief is a civil engineer in the Regulatory Division.

The Stryker engineers provide maps, connections and security. I usually have at least one armed military member always with me.

Although the trips are stressful, they are very rewarding. I remember one day in particular at FOB Mescall.

The FOB sits atop a 500-meter cliff overlooking the Tarnak River valley.

After conducting the survey, we slept on cots in an old transient tent. We were woken at 4 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day to view a crystal clear sky. The outer bases typically have no outside lighting, and the view of the stars is incredible.

As the sun rose, the mountains were blue and the river silver. After enjoying the stars and sunrise, we went to breakfast where the Romanians served us cold eggs Benedict. We spent the rest of the morning sitting against the outside of HESCO barriers, overlooking the dramatic valley and waiting for a ride. It was the most peaceful and beautiful Thanksgiving I have ever had.

At the same time, the experience also made me appreciate all the conveniences I have at Kandahar Airfield.

Heather Moncrief, an environmental engineer deployed from the Alaska

District, shared her experience while visiting FOB Lagman in March.

"Though I will never forget the ammunition-box desk and five-gallon bucket chair that served as my workstation, or the view of Alexander the Great's fortress visible from anywhere in camp, my take-home moment from FOB Lagman would have to be standing on top of the HESCO barriers at sunset, looking out at the children playing in the cool of the evening.

"It was such a stark contrast to what was going on behind me—a guy training his bomb-sniffing dog to find bricks of C4 (explosive), soldiers readying themselves to go out on a patrol convoy, and Blackhawk helicopters taking off and landing in tandem. It was a good reminder that even during times of adversity, life goes on," Moncrief said.

The base closure and transfer process will increase the workload for the AED South Real Estate and Environmental Offices. However, the opportunities to see the country and make a difference are worth the extra work.

This article originally appeared in the March/April 2011 Engineering Freedom magazine.

Around the district

Safety specialist certified

Greg Vernon, health and occupational safety specialist in the Safety Office, has met all the requirements for Certified Safety Professional.

This certification is awarded to individuals who meet academic standards, satisfy professional safety experience requirements and have passed two examinations. The examinations cover engineering and management aspects of safety, applied sciences, legal and regulatory matters, professional affairs and other safety-related topics.

Certified Safety Professionals specialize in protecting workers, the public, property and environment by identifying, evaluating and controlling hazards. The CSP directs safety programs at a corporate level to reduce risk and loss.

"Becoming a CSP elevates a safety professional to the top of his or her field," said Steven Schoolcraft, Board of Certified Safety Professionals examination director.

The BCSP, governed by 13 directors with seven membership organizations, establishes standards for and verifies minimum competency in professional safety practice. BCSP also evaluates CSPs for compliance with recertification requirements.

Since 1969, nearly 20,000 individuals have achieved the CSP certification. Currently, more than 11,000 hold the CSP. BSCP is a nationally-accredited, non-profit corporation chartered in Illinois, with headquarters in Savoy.

Asian Pacific-Islander Month events

Asian-American Pacific-Islander Heritage Month is celebrated in May. This year's theme is "Leadership, Diversity, Empowerment and Beyond." Several activities are scheduled to highlight the month.

May 12: Brown bag lunch "All About Japan" in the Talley Room from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. hosted by Marion Dawag.

May 18: Bake sale in the atrium annex from 8-9:30 a.m.

Points of contact are Audrey Harrop and Julian Baxter.

May 31: Outdoor potluck finale celebration from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Japanese Consulate Consul Hideo Fujita is the scheduled guest speaker. Featured entertainment will be the Taiku Drummers, Philippine Cultural Dancers and Hawaiian dancers. Points of contact are Beth Beardsley and Melanie Peterson.

Project completed

Fort Wainwright Stryker Vehicle Wash Facility—The district conducted the final inspection and turned over this FY2009 project to the garrison March 29. The project involved construction of a tactical vehicle wash facility with a laydown area for unit/vehicle/personnel equipment and organizational vehicle parking.

Photos wanted for Arctic Engineer

The public affairs office is seeking high-resolution photos of employees participating in various recreational activities or hobbies in Alaska, such as hunting, camping, fishing, skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, snowmachining, curling, golfing, boating, flying, taking a scenic cruise, riding the Alaska railroad, riding ATVs, playing a team sport, sightseeing at a national park, visiting a museum. These images are needed to create the "Active in Alaska" photo page in the Arctic Engineer magazine. Send photos to Curt Biberdorf.

Deployments

Iraq—Ron Jackson, Robert Weakland

Afghanistan—Linda Arrington, Lt. Col. Matthew Dooley, Anthony Garigliano, Roger Green, Scott Haan, Sterlin Hill, John Keys, Deborah McAtee, Heather Moncrief, Daniel Nordstrom, A'leisha Sorenson, Gary Weiler

Returned—Victor Ross, Ron Shafer



On schedule

Debra Curnow, construction schedule analyst for the Northern Area Office, was named the 2010 Pacific Ocean Division Construction Manager of the Year. Curnow provided construction contract scheduling support for more than 20 projects during 2010 on Fort Wainwright, Eielson Air Force Base, Fort Greely and Elmendorf Air Force Base. She was recognized for being a professional whose expertise, abilities and efforts have played a major role in improving project scheduling capabilities at the local, regional and national levels within and outside of the Army Corps of Engineers. (Photo by Doug Hart)

ACE-IT briefs

Common Access Card login only

In the 3rd Quarter of FY2011, ACE-IT will begin implementing a CAC-only login transition that will be completed by July 31. The Microsoft login will no longer be available.

Preparing for Windows 7

The Army has mandated that the Microsoft Windows XP Operating System be phased out of use by the end of 2013.

The Army Corps of Engineers, as part of the life cycle management of personal computers, will begin deploying the Corps version of Windows 7 this month. Computers delivered after the release of Windows 7 will be deployed with this updated operating system.

Computer refresh ahead

USACE personal computer refresh has been transformed from a delineated project, with a beginning and an end, into an ongoing life cycle management program.

Planning is under way for the purchase of the first round of computers for FY2011. Information Technology chiefs across the Corps are developing their life cycle plans for

computers that will be purchased through the end of July 2011 by model and user requirements. The next step will be to define site life cycle plans for FY2012-2014.

Reservationless conferencing

The less expensive and more productive method to conduct audio and web conferences is via ACE-IT's self-service AT&T reservationless audio and web conferencing. This service gives a host maximum flexibility and ease to hold a meeting, day or night, without making a reservation. Each host is assigned permanent dedicated dial-in numbers and access codes to use at any time. To make arrangements, call 1-866-562-2348.

Upcoming events

May 9-12	POD 2020 Conference in Seward
May 16-17	Deep draft port design charrette
May 19	Safety Day Headquarters
May 26	Safety Day Northern Area Office
June 6-9	Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko visit
June 10	SAME golf tournament
June 13-17	USACE Infrastructure Conference
June 23	District picnic



Courtesy photo

Dam conference

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Travis Tutka, National Dam Safety Program manager; Rick Britzman, South Pacific Division Dam Safety Program manager; Marcus Palmer, Alaska District Dam Safety Program manager and Soils and Geology Section chief; and Eric Halpin, special assistant for Dam and Levee Safety, gather at the 31st Annual U.S. Society on Dams Meeting and Conference in San Diego, Calif., April 11-15. During the event, Palmer was selected as one of the Corps' five young members of the U.S. Society on Dams. USSD is the primary professional society in the nation that deals with dams, and the conference was an excellent opportunity to network with other federal, state and local agencies, as well as private contractors on dams. Palmer attended several technical presentations, concentrated mostly on state-of-the-practice topics that are most applicable to the conditions at Moose Creek Dam at the Chena River Lakes Flood Control Project. Highlights were Corps presentations on efforts to remediate seepage issues at Howard Hanson Dam, a case study on the seismic remediation at Tuttle Creek Dam using cement bentonite slurry, and use of geologic data for risk assessment. At a Corps town hall meeting, Halpin discussed the transition to regional production centers and a mandatory center of expertise for dam safety. Throughout the week, Palmer interacted with the Corps dam safety leadership and staff from other regions.

Women excel within male-dominated workforce

By Pat Richardson
Public Affairs Office

Trish Opheen, Alaska District's first female Engineering Division chief, told women who work in a male-dominated workforce that they need to be true to themselves.

She talked about the importance of learning about strengths and weaknesses with a number of tests available through leadership and management programs. She advised women to gain the experience and credentials.

"Women need to speak up and take ownership of accomplishments," she said. "It's one of our greatest struggles. You've got to be able to tell your story so that people can recognize your competencies."

The title of Opheen's talk, "Succeeding as a Woman in a Male-Dominated Workforce," drew a crowd of women and several men to the brown bag lunch presentation April 12. The event was sponsored by the

district's Special Emphasis Program for Federally-Employed Women.

She said searching out mentors is valuable for feedback. "I lacked female role models, so I developed my own style, which includes hugging," she said.

At the University of Minnesota she was the lone woman in a class of 29 men. "I never considered I couldn't become an engineer," she said.

She shared stories about when the engineering profession and society's expectations didn't recognize her engineering capabilities and accomplishments.

Opheen was allowed into a high school architectural course on a trial basis the same year that Title 10 was signed into law. Title 10 mandated equal education for individuals and groups from all ethnic and racial backgrounds and of both sexes.

When she won a national award from the Corps of Engineers, the ceremony photographer pushed her aside and

took a photo of her husband shaking hands with the Chief of Engineers. When she was the resident engineer on the Snettisham Hydroelectric Project's Crater Lake Phase, she had to address the old wives tale that women were bad luck in tunnels.

"Why do I have to be a woman engineer?" she used to ask. "I am accepting that now."

Opheen is concerned about the lack of women entering engineering and the tendency for them to leave the field after 10 years.

A few women still are in engineering's managerial and leadership roles, she said.

She is at the giving-back period of her career. After she retires in June, she plans to become involved in speaking to kindergarten through 12th grade classes about careers in engineering.

Opheen said she wants to tell all girls you don't have to be a nerd. "I loved math in high school, and I was a ski bum in college."



Chili cook-off

(Below) Chili cook-off judges Jackie Leseman, executive assistant, and Larry McAllister, director of programs and project management, sample an entry while Colin Strickland, assistant district counsel, takes notes after a taste in the headquarters atrium April 28. (Top left) The top three recipes received a chili award. Pamela Lovasz's "Perfect Chili" won the first place red chili, Dianne Viotto's "White Chicken Chili" took the second place green chili and Natalia Soto's "Jalapeño Chili" received the third place yellow chili. Honorable mentions went to the remaining cooks. Thanks to everyone's participation in this event, the Social Activities Committee raised \$265 for the district picnic fund. (Photos by Curt Biberdorf)

