



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 22, No. 1

January 1999

Strategic Vision: *Satisfy the Customer*

Team from district assesses explosion site

By Peter Verstegen
Public Affairs specialist

An untouched Bloody Mary with a fresh stick of celery in it still rested on the bar. Tom Sully, a structural engineer with the St. Paul District, immediately grasped the irony. That drink and others, along with coins and currency, remained amid dust and debris from the explosion the day before. On Dec. 11, a natural-gas explosion had severely damaged the bar in downtown St. Cloud, Minn. Nearly 50,000 people live in this central Minnesota community. But four of those people died. The explosion injured more than a dozen others.

A pizza parlor, the building next to the bar, was ground zero. The parlor was empty at the time of the explosion. A pile of bricks, shattered glass and jagged concrete were all that remained.

"I could tell that people left the bar in a hurry," said Sully. "When we got there, the building was partially collapsed. It was unstable."

Both buildings were among four structures severely damaged by a natural gas explosion during the lunch hour.

Sully and Mike Dahlquist, a



Photo by Tom Sully

Mike Dahlquist assesses a partially collapsed building in St. Cloud, Minn. The structure was next to a building destroyed by a natural-gas explosion on Dec. 11. The explosion blew out glass windows and made the roof and walls unstable. Drinks and currency were still sitting on the bar amid the dust and debris. Dahlquist is a structural engineering specialist who is trained in urban search and rescue. He works in Engineering Division

structural specialist trained in urban search and rescue, were called in by the Minnesota Department of Safety to support local building officials in their evaluation of damaged structures.

The blast occurred Friday at 11:40 a.m. Sully and Dahlquist provided structural engineering expertise from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. the next day.

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Strategic Vision: Build the Team**Suggestion program award winners recognized at holiday party**

By Peter Versteegen
Public Affairs specialist

Three received the top Army Ideas for Excellence Program (AIEP) awards at the Holiday Awards Ceremony on Dec. 17 at Fort Snelling. Stephen P. Harmon earned the Suggester of the Year for presenting a way to improve the miter gate control circuitry on locks and dams. His suggestion provided

significant safety improvements, reduced damage to the operating system, and smoothed the running cycle between high and low speeds. Harmon works at Lock and Dam No. 2 in Hastings, Minn.

Jeffrey J. Gulan was honored as Evaluator of the Year for his timely evaluations of six difficult suggestions. His average turnaround time was 26 days.

Harold E. Taggatz, who retired in

April 1998 as assistant chief of Construction Operations Division, received the Suggestion Champion of the Year award. He served as chairperson of the AIEP since its inception in the St. Paul District. He actively supported and promoted the AIEP during his tenure. Mark Nelson, chief of Real Estate division and chairperson of the AIEP, presented the awards. Ann Marie Scheie, Resource Management, is program coordinator.

Strategic Vision: Build the Team**Knowing the ABCs of smoke and fire safety will help you PASS the test**

By Ron Scott, Safety Office

Knowing the ABCs of smoke and fire safety will help you "PASS" this test.

Two home safety features can save money and lives if properly located and maintained. The first of these is a smoke detector. The National Fire Protection Association Journal believes that ionization or photo-electric smoke detectors are superior to heat detectors for use in private homes. It's recommended that a smoke detector be located on each level of the home, and in particular, within bedroom areas. Many local building codes require this in new construction or when selling an existing dwelling. If your smoke detectors use batteries, and some codes do allow this, you should change them regularly. Those that are wired into the home's electrical system should also be tested regularly. All smoke detectors should be kept clear of dust or other particles that could accidentally trigger the alarm or

prevent it from operating properly.

The second safety feature to consider adding to your home is a fire extinguisher. Used properly, they can save lives and property by putting out a small fire or containing it until the fire department arrives. Understand the limits of portable extinguishers, however. They aren't intended to fight large or spreading fires.

All fire extinguishers aren't created equal. The ABC's consist of three classifications designed to be used on a particular type of fire source:

Type A: For use on ordinary combustibles such as paper or wood.

Type B: For use on flammable liquids including gasoline and paint.

Type C: For use on energized electrical equipment such as fuses, appliances and wiring.

Obviously your best bet is to buy an extinguisher labeled ABC which has been proven effective

against all three types of fire. Be sure to buy one large enough to be effective, and look for metal parts, not plastic. It is better to pay a little more for reliability because when you need a fire extinguisher, you really need one large enough and reliable enough to be effective. Know how to operate your extinguisher too. No one wants to be reading instructions by the light of their house burning down.

To operate your extinguisher, use the PASS system:

P - Pull the pin which unlocks the operating lever.

A - Aim low, point the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the fire.

S - Squeeze the lever to release the extinguishing agent.

S - Sweep from side to side
Fire safety starts with you and your family.

Smoke detectors labeled ABC and fire extinguishers operated with the PASS system will help you protect the people and property you value.



Photo by Tom Sully

The gaping hole and debris used to be a pizza parlor in St. Cloud, Minn. The State of Minnesota asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District to provide personnel with expertise in structural engineering to assess damage of nearby structures after a natural-gas explosion. The old Stearns County Courthouse is in the background

Explosion, cont. from page one

The state requested emergency expertise in structural engineering from the St. Paul District. In response, the district dispatched a two-person, structural assessment team to the site of the emergency. The team assisted the community in the assessment of structural integrity of buildings adjacent to the scene of an explosion.

"We went in as a team," said Dahlquist. "The number one benefit is safety. Number two is consultation. Two pairs of eyes are better than one." Dahlquist is one of two people in the St. Paul District who is trained in urban search and rescue and is a structural specialist.

Sully and Dahlquist worked with the city building officials, under the direction of the fire chief who was the incident commander.

The Corps structural assessment team helped city officials set priorities in evaluating structures in the vicinity of the blast area. "We prepared a post-incident evaluation of damaged structures

to establish entry and use restrictions," said Dahlquist.

The team worked with the city to tag 14 buildings with red, yellow or green placards that noted specific restrictions on the use of the building. They tagged six addresses red, meaning no entry. Five structures received yellow tags, warning of limited entry. Three buildings received green tags, indicating no structural reasons for restrictions on entry. Also, the team consulted with officials from the National Transportation Safety Board to convey the dangers related to working with heavy equipment next to unstable buildings.

News reports said the explosion happened when contractors, drilling a support for a utility pole, had struck an unknown buried block of stone. Federal investigators had determined that the stone diverted an auger sideways. The auger ruptured a nearby gas line. About 30 minutes after the rupture, an explosion destroyed

four buildings. Fortunately, public safety and utility company officials had ordered the evacuation of office workers and residents from the six-block area in the vicinity of the blast.

In incidents such as the St. Cloud explosion, the Corps gives emergency assistance top priority and provides immediate response using available resources and expedited procedures. Assistance is limited to the preservation of life and the protection of public property, including public and private facilities that provide public services. Emergency preparedness and response is primarily a state and local responsibility. But, in instances when the nature of the disaster exceeds the capabilities of state and local interests, the Corps may help to save human life, to prevent immediate human suffering or to mitigate property damage.

"We worked in a true spirit of partnership with local building officials," said Sully.

Strategic Vision: *Reshape Culture*

1832 Battle at Bad Axe took place in what is now Black Hawk Recreation Park

Chief Black Hawk among 36 photos featured on Pride of American Indians poster on EEO bulletin boards

Editor's note: The information in this article is from the St. Paul District brochure "Battle at Bad Axe." The brochure describes the last battle fought east of the Mississippi between Indians and U.S. troops and introduces us to Chief Black Hawk, the elder Sauk war chief. Preliminary skirmishes took place in the region south and east of today's Black Hawk Recreation Park. The park was the site of the final fight. The re-telling of the story was inspired by "The Pride of American Indians" posters on the EEO bulletin boards on 4th and 5th floors. The posters feature 36 photos, including Chief Black Hawk, which illustrate the pride and diversity in the heritage of Native Americans.

Chief Black Hawk was the elder Sauk war chief who refused to leave his home, called Saukenuk, in order to appease the new U.S. government. Black Hawk's followers were called the "British Band."

In 1832, the British Band returned to Illinois, triggering the reaction of frontier militia and the U.S. Army. During the war, Chief Black Hawk guided the band through the Wisconsin wilderness attempting to avoid conflict.

In April 1832, Black Hawk's British Band consisted of 2,000 men, women and children. At the



of age 65, Black Hawk returned with his band to a Winnebago village on the Rock River governed by White Cloud, a Winnebago Indian.

Unfortunately, the Governor of

Illinois interpreted this as an invasion. The arrival of U.S. troops under the charge of Gen. Henry Atkinson caused the band to move further up the Rock River. Here, Black Hawk learned

Strategic Vision: *Satisfy the Customer*

14 from St. Paul District support Georges relief



St. Paul District photos

Fourteen people from the St. Paul District volunteered to provide emergency response after Hurricane Georges hit Puerto Rico. Tours of duty ranged from 20 to 60 days. Many worked on a temporary roofing mission in San Juan and other locations beginning Sept. 29, 1998. The hurricane swept the Caribbean from Sept. 15 to Oct. 1. The above photo shows temporary roofing in Corozal.



Winds reached a peak of 155 mph and 602 deaths were directly attributable to the hurricane. Dave Swanson, right, inspects temporary roofing in Negros, a barrio of Corozal. Swanson, a civil engineering technician in Engineering Division, was in Puerto Rico for 30 days. The person at left is unidentified.

that the other tribes and the British Army would not support the band.

Under fire and under pursuit by militia patrols and U.S. troops, in July the band fled north to the swamps of southeast Wisconsin. Facing starvation, the band headed north and west through the Madison lakes toward the Wisconsin River. Militia patrols caught the band as it prepared to cross the Wisconsin River. The band suffered heavy casualties and split up. Some opted to float down the Wisconsin River towards Iowa, while 500 followed Black Hawk northwest towards the Mississippi River.

Pursuing U.S. troops reorganized at Fort Blue Mounds.

The remnant band crossed the Kickapoo River and followed the top of the ridge to the present day village of Red Mound. The band began to work its way down Battle

Hollow to the floodplain bench at its mouth. Once they reached the floodplain, the band prepared to cross the Mississippi River by stripping elm trees for bark canoes and cutting timber for rafts.

The pursuing army was only 10 miles behind, having crossed the Kickapoo River at Soldiers Grove.

The battle at Bad Axe started shortly after the band reached the banks of the Mississippi River on August 1.

The two-day battle took place on the banks of the river when the steamboat Warrior approached from upstream and the troops on board observed the Sauk. The Sauk stood unarmed along the shore and offered a white flag.

The lieutenant in command stated that the band hoisted the white flag, but would not send a representative aboard the steam boat.

Accordingly, he fired his six pounder, and likewise opened a fire of musketry upon them when the Sauk fired at the boat.

The band and the troops fought for two days in the area surrounding the Black Hawk site. The Indians fought back with desperation, but little effect. U.S. troops, who were better equipped and armed, completely overthrew the band. After realizing the futility of fighting the U.S. troops, a remnant of the band fled to the west.

The Battle of Bad Axe was the last Indian-American battle fought east of the Mississippi River. The battle resulted in the deaths of nearly 150 of Black Hawk's followers. The event was the catalyst for the Sauk losing land in eastern Iowa and the Winnebago losing land in western Wisconsin.

Bits and Pieces

Real Estate continues to draw fair 'line in the sand' at Pool 4

By Peter Versteegen
Public Affairs specialist

What do you do when part of your property encroaches on government land? The owner of the property at right faced that question as a result of a survey of federal lands in Pool 4 north of Alma, Wis.

The 1995 survey is part of an ongoing effort to re-establish boundary lines for federal lands along the Mississippi River in southern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

"The deck and five feet of this home encroached on government property," said Kurt Reppe, Real Estate Division. "The line went through the patio door." The owner built an edition to the home in 1993 and added the deck shortly thereafter. The site also has archeological significance.

"The government is selling the owner a minimal portion of land around the house to cure the encroachment," said Reppe. "But the deck had to go." The survey identified the encroachment in 1995 and the St. Paul District initiated action on this and other claims in 1996 and 1997. This survey has identified 26 encroachments.



Photos by Bill McCarthy



Spychalla named Commodore

Bill Spychalla, a project manager, was named a Commodore in the North Dakota Mythical Navy to commemorate his 27 years with the St. Paul District. Many of the projects Spychalla managed improved water resources in North Dakota. He received the certificate, signed by Governor Schafer, during a meeting with the North Dakota State Water Commission in St. Paul on Dec. 12.



US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

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, nor of the Department of the Army.

Crosscurrents

Address all inquiries to:

Editor, *Crosscurrents*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Army Corps of Engineers Centre
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

District Engineer Col. Kenneth Kasprisin
Public Affairs Officer Kennon Gardner
Editor Peter Versteegen
e-mail: peter.e.versteegen@usace.army.mil