



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 12 No. 12, December 1989

Earthquake Team returns



Along with other Districts, St. Paul responded to the call for help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency during the earthquake disaster in California. Within 48 hours of the request, ten district employees were on their way, joining 300 others from around the nation.

Their experiences were eye-openers in terms of inter-agency coordination, human nature and, for some, conditions under which humans live, even without an earthquake.

The stories on pages 4 and 5 were written by two who spent three weeks in California - Arne Thompson, construction inspector from the Winona Area Office (shown at left near the infamous Nimitz Freeway in Oakland) and Clyde Giaquinto, engineer in Treatment Works. The photos were taken by Clyde.

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Bits and Pieces

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It's nearly here. The St. Paul District Awards Ceremony and Holiday Party will be held on December 8. The celebration will be at the Town Square Holiday Inn with socializing starting at 12:30. Music will be provided by **Kevin Bluhm** (PD-ES). At 1:00 p.m. there will be an awards ceremony followed by goodies at 1:30p.m.. In addition there will be great door prizes including a weekend stay at the Holiday Inn. Tickets at the door will be \$5.00. See you there!

Santa Anonymous will be party (pun intended) to the Holiday Party this year. Stop by on your way to the Holiday Inn and purchase the gift you would like to donate for a Santa Anonymous child. Santa's "sleigh" will move to the Holiday Party the afternoon of December 8th. The sleigh will also be located in the district office and the Sibley Building for two weeks in December. Dates of collection by the Federal Executive Board will be announced. Remember, your gift could be the only gift a child will see on Christmas morning, so make it a good one! Thanks.

The 1989 national conference of the **National Association of Interpreters (NAI)** was held at the St. Paul Radisson Hotel from November 5-10. This year's theme was "From Homespun to Hightech - Interpreting for Urban Audiences".

Twenty five Corps of

Engineers employees attended, including **George Tabb**, chief of the Land Management Section, Natural Resources Management Branch, HQUSACE and **Debbie Chenoweth**, assistant branch chief of Natural Resources Management in the Missouri River Division. Debbie is also the instructor for the Corps' Interpretive Services class. St. Paul District was represented by Park Rangers **Shelly Boney** and **Barb LaPierre**, Outdoor Recreation Planner **Norma Malinowski** and Public Affairs Specialist **Joan Guilfoyle**. Joan also served on the conference's Program Committee for the last year.

Marty McCleery of Planning Division has taken a position with the Twin Cities Arsenal Plant in New Brighton. His position of environmental engineer begins December 1. Good luck, Marty!

Dave Raasch is the newest addition to the Life Cycle Project Management staff. As an Individual Project Manager, he will be responsible for Chaska and State Road Coulee projects.

Marvin Pedretti, **Marvin Althoff**, **De Lene Moser** and **William Wolfe** of Lock and Dam #10 donated blood during a 1989 Red Cross Blood Drive in Guttenberg, Iowa.

You'll hear new voices when calling Planning Division and Office of Personnel: **Angie Peterson**, formerly of Real Estate, has taken the secretarial position in Planning (x309) and **Jenny Sjoberg** has moved

from Contracting Division to the secretarial position in Personnel (x477). Congratulations to you both!

The fire alarm system in the Post Office building is still being tested by our "landlord", the US Postal Service. One item that will be attended to is the alarm's volume, which will be increased.

Office Security Alert!!!!

In early October, a thief came up the elevator with a group attending a meeting in Room 1219, slipped into Planning Division, went through two desk drawers, then proceeded up the stairs to the 16th floor, did we know not what there and left the building. His take: money, check book, wallet and peace of mind.

The most disturbing fact is that the office he stole from was fairly buried in the cubicles, not seemingly accessible for a snatch-and-slip-away operation. What does that mean for those employees whose desks are close to the hallway? **Advice: Put valuables out of sight (locked if possible), watch for and challenge strangers, yell for help if needed.** The "baddies" are out there - Help keep them out of here!

Those who attended the last two **Brown Bag Luncheons** got feedback from **Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Mahoney** about the following topics: Corps

reorganization; alternate work schedules; purchase of systems furniture; the possibility of relocating the district to new headquarters, during renovation or permanently; the changing role of administrative support staff in light of increased automation (i.e. managers who now write rough drafts on the computer themselves); leasing additional office space for Regulatory Branch; problems with individuals telling contractors what to do, without having the authority to do so; employee morale.

If you would like to know more about how these discussions went and what Lt. Col Mahoney had to say... you'll have to come to the next "Brown Baggers", in January.

A demonstration of **evacuation equipment** for employees with mobility impairments was recently held. Approval to purchase equipment is eminent.

One useful piece of information has already come out of the meeting; that the evac equipment may be used in the center stairwell during a fire. This should allow the equipment to operate unimpaired by foot traffic. The issue of lighting in this stairwell during a power outage remains to be resolved.

Input, questions, comment may be directed to **Steve Adamski**, x498 or **Dave Christenson**, x204.

One member of the earthquake team has yet to return - **Tom Oksness** of CO-PO. The word is he may be back in time for Christmas.

Cultural Diversity Week celebration topped off with luncheon, music, dancing



Approximately 50 people attended the grand finale luncheon for Cultural Diversity Week, held at the downtown St. Paul Holiday Inn. From left, those visible are Barb Duffy (PD), Jan Graham (ED), Wayne Knott (PD), Dave Berwick (PD), COL Baldwin (DE), Mary Rivett (RM), Ruth Hageman (CO) and Marilyn Krutchen (PD).

Thistledown, shown at right, is a popular local folk music band who utilize, among other instruments, a hammer dulcimer, mandolin, piano and concertina. They specialize in Irish jigs, reels and traditional Irish music.

They provided accompaniment to the Royal Scottish Country Dancers, below right, who performed a sprathsha and a variety of reels and jigs! District officestaff may recognize Ed Eaton, chief of Water Control, by looking closely at the first man on the left. Ed has been dancing with the group for quite a few years, along with performing with the Historic Dance Ensemble every Christmas at the Alexander Ramsey House in St. Paul.

The dance and music provided a nice closure to a full week of activities in celebration of Cultural Diversity Week.



Direct Line to the Deputy intended to improve communications, morale

Will use "brown bag" lunches, suggestion boxes and an open door policy

By Lt. Col. Mike Mahoney
Deputy District Engineer

Part of my job as the Deputy Commander is to honestly assess the morale of the District and report my findings and recommendations to the District Commander. Morale is a subjective term; it's difficult to reach agreement on a definition, much less on the state of morale at any particular time. Colonel Baldwin has given me broad latitude in this area, so I've got few constraints and few guidelines. You might say he's empowered me as the District ombudsman for morale matters. I'm trying several approaches to get a feel for morale in our District. Hopefully, I'll be able to identify and address issues that will make life better for all of us.

..be forewarned: You may not get the answer you want, but you'll get an honest answer.

I've been at this business over 17 years, and I've always had an "open door" policy. If you catch me in the hall or stop by my office, I'll find time to talk to you. If I'm busy, I may have Mary Kay put you on the calendar instead of seeing you right away; but I will get to you and I will listen. I try to be honest in these sessions. So be forewarned: You may not get the answer you want, but you'll get an honest answer.

I've started a series of "brown bag" lunches to meet informally with anyone who wants to attend. They've been fun, but they haven't been as well attended as I'd hoped. Jody Rooney stopped by recently and made a dynamite suggestion. We'll start scheduling an important morale issue to discuss at each lunch. I'll still answer questions and discuss other issues, but we'll focus on a particular problem.

Jody suggested; (1) Perceived unfairness in the awards program, (2) Comparing St Paul's performance indicators to other districts, and (3) Alternate work schedules. I think she's got a super idea. We'll give it a try. Thanks Jody! Look for details on the next "brown bag" flier in early January.

You'll soon see suggestion/comment boxes appear in the District. I want to hear from you; questions, comments, gripes, attaboys for others in the District, or whatever's on your mind. I'll answer appropriate comments here in *Crosscurrents*. If you want a personal response, say so and give your name and office. I'll read and investigate every comment, but I won't spend inordinate effort on unsubstantiated, anonymous accusations. For this to be effective you need to give me all the information, or identify yourself

so I can get clarification. Just like Ann and Abby, I'll keep your identity confidential if you request. For our personnel outside St Paul, send your comments to our Public Affairs Office in an envelope marked "Deputy's Comment Box." PAO will bring them to me, unopened, with the local comments.

Just like Ann and Abby, I'll keep your identity confidential if you request.

In closing, I think this is a fabulous district. I don't think we have significant morale problems, but that doesn't mean we don't have a number of distractors that we can fix. I pledge you my honest efforts to make our District an even better place to work.

Finally, the Holiday season is upon us; PLEASE BE CAREFUL! Watch the road conditions, be aware of the danger posed by cold weather, get enough rest, and above all — don't mix alcohol or drugs with driving. We have many challenges ahead, and we need our full team to address them.



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Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-81. It is published monthly by offset for the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army. Deadline for submitting articles is the 10th of each month preceding publication.

Crosscurrents

Address: Editor, *Crosscurrents*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1421 U.S. Post Office and Custom House, St. Paul, Minn. 55101-1479.

District Engineer COL Roger Baldwin
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Mankato Dedication culminates 20 years of work

An October ceremony in Mankato marked the end of nearly 20 years of construction on the Mankato-North Mankato-Le Hillier Flood Control Project. The project had a total cost of nearly \$102 million and has been a major project of the district for two decades.

According to Bob Penniman, project manager in Engineering Management Branch, all major items on the project are complete. The contractor and the Corps have a number of minor items to complete before the project is turned completely over to the sponsors.

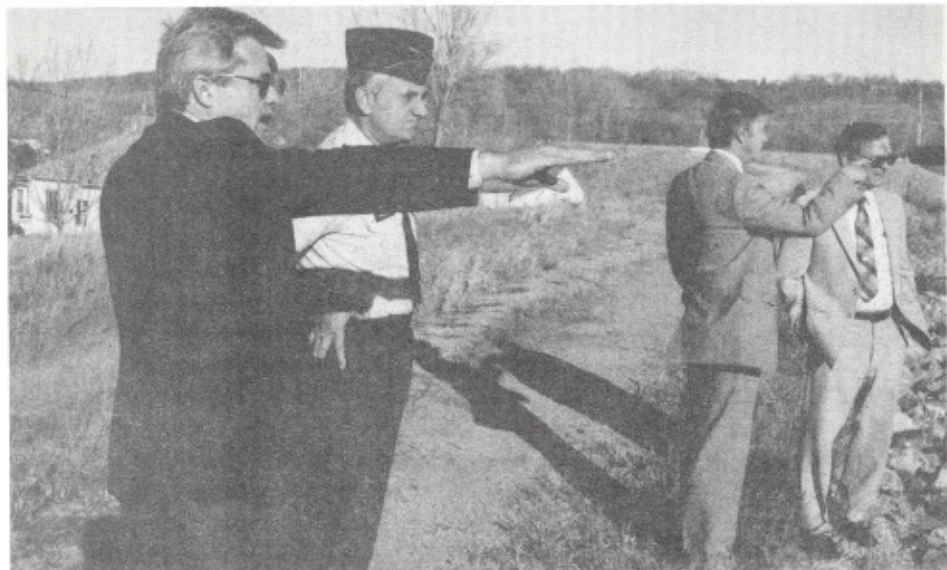
During the ceremony on October 17, District Engineer Colonel Roger Baldwin joined representatives of Mankato, North Mankato, South Bend Township and the Minnesota Department of Transportation in acknowledging the importance of the project and its impact on the people of the local area. The officials then unveiled (top photo) the three bronze plaques which will be mounted at prominent locations in the three communities.

The project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1958. The project design was modified following the severe flood of 1965 to include protection for portions of Mankato below Warren Creek and for Le Hillier, a small community next to Mankato. Construction was started in 1970.

The completed project includes nearly 5 miles of levee, 2.5 miles of concrete floodwall, 9 pumping stations with a combined pumping capacity of 650,000 gallons per minute, more than 3,400 feet of diversion channel on Indian Creek, and the construction of two highway bridges and a railroad bridge.

Prior to the ceremony, Penniman showed District staff key features of the project (middle photo).

Following the ceremony, Project Engineer Larry LaPoint led a bus tour of the project with stops at the Indian Creek drop structure and one of the pumping stations (bottom photo).



By Ken Gardner
Public Affairs Officer

Earthquake Team returns to District



Three of the ten employees sent to assist FEMA in residence inspections are shown at the Oakland Emergency Operations Center. From left, Clyde Giaquinto, engineer in Treatment Works, Bruce Ragan, Treatment Works Chief and Arne Thompson, construction inspector in the Winona Area Office.

Story by Clyde Giaquinto and Arne Thompson, Construction Operations Division

Photos by Clyde Giaquinto

Clyde: It was 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 21 1989 when what was about to be a fun-filled weekend of residential chores suddenly changed with the voice of Dave Christenson, Emergency Management (EM), on the phone asking if I was still interested in going to San Francisco. At 3:00 p.m. the same afternoon, my travel orders were ready to be picked up from EM. By 11:30 a.m. the next day I was en route to Sacramento, California.

Arne: Sacramento District was tasked with providing inspection assistance to FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). The district received the request from FEMA late Friday afternoon and by Monday morning had assembled 350-400 Corps people from around the country in Sacramento. Logistically,

Sacramento contracted for all the motel rooms and the rental cars so employees wouldn't have to worry about those items. They issued advance checks to anyone who had not received one prior to departure. They issued ID cards to anyone who didn't have one and they provided kits to everyone which included calculators, measuring equipment, paper, flashlights, raingear, gloves and cameras.

On Monday, there was an orientation and administrative meeting all day (Clyde: with at least six hours of instruction on how to complete the FEMA Form 90-56 Inspection Report.) That evening, we were assigned and deployed to various field offices. Sacramento District attempted to keep each District's people together as much as possible. Most of the St. Paul contingent went to Redwood

City with a crew from the Kansas City District.

Clyde: The Corps' response to this emergency was so rapid that it took a couple days for the workload to catch up to the various Emergency Operations Centers (EOC). Once it did, our work of conducting inspections of private residential property began. After about a week, there was a cutback at the Redwood City EOC due to a light workload. We were then sent to Oakland, where an average of 300-400 applications were being received daily.

Arne: The work assignment involved performing a verification inspection of damages to personal property and privately owned real property. A person claiming damages would fill out a FEMA

application for assistance. FEMA would review and categorize the application, and send applicable ones to the Corps. They would then be distributed to various field offices and inspection teams. Inspectors then contacted the applicants, completed the two page generic form and returned it to FEMA. It was FEMA whom made the final determination of eligibility, including how much money the applicant was eligible for.

During my inspection duties, I encountered just about every imaginable living condition, from two-story penthouse condominiums to "pits" that were so unbelievably dirty, I could not bring myself to enter them.

Clyde: Many homes were constructed on a pier foundation. Most of the foundations observed had no cross-bracing, so when the earth shifted, the structure shifted laterally, sometimes only a small distance, but enough to sever plumbing and other utilities. Others shifted more severely, sending the house completely off its foundation.

In one house that I inspected, the majority of plaster cracking in walls occurred only in the north and south facing walls, with minimal damage in the perpendicular direction. Interestingly, in this same house, windows which had been painted shut for many years now moved freely.

In Oakland, there were a number of so-called transient hotels. Most of these hotels were declared uninhabitable by the city. The EOC was forced to obtain an accurate resident list at the time of the quake in order to determine the actual number of people living at these residences. At one hotel that had 80 actual rooms, the EOC received applications from 150 people purported to be living there.

Some applications were accompanied by a memo as such: "Applicant claims he is 38 years old, but appears to be 17 or 18. Please verify". Upon reaching the address, there was nothing more than a chain link fence in front of a vacant lot with about 4" of new green

growth and the applicant. The applicant stated his house had fallen as a result of the quake and was subsequently removed. Upon interviewing a neighbor and the mailperson, we learned that the house had been torn down months ago.

Arne: The Corps' role was very important because it is through this inspection work that fraud attempts are thwarted, thus allowing assistance to be funneled to those who were really in need. There was a significant amount of attempted fraud.

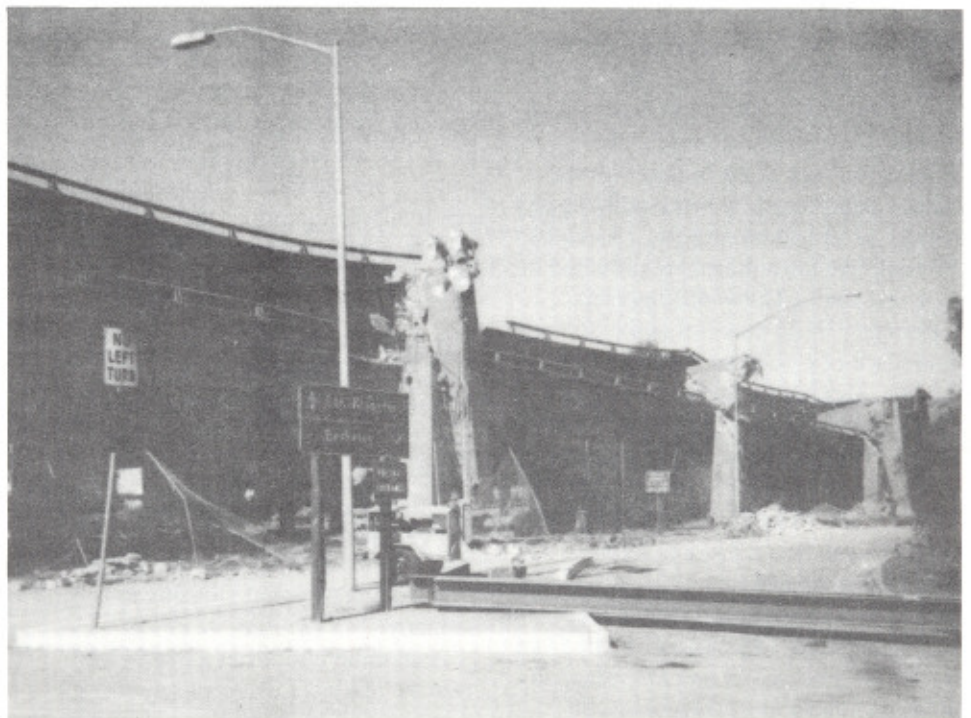
I had applications with addresses which turned out to be empty lots, school yards, city parks and addresses for which the resident did not know the applicant.

I feel that the rapid response by the government in the case of the earthquake was partially due to the criticism it received from Hurricane Hugo. Estimates from FEMA were that they could expect up to 100,000 applications, when I heard that they received only about 40% of that number, so I feel there was an overreaction. In an effort to respond, the Corps was required to complete inspections

within 48 hours of receiving the applications from FEMA. In my case, this led to long hours and no time off. It appeared that, in responding to FEMA's request for assistance, the Corps responded much faster than FEMA anticipated. The first couple of days were slow because we did not have the work from FEMA yet. In fact, the Corps was "on line" quicker than FEMA.

This was not a typical Corps role. Although I heard some grumbling that the work was not as anticipated, overall the Corps responded in a professional manner and everyone worked hard. My impression is that the overall government response to this disaster was excellent. Assistance was provided where needed in a timely manner.

Clyde: For me, the experience was somewhat of an eye opener, not only because of the destruction seen first-hand, but day after day talking with people in their homes, listening to their stories of loss and seeing the conditions under which some of the people in West Oakland live.



The shearing action of the support columns on the Nimitz Freeway during the earthquake is clearly seen in this photo.

Dave Tropple
Head Lock and Dam Operator,
US Army Corps of Engineers
and
Sergeant, US Army Reserve

If you ask Dave Tropple, CO-PO, what he finds most satisfying about his responsibilities as an NCO in the U.S. Army Reserve, he'll mention several things. He enjoys summer camp each year at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Working with the 318th Airborne Division in tactical field maneuvers and simulated war games is stimulating. Travel is also a big part of his reserve experience. But, at the top of the list, is his involvement with the color guard of the 407th Civil Affairs outfit in Winona.

Over the 13 years of its existence, this six-man unit has received several medals and trophies and many invitations to parades and celebrations. Tropple's self-supported group has been invited to the Rose Bowl and Macy's Thanksgiving Day parades as well as a variety of local and regional events. Each summer they look forward to participating in the Minneapolis Aquatennial Parade.

Sgt. David J. Tropple became a non-commissioned officer in 1980, just four years after joining the reserve as a mechanic with the 407th Detachment One group. From 1974 to 1976, he served active duty with the Army in Schwaibush Gmund, Germany. According to Tropple, serving in the military gives him the opportunity to work with highly-skilled, professional people. He says it's much like the atmosphere provided in his work for the Corps of Engineers.

Presently head operator at the St. Paul District's Lock & Dam 5A near Fountain City, Tropple has also served as a welder at the district's Boatyard. Additionally, he was a deck hand on board the Dredge *Thompson* for three years. Tropple calls his work challenging and enjoyable and describes his fellow workers as good people.

Dave is a graduate of Winona High School and has a welding certificate from Western Wisconsin Technical College in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Dave, his wife Michele, and their two children reside in Winona.

NCO's of the Month

Editor: In this issue, we see the last of the articles on our District's non-commissioned officers, in celebration of the "Year of the NCO", 1989.

Gerald Dohmen
Lock and Dam Operator, US
Army Corps of Engineers
and
Staff Sergeant, US Army Reserve

Perhaps two words best sum up what Gerald "Gerry" Dohmen, CO-PO, likes best about his duties as an NCO in the U.S. Army Reserve. "The people", says Dohmen. "Not only are my fellow soldiers very professional, but they also are good workers and good friends". As a supervisor with a unit that provides soldiers with their daily rations of food, it's quite likely Dohmen has a lot of friends.

A Subsistence Ration NCO with the 56th Material Management Company at Fort Snelling, Staff Sergeant Dohmen has been a member of the U.S. Army Reserve since 1974. He and a crew of four manage requests and reports of rations for four reserve units. This means, for a typical weekend drill, they will see to it that up to four hundred soldiers are fed.

Dohmen's NCO responsibilities require a lot of paper work but sometimes his accomplishments draw direct praise from the field. For instance, he recalls supplying rations during winter combat exercises several years ago at Fort McCoy. Despite temperatures of 20 below zero, Dohmen's crew, using just tents and portable heaters, was able to keep all perishable items from freezing for three days. For this action, he received the Army Commendation Medal.

Prior to joining the Army Reserve, he was a member of the active Army from 1956 to 1958, serving as a tank gunner with the 3rd Armored Division in Germany.

Describing himself as a man who loves the outdoors, Dohmen says his job as operator at the district's Lock & Dam 2 in Hastings, is ideal. He likes being around the water, and he likes being part of a two-man swing shift which provides



Gerald Dohmen

him with the opportunity to do a lot of fishing during his free time.

Dohmen joined the St. Paul District in 1979, working first as a laborer at Lock & Dam 1. A year later he became an operator at Hastings and, in his ten years there, has seen many changes. He highlighted the replacement of the lock's valve and gate machinery last year, and says the de-watering processes is always interesting. Saying his work is part "public relations", he has established many good relationships with both those he works with and those who use the lock. "I regularly meet a lot of wonderful people, whom I've know for years, on the river," notes Dohmen.

Last month, Gerry and wife Ardelle celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. Children Dale and Dianne are grown and married. Gerry is especially proud of two grandchildren. When not helping Ardelle tend to their prize flowers, Gerry enjoys ice fishing and golfing. "There are four golf courses in Hastings," he exclaims. He hopes to spend a lot of time thereafter retirement from the Corps.

By Jerry Cadwell,
Public Affairs Office