

HEARTLAND ENGINEER



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JANUARY 2007



LTG Carl Strock Visits the Kansas City District



1907 2007

A CENTURY OF VISION, ACHIEVEMENT & SERVICE

FEATURES



The Kansas City District was awarded the Best Unique Special Event for its Sumo Smackdown during the 2006 Heartland Combined Federal Campaign. The trophy is located in the display case in the lobby on the seventh floor of the Richard Bolling Federal Building. Congratulations, Kansas City District! CENWK-PA Photo

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COMMANDER Col. Michael Rossi / michael.a.rossi@usace.army.mil
DEPUTY COMMANDER Lt. Col. Kelly Butler/kelly.b.butler@usace.army.mil
PUBLIC AFFAIRS CHIEF Thomas O'Hara / thomas.a.ohara@usace.army.mil
EDITOR Diana McCoy / diana.mccoy@usace.army.mil
STAFF WRITER Alicia Embrey / alicia.m.embrey@usace.army.mil
STAFF WRITER Eric Cramer / eric.w.cramer@usace.army.mil
DESIGNER Rusty Thomas/ rusty.thomas@usace.army.mil

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Richard Bolling Federal Building
601 East 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106
Phone (816) 389-3486
Fax (816) 389-2021

ON THE COVER:

Photo by Diana McCoy



COL Michael A. Rossi

Happy Anniversary. It's only fitting the first article I write in 2007 for the Heartland Engineer recognizes the district's centennial anniversary. One hundred years of service to the nation and to the heartland. One hundred years as the premier agency in what is basically the "quality of life" business. If you stop to think about it, most everything we do affects the quality of life of the American people.

The Kansas City District began in 1907 with a mission to improve commerce and the quality of life for citizens along the Missouri River by providing reliable navigation along the river. From there, our civil works mission and positive impact on the public expanded when we took on flood protection, water supply, hydropower and recreation missions. In the 1940s, we began our military mission and began to directly affect the quality of life of our Soldiers and Airmen by providing first-class facilities for them to live and work—and the American people sleep well knowing when our Soldiers and Airmen are relevant and ready, they are protected. In the 1980s, we took on other quality of life missions to cleanup and protect our environment, ensuring our natural resources are abundant and safe for future generations of Americans. One hundred years of quiet professionalism in service to our nation.

Well, as the Leadership Development Program team charged with planning our 100-year mark said, "There's a big difference between your 24th and 25th wedding anniversary, and there should be a big difference between our 99th and 100th birthday in the district." So while we will still be thoroughly professional this year, we may not be so quiet. We've got some big ideas and plans to mark this occasion.

The district has produced a centennial calendar that should already be in your hands. Rusty Thomas has designed a centennial Commander's Coin of Excellence to be awarded throughout this year for outstanding service. Jeannie Wilson is producing a centennial video to document and celebrate our history. Alicia Embrey and the Public Affairs staff are producing a district centennial book of pictures and narratives which proudly captures our history, our accomplishments and our great people. The graphics and PA staff have also developed a traveling display of the Kansas City District's accomplishments over the past century. You should also see some feature articles in the Kansas City Star that let the public know about our significant impact on their "quality of life" this past century. Finally, we are going to go upscale a bit on our annual picnic this year—after all, this is our 100th year, and it is a bit more special than the last 99 or so. We're going to celebrate at Theis Park, on the Country Club Plaza June 15, with cake, special guests and activities and entertainment. Stay tuned for details.

One hundred years—we all stand on the shoulders of great men and women who, by their deeds and selfless service, made the Kansas City District great in every way. As always, I'm proud of serving with you every day and thank you on behalf of the Soldiers, Airmen, and citizens of the heartland for their great "quality of life."

Hooah.

Colonel Mike Rossi

1907-1917

The first decade of the Kansas City District

This is the first in a series of articles commemorating the centennial of the Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The articles will attempt to address topics from each decade of the district's history.

World Events:

1907

- ~The Chicago Cubs are the World Series Champions
- ~Our president was Theodore Roosevelt, (R-New York)
- ~The Ziegfeld's Follies has its first year on Broadway
- ~Federal spending is \$0.58 billion

1908

- ~Henry Ford produces the first Model T

1912

- ~The Republic of China is established
- ~New Mexico and Arizona are admitted as states
- ~The Royal Mail Steamer Titanic sinks

1913

- ~Woodrow Wilson creates the Federal Reserve System.

1914

- ~World War I begins

1915

- ~Einstein publishes his theory general relativity.

1916

- ~Britain initiates daylight saving time

1917

- ~The U.S. declared war on Germany (World War I)
- ~Federal spending is \$1.95 billion

By Eric Cramer

The Kansas City District began its first 100 years in 1907, with the appointment of Capt. Edward H. Schultz as its first district engineer.

The then-new district headquarters were in the Postal Telegraph Office at 8th and Main streets in Kansas City, Mo.

Although the Kansas City District came into existence in 1907, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was present along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers throughout much of the 19th century.

The initial call was to improve navigation on the rivers, the waterways that were the nation's highways and the freightways for the heartland's agricultural products to reach the rest of the world.

In 1907, the work of the Kansas City District was a matter of political debate even as it is today.

Kansas City businessmen organized a "Missouri River Valley Improvement Association," or MRVIA, with the stated goal of having a six-foot navigational channel from Kansas City to St. Louis.

Ultimately, the first district commander presented a report to Congress asking for authority to spend \$20 million in channel improvements from Kansas City to St. Louis. Corps histories indicate much of his data came directly from the MRVIA.

In 1908, Schultz told Congress the farm economy throughout the area would benefit by channel improvements, as the threat of competition from river traffic would lower railroad freight prices for grain.

Congress authorized \$1 million to be used for a six-foot channel from Kansas City to St. Louis, plus an additional \$300,000 for channel improvements between Kansas City and Fort Benton, Mont.

Missouri Rep. James “Champ” Clark, speaker of the U.S. House, praised the measure for returning the river to what he called the “granary.”

By 1912, Congress adopted the “Ten Year Plan” for developing the river. It called for spending \$2 million each year over a 10 year period for a series of systematic river improvements. Although Congress never provided the plan with full funding, local interests in Missouri acted in response to the plan’s authorization.

The Kansas City Missouri River Navigation Co. pledged \$1.2 million for the creation of steam boats to run between Kansas City and St. Louis. Kansas City issued \$75,000 in bonds to build port facilities on its river front.

The Kansas City firm also constructed port facilities in St. Louis.

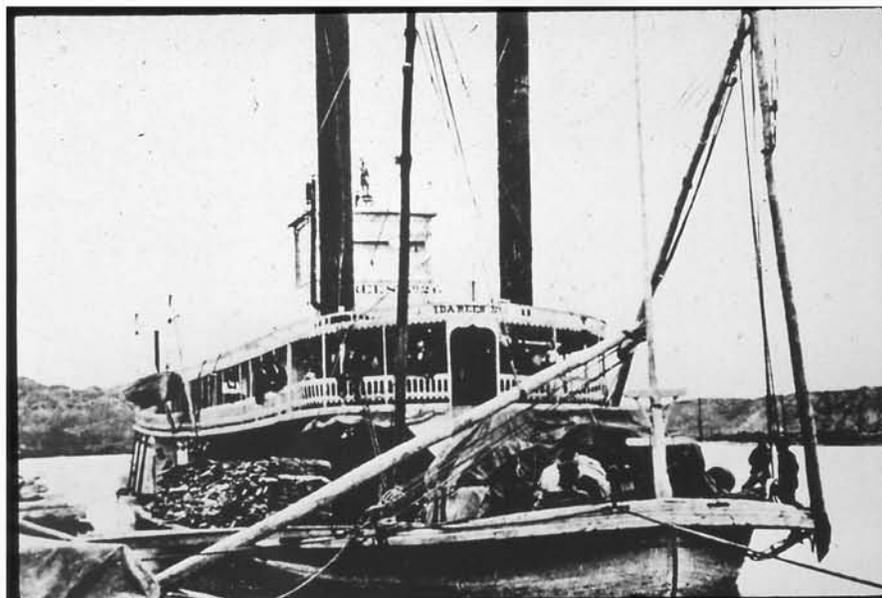
By 1914, the company reported 221 shippers and 13,677 tons of freight hauled.

Despite this seeming success, the new Kansas City District Commander, Lt. Col. Herbert Dekyne, felt navigational improvements on the Missouri River should be abandoned. In 1915, he reported the channel improvements between Kansas City and St. Louis were only 14 percent complete. Although Congress had not fully funded the Ten Year Plan, Dekyne said it was spending \$1.1 million a year to save freight shippers \$10,000 a year in shipping fees. He told the Congressional Rivers and Harbors committee that the project should be abandoned on the grounds that its costs would exceed any possible national gains.

Although the Dekyne report energized navigational interests, the advent of World War I changed priorities. By 1918, the Kansas City Navigation Co. sold its boats and barges to a congressionally created federal barge line, authorized to operate between St. Louis and New Orleans.



A steamboat sinks in the middle of the Missouri River. Removing hazards to navigation and improving the movement of freight on the Missouri River was the primary mission for the Kansas City District when it came into existence in 1907. *Photo provided*



The steamboat *Ida Reese* takes on cargo at a Missouri River port. Navigation was the driving force behind the creation of the Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. *Photo provided*

Editor’s note: Figures used in this article are taken from the book “Soundings – 100 years of the Missouri River Navigation Project” by John Ferrell.

(Next Month: the Roaring ’20s)

Lt. Gen. Carl Strock

visits NWK
for the
last time

By *Eric Cramer*



Steve Iverson, Lt. Gen. Carl Strock and Rex Goodnight (left to right) listen as David Manka (right) briefs the general on the progress of the Lewis and Clark Center at Fort Leavenworth Jan. 18. Manka is the resident engineer at Fort Leavenworth. Lt. Gen. Strock visited the project during his last visit to the Kansas City District as the chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. *Photo by Diana McCoy*



Employees working on the 1st Infantry Division headquarters building brief Lt. Gen. Carl Strock (left) and Col. Mike Rossi on the project's progress Jan. 17 during the general's visit to Fort Riley. Bryan Smith is the project manager for the building. *Photo by Diana McCoy*

Scott Vollink (left) briefs Lt. Gen. Carl Strock (right) and Col. Mike Rossi on the district's Turkey Creek project during the general's visit Jan. 17.

Photo by Alicia Embrey

Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, praised Kansas City District employees for their efforts in support of deployments both overseas and in the United States during a town hall meeting with the district Jan. 18.

Strock also toured military construction at Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth as well as seeing flood damage control projects in the Kansas City area during his visit. He also attended the Society of American Military Engineers annual banquet in Kansas City that evening.

Strock, a former Northwestern Division commander, said he recognized a lot of faces in the Kansas City District audience.

"I see a lot of people I've known as part of the family for a long time. I also see a lot of young, new faces, and I want to thank you all for your service," Strock said.

He said Kansas City has addressed the issues of the past year admirably, maintaining a full work load in the face of budget, personnel and deployment challenges.

"You've seen your budget over the past few years doubled, and you've addressed it, and the workload has grown with it, but the workforce of about 800 people hasn't changed much," Strock said.

He said Kansas City has shown strong support for missions overseas while maintaining its missions at home.

"Maj. (Matt) Little is emblematic of what you're doing here, as he's stepped forward as deputy commander while Lt. Col. (Kelly) Butler serves in Iraq," Strock said. "While you may not put your boots on the ground in Afghanistan or Iraq, you keep things going back here."

He said missions are ongoing in the Gulf Region Division and the Afghanistan Engineering District.

"They're going about as well as they can go," he said of these missions. "It's a hostile area, and we've been very fortunate that we've had no one seriously injured over there."

He said about 3,000 of a total of 3,400 projects have been completed in Iraq. "We need about another two years of real hard effort in Iraq," he said. "We've pretty much stayed on track in delivering our projects. We're accomplishing a 'Marshall Plan' effort, but we're doing it under fire."

Strock said efforts in Afghanistan Engineering District are having a large impact on limited resources.

"Even the modest effort we're putting in AED is

making a big difference. We've been mostly focusing on extending the facilities for the Afghan Army, and through that to allow the Afghan government to expand its influence. It's tough work, but we're making a difference every day."

He said the Kansas City District has been especially innovative in the methods it is using to build military construction projects at Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, using the Construction Manager At-Risk system.

"The work I've seen at Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth is truly cutting edge," the general said. "I believe in what you've done out here. We have projects being finished on budget and on time, and I'm very impressed by that."

Strock emphasized the importance of being on time to the Army as a whole.

"If you don't have the facility there for a combat aviation battalion by next year, then we're not ready as an Army," he said. "You're contributing to the way we transform military construction."

He also encouraged employees throughout the Corps to continue to volunteer for deployments both overseas and at-home disaster relief efforts.

"We want to see you go, come back with improved skills and go back to work. Keep your eyes open for these opportunities," Strock said.

The general also responded to questions from the audience following his presentation.

In response to a question on the aging of the Corps workforce, Strock said although there is a small gap between recruitment and retirement, the Corps is working to close that gap.

"We're seeking people coming to the workforce with some tremendous skill sets," he said. "We have a bit of a gap, but as we work to grow, we need to target the right people, and we need to reach out to industry to make certain that we have the people we need for the mission."

In response to another question, he said the Corps is working to be the lead in providing help with U.S. Agency on International Development missions in Afghanistan as ongoing operations allow.

"We've been asked to help them put together a water resources strategy," Strock said. As security systems stabilize, the nongovernmental organizations and other nations will come in, but the Corps will be there to at least get things started."

"The work I've seen at Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth is truly cutting edge."

-Lt. Gen. Carl Strock





EAGLE DAYS ONCE AGAIN

Stockton Lake Eagle Days January 6th, 2007. *Photo by Mike Watkins*

By Diana McCoy

Throughout the winter months, lake projects around the Kansas City District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hold their annual eagle days.



Helen Bybee of Stockton, MO attends her first eagle day viewing tour.
Photo by Mike Watkins

Visitors come from across the country to catch a glimpse of the bird that is our national emblem.

Bald and golden eagles pass through the Midwest during the winter months as they follow migratory birds south when food becomes less available and streams and rivers freeze over.

“We’ll have between 2,500 and 3,000 eagles in Missouri and about 2,000 in Kansas during the winter. The peak period is probably between December and March,” said Mike Watkins, a wildlife biologist for the district.

Stockton Lake, Tuttle Creek Lake, Truman Lake, Milford Lake and Smithville Lake held eagle days this season. Clinton and Perry Lakes held a combined eagle day at a local high school.

Dan Sandersfeld, a ranger at Truman Lake, said about 600 visitors attended this year.

“They really seemed to enjoy it,” he said. “Dickerson Park Zoo did a great job with bringing in some live eagles for people to view, and new for this year was our display of art from our local high school.”

The Corps often partners with other agencies such as the Missouri Department of Conservation and various local groups in order to provide a better event for its visitors.

Stockton Lake held its eagle day Jan. 6, and each of the lake’s three marinas hosted Eagle Boat excursions

Debby Record, a visitor from Joplin, Mo., visited Stockton Lake’s eagle day and brought a friend with her.

“This is our fourth year of attending the eagle boat tours, and we have seen eagles every time we have come,” she said. “It’s a wonderful experience and well worth the long drive from Joplin. People learn a lot about bald eagles through these trips.”

Record’s friend, Udell Simmens, is a veterinarian and avid birder. He has personally worked on rehabilitating four bald eagles.

“The Corps and the Missouri Department of Conservation do a great job with this event,” Simmens said. “It’s wonderful to get out in nature and enjoy the wildlife. They are fascinating birds, and you just can’t take your eyes off them when you are viewing them up close. Their markings and talons are so impressive.”



Debby Record of Joplin, MO observes a bald eagle with her friend Udell Simmens from Neosho, MO.

Photo by Mike Watkins



People participating in a guided eagle viewing tour on a pontoon boat donated by the Orleans Trail Marina.

Photo by Mike Watkins



Steps to aligning the district's workforce

Change is coming to Kansas City District

By *Alicia Embrey*

As the district gradually converts to the National Security Personnel System, or NSPS, misconceptions of what will and will not change begin to surface.

We've all asked the questions...why are we converting? In short, NSPS is a key part of the Department of Defense's, or DoD's, strategy to implement a human capital management system that facilitates high performance and is efficient, flexible and properly aligned with our national defense mission.

According to David Glandon, NSPS Subject Matter Expert, we are converting to NSPS in order to provide our employees a modern personnel system which:

- enables them to jointly identify, with managers, meaningful performance objectives for their assigned duties,
- provides opportunities for managers to fairly reward exceptional employee performance through both basic pay increases and/or performance awards and
- retains basic employee benefits and merit system protections.

The new system offers freedom and opportunity to the

civilian workforce.

"By eliminating the current grade-based structure, the new system will also simplify job classification and provide opportunities for employees to move among job assignments in a much easier manner than is currently available," said Glandon. "Managers will have greater flexibility in assigning work to employees, including more complex work with appropriate compensation."

Under NSPS, pay increases will be linked to performance.

"During each rating cycle, supervisors will meet with employees to discuss progress against their objectives, identify changes which may be needed and resources that must be provided the employee to achieve success," said Glandon. "At the end of the rating cycle, employees can document their accomplishments, and supervisors will be able to rate and reward employees who have achieved or exceeded their objectives. This 'pay-for-performance' aspect of NSPS is critical to changing our organizational cultural focus from a rigid bureaucracy to a results-oriented, performance-based culture."

NSPS is a pay-for-performance system that provides

Ask the NWK-NSPS Subject Matter Experts



Bruce Clark



Mike Coats



David Glandon



Tom Graff



Natalie Joiner

DoD with the tools necessary to compensate and reward its most valuable asset—its employees. NSPS is critical to DoD's overall transformation to a results-oriented, performance-based culture. NSPS emphasizes these key concepts that are core to the system:

Accountability—Employees are responsible for their careers and performance. Employees' performance and contributions will pay off through salary increases and bonuses.

Flexibility—NSPS is a simplified and adaptable management system that places the right people in the right jobs at the right time.

Results—Employees' performance and contribution link to achieving organizational goals and DoD's critical mission.

What will not change under NSPS? First of all, the fundamental entitlements—leave and work schedules, health benefits, life insurance, retirement, overtime pay and travel subsistence will not change under NSPS.

Furthermore, veterans' preference, merit systems principles, rules against prohibited personnel practices, anti-discrimination laws, whistleblower protections and fundamental due process all remain untouched and critical to maintaining the values of the civil service system.

"Our current personnel system was designed more than 60 years ago and while there have been significant changes in some aspects of the system; it is still rooted in an organizational culture that is no longer appropriate for the 21st century," said Glandon.

NSPS will be implemented in a "spirals" approach

Spiral 1.1 took place in April 2006 with about 11,000 DoD employees converting. DoD will grant all eligible Spiral 1.1 employees the equivalent of the across-the-board base pay increase and locality pay increase that was received by General Schedule employees in January. Eligible employees with performance ratings above unacceptable will receive these payouts in the form of rate range and/or local market supplement adjustments.

Spiral 1.2 was implemented in July 2006 and will take place between October 2006 and January 2007 with more than 66,000 DoD employees converting. Employees who convert to NSPS in Spiral 1.2 automatically received the January 2007 pay increase (or equivalent).

Spiral 1.3 is scheduled to launch in April 2007. Organizations in this spiral will be announced soon. As the rollout of NSPS continues, the Department intends to implement NSPS for all eligible employees across DoD. While litigation by some unions representing DoD employees does not prevent the Department from converting bargaining unit employees to the NSPS human resources management system, the Department has elected to implement NSPS only for non-bargaining unit employees until the litigation is resolved.



BE A PART OF THE PROCESS!

Education, feedback and questions from Corps employees are an important part of the process.

Want to take control of your future? Knowledge through education is the key and NSPS 101 is the first step toward opening the door. To take the free class, visit – www.cpms.osd.mil – NSPS 101

Keep up to date on NSPS information. Periodically check the DoD NSPS website www.cpms.osd.mil/nsp, as it is continuously updated with latest NSPS news.

Ask the experts. Talk to your supervisor or check visit the NWK-NSPS intranet site <https://w3.nwk.usace.army.mil> and submit your questions to the NWK NSPS Experts. Questions and answers will be posted online.



Remember! Celebrate! Act!

A Day On... Not A Day Off

The 2007 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., National Holiday was on Monday, Jan. 15, the third Monday in January. The holiday marked the 78th birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the 21st anniversary of the national holiday.

The theme for 2007 was “Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On... Not A Day Off.” The holiday is celebrated in more than 100 nations. We commemorate Dr. King on this holiday for his actions to end social injustice, nonviolent social change, ability and commitment to serve, creation of a color-blind society, equality, spreading of cultural sisterhood and brotherhood and the notion that this is a “peoples’ holiday”—all religions and races.

Also to commemorate the holiday, The Equal Employment Opportunity Office conducted the 8th Annual Civil Rights Open House/Exhibit Hall on Jan. 16, which included visual replicas of various events that took place during the Civil Rights Movement and the viewing of the following videos: A Class Divided, Voices of the Civil Rights Vol. I and II, The History of the Civil Rights Movement and Four Little Girls.

The Black Federal Employees Council along with the Federal Executive Board Diversity Subcommittee sponsored a Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, with keynote speaker, Dr. Carmaletta Williams, Ph.D., Johnson County Community College. Additional program events included: Excerpts from Dr. King’s speeches, Kiddie Kollege, Music: Paseo High School Jazz Band and a Special Tribute to Dr. King, Mr. Vincent Barriere.

While the great civil rights leader was in the forefront of social movements during the Civil Rights era, Dr. King made great strides and had numerous noteworthy accomplishments. In 1964, Dr. King was the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Other noteworthy accomplishments includes: featured on the cover of Time Magazine, author, ordained minister, noted speeches, Montgomery bus boycott, United Auto Workers Union, Detroit, Mich., Sit-In, Greensboro, N.C., Sit-in Montgomery, Ala., and the march on Washington.

While Dr. King is noted as a great speaker, the voice of his teachings still lives on...

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
--in a letter from Birmingham Jail in “Why We Can’t Wait, 1963.”

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.’”

“One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.”

“From the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire, let freedom ring. From the mighty mountains of New York, let freedom ring. From the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania, let freedom ring... Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill.”
--address at Lincoln Memorial during March on Washington, Aug. 23, 1963.

“We have flown the air like birds and swum the sea like fishes, but have yet to learn the simple act of walking the earth like brothers.”

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?”

“Everybody can be great because anybody can serve. You don’t have to have college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.”



Last Word by Cathy Hood

To go or not to go



Okay, I am in Iraq and it took me 35 years to get to a combat war zone. No, I have not lost my marbles. I decided two and half years ago that I was going to go back and work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers first and then volunteer to go to Iraq. Well, that is just what I did.

One of my most favorite quotes is “If you want something you have never had, you will have to do something you have never done.” I have truly enjoyed my tour here and the awesome people and the neat things that are happening for the Iraqis.

My experiences have been exciting, and I am not a very excitable person—just ask my husband. But this, this excites me, and I’ll have this experience stored away in my memory for the rest of my life. Among some of the things I’ve experienced: wonder, achievement—for those that need our help, the feeling of giving and also walking with my hands outstretched. It’s an unbelievable feeling. I truly have enjoyed being in Iraq, and it is an honor to be part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the work that is being accomplished.

I am so excited to have experienced visiting a school and watching the excitement on the faces of the children in a newly refurbished school. At that same school, I had an opportunity to help deliver school supplies. I watched children experience for the first time the opportunity to play around a fire hydrant with water freely flowing from it. How fantastic it was to watch them play! How wonderful to know they have electricity for more than 10 hours at a time when they did not have but maybe two to three hours of electricity a day, if that, in the past. When it’s all said and done, they truly appreciate all that has been done for them, and when I talk to the nationals, they speak with excitement about the freedom and their promising future.

Currently, I am an administrative assistant to the chief of Engineering and Construction. During this tour, I have had the opportunity to be multi-tasked to Contracting and Resource Management and Command Office. Because of my position in the states as admin in Contracting and different occupations in my past, I have been able to carry the load of what ever needs to be done.

If you are considering taking the trip to Iraq or Afghanistan, you will not regret it, and remember, it’s about the MISSION.

Sure, I miss getting hugs from my children and two grandsons. I miss my two little friends Kisses and Max. I find it strange that I do not miss the creature comforts of home because I am so wrapped up in what is going on here that it is not important to me. What *is* important to me is what I can do while I am here.

It goes without mentioning that you will be making a sacrifice by giving up the months away from your loved ones. But, stop and think how rich your life will be by taking that first step to help others. The experience itself is something you will never forget. Let your family know this is what the people of Iraq need. And, just think. Where else would we have such a great opportunity to give of ourselves than through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers?



DISTRICT WINS AWARDS IN ANNUAL COMPETITION

Heartland Engineer, the Kansas City District's monthly news magazine earned awards during the annual Herbert A. Kassner Journalism Awards, the public affairs journalism competition held in February by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The program recognizes military and civilian-employee print and broadcast practitioners for journalistic excellence in furthering the objectives of the Department of the Army internal-information program.

Ten judges from outside the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with distinguished careers in journalism and public affairs judged a field of 172 entries, the highest number in the history of the competition.

The district won three awards. The Heartland Engineer won third place in the "magazine" category. The district's Year in Review issue also took third place in the "special achievement in print media" category. The third award for the district went to Diana McCoy won second place in the "commentary" category.

In 2005, the district won five awards, including three of possible six individual writing categories, given throughout the Corps. Winning entries included Eric Cramer, first place for story series; Diana McCoy, first place for photojournalism; Diana McCoy, first place for commentary; Tom O'Hara, second place for commentary; Heartland Engineer, third place for special achievement in print media.

First place entries were forwarded onto the Keith L. Ware Journalism Awards Competition which is sponsored by the Secretary of the Army. Eric Cramer won first place for his story series and then went onto to win the Department of Defense Thomas Jefferson Awards.

'WHY I SERVE' SPEAKERS

continued from page 15

"I was surprised at how appreciative some of the Iraqi people are that we are there," he said.

Marine Corps 1st Lt. Richard Posselt, another program participant, said he is happy to get the chance to share his experiences training both Afghan and Iraqi security forces. "I want to get the message out that we are succeeding over there and making positive strides," he said. "I'm excited about trying to talk to as many people as possible in the next three months and get the word out there."

Posselt said he plans to tell people that he and his fellow troops believe in their mission. "We are there for the greater good of both Iraq and Afghanistan," he said. "We are out here trying to make a difference, and we believe in what we are doing." ~Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service

"I SIGNED UP"



You might see these signs hanging up in various cubicles around the Kansas City District. If you sign up for Kansas City Corporate Challenge by the March 21 deadline, you will be able to display this sign at your desk, too! Be a part of the team. Sign up for Corporate Challenge today by visiting www.challengemanager.com or by clicking on the KCCC logo on the right side of this page under "What's New." Then click on "KCCC Sign-Up." For more detailed information and to hear what Col. Mike Rossi has to say, read the KCCC message on the message board.

USACE TO SAMPLE SALINA GROUNDWATER

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will sample groundwater on Salina city right-of-ways in a residential area located in the southwestern portion of Salina beginning later this month. The area to be investigated is generally bordered by Dover, Broadway, Hageman, and I-135.

Corps contractors will insert temporary, small-diameter probes into the ground to collect these samples.

Once preliminary testing is complete, the Corps will install several monitoring wells to track any ground water contamination that is identified. The Corps will attempt to contact those property owners whose land contains the city right-of-ways to be used in the installation of these permanent wells. Corps officials will work with property owners, when feasible, to place wells in acceptable locations. All monitoring wells will be flush with ground level to minimize inconvenience.

Corps officials expect to install the monitoring wells beginning in March.

The Kansas City District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is celebrating a century of providing ready, responsible and relevant service to the nation.

For more information on the upcoming testing and the installation of monitoring wells, contact the Kansas City District Public Affairs office at (816) 389-3486.

USACE WILL HONOR LANDS PASSES

The 18 lakes in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, will honor three of the four "America the Beautiful—National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands" passes to give a 50 percent reduction in day use and camping fees to pass holders at its recreation areas beginning in January.

The Corps will accept the Senior Pass for citizens and permanent residents age 62 and over, the Access Pass for citizens or permanent residents with an established permanent medical disability and the Volunteer Pass. The fourth pass covers entrance fees at national parks and forests. The Corps does not charge entrance fees.

The new passes are available as a result of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act of 2004. The legislation established the new discount pass program to replace the Golden Passport Program for all agencies. The Corps will continue to accept Golden Access and Golden Age Passports according to the provisions of the pass. In addition, paper Golden Age and

Golden Access Passports may be exchanged for new plastic passes.

The new passes may be obtained in person at USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management and Fish and Wildlife Service facilities. The Corps will not issue the passes.

Additional information about the pass program is available at <http://www.recreation.gov/recpass.jsp> or by calling 1-888-275-8747 (1-888-ASK-USGS).

The Corps encourages all Americans to enjoy the nation's public lands and waters. The Corps is the largest federal provider of outdoor recreation opportunities, operating more than 2,500 recreation areas at 456 projects and leasing an additional 1,800 sites to state or local park and recreation authorities or private interests.

The Corps hosts about 375 million visits each year at its lakes, beaches and other areas, and estimates that 25 million Americans (one in ten) visit a Corps project at least once a year to recreate. Additional information about the Corps' recreation program is available at <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/visitors/visitors.cfm>.

'WHY I SERVE' SPEAKERS ANXIOUS TO SHARE EXPERIENCES

Many of the troops fanning out across the country beginning Jan. 8 to share their deployment experiences with civilian groups say they hope to share some of the "good news" stories that often don't make it into the evening news.

The eight troops are participating in the Defense Department's "Why I Serve" program, which gives men and women in uniform the opportunity to speak to groups ranging from the Boy Scouts to local Rotary Clubs to schools and retirement community organizations.

The concept originated with former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who wanted a way to help reconnect troops to the American people, Marine Maj. Matt Morgan, the program's director, explained.

"So we took a number of ideas, and one of them was taking troops just returned from overseas and sending them out to the American people so they could talk to community organizations and groups and interface directly without the interference of filters," Morgan said.

Army Staff Sgt. Jerome MacDonald, a combat medic who returned from Iraq in February 2006, said he and his fellow Why I Serve participants have "an incredible

amount of different stories" to share about their time on the ground in the Middle East.

He said he's excited about the opportunity to spend the next 90 days sharing those personal stories with people who may never have heard firsthand what it's like to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan.

"I think it's important to tell people what's going on," he said. "They can turn on CNN, but there's someone on CNN telling them what they saw over there. This will be the soldier telling you, 'This is what I saw; this is what I did.'"

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Lyndon Romeo said he hopes his firsthand accounts will give the American public new insights. "I can describe to them and get them to see what I saw," he said. "They will see a personal side they wouldn't otherwise see from a person who has been in the field and can relate to them on a one-on-one basis."

For Air Force Staff Sgt. Jeramiah Poff, the Why I Serve program represents an opportunity to share personal stories about his interaction with the Iraqi people and day-to-day life while deployed. "I'm going to share with them my experiences, everything from the culture to the daily routine to living conditions, what it's like, even how I feel to be in uniform, and how proud I am of what I do," he said.

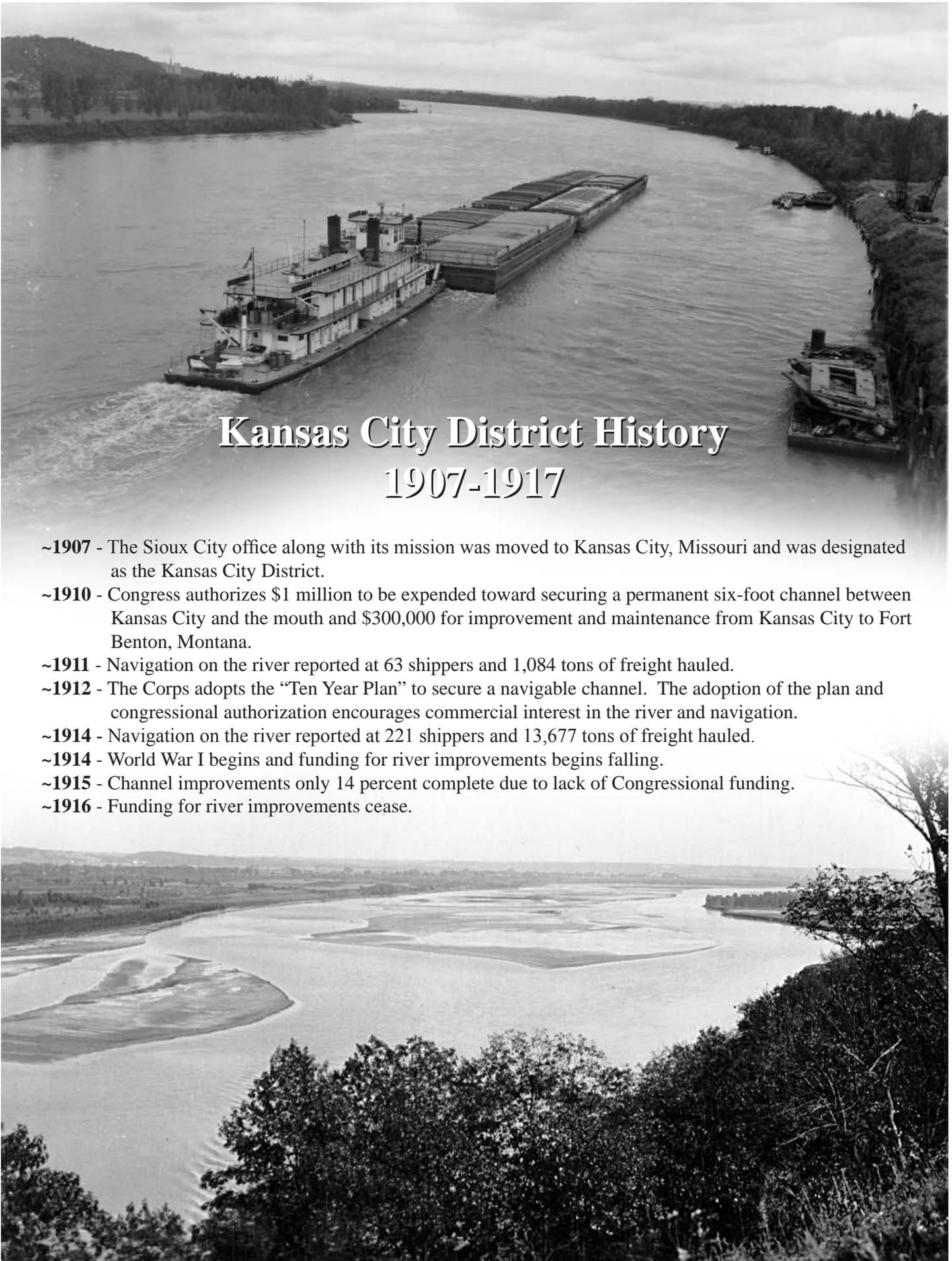
Air Force Master Sgt. Ruben Vazquez, a medical technician who will begin his Why I Serve tour this week speaking to a Colorado Boy Scout group, said he looks forward to sharing some of the good things happening in Iraq that never get covered in the news.

"You hear about body counts and explosions and about the negative things happening over there, but you don't hear a lot about the positive things," he said. "And I did see a lot of positive things when I was over there: a lot of construction, a lot of training, a lot of education, a lot of gifts coming from the states.

"It's not something you see a lot in the media, the positive impact we are making," he said.

Marine Cpl. Michael Good Jr. said he will tell the groups he addresses how much most Iraqis appreciate what U.S. troops are doing in their country. "I was there sweeping roads for bombs, and they were very appreciative of what we do, because a 3-year-old could be walking down the road, then all of a sudden, 'Boom!'" he said. "The insurgents don't care who it is, a U.S. troop or an Iraqi civilian. They don't care who they are going to kill."

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Kansas City District History 1907-1917

- ~1907 - The Sioux City office along with its mission was moved to Kansas City, Missouri and was designated as the Kansas City District.
- ~1910 - Congress authorizes \$1 million to be expended toward securing a permanent six-foot channel between Kansas City and the mouth and \$300,000 for improvement and maintenance from Kansas City to Fort Benton, Montana.
- ~1911 - Navigation on the river reported at 63 shippers and 1,084 tons of freight hauled.
- ~1912 - The Corps adopts the “Ten Year Plan” to secure a navigable channel. The adoption of the plan and congressional authorization encourages commercial interest in the river and navigation.
- ~1914 - Navigation on the river reported at 221 shippers and 13,677 tons of freight hauled.
- ~1914 - World War I begins and funding for river improvements begins falling.
- ~1915 - Channel improvements only 14 percent complete due to lack of Congressional funding.
- ~1916 - Funding for river improvements cease.