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**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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LTC Breyfogle to assume command of St. Paul District

LTC William J. Breyfogle will assume command as the 57th commander of the St. Paul District at a Change of Command ceremony on Jan. 21 at the Radisson Inn Ballroom, 411 Minnesota Street in St. Paul. The ceremony begins at 1:30 p.m.

Prior to taking command, LTC Breyfogle was assigned as the District's Deputy Commander since June 1995.

His previous assignments include Director of Evaluation and Standardization, U.S. Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and Deputy District Commander, Memphis District.

He has a Master of Science degree in civil engineering from the University of Florida, and a Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics from Middle Tennessee State University.

He is married to the former Cynthia Mathews of Waynesville, Mo. They have one son, Gerram.



Photo by Jessica Shallow

District employees share holiday spirit with needy families

St. Paul District employees donated to a variety of programs for needy families during the holiday season. Santa Anonymous and Adopt-A-Family program sponsored by Neighbors, Inc., were among the non-profit programs that received presents and gift certificates for food. The top left photo shows the accumulation of presents for Santa



Photo by Henrik Strandkov

Anonymous. In the top photo are Lupe Santos (left) of Human Resources and Marilyn Aird from Contracting Division. In the bottom photo, Denise Blackwell-Kraft (left) and Marita Roherty were among 23 from Construction-Operations Division who supported a family for the holidays. Some of the other offices that donated to Adopt-A-Family were Public Affairs, Programs and Project Management and the Executive Office staff.

'Checking Out of the Net:' Thoughts on Leaving

by COL J.M. Wonsik
St. Paul District Commander

As many of you already know, for personal reasons I have elected to retire this January.

The Commander of the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD), MG Anderson, has approved a Change of Command date of January 21, 1998. LTC Breyfogle will assume the duties and responsibilities as your commander until your new colonel arrives next summer.

With my retirement comes an opportunity to outline some thoughts upon leaving.

The St. Paul District (MVP) has proven that it is the best performer in two divisions. Keep it up. I urge you to continue to further develop the team and to work smarter rather than harder. MVP has the leadership at all levels and the systems to continue to perform at this enviable level.

I hope you all will continue the journey of our Vision and be aware how our individual actions fit into it. The Vision, our Operations Plan, and our own

quality program are like the three legs holding up a stool. Each leg is needed to make the stool operational. The Vision provides the direction and objectives for where USACE, division and our district are going. The Operations Plan details the programs and initiatives that support the Vision. Our district quality program serves as the implementing element for further improvements. Each element is essential to achieving the overall program.

Keep focused on the high objectives we have set. Continue to delight customers – both internal and external. Continue to maintain the high quality that is the district's trademark and to deliver projects on time and within budget.

It has been an honor and a privilege to work with you and to be a member of the MVP team. You have taught me volumes. I leave with no regrets, but with a significant debt to all of you for your superlative accomplishments.

I want to thank you for all the support you have provided me and for all that you have done for the district. I know I can rely upon your continued support to make this transition as smooth and as seamless as possible. I also know that you will give LTC Breyfogle all the support necessary to ensure that the district continues to grow and perform in the exemplary manner which has become your hall mark.

Essayons, MVP!

'Diversity means accepting people's differences'

by Peter Verstegen Public Affairs Specialist

"Diversity means accepting people's differences," said Peggy Riley during her Nov. 18 keynote speech for Diversity Appreciation Week (DAW).

"The more we know about people, communities, and cultures in this nation and around the world, the better able we will be to serve our customer and live our mission," said Marianne Price, EEO officer.

DAW offered participants fun-filled opportunities to examine their willingness to accept personal responsibility for recognizing and accepting diversity in their lives.



St. Paul District photo

Participating in a presentation for Diversity Appreciation Week are, from left, Linda Wiley, EEO Office; Lynn Harris, Human Resources; Keynote Speaker Peggy Riley, and Marianne Price, EEO officer.

Computer application automates many Human Resources actions *HR functions move to regional personnel center at Rock Island*

by Peter Verstegen
Public Affairs specialist

This March, the Department of Army will automate many Human Resource Division (HR) actions in the St. Paul District and shift additional functions to regional personnel centers. The regional personnel center in Rock Island, Ill., will service this district and other Army activities in the north central states.

"Stand up is March 1," said Liz Sackett, chief of Employee and Compensation Branch in HR. The regional system will affect how district employees apply for jobs, retirement programs, and health benefits. The new system will also affect how managers request personnel actions, how personnel actions are processed, how training is accomplished, and other HR functions.

"The effort to centralize personnel operations is an Army-wide initiative," said Sackett. "It is driven by workforce reductions and the Army's desire to streamline operations."

"Regionalization of HR will affect every single person in some way at some time," said Sackett. "It will change where people get their information." After March 1, district personnel will access a computer application to hire someone or to change work hours, for example, instead of starting with a paper copy SF-52, a form used to initiate personnel actions.

Automation will play a significant role in regionalization.

A team from Army visited St. Paul in December to support installation of computer hardware and software in the district office and Fountain City, Wis. "As with CEFMS, there will be a huge learning curve for those who need to use the new system," said Sackett. CEFMS, of course, is the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System that required extensive user training, huge operating manuals, and its own bulletin board directory to update users on system bugs and last-minute changes.

Kathy Freese, personnel systems manager in HR, is coordinating the installation of new application software on a new computer server. Two names have been used interchangeably for the new suite of application software: Personnel Process Improvements (PPI) or Functional Process Improvements (FPI). "The new office suite will be set up with several modules. The biggies are 'Regional Applications,' 'Train,' 'Persaction,' and 'Resumix,'" said Freese. Regional Applications will allow managers to access information about employees. Train provides information on training and class schedules. Persaction automates SF-52 forms and processing. Resumix is a database of resumes and uses artificial intelligence to review the content on resumes and provide referrals.

"The automated SF-52s are supposed to be quicker," said Freese. "They are directed by

software instead of being routed physically. But, actions have to be at least done two weeks in advance. Everyone is going to have to plan ahead."

"The most immediate impact will be on supervisors, their administrative assistants and clerical staff," added Sackett. "The biggest impact for individuals across the board is in the changes to the merit promotion system. Resumix, part of the PPI suite, will be used for internal placement and promotion. Resumix will not replace existing career programs," she said. "This means that for people at 'mandatory career-referral levels,' the 'ACCES' or 'SKAP' system will still be the means for merit promotion."

"Highly dynamic organizations, like the Mississippi River Project Office, will feel the most immediate effects of regionalization. They do a lot of hiring each spring and winter and frequently move people from site to site. Those with fewer personnel actions will initially feel the effects to a much lesser extent," said Sackett.

Another impact is that authorities are being returned to managers. "Supervisors will be more directly involved in staffing activities, job classification, training, and employee development. The expectation for employees is more do-it-yourself, more self-directed," said Sackett.

The North Central Civilian Personnel Operations Center

HR, cont. on page 5

Ergonomics: Designing a work area to fit you and your work

by Ron Scott, Safety and
Occupational Health Office

A poorly designed computer workstation can put people at risk for a variety of health problems. But the correct furniture and protective equipment can help prevent injury and discomfort.

Problems from poor design include musculoskeletal injuries, including pain or numbness in the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, neck and back. They also include vision difficulties and stress. Health problems has also been associated with prolonged use of visual display terminals.

Ergonomics is the science of designing workplaces and jobs to fit people. This means that your work area should be designed to fit you and your work.

Ergonomists today agree that no person can maintain one ideal posture all day. For this reason, adjustable furniture that can support proper posture is a basic requirement for a professional workstation.

Please consider the following components to arrange your work area:

• Work surfaces

Height of work surfaces or keyboard height should be adjustable. Leave enough leg

room to allow legs to move freely, and do not use the area underneath for storage. In addition, avoid resting your wrists on a hard or sharp surface. Use a wrist rest or support if necessary.

• Chair

Ergonomically correct chairs have the following features:

1. An adjustable back support that presses firmly against your lower back and extends up at least to your mid-back.

2. An adjustable seat height to permit your feet to rest flat on the floor with a knee angle of roughly 90 degrees.

3. A rolling five-prong base for stability and to prevent unnecessary twisting.

4. Adjustable padded armrests to support the weight of the shoulders. You should use the armrests if you will be working at a computer for more than two hours at a time.

5. A seat pan that adjusts to allow you to work comfortably in a forward or reclined position.

• Keyboard

The keyboard should be positioned low enough to keep wrists straight, shoulders relaxed, and elbows angled between 90 and 120 degrees. (A wrist rest or support can help to maintain straight wrists.)

Computer work requires that you use your eyes at close range for long periods of time. This may result in eyestrain. Glare on the screen from windows or overhead lights, even though it might not be noticeable, puts additional stress on your eyes. Symptoms of eyestrain include blurred vision, sore eyes, focusing problems, and

headaches.

The following can help reduce eyestrain:

1. Copy holder: Use an adjustable copy holder. Place it on the same plane as the screen – either right next to it or between the keyboard and the monitor – to reduce awkward movements of the head and minimize the need to adjust your eyes to different distances.

2. Computer placement: Place the computer parallel to and between overhead lights and perpendicular to windows and other major light sources so that the light strikes neither the screen nor your eyes. Glare screens and window blinds also help.

Take regular breaks from computer work. Change your position. Do a different task and stretch, or both. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends a 15-minute rest break every two hours for moderate VDT work and 10-minute rest break every hour for intense VDT work.

In addition, look at a distant object for a few seconds every five to 10 minutes to relax your eye muscles.

Sitting for long periods of time can lead to muscle aches. At least twice a day, stop and stretch your back, neck, shoulders, arms and legs. Get up from your workstation and take on a different task in order to improve circulation and exercise muscle groups. It is important to organize work to avoid long periods of time at the computer. Intersperse VDT work with other tasks as much as possible.

HR, cont. from page 3

(CPOC) in Rock Island is the designated regional office that will support Minnesota and eight other states. CPOC is a Department of Army command support branch that will process personnel actions, classify positions, maintain official personnel folders, rate and rank applications, administer Army-wide training and manage the automated data base.

Sackett and others currently in HR will be working with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), which reports to the commander of the local installation – in this case, the Commander of the St. Paul District. The CPAC will offer the district general advice and assistance, labor-management negotiations, disciplinary actions, employee benefits, recruitment strategies and position management and other HR matters. CPACs and CPOCs will co-exist as parallel stovepipes and crossover at the top administrative and policy-making level.

*More information is available at the following web site:
<http://cpol.army.mil>.*

Significant firsts by the St. Paul District

In 1883-1884, engineers from the district laid out and developed the road network in the nation's first park—Yellowstone. The first officer in charge of this project at Yellowstone was Dan C.

Kingman, who became Chief of Engineers in 1913.

A Presidential Message for National Engineers Week, 1998



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Warm greetings to all those celebrating National Engineers Week, 1998.

The efforts of engineers are vital to building a competitive and prosperous America. As we approach the 21st century, we recognize more than ever the many contributions engineers make to our quality of life. Turning ideas into reality, our engineers provide us with the research, innovation, and technological achievements that help keep America strong and growing.

I commend the organizers, volunteers, and supporters of National Engineers Week for using this time to educate our nation about the importance of engineering.

Through hands-on activities and scientific demonstrations across the country, you are sharing your love of engineering and encouraging thousands of young Americans to pursue careers in this exciting field. With your continued commitment to excellence, we can look forward to unprecedented prosperity and achievement for generations to come.

Best wishes for an enjoyable and productive week.

Bill Clinton

The St. Paul District has scheduled the Order of the Engineer Ceremony and National Engineers Week early this year – February 18 – due to schedule conflicts. Ann Banitt and Mark Meyers, Engineering and Planning Division, are coordinating the ceremony this year.

The week was first established in 1951 by the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) to bring to public attention the work and contributions of our nation's engineers. NSPE has scheduled Engineers Week for February 22-28, 1998. The district's e-mail will have additional information.

*(Information compiled in part from the NSPE web site:
<http://www.eweek.org/1998/index.html>)*

1997 began with record snowfall and Corps-wide restructuring and ended with successful flood recovery effort

January

Snow continued to accumulate in the Red River Basin and in western Minnesota. Throughout the winter, six to eight feet of snow – three times the average – fell on the basin.

Staff from Engineering and Planning Division met with state and federal agencies to discuss the potential for severe flooding in the Red River Basin, the Minnesota River Basin and the Upper Mississippi River.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced restructuring of its divisions. St. Paul District (MVP) was to become part of the new Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) on April 1.

St. Paul District employees began CEFMS (Corps of Engineers Financial Management System) training.

The district became a center of expertise for the Corps' National Sign Program. Engineering and Planning Division became a separate but related center of expertise to support the installation of safety-critical waterway signs.

The commander of the North Central Division visited Upper Saint Anthony Falls Lock and Dam to recognize personnel for their outstanding safety record.

February

The district and other public, private and non-profit stakeholders in the management of the Mississippi River participated in the Upper

Mississippi River Summit in St. Louis, Mo. Outcomes included a Vision Statement. Coordinating teams on water level management, flood plan and aquatic habitat, river training structures, watershed management, and future conditions worked to implement actions in the Vision Statement.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Office initiated a Special Emphasis Program Committee to address problems and concerns of employees in achieving equal employment.

St. Paul District celebrated National Engineers Week. Pete Fischer, retired chief of Engineering Division, spoke. Twenty two from the district were installed in the Order of the Engineer.

March

The district activated its Emergency Operations Center for an exercise to prepare for imminent floods.

The district also

Dave Haumersen, (left) chief of Construction-Operations Division confers in early April with Tom Eidson at Granite Falls, Minn.

received approval to spend more than \$5 million for the Advance Measures Program. The district invoked Advance Measure authority on March 8 and Emergency Operations authority on March 31. Advance Measures projects were initiated before predicted flooding and protected against loss of life and against damage to improved public property.

The Red River began to flood on Sunday, March 30. By the end of March, the district had reviewed projects for 25 communities in the Red River Basin and three in the Minnesota



River Basin. Also, the district had developed emergency measures for 70 communities in Minnesota and North Dakota that were most vulnerable to flooding based on National Weather Service forecasts.

Mary Chang, Information Management; Jim Mosner, Engineering and Planning Division; and Angie Peterson, Office of Deputy District Engineer for Project Management, were named Civil Servants of the Year.

April

Division restructuring was implemented and St. Paul District became part of Mississippi Valley Division. MVD Commander Major General Robert B. Flowers visited the St. Paul District and held an employee meeting on April 3.

On April 27, the district entered a two-week financial blackout as part of the effort to convert data from old systems to CEFMS. Many district employees had been

working seven-days-a-week for the past three months to support the flood fight or to convert computer systems.

A record 200-year flood engulfed communities in the Red River Basin. On April 19, the Red River overtopped levees at Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn. The river reached a record-breaking crest of 54.21 feet on April 22.

Record flooding also impacted communities along Minnesota River Basin. The Minnesota River crested at Montevideo nearly three feet higher than the previous record of 21.7 feet on April 12, 1969. Non-record flooding occurred on the Upper Mississippi River. The U.S. Coast Guard closed the Upper Mississippi River to navigation on April 9 and reopened it on April 14.

The district initiated recovery efforts for communities devastated by flooding in the Red River Basin and the Minnesota

River.

May

District traveling display trailer visits the 13th annual Cinco de Mayo Fiesta in St. Paul.

CEFMS, after months of work to install and configure the system correctly, issued its first checks in late May. The district successfully completed the transition to CEFMS without major problems.

June

The district received initial funding for engineering and design of permanent flood control projects for Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, Minn. The alternatives included a diversion only, a levee only and a combination of the two.

The district held its awards ceremony and summer picnic at Long Lake Regional Park. Bob Post, chief of Engineering and Planning Division, received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award for his outstanding management during the Flood of '97.

Tom Eidson was one of 24 recipients honored for construction excellence at the Engineering and Construction Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

1997 in review, cont. on page 8



A Corps-built emergency levee ran down the middle of Main Street in Drayton, N.D., in late April. The levee protected most of the community from record flooding last spring.

Photo by Paul Madison

1997 in review, cont. from page 7

July

Four district employees were honored with the Commanders Honorary Award for Equal Employment Opportunity. They were Joann Meier (now retired); Tom Sully, Engineering and Planning Division; Tony Foster, Contracting Division; and Jan Pream, Construction-Operations Division.

August

The city councils at Grand Forks and East Grand Forks authorized the district to proceed with levees-only design for permanent flood protection and to continue a study of a diversion alternative.

The Devils Lake Planning Team earned the USACE Achievement Award - 1996. The award recognized the exceptional effort in preparing the Devils Lake contingency plan and emergency outlet plan.

The district presented Ostrum Painting and Sandblasting Co., Inc., the Contractor of the Year Award for 1996 for its

outstanding performance on the \$1.85 million gate painting project at Lock and Dam No. 7 near La Crosse, Wis.

Motor Vessel (MV) Mississippi, the largest tow made in the U.S., visited St. Paul. The vessel was part of a river inspection tour by the Mississippi River Commission.

St. Paul District Commander COL J.M. Wonsik presented an historic benchmark dated 1898 to the members of Mississippi River Commission. The mark was found 54 miles down river of Lake Itasca.

LTG Joe Ballard, chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, visited the district and held a Town Hall meeting with employees. Tim Bertschi received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award for his outstanding performance throughout the Flood of '97.

The second edition of "Wetland Plants and Plant Communities" was released. Steve D. Eggers, Regulatory Branch, and Donald M. Reed, a Wisconsin biologist, wrote the reference book.

September

District retirees held their 22nd retirees' reunion in St. Paul.

At the close of the fiscal year, the district had obligated between \$20-22 million to complete major missions for flood recovery efforts. Missions included temporary housing, debris removal, demolition, storm sewer cleaning, and inspection of structures.

October

The Federal Executive Board honored the district's Small and Disadvantaged Business Program with the Award for 1997 Excellence in Federal Contracting.

November

Major maintenance and major rehabilitation at Lock 5A started.

The EEO Office sponsored Diversity Awareness Week and organized speakers, workshops, and an ethnic food taste.

December

Water was pumped out of Lock 5A as part of major maintenance. A mat of zebra mussels covered the lock chamber.

District employees gathered for the Holiday Awards Ceremony at the Fort Snelling Club.

The Adopt-A-Family program at Neighbors, Inc., and Santa Anonymous received generous support from district personnel for the holiday season.

District Commander COL J.M. Wonsik announced his retirement, effective January 1998. Deputy District Commander LTC William J. Breyfogle is to be installed as 57th commander of the district at a January change of command ceremony.



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