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Memorial Day - May 27, 2013

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COMMANDER'SCORNER
MESSAGE FROM COL. ALAN DODD

FEDERAL PARTNERS GETTING BETTER AT LISTENING, THEN ACTING

"I'm with the government and I'm here to help." Anyone who has worked for the government for any length of time has heard that statement made disparagingly about even the most well-intentioned government actions that have had unintended consequences. The Everglades restoration program is a prime example of the federal government making decisions based on the needs, desires and beliefs at one point in time, and then having those actions produce long-term negative consequences that are costly to fix in the future. We can, and must, get it right the first time. The nation can no longer afford to fix mistakes due to poor, albeit well-intentioned, decisions.

Jacksonville District is getting much better at listening to, and incorporating input from, our multiple stakeholders – non-governmental organizations, Tribes, environmental groups and the general public. We aren't playing the "federal government knows best" card as often as we did in the past. To take it to the next level, we need to better understand the concerns of a multitude of groups having a vested interest in the outcomes of our projects. By doing so, we make better decisions, because we have considered all the factors involved in a particular course of action.

That's what we are doing with the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP). Our goal for CEPP is to deliver within two years the finalized suite of restoration projects in the central Everglades for congressional authorization. Public participation has been a major component of this planning effort and has significantly improved the quality of the plan as it developed. To date, we have held 24 Project Delivery Team meetings and seven public meetings in coordination with the South Florida Water Management District. We have participated in 16 public workshops sponsored by the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force's Working Group to keep the public informed and engaged as active participants. It works. Public engagement makes us more responsive to the needs of the nation and results in better solutions to our many complex challenges. It improves our transparency, increasing the public's confidence in the Corps and support for our many projects. It makes us better.

CEPP is a national priority, one of the president's "We Can't Wait" initiatives, and we have to get it right the first time. The entire nation is watching, and Jacksonville District is demonstrating how to use every resource, especially stakeholder involvement, to determine the best solution. Our success will become the template for how similar projects are planned nationwide within the Corps.

Public participation has been — and will continue to be — an invaluable part of Corps processes, ensuring that we develop plans that are understandable, broadly supported and beneficial for the nation.

I'm going to briefly switch tracks and talk to you for a moment about Operational Security. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all of those affected by the senseless Boston Marathon bombing. This reinforces the message of "See Something. Say Something." Be observant. I'd like to thank three district employees who decided to "say something" April 17 when they called our security office to report what looked like a box of toner on the floor outside of the ladies restroom on 4W. As it turns out, the box was simply toner someone had carelessly left on the floor, but it could have just as easily been something worse. I can't help but wonder how many others observed the box, thought it looked odd, but assumed it was nothing and did not report it. We would much rather check something like this out and have it be benign than not do so and have it turn into a catastrophe. Make it easy on us. Break down empty boxes for disposal.

Thanks for all you do and the service you provide for our nation.

Army Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

Alan M. Dodd
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

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Cherry blossom tree at Arlington National Cemetery

Memorial Day 2013

"Your silent tents of green
We deck with fragrant flowers;
Yours has the suffering been,
The memory shall be ours."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

(PHOTO BY KELLY WILSON)

Injury underscores importance of 3R safety message

BY NANCY J. STICHT

Flamenco Beach, a popular tourist destination on the island of Culebra, Puerto Rico, where a young girl found, handled and was later burned by unexploded ordnance. The incident, which occurred as Culebra was about to enter its busiest tourist season of the year, underscored the importance of learning and following the 3Rs of explosives safety – Recognize, Retreat and Report. (PHOTO BY NANCY J. STICHT)

It was a message that no one in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) ever wants to receive – a report that a young girl, while visiting the island of Culebra, Puerto Rico with her family March 21, found and handled unexploded ordnance on Flamenco Beach, a popular tourist destination. Not realizing what the object was, she reportedly carried it into town, playing with it until she dropped it near the ferry dock, where it broke open. According to reports, the materials from inside the object burned the girl. After declining immediate medical treatment on Culebra, she and her family boarded the ferry to return to Fajardo, Puerto Rico. Unfortunately, there is no further information about the girl's identity or condition. Due to safety considerations for responders, the object was not positively identified prior to being destroyed by explosives experts.

"When I received the message about the accident, I started calling people on the island as well as the community members of the project Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) to get more information," said Tom Freeman, project manager. "My first concern was for the child and her family – this is exactly the type of situation we want to avoid and why we promote the 3R safety message at every opportunity." Freeman said at the April 9 RAB meeting, which was scheduled prior to the incident, that it was frustrating to be unable to find out exactly what had happened and how badly the girl was injured.

As additional details about the incident came together, it became apparent that the girl had encountered the munitions item on the Northwest Peninsula, an area of Culebra where the Corps is specifically prohibited from remediating any hazards as a condition of the property transfer from the Department of Defense to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The potential for encountering military munitions on Culebra and in the surrounding waters is high, and the Corps consistently informs the community about that possibility while promoting safety precautions. Between 1901 and 1975, the U.S. Navy used Culebra and adjacent islands and cays for aerial bombing, maneuvers, artillery firing and amphibious training. The U.S. Marines held advanced base defense exercises on the island and trained new pilots on seaplanes in Culebra

Unexploded ordnance, found by a young girl on Culebra, Puerto Rico. Old military munitions are not always easily identifiable and should always be considered dangerous, regardless of their age, condition or location. (PHOTO COURTESY OF RESPONDING EXPLOSIVES EXPERTS)

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3R SAFETY MESSAGE (continued from PAGE 3)

harbor. Reportedly more than a million ordnance items were dropped or fired at Culebra during training operations. All ordnance use on Culebra ended in 1975. The Corps has investigations under way for all portions of Culebra eligible for the FUDS program.

With a program that covers Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, Jacksonville District has the fourth largest inventory of FUDS projects in the nation. "We currently have about 230 projects in Florida and Puerto Rico, and more than one third are active, with a study or remediation in progress," said John Keiser, FUDS program manager.

All munitions should be considered dangerous, regardless of their age, condition or location and should never be touched, moved or disturbed. "Disturbingly, we often hear reports about people finding and handling artifacts, sometimes keeping them as souvenirs, completely unaware of the hidden danger in their hands or their homes," said Keiser.

"Public health and safety is our highest priority. Learning and following the 3Rs of explosives safety is the best way to ensure safety," Freeman said. "If a suspicious item is found, RECOGNIZE that it may be munitions, and that munitions are dangerous; RETREAT without touching or moving the item, noting its location; and REPORT the finding to local law enforcement by dialing 9-1-1 or, in the case of Puerto Rico, dialing 787-742-3501." ♦

One man's legacy lives on through scholarship fund

BY AMANDA ELLISON

The Michael Allen Schultz Endowed Scholarship fund, established by Susan Schultz in memory of her husband, Mike, benefits deserving undergraduate engineering students enrolled at Iowa State University. The first scholarship was awarded this spring, and two more are planned for fall. (PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSAN SCHULTZ)

Mike Schultz was a man with an infectious smile and a big sense of humor. He was known as a dedicated worker and a person of integrity who could get the most complicated jobs done, and done well. Above all, he was respected and loved by many. Sadly, this bright light was taken from Earth far too soon, when Mike lost his life in an accident at the age of 53. Though he is no longer with us, his memory lives on and is making a great impact on future generations.

The Michael Allen Schultz Endowed Scholarship fund was created in 2012 by Schultz's wife, Susan, in honor of her husband. The fund assists deserving undergraduate, civil, environmental, agricultural or biological systems engineering students enrolled at Iowa State University.

The first $500 scholarship was awarded for the current spring semester to a student from Connecticut who is graduating in May with a degree in civil engineering. According to a letter written by the recipient, receiving the scholarship will enable him to pursue lifelong goals. Due to the great interest in the scholarship fund, there will be new scholarships of up to $1,250 offered to two students in the fall.

Throughout Schultz's life, he was dedicated to preserving and protecting the country's natural resources. His desire for preservation began as a child, as he grew up learning about the importance of conservation on his family's farm in Iowa. His desire was to take care of the farm and make it more productive and useful.

That drive would eventually guide Schultz into the agricultural engineering program at Iowa State University. Later he would earn a master's degree in engineering and become a certified Professional Engineer. Throughout his life and career, Schultz worked diligently as a farmer, soil conservation agent, lock and dam inspector and project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Education was very important to Schultz, and he encouraged others to pursue it. The scholarship fund is a perfect reflection of the excellence Schultz strived for in his own life and of his commitment to preservation.

"He worked all of his life to preserve and protect our natural resources," said Susan Schultz. "Even after he has passed on, he is still inspiring others. It's a good legacy to leave behind." ♦

Corps project manager sets future conditions in Afghanistan

BY JENN MILLER

During his recent deployment to Afghanistan, Robert Medlock (center) managed construction projects in Afghanistan, one of which was on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Shank in the Logar Province. (PHOTO BY MICHAEL KENNEDY, U.S. NAVY)

Over the course of four years, Robert Medlock has traveled to two separate combat zones to help set future conditions for local communities through his management of construction projects for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Medlock, a 10-year veteran of Jacksonville District, just returned from his second deployment with the Corps in February and is now incorporating new skill sets he acquired while overseas into his management of Everglades restoration projects in the district's Ecosystem Branch.

"As project manager, my main duties are to manage the team," said Medlock. "I like to describe it as a conductor of a symphony. Everybody has their specific roles and everybody is proficient at what they do, so my job is to make sure the baritone sax comes in when he is supposed to come in and cuts out when he is supposed to cut out; make sure the piccolo gets into the act at the right pitch; and the violin sounds as smooth as she can. And that together, we make beautiful music."

Medlock deployed to Iraq with the Corps in 2009 and re-deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan this past year. Although his deployments took place in two different countries during two different timeframes, the scope of his work remained strikingly similar.

"We were trying to get the local citizens to be prepared to step in and take over operation and maintenance of these facilities and new infrastructure," said Medlock.

While in Afghanistan, Medlock managed approximately 40 different construction projects that ranged in cost from $100,000 to about $5 million. These projects included building water towers to provide water to cities, towns, police stations and Afghan military bases. They also included renovations of police stations, volunteer centers and reconstructing buildings that were falling apart and needed to be put back together with new construction methodologies.

"Some things they didn't have until we got there and started putting these facilities in the ground," said Medlock. "It would be much like America's transition through its different historical time periods, such as the Depression, Industrial Revolution and Information Age, and how we transition through these periods and see a change. We actually helped bring that about because of all of the new technologies and new opportunities that we have been creating through our construction projects and our presence."

In addition to providing new technology and infrastructure to Afghanistan, these construction projects also benefited the local

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CORPS PROJECT MANAGER (continued from PAGE 5)

economy by providing jobs, since a majority of the construction contracts were awarded to local contractors.

While the projects Medlock managed during his deployment will provide lasting results for the Afghan people, his time spent overseas has also left him with a heightened ability to adapt.

"As a project manager, my job is difficult because I am responsible, but don't have authority. I have to get work done through other people's efforts," Medlock said. "While in Afghanistan, I had to do the same exact thing, but I had a language barrier as well as a customs barrier."

Col. Alfred Pantano Jr., USACE Transatlantic District-North commander (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald F. Flubacher presented Robert Medlock with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service during his recent deployment to Afghanistan. (PHOTO BY MICHAEL KENNEDY, U.S. NAVY)

Now back at work with Jacksonville District, Medlock has resumed his role in managing some of the district's Everglades restoration projects, which are part of the Corps' single largest ecosystem restoration effort.

"As soon as Robert returned from Afghanistan, he hit the ground running," said Jeff Couch, Okeechobee Section Chief within the Ecosystem Branch. "He is a dedicated professional and his ability to transition so easily back into his responsibilities at the district speaks volumes of his character. He is able to handle whatever is sent his way and is a valuable asset to the Everglades restoration team."

While Medlock does not have another deployment scheduled right now, he encourages others to take advantage of the deployment opportunities the Corps has to offer.

"I would encourage any Corps employee that is eligible and willing to deploy," said Medlock. "Deployments give you a greater respect for the blessings you have, the work you're involved in and the organization you work for. You really get to see the bigger picture and you get to see how people appreciate the Corps of Engineers and what we do."♦

Corps team promotes Earth Day at Fort Buchanan

Earth Day is a worldwide event that represents the commitment of the United States and other countries to environmental security and improvement. At the U.S. Army Garrison Fort Buchanan in Puerto Rico, active duty military, civilian personnel, families and the local community have contributed significantly to this occasion. The 2013 Fort Buchanan Earth Day theme was "Protection and Conservation of Water Resources: Pursuing a Net Zero Goal."

Fort Buchanan was selected by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installation Energy and Environment as a Net Zero Water Installation, to limit the use of potable fresh water and to recapture, repurpose or recharge an amount of water equal to or greater than the amount of water consumed. Fort Buchanan's Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Division invited the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to participate in its Earth Day activities. Corps attendees included (left to right) Diana Martuscelli, Ivan Acosta, Sindulfo Castillo, Ricardo Vazquez, Miguel Mercado, Capt. Juan Cordon, Johann Sasso and Ramon Pacheco. Photo courtesy of Diana Martuscelli. ♦

Stay safe and have fun – wear your life jacket!

Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy, Bobber the Water Safety Dog and Major General Todd Semonite, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general, joined forces to produce a public service announcement about water safety, highlighting the importance of wearing a life jacket whenever you are in, on or around the water. View the video at: https://saj.usace.afpims.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/Recreation/WaterSafety.aspx. (PHOTO BY TY ERICKSON) ♦

Violation of consent decree in Century Homebuilders Clean Water Act case settled

BY NANCY J. STICHT

(PHOTO BY SHELLEY CARTER)

(PHOTO BY ROBERT KIRBY)

After the initial clearing, Melaleuca mulch, similar to what is shown in the photo, was left behind, which suppressed the regrowth of sawgrass and beakrush. Waiting for the decay of the mulch and subsequent regrowth would have delayed achievement of the success criteria by approximately 10 years, much longer than the permit allowed. The enforcement case compelled Century to go back to the site and remove the mulch and conduct supplemental plantings in the buffer areas in order to jumpstart the mitigation area so that it met its success criteria within five years.

A 2006 Clean Water Act violation case against Century Homebuilders has been closed with the receipt of payment of $400,000 in civil penalties plus the purchase of $60,000 in mitigation credits from Everglades National Park. The penalties were assessed in a 2010 consent decree between the U.S. District Court in Miami and Century Homebuilders, when Century Homebuilders failed to fulfill its commitment to enhance 47 acres of wetlands associated with a residential development in the city of Doral, Miami-Dade County, Fla.

The Clean Water Act requires authorization in the form of a Department of the Army permit, issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including certain wetlands. The permit issued to Century Homebuilders authorized impacts to 415 acres of wetlands for the Doral development, with the condition that the company offset those impacts by restoring other wetlands in Everglades National Park and enhancing 47 acres of remaining wetlands on site.

The Corps found that Century failed to enhance the 47-acre parcel to the level required by the permit. The consent decree ordered Century Homebuilders to pay a penalty, maintain and preserve the on-site wetlands in perpetuity and purchase $60,000 worth of wetland mitigation credits to account for the delay in enhancing the wetlands.

Century Homebuilders failed to make the civil penalty payments required by the 2010 consent decree and sold the wetland mitigation parcel without properly advising the government. Upon learning of the violations, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a motion to hold Century Homebuilders and its corporate representative, Sergio Pino, in contempt of court.

In subsequent mediation between Century and the Department of Justice, a new settlement and modified consent decree was reached, holding Pino personally responsible for payment of the penalties initially assessed in 2010. The government also required additional financial assurances to ensure that the 47-acre mitigation site would be permanently protected and maintained.

On April 1, 2013, Century completed paying the $400,000 civil penalty required by the consent decree. Also, all of the remedial work on the 47-acre parcel has been completed and financial assurances to protect the site put in place, closing the case.

"Compliance and enforcement is an important component of the Corps' regulatory program and helps us to ensure the continued protection of our nation's aquatic resources," said Theresa Hudson, chief of Jacksonville District's enforcement section. "We take violations and unauthorized activities very seriously." ♦

Giant African snails invade south Florida

BY ANNIE CHAMBERS

Photograph courtesy of Andrew Derksen, Florida Cooperative Agriculture Pest Survey Program.

The giant African land snail (GALS) is considered one of the most damaging snails in the world, known to consume at least 500 different types of plants and possibly pose a health threat to humans, according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) website.

Since the snail was first spotted in September 2011, approximately 120,000 have been caught. The snails can produce up to 1,200 eggs per year, have a life span of up to nine years and are among the largest snails in the world, according to the University of Florida website.

The snail can carry a parasitic rat lungworm which can cause illness in humans, including a type of meningitis. In October 2012, scientists at FDACS Division of Plant Industry confirmed rat lungworm parasite in samples of the GALS collected during an eradication program in Miami-Dade County.

Homeowners beware - these snails can grow as big as rats and are known to chew through stucco, which provides the calcium content needed for their shells. In some Caribbean countries, which are swarming with the snails, the shells blow out tires on the highway and become projectiles from lawnmower blades, according to a story posted by Reuters.

Jacksonville District's Invasive Species Management (ISM) Branch is not directly involved at this point. However, the ISM team is working closely with state and other federal agencies by assisting and monitoring the snails' progression, according to Jon Lane, chief of the ISM Branch.

"If [the snails] get into the Everglades, we are developing a Rapid Response Plan and would become part of a rapid response team to see if [the snails] would have an impact on the Everglades," said Lane.

Originally from east Africa, it remains unknown how the infestation began; however, this is not the first occurrence of the snails in south Florida. In 1966, a Miami boy brought home three giant African snails upon returning from a trip to Hawaii. His grandmother released the snails in the yard. Seven years later, more than 18,000 snails had been found, along with scores of eggs. Florida's state eradication program took 10 years at a cost of $1 million, according to the FDACS.

With few natural enemies, the ability to reproduce naturally and a knack for gnawing on anything in their path, the road to eradication appears to be long. South Florida, due to its subtropical habitat, is a hotbed for non-native invasive species, such as the Burmese python.

"Natural environment groups are doing surveys in and near Everglades. They report facts back to us on a regular basis," said Mark Fagan, spokesperson for the Florida Department of Agriculture.

Florida's rainy season is on its way and the snails will begin to emerge from winter hibernation.

To prevent infection with the rat lungworm parasite, do not handle the snails. Anyone who thinks they may have seen a giant African land snail is asked to call the Division of Plant Industry's toll-free helpline at 888-397-1517 to make arrangements to have the snail collected. For more information visit http://www.FreshFromFlorida.com/pi. ♦

Restoration project may serve as regional prototype

BY NANCY J. STICHT

The Alligator Creek Habitat Restoration Project and the Coral Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project are currently under way. Among their many anticipated benefits are improving water quality and enhancing shallow water habitat for the endangered Wood Stork. (USACE PHOTO)

Under the Clean Water Act of 1972, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for regulating dredge and fill activities in waters of the United States, including jurisdictional freshwater and tidal wetlands. Some minor activities, such as aquatic habitat restoration, boat ramp construction, agricultural activities and modifications to existing marinas may be authorized through a general permit, which may be issued on a nationwide or regional basis for projects that are substantially similar in nature and are anticipated to cause only minimal or no individual or cumulative impacts.

There are currently more than 50 Nationwide Permits available to authorize a variety of activities. Nationwide Permit (NWP) 27 specifically authorizes aquatic habitat restoration, establishment and enhancement activities, and it was this general permit, issued by Linda Elligott, project manager in the Fort Myers Regulatory Office, that authorized a unique hydrologic and habitat restoration project in Charlotte County.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Program and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection have partnered for the past decade to complete several habitat restoration projects on more than 4,000 acres of state-owned land within the Charlotte Harbor watershed. Two large-scale projects, the Alligator Creek Habitat Restoration Project and the Coral Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project, are currently under way, and are anticipated to provide a net benefit to regional aquatic resources and wildlife by restoring historic hydroperiods and overland sheetflow, improving water quality, enhancing shallow water habitat for the endangered Wood Stork, and providing an overall improvement to essential fish habitat in estuarine waters.

In this pre-construction picture of the filter marsh, note the extensive exotic/invasive vegetation coverage, including Brazilian pepper and water hyacinth. (PHOTO BY STEPHANIE POWERS, SWFWMD)

The SWIM program has partially or fully funded more than 40 research and restoration projects in the Charlotte Harbor watershed, leading to nearly 1,100 restored acres.

The Coral Creek Ecosystem Restoration project consists of hydrologic and habitat restoration of approximately 2,600 acres of degraded and impacted wetlands on the Cape Haze peninsula. It is expected to provide water quality polishing for stormwater flows entering the project area from a nearby subdivision. Construction on Phase I, encompassing about 250 acres, began this month and six additional phases are conceptually designed.

The Alligator Creek Habitat Restoration Project design is now in Phase III, with a goal to restore approximately 90 acres of wetland and salt-tern area that had been historically impacted by human activities such as ditching for agriculture and drainage/mosquito control. Once Phase III is completed, 12 individual projects will have been implemented within the 1,600 acre site. Future phases for this project have not yet been planned.

A current view of the filter marsh, in which invasive vegetation has been removed. A new weir structure will be constructed, where flows will outfall into an existing slough system that discharges into the east branch of Coral Creek. Wood Storks and Roseate Spoonbills have already been observed feeding in the marsh as it was pumped down. (PHOTO BY STEPHANIE POWERS, SWFWMD)

"The filter marsh is expected to be completed by May 2013; however, we've already observed Wood Storks and Roseate Spoonbills feeding in the marsh as it was pumped down," said Stephanie Powers, staff environmental scientist with SWFWMD's SWIM program. "Spoonbills were not generally detected in this area until construction began and we anticipate continued use of the marsh by both of these wading bird species when the project has been completed."

Restoration monitoring designs are being developed by a cooperative partnership, including the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, SWFWMD and the Corps, to assess the effects of the hydrologic restoration on ecological habitats, both in Coral Creek and in the receiving estuary, Gasparilla Sound.

"We have just solidified a monitoring plan for Alligator Creek that will be conducted in North and South Silcox Creeks, the discharge point of Project 16, which was constructed by the Corps. This creek system flows into Charlotte Harbor," said Powers.

"This is a great 'do-good' project story," said Elligott. "This project and the monitoring design will serve as a prototype for other similar restoration projects throughout the region." ♦

An overview of projects and missions in the Antilles

The final in a series of four stories about the history of the Antilles Office

BY ERICA SKOLTE

The Cerrillos Dam was constructed to hold the water that rushes down the Cordillera Central mountain range after rain events, protecting the city of Ponce on the southern coast below. (USACE PHOTO)

When it comes to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' involvement in Puerto Rico, one might say that its geography is its destiny.

The island's distinctive topography is the source of much of the Corps' work in the area. For example, San Juan, the capital on the north side of the island, boasts one of the biggest and best natural harbors in the Caribbean. This harbor has been improved and must be maintained by dredging.

Puerto Rico, at its widest point, is 110 miles long from east to west and only 40 miles wide from north to south. The main mountain range, La Cordillera Central and the smaller cordilleras that run east-west through the center of the island are sparsely populated, but take up half of the available land. Most of the population lives in the narrow coastal band around the cordilleras. In the mountainous region above the city of Ponce in the south, slopes average 45 degrees and Cerro de Punta, the highest point of the island, at 4,393 feet, is only 14 miles from the coast.

Surprisingly, Puerto Rico does not have any natural lakes. It does have 17 man-made reservoirs, commonly known as lakes. The U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation and other agencies dammed the main rivers to collect water for irrigation and to generate electricity; the Corps constructed the Cerrillos and the Portugues Dams. There are more than 50 rivers In Puerto Rico, most originating in the Cordillera Central.

Due to the island's location in the tropics, the trade winds blow almost constantly from the east. When those winds encounter the mountains, the air mass rises, condenses and precipitates. The northeastern section of the island receives more than 200 inches of rain a year, supporting the El Yunque National Forest, the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. National Forest System.

The cordillera collects between 100 to 150 inches of rain per year, while the drier south coast receives only 30 to 40 inches of direct rain per year. That doesn't mean, however, that the south coast doesn't receive much water. When it rains in the mountains, large amounts of water rush down the steep slopes to the narrow, flat coastal plain where most people live. The coastal communities that were built around the little rivers and creeks that provided their water supply are subjected to flash flooding.

Col. Alfred B. Devereaux, Jr., Jacksonville district commander from 1981-1984 recognized the potential need for services while visiting a village at the base of the mountains. Water from rains in the central mountain ranges rushed down the street, and within a matter of hours, the water in the area was three feet deep. It provided a crystal clear understanding of the serious and constant threat that flash flooding represented to the coastal communities. The experience helped shape his perception as he envisioned the development of flood damage reduction and water supply projects for the U.S. Commonwealth.

Today, the Antilles Office's main functions are civil works tasks associated with Corps projects and programs on the islands, principally in the areas of flood damage reduction, navigation, military munitions response and other areas of Corps expertise. It also provides real estate services to all the military branches, and provides support to other federal, state and local entities, as requested and based on interagency agreements. There is also a regulatory mission in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In Puerto Rico, as in the U.S., many Corps projects have had a long history, spanning decades, with multiple planning and construction phases. Similarly, large projects are often broken down into smaller projects, phases and contracts, and moving forward with them is contingent upon congressional authorization and appropriations.

Puerto Rico may be small (slightly less than three times the size of Rhode Island), but it is bustling with activity. Ongoing projects in the North Puerto Rico Resident Office in San Juan include Río De La Plata, Margarita Channel, De Diego Bridge, the Bechara Middle Section, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Veteran's Administration Fire

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A ribbon-cutting ceremony took place April 15 for the 50,000-square-foot Army Reserve Center on Air Base Ramey in Aguadilla, attended by Aguadilla Mayor Carlos Méndez and Brig. Gen. Fernando Fernandez, command general of the reserve component in Puerto Rico. "As we execute this ribbon-cutting ceremony, we continue taking the proper steps to assure our troops have the resources and the facilities necessary to plan operations and train Soldiers in order to continue to support the needs of our nation," said Fernandez. The project was constructed by Louisville District, with Jacksonville District providing quality assurance support. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPT. J.C. CORDON)

Alarm. Recently completed projects include Fort San Gerónimo, Río Fajardo Improvements and Arecibo Harbor dredging. In the future, another contract is scheduled to be awarded for another section of the Margarita project.

The ongoing projects in the Support for Others Resident Office, also in San Juan, are the Mayaguez Army Reserves, Fort Buchanan Army Reserves, Caguas Army Reserve, Fort Buchanan Department of Transportation and Public Works Building, Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC), Antilles Elementary School, and phase two of the Customs and Border Patrol. Recently completed projects for this office include the Aguadilla Army Reserve Center, and the first phase of a Customs and Border Patrol project.

Yamil Castillo, chief of Antilles construction in San Juan, sees the dedication of the Corps team in the Antilles as critical to moving these projects moving forward. "The people in the Antilles are so committed that they see the Corps as a continuation of their families; not as a job, but as a responsibility and obligation to Puerto Rico," said Castillo. "I've worked several different places, and the people who work for the Corps in Puerto Rico are different. The people in our office get a lot of satisfaction out of their work.

"This week, we had four partnering meetings with prime contractors. Those meetings take a lot out of you, and that was a lot to do in one week, but we had four excellent meetings. Everyone with the Corps comes to meetings with the same type of commitment, attitude and willingness to go the extra mile."

Alberto Gonzalez is the chief of the flood damage reduction section in the Water Resources Branch of the Programs and Project Management Division in Jacksonville, but he was born in Ponce, on the southern coast of Puerto Rico. Gonzalez was in his first year of college at the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez when Hurricane Eloise, the most destructive tropical cyclone of the 1975 Atlantic hurricane season, produced torrential rainfall throughout Puerto Rico, causing extensive flooding that led to severe damage and more than 40 deaths. Thousands of people in these areas became homeless as flood waters submerged numerous communities.

Right after college, Gonzalez was offered a job with the Corps -- in Jacksonville. At the time, he had no way of knowing that during his 32 years with the Corps, he would work on most of the flood damage reduction projects in Puerto Rico and that he'd be the project manager for the last piece of the Portugues and Bucaná Rivers flood damage reduction project that included the Cerrillos Dam, northeast of Ponce, and the Portugues Dam, the main ongoing project for the South Puerto Rico Resident Office in Ponce.

"We have worked on projects such as the Río Puerto Nuevo, Río de La Plata, Río Grande de Arecibo and Río Ojo de Agua, which are flood damage reduction projects and of significant importance to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," said Gonzalez. "As a public servant, it was a source of pride for me to be able to provide flood damage reduction to the citizens of the U.S., the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. I didn't want others to go through the pain I witnessed when I was a college student."

Gonzalez's focus is now on the completion of the Portugues Dam, to protect the people in his hometown of Ponce. The Portugues Dam is the first thick arch roller compacted concrete construction (RCC) dam in U.S. territory. Rolled concrete has the same basic ingredients as conventional concrete, including cement, water and aggregates, such as gravel or crushed stone. However, it's a drier mix than conventional concrete, and is stiff enough to be compacted by vibratory rollers. Gonzalez and his team proudly presented the use of RCC construction technology on the Portugues Dam at a recent international conference.

"Construction on the dam in Ponce is expected to be completed in late 2013 and later transferred to the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, which is the local sponsor for about 80 percent of our projects," said Gonzalez.

Another longtime project that demonstrates the scope and complexity of flood damage reduction projects in Puerto Rico is the Río

This recent aerial shows construction progress on the Río de la Plata project. The river flows by the municipality of Dorado, about 15 miles west of San Juan on the northern coast of Puerto Rico. Looking upstream, the photo shows channel excavation and placement of stone revetment (right), while the river flows through a temporary diversion channel to the left. The revetment will slow the velocity of storm water coming from the mountains upstream and prevent erosion of the banks. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CONSTRUCCIONES JOSÉ CARRO)

(CONTINUES ON **PAGE 12)**

ANTILLES (continued from **PAGE 11)**

Looking upstream to its source in the central mountains, the Río Puerto Nuevo basin drains 24 square miles of metropolitan San Juan, 75 percent of which is highly developed with a population of 250,000. The plan of improvements includes channels, high velocity channels, debris basins and modifications to bridges, in an effort to protect the population against a 100-year flood. (USACE PHOTO)

Puerto Nuevo project, originally authorized by Congress in the Water Resources Development Act of 1986. Rapid upstream runoff, inadequate channel capacity, constriction at bridges and elimination of the natural floodplain by urbanization resulted in severe flooding for 7,500 residents and 700 commercial and public structures valued at over $3 billion, including the most important transportation facilities and strategic utility complexes. The plan of improvement protects against the 100-year flood and includes lined channels and high-velocity channels, debris basins and construction, replacement or modification of many bridges.

"Puerto Rico got good news in the president's budget in April. The Río Puerto Nuevo project received funding," said Gonzalez. "Now that we have the federal piece in place, we need to work with the local sponsor on their part of the commitment. Like any civil works project, there is a required cost share agreement. The local sponsor can help with things such as the purchase of property necessary to move the project forward."

Caño Martin Peña (CMP), authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, is the largest ecosystem restoration project on the island and also expected to provide flood protection benefits to the densely populated wards of the city. The Caño Martin Peña is a natural tidal channel that runs through metropolitan San Juan. Historically, it had an average width of 200 feet and a depth of between 6 to 8 feet, and provided tidal exchange between San Juan Bay and the San José Lagoon.

Since the 1920s, housing structures were constructed in the wetlands. These developments lacked basic utilities such as storm and sanitary sewers or adequate road infrastructure for a proper solid waste system. The people living in thousands of structures discarded refuse into CMP for decades. Siltation, accumulation of household and construction debris, industrial waste, encroachment of housing and other structures and sedimentation from urban runoff have almost completely blocked the CMP's ability to convey flows. Dredging the eastern segment of the 2.2 mile-long canal, to restore the CMP and adjacent areas and to increase tidal flushing of the San José Lagoon and reduce flooding within the CMP's eight adjacent communities, was completed in 1988. A feasibility report prepared by the local sponsor for additional dredging and restoration work is under review by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, with approval anticipated by spring 2014.

In addition to the environmental issues of flash-flooding, erosion, periodic droughts and water shortages, Puerto Ricans also deal with the Atlantic hurricane season from June through November. Responding to these events is another mission embraced by the Antilles Offices.

Long-time Corps employee Elsa Jimenez served as a public affairs specialist for 32 years. Jimenez worked on many of the projects in Puerto Rico, including emergency and disaster response missions. Now enjoying retirement, she reflected back upon what she calls her most meaningful work: "I remember dearly the opportunities we had to work, helping so many before, during and especially after several big hurricanes in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and even in Miami."

Another ongoing effort by the Corps in the Antilles is the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites, or DERP-FUDS. This program is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on behalf of the Department of Defense (DoD). Formerly used defense sites (FUDS) are those properties that the DoD once owned or used for military demonstration, training and testing, but no longer controls. The DoD used locations on the main island of Puerto Rico, as well as the islands of Culebra, Vieques and other smaller islands, as well as the U.S. Virgin Islands as military installations and to train troops for combat. Although those activities ceased in the mid-1970s, military munitions remain on the islands and surrounding waters. These sites are in varying stages of the remediation process.

"We have done a lot of work in Puerto Rico, and there is a lot of work to be done still. I hope the young engineers and scientists who work on the projects in the future have the same sense of pride that our team feels about the work we do," said Gonzalez.

"As part of Jacksonville District, we are responsible for the full spectrum of engineering support to Puerto Rico and the U.S .Virgin Islands. Puerto Rico is a very dynamic environment with many ongoing transitions," said Capt. Juan C. Cordon, deputy district engineer for the Antilles.

"Our full spectrum engineer force of high quality, dedicated civilians is involved in myriad important infrastructure projects throughout Puerto Rico. Among the biggest projects the Antilles team is undertaking are the ongoing flood damage reduction project for Río de La Plata, one of the most important rivers on the island and the Portugues Dam; a flagship project for the district," Cordon added. "As the new member of the Antilles team, I value the commitment of our team, their efforts to meet the needs of this country and the way they always deliver on whatever is asked of them." ♦

A map of Puerto Rico, highlighting the location of Corps offices in the capital and harbor city of San Juan, Ponce to the south, Cerro de Punta, the highest point in the Cordillera Central, the islands of Vieques and Culebra, and many of the areas where Corps projects are under way. (MAP SOURCE: CIA WORLD FACTBOOK)

W.P. Franklin Recreation Area team delivers perfect Easter day

BY NANCY J. STICHT - PHOTOS BY PHIL HART

Left - The W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area swimming beach was a popular destination, and the beach life jacket loaner stations had to be restocked, according to park ranger Phil Hart. Center - Visitors prepare to launch their boat from the W.P. Franklin South boat ramp March 31. Boating and fishing were among the activities enjoyed throughout the day. Every camp site and boat slip was occupied and lock operators saw 140 boats navigate through the locks. Right - It was a beautiful day to fly a kite at the W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area on Easter. The fields were also host to soccer, football and volleyball games as well as several Easter egg hunts arranged by park rangers and volunteers.

From a fifth annual Easter sunrise service to family fun of all types, Easter weekend was one of the busiest times of the year at the W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area on the Caloosahatchee River section of the Okeechobee Waterway. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team members, including a valued volunteer contingent, saw to it that park users had fun and stayed safe.

The park started filling in the early morning with church groups, local residents, visitors, fisherman and park patrons, creating a need for overflow parking in the field on the east side of the park. All available picnic tables were filled by 10 a.m., and some people had started setting up their own tables and canopies.

The boat ramp was full and the life jacket loaner stations were all used to the maximum extent. The beach was used most of the day, with young children and adults wading and swimming, and the beach life jacket loaner stations required restocking. Every camp site and boat slip was occupied and the boat ramps at Franklin North and South were also full.

Sure signs of a successful day included no accidents or incidents, seamless teamwork in handling large crowds and compliments from the public on the beauty and cleanliness of the parks, which remained full until sunset.

"None of this would have been possible without the teamwork shown by volunteers John, Bonnie, Margie, Cora, George, Flo, Don, Jerome, Sharon and Rick," said Phil Hart, park ranger.

"The ranger staff - Rich, Rick, John – and the Clewiston team, along with Lee County law enforcement and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, patrolled the waterway and maintained a presence at the park, which was helpful in keeping order," Hart added. "Lock attendants Kenny, Nate and Glen saw more than 140 boats through the W.P. Franklin lock throughout the weekend, and answered a host of questions about the waterway and recreation areas." ♦

With all available picnic tables filled by 10 a.m. (left), park visitors set up their own tables and canopies. The park remained busy from sunrise to sunset on Easter, one of the busiest days of the year for the W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area.

Areawide Environmental Impact Statement addressing phosphate mining in Central Florida Phosphate District completed

BY NANCY J. STICHT

Florida law requires reclamation of each individual acre of land that is mined, to make it suitable for beneficial use or habitat. In 2002, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Mine Reclamation issued a report that 63 percent of land mined between 1975 and 2002 had been reclaimed and released. At left, the beginning stages of a stream restoration effort. (PHOTO COURTESY OF MOSAIC FERTILIZER LLC.) At right, the result of successful stream restoration at a different site. (PHOTO COURTESY OF CF INDUSTRIES)

The final Areawide Environmental Impact Statement (AEIS) addressing phosphate mining in the Central Florida Phosphate District (CFPD) has been completed and released and a Notice of Availability is scheduled for publication in the Federal Register May 3. The milestone caps a years-long effort that kicked off with a public workshop in October 2010, at which agency and special interest group representatives and members of the public gave preliminary input prior to the start of the official scoping process.

The need for an AEIS was identified after the Corps received applications for Department of the Army permits for three proposed projects from Mosaic Fertilizer LLC (Desoto, Ona and Wingate East) and one proposed project (South Pasture Extension) from CF Industries. When viewed collectively, these separate proposed phosphate mining projects had similarities that provided a basis for evaluating their direct, indirect and cumulative environmental impacts in a single AEIS. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the AEIS will support decision making on the existing permit applications as well as future phosphate mines considered to be potentially feasible in the CFPD, an approximate 1.2 million acre area located in Hardee, Hillsborough, Manatee, Polk and Desoto Counties.

The permits are required under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, under which the Corps regulates dredge and fill activities in waters of the United States, including certain wetlands. The Corps will analyze each of the four permit applications, as well as any future mining projects proposed in the CFPD, in separate project-specific records of decision.

A draft AEIS was released in June 2012. During a 60-day public review and comment period, the Corps received and considered more than 4,000 comments. Primary issues identified in the comments related to NEPA compliance, surface water and water resources, and ecological resources.

"The input received during the comment period resulted in changes or factual corrections to the final AEIS, modifications to the analyses or alternatives, and reconsideration of alternatives," said John Fellows, project manager.

"We are confident we have a firm foundation for future decision-making on permit actions related to phosphate mining in the CFPD," said Tunis McElwain, chief of the Fort Myers Regulatory Office. "That can be attributed in part to the contributions of not only stakeholders, but members of the public who care about this issue and took the time to participate in the process."

The cumulative effects analysis focused on five resources categories that the Corps determined as having significant potential cumulative effects – surface water resources, groundwater resources, surface water quality, ecological resources (such as wetlands, streams and upland habitat) and economic resources. Without mitigation, the Corps determined that significant impacts associated with phosphate mining would occur to all of these resources except economic resources. With mitigation, however, it is expected that the impacts to these resources would be greatly reduced and would not be significant.

For more information, please visit Jacksonville District's website at www.saj.usace.army.mil. Click on Missions, then Regulatory, then Items of Interest. ♦

According to the Florida Industrial and Phosphate Research Institute, draglines, the current mining tool, came into use in the 1930s and significantly changed the mining operation. In 1900, it took a year to mine a 15-acre mine site with picks and shovels. Today one dragline mines 15 acres in a month. (PHOTO COURTESY OF MOSAIC FERTILIZER LLC.)

Water managers prepare for wet season

BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL

Water Conservation Area #3 near the Tamiami Trail in late April. How to handle this water during extreme wet weather events was the topic of a meeting held with multiple state and federal agencies in preparation for the upcoming wet season. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

The birds fly gracefully around the canal on this late April day, occasionally dipping their beaks to the water, perhaps in search of some prey. A few miles up the road, sounds of airboats fill the air. Everyone, it seems, is enjoying the water in south Florida.

At the same time, on a college campus in Davie, representatives from a host of state and federal agencies discussed how to manage that water during extreme wet weather events, with special focus on Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) 1, 2, and 3 in the heart of the Everglades.

The meeting was timed in advance of the upcoming wet season, and featured representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, the South Florida Water Management District, Everglades National Park, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians.

"Stakeholder involvement is vitally important to management of the system," said Lt. Col. Tom Greco, deputy commander for south Florida. "We wanted to provide attendees with a clear understanding of the system's capabilities and constraints while also exchanging ideas on how to best handle extreme events."

Such an event occurred last August, when Tropical Storm Isaac dumped massive amounts of rain in south Florida. The influx of water caused levels in Lake Okeechobee and the water conservation areas to rise rapidly. At one point, the rising water caused major concerns for wildlife, as it was creating islands in the water conservation areas and trapping animals. However, officials worked together to make the emergency adjustments necessary to avoid any major catastrophes to the wildlife population.

"We wanted to exchange information about what occurred in the WCAs over the last six months," said John Kilpatrick, chief of the Multi-Project Branch, which oversees water management operations. "We wanted to identify our strategies, the likely water levels for the rainy season, and how we should respond in the event of another high water situation."

It's been a busy dry season for water managers, as they have been meeting regularly with agencies, groups and individuals wanting to learn more about the Corps' water management practices. Meetings were conducted with stakeholders in Fort Myers and Stuart in January to discuss last fall's series of water releases from Lake Okeechobee after Isaac caused a four-foot spike in water levels.

"The feedback showed the Jacksonville team does a tremendous job balancing multiple needs across the system," said Greco. "While some stakeholders may not always like our decisions, they certainly understand we make them with the broadest public interest and safety in mind."

A different challenge facing water managers this year surrounds Lake Okeechobee and a higher water level this year, when compared to the previous two years. On April 23, the lake level was 13.59 feet, more than two feet higher than it was on the same date in 2011 and 2012. The lake has stayed within the Corps' preferred range of 12.5 and 15.5 feet all winter. As a result, the district has been able to provide regular discharges of water to meet a wide variety of needs, including releases to the Caloosahatchee Estuary to keep the saltwater-freshwater mix in an acceptable range.

(CONTINUES ON **PAGE 16)**

WET SEASON (continued from **PAGE 15**)

Operation of the so-called "S-12" structures near the Tamiami Trail was one of the topics of discussion during a multi-agency meeting held April 23. Jacksonville District facilitated the meeting to discuss wet weather events from 2012, and what lessons could be applied to the 2013 wet season. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

"Water releases will likely continue through May and June," said Kilpatrick. "Maximum water is also being moved south through stormwater treatment areas and to the WCAs."

With the dry season nearly complete, the focus now shifts to hurricane season and what it might have in store.

"There are so many uncertainties," said Kilpatrick. "We could see a busy hurricane season and get hit with multiple storms, or it could be slow. Whatever happens, we will continue to manage the lake and the WCAs, using their respective water management plans."

Public safety will continue to be the highest priority.

"Managing water in Florida is a team effort," said Greco. "Jacksonville District's water managers make outstanding decisions to properly manage the system we have. Our project managers, planners, engineers and a vast support team are working diligently to make the system better for Florida and the nation." ♦

A juvenile Brown Pelican stands guard at the Pahokee Marina along the southeastern edge of Lake Okeechobee. The lake level is currently the highest it's been at this point in the dry season since 2010. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

CERP System Status Report update available online

BY JENN MILLER

Monitoring is the primary tool used by RECOVER to assess CERP performance by determining if ecosystem responses are desirable, if progress is being made toward interim goals and targets, and whether refinement of CERP implementation is needed. (USACE PHOTO)

The 2012 System Status Report (SSR) interim update is now available online. The report evaluates monitoring data to determine if the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) are being met.

The SSR was developed using data collected by the Restoration Coordination and Verification (RECOVER) Monitoring and Assessment Plan (MAP) for CERP, and evaluates data from different geographic regions, including Lake Okeechobee, the Northern Estuaries, Greater Everglades and Southern Coastal Systems.

"The data presented in this report is used to not only summarize changes in the ecosystem that are consistent with the goals and purposes of CERP, but also to recognize and discuss, when necessary, why goals are not currently being met," said Andy LoSchiavo, RECOVER adaptive management coordinator. "It also identifies any unanticipated findings during the duration of monitoring that may require future attention and correction through adaptive management."

The information in the 2012 SSR Interim Update will be incorporated into the 2014 SSR, which is currently under development and will provide a full assessment of the system monitored under the MAP program.

The 2012 SSR Interim Update, along with additional information on the RECOVER MAP program, is available at: www.evergladesplan.org/pm/ssr_2012/ssr_main_2012.aspx. ♦

May is National Military Appreciation Month

BY GENE HARPER, AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

The U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" performed during the burial of Army Brig. Gen. Terence J. Hildner at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., Feb. 29, 2012. (U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY EBONI L. EVERSON-MYART/RELEASED)

Both chambers of the U.S. Congress have adopted a resolution calling for Americans to recognize and honor U.S. service members during May's National Military Appreciation Month. Virginia Rep. Tom Davis, along with 16 cosponsors, introduced Concurrent Resolution No. 328 in the House in November. The Senate agreed to it without amendment and by unanimous consent April 26.

The resolution states that the House, with the Senate concurring, "supports the goals and objectives of a National Military Appreciation Month." It also "urges the president to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States, localities, organizations and media to annually observe" the month "with appropriate ceremonies and activities. Finally, the resolution urges the White House Commission on Remembrance to "work to support the goals and objectives" of the month.

The Senate first passed a resolution in 1999 designating National Military Appreciation Month. That declaration summoned U.S. citizens to observe the month "in a symbol of unity…to honor the current and former members of the armed forces, including those who have died in the pursuit of freedom and peace."

Traditionally, May has focused on the military in many ways. For example, Public Service Recognition Week (PSRW), celebrated the first full Monday through Sunday in May since 1985, recognizes the roles of public servants, including the military, at local, state, regional and federal levels. As a part of PSRW, communities across America showcase military equipment and service members from U.S. installations. The largest PSRW event takes place on Washington's National Mall, where more than 100 federal agencies, including the military services, put their activities, people and equipment on public display. This year's mall event is May 6-9.

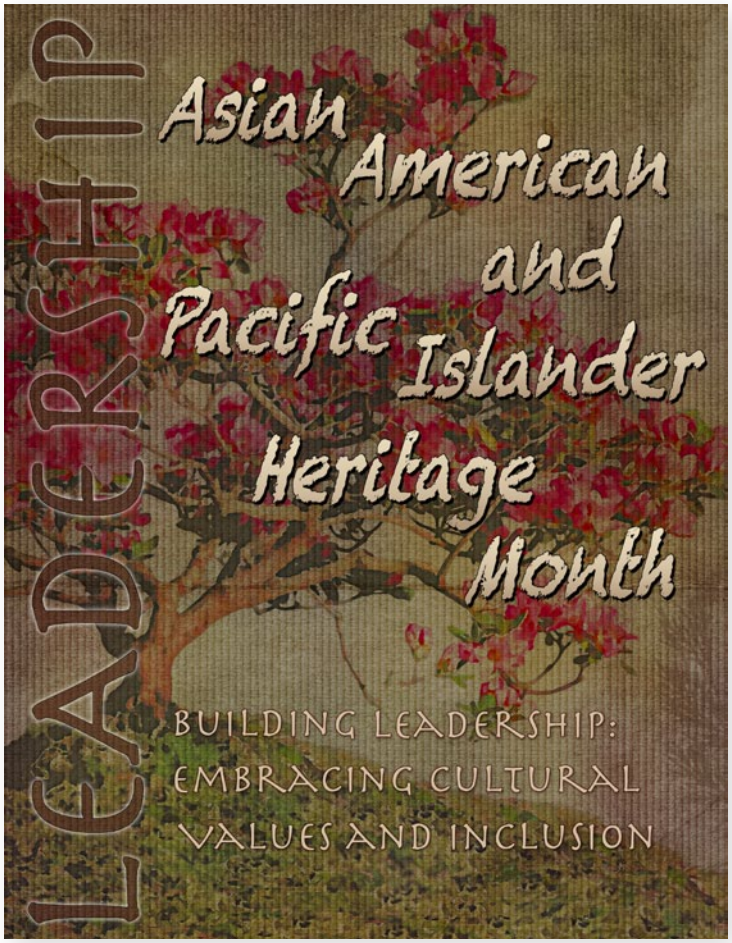
Armed Forces Day, created in 1949, is an annual event held on the third Saturday in May, with activities at U.S. military bases around the world. This year's celebration occurs May 15.

The month culminates with Memorial Day, a federal holiday on the last Monday in May. The day, dating from the Civil War era, traditionally has marked recognition of those who have died in service to the nation. Each year on Memorial Day, the White House Commission on Remembrance promotes one minute of silence at 3 p.m. local time to honor the military's fallen comrades and to pay tribute to the sacrifices by the nation's service members and veterans. ♦

NATIONAL MILITARY APPRECIATION

If you would like to thank the men and women of our armed forces, here's one way to do so. Log on to the U.S. Army's Facebook page at the following link, and add your message of thanks to the thousands already collected there:

https://www.facebook.com/ArmyOCPA#!/ArmyOCPA/app_103926973053781



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District team shares wealth of information at Boat Show

Jessica Weatherby (left), environmental engineer in the Interagency and International Services Branch and Lisa Holland, civil engineering technician in the Hydrographic Survey Branch showcased water safety, hydrographic survey capabilities, the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle program and invasive species information at the 17th Annual Southeast U.S. Boat Show, held April 12-13 at the Metropolitan Park and Marina in Jacksonville, Fla. (PHOTO BY ANNIE CHAMBERS)

Lisa Holland, civil engineering technician in the Hydrographic Survey Branch, speaks with boat show patrons about hydrographic survey capabilities April 12. (PHOTO BY ANNIE CHAMBERS)

WELCOMEHOME

OVERSEASCONTINGENCYOPERATIONS
JACK RINTOUL