



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Vicksburg District

THE Water's Edge

Spring 2019

District Commander's
Farewell Remarks

Above Average Rainfall Leads
to Devastating Flooding

ARMOR One: Design to
Construction in 2019





US Army Corps of Engineers®

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

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On the Cover

Col. Michael Derosier, Vicksburg District commander, left, and Maj. Gen. Scott Spellmon, deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, right, survey flooding in the Yazoo Basin.
Photos by Jared Eastman.

The Water's Edge

Spring 2019

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NEED TO KNOW PEOPLE

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Chrystal Spokane, Jennifer Brown

PROCESS

John H. Overton Dewatering
Repair Work Continues at Columbia Lock
and Dam

PROJECT

ARMOR One: Design to Construction in
2019



District Commander's Farewell Remarks

with Colonel Michael C. Derosier



A farewell message to the Vicksburg District – a “World-Class Workplace” and “Flagship” District

It is hard to believe that three years at MVK and four years in Vicksburg are coming to an end. The opportunity to serve as your commander has been the highlight of my 27-year Army career.

I hope you are all as proud as I am of this team and each other. The impacts that you are making for the Army, the region and the nation are remarkable. In navigation the Dredge JADWIN celebrated its 85th year of service, we have improved our dredging acquisition strategies, we are looking at opportunities to study both deepening and extending navigation on the Red River, and we are working with our partners to improve navigation through sediment reduction strategies and port expansion efforts. We are working diligently to reopen Columbia Lock and Dam after a year-long effort to make emergency repairs.

In flood risk management, we are working on constructing nearly 60 miles of Mississippi River Levees. We have improved our levee enlargement acquisition strategy, we are laser focused on upholding our federal levee maintenance requirements, we are working with levee boards across the region to fight floods, maintain our levee systems and reduce the number of levee segments that are currently rated “unacceptable.” Our teams have repaired dozens of levee slides, and we remain committed to working with Congress and within the administration in reviewing the Yazoo Backwater Pump project.

With the Corps’ Levee Safety Center being led out of the district, we are deeply involved in setting the national standards for levee safety. In environmental stewardship, we are involved in efforts to address environmental damage that may be caused by water control releases out of Wright Patman Reservoirs. Our Regulatory team has been recognized regionally and nationally for working with other Corps districts, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency and others in Standardizing Local Operating Procedures for Endangered Species (SLOPES).

Our Regional Channel Improvement team, which is responsible for delivering navigation, flood risk management and environmental benefits, has continued the hard work of maintaining the Mississippi River in its current channel

alignment, protecting Mississippi River and Tributaries levees and enhancing habitat along the Mississippi River and the Mississippi Delta.

The Mat Sinking Unit celebrated its 70th year of service and placed over 600,000 squares of articulated concrete mat over the past three sinking seasons and, in collaboration with SIA Solutions, Bristol Harbor Group and the National Robotics Engineering Center, will soon be replaced with a modern era sinking unit (known as Armor One).

Our involvement in disaster response and recovery missions has been astounding – California wildfires, devastating hurricanes and major and historic flooding in three out of the last four years that has impacted the Mississippi, Red and Ouachita-Black Rivers and the Yazoo Backwater Area. Over 300 Vicksburg District teammates have answered the call on nearly 800 taskers (including flood fighting) in ways that have had a national impact and enhanced the reputation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In recreation, even with ever-shrinking budgets, our teams are committed to making improvements to modernize the region’s recreational experiences. Our flood control reservoir lake projects provide multiplied benefits for flood protection, water supply, recreation, hydropower and the environment. We appreciate our lake champions and other agency partners in safely maintaining world class crappie and eagle habitat, campgrounds, hiking and biking trails, and the opportunity it provides to host special fishing/hunting/outdoor events for kids, the physically disabled and our Veterans. I’d like to recognize our rangers for their commitment to public safety, best expressed in 2017 with zero recorded public fatalities across all of the district’s recreational areas.

In water supply, we recently entered into historic water supply agreements at DeGray Lake with the City of Hot Springs and Central Arkansas Water. In hydropower, we appreciate the partnerships that we have with Department of Energy’s Southwestern Power Administration and the user group represented by Southwestern Power Resources Association. With more than a dozen customer-funded agreements valued at over \$6 million we are working hard

(Continued on page 4)

(Commander's Corner, concluded from page 3)

to maintain our hydropower plants and meet the regional demand for hydropower energy, and we look forward to the possibility of private equity investments in hydropower at the Mississippi flood control reservoirs and at locks and dams.

In support of overseas contingency operations, a special thanks goes out to those who have deployed. Please keep Bill Sisneros and Jason Mothershed in your thoughts and prayers; they are currently serving down range. Our engineering and contracting offices have also worked regionally in designing and awarding marquee construction projects in support of Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan.

The Mapping, Modeling and Consequences Production Center, headquartered at the Vicksburg District, brings a capability to the table that is sought after nationally and internationally. And in Supplemental execution, we have prioritized our efforts on delivering channel improvement, Mississippi River Levee enlargement, levee slide repair and bank stabilization benefits in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

I am proud of our community efforts in operating (in

partnership with the City of Vicksburg and our volunteers) the Jesse Brent Lower Mississippi River Museum and our passion for investing in the community by adopting schools, conducting STEM and career outreach events and hosting the Army's Society of American Military Engineers summer STEM camp. Behind the scenes, we have an award-winning cast of support staff and national level organizations that help keep us programmed, staffed, safe, secure, planning, able to communicate, compliant, affordable, fair, legal, supplied, informed, negotiated, administered and under contract with both large and small businesses. Without this full team, it would be impossible to accomplish our mission.

I appreciate all of our partners at the federal, state and local level – especially our members of Congress and the record-setting appropriations they have entrusted in the Corps in recent years. In many of our projects, our partners are invested financially as non-federal project sponsors and collectively they represent our fundamental purpose – to serve the public and deliver benefits to the nation. This

assignment has been an opportunity and an experience of a lifetime. I appreciate the opportunity to work with each one of you, to be a part of such a professional and high-performing team, and I will miss you.

Farewell! Auf Wiedersehen! I look forward to keeping in touch and continuing to hear about the great things that y'all are doing!



Photos courtesy of Jared Eastman and Colleen Cummins.

John H. Overton Dewatering

By K. C. Ellis

Photo courtesy of
Monroe Navigation Project Office

The Vicksburg District has coordinated the closure of John H. Overton Lock and Dam with industry and users of the waterway. A 30-to 40-day closure is scheduled to begin August 2019. The district's Engineering and Construction Division will conduct the inspections and monitor the lock chamber during the dewatering process. The district's river operations maintenance section will provide the equipment needed to perform the dewatering and assist with work at the site.

Construction of John H. Overton Lock and Dam began in 1982, with operations beginning in 1987. Since construction of the lock and dam, the lock chamber has never been completely dewatered.

Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) prioritizes dewatering annually based on the last dewatering and/or construction date of locks within the division. MVD identified the dewatering of Overton as a priority for fiscal year 2019. The dewatering provides an opportunity to inspect and make minor maintenance repairs to the lock chamber components, which are vital to a functional and reliable lock chamber. The findings of the inspection are updated in the Inland Navigation Operational Condition Assessment Tool, which better informs work packages for maintenance needs. ◀

John H. Overton Lock and Dam



Repair Work Continues at Columbia Lock and Dam

By Reagan Lauritzen
Photos by Jared Eastman

Elevated water levels on the Ouachita River have delayed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Vicksburg District's emergency repair work at Columbia Lock and Dam, located approximately seven miles upstream of Columbia, Louisiana.

Due to unusually severe rainfall in 2019, river stages have been at or slightly above the top of the lock's walls. The Vicksburg District and Massman Construction Co. have successfully used alternative construction methods to mitigate impacts to the repair work required at the site. However, district engineers estimate that approximately four weeks of work remains at the site when river conditions permit the full scope of repair work to commence.

Emergency repair work at



Columbia Lock and Dam began in July 2018 after Vicksburg District engineers identified seepage and sand boils near the structure, as well as voids under the lock wall. In November 2018, additional damage was discovered at the upper end of the lock. The repair work was slated for completion by the end of April 2019 before recent high water impacts suspended work. Exploratory drilling and grouting work on a significant portion of the structure has been completed.

The Vicksburg District has and continues to brief industry partners, as well as local, state and federal officials, on the status of emergency repairs on Columbia Lock and Dam and has advised citizens to avoid all activities around the lock, dam and other associated structures for safety reasons. The lock and dam remains closed to traffic.

Throughout the repair work, the Vicksburg District has and continues to collaborate with the Engineering Research and Development Center, the Levee Safety Center, the Inland Navigation Design Center and other federal partners to ensure that the best engineering minds and technology are used to understand the situation at Columbia.

As part of the repair work, the district will be implementing a post-construction monitoring plan for the project in order to prevent further degradation that might arise after current repairs are complete.

The district will also lead a post-construction risk assessment. The purpose of the assessment will be two-fold: 1) to assess the effectiveness of current repairs and inform the district as to whether any additional long-term repairs are needed to ensure continued safe operation of the project and 2) to determine if any revisions to the post-construction monitoring plans are needed. ◀

District Signs Two Water Storage Space Agreements at DeGray Lake

By Reagan Lauritzen
Photo by Jared Eastman

The Vicksburg District hosted a signing ceremony for two water storage space agreements at DeGray Lake near Arkadelphia, Arkansas, April 3.

Vicksburg District Commander Col. Michael C. Derosier, along with Central Arkansas Water (CAW) Chief Executive Officer Tad Bohannon and City of Hot Springs Mayor Pat McCabe signed the agreements.

The agreement with CAW is for an estimated 157,014 acre-feet of storage and will supply approximately 100 million gallons a day (MGD) of water to their customers. The agreement with the City of Hot Springs is for an estimated 31,456 acre-feet and will supply approximately 20 MGD to the city.

Representatives from the Vicksburg District, CAW and the City of Hot Springs provided remarks during the ceremony.

“This is absolutely remarkable what is being achieved today,” said Dale Kimbrow, CAW’s manager of planning and regionalism. “The older you get, the more you start thinking about your family, your kids, and your grandkids, in my case. I know they are taken care of for the most important thing that’s going to be in their lives 30 to 40 years from now. We have now secured their future.”

CAW and the City of Hot Springs have requested a combined 188,470 acre-feet of storage space, which equates to approximately 120 MGD, to be withdrawn from the main reservoir or upper pool of DeGray Lake. The agreements are the largest water storage space agreements executed in the Vicksburg District and throughout the Mississippi Valley.

Located on the Caddo River in Arkansas, DeGray Lake is a multi-purpose reservoir with flood control, hydropower, water supply, environmental and recreational functions.

“It’s very exciting to have these multi-purpose projects and to be able to move them in a direction that provides the benefits that Congress and all of you expect them to deliver,” said Derosier.

CAW and the City of Hot Springs initiated the request for a water storage agreement with the Vicksburg District in October of 2013. ◀



Col. Derosier and Tad Bohannon shake hands during the signing ceremony.

Mississippi River Commission Hosts High-Water Inspection Trip

by Mississippi Valley Division Public Affairs Office



Official U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo.

The Mississippi River Commission conducted its annual high-water inspection trip on the Mississippi River, April 8-12.

Four public meetings were scheduled aboard the Motor Vessel MISSISSIPPI in selected towns along the river. Commission members met with local partners, stakeholders and residents to hear their concerns, ideas and issues. The meeting dates, times and locations were:

April 8 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Port of Hickman, Ky.

April 9 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Memphis, Tenn. (Beale Street Landing)

April 10 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Port of Rosedale, Miss.

April 12 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Baton Rouge, La. (City Dock)

All meetings were open to the public. Interested parties presented their views on matters affecting the water resources infrastructure needs in the valley, including flood control, the Mississippi River and Tributaries project, and other water resources challenges.

The agenda for each public meeting included:

- * The president of the commission provides a summary report on national and regional issues affecting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and commission programs and projects on the Mississippi River and its tributaries.

- * District commander provides an overview for the commission on current project issues in the respective area.

- * Local organizations and members of the public provide comments issues affecting the commission and the Corps of Engineers programs and projects.

The Mississippi River Commission, established in 1879, is composed of seven members, each nominated by the President of the United States and vetted by the Senate. Three of the organization's members are officers of the Corps of Engineers; one member is from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and three members are civilians, two of whom are civil engineers.

General duties of the commission include recommending policy and work programs, studying and reporting on the necessity for modifications or additions to the flood control and navigation project and conducting semi-annual

inspection trips. The authority of the commission extends the entire length of the Mississippi River from its headwaters at Lake Itasca, Minnesota, to Head of Passes, Louisiana, where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico.

The public hearing process is unique to the Mississippi River Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The purpose of the public meetings is to maintain a dialogue between watershed interests, the public and the Corps. Presentations by the public are made orally, and a copy of the remarks is presented to the commission for official record and written response.

The benefits of hearing the issues and concerns first hand through the public hearing process are invaluable to the commission and the Corps. Also, the interaction with congressional, federal and state interests, local boards and non-government organizations and the public is crucial to the decision-making process for the nation's water resources.

The Mississippi River Commission brings critical engineering representation to the drainage basin, which impacts 41% of the United States and includes 1.25 million square miles, over 250 tributaries, 31 states and two Canadian provinces. ◀

Photos by Jared Eastman

Col. Michael C. Derosier provides an update on the Vicksburg District during the Mississippi River Commission's high-water inspection trip.



Maj. Gen. Richard G. Kaiser, President of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC), discusses precipitation trends in the Mississippi River watershed during the high-water inspection trip.

Col. Robert A. Hilliard, Secretary of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC), provides remarks during the MRC high-water inspection trip.



Above Average Rainfall Leads to Devastating Flooding

By Reagan Lauritzen
Photos by Jared Eastman

Extreme rain in the Ohio Valley in late February 2019 caused a major flood on the lower Mississippi River, resulting in a top 10 record crest of 51.5 feet at Vicksburg, Mississippi, in March 2019. Extreme rain in Mississippi during the same time frame caused tributary flooding in the Yazoo Basin, extending from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' four flood control reservoirs in northern Mississippi south to Greenwood, Mississippi.

The Vicksburg District used its four flood control reservoirs in the Yazoo Basin – Grenada, Enid, Sardis and Arkabutla lakes – to reduce the peak flow of rainfall runoff by approximately 90 percent during the unprecedented rainfall event throughout the region in February 2019. The use of the reservoirs for water storage provided tremendous benefit to the Mississippi Delta.

Due to high Mississippi River stages in February and March 2019, the gates at the Steele Bayou Control Structure were closed to hold more than four feet of water out of the Delta; however, due to heavy local rains while the gates were closed, the Yazoo Backwater Area set a new all-time

peak stage of 97.2 feet and inundated nearly 450,000 acres of hardwood timber and agricultural land, as well as numerous homes and camps.

After the March 2019 peak, heavy rains on the upper Mississippi River, the Missouri River and the Arkansas River basins have caused the lower Mississippi River to remain high, thus not allowing the Yazoo Backwater area to drain.

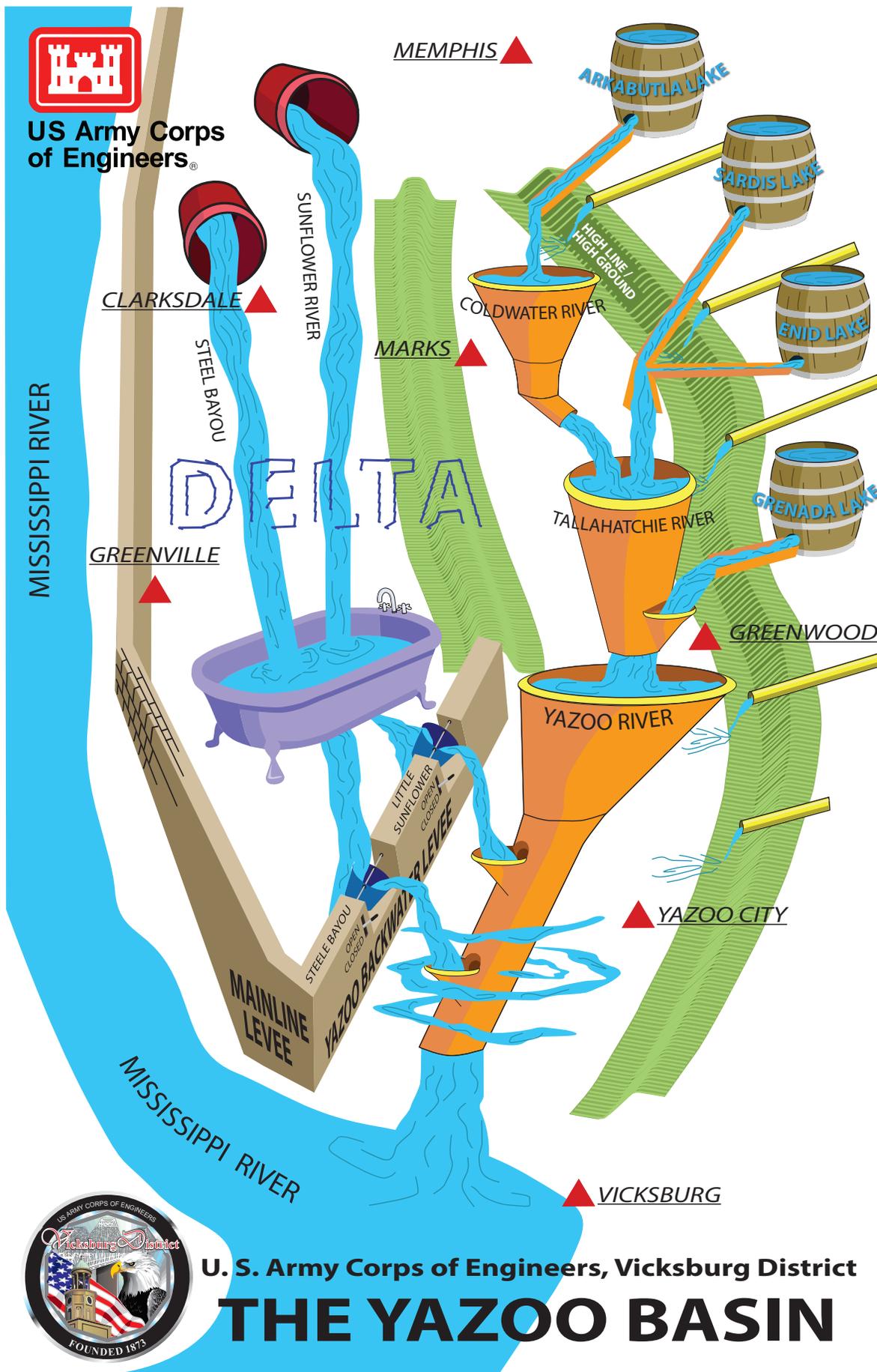
Additional heavy rainfall in April 2019 combined with persistently high stages on the Mississippi River led to a second peak of 98.2 feet in the Yazoo Backwater area in May 2019, surpassing the previous all-time record set in March 2019.

In June 2019, the Vicksburg District monitored a second large peak that made its way through the lower Mississippi River Valley, resulting in conditions requiring the gates of the Steele Bayou Control Structure to be closed again for the fourth time in 2019 to keep Mississippi River backwater out of the south Delta. ◀





US Army Corps of Engineers®



U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District

THE YAZOO BASIN



Active deck with rollers

ARMOR One: Design to Construction in 2019

**Story and photos by Col. (Retired) John Cross
Sketch of ARMOR One, by Bristol Harbor Group**

ARMOR One, the replacement for the Mat Sinking Unit (MSU), reaches an important milestone in 2019 as the program transitions from design to construction. ARMOR One has been through a detailed concept-to-design prototyping process over the last several years.

The design team will continue to prototype and test the robotics throughout the year and will finish major portions of the robotics. Bristol Harbor Group, leading the barge design and other marine aspects of ARMOR One, will wrap up a significant portion of the marine plans. These two

major actions, complete in early 2019, will allow the District to move forward to award the construction contracts necessary to build ARMOR One. The design renderings for ARMOR One were introduced at the International Work Boat Show in New Orleans in November 2018 to start the contracting process. Several major shipyards expressed interest in building such a unique vessel for the Corps. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2019.

ARMOR One's design is not focused solely on robotics but is driven along three overarching standards: Safety, Reliability and Efficiency.

- Safety – marine safety design is in accordance with the American Bureau of Shipping Group (ABSG) standards. The ABSG standards are used for both commercial and



Robotic lifting crane

governmental marine vessels to ensure these vessels are in compliance with all modern design specifications.

- **Reliability** – the current mat sinking has been in operation since 1948 and is both difficult and expensive to maintain. Many of the MSU components are no longer manufactured and have to be either machined on site or specially ordered, which often results in repair delays. Modern common components, modern winching systems and marine hull design are among the many features that will dramatically increase reliability.

- **Efficiency** – ARMOR One will be built to double the production rate, use fuel more efficiently and be easier to move from place to place. Increased efficiency also reduces impact to our industry partners who rely on an open waterway with less restrictions for the commercial movement of goods.

The design process for ARMOR One consists of extensive prototyping and testing to ensure that all of the systems work both individually and collectively. This very deliber-

ate process helps ensure that the best design available is used for final construction plans. Part of the testing process is to source parts and components that are readily available and are checked for best cost and durability. Prototype robotic components are run through a series of tests at the National Robotics and Engineering Center (NREC) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These tests result in the robotics being disassembled, redesigned and improved. This iterative method is the best approach to ensure a complete design that fully meets the needs of the Corps.

The ARMOR One systems are designed to work with standard specification articulated concrete mattress (ACM). The Vicksburg District provided NREC with different quality levels of ACM early on in the design process, which led to improvements such as cable grabbers that fit into the scarf box to pull cables into the tie head and greatly improved lifting arms that pick up and secure the ACM to help prevent breakage. A new active deck roller system al-

(Continued on page 14)

PROJECT

(*ARMOR One*, concluded from page 13) lowers the alignment of scarf boxes supporting the robotic tie gantry system. Improved robotic systems will allow *ARMOR One* to meet the full production rate of 4,000 ACM squares a day, more than doubling current output.

One of the more hands-on aspects of the design is the development of a new manual tie tool. This new electric tie tool is for revetment workers on *ARMOR One* to perform quality control assessments and will allow them to use the tool to make ties that the robotics were unable to make. The first and second generations of this



Manual tie tool on the Mat Sinking Unit for testing



Robotic tie tool prototype



New tie tool testing on Mat Sinking Unit

new tool were tested on the MSU during this past sinking season. Revetment workers were able to use the tool to provide onsite direct feedback to the NREC engineers who are designing and building the new equipment. The new tie tool is battery operated using a chargeable lithium battery similar to a drill or leaf blower. This will eliminate the yellow pneumatic hose lines that often are a safety nuisance across the deck of the MSU. The tool is also substantially lighter at 35 pounds and easier to use with many upgrades over the older tie tools. NREC will build three of the latest generations of the tie tool for use and more testing with delivery to the MSU in the spring of 2019.

The most important aspect of *ARMOR One* is support to our work force. The district is working with Hinds Community College (HCC) to establish training to help prepare our workforce for the transition to *ARMOR One*. As the design is complete over the next year, NREC will define tasks necessary to run and maintain the robotic machinery and new equipment on *ARMOR One*. HCC is researching a training curriculum that supports those skills and provides the necessary training to make the transition successful. This training program is anticipated to be introduced in 2020 with training becoming available in 2021.

ARMOR One will be built over the next three years with a full trial test in 2022. The mat sinking season in 2023 will be the first full sinking season with the new equipment. *ARMOR One* will allow reliable armoring of the channel for the next 50 years to protect our nations' waterway infrastructure along the Mississippi River. ◀



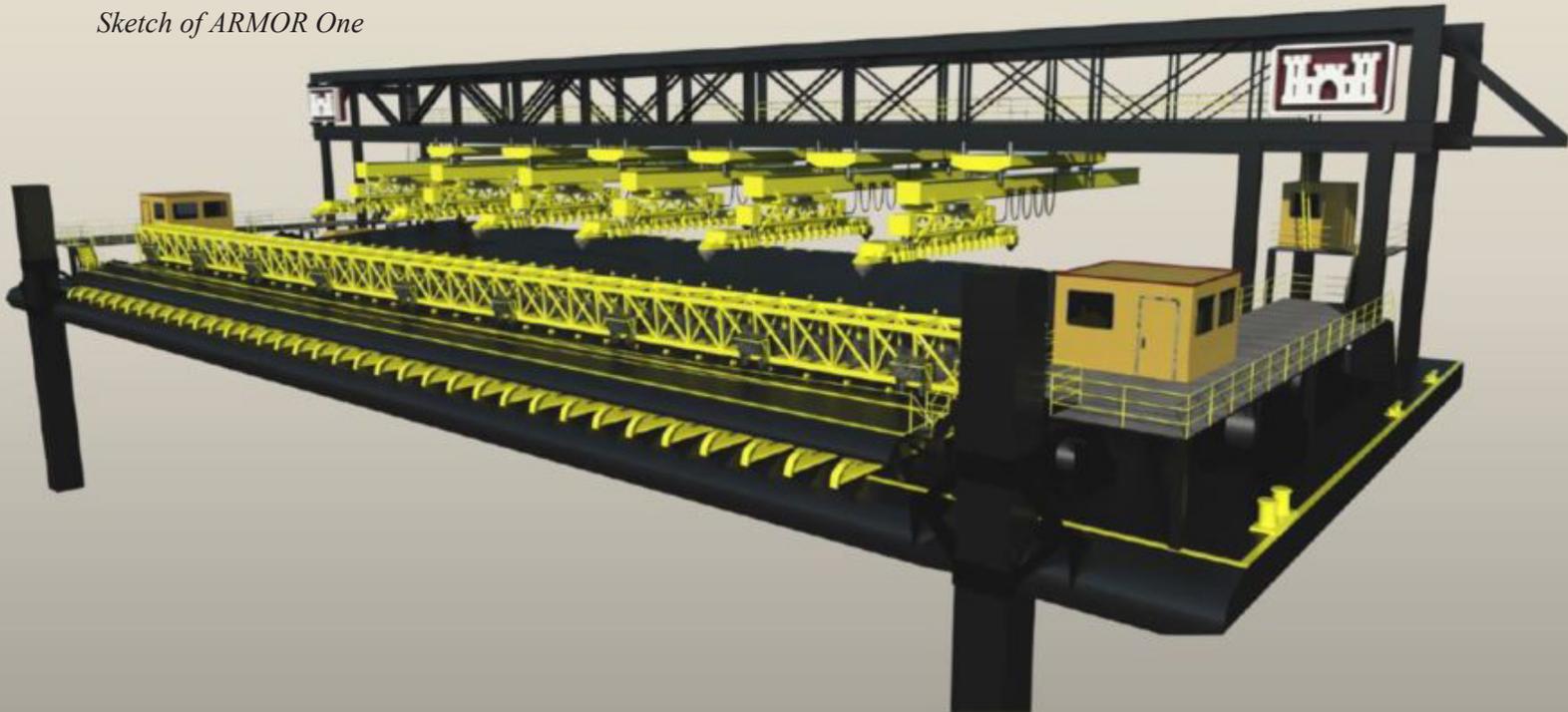
New lifting frame with articulated concrete mattress



Scarf box, the square hole in the mat where the tie is made

Robotic tie tool in operation

Sketch of ARMOR One



District Welcomes New Deputy Commander

By Shirley J. Smith
Photo by Jared Eastman

The District welcomed Maj. Frank R. DuVerger III as its new deputy commander in January 2019.

DuVerger is a native New Englander who joined the U.S. Army in 1996 as a combat engineer. He served his first tour of duty as an enlisted Soldier in the Virginia Army National Guard and was later selected for U.S. Army Officer Candidate School and commissioned into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2003.

His previous tactical assignments include: Platoon Leader, A Company, 92nd Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Heavy), Fort Stewart, Georgia; Company Executive Officer, A Company, 92nd Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Heavy), Fort Stewart, Georgia; Battalion Maintenance Officer, 92nd Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Heavy), Fort Stewart, Georgia; Battalion Logistics Officer, 92nd Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Heavy), Fort Stewart, Georgia; Company Commander, Savannah Recruiting Company, Jacksonville Recruiting Battalion; Assistant S3 - Chief of Operations, 18th Engineer Brigade, Schweinfurt, Germany; Staff Engineer Officer, 21st Theater Sustainment Command, Kaiserslautern, Germany; Battalion S3, 15th Engineer Battalion, Grafenwöhr, Germany; and Battalion Executive Officer, 15th Engineer Battalion, Grafenwöhr, Germany.

DuVerger's combat deployments include two deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and one deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

His military education includes the Engineer Officer Basic Course, the Engineer Officer Advanced Course, the Joint Engineer Operations Course, and the Command and General Staff College.

He earned a bachelor's degree in history from The College of William and Mary, and a master's degree in geological engineering from the Missouri University of Science and Technology.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with two oak leaf clusters,



Maj. Frank R. DuVerger III

Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Army Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster and the Combat Action Badge.

Vicksburg District Selects Chief of Operations Division

By Shirley J. Smith

Photo by Jared Eastman

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Vicksburg District selected Julie Vignes as chief of its Operations Division in May 2019.

Prior to her selection for this position, Vignes worked for the USACE New Orleans District since 1988. During that tenure, since 2014, she served as the chief of the physical support branch in the Operations Division and oversaw major maintenance and repair of navigation and flood risk management infrastructure, including 11 major locks and flood control structures. Among those structures were the Old River Complex, the Bonnet Carre Spillway and the Hopper Dredge Wheeler.

In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Vignes was reassigned as a branch chief in the Project Management Protection and Restoration Office after 17 years in the Operations Division. There, she led efforts to execute the planning, design, construction and turnover to the non-federal sponsor of more than \$4 billion of Greater New Orleans Hurricane and Storm Damage Risk Reduction System projects. Those projects included more than a hundred miles of levees and floodwalls, waterway and highway flood gates, pumping stations and the West Closure Complex, one of the most complex civil works structures designed and con-



Julie Vignes

structed by USACE.

During her tenure with the New Orleans District, Vignes served in various other capacities, including as a project manager in Regulatory, Operations project manager on draft navigation and other Mississippi River and Tributaries projects and Navigation Function Chief in the Technical Support Branch. In 2017, she served a 120-day assignment as the deputy to the commander.

Vignes is a graduate of the University of New Orleans with a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering. She is Defense Acquisition Workforce Facilities Engineer Level 3 certified and an

Army-certified Black Belt in Continuous Process Improvement/Lean Six Sigma. She is a recipient of the Department of the Army Meritorious Civilian Service Award for her professionalism, dedication and outstanding service to the USACE and the Army.

Vignes is a second-generation USACE employee. Her father, Bernard Dorcey, served as a draftsman and Civil Engineer Technician with the New Orleans District for 40 years, and Vignes recalls making family trips to the Waterways Experiment Station in Vicksburg when she was a child. A native of New Orleans, Louisiana, she and her husband Ray have three children, Christian, Kaycee and Kaila. ◀

District Team Members Receive USFWS Award

By Jessica Dulaney

Photo by Amiee Smith, Mobile District regulatory branch

Past and present members of the District's regulatory branch recently received the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region Regional Director's Conservation Award.

Mike Stewart, Cori Carraway, Jennifer Brown and Jennifer Mallard received the award for their outstanding work as part of the Mississippi Standard Local Operation Procedures for Endangered Species (MS SLOPES). Implemented in 2017, MS SLOPES is an innovative, expansive collaboration among multiple federal agencies designed to achieve positive environmental outcomes. ◀



Standing left to right are Mike Stewart, Cori Carraway, Jennifer Brown and Jennifer Mallard.

Vicksburg District Selects Chief for Real Estate Division



Chrystal Spokane

By Shirley J. Smith
Photo by Alfred Dulaney

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District selected Chrystal Spokane as Chief of its Real Estate Division in May 2019.

In this position, Spokane provides technical expertise relating to the district’s real estate mission, which includes real estate acquisition, land management, real property accountability, and disposal of real property.

Prior to this assignment, Spokane has

worked in all aspects of the Real Estate Community of Practice, including planning, acquisition, land management, disposal, overseas contingency operations and disaster recovery.

She is a Real Estate Contracting Officer and a Certified Acquisition Professional Facilities Engineer Level III. ◀

Regulatory Selects 2019 Regulator of the Year

By Shirley J. Smith
Photo by Jake Pope

The regulatory branch awarded Jennifer G. Brown the 2019 Larry N. Harper “Regulator of the Year” Award in April. Brown was recognized for her can-do attitude, mission success and specialized knowledge in regulatory.

Brown was recently presented the award at regulatory branch’s Earth Day luncheon.

She was nominated by her peers as this year’s award recipient. Regulatory team members nominate a peer who demonstrates outstanding service to the mission to receive this prestigious award. Her expertise as a senior environmental specialist in the regulatory branch and its mission embody the essence of the award’s namesake, Larry N. Harper.

Brown, a native of Maryland, earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in biology from Salisbury University and a Master of Arts in international relations from the University of Oklahoma. She began her career with the Corps

in the regulatory branch of the San Francisco District in 2001. She joined the Vicksburg District regulatory branch in 2015.

Larry Harper, a district team member, gained his “Professional Wetland Scientist Certification” while in service with the Corps. Harper established an interagency team to provide technical wetland training for the Natural Resources Conservation Service and served as primary instructor. He began his regulatory career with the Corps in November 1978 where he worked in the surveillance and compliance section. Harper retired in June 2007 following 35 years of dedicated service. He also served his country in the U.S. Army Reserve where he was promoted to the rank of colonel and was inducted into the district’s Gallery of Distinguished Employees in 2017. ◀



Pictured from left to right are Jennifer Mallard, chief of Regulatory Branch, Jennifer Brown and Col. Derosier, commander of the Vicksburg District.

DeGray Lake Remains "Central" to Community Outreach

By Johnathon Morpew
Photos courtesy of DeGray Lake

The DeGray Lake Field Office staff attended the Arkadelphia Public School District's Central Primary Parent-Teacher Committee (PTC) Central Spring Fling to promote environmental stewardship and water safety to students and their families.

This year's Spring Fling was held in the Arkadelphia Recreation Center, where booths were arranged like a carnival. The DeGray Lake staff received a prime location for our booth, which allowed us to effectively reach students and parents with our message of environmental stewardship and water safety.

Our booth's theme was fishing but with a twist. We filled a kiddie pool with water, magnetic office supplies, water safety supplies and trash. Students who visited our booth received a fishing pole with a magnet at the end of the line. Once the students started to fish for water safety supplies, they would inevitably ask about the trash in the water. Their questions provided us with the opportunity to talk about environmental stewardship at our projects. We spoke with them about the importance of taking care of our lakes and waterways and shared water safety tips. After fishing, students picked out water safety supplies and took photos with Bobber the Water Safety Dog.

Event coordinators estimated the Spring Fling's attendance at approximately 1,000 people, and we reached a significant number of them with our message of environmental stewardship and water safety. Because of this booth's success at the Spring Fling, we plan to use the fishing theme again in the future. ◀



Attendees of the Spring Fling pose with Bobber the Water Safety Dog.

Grenada Lake Hosts Annual HOPE Outdoors Duck Hunt

By Kevin Coleman
Photo by Ramon Pierce

The Grenada Lake Field Office recently hosted the third annual HOPE Outdoors Duck Hunt at the Haserway Wetland Management Area.

HOPE Outdoors is an outdoor ministry whose mission and goal is to work with other organizations to bring renewed meaning to the lives of those less fortunate. The Grenada Lake Field Office is proud to provide hunting opportunities to various organizations like HOPE Outdoors.

Twelve hunters from Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee harvested a total of 12 ducks during the three hunts.

Some volunteers drove from Illinois and Ohio hauling trailers of decoys, duck blinds, and retrievers to show their love and support to the hunters and families.

Volunteers showed up early to brew the coffee and begin the migration from the Ranger station atop the dam to the

duck blinds just below the dam. Park rangers loaded trailers with action-track chairs for the hunters to use. Track chairs made it possible for the hunters to traverse rough ground and knee-high flood water to be able to pull right into duck blinds. Mallards, Green-winged teal, wood ducks and ring necks accompanied them and British and Irish Labrador retrievers were directed into the water.

For one of the hunters, Chris R., the duck hunt provided him his first visit to Grenada Lake. Chris stated that he had done some duck hunting in his younger years and fell in love with it. But, since becoming wheelchair bound, he never thought that he would have a chance to experience that love and excitement again. He summarized the duck hunt experience by stating, "God, guns, good times, great friends and Gadwalls, a weekend I will never forget!" ◀



Pictured left to right:

*Front Row: Gregg Vowell, Chris Riley, Emily Hickman, Doug Price, Anthony Guiden, Nick Landsdell
Back Row: Matthew Ard, Gregory Vowell, Kevin Coleman, Colt Hall, James Bornes, Brian Bowman.*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

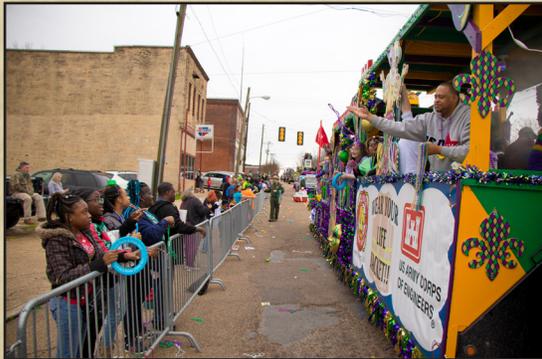
Warren Central Jr. High's Career Fair

Photos by Jared Eastman



Mardi Gras parade through downtown Vicksburg

Photos by Jared Eastman



COMMUNITY

Alcorn St. University ROTC Visit

Photo by Angela White



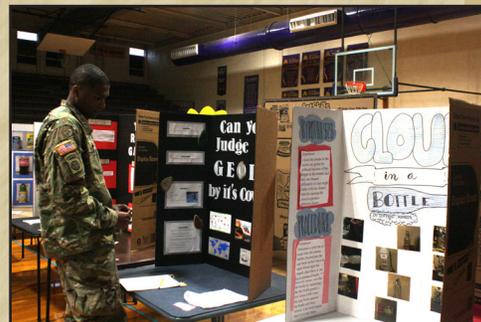
Vicksburg District members judge Black History Month Poster Contest at Beechwood Elementary school

Photos by Shirley J. Smith



Vicksburg District members judge science fair projects at St. Francis Elementary school

Photos by Reagan Lauritzen



Col. Derosier addresses audience at City of Vicksburg's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Photo by Jared Eastman



Vicksburg District Invites the Public to Talk with a Regulator

Photos by Angela White



River Class

Photo by Angela White



OUTREACH

Vicksburg District members
judge science fair projects at
Beechwood Elementary school

Photos by Angela White



Team members volunteer
during Earth Day

Photos by Jared Eastman



Day of Caring

Photos by Colleen Cummins



Maj. DuVerger III speaks to a
Chamber of Commerce
leadership group

Photos by Jared Eastman



“Wear Your Life Jacket
to Work” Day

Photos by Jared Eastman



District Field Offices & Services

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Lake Greeson (870) 285-2151

DeGray Lake (870) 246-5501

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

JBW 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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