

# SOUNDINGS



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# Soundings

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COVER: Detroit magician Dyno-Mike performs tricks for spectators during the Detroit District Office barbecue, Aug. 19 on Isle Royale. (Photo by Ricardo J. Garcia)

## Commander's Column



Lt. Col. Michael C. Derosier

*"It is the team that enables our mission; it is the team that gives us the ability to identify and tackle challenges, and it is the team that continues to inspire me in command each and every day!"*

My writing of this column coincides with the annual barbecue, the one day I feel we should NOT think about our continual journey from Good to GREAT.

Instead, the focus is to relax, kick up the heels, and reflect on our team, our family and friends who enable us to be an Army and Building Strong District.

As you read this column, please take the time to welcome our deployed employees who are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, wish our on-deck deploying teammates well; remember Eric Jones and Steve Thompson and their families.

Thank a team member for the support they've given, and take a few minutes to get to know someone outside of your immediate office. It is the team that enables our mission; it is the team that gives us the ability to identify and tackle challenges, and it is the team that continues to inspire me in command each and every day!

Essays!

The Corps Day barbecue has come and gone, and a new school year has begun... What happened to summer?

Plain and simple, we have maximized this season to deliver value to the Nation and to our customers across the full range of our capabilities – Operation and Maintenance, Program and Project Management, Planning, Environmental Services, Engineering, Design, Construction, Procurement and Contracting, Real Estate Services, Hydraulics and Hydrology, Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery, Regulatory...

All of this was enabled by a multi-talented General and Administrative Staff...and surely I have missed something!

## In Memory of Steven W. Thompson

On Aug. 2, the Detroit Area Office, DAO, and Detroit District lost a friend and valued co-worker when Steve Thompson passed away unexpectedly. Thompson had over 30 years of government experience, having most recently served as chief



of the DAO's Maintenance Branch, a post he held since 1987. Thompson was known for his reliable service on the "Ice Team"

that provided water and ice assistance to people affected by natural disasters around the nation. Prior to 1987, he served as a tug captain in the Panama Canal Zone. Thompson will be missed as a hard worker who kept the DAO functional with his vast historic knowledge of building, floating plant and general maintenance. His positive outlook, sense of humor

and multiple areas of expertise will be hard to replace. Thompson leaves behind his beloved wife and son.

# Deployment a rewarding experience for Kirkendall, Pine

By Tom Black  
Public Affairs Office

Deployment to Afghanistan has been a rewarding and enlightening experience, said two Detroit District employees currently serving there.

Mark Kirkendall and Doug Pine are deployed in Afghanistan Engineer District – North. Both said there are positive things going on in the country, and those developments ought to receive more attention back home. Below, Kirkendall and Pine provide insights into their deployment experiences.

## Mark Kirkendall

“When someone tells you the Afghans are backward people; they’re not,” said Kirkendall, a construction control representative with the Detroit Resident Office at TACOM. “The Afghan people I have met here are some of the kindest, most caring people. The Afghan engineers we work with could rival many I’ve dealt with in the states.”

The fulfillment and new friendships resulting from deployment help explain why Kirkendall has committed to a second deployment in Afghanistan after his current one concludes in April 2012.

“I’ve been frustrated, bored, angry, and tired but there must be some reason why I’ve put in to do a second year here,” he said.

Kirkendall works in quality assurance for the Mazar-e Sharif Area Office. He helps mentor dozens of Afghan quality assurance representatives at construction projects located in various remote areas. Four of the projects, for the Afghanistan National Army, are valued at \$92.3 million; three others are for the Afghanistan National Police and are valued at \$118.5 million.

A U.S. Army veteran and longtime Detroit District employee, Kirkendall has deployed several times in the past. He appreciates the support his wife and three sons have given him, and his co-workers for their encouragement and support. He emphasizes how important it is for those who are deployed to stay in close touch

with family and friends.

He also encourages his coworkers to consider deploying for more than just the extra money. They must “believe in what we’re doing here” and toughen up for a



Mark Kirkendall

challenging assignment, Kirkendall said.

His experience in Afghanistan has been enriching, Kirkendall said, as he’s gained much knowledge of the Afghan culture and helped Afghans learn more about American ways.

“All the memories I take away from here are great. The people I work with are a lot of fun. We’re a team here.”

## Doug Pine

Pine, a lock and dam operator at the Soo Area Office, agrees Afghanistan has been a great experience. He has deployed numerous times despite the personal sacrifice of being away from his family and giving up the comforts of home.

Serving at the Mazar-e Sharif office, he wears many hats, performing the duties of a senior quality assurance

representative, engineer tech, project engineer and project manager. He oversees projects worth more than \$40 million.

Pine mentors other employees and said he strives to lead by example. Deployment, he said, gives him a greater appreciation for the high quality of every day life in America – such little things as walking to a neighborhood store, watching a favorite TV program, or driving on smooth roads.

Still, he has fond memories of his interactions with Afghans and colleagues from other countries. He recalls one time when he and a project engineer were walking down a road at a project site and many local children began leaving their homes and following the men.

“I think at one point there were 50 or 60 kids following us down the road and just so interested in what we were doing,” Pine said. Although he acknowledged the kids might have hoped the men planned to distribute candy, he also believes the youngsters were genuinely interested in the work they were doing.

Plenty of good things are happening in Afghanistan, Pine said, and he hopes more effort will be made to publicize the positive developments.

Stressing that he is thankful “to my loving wife Dana and my seven-year-old daughter Yvonne” for their support, Pine also thanked other relatives and his co-workers for their support during his absence.



Doug Pine, right, looks over a project with Matt Joerin of the Federal Highway Administration, resident engineer of the Marmal Resident Office in Afghanistan Engineer District - North.

# District employees enjoy cookouts, rest and recreation

## Sault Ste. Marie



Scavenger hunt



Have sand box will travel



Surprise birthday wishes for the Commander



Just for kicks



Hoppin' not stoppin'



## Preparing for a feast Lake Michigan Area Office Kewaunee



Winding up for a big toss



Taking aim

The various Detroit District offices each held employee outings in August, offering food, refreshments and recreation in the great outdoors. Soo Area Office employees gathered Aug. 12 for a cookout at Sherman Park in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. The Lake Michigan Area Office held its barbecue Aug. 18, as employees played disc golf at Rycenga Park in Spring Lake, Mich., then cooked out at North Shore County Park near Grand Haven, Mich. Also on Aug. 18, employees of the Kewaunee and Fox River offices in Wisconsin played disc golf on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, then gathered for lunch at a local restaurant.

The District Office barbecue took place Aug. 19 on Belle Isle in the Detroit River. While adults socialized, played horseshoes and tossed flying discs, the children participated in activities including face painting, sack races, kickball and playing on an inflatable slide. Duluth Area Office employees gathered Sept. 9 for lunch at a Mexican restaurant.



Watch closely now



Fun on the slide



A chinchilla wonders: What's going on here?

## Detroit



Watch how I do it, then you try!

# Outstanding Detroit District employees honored for

Continuing a longstanding tradition, the Detroit District honored its outstanding employees for their performance during calendar year 2010. The June 15 Engineers Day ceremony also recognized employees for length of service.

## Administrative Employee of the Year



**Jo Ann Bryant**, a Purchasing Agent at the Soo Area Office, has established a long-standing reputation as the district's go-to person for purchasing support. Always quick

to respond, she can be counted on to obtain the goods and services employees request to perform their jobs. On top of her regular duties, Bryant also trains new purchasing agents and credit card holders.

## Student of the Year



**Keith Kropfreiter** began with the district in May 2010 and hit the ground running. He has demonstrated foresight and a proactive approach to tackling problems as well as tremendous communication skills that enable him to convey complex information in a coherent, concise manner. Kropfreiter has become a key contributor at the Detroit Area office, and is always willing to take on any task and follow through diligently until the job is done.

## Technical Specialist of the Year



**Kenneth Smith** is committed to the Corps of Engineers mission, and has been instrumental in bringing forth technological advancements in the St. Marys River Section

of the Soo Area Office. He's used hydrographic multi-beam survey data to produce 3-D images of locks, piers and dams, enabling engineers to check for deterioration and structural damage.

Smith's technical skills and reputation for being a "quick study" make him a great mentor to train and lead others.

## Boater of the Year



**Jason Iodence** is a small craft operator in the St. Marys River Section of the Soo Area Office. He helped upgrade survey vessels, trailers and vehicles, and developed new work methods to increase efficiency and productivity. Not long after joining the district, Iodence began doing hydrographic survey work for the Soo Area office while also performing his other duties.

His positive attitude and "team player" mindset exemplify the Army values of loyalty, duty and selfless service.

## Operator / Maintainer of the Year



As Master of the Detroit Area Office's crane barge *Veler*, **Kevin Kruskie** developed the Activity Hazard Analysis for removing the vessel's old crane and installing the new one. As the contractor assembled the crane, Kruskie learned about its operation and necessary maintenance. The district saved \$25,000 not having to pay a contractor to dismantle and dispose of the crane.

Kruskie also learned how to use hydro survey software, which aids the removal of foreign objects from navigational channels.

## Professional Specialist of the Year



**Jim Tapp** works constantly with the project managers, program staff and project development teams to establish schedules, monitor projects, and make necessary adjustments. He provides

training, assistance and modifications to project schedules, budgets and funding.

He has an excellent record for achieving objectives within timelines of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. His innovative ideas for project tracking and reporting have fostered excellent relations with customers and ensured continued funding.

## Project Manager of the Year



**Carl Platz** has always led by example, excelling at project planning and execution, program management, and operations and maintenance.

Platz managed three important environmental restoration efforts currently taking place on the Great Lakes: the Detroit District's sea lamprey barrier program, the Great Lakes Fishery and Ecosystem Restoration program and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

He communicates well with his team members and often provides non-supervisory leadership and mentoring to co-workers.

## Engineer of the Year



**Gregory Mausolf** excels at working within a team environment – essential for the success of his projects.

Working with technical experts from the Corps' Engineer Research and Development Center, he helped compile oblique photos and developed an oblique photo viewer for the FEMA Great Lakes Flood Hazard Mapping project. This provided FEMA with a high quality product for significantly less than what it otherwise would have cost them.

His technical knowledge of coastal processes and his ability to learn from his technical team have contributed significantly to the project's success.

# contributions in Engineers Day ceremony

## Scientist of the Year



**Hal Harrington** is considered the ecosystem and habitat restoration expert in the Environmental Analysis Branch.

By providing input on habitat and ecosystems, Harrington made important contributions to the Environmental Assessment for the Green Bay Dredged Material Disposal Facility, one of the district's top 10 projects.

Some of his key contributions include preparing fish and vegetation monitoring plans for ecosystem restoration, providing guidance on Clean Water Act compliance, coordinating with stakeholders to facilitate the review process, and imparting his knowledge to interns.

## Leader of the Year



As Assistant Area Engineer at the Soo Area Office, **Steven Rose** has mentored and supported his peers, and been unwavering in his support of Detroit District objectives through a period of great change.

His steady demeanor and personal integrity have made him a role model.

One of Rose's key responsibilities is serving as the Detroit District's hydropower business line manager, and he serves as the district's representative for hydropower on the International Upper Great Lakes Study.

His leadership has ensured that the hydropower operations at Sault Ste. Marie remain the best in the Army Corps of Engineers in terms of generator availability.

## Team of the Year

The **Great Lakes Flood Hazard Mapping Project** remaps the flood hazard areas of the Great Lakes coastline on the U.S. side. The Detroit District teamed up with the Corps' Coastal Hydraulics Laboratory to help with the complexity of



the project. Fifteen team members, based at the Engineer Research & Development Center in Mississippi, provided technical and scientific support to the project.

The flood hazard mapping team developed new technology specifically for this project to store and distribute study-related storm data. The team also created an interactive oblique photo viewer that will simplify shoreline classification. Team members suggested to FEMA that ice cover be incorporated into numerical models for the Great Lakes. The results were positive.

The team successfully negotiated and managed contracts for the project to FEMA's satisfaction. Multiple federal, state and local agencies and contractors were involved in this project, requiring excellent coordination and communication. The eventual outcome will be accurate digital flood hazards maps, and a sustainable mitigation planning effort that increases public awareness and reduces risk to life and property. Detroit District team members were Mary Weidel, Phil Ross, Eric Tauriainen, Greg Mausolf, Martin Kuhn, Charles Gould, Darryl Williams, Catherine Sheppard, Bill Kempisty and Angelique Bartreau.

## Distinguished Citizen



**Jeff Weiser** was an excellent employee, leader and mentor during his 34 years of selfless service to the Detroit District. He worked his way up the ladder over the years, eventually being named chief of the Project Management Division.

He trained over 200 employees in the Leadership and Education Development class and collaborated with congressional

staffs to move projects forward.

Weiser's ability to build consensus, proven leadership skills, and tireless work ethic benefited the Corps tremendously.

## Safety Champion of the Year



**John Walker**, a representative at the Lake Michigan Area Office, is recognized for practicing and promoting safety on the job.

After a contractor scaffolding accident at the Battle Creek Army Reserve Center, Walker notified key leaders and ensured a safe working environment before work could continue. He conducted research and attended training courses to become the on-site expert on hydro-mobile scaffolding. He then implemented an on-site safety program and more stringent personal protective equipment policies. Walker is a conscientious hard worker and a leader. His focus on safety exemplifies his concern about the well-being of his fellow employees.

## Regional Hard Hat of the Year Award



Maj. Gen. John Peabody, commanding general of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, named **Bruce Walrad**, engineer and team leader at the Detroit Resident Office, the most outstanding construction field office employee. Walrad will compete with other division Hard Hat Award winners across the Corps for the national award.

Walrad was the project engineer for the \$70.9 million BRAC Administration Building, parking ramp project and the \$6.7 million Commercial Vehicles Access Control Point project. The Admin Building was completed ahead of schedule with an excellent safety record. The access control project is essential to provide security screening for commercial vehicles entering the installation.



# Employees of the Quarter

## Fourth Quarter 2010



**Katie Schill**  
*Regulatory Office*

Katie Schill

organized Monroe Harbor data into color-coded spreadsheets. The new format visually depicted that sediments were becoming cleaner, similar to previous dredging operations. She reviewed a contractor prepared document of St. Marys River aerial photos and made substantial clarification edits. She prepared Environmental Assessment templates resulting in savings of preparation time. Her demeanor and capabilities are exceptional and Schill's performance reflects great credit upon herself, the Detroit District and the United States Army.



**Mollie Mahoney**  
*Operations Office, Technical Services Branch*

Mollie Mahoney distinguished herself by meritorious service as Project Manager in O&M, demonstrating professionalism, technical expertise and dedication to duty. She oversees 10 dredging projects, construction at four projects and modernization at the Soo Locks. She also handled several tasks outside her lane that contributed to mission success. Mahoney is committed to doing the right things, the right way and her performance reflects great credit upon herself, the district and the United States Army.



**Nicholas Zager**  
*Geotech and Structural Engineering Branch*

Nicholas Zager has been a critical part of the Geotech and Structures Branch and is a lead engineer for a number of projects in the district. His attention to detail and ability to work with others has been a large part in our mission execution. His patience and mentoring style helps ensure that new engineers in the district will support the high quality standards the Engineering and Construction Office strives to achieve.



**James Bonetti**  
*Kewaunee Area Office*

James Bonetti was

asked to take on the position of chief of construction operations, Kewaunee Area Office. He accepted the position, and challenges, to include a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request on behalf of the EPA for all records of dredging from Green Bay Wis., since the early 1950s. Bonetti immediately took charge, assessed the needs, tasked his employees to the assignment, held weekly update meetings and ensured that we could do this monumental job. Bonetti pulled all of this together and got the job done in weeks rather than months, saving the government thousands of dollars.

# CONGRATULATIONS!

## First Quarter 2011



**John Pelke**  
*Lake Michigan Area Office*

John Pelke is a construction representative assigned to the Lake Michigan Area Office, where he is known for his depth of experience and ability to tackle the tough jobs. He was recently assigned to help on another difficult project at the TACOM facility in Warren, Mich. – construction of a vehicle access control point that includes a bridge crossing a creek.

When the project needed extra field support with a HUBZONE contract, Pelke's name was immediately mentioned and he took on the challenge. He brought extensive experience and expertise in waterline construction to the project and helped mentor the contractor through growing pains to provide another quality project for the booming population at the TACOM facility.

Pelke and his efforts were invaluable in putting the project back on track for successful completion by the end of this calendar year.



**Innovator of the Quarter:**  
**Michelle Boddy**  
*Resource Management Office*

Boddy took it upon herself to design an integrated data management tool that is far less time consuming, more effective and more efficient. The solution allows Resource Management to accurately and quickly crossmatch permissions, roles, and required training.

Using Access software, Boddy designed an electronic database for tracking and marrying the information necessary to quickly determine roles and responsibilities and verify completion of required training. This enables prompt and accurate responses to requests and updates to CEFMS permissions. It also establishes a single reference point to determine at a glance if permissions can be granted or renewed.