



District Tides

NORFOLK DISTRICT

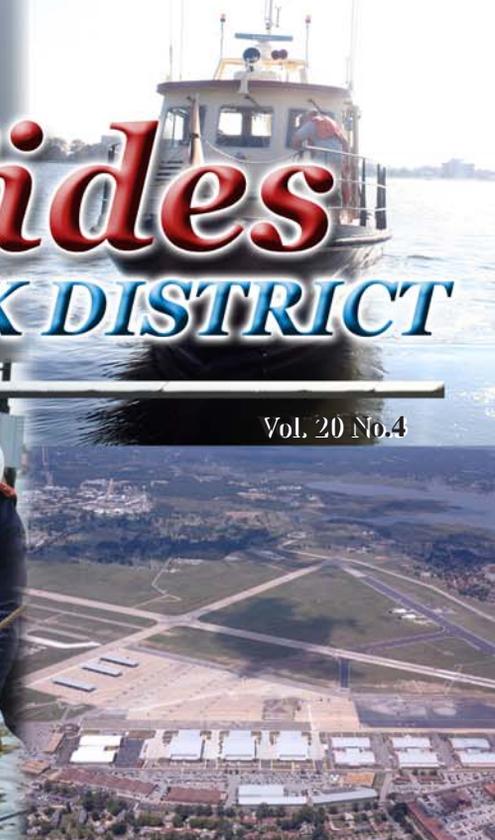
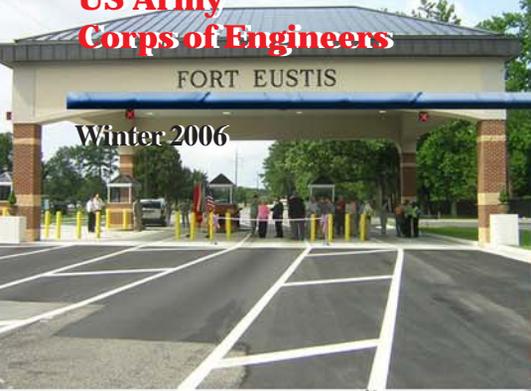
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Year in Review!

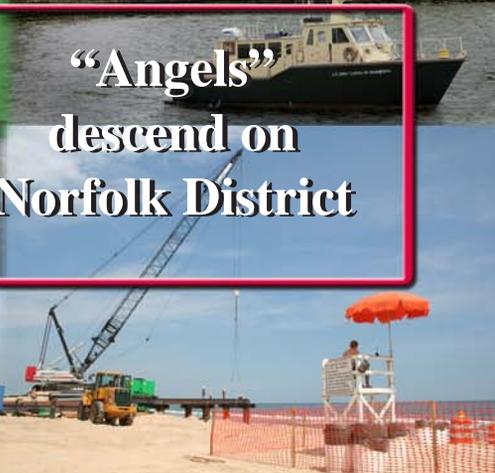
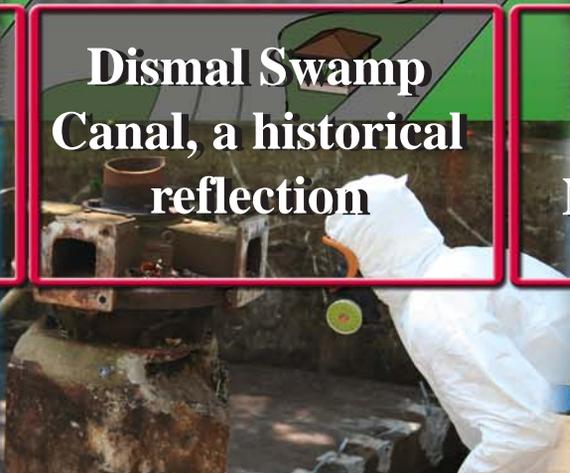


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Corps work continues in New Orleans

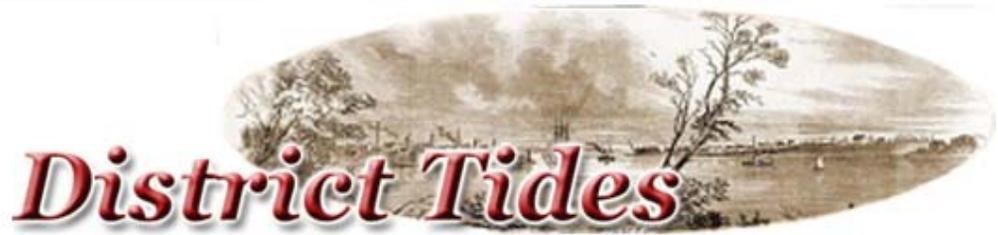
Dismal Swamp Canal, a historical reflection

"Angels" descend on Norfolk District



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District Tides

**Commander's
 Corner**

Since the last *Tides* publication, we observed the one year mark of the devastation that occurred in the Gulf Region and the five year mark of our nation at war. I am extremely proud of the Norfolk District's contribution and support to these national and domestic priorities. There is however, more work to be done. Again, I encourage volunteers to step forward and support these efforts. Everyone I speak with, to include my own personal experiences, found these deployments professionally rewarding and providing a tremendous sense of pride for serving. I ask each of you to please keep your thoughts and prayers with those service members and civilians deployed on the front lines. Equally, please keep their families in your thoughts and prayers as well, especially during this holiday season. A special thanks to our Family Readiness Group for preparing and sending packages to our deployed loved ones world-wide.

In my first five-plus months in command, I spent the majority of my time traveling and visiting numerous project sites. Additionally, I met with most of our stakeholders, partners and customers, as well as Congressional and state leaders. In every case each individual and each organization expressed their appreciation for the support they received from our District. The current Military Construction (MILCON) program customer surveys reflect the quality of service and proactive approach each of you is taking to ensure we deliver quality products/services on time, within budget and safely. This is a great reflection on your professionalism and personal commitment towards excellence. Additionally, our response and support to our communities during Tropical Storm Ernesto and October's nor'easter was second to none! Our business is truly a team sport!

A challenging year ahead

We've just closed out the FY 06 budget year with a tremendous effort that resulted in our

awarding all of our FY06 projects and obligations. As we begin executing our fiscal year 07 program, we will encounter some friction points across each of our Lines of Operations. That is okay. Henry Ford once said, "Whether you think that you can, or that you can't, you are usually right." In our case we will work through all friction points and execute our program on-time, within budget and exceed customer demands — all the while caring for our people.



Col. Dionysios Anninos

Throughout this coming year:

- We must continue to support the national priorities of winning the Global War on Terror and executing recovery efforts in the Gulf Region. This can only be accomplished through volunteers. We must think of innovative ways to support these current efforts as well as to ready ourselves in preparation for next year's hurricane season. We plan to execute a command post exercise with our partners in the spring, as well as provide local communities with flood damage and storm reduction studies and projects, where possible.
- We need to aggressively set the conditions to execute our growing military program at Fort Lee, Langley AFB, A.P. Hill, Defense Supply Center Richmond, National Ground Intelligence Center and Fort Eustis... totaling more than \$1.5 billion over the next several years. As we do this, we must continue to provide quality construction execution to our on-going project sites at these installations and others.
- Our seven Army Centers of Standardization facilities must be poised to use Building Information Models (BIM) and have an acquisition strategy in place that is flexible and able to deliver the product.

Please see Commander's Corner, Page 3



Various images from the past year depict the scope of work that encompasses the Norfolk District's mission.

Commander's Corner: Focusing on the upcoming year

Continued from Page 2

- We continue to see a fairly steady civil works program; however, I am hopeful that we will move forward on several, specific high pay-off projects including the Deep Creek Bridge, Craney Island Eastward Expansion, the Port of Richmond Turning Basin, and Oyster restoration and its Environmental Impact Statement, as well as completing the study to deepen the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River as we partner with the U.S. Navy on this effort.
- We will, unfortunately, continue to be faced with “bare-bones” Operations and Maintenance funding this fiscal year. I am hopeful that a systems-approach in justifying our shallow draft requirements and re-looking at metrics and local sociological impacts will result in additional funding.
- We must continue to execute our regulatory mission along the seven environmental operating principles while we work closely with the Commonwealth to improve the current 404 permitting process.
- Finally, our real estate program is managing an expanding workload while working through personnel shortages.

A year loaded with new opportunities

So, while it will prove to be a challenging year, I am excited about our FY 07 program. It is a sound, diverse and growing

program on most fronts that will enable us to sustain and grow our workforce. I am equally excited to move forward with a series of initiatives that include leadership development seminars and events; improvements and public access to Fort Norfolk; and recognition of our excellence and rich history through conference room renovations, certification recognitions and publicizing Norfolk District's history as the Commonwealth celebrates the Jamestown 400th Anniversary. We've already been seeing that the Norfolk Welfare Council program has been moving forward with fund-raisers, fall harvest activities, the craft bazaar and upcoming holiday events. I know these wonderful activities in support of our workforce will continue through the year. Finally, I am looking forward to putting into practice our District vision and goals centered on caring for our people, providing world-class service to our customers and pursuing a balanced and diverse workload.

One final note on safety. On-the-job site safety is not negotiable. Do not compromise — take the extra time to do this right. The holiday and winter seasons are upon us. Please take the extra time to plan your travel safely.

Have a great HOLIDAY SEASON and may God Bless our Military Servicemembers and Civilians who are deployed, serving our nation in time of war!!

The CPAC Moment with Paula Bradshaw & Carleen Gwinn

Self-service Human Resources through web

Self-Service Human Resources for employees and managers is located at www.cpol.army.mil under the employee or manager tab. These new modules permit employees and managers secure, real-time, on-line access to personnel information, at any time, from their workstations.

My Biz allows employees access to view information from their official personnel records including appointment, position, personal information, salary, benefits, awards and bonuses, and performance. In addition, employees can update their telephone number and email address, disability codes, Race and National Origin (Ethnicity and Race Identification), and foreign language proficiency online.

My Workplace brings key information to managers and

supervisors about their employees together in one place, streamlining the human resources decision-making process and helping to balance managerial tasks with day-to-day demands more easily. *My Workplace* also keeps managers and supervisors informed about their employees' personnel actions. With quick and easy access to employees' personnel information, managers are able to make budget decisions, staffing plans and work distributions more efficiently.

The instructions on how to access *My Biz* is now located on the NAO CPAC website:

<http://nao-ws5nfk/sites/AAD/Civilian%20Personnel%20Adisory/default.aspx>



Taiwanese delegation visits district

Norfolk District and the Norfolk Naval Station hosted a delegation of visitors from Taiwan on Nov. 9. The fact-finding visit included discussions about harbor and port facilities built and managed by the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Navy. The visit included Norfolk District and USACE briefings followed by a boat tour of the Norfolk shipyard, a visit to the Maersk APM Terminal and a site tour of Craney Island. Pictured left to right, are Norfolk District Commander Dionysios Anninos; RADM Ta-We-Wu, Director General, Taiwan Defense Procurement Division; and COL Tsang-Ti Chen, Chief, Defense Procurement Div. (Air Force), Taiwan, as they depart on NAO Vessel *Harrell*. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)



2006 Year in Review**District MILCON evolves to keep pace with Army Transformation**

Story by Jerry Rogers

“Essential changes are taking place in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ military construction (MILCON) program to keep pace with the most comprehensive restructuring of the Army since the years immediately following World War II.”

Those were the words of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Director of Military Programs, Brig. Gen. Merdith W.B. “Bo” Temple, in an article published in the October issue of *Engineer Update*. General Temple wrote of the evolving nature of the USACE MILCON program and the Corps’ strategy for keeping pace with Army Transformation.

Meanwhile, Norfolk District is set to spend approximately \$1.6 billion over the next several years in its steadily evolving MILCON BRAC program. During fiscal year 2006, several major projects were completed, while many more construction projects were awarded at the District’s seven Army and Air Force military installations and other federal agencies throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In a companion story to General Temple’s article, which also appeared in *Engineer Update*, the Director of the Army Installation Management Agency, Brig. Gen. John A. MacDonald, wrote: “While wooden, ‘temporary’ facilities were the cornerstone of the program begun in 1942, the Army is now looking at the design and construction of permanent, 50-year-life facilities using an expedited, standardized process USACE has designated as ‘MILCON Transformation.’”

Both directors emphasized that the key to the MILCON Transformation effort is the use of standard designs. The Norfolk District is the Army CONUS Center of Standardization for seven military facility types: Army Family Housing (Request for Proposals), Dining Facilities, Criminal Investigation Division Command Facilities, Military Entrance Processing Stations, Classroom XXI (computer online training facilities), Information System Facilities and General Instruction Buildings. The Norfolk District Center of Standardization will be fully operational by the end of FY 2007, said Chief of Technical Services Division Bill Sorrentino.

General Temple also revealed in his article that while the USACE MILCON program has steadily



Work began this year on the Combined Arms Collective Training Facility at Fort A.P. Hill (Photo Courtesy Tamitha Evans)

increased during the past few years, staffing to execute the program has not kept pace.

Staffing is an issue

“We have a huge customer coming like Fort Lee, who is gaining new commands as a result of BRAC 2005,” said Sorrentino. “We are talking about hiring 5 to 20 people in Engineering Branch and 25 to 100 people in Construction Branch.”

“Today’s workload is even larger and will continue to grow as a result of several factors,” said Temple. “One of these is the construction requirements from the latest round of Base Realignment and Closure. BRAC 2005 is focused more on realignment more than in past BRAC rounds, which means that Army installations that gain units will need to have facilities built.”

“More units are returning from overseas locations. Before these units can be brought stateside, the facilities and infrastructure have to

Completed projects for FY 06**Langley Air Force Base**

- Operations Support Center
- Historic Housing Improvements
- Clear Water Rinse

Fort Eustis and Fort Story

- Military Traffic Management Command Security Upgrades to Building 661, Fort Eustis
- Aviation Training Facility, Fort Eustis
- Covert National Ground Intelligence Center Warehouse, Fort Eustis
- Building 804 Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning Upgrades, Fort Eustis
- Cantonment Fence, Fort Eustis
- Main Gate Canopy, Fort Eustis

Fort Lee

- Fire and Emergency Services, Phase 1
- First Phase of Madison Park Family Housing Area
- 49th Group Stationing Facilities

Continued on Page 5

Wetlands often keep regulators in the weeds

Story by John Evans and Patrick Bloodgood

As in past years the Norfolk District's Regulatory Program continued to move along at breakneck speed in 2006. This past year kept the Regulatory staff busy processing nearly 100 standard permits, which pertain to applications that do not meet the criteria for



Environmental Scientist Amy Bourne marks flags while performing a wetlands delineation on Nov. 30. (Photo By Scharlene Floyd)

simple general permits because of substantial environmental impacts. They also require a public notice and involve coordination with other local, state and federal agencies, as well as the general public.

During this past year, the District's Regulatory staff processed nearly 2500 projects that met the terms and conditions for a regional permit, and over 1500 projects that met the terms and conditions of a Nationwide permit.

This past year also entailed the Regulatory staff making 3,682 determinations about the extent of jurisdiction over waters and wetlands in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Regulators also had 1,815 meetings with members of the general public regarding potential projects before any permit applications were submitted. This pre-application process is one tool that the Norfolk District's Regulatory Program uses to help find ways to avoid and minimize adverse environmental

impacts. This process saves the general public and developers' money, time and headaches.

Impacts reduced, wetlands created

During fiscal year 2006, the Regulatory staff was very successful in reducing adverse environmental impacts throughout the Commonwealth. Members of the general public initially requested to impact 426 wetland acres this past year, but by the time permits were issued by the Norfolk District, those

impacts were reduced to 274 acres. To compensate for those unavoidable impacts, there were 469 acres of compensatory mitigation, as well as nearly \$4 million in trust fund contributions.

To help ensure that there is compliance with the Regulatory Program, personnel from the Regulatory Office conducted 302 enforcement investigations and 257 permit compliance inspections this past year, making for a busy year in 2006.

District MILCON transformation

Continued from Page 4

be in place to house them, train them, and provide their families with the quality of life they deserve," said Temple. (See RCI update)

At the same time, Temple continued, the conversion to a modular force will have certain unique facility requirements that will need to be in place as units are stood up. "Many of the existing facilities at our posts are near or have surpassed their design life and need to be replaced or rehabilitated," said Temple.

Norfolk District Chief of Engineering Peter G. Reilly echoed General Temple's assessment of the USACE MILCON Transformation Program.

"The key elements of MILCON Transformation revolve around using standard facilities and the elimination of prescriptive standards which have driven the costs for facilities 'inside the gate' above what is typical in private industry for a similar facility," said Reilly. "Our challenge as we move forward with MILCON Transformation is ensuring that our customers, clients and partners understand the process and are supportive."

Residential Communities Initiative (RCI)

The Army Residential Communities Initiative or RCI is a sterling example of a MILCON Transformation initiative that's revolutionizing the quality of life for Soldiers and their families. Since January 2002, Norfolk District has provided real estate support to the entire Army



Flags hang from the front facades of a recently completed RCI project at Fort Belvoir, Va. (Photo Courtesy Lynda Christensen)

RCI program, a real estate privatization program for Army family housing throughout the continental United States.

Currently, the District Real Estate Office, which manages both the 50-year ground leases with annual compliance inspections and the document repository for the life of leases, has transferred 75,120 housing units on 35 Army installations. Another 10,131 housing units on nine Army installations will transfer by March 2010.



Norfolk District History

A Look Back In District History: The Dismal Swamp Canal

Compiled by Jerry Rogers

In the midst of the metropolitan area known as Hampton Roads, Virginia, and extending well into North Carolina, there is a unique primeval forest inhabited by a variety of mammals, including Black Bears, 21 species of reptiles, 58 species of turtles, lizards, salamanders, frogs and toads, and over 200 species of birds, as well as history, mystery and lore – the Great Dismal Swamp.

The Great Dismal Swamp is also home to the oldest continually operating man-made canal in the United States – the Dismal Swamp Canal.

Connecting the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia via the Elizabeth River and the Albemarle Sound in North Carolina via the Pasquotank River, its inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places and its designation as a National Civil Engineering Landmark are honors worthy of its unique past. Adding to its history, in February 2004 the Dismal Swamp Canal was included into the National Park Service’s Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, the hidden network of people and places that provided refuge for African-American slaves on their long journey to freedom. What keeps it alive today are the plethora of pleasure boaters who transit this historical waterway every year, which provides a protected inland channel between Norfolk, Va. and Miami, and is part of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Norfolk District’s Mission

Since 1929, the Norfolk District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has held the responsibility for maintaining and operating the federally-owned 22-mile Dismal Swamp Canal, by operating the locks at Deep Creek, Va. and South Mills, N.C., performing maintenance dredging of the Canal, and by removing obstructions to navigation.

The Dismal Swamp Canal receives its water supply from Lake Drummond, a 3,100 acre natural lake located in the heart of the Swamp.

History, Mystery and Lore

In 2006, more than 1,900 mostly recreational vessels transited the Dismal Swamp Canal. These visitors and navigators travel where famous explorers and presidents have stood and literary greats have been inspired for over 200 years. For example, astride the Virginia-North Carolina borders is the site where the infamous “Halfway House” hotel was built in the late

1820s. The hotel was a popular spot for marriages, duels and those escaping the law. Since the hotel was on the state line, these “escapees” simply walked to the other side of the hotel to avoid being captured in either state. It is also said that Edgar Allen Poe wrote “The Raven” during one of his stays at the hotel. Boats today follow the course of James Adams’ Floating Theatre, where Edna Ferber got the idea to write the novel “Showboat,” upon which the famous musical is based. The Swamp is also the scene of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel “Dred.”

Colonial Beginnings

Just who discovered the Great Dismal Swamp and when is unknown. Colonel William Byrd II, founder of the city of Richmond, Va. in 1737, was a member of the commission that surveyed the North Carolina/Virginia state line through the Swamp in 1728 and provided the first extensive description of it.

In May 1763, George Washington made his first visit to the Swamp and suggested draining it and digging a north-south canal through it to connect the waters of Chesapeake Bay in Virginia and Albemarle Sound in North Carolina. Joining with several other prominent Virginians and North Carolinians, he formed two syndicates known as the *Dismal Swamp Land Company* and the *Adventurers for Draining the Great Dismal Swamp*. This group hoped to drain the Swamp, harvest the trees, and use the land for farming.

That same year, the company purchased 40,000 acres of Swamp land for \$20,000. George Washington, who 12 years later would lead the American Revolutionary War and become our nation’s first president, directed the surveying and digging of the 5-mile long ditch from the western edge of the Swamp to Lake Drummond, known today as

Washington Ditch. In the late 1700s, Riddick Ditch was also completed. Together these ditches provided a means to transport logs out of the Swamp and drain it as well. The *Adventurers* soon realized, however, that the task of draining the Swamp was enormous and gave up that part of their plan to concentrate on lumbering.

Strategic Economic Importance

Over 200 years ago, as it is today, transportation was the lifeblood of the North Carolina Sound region and the Tidewater areas of Virginia. The landlocked sounds were entirely dependent upon poor overland tracts or shipment along the treacherous Carolina coast to reach further markets through Norfolk. George Washington, Virginia Governor Patrick Henry and other prominent leaders still envisioned that if the country was to grow and prosper, it would require better transportation.

Both Washington and Governor Henry felt that canals were the easiest answer for an efficient means of internal transportation. In 1784, the Dismal Swamp Canal Company was created. Digging began in 1793 and progressed slowly since the canal had to be dug completely by hand. Most of the labor was performed by slaves hired from nearby plantation land owners. It took approximately 12 years of back-breaking construction under highly unfavorable conditions to complete the 22-mile long waterway.

Canal’s Heyday, Demise

By 1805 flat-bottomed vessels could be admitted into the Dismal Swamp Canal. Meanwhile, the surrounding country was being opened up to farming and timbering. Landings were established along the length of the Canal and regular postal service was established. Hotels



Historical image of the Dismal Swamp Canal (File Photo)

sprang up along the state lines of Virginia and North Carolina, and the Gilmerton Canal was finished and put into usage.

This boom lasted right up to the completion of the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal in 1859. Toll collections dropped significantly due to the competition. Then along came The War Between the States. Tolls dropped even further and maintenance was neglected. The Dismal Swamp Canal went into a general decay until a final reorganization of the company in 1892 led to the creation of the Lake Drummond Canal and Water Company and usher in the “great improvement” to the Dismal Swamp Canal.

‘Great Improvement’ Era

Beginning in 1896 and continuing for three years, great steam shovels were barged through the locks and assembled in the Canal. They systematically widened the Canal to twice its width. Great trees were uprooted and tossed aside. The Canal was dug to the same depth from Deep Creek locks to South Mill locks, including the feeder ditch. A bigger lock/spillway control was built in the feeder ditch near Lake Drummond. The Gilmerton Cut was abandoned and a new dam and cross canal was built at Deep Creek.

Federal Government Intervenes

With the 20th century, however, further improvements in modes of transportation meant another downturn for the Dismal Swamp Canal. By the 1920s, commercial traffic had subsided except for passenger vessels. In 1929 the U.S. federal government purchased the Dismal Swamp Canal for \$500,000, and in the succeeding years, the Army Corps of Engineers has replaced the locks of 1899 with new steel and concrete locks, along with many other navigational improvements.



Workers build the South Mills Lock using lever and pulley technology. (File Photo)

'06 marks another banner year for Small Business

Story by Patrick Bloodgood

"We did quite well," said Small Business Program Manager Jack Beecher

"Quite well," meaning that the Norfolk District's Small Business Program enjoyed yet another record-setting year. This time around, the District awarded more than \$92 million in military and civil works projects to small businesses during fiscal year 2006. This allowed Norfolk District to exceed its overall Small Business goal of 40 percent. The district awarded 52 percent of its obligations to small businesses and also met or exceeded three other goals – Small Disadvantaged Businesses; HUBZone; and Women-Owned Business awards.

"We met or exceeded four out of the six categories, that's not bad," said Beecher. "In fact in those categories that we exceeded the goal, we didn't just exceed, we busted those wide open."

The two Small Business goal categories not met were awards to Service Disabled Veteran (SDV) Owned Businesses and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Awards to SDVs were 1 percent, with a goal of 1.5 percent, and HBCUs received 1 percent, with a goal of 13.9 percent. Even though the HBCU goal wasn't met, the District was still second in the Division for this category.

Program highlight

One project worth noting is the Langley Air Force Base runway resurfacing project. This high-profile project was completed by a small business that bid against larger corporations. Hi-Way Paving, a small business out of Ohio, received the \$15.5 million project that entailed immense pressure to complete on a very tight deadline. For the entire summer the fighter squadrons that call Langley home were sent away for training while the runways and taxiways were refinished. On July 6, just 60 days after the project began, the "birds" that call Langley Air Force Base home returned and the project was complete.

"They did a great job, they were probably our biggest success this year," said Beecher.

A challenging future

Even though the program has had great success in the past few years, the road ahead has its challenges. According to Beecher, the upcoming BRAC work is going to skew the percentages of large business versus small business contracts, mainly because of the large influx of high-dollar, large-projects that are going to have to be completed over the next few years. Many of these projects are going to be so large that a small business won't be able to complete the work because of a lack of resources (manpower, equipment) to do the job.

The goals set for the individual Army Corps of Engineer Districts to achieve are all in percentages of total dollar amounts awarded, and according to Beecher there is going to be a lot of money awarded because of those large BRAC-related projects, which makes it that much harder to achieve a

level of 40 percent of all dollar amounts awarded going towards small businesses.

"Fiscal Years 07-10 are going to be a real challenge for us," said Beecher.

Citation no small feat for Small Business



Marc Gutterman receives the Chief of Engineers Award for Outstanding Small Business Program Support from the USACE Commander, Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock and Steven C. Preston.

In a ceremony on Nov. 14, at the Regional Small Business conference in St. Louis, Mo., Norfolk District Environmental Scientist Marc Gutterman received the Chief of Engineers Award for Outstanding Small Business Program Support. Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, along with Steven C. Preston, administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration, were present to recognize Gutterman for his support of the Norfolk District Small Business Program.

Gutterman, the Technical Team Leader for the AVTEX Fibers Plant EPA Superfund Site, managed to have nearly 87 percent of the contracted work go to small businesses. According to the nomination letter, this high percentage rate was made possible because Gutterman took a very active role in courting small businesses that could meet the task at hand. Gutterman met with and reviewed capability statements of many local small business companies that were interested in providing contract support on the project. He also reviewed many market surveys seeking qualified small businesses, not only for potential prime contract awards but also for sub-contracting opportunities.

Gutterman points to Small Business Program Chief Jack Beecher as being the driving force for his highly-touted successful use of small businesses.

"Jack Beecher's perseverance convinced me to use small businesses when feasible and it's worked out very well so far," said Gutterman. "It's good to be recognized."

According to Beecher, this marks the first time a District employee has been recognized for this award.

"Marc was selected from probably 40 other Districts. That tells me that our Norfolk District project managers are small business-friendly, which makes my job much easier and enjoyable," said Beecher.

Craney, Gathright studies among Civil Works projects

Story by Patrick Bloodgood

The Norfolk District's Civil Works Program continued to steam along this past year. The District completed the Hampton Roads 50-foot Channel Deepening, allowing the area's port facilities to be the only ones on the East Coast that can accept the large Post-Panamax container ships. The District's Civil Works Program is also boasting the passing of a major milestone in the effort to expand the Craney Island Dredged Material Management Area for the eventual use as another port facility, with the signing of the Chief's Report on Oct. 31.

"I feel extremely proud that I had the opportunity to serve our nation by successfully leading a complex and diverse team and finishing a long study process with complete buy-in from the public," said Project Manager Doug Martin. "This study has thoroughly examined all problems and opportunities and has developed the best technical solutions for the region and the nation.

Down at the Virginia Beach, Va., oceanfront, contractors working for the Norfolk District started work this past summer on the city's Hurricane Protection System. They are refitting new manhole covers to and clearing sand from the outflow pipes at the 16th St. pump station. Work is expected to be completed on that phase of the project in early 2007.

Studies abound for District

Along with the harbor deepening and the Craney Island report, the District continued to work on various studies throughout

the Commonwealth of Virginia. Studies ranged from altering the way that the District operates Gathright Dam to helping with dissolved oxygen levels downstream from the dam, to creating a hurricane protection system for the Willoughby Spit section of Norfolk.



The Willoughby Spit section of the city of Norfolk is currently being studied for a Hurricane Protection System (File Photo)

This past year, the District continued working on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the possible introduction of the non-native oyster into the Chesapeake Bay. The draft EIS is expected to be ready this summer. In addition to the non-native EIS, the District continues to study and work towards restoring the Chesapeake Bay's native oysters, which have been decimated by disease and over-fishing.

Looking to WRDA

The main hope for the upcoming year in Civil Works is that the Water Resources Development Act is passed by Congress, and funding for ongoing projects comes through. Currently, the District has a few projects on the back burner because they are not fully funded. However, according to Programs Branch Chief Jeff Irving, the local delegation has been extremely supportive and he is very confident that the District's Civil Works program will be able to continue to help localities throughout the Commonwealth with various environmental restoration and engineering needs.

"Thanks to the delegation, we have had a sufficient amount of monies to solve local problems, but we can always use more and do more," said Irving.

NAO ranks third in USACE for military customer satisfaction

Story by Jerry Rogers

The results of the USACE FY 06 Military Programs Customer Satisfaction Survey are in and Norfolk District, with a composite score of 4.47, ranked third among 16 Tier 1 organizations surveyed throughout the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Perennial survey toppers, Savannah and Tulsa Districts, ranked one (4.62) and two (4.50) respectively. Tier 1 USACE organizations are assigned based on large military programs with at least 35 customer contracts. The composite score average for all 16 Tier 1 organizations surveyed is 4.26.

Norfolk District was at or near the top of all 34 categories of Trends by Customer Group, ranking first in Engineering Design Quality, Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity Contracts,

Contract Warranty Support and the extremely important On-site Project Management (Project Manager Forward, Area/Resident Engineer) evaluations.

In his memorandum to USACE Division Commanders, Director of Military Programs, Brig. Gen. (P) Merdith W.B. Temple noted that the objective of these survey analyses is simply benchmarking, not organizational competition.

"General Temple is absolutely right. While we are extremely pleased with the survey results, they serve only as a benchmark that we will strive to improve upon," said Chief of Projects John Adams.

To view the complete Norfolk District rankings analyses, click on following link: <http://www.nao.usace.army.mil/milcon/nao%20fy2006.asp>



Hurricane Recovery

More than a year after Katrina, volunteers still needed

Story by Nancy Allen

On Aug. 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina, one of the largest natural disasters in our nation's history, slammed into the Gulf Coast with 127 mph winds. More than 1,500 lives were lost. There was a storm surge of 28 to 30 feet along the Mississippi coast and when several critical levees failed, 75 percent of the City of New Orleans was flooded.

Four days later, the Corps of Engineers established Task Force Hope, a federal plan to un-water the city, clean up the debris in the city and along the Gulf Coast, rebuild levees to pre-Katrina levels and upgrade the Southeastern Louisiana Hurricane Protection System.

Since then, the some 8,000 Corps employees have been working night and day to carry out a variety of missions. At the peak recovery efforts, more than 10 percent of the entire Army Corps of Engineers would be engaged as part of Task Force Hope. More than 70 employees have deployed from Norfolk District, some making more than one trip to Mississippi, Louisiana and other locations.

In the days and weeks following the storm, emergency support provided to the Gulf Coast region included deliveries of ice and bottled water; installation of temporary roofs, emergency generators and temporary structures; and removal of 44 million cubic yards of debris. In addition, the Corps was responsible for un-watering the city of New Orleans, a task that was completed in 53 days.

The Corps has also completed significant work on the New Orleans Hurricane Protection System, with much more work to be accomplished.

"In the past year the Army Corps of Engineers has done some amazing things. We have compressed years of work into a matter of months," said Dan Hitchings, director of Task Force Hope. "We have repaired all of the hurricane protection system and, in the process, we have improved and strengthened portions of it. For example, we have brought 220 miles of floodwalls and levees up to authorized levels – some portions were unfinished,

some areas had subsided. New erosion protection has been added at several sites and a program of tree cutting on existing levees for protection is ongoing."



Workers at New Orleans' London Ave. Outfall Canal practice lowering the temporary gated closure structures designed and constructed by the Corps. These massive gates, and similar structures at the 17th St. Canal and Orleans Ave. Canal, will prevent surge from Lake Pontchartrain from entering the canals while pumps will help remove water from the city in the event of another hurricane. The temporary closure structures and pumps will be replaced by permanent gates and pump stations in the next four years. (Photo by Todd Hornback)

Other improvements included replacing failed I-wall designs with stronger T-Wall or L-wall designs and reinforcing the most vulnerable undamaged I-walls.

Additionally, the Corps has constructed massive temporary closure gates at each of New Orleans' three outfall canals and installed pumps. In the event of another storm, rainfall can be pumped out of the city through the canals, while closing the gates will prevent storm surge from entering the canals from Lake Pontchartrain.

According to Hitchings, "A job of this magnitude in this short amount of time has never been accomplished before, anywhere. And we are continuing to work with that sense of urgency as we plan for the 100-year level of protection."

Designing and building permanent closure gates and pump stations is just one task that the Corps will tackle over the next three years. By 2010, the Hurricane Protection System will be improved to a 100-year protection level with higher, stronger floodwalls and levees and navigable floodgates in several locations.

The Corps is also completing the Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration project to identify, describe and propose a full range of flood control, coastal restoration, and hurricane protection measures for South Louisiana.

The task of overseeing the work will fall to three offices – Task Force Hope, the New Orleans District's Protection and Restoration Office and the newly-established Hurricane Protection Office. The Corps is currently recruiting employees for all three offices, offering the opportunity for promotions and higher-level positions throughout the Corps and "return rights" to the position they left.

For more information on the Corps' work to improve the Hurricane Protection System, including job opportunities in New Orleans, visit <http://www.mvn.usace.army.mil/hps/>.

Operations, keeping vessel traffic on the go

Story by Patrick Bloodgood

Once again the Norfolk District's Operations Branch served as the backbone to the Commonwealth of Virginia's Federal Navigation Channels, providing federal support and maintenance to the Commonwealth of Virginia's water transportation routes. The District's Operations Branch dredged 11 projects throughout the Commonwealth in 2006, including the Hampton Roads Harbor and James River as well as smaller projects around Tangier Island, Chincoteague Island and Bennetts Creek.

Three of the dredging projects were Work-for-Others Projects, in which the District dredged for other agencies outside of its normal scope of work. According to Operations Branch Chief Betty Gray Waring, these projects included certain portions of the James River for the Maritime Administration, the Cape Henry Channel for the Baltimore District and an executed contract for the Virginia Port Authority to dredge the Norfolk International Terminals.

"It's pretty good to get additional work in addition to our own," commented Waring.

What would Operations Branch be without Craney?

No District operations review over the past year would be complete without a look into the ongoing work taking place at the dredged material management area known as Craney Island. From an operations standpoint, Craney Island continues to be the ace in the hole for the Norfolk District. This massive parcel of land extending into the James and Elizabeth Rivers has kept the Hampton Roads harbors competitive, keeping the costs of dredging the area's channels at industry lows not found anywhere else on the East Coast.

This past year Craney Island took in more than 7.3 million cubic yards of dredge material, which is roughly double the average yearly intake for the area. To accommodate the material, the dike system around Craney Island was raised this past year.

Keeping the path clear and vessels moving

The Norfolk District Operations Branch's drift removal program for the federal channels continued to keep the waterways clear of debris and hazards to navigation which could damage commercial and personal watercraft. This past year alone, the program removed 83,000 cubic feet of debris from the federal channels located in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A portion of the 83,000 cubic feet included a buoy and buoy sinker that the District assisted the Coast Guard in removing from the Thimble Shoals section of the Atlantic Ocean outbound channel.



The Norfolk District Survey Vessel Harrell departs Fort Norfolk. The vessel is equipped with state-of-the-art underwater survey equipment that can scan the river bottoms looking for shoals and other underwater hazards to navigation (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)

The nation's oldest continually operating canal, the Dismal Swamp Canal, locked more than 1,900 vessels through this past year, and the Albermarle and Chesapeake Canal locked through close to 12,000 commercial and passenger vessels for fiscal year 2006. These two canals are vital to the nation's economy allowing safe passage for barges and pleasure craft alike to travel from the north to the south and vice versa without having to brave the open waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

Future projects and challenges

The Norfolk District Operations Branch is looking at some major projects that could potentially be coming its way. The first is assisting the Navy in the deepening of portions of the Elizabeth River from the current authorized levels of 45 feet to 47 feet to accommodate their fleet of aircraft carriers, enabling them to reach the Norfolk Naval Shipyard more easily.

One of the challenges that the District's Operations Branch faces is the same challenge that many other sections of the Norfolk District faces -- funding.

"The main thing is funding; making sure we get enough money in our budget to maintain the projects that we have. Many of the small navigation projects are not getting the funding," commented Waring.

This past year also marked the first year that Waring has served in that position and for her the year marked challenges and a rewarding experience.

"It's been really challenging, a lot of things that I wasn't really involved with before, like budgets and funding... a lot of learning. There is a real learning curve but it is getting easier as we go along," said Waring. "Everybody has been real supportive. It helps when you have a tremendous team here."



District Safety

Report safety problems at work and get rewarded

Story by Rickey Brown

A Safety Award is an award that everyone here in the Norfolk District is eligible to win. The question you may ask is “how can I win one?” Well, I’m glad that you asked! When you happen to see an unsafe violation just waiting to happen in your work environment, or if you think that there is a safer way of performing a job, bring those particular items to the attention of the Safety Office. We can have it addressed, and at the same time you will be considered for a Safety Award.

Now I know you are thinking... that’s too easy! That may be but it’s just that easy to be considered for a Safety Award.

The bottom line is that we here in the Safety Office, including Norfolk District Commander Col. Dionysios Anninos, do not want any of Norfolk District’s employees to have an accident. Each and every one of us can play a big part in working together towards a goal of *zero accidents* in the work environment.

Take *zero accidents* a step further and be mindful that there may be an unsafe violation lurking inside or outside of your homes. The Safety Office can not award you for actions at home, but making your house a *zero accidents* home will reward you with a healthier, pain-free life.

All of us here at the Norfolk District are very valuable to the mission of this *great team*, so awards or no awards, THINK SAFETY FIRST!

‘Angels’ grace Norfolk District for more than two decades



Visitors from the St. Mary’s Home for Disabled Children attend the District’s Angel Tree Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 5. (Photo by Nancy Allen)

St. Mary’s sends around 65 to 80 individual wish lists for seriously disabled kids. This year is no different; 86 children are available for Norfolk District employees to “adopt” this year.

The lists come in the form of an angel, which is hung from the District’s Angel Tree. During a tree lighting ceremony held on Dec. 5, employees from the District picked the angels off the tree and looked at the back to see what was requested. Each year the requests generally range from socks, sweat suits, headbands for the babies, tights for the little girls, and each child gets to ask for one toy.

Again this year, the Norfolk District’s singing group, the Corpsaleers, will go caroling at St. Mary’s on Dec. 20, and deliver the gifts that the District employees purchased for the children. For the members of the District’s vocal aficionados, it’s a chance to not only give to the community but receive many thanks, smiles, and much joy.

“It’s uplifting; it’s rewarding; as much as they say they are happy to receive from us, we know we are also receiving from them,” commented Corpsaleers Director Marsha Flood.

The next edition of *Tides in Brief* will include pictures and the final tally of all gifts that were delivered to the children at St. Mary’s.

Story by Patrick Bloodgood

It’s a relationship that spans multiple decades. The employees of the Norfolk District have donated gifts to the little ones at the St. Mary’s Home for Disabled Children for at least 20 years. Each year

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District Commander: Colonel Dionysios Anninos

District Public Affairs Officer: Terry A. McCann

Editor: Patrick J. Bloodgood

