



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Vicksburg District

THE
Water's
SUMMER/FALL
2018 **Edge**

Vicksburg District Recognized as 'World-Class Workplace,' *page 5*
District Dive Team Remains Mission Ready, *page 14*



US Army Corps of Engineers®

News magazine of the Vicksburg District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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On the Cover

Ed Mullen adjusts his diving gear with the help of Hayden Pickering.

Photo by Catherine Jennison

The Water's Edge Summer/Fall 2018

Contents

Commander's Corner Colonel Michael C. Derosier	3-4
Vicksburg District Recognized as 'Best Place to Work,' 'World-Class Workplace'	5
District Signs Adoption Certificates at Two Schools	6-7
District Supports Adopted School's Career Fair	8, 12
District Team Member Participates in Geospatial Disaster Preparedness Workshops	9-10
Taking Steps to Keep USACE Safe	11-12
Corps Signs Wastewater System Rehabilitation Projects with Mississippi Communities.....	13
Emergency Management Office Achieves Significant Accreditation Milestone	13, 18
District Dive Team Remains Mission Ready	14-15
SMA Dailey Visits Mat Sinking Unit	16-18
Army War College Visits Dredge Jadwin	19
District Honors 145 Years of Service and Length of Service Award Recipients	20-22
District Selects Chief for the Programs Management Branch.....	22
Water Treatment Plant Operator at Sardis Lake Receives Jim McDonald Award	23
Arkabutla Lake Celebrates 75 Years.....	24-25
Enid Lake Hosts 27th Annual Fishing Day for the Physically Challenged.....	26
Sardis Lake Hosts Fourth Annual Wounded Veterans Fishing Event.....	27
Employee Appreciation Day	28-29
Community Outreach.....	30
Show and Tell.....	31



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<https://www.youtube.com/c/vicksburgusace>

The USACE Vicksburg app is available in the Apple App Store, Android Google Play and Amazon Apps.

NEED TO KNOW PEOPLE

Billy Williams, Alainna O'Bannon
SMA Dailey Visits MSU

PROCESS

Active Shooter Training
Dive Team

PROJECT

District Signs Rehab Projects
District Adopts Two Schools



Commander's Corner

with Colonel Michael C. Derosier



MVK Teammates -

GREAT JOB in fiscal year 2018 (FY18) in delivering the program, strengthening the foundation, and working towards achieving our future vision! I am proud of each and every one of you and of the way that our team rises to meet every challenge! As I often like to do, here is a call out to SOME of the things that we have accomplished in FY18 leading into fiscal year 2019 (FY19):

- The district met 45 of 45 scheduled milestones (28 regular and 17 supplemental) in the execution of a \$327M program!
- \$160M total obligations; \$98M awarded to small businesses
- Contracting executed 659 actions worth \$176M
- Excellent execution of our operating budget
- Over 260,000 squares of articulated concrete mats placed by the Mat Sinking Unit and Revetment/Channel Improvement team
- Over 1,500 Regulatory permits issued with regulatory branch exceeding all performance metrics
- Design, real estate and construction of over 55 miles of Mississippi River Levee enlargement projects
- 287 employees deployed to Florida, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and California in support of disaster response missions
- Incredible support from the Modeling, Mapping and Consequences Production Center to South Atlantic Division (SAD) and Southwestern Division (SWD)

- Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) certified

Behind each and every one of these are a host of enabling actions that are essential for setting the conditions for success – staffing/personnel, security, internal review, logistics, equal employment opportunity office, information technology, public affairs office and office of counsel.

FY18 was a championship year for the Vicksburg District! As I was watching the Kansas City Chiefs beat the Cincinnati Bengals recently, I couldn't help but think about parallels with our district team – a team of professionals who take the field each and every day with purpose, a team with depth and versatility in talent, a team that performs well and has fun doing it and a team that is built to win a championship. With this year's budget already appropriated, the work plan anticipated much earlier than in recent years and all of the supplemental work that needs to be executed, the Vicksburg District is set up for an exciting and promising FY19!

One thing that I would ask everyone to keep handy and visible is our district "145 dollar bill." Many thanks to

(Continued on page 4)

District "145 Dollar Bill" in green.

(Commander's Corner, concluded from page 3)

- during hurricane response (and also internationally in support of Colombia)
- A special shout out to Bill Sisneros and Jason Mothershed who are deployed, and Dan Carney and Frederick Auston who returned from deployment this past year
- Improvement in safety and reduction in accidents
- The Dredge Jadwin executed a 5-month dredging season and is celebrating its 85th year in service
- Repaired 80 levee slides plus other work by the maintenance section in support of SAD and SWD and others
- Arkabutla Lake celebrated its 75th anniversary
- Dewatering at Enid Lake and design work for a bridge replacement project
- Completed well treatments in outlet channel at Granada Lake
- Work at Hurricane Landing at Sardis Lake
- Narrows transformer replacement at Lake Greeson
- Work at Pint Cedar and Alpine Ridge at DeGray Lake

- Vertical alignment and revisions on a draft water supply agreement at DeGray Lake
- Work at Brady Mountain, Stephens Park Rec Area and Little Fir Rec Area at Lake Ouachita
- Another year of phenomenal outreach events in Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana
- Improvements at the McKinney Bayou Pumping Plant
- Remote operations in Greenwood
- Emergency work at Columbia Lock and Dam to reopen the Ouachita-Black to navigation
- Successful flood fight of a Top 10 record flood on the Mississippi River (to include emergency repairs at Blackhawk, Louisiana)
- Award of the bank stabilization project in Monroe, Louisiana
- Fabrication of the Steel Bayou gates
- Armor One is funded and on schedule

Lee Grant, Jamie Baker and Colleen Cummins for taking the output and products from our strategic offsite meeting in August and arranging that into the FY19 Operations Plan (OPLAN). The dollar bill is a reflection of our FY19 OPLAN strategic priorities and is also intended to serve as a symbol of the district - a link to the past and the future, a continued celebration of the district's 145th anniversary,

a reminder that we establish excellence each and every day through the execution of our mission and delivery of our projects and programs. We earn our CREDIBILITY through EXCELLENCE - and CREDIBILITY is KEY! Keep it up - our efforts do much to deliver value to the nation and enhance the reputation of the Vicksburg District, Mississippi Valley Division and U.S. Army Corps of



WATER'S EDGE

District "145 Dollar Bill" in red, blue and purple.

Vicksburg District Recognized as 'Best Place to Work,' 'World-Class Workplace'

By Jessica Dulaney

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) headquarters recently recognized the Vicksburg District (MVK) as a "Best Place to Work" and a "World-Class Workplace."

The recognition was based on results from the 2018 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), which is an annual survey that measures federal employees' perceptions of their respective agencies. FEVS collects information on which agencies are viewed by their employees to have conditions most favorable to success.

"We are honored to be recognized as a 'Best Place to Work' by FEVS for the third year in a row and to be named a 'World-Class Workplace,' a new distinction offered by USACE that is even more challenging to accomplish," said MVK Commander Col. Michael C. Derosier. "This outstanding achievement would not be possible without

the district's team of professionals who are dedicated to executing the mission and creating a culture of respect and community in the workplace."

The results of FEVS provide valuable insight to agency leaders on the factors that shape the experiences of the civilian workforce.

MVK intends on hosting a ceremony at its headquarters at a later date to further share this achievement with its employees and the community.

MVK encompasses a 68,000-square-mile area across portions of Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana that holds seven major river basins and incorporates approximately 460 miles of mainline levees. The district is engaged in hundreds of projects and employs approximately 1,100 personnel. ◀



District Signs Adoption Certificates at Two Schools

By Shirley J. Smith
Photos by Jared Eastman

District Commander, Col. Michael C. Derosier, and other district personnel recently participated in Adopt-A-School Program (AAS) ceremonies at two local schools, Beechwood Elementary and Vicksburg High. The district has participated in the adoption partnership with local schools for the last 20 years. While the partnership with Beechwood Elementary is new, this is *deja vue* with the partnership at Vicksburg High.

The principal at Beechwood, David Adams, stated, “This is wonderful, we’re happy to have you all adopt us. We look forward to working with the Corps. You have a lot to offer us, especially with our Science, Technology, Engineering and Math program (STEM), and all aspects of the program.”

The atmosphere at Beechwood Elementary was filled with excitement as students awaited the arrival of the “colonel.” Upon his arrival, the students escorted Col. Derosier and members of the Outreach Committee to the designated area for the ceremony. The ceremony began with a Welcome and introduction of staff and District personnel. Before the signing of the certificates, Col. Derosier was asked to present awards to 15 students who scored highest on the state assessment tests. Each student exemplified school pride, courtesy, and a sense of accomplishment as they each received their award from the “colonel.”



Col. Derosier is escorted into a designated area by student, Brandon Nailor.

This effort is not new to Vicksburg High, the District’s first adopted school. The partnership was initiated with Vicksburg High during the fall of 1998. The school’s principal, Angela Johnson, stated, “We are excited to have you adopt us and we will definitely strive to enhance the program. I’m really excited and thankful that the Corps has again adopted the school. We look forward to a successful school year.” Although this is the first year for the partnership with Johnson as principal, the partnership has involved four other principals.



Issac Summer, a fourth grader, salutes after receiving his award from Col. Derosier, left, and principal David Adams, right.

The AAS Program has proven to be a very effective tool within our community. Our team members have assisted numerous students and faculty members through this worthwhile endeavor. The AAS Program could not have been and will not be successful without the dedicated efforts of our team members. The program is executed through an annual plan that is developed each year at the beginning of the school year among the District’s committee members and the faculty and staff of the schools. The plan outlines specific goals to be achieved through the partnership during the school year.

Col. Derosier signed adoption certificates at each school along with its principal, certifying the industry/school partnerships. The adoption agreement will have volunteers

PROJECTS

from the District and other local industries supporting the schools through various activities including tutoring, mentoring, speaking engagements, assisting with state testing and career development plans according to the annual plan.

Col. Derosier stated, “We are happy to have you for our adopted schools and definitely look forward to serving you with our available resources. Being the organization that we are, we have a strong interest in the STEM fields and have the expertise to assist you with many more,” he stated.

As one of the community’s leading technical organizations, the Vicksburg District traditionally supports local and surrounding educational institutions through the varied expertise of our diverse workforce. The District’s involvement in local and surrounding schools is critical to the success of our educational systems and our success in Building Strong. Successful educational programs such as the AAS Program help to build the necessary skills of our future leaders, and introduce many students and educators to the Corps for the first time. ◀



Vicksburg High principal, Angela Johnson, left, and District Outreach Committee members develop annual plan for the school year.



Vicksburg High School’s principal, Angela Johnson, left, and Col. Deroisier, right, signed adoption certificates with District personnel and school staff in background.



Col. Derosier, far right, discusses Vicksburg High School’s annual plan with principal Johnson, head of table, and school staff.



Beechwood’s principal, David Adams, left, and Col. Derosier, right, shake hands after signing the adoption certificates. District Outreach Committee members in background are left to right, Jeff Artman, Kim Day, Alex Long, Janice Darby, Sara Robinson, Donyatta Thomas, Shirley Smith, Kiera Jackson, Sarah Thames and Samantha Thompson.

District Supports Adopted School's Career Fair

By Cynthia Milton
Photo by Shirley J. Smith

One of the district's adopted schools for the 2018-2019 school year, Vicksburg High, recently held its career fair for juniors and seniors attending Vicksburg and Warren Central high schools. Held on Vicksburg High's campus in its JROTC building, the career fair was also attended by faculty and staff of both high schools, district team members, local police and fire department personnel and representatives from colleges and universities in surrounding areas.

Events such as career fairs are important community outreach and recruitment efforts for the district. Effective outreach efforts are vital to building the most viable workforce. In the current economy, efforts to recruit the best and brightest are becoming more competitive. Career fairs allow the district to begin recruiting prospective employees at a young age, by informing them of internship opportunities such as the Corps' "Pathways" program, which allows students to begin training to be valuable employees on the job while still in school. Those internships often lead to permanent job placements.

Brian McPherson, a biologist at the district, is in his second year as a Pathways participant. He plans to remain working for the Corps after completing the program. He attended the career fair to share his experience in the program with other students. He stated, "I enjoy it. Sometimes you don't know the opportunities that are available until you start talking to people."

Sixteen-year-old Erianna Gibbs is a smart, articulate junior attending Vicksburg High School. She plans to become a nurse and was one of dozens of students who attended the career fair. She stated, "I plan to attend a junior college and begin my studies in a nursing career. This career fair is a good opportunity." Gibbs never considered that she could have that career with the Corps until she stopped by the district's booth at the career fair.

Vicksburg High School's guidance counselor, Louis Coleman, stated, "That's exactly what organizers had in mind when they planned this event. The students need to know what opportunities are out there. A lot of times they only know what they see, their immediate surroundings, where mom and dad work. They need to know what's beyond those boundaries."

"We want students to be aware of these opportunities and to have a chance to inspire them to serve the nation right here in the Vicksburg community."

Col. Derosier



Cynthia Milton, left, formerly of the Public Affairs Office, and Sheneka Mustipher, right, of Human Resources Office, discuss student job opportunities with a counselor at Vicksburg High School.

District Commander, Col. Michael Derosier stated, "The district is thrilled to participate in this career fair. Here at the district, there are a wide variety of career fields available including science, technology, math and others. We want students to be aware of these opportunities and to have a chance to inspire them to serve the nation right here in the Vicksburg community."

School administrators stated that the Corps is a cornerstone of the community, and they are grateful to have the organization's support. Coleman says the Corps' participation in programs like the career fair plant significant seeds that inform students about future opportunities and the need for them to be prepared to seize those opportunities.

High school counselor Rhonda Battle stated, "A lot of young people aren't aware of the opportunities in the community and they feel the need to leave Vicksburg and

(Continued on page 12)

Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina; shows the Latin Bridge and the Miljacka River. Latin Bridge is one of the oldest bridges in Sarajevo and was the location of the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Sophie, which triggered the start of World War I

District Team Member Participates in Geospatial Disaster Preparedness Workshops

Story and photos by Julie Vicars, geospatial professional

The Corps' Civil-Military Emergency Preparedness (CMEP) program is a NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) focused Department of Defense cooperation program managed by the Center for Civil Military Relations and executed by the Corps.

CMEP organizes multiple events each year, including seminars, workshops, tabletop exercises, and assessments, with the primary goal of building capability for managing hazards. Through knowledge exchanges with subject matter experts (SMEs) and facilitators from multiple Corps districts and divisions, CMEP provides countries with the building blocks necessary to enhance their capabilities for managing all disasters, natural and man-made, as well as establishing whole-of-government, interministerial and interagency cooperation. These events encourage development of a roadmap to eliminate gaps in response; increased use of technology such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and modeling; improved crisis communications with the public and media; and promote regional partnerships, coordination, and cooperation. CMEP actively participates in events in Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

In 2018, I participated as a geospatial SME in multiple CMEP events. These included a disaster preparedness assessment and a disaster preparedness workshop for Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Geospatial Disaster Preparedness Workshop

in Macedonia, and two Geospatial Disaster Preparedness workshops in Georgia. Though all of the events were deemed a success, the dual events of the year, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Georgia, were by far the most dynamic.

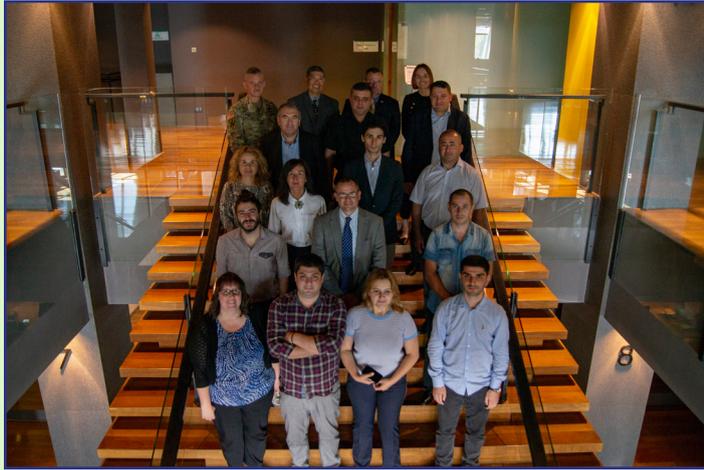
Bosnia-Herzegovina

Following Bosnia-Herzegovina's historic flooding in the spring of 2014, CMEP participated in a disaster assessment of the country's response in 2016 and again in 2018. In the March 2018 assessment, the CMEP team met with sixteen ministries and organizations over a five-day period for formal discussions related to their emergency response and preparedness. The assessment was a success in gathering information concerning the current status of Bosnia-Herzegovina's capabilities. However, due to the complexity of Bosnia-Herzegovina's governmental structure, a true whole-of-government approach to disaster preparedness and response is limited.

With the information collected in March, the CMEP team conducted a Disaster Preparedness Workshop in July 2018. Objectives for this event included promoting coordination and cooperation in an interministerial and interagency environment and best practices in documenting actions taken during an event. The team also worked toward understanding the importance of and integrating geospatial tools and techniques to emergency response and crisis communications.

(Continued on page 10)

(Geospatial Disaster Preparedness, concluded from page 9)



Team photo from the SEP 2018 Georgia Geospatial Disaster Preparedness Workshop #2; attendees were geospatial professionals from multiple ministries within the Georgian government, the armed forces of Georgia, the Georgia National Guard (USA), and the SMEs from USACE.

Discussion amongst the Federal Bosnia-Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Brčko District representatives was animated and provided additional information on how the three entities work together during a disaster event. All participants from the three national entities, the ministries, the cantons and the municipalities all agreed on the need to formalize their processes for incident command, crisis communications, after-action reporting, and training. Participants also agreed that there is a requirement for a better understanding of geospatial disaster preparedness, especially with the implementation on NATO's Next Generation Incident Command System (NICS) capability within Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Georgia

In 2018, the CMEP geospatial team, including geospatial team members from the Fort Worth, Kansas City, and

Vicksburg districts, participated in two geospatial workshop events hosted by Georgia's Emergency Management Services (EMS) agency. The purpose of the workshop was to support the government of Georgia's development of geospatial capabilities as part of ongoing reform, familiarize personnel with geospatial capabilities that support an all-hazards emergency management as part of national-level preparedness; foster development of a Georgian interagency Geospatial Community of Practice (CoP); and facilitate civil-military cooperation in the use of geospatial capabilities for defense support to civil authorities as well as civil support to the military.

The outcome of this initial workshop was the decision of Georgian geospatial professionals on the need to have an interagency geospatial working group to develop a plan for geospatial capabilities and whole-of-government geospatial reform within the Georgian ministries and agencies. The deputy director of EMS quickly endorsed this idea and vowed to sponsor the creation of this group.

Through the use of CMEP facilitators, Georgia's September workshop was a continuation of June's workshop. With the agreement that EMS would sponsor a geospatial working group in the previous event, this second event began with the participants finalizing the working group membership, creating a draft charter and terms of reference, and developing and agreeing to short and long term goals. At the conclusion of the workshop, the Georgian geospatial professionals developed an out brief, with guidance from CMEP facilitators, and presented the accomplishments of the event to the Acting Head of EMS, which resulted in his full and continued support for the Georgian Geospatial Working Group. ◀

Tbilisi, Georgia; the view from Narikala Fortress, showing the air tram and a portion of the city of Tbilis.



Taking Steps to Keep USACE Safe

PROCESS

By Catherine Jennison
Photos courtesy of Security Office



Classroom instruction.

Members of the Vicksburg District Contract Guard Force, local law enforcement and the Security and Law Enforcement Office attended the Law Enforcement Active Shooter Emergency Response (LASER) course at ERDC in early July. Instructors from various agencies across the country lead the training. The course was funded and accredited by FEMA and is conducted nationwide to all law enforcement agencies.

The LASER course used a mixture of extensive classroom presentations, hands-on field training and practical exercises to enhance the response capabilities of our law enforcement officers. Students are put in situations that simulate real-life stress levels experienced during an actual incident. The course enhances an officer's ability to effectively respond to and stop an active shooter incident.

The hands-on training included information on the potential mental and physical tools that would be
(Continued on page 12)



Ronald Ingram of the Vicksburg District Security and Law Enforcement Office (red shirt) and another student engaged in a practical exercise using search procedures.



Students engaged in search procedures during a practical exercise.



Billy Brown (black shirt tan pants) and Wesley Miller (green shirt brown pants) from the Vicksburg District Security and Law Enforcement Office engaged in search procedures as part of a team.

(District Supports Career Fair, concluded from page 8)



Jackson State University students participate at career fair.

leave the state in order to advance in the opportunities and careers that they are interested in, especially for STEM. Your presence here, and your display of various opportunities available, and the background they have to get those jobs, cause them to think – ‘I can do that.’”

Eleventh grader, Heather Henderson, is another student who gained insight from talking to representatives at the

career fair. She is now interested in pursuing opportunities at the Corps through the Pathways internship program. “I learned that they have many different fields of interest. I wasn’t thinking about any internships, but after hearing the information, I think I will consider It,” she stated.

Gibbs is also considering a career in the federal service with the Corps. She knew she wanted to be a nurse but never considered the Corps until she talked to a Corps representative during the recent career fair. Now, her interest is peaked, she wants to know more. “I’ve got to look into it more, I’ve got to do my research,” she said.

School counselor Juan Jackson says the fair stoked student’s excitement and interest in STEM-based careers. “It gives students a lot to see, the different avenues from which to choose. The district is very important because a lot of students want to major in engineering, and the career fair affords them other selections as well.” ◀

Coleman says the Corps’ participation in programs like this plant significant seeds that inform students about the opportunities and the need for them to be prepared to seize those opportunities.

(Keep USACE Safe, concluded from page 11)

necessary to achieve an effective and efficient response to an active shooter incident. Participants observed and carried out room entry and clearing techniques based on various response teams’ sizes and structural configurations.

Upon completion of the active shooter course, each officer had the opportunity to take a test to become a certified active shooter trainer. Officers had to achieve a score of 80 percent or better. Those who passed received a certificate certifying them as a LASER course trainer from the Department of Homeland Security.

In August, district officers put their knowledge and skills to the test when the entire building participated in an active shooter drill. Offices were instructed to prepare for a potential intruder and active shooter drill to take place any day that month. The objectives of the active shooter drill were to test the alert and mass notification systems in the district building, test all occupant ability to apply the RUN/HIDE/FIGHT principles of self-protection, ensure all building occupants know the location of safe zones within the building, exercise personnel accountability actions and exercise security force response.

The exercise was successful and showed that the district’s mass notification systems functioned effectively during the drill. The exercise also allowed the district to identify focus areas for future exercises. ◀



Students confronting a suspect during a practical exercise.



Corps Signs Wastewater System Rehabilitation Projects with Mississippi Communities

by Sara Robinson
Photo by Katy Breaux

The Vicksburg District has entered into a Partnership Project Agreement with leaders of several Mississippi communities. Signings for each agreement were held in the communities of Tylertown, Flowood and Starkville on Sept. 12 and 13, 2018, as a part of the Mississippi Environmental Infrastructure Program (Section 592) as authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

The Section 592 Program provides environmental assistance to non-federal interests in Mississippi. Assistance may be in the form of design and construction assistance for water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects in Mississippi. This includes, but is not limited to, projects for wastewater treatment and related facilities, elimination or control of combined sewer overflow, water supply and related facilities, environmental restoration and surface water resource protection and development. Assistance may be provided only for projects that are publically owned and the non-federal interest must enter into a written cost-share agreement to furnish its required cooperation for the project.

The city of Flowood's water and wastewater system will be rehabilitated at a cost of \$1,590,000; the city of Starkville's sewer and wastewater system will be rehabilitated at a cost of \$1,137,758; the town of Tylertown's wastewater system will be rehabilitated at a cost of \$279,328. These cost-share agreements will be 75 percent federally funded and 25 percent non-federally funded.

Mayor Gary Rhoads of Flowood, Mayor Lynn Spruill of Starkville and Mayor Edward Hughes of Tylertown, joined Vicksburg District Commander Col. Michael Derosier to sign agreements for their respective towns. ◀



Col. Derosier, right, Joseph Stinson (attorney for Tylertown), left, and Tylertown mayor Edward Hughes, center, sign the Tylertown Rehab Agreement.

Emergency Management Office Achieves Significant Accreditation Milestone

By Cynthia Milton

The Vicksburg District (MVK) has joined an elite group of emergency management organizations achieving accreditation through the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP).

EMAP is an independent organization composed of emergency management volunteers. The group develops a uniform set of standards used by emergency operations on the local, state and national level worldwide.

“We believe this is a great milestone for our organization. Anytime we become better trained and/or achieve certification, we put ourselves in a better position to respond to our missions and add value to our organization,” stated MVK Commander Col. Michael C. Derosier.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has established a voluntary partnership with EMAP with the goal of ensuring that all of its emergency management programs have uniform standards that meet the highest level of excellence.

“It puts us all on the same plane. We know when we talk we hear the same thing, have the same goal and the same training,” said Don Walker, chief of emergency management branch.

Those uniform standards also provide better service to those affected by disasters and USACE employees who deploy.

To achieve accreditation, applicants must demonstrate that their program meets the Emergency Management Standard through a series of self-assessments, documentation and peer-assessment verification. Accreditation is valid for five years and the program must maintain compliance with the Emergency Management Standard through a reassessment to maintain accredited status.

EMAP revolutionizes emergency management programs that coordinate preparedness and response activities for disasters based on standards. It also recognizes the ability of emergency management programs to bring together personnel, resources and communications from a variety of agencies and organizations in preparation for and in response to an emergency, in addition to obtaining the ability to measure those capabilities.

(Continued on page 19)

District DIVE Team Remains Mission Ready



Story and photos by Catherine Jennison

With an average of 20 dives per year, Vicksburg District dive team members travel throughout the U.S. supporting the Corps through underwater missions. With a crew of seven members, the district dive team inspects, performs maintenance and repairs Corps locks and dams, as well as assists with operations on waterways throughout the country. The dive team works in Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma, but is occasionally tasked with missions that take them from one side of the country to the other, from Washington to the far southeastern corner of Florida.

Each member of the team has a full-time job within the Corps. However, when they are called for a diving mission, they travel to the job site and form the Vicksburg District dive team.

The majority of all dives performed by the team are called “blackout dives” due to the restricted visibility. The dark and murky waters of the Mississippi River provide a six to 12-inch maximum visibility range, making it nearly impossible to see. During dives, there is no lighting, the divers work by touching. Occasionally, if necessary, the dive team will use lighting during their inspections, but the



Ed Mullen and Lance Gullett return from the recreation area after diving for trash items.



Ed Mullen adjusts his diving gear with the help of Hayden Pickering.

particles in the water reflecting off the light make it more difficult to see.

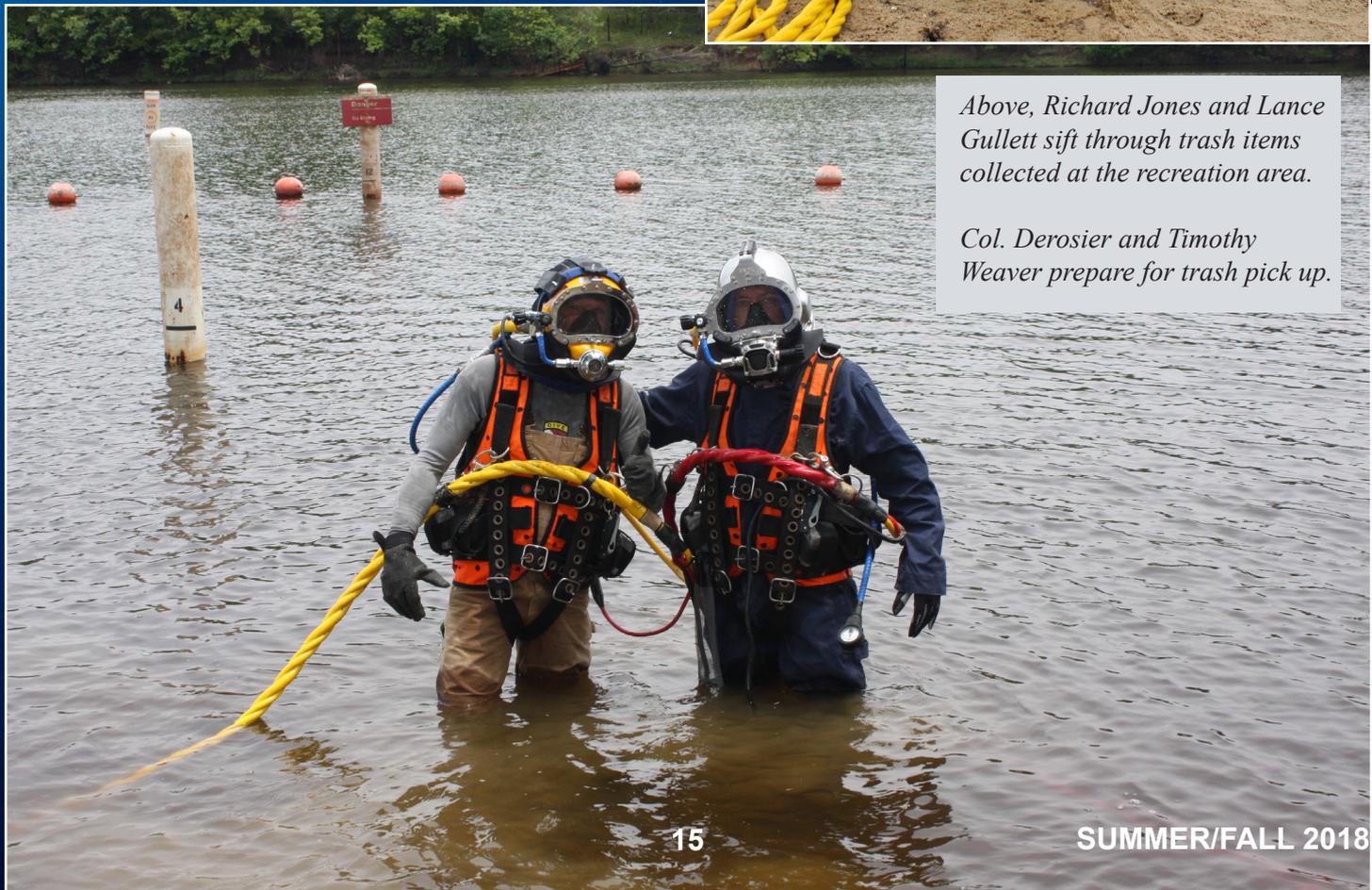
Although visibility can be three to four feet in Florida and other clear water locations, dive team members are proficient with their hands. They feel for wash-outs, cracks or any gaps where material may be missing.

(Continued on page 17)

Dive team members operate under the supervision of a dive team supervisor who talks them through their navigation channels. Each diver also has a “tender,” or another diver in extremely shallow water. The tender keeps the diver’s oxygen and tethering lines free and untangled. The tender also controls how much slack the diver has while navigating through the water. During all dives, there is also a stand by diver on land. This diver is geared up and prepared to assist in any emergency type situations.

Since the majority of the team’s dives require them to walk or crawl on the bottom of the inspection area, team members wear 50-pound weighted vests and ankle weights. When a diver is fully loaded with all the gear, the weight of the gear is 125 pounds. However, divers carry no additional weights during climbing dives so that they can move around freely.

Each year, the dive team participates in training exercises to ensure they are mission ready at any time. During this particular training exercise, the dive team, along with Vicksburg District Commander Col. Michael Derosier, were inspecting the Riverton Recreation Area in Columbia, Louisiana. For the duration of their training exercise, the divers maneuvered through the swim area collecting glass, cans and other objects that could potentially cause harm to swimmers. ◀



Above, Richard Jones and Lance Gullett sift through trash items collected at the recreation area.

Col. Derosier and Timothy Weaver prepare for trash pick up.

PEOPLE



SMA Dailey Visits Mat Sinking Unit

By Sara Robinson
Photos by Jared Eastman



Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley J. Houston; SMA Dailey, the Army's highest ranking enlisted soldier; Col. Derosier; and Mississippi Valley Division Commander Maj. Gen. Richard Kaiser pose in front of the Motor Vessel WILLIAM JAMES during a site visit to the Mat Sinking Unit.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army (SMA) Daniel Dailey, the Army's highest ranking enlisted soldier, visited the Mat Sinking Unit (MSU) July 24 to kick off opening day of mat sinking season along with the Corps' Command Sgt. Major (CSM) Bradley Houston.

The Commanding General of the Mississippi Valley Division Maj. Gen. Richard Kaiser, Vicksburg District Commander Col. Michael Derosier and members of their respective staffs provided a tour of the MSU operation and explained how the vessel lays articulated concrete mattress to maintain the designed channel alignment of the Mississippi River by preventing channel migration through bank erosion.

The purpose of the SMA's visit to the MSU was to show-

case the significance of the MSU's mission; the impact the operation has in maintaining a navigable Mississippi River channel and to meet the MSU crew and employees who work diligently in harsh summer and winter weather to achieve the mission.

SMA Dailey had the opportunity to view the engine room, tool room, shore operations, the pilot house of the Motor Vessel JADWIN and to recognize a few employees during the visit. The team also gave SMA Dailey a hands-on lesson of the pneumatic "mat-tying" tool that wires sections of the concrete mattress together.

Edward Adcock, chief of the revetment section of Operations Division's river operations branch, said, "The Ser-
(Continued on page 18)

PEOPLE

(SMA Dailey, concluded from page 17)
geant Major's visit to the MSU was truly a historic event. It was a great honor to have him on board the MSU and a personal privilege for me to serve as his tour guide. SMA Dailey was very personable as he interacted with the crew and exhibited great interest in revetment operations and the channel improvement mission. I would say SMA Dailey

now understands the mission and is a strong advocate for the channel improvement program.”

The unique capability that the MSU provides is an example of USACE's commitment to maintaining the integrity of the levee systems protecting people, towns and infrastructure along the banks of the Mississippi River. The MSU employs approximately 60 full-time employees and 240 seasonal and temporary employees who reside in several states. ◀



Col. Derosier, right, leads SMA Dailey, left, to the Mat Sinking Unit.



Edward Adcock, left, chief of the revetment section, talks with Sgt. Maj. Daniel Dailey, aboard the Mat Sinking Unit.

Maj. Gen. Richard Kaiser, Commander for the Mississippi Valley Division, speaks with SMA Dailey during a site visit to the Mat Sinking Unit.





Army War College Visits Dredge Jadwin

By Cynthia Milton
Photos by Angela White

The Vicksburg District (MVK) provided students from the Army War College's Advanced Strategic Art Program with a staff ride aboard the dredge Jadwin in December 2018. The Army War College selects 14 students to participate in the program, which offers a concentrated course of study while preparing students to be future leaders.

This visit is a part of an initiative to introduce the students to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and to enhance their knowledge of USACE missions. MVK District Commander Col. Michael C. Derosier provided the group with an overview of the district's history and mission, current operations and impact to the nation.

After the briefing, the students were afforded a ride along the Mighty Mississippi while touring the dredge. Program participant and student, Lt. Col. Anthony Barbina, presented Col. Derosier a certificate of appreciation for outstanding support of the Army War College. MVK has facilitated an annual visit from Army War College students for the last 20 years. ◀

(EM Office Achieves Accreditation, concluded from page 13)

The Emergency Management Standard is flexible in design so that programs of differing sizes, populations, risks and resources can use the standard as a blueprint for improvement and can attain compliance with those standards in an accreditation process. The accreditation process evaluates emergency management programs on compliance with requirements in 16 areas, including: planning; resource management; training; exercises, evaluations, and corrective actions; communications and warning; and administration. These evaluations form the foundation of the nation's emergency preparedness system and are the basis of the only accreditation process for emergency management programs. ◀



Program participant, Lt. Col. Anthony Barbina, presents Col. Derosier a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Army War College.



Army War College students watch as the Dredge Jadwin pulls riverside.



Army War College students receive a briefing in the pilot house during a staff ride aboard the Dredge Jadwin.

District Honors 145 Years of Service

By Shirley J. Smith
Photos by Jared Eastman

The annual Vicksburg District Founder’s Day began with a breakfast for District retirees. Immediately following the breakfast, the retirees were escorted to the ceremony. The ceremony began with a slideshow showcasing the district’s missions, team members and retirees who make up the largest district within the Corps.

History of the district was given by David Tate, a senior power plant electrician at DeGray Power Plant. He began his remarks by stating, “The purpose of Founder’s Day is to celebrate the founding of the Vicksburg District and the people who have made it what it is today. In the spring of 1873, William H. Benyaurd was appointed to serve as

supervising engineer in the Yazoo and Ouachita basins. He originally chose Monroe, Louisiana, to be his headquarters, and arrived in Monroe on May 9, 1873.

“A year earlier, a fire destroyed all of Monroe’s commercial section. Most of the goods and supplies that he needed at the Monroe office were ordered and shipped from Vicksburg. On June 30, after only 52 days in Monroe, Benyaurd requested that the headquarters be moved from Monroe to Vicksburg. The office was officially moved to Vicksburg on August 18, 1873, the date that the Vicksburg District was founded.”

District Commander Col. Michael C. Derosier, followed with opening remarks. “To district team members, family and friends, we welcome you. Also, we welcome our retirees who set the bar of excellence.



Founder’s Day attendees include District staff, other team members and retirees..



and Length of Service Award Recipients

“Today is a day of celebration, remembrance and anticipation. We’re celebrating this day as the founding of the Vicksburg District. We’re remembering those team members whom we have lost since last year’s Founder’s Day. They set the mark for the future and give us purpose for what we do.

“The Mat Sinking Unit (MSU) is working along the Mississippi River. We think of them as we sit here in air and they’re working in 100-degree weather doing great work for the nation. Symbols of our past are very important. And, speaking of Benyaurd, who was a West Point graduate, has a motor vessel named in his honor, the MV



Col. Derosier welcomes a retiree to the ceremony.

BENYAURD, which is a part of the MSU fleet.

“Thank you for attending and now we begin to recognize some team members for Length of Service Awards and reflect upon what we do here at the district. Thanks to the Vicksburg Leadership Development Program (VLDP) members for what you do throughout the year.”

Beginning the Length of Service Awards, Tommy Jones, operations project manager, Louisiana Field Office, stated, “With the presentation of our Length of Service Awards, we reflect on the history of the Corps and its expansive efforts in ‘Building Strong’ and supporting our nation. Although most of our predecessors are not here with us to celebrate today, we proudly share and recognize the vital roles and commitment each of us has played in serving our nation with the Corps’ missions.

“Each year on Founder’s Day, in honor of their many



Col. Derosier presents the 25-year Length of Service Award to Founder’s Day MC, David Tate.

years of selfless service, the Vicksburg District honors its team members who have reached landmark lengths of service in their careers. Today, we recognize those individuals.”

Although team members with at least 10 years of service receive a plaque, only team members with 20 and more years of service are recognized at the ceremony. Col. Derosier presented those team members with their Length of Service Award.

The VLDP graduation followed the presentation of awards. VLDP graduates were:

James Cumberland, civil engineer, geotechnical branch of Engineering and Construction Division

Adrian Davis, general equipment mechanic leader, maintenance section, Operations Division

Kristi Hall, senior environmental scientist, regulatory branch, Operations Division

Jason Hurt, senior controller, Blakely Power Plant, Operations Division

Tommy Jones, operations project manager, Louisiana Field Office, Operations Division

Kaswana Moore, civil engineer, design branch, Engineering and Construction Division

Jamie Stubbs, program analyst, programs management branch, Planning, Programs Project Management Division

David Tate, senior power plant electrician, DeGray Power

(Continued on page 22)



District Selects Chief for the Programs Management Branch

By Shirley J. Smith
Photo by Jared Eastman



The District recently selected Alainna O'Bannon as chief of its programs management branch of the programs and project management division.

O'Bannon's job duties include developing and defending the federal budget and preparing the fiscal year work

plan execution. Prior to this assignment, O'Bannon was the operations and maintenance appropriation manager at the Mississippi Valley Division, which supports district offices located in St. Paul, Minnesota; Rock Island, Illinois; St. Louis, Missouri; Memphis, Tennessee; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and New Orleans.

She began her career with the Corps in 2009 at the Coastal and Hydraulics Lab at the Engineer Research and Development Center. In 2010, she accepted a position in the project management branch and worked as a program analyst on numerous projects. She became a senior program analyst for Mississippi River and Tributaries appropriation at the Vicksburg District in 2013.

A native of Vicksburg, O'Bannon is a graduate of Vicksburg High School. She earned an Associate Degree from Hinds Community College and a Bachelor's in business administration from the State University of New York.

She is a member of Gibson Memorial United Methodist Church and also attends First Presbyterian Church of Vicksburg. She is a Life Member of the Junior Auxiliary of Vicksburg where she served as the 2014-2015 president.

She and her husband, David, have a daughter, Laurel, and she is the daughter of Joe and Linda Garcia. ◀

(District Honors 145 Years, concluded from page 21)
Plant, Operations Division

Col. Derosier made closing remarks. His remarks were followed by the announcement of the cutting of the annual Founder's Day cake.

Jason Hurt explained the significance of the cutting of the cake by stating, "The cake is cut using the Army saber, a symbol of a military officer's chivalry, power and command. The Commander is joined in cutting the cake by Norma J. Walker, Engineering and Construction Division, and Janice Darby, Programs and Project Management Division, the most and least tenured team members. The cutting of the cake by these team members symbolizes and celebrates the District's distinguished heritage and its promising future."

The singing of the Army Engineer song, "Essayons," and the Army song, "The Army Goes Rolling Along," followed the cake cutting.

Kaswana Moore ended the ceremony with an invitation to remain for cake and asked everyone to sign the 2018 Founder's Day poster. The poster will be hung on the first floor wall of the district's headquarters building alongside previous years' Founder's Day posters. ◀



Norma Walker, left, and Janice Darby, right, assist Col. Derosier with cutting the Founder's Day cake.



Water Treatment Plant Operator at Sardis Lake Receives Jim McDonald Award

Story and photo by Carter Brandon

It's always great to be acknowledged for doing a good job, and even better to be recognized by your peers at being the best at what you do.

Billy Williams, water treatment plant operator at Sardis Lake, has received these honors. Having served in this position for 39 years, the recognition was special for Williams. He received the Jim McDonald Award as "Operator of the Year" for a class "C" water system. The award is given annually by the Mississippi Water and Pollution Control Operators' Association, which represents more than 2,500 certified water and wastewater operators in Mississippi.

This didn't happen by accident, and for those who

know Williams, know that he is very deserving. Williams has been very diligent in keeping current with the necessary training required to maintain his certification. He also maintains a high level of competence in the operation and maintenance of class "C" and "D" water systems. His keen awareness and astute understanding of operational regulations, determined by both the Corps and the state of Mississippi, along with his resolve to maintain a high level of knowledge are the primary reasons why Sardis Lake's water systems have remained deficiency-free for the full length of his tenure as sewage plant operator.

He ensures the highest quality of operation for the water supply and sewage treatment systems through the required inspection and testing of each system. The class "D" wells are inspected three times a week with one sample per well taken once a month and sent to the local health department for testing. The class "C" well is inspected five times a week with samples taken once per month that are also sent to the health department for testing. The class "C" well is inspected five times a week with a bacteriological water sample pulled once a month, which is required by the Mississippi Department of Health. Quarterly wastewater samples are pulled four times a year from the Lower Lake Lagoon and Clear Creek Treatment Plant. Discharge monitoring reports are electronically filed at the end of the year with results of each quarterly sample.

Williams' supervisor, Carter Brandon, stated, "Williams has had water and wastewater operator certifications since the early 1980s. Since then, he's worked tirelessly to maintain the water and wastewater systems at Sardis Lake. In doing so, he has become a source of knowledge at Sardis Lake." ◀



Anthony Hall, right, president of the Mississippi Water Pollution Control Operators Association, presents the McDonald Award to Billy Williams, left.



Arkabutla Lake Celebrates 75 Years

Photo and story by Sara Robinson
Historical photo courtesy of Arkabutla Lake

The Vicksburg District's Arkabutla Lake and Dam celebrated 75 years with a special ceremony at the South Abutment Recreation Area on Sept. 26. District Commander Col. Michael Derosier participated in the ceremony along with the Mississippi Valley Division's Chief of Operations Dennis Norris and other district team members.

Arkabutla Lake Resource Manager Michael Carter welcomed guests to the ceremony and introduced the Lake Cormorant High School Junior ROTC who helped kick off the ceremony with the posting of the colors. The Baddour Center Miracles sang the National Anthem along with a series of patriotic songs for the event. Mississippi Lakes

Project Manager Johnny Kiser and Mississippi Lakes Deputy Project Manager Andrew Strickland recognized attendees and introduced speakers. Operations Division Chief James Ross spoke on the significance of Arkabutla Lake and its dedicated staff while Derosier shared the history of the project and of the district.

The Arkabutla Lake project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of June 15, 1936, as part of the Yazoo Basin Headwater Project and became operational June 1, 1943. It is just one of the district's projects that offers benefits to organization's customers, partners and stakeholders. The construction cost of the project was 9.9 million dollars and



WAR DEPARTMENT VICKSBURG ENGINEER DISTRICT, VICKSBURG, MISS.
ARKABUTLA RESERVOIR PROJECT on Coldwater River near Coldwater, Miss. Spillway, taken from Station 5-A. Contractor: Forcum-James Co., Pioneer Contracting Co., and H. N. Rodgers & Sons Co., Contract No. W1106eng-4951, dated July 15, 1940. Flood Control Funds. Photograph taken December 16, 1942. Serial No. 408 File No. A11/408



LAKES AND RECREATION

brought much needed employment to the surrounding communities.

The project began after early settlers and farmers in Northwest Mississippi (along the Delta Region of the Coldwater River and tributaries) experienced difficulties farming each spring as heavy rains caused the Yazoo Basin to flood their land. Many acres of rich farmland were made useless due to flood waters. Buildings and houses were damaged and infrastructures such as roads and bridges were often washed away causing additional hardships.

After a series of disastrous floods, high priority was given to flood control projects. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers became the designers, planners and builders of these projects.

Arkabutla Lake was named after the small community of Arkabutla, located near the dam, which has a very interesting history as well. The small community was first named "Skull Bones" due to John A. Murrell, an outlaw who killed two men and hung their skulls on a bush. This name was used until the early 1860s when the community changed the name to Arkabutla, in honor of the Chickasaw Native American Chieftain, Arkabutla.

The construction of Arkabutla Dam began August 1, 1940, by Forcum-James Company, Pioneer Contracting Company and H.N. Rodgers and Sons Company. As the construction

of Arkabutla Dam began, another significant event took place 12 miles east of the dam site as the entire town of Coldwater relocated. The town, in its original location, was in the middle of what is now the upper lakebed. Relocation of the old town of Coldwater was completed in 1942 and the dam became operational a year later.

The primary mission of Arkabutla Lake is flood control. Other substantial missions of the project include recreation and environmental stewardship. Arkabutla is the second oldest lake in the district and encompasses more than 36,000 acres of land with a variance of water surface acreage from 5,100 acres at conservation pool to 33,400 acres at flood pool.

Arkabutla Lake stores waters drained from more than 1,000 square miles and is the northern most reservoir protecting the Yazoo Basin reducing flood damage downstream. In its 75 years of existence, Arkabutla Dam has saved more than \$200 million dollars in flood damage reduction within the Yazoo River Basin.

The Corps typically builds dams or structures and plans for a 50-year operational period. At 75 years in operation, Arkabutla Lake is truly a testament to the service and expertise of the people who oversaw and built the dam and Vicksburg District employees who have been charged with the caretaking of this great project. ◀



Enid Lake Hosts 27th Annual Fishing Day for the Physically Challenged

Story and photos by Tom Hoff, natural resource specialist, Enid Lake

The Chickasaw Hill Volunteer Association and three officers of the Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks recently held the 27th Annual Fishing Day for the Physically Challenged at Chickasaw Hill Recreation Area.

Thirty physically challenged individuals ranging from young children to older adults turned attended the event. One-hundred and twenty individuals including participants, friends and family, volunteers, Corps personnel, Fedserv Contract personnel, Mississippi Department of Wildlife Fisheries and Parks officers, and the Panola County Sheriff

and deputies also attended for the event. The weather and the fellowship were great weather. Everyone enjoyed a beautiful and successful morning of fishing that was followed by a fish fry and the awarding of door prizes.

The Chickasaw Hill Volunteer Association along with residents from the local community provided pontoon boats, bait, and poles for the fishing trip, and all the essentials for a first class fish fry. During the event, volunteers not only provided boats, fishing equipment and food for the fish fry, but also assisted with loading and unloading participants from boats, accompanied the participants during the fishing event and prepared lunch.

This event, held annually, give individuals who do not otherwise have the opportunity, a chance to enjoy the great outdoors along with one of the most enjoyed recreational sports, fishing.

Enid Lake team members thank all sponsors and volunteers for donations, their time and hard work. Without the sponsors and volunteers, the Annual Fishing Day for the Physically Challenged would not be possible. ◀



Above: Volunteers and rangers assist participants onto pontoon boats for a morning of fishing.

Participants enjoy a beautiful and successful morning of fishing during the 2018 Fishing Day for the Physically Challenged.





Sardis Lake Hosts Fourth Annual Wounded Veterans Fishing Event

Story and photos by Hayden Sullivant

Team members at the Sardis Lake Field Office partnered with the Panola County sheriff's office and local volunteers to host the fourth annual fishing event for wounded veterans.

The six participating wounded veterans were treated to dinner by Slick McDonald on July 20, the evening prior to the beginning of the fishing event. On July 21, their day began with a breakfast provided by Jason Chrestman, Lonnie Chrestman and Howard Brower. Following breakfast at 7 a.m., the veterans teamed with volunteer guides Jeremy Aldridge, Stephan Sullivan and Chaney Starnes to begin fishing at Pats Bluff Campground on the scenic waters of Sardis Lake.

The day was full of excitement as the veterans caught about 200 crappie, having kept only 44 solid slab crappie due to length restrictions.

After a thrilling day on the water, the veterans and volunteers gathered at Pats Bluff campground for dinner.



Veterans Cameron Boyette, Chris Glory, Jessica Glory, Dustin Williams, Michael Holiday and Barry Morreale, display crappie caught at Sardis Lake.

This event shows appreciation to wounded veterans for their service and sacrifice and affords them the opportunity to enjoy outdoor recreation. Participating veterans were Christopher Glory, Jessica R. Glory, Barry Morreale, Mike Holiday, Dustin Williams, and Cameron Boyette. Volunteers for this event were Dennis Darby with Panola County Sherriff Department, Blake Shipp of Guaranty Bank, Jason Chrestman, Leo Chrestman, Lonnie Chrestman, Slick and Trina McDonald, Howard Brower, Logan Potts, Jay Davis and David Goss.

The staff of Sardis Lake thanks all for making this year's fishing event another success. ◀

Volunteer guide Jeremy Aldridge, left, fishes with wounded veterans Cameron Boyette and Barry Morreale.





EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY

Photos by Jared Eastman



Adopt-A-School

Photos by Jared Eastman



Career Day

Photos by Cynthia Milton and Shirley J. Smith



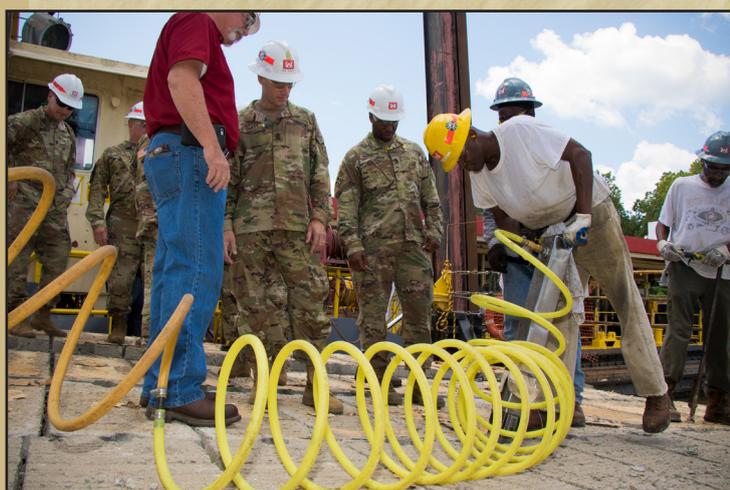
Signing American Federation of Government Employees

Photo by Jared Eastman



SMA Dailey Visits Mat Sinking Unit

Photo by Jared Eastman



Low Water Inspection Trip

Photos by Jared Eastman





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 Sardis Lake (662) 563-4531
 Arkabutla Lake (662) 562-6261
 Enid Lake (662) 563-4571
 Grenada Lake (662) 226-5911
 Bayou Bodcau (318) 949-1804
 JBJ Waterway (318) 677-2673

Ouachita-Black Rivers, Monroe
 Navigation Project Office, &
 LA Field Office (318) 322-6391
 Corps Wetland Permits (601) 631-7071
Apply, ask questions, or report violations
 Contracting & Bids (601) 631-7684
Vendors, status of bids, specs
 Community Support (601) 631-5223
Tours, speakers, volunteers
 Historical Questions & Research (601) 634-7023
Mississippi River History Center
 Real Estate Issues (601) 631-5979
Corps impacts to your property
 Employment Questions (601) 631-5858
Vacancies, status, qualifications
 River Forecast (601) 631-5900

Other Engineer/Federal Organizations in Vicksburg

Mississippi Valley Division (601) 634-5760
 Engineer Research and Development Center (601) 634-2504
 412th Theater Engineer Command (601) 636-1686
 168th Engineer Brigade (601) 313-5290
 Vicksburg National Military Park (601) 636-0583
 Marine Safety Detachment Vicksburg (601) 636-5516
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (601) 629-6607

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