The Pacific Connection

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US Army Corps of Engineers Pacific Ocean Division

Buyout offered POD employees

Story by Alexander Kufel

discussion of incentive buy-out and early-retirement programs replaced a scheduled meeting to outline reduction-in-force (RIF) procedures Oct. 3 at Fort Shafter's Skyview Terrace. The meeting, open to all POD/HED employees, was originally planned to coincide with distribution of RIF letters to the workforce. However, sudden affordability issues caused division and district officials to reconsider making VSIP (Voluntary Separation Incentive Program) and VERA (Voluntary Early Retirement Authority) available in order to minimize the effects of reorganization.

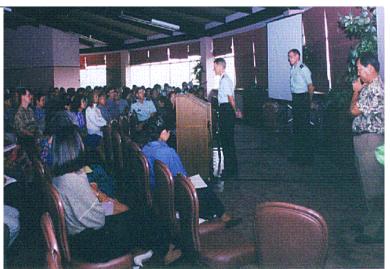


Photo by Jim Dung

HED commander Lt. Col. Ralph H. Graves addresses an attentive audience on the topics of workload and affordability while POD commander Col. (P) Carl A. Strock and Human Resources director Vernon Kajikawa stand by.

Offering the incentives cre-

ates a new timeline, with Nov. 3 being the last day for employees to apply for VSIP/VERA. It is being offered only to eligible employees GS-13 and below. For those whose applications are accepted, Dec. 30 will be their last day for separation. This particular date is significant because current Department of Defense early retirement authority expires then.

"There can be no guarantees, but we are hoping that the implementation of VSIP and VERA will have the impact of eliminating the need for any involuntary separations — the type of RIF that worries people the most," said Lt. Col. Ralph Graves, HED commander.

See "Buyout," page 5

Restructuring means working spaces change too

C eparation of POD and HED will require redistri-U bution of office space to accommodate the two stand alone organizations. Where people will work is crucial to the restructuring plans, said architect David Marquardt, ET-T, supervising design of the new floor plans. Work to turn his blueprints into new offices in Building 230 is already underway.

"We were able to award several contracts of nearly \$340 thousand before the fiscal year ended for modifying walls, consolidating telephone lines, installing carpeting and moving furniture and equipment," said project manager Kathleen Ahsing, PP-P. "That means we'll be able to have the work spaces Soo "Working choose " nogo

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Marketing:

When the product is right, you don't have to be a great marketer.—Lee Iacocca, former Chrysler Corporation chief executive

Commander's Comment



By Lt. Col. Ralph H. Graves HED Commander

HED goals: stepping into the future

"

Fiscal Year 1997 was

a great success...

"

-Lt.Col. Ralph H. Graves

The end of the fiscal year is always an exciting time in a Corps District, but we in Honolulu have had more than our share of thrills this fall. The usual challenges of making year-end awards and closing out our books were heightened by doing it under CEFMS for the first time. About \$10 million of unexpected construction work arrived to boost our projected placement, but revised supervision rate guidance still threw us into a potential budget deficit situation for FY98.

This in turn has made necessary a VSIP/VERA

buyout campaign that will delay by several months the restructuring of the District and POD Headquarters. We face some minor construction and major moves in Building 230 to configure according to the new organizations. Finally, the Senior System TAPES cycle has shifted so that all GS13s and above closed out an appraisal period on 30 September.

Still, we need to lift our attention from the immediate excite-

ment and take a longer look. Let's pause and assess our performance on FY97 POD/HED goals and talk about the ones we have established for Honolulu District under the "Corps Plus" Campaign Plan.

First consider the '97 goals and accomplishments:

a. Restructure POD in accordance with law and command guidance, preserving an effective, efficient organization and protecting the interests of our employees. Restructuring continues a work-in-progress, but the accomplishments to date are encouraging and we remain committed to establishing healthy District and Division teams.

b. Field CEFMS, using the enhanced capabilities of the system to improve accountability and highlight opportunities for more efficient use of funds. Our CEFMS fielding was simply one of the best in the Corps to date, and that's a great credit to all involved. CEFMS year-end closeout also went very well. Yet we still need to do more to get beyond just "surviving" CEFMS and make the system truly serve us. c. Establish an internal set of measures and goals for cost of doing business, supplementing where necessary the CMR standards and taking maximum advantage of the capabilities of CEFMS and other management systems. District performance on a revised set of cost-of-doing-business measures has been published monthly for about six months. Starting in October we'll expand them further, link them with the Command Management Review and give them a key place in the management of the new Honolulu District.

> d. Assess and enhance our lessons learned/continuous improvement system based on customer input and construction experience. Our construction personnel have begun writing excellent feedback at the completion of projects. Soon our customers' project comments will be coming, too, giving us more valuable information for improvement. Teams looking at how we address HTRW problems and track funding of different work catego-

ries in renovations have produced useful results.

e. Improve teamwork by refining definitions of project management and technical responsibilities and enhancing communication among POD elements. The restructuring provides an opportunity to eliminate a layer in managing projects. It also will change the roles of many individuals. We'll all have a share in building effective new teams and networks.

f. Award and administer a POD Job Order Contract, in order better to meet the needs of our reimbursable customers. The JOC was awarded Sept. 30, and the Indefinite Delivery Construction Contract will also soon be available to serve our customers.

g. Award Maalaea Small Boat Harbor Improvement project. The earliest possible award of the Maalaea project has slipped to February 1999, as many people continue to oppose it. We need either to modify our plans to meet their concerns or ex-See "HED goals." Page 4

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Happiness: One of the keys to happiness is a bad memory.—Rita Mae Brown, American author

Both sides to the division dilemma

have a confession to make. I've never been a part of a "pure" division before. When I was in Europe Division, it was an operating division. No districts, just area offices. Then I came to POD six years ago (time flies when you are having the kind of time I'm having) I joined an "operational" division that did have districts, but one of them was on paper. It was sort of a half-way house, leading to what we are in the midst of today which is a full-fledged, cardcarrying, find-them-in-the-phone book DEEVISION.

The prestige that comes from being in a real division is heady stuff. I'm already looking out the window at that 1985 Ford pickup truck I drive and I'm asking myself, "is this the kind of car befitting a staff officer of a major Corps of Engineers division? Shouldn't it at least have a bed liner? Perhaps a manufactured date within this decade?"

I'm thinking maybe I should wear more formal Aloha shirts in the future, just to maintain a certain level of respectability. I don't want to disappoint our customers and fellow Corps employees who know what a division is and how division people should act. For example, there has to be dayto-day conventions that differ from those of us living and working in the enlightened glow of a division headquarters and those poor souls forced to toil in the darkness of a lowly district.

A division officer probably inspects a menu, a district guy would probably just read it. Division folks think before they answer, district people just say what is on their minds. Wholly unacceptable. I've got to learn that one.

Interestingly, half of me is still in the district. Honolulu Engineer District. It's the dual-hatted thing. By the way, the district half of my persona has temporarily taken over and is writing this ar ... no, stop it, get away!... Print that and your fired! ... You can't stop men who want to be free!... this commentary.

But the duality of my position does offer some unusual opportunities. One of my favorites is the chance to commend myself for the tremendous job I am doing. I expect that to occur when I make the rounds to the districts for Staff Assistance Visits. Right now, I'm on the schedule to visit FED, JED and AED next spring and summer (guess which one is set for July?). And — are you ready for this?— I will do a SAV with HED in August. I intend to appoint Elsie Smith as HED PAO for a day, with all the rights and privileges thereof, and we'll talk.

Me: "Elsie, er, may I call you Mrs. Smith?"

Elsie: "Certainly."

Me: "I guess you know why I'm here today." Elsie: "Because it's a normal work day and you work here? I give up, why?"

Me: "Well, Mrs. Smith, it's because I am your division PAO and I am here for a staff assistance visit, which means I am here to help you."

Elsie: "And I'm glad you came."

Me: "Good. Now, Mrs. Smith, I want to tell you that I am very impressed by the Public Affairs program here in Honolulu. It just may be the best in the division and perhaps the best in the Corps of Engineers. We can see how it stacks up against the rest of the federal government and nations throughout the Free World later . . . but I want to know if you feel you are getting the attention and guidance you need from your division headquarters."

Elsie: "Well, they never write."

Me: "You mean to tell me you are able to make such tremendous strides in your program here in Honolulu with little or no supervision from division? An amazing accomplishment, Mrs. Smith. This is definitely going to go down well in the report I am filing to summarize this investigative visit. Bravo, and my compliments to the chef."

Now, I realize that some of you reading this may not really know whether you're part of a district or a division. Not until the Restructuring RIF, the Affordability RIF, and the Save the Whales RIF are completed will all of that be sorted out. Meanwhile, it is recommended that you find no humor in any of this until you can be certain. Of course, you could always heed Strategic Displacement's Early Warning Signs.

For example, you may come into work one day and find contract labor methodically moving your desk down the hall. If they move it UP the staircase, that could mean division, DOWN the stairwell and it might be a good time to start learning the words to the HED fight song. Any sudden change in a freckle or mole, or a grade classification could also signal a major personnel move. Or, you may have this unexplainable feeling that you have absolutely nothing to do. That's a major indication that you have been selected for division-level work. On the other hand, if you have a constant desire to whine about your fellow employees and are certain that you and you alone are making a meaningful contribution to the future of mankind, then it could be district for sure.

Oh, a couple of other indications: Did you have the time to read all of this? Division. Are you going to tell? District.



The View from Here. by Larry Hawthorne

Advice: Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't.—Erica Jong, American author

HED goals...

Continued from Page 2

haustively document why what we propose is the best available course of action.

h. Continue progress on the design of the Palau

Honolulu District "Corps Plus" <u>High-Payoff Initiatives</u>

<u>Revolutionize Effectiveness</u> •Restructure HED.

•Provide suitable facilities for HED and HQ POD workforce.

•Use customer feedback to drive improvement initiatives.

•Exploit current information management technology. •Participate in Corps and POD "One Door to the Corps" initiatives.

Seek Growth Opportunities

•Enhance installation support.

•Improve performance on MILCON projects. •Marketing.

•Establish procedures for regular customer communications and enhance customer input and project participation.

Invest in People

•Produce HED long-term vision.

•Commission systems, committees and processes to improve mission performance and organizational efficiency.

 Provide opportunities for employees to gain variety of work experience.

•Promote diverse workforce.

•Direct individual training toward organizational requirements. Compact Road to support a planned FY98 construction contract award. The design is proceeding on schedule toward a fall 1998 award. Also on schedule is exhaustive environmental documentation, identification of aggregate sources and planning for contract award and construction supervision, each in a challenging interagency and international environment.

i. Complete a Master Plan for POD facilities, with thoughtful participation by POD employees and managers to provide optimum direction for the future course of our workplace improvement program. A small team developed a comprehensive plan under considerable time pressure in order to make a bid for end-of-year funding. That bid was not very successful, so we

need to explore other sources of funds while continuing to refine our plan.

j. Develop plans and preparations for deploying POD personnel and helping deploy USACE reinforcements to military contingencies in the Pacific. We updated the contingency Standard Operating Procedures and put Lori Sorayama through all the preparations for deployment to Korea for Exercise Ulchi Focus Lens. Although we stopped short of actually putting her on the plane, we learned valuable lessons about contingency deployment.

For next year the context, form and direction of our goals have all changed. Goals related to individual projects can be found in respective Project Management Plans or approved schedules. Along with collective performance goals, selected project goals will published in the District Command Guidance. Goals related to organizational improvement have been established in the context of Lt. Gen. Ballard's "Corps Plus" Campaign Plan, which directs our improvement efforts along three axes: *Revolutionize Effectiveness, Seek New Mission Areas* and *Invest in People*.

Individual District offices identified a large number of improvement initiatives as we formulated our plan. These were published as part of the District "Corps Plus" OPLAN, and selected ones were designated as "high-payoff" items in the Division plan.

In the box accompanying this article, you can see that some of the identified high-payoff items reflect ongoing Honolulu concerns, while others tie in to Corps-wide initiatives. For example, we can improve overall efficiency and improve our customers' access to the world-class capabilities of the entire Corps through the "One Door to the Corps" initiative. A number of other initiatives address specific aspects of our ongoing District search for more efficient, responsive and effective ways to accomplish our mission.

Fiscal year 1997 was a great success, as we delivered quality engineering and construction projects to our military and civilian customers across Hawaii and Micronesia while wrestling decisively with the challenges of CEFMS fielding and restructuring. Fiscal 98 promises to be exciting too, as we take on substantial project work, establish the new Honolulu District, continue to improve our organization and expect to put POD/HED restructuring substantially behind us. I look forward enthusiastically to all of it!



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Preparation:

If someone had told me I would be Pope one day, I would have studied harder. —Pope John Paul II, leader of the Roman Catholic church

Buyout offered POD employees...

Continued from Page 1

Division and District managers indicated that the drop in forecast income triggered by a lower S&A (supervision and administration) rate precipitated the VSIP/VERA decision. About 48 slots are likely to go unfunded now, and planners are hoping that VSIP/VERA can accommodate about half those positions, with the rest coming from natural attrition.

RIF letters are anticipated to go out Jan. 7, and by Mar. 15 all RIF actions will have been completed. The physical separation of POD and HED will be accomplished at that time. POD commander, Col. (P) Carl A. Strock, said that the RIF procedure necessary to create two stand-alone organizations is a technical process that is extremely objective and that everyone's rights will be well-protected.

Strock also said that a good portion of division income is determined by the S&A collection rates. He said the plan is to resize the organization before creating the new structure and accomplish the goals of minimizing impact, avoiding further reorganization in the near future, and achieving restructuring independently of USACE. "Affordability" has factored significantly into all of the decisions that have been made.

Graves added that while there has been a decline in the district's workload during the past 10 years, the

Working spaces...

Continued from Page 1

ready in time for physical separation of POD and HED."

This is the third move we've made since 1994," said Marquardt. "Each time we've learned something from the past, so planning has gone quite

Editor's Note

The *Pacific Connection* is *your* connection to co-workers within the Division. Tell us what you're doing and what's new in your area:

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INTERNET:alex_kufel@pod01.usace.army.mil or just stop by building 214 when you're in the neighborhood of Fort Shafter. decline in the workforce has not kept pace. Looking to the future, he said that downsizing will lower operating costs, thereby making HED more competitive, and help to achieve some flexibility in personnel management so that more entry-level engineers can be attracted.

VSIP is not something that will automatically be awarded to everyone who applies for it, said Vernon Kajikawa, chief of POD Human Resources. One of the factors critical to its use as an incentive is that it must help avoid involuntary separations. Another is that it must result in a net savings over a two-year period. Thus, each application will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The buyout rate will be the lesser of \$25,000, or the amount equal to an employee's entitlement using the severance pay formula. A major caveat for interested employees is that they cannot be re-employed by the government for five years without paying back the money they received.

VERA also has some caveats, said Kajikawa. While persons age 50 or above with 20 years of federal service, or persons of any age with 25 years of service, may apply for early retirement, acceptance of it will result in a lifetime reduction of the annuity by two percent per year for each year under the age of 55.

smoothly."

Starting with the Army regulation that specifies maximum square-footage on the basis of job and rank, Marquardt's office was able to determine space requirements for each organization. That was weighed against existing space and job requirements.

"Federal employees seem to have no trouble enduring all kinds of hardships," he said. "But the last thing you want to do is mess with their space! Architect Ed Chang did an excellent job with the planning. He did most of the work."

Previously, allocations varied from as low as 89 square-feet per person to as high as 250. Marquardt said that they have been able to standardize on 100-110 square-feet for most positions. There is more to it than a simple number, however. Equipment related to specific jobs has to be factored in, and the privacy requirements of supervisors who confer with employees also are considered.

Space allocations are still theoretical at this moment, pending finalization of organization charts, which could be as soon as mid-November. Only when it is known exactly what POD and HED will look like will final determinations be able to be made.

—Alexander Kufel

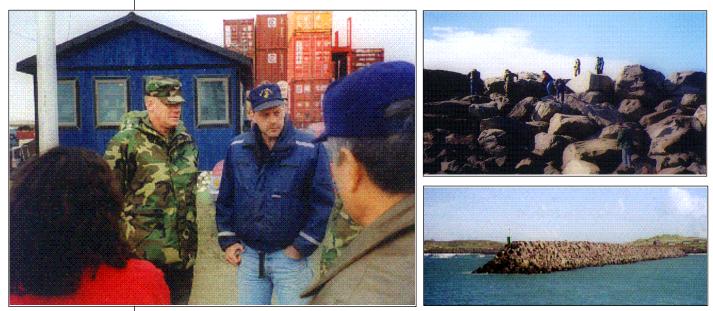
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Growth: When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years. —Mark Twain, American author

In the Field



Photos by Paul Mizue

POD Commander visits AED civil works projects at diverse sites in preparation for giving Congressional testimony in the spring. (Above) Col. (P) Carl A. Strock meeting with Bethel city officials at the site of a recently completed \$20 million bank stabilization project. (Upper right) Rock-hopping at St. Paul Harbor. (Lower right) A projected \$18 million improvement will reduce storm waves overtopping the breakwater. This project will serve to boost the local fishing industry which has essentially replaced the fur trade since the Alaskan fur seal was placed on the endangered species list.

POD has launched its own home page on the World Wide Web. Find it at: http://www.pod.usace.army.mil



Will power

When writer Anthony Burgess was 39, his doctors found a brain tumor and gave him a year to live.

He made a vow to write 10 novels in that last year so his widow could live on the royalties. At the end of the year he had completed five and a half novels and the brain tumor had completely disappeared.

Burgess lived to age 76 and wrote about 50 novels and at least 15 nonfiction works. He was so prolific even his publisher was unsure of the exact number of his books at the time of his death.

-Jocelyn Little, Sterling Publishing.

<u>Teamwork for the birds?</u>

A flock of geese provides an unusual but appropriate example of how a team can achieve the same objectives as an individual, but with better efficiency and safety:

•Exceptional performance is achieved through cooperation and teamwork. In a procedure known as "drafting," the uplift from the birds in front reduces effort and provides additional range and speed for the entire flock.

Each member looks to itself—not the leader—to determine what to do.
Every member knows the direction of

the flock and is responsible for getting itself to wherever the flock is going. Sharing the common direction makes assuming the leadership role easier. •Every member is willing to assume leadership when the flock needs it. When the lead goose gets tired, a fresher goose from the back of the pack assumes the leadership position.

•Team-members look after each other. If a wounded goose goes down, two geese follow it and protect it and feed it until it either recovers or dies. They then resume flight, either finding the original flock or joining another.

•When the nature of the task changes, the geese reorganize themselves for the best results: they fly in a V-formation, land in waves, and feed in fours.

-Neil H. Snyder and Angela P. Clontz, Irwin Professional Publishing.

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Limits: The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible. —Arthur C. Clarke, British writer

PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE



Maria Buckner Hometown: Waianae, Hawaii Years with Corps: 1-1/4 Works in: Contracting

uggling the concerns of raising a family, Jugging and performing a fulltime job as administrative support assistant at Contracting, Maria Buckner makes life look easy.

"I like staying busy," said Buckner. "When I get caught up with my work and it looks like someone else could use some help, I offer assistance. I feel that what I learn more than offsets the extra effort of doing something different."

Part of her secret may lie in her love of teamwork. Married, and mother of three children: Shantel, 6; DeForest, 3; and Kenya, 1; Buckner said that she met her husband George at Hawaii Pacific University while they were both at college on basketball scholarships. During her off-duty hours, she likes doing things with her family and loves being out-ofdoors, even if lately that means doing yardwork.

Once in a while though, she finds time to watch a video or even read a romance novel. She said that she and her husband like to go out together, to dinner or a show, but have been waiting until her youngest turns two. Then, they'll start going out again.

"I like having a life outside of home," said Buckner. "I guess that I will always have some kind of job just because of that." She added that although she's been a Federal employee for 11 years, it is very hard to live in Hawaii on only one person's income, especially with three kids.

Maria is making POD more productive.



Lawrence Onaka Hometown: Aiea, Hawaii Years with Corps: 16 Works in: ET-TD

almness seems to surround Lawrence "Larry" Onaka. It seems surprising when one considers the changes that have taken place around him during his life. Or perhaps not. "I'm a quiet person," he said. "I don't get excited unnecessarily."

Growing up in Aiea, his nearest high school was in Waipahu, 12 miles away. Now, two major schools are closer. Fascinated with drawing from childhood, he studied architectural drafting at Honolulu Community College when it was still called Honolulu Tech. For the next 23 years he prepared construction drawings by hand for City Mill. Today, still a draftsman, Onaka's tools consist principally of a computer using CADD software.

"I like learning about new things," he said. "My wife, Lynn, and I are big Rainbows fans, too, so every year we go on a tour to wherever they're playing, and spend a week or so checking out that area before the game."

Those pre-game visits have brought them to museums and art galleries, and also to Indianapolis Speedway where they took a slow lap around the track in a tour bus.

Onaka golfs, but loves to travel. He said that he goes to Las Vegas 3 to 4 times a year and gets a kick out of running into other POD people while he's there.

"Oh, we like to gamble and see the shows," he said. "But the food is something that's just there. They just about give it away."

Larry is making POD more productive.

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History: Every parent knows that "once upon a time" is the most powerful lure you can throw a child; once snared, we are historians for all our travels through life.—**Carla Davidson, senior editor, American Heritage**

POD welcomes new Public Works Director

There is a long-standing link between DPW and HED that recently was renewed with the August 1997 appointment of Col. Barry N. Totten to the position of Director of Public Works.

The Directorate of Public Works is the U.S. Army Garrison's means of operating and maintaining facilities and utilities in Hawaii. DPW is HED's largest customer.

> In a recent interview, Totten said that his own connection with HED goes back 14 years to when he was a Captain and HED resident engineer at Kwajalein Missile Test Range in the Marshall Islands. He said that the experience was a great one, primarily because it afforded him the opportunity to work with civilian employees in a context of doing meaningful work. Formerly, his engineering experiences had been of the "muddy boots" type employing only military personnel. The uniqueness of Kwajalein gave him many new opportunities for learning.

Totten also said that previously, as-

sistance, guidance and recommendations from HED were only a phone call away. All that seems to have changed these many years later is that E-mail has been added to the communications loop.

Where Totten gained experience being the provider of engineering services, he is now the customer. This perspective makes him eager to keep DPW and HED working together.

"POD has been very responsive and forthcoming with DPW," said Totten. "We have a longstanding and valuable relationship that we need to maintain and nurture."

DPW consists of a work force of 647 employees with an annual funding program of approximately \$163 million plus \$30 million in reimbursable work. Statewide, 29 locations include Schofield Barracks and Wheeler Army Airfield, Helemano Military Reservation, Tripler Army Medical Center, Fort Shafter and Fort DeRussy on Oahu. All told, it is responsible for approximately 167,000 acres of land, 26 million square-feet of buildings, three active airfields, over 1,100 miles of utility systems and nearly 8,300 sets of family housing quarters. —*Alexander Kufel*



Col. Barry N. Totten, Director of U. S. Army Garrison Public Works.

Editor's note: Shoichi Yokoi, a former Japan imperial army sergeant, fled into the jungle when American troops recaptured Guam in July 1944. Rather than surrender, he lived in seclusion until January 1972 when he was discovered by hunters while fishing along the Talofofo River. Upon his return to Japan, Yokoi became a folk hero, was married within months of his return, and embarked on a career of lecturing on survival tactics. In 1974, he ran unsuccessfully for a seat in Japan's parliament. He died Sept. 22, 1997 in Nagoya, Japan.

Sometimes the unknown makes its presence felt Alone in the jungles of Guam, or not?

The recent obituary of Shoichi Yokoi, a former Japanese soldier who hid in the jungles of Guam for 27 years without knowing that World War II had ended, spurred a memory in Jimmy Lee, Emergency Management Division chief.

"In the late sixties I went to Guam as a member of Planning Branch," said Lee. "Trim and eager as I was then, we trudged up into the Talofofo Valley, my Chamorro guide and I, looking for sites for flood protection activities."

Lee was able to identify sites, all right, but in the process found a little more than he bargained for.

As they climbed their way deeper and deeper into the valley, Lee said that he felt like he was in an area where someone was living. "There were signs of cultivation and there was lots of edible fruit around," he said.

He noted, too, that in this uninhabited place, he also felt like they were being observed as they wove their way through the dense vegetation; somebody was watching.

The sun was hot, the air was still. About all the life they saw were a few chickens here and there. Late in the day, with shadows growing longer, they turned around and started walking slowly out of the forest.

Suddenly, there was a flurry of noise and

activity. Chickens, similar to ones they had seen earlier slowly foraging in the brush for food, came flying past them. As he turned around to look, Lee got the surprise of his life. A creature that looked ten feet long was coming directly toward him!

"It seemed like a dragon was coming straight for me!" said Lee. "Maybe it was just an airborne alligator. It sure wasn't anything I had seen before!"

Lee's guide dove under a fence! "I took off, too!" said Lee. Heart pounding, he ran over, rather than under, the same fence, smashing his camera in the process. Later he filed a report of survey for its repair.

It had taken them many hours to go into the valley, and only minutes to come out. "We didn't waste any time getting out of there," said Lee. The monster turned out to be an iguana-like lizard, actually about three feet long, and probably about as surprised to see them as they were to see him.

The sudden action made them forget completely about the possibility of someone watching them. Only later did they realize that the tangerines and bananas they had eaten, and the chickens they had seen, were being cultivated by someone. And, that someone was probably Shoichi Yokoi. —*Alexander Kufel*