



HED affordability within reach

Story by Alexander Kufel

The RIF is off! In an 11th hour turn of events, HED Commander Lt. Col. Wally Z. Walters told an audience of over 200 employees at the Oct. 7 Town Hall meeting that events have overtaken the need for a RIF (reduction-in-force) and HED will be able to proceed toward achieving its correct size without upheaval.

"We are reasonably confident that we will be an affordable organization this fiscal year and that we will be able to execute our mission," said Walters. "This is not a postponement of the RIF. It is a cancellation."

What has changed since he assumed command in July is that income projections for this fiscal year have increased and operating costs have decreased to the extent that HED will not experience a



HED Commander Lt. Col. Wally Z. Walters illustrates a point as he expands on why the RIF is no longer required. Photo by Jim Dung

budget shortfall after all, said Walters.

The original expectation was that HED would miss its budget mark by about \$5 million and that immediate action in the form of "downsizing" the District needed to be taken. A mock RIF was conducted in August that identified 36 positions for deletion or downgrading.

Since then, the Oct. 1 start of a new fiscal year brought with it the reinstatement of \$2 million in project income and additional work has come in from FED and JED as well as \$500,000 for flood damage work in Korea. At the same time, costs have decreased because of attrition to forestall the need for any further RIF action.

Walters said that in addition to 23 people migrating to other jobs outside the District, 15 more people had applied for VSIP (Voluntary Separation Incentive Program) and VERA (Voluntary Early Retirement Authority) by the cutoff date. It was announced after the meeting that VERA authority from the Department of Defense has been received. Walters said that applications for both VSIP and VERA will be honored. He said there was no assurance that the buy-out incentives would be offered again.

The decision not to go ahead with the RIF also was made
See "HED affordability," page 5

POD helps in hurricane recovery effort

With winds gusting up to speeds of 174 miles-per-hour, Hurricane Georges carved a huge path of destruction in Puerto Rico and the Gulf of Mexico states of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. Over a dozen members of Pacific Ocean Division deployed, some even before the storm was over, to lend assistance in the recovery effort.

"Due to the extent of the damage, particularly in Puerto Rico, recovery efforts will be going on for a long time," said Ken Suiso, acting chief of Emergency Management Division.

Honolulu Engineer District initially sent its five-member power team consisting of Tom Brady, EM; Clifford Takano, ED; Robert Mueller, CO; Kent Tamai, CT; and Francis Tonaki, LM, to Vicksburg, Miss. Now both Brady and Tonaki are in Puerto Rico. Recently, Kenneth Santiago, LM, and Rudolfo Atoigue, LM, were deployed to

Jacksonville. Takano, Mueller and Tamai have since returned to Hawaii. Mike Lee, ET-C, went to Ponce, Puerto Rico, to assist with re-roofing efforts there.

Steve Philben, chief of Emergency Management Division initially went to Tallahassee, Fla., and is currently in San Juan, Puerto Rico, assisting with ESF-3 operations. Under the Federal Emergency Response Plan, the Corps of Engineers is responsible for coordinating engineering and public works.

From Alaska Engineer District, three individuals were sent to Puerto Rico: Yvonne Drake, CT; Mary Bradley, IM; and Melanie Burg, LM. Ernest Hudson, LM, went to Camp Beauregard, La.

Merv Mullins from Alaska's Emergency Management office went to Washington, D.C., to provide assistance in the USACE Emergency Operations Center.

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Character Traits: *If courage is the first characteristic of the soldier, perseverance is the second.*
—Napoleon Bonaparte, French emperor, (1769-1821)



By Lt. Col.
Wally Z. Walters
HED Commander

HED Commander's Comment

Beyond Downsizing

Early during the Civil War Abraham Lincoln was asked if he had difficulty getting enough generals to lead the expanding Union Army. "No," he replied, "I can make 50 generals overnight, lose them and make 50 more. It's replacing 50 horses that's difficult."

The situation for the Honolulu District is analogous. Filling positions on the organizational chart is not hard, but keeping and empowering the "horses" who pull the weight is more important. Our "horses" are those skilled, dedicated and enthusiastic professionals who consistently get the job done and inspire others. They are the antithesis of the image of a classical government bureaucrat. They are not timeserving employees. They relish the challenge of running complex programs and are not only independently motivated, they lift the performance of those around them. They are not discouraged by tough times for they adjust to new demands and draw cheerfulness from within themselves.

Fortunately for the District, we have many such skilled, dedicated individuals who pull the load day-after-day, rewarded by pride in their professionalism. This was most recently demonstrated in the superb end-of-year closeout of District programs, accomplished by teamwork throughout the District, but inspired by the best among us who would not rest until they assured all tasks were achieved. Such individuals can be in any specialty, at any grade and with any longevity of service.

Without their skill and dedication the District would fail in its missions, even if its financial books balanced. Ensuring we retain these individuals' motivation is the District's most important task, and is difficult in a time of uncertainty, reduced budgets and rising expectations.

It is for these people that I am happiest that we were able to cancel the RIF. Through aggressive efforts to obtain more workload, the willingness of some to pursue jobs elsewhere, and as a consequence of natural disaster in Korea, we can expect to be affordable in FY99 without involuntary separations. With appropriate realignments within the District we should also be affordable and capable of executing the FY00 program without a RIF. We should all be especially grateful to those individuals willing to take opportunities outside the District, and to the other Districts of POD which are supporting us through these tough times. While downsizing needs to continue, we are hopeful it will accomplish its goals through gradual attrition rather than drastic cuts.

As we look beyond the RIF, the District will need everyone's cooperation to realign and improve our organization, including cross-leveling some individuals to mission-essential vacant positions through detailing and reassignments. Everyone needs to participate in and contribute to increasing our efficiency and expanding our capabilities to provide services to

our clients. These efforts will especially engage us over the next year, as we focus on our processes and investing our scarce dollars, not simply cutting costs. Looking even farther out, our goal should be to reduce our charges, thereby enhancing our value to our clients and ensuring we remain the preferred agent to provide government engineering and related services throughout the Pacific. However, achieving these goals and continuing the District's success in accomplishing its mission begins and depends foremost on "taking care of the horses."

'From Where I Sat'

A number of years ago there was a wonderful Japanese play about how memories are inconsistent and dependent on each individual's point of view. With apologies to those who may have experienced it differently, from where I sat the decision to cancel the RIF emerged both quickly and tentatively. Some chronology:

Thursday, Sept. 24: Began the process of final preparations for the RIF (deadline to submit final organizational chart/job descriptions was Oct. 9). Received updated income expectations for FYs 98, 99, and 00. Much to everyone's surprise, the \$5 million gap between FY98 and FY99 reported in June was now only about \$1 million. Puzzlingly, much of the change was in reduced FY98

income, even though payrolls were still met. This discrepancy was partially explained by reductions in IM purchases and also by the difficulties of discerning HED spending separate from HQ POD.

Friday, Sept. 25: Initial leadership discussions to frame decisions on which positions could be added back to the organization and how to prepare for the RIF.

Monday, Sept. 28: Broader District leadership debate and decision to add 11 positions back to the organizational chart based on increased income and workload.

Tuesday, Sept. 29: Prompted by release of design funds, FED identifies prospects for additional work HED could do and requires immediate response. Significant debate over how much risk

See "From where I sat," page 12

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Delusion: *We are never deceived; we deceive ourselves.*—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, German poet, 1749-1832

Opinion

Oh, you mean I have to keep changing?

With the topic of “downsizing” on everyone’s mind, particularly those whose positions were identified as being vulnerable in the recent mock-RIF, I decided to see just what kinds of options I’d have if I were to leave. Not so long ago, I went through this exact process, being “RIFed” out of a job I had for 17 years and having to find a new career. I was stunned to discover how much things have changed in just a few years since I last submitted a job application.

I don’t think federal jobs have ever been that plentiful, so the news according to Federal Jobs Digest that only about 5,000 of them are being advertised worldwide is no surprise. Nor is it a surprise to see it’s still much harder to enter the civil service system than it is to move around within it once you have “career status.” After all, that’s one of its attractions. Lately, however, staying put for an entire career is not as possible as it once was. As organizations shrink, opportunities simply move to another place. Particularly for those just beginning federal careers, the system survivors will undoubtedly be those who move along with the jobs.

I find it amazing that Internet computer access is so necessary to job hunters today. “Website” addresses bring listings directly to you, and from anywhere in the world if you’d like. Jobs are still accessible to those not “wired,” but have to be physically pursued at the actual personnel offices. Also, with a computer, waiting for announcements to appear through mail distribution is history. Tables full of thick books of job announcements divided by category are gone, too. Nowadays, selections are isolated electronically by electing or eliminating certain factors—pay schedules, ratings, eligibility requirements, job titles, job series or physical locations. Alas, gone, too, are the skilled staffing specialists at the front desks who guided individuals through myriad job announcements.

This isn’t to imply that life is all that easy, however. The term labyrinthine takes on new meaning when applied to “web” pages. If you doubt it, take a look at the Air Force Personnel Center site—Palace Compass.

While I love the immediacy of these new systems, I’m not confident that the computer is as adept at serendipity, when one could stumble upon a whole new world accidentally. Stumbles now are much more systematic. Hopefully, the jobs themselves are tangibly real and not the virtual reality that employment offices seem to have become. I shudder at the thought.

I’ve been told that the surest way to get a government

job is through sheer persistence. Once, that meant applying for every job that came down the pike in the hope of getting lucky. It also meant developing SF171 job descriptions in great detail and including everything but the kitchen sink as an attachment to your application—transcripts, diplomas, awards, certificates, letters of appreciation, recommendation, etc. And, maybe in some cases throwing in the kitchen sink, as well. Being already in the system helped to cut down on the thickness of the packet, but those in the know usually advised including copies of critical documents, just in case....

Currently, thinner is better. The SF171 is being replaced by OF612. The paper form is being replaced by an electronic one. In a system bulging at the seams with documents, more paper is the last thing personnel departments want, so the push has been toward filing short electronic resumes. Attachments also are “virtual.” There’s no longer room for developing an impression of your character strengths, enthusiasm, personality, or other elements to create a sense of the person behind the paper. Now, it’s “Just the facts, ma’am (sir).” And, these facts have to be presented in sweeping topic sentences that barely leave room for punctuation.

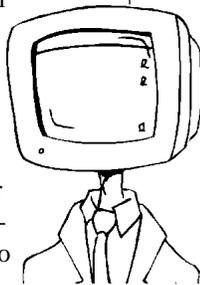
I read one set of guidelines that said to save valuable resume space by eliminating those words used for creating complete sentences. Concentrate instead on the nouns and verbs that make up the job. Presumably, no human being will read your application. Computer-driven optical character readers scan applications and classify the contents, matching “buzz” words as they go.

I feel a sense of sadness that the time-honored traits of skill, experience, instinct and curiosity about another living being are being displaced by such efficiencies. I wonder if the employees of the future will be as multi-talented and diverse as they are today. The number of letters returned by the post office lately as being “undeliverable,” even though the address is clearly correct, suggests to me that while a not-very-smart person can catch an error, even when made by himself, a machine is only a machine.

At various times in my life, I have had to rely on courage, belief in myself, indifference to rejection, and sheer determination to accomplish something. That includes finding a job. It seems to me that the time to change my approach to things as mundane as chronicling my work experience is already here. However, it’s at least as important as ever, and maybe more so, that I retain a clear understanding of myself as a person and not be discouraged by things I may not comprehend. And, that I keep up my subscription to the Internet.



Just Thinking
by Alexander Kufel



Arrogance: *The fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful is the cause of half their errors.*—John Stuart Mill, English philosopher, economist, 1806-1873

Board dismisses contract appeals

Story by Alexander Kufel

Fiscal year 1998 closed out on a high note as the Armed Services Board Court of Appeals (ASBCA) dismissed 19 appeals based on 15 contracts brought by Harbert International, Inc., against HED, for work begun 11 years ago for U. S. Army Kwajalein Atoll (USAKA). The Harbert group of corporations is one of the world's largest construction organizations. The appeals comprised about \$17 million in claims that dated back to 1988, and opened the door to hundreds of thousands of dollars in potential interest payments under the Contract Disputes Act.

"The original contract amounts and most of the modification sums were never disputed, and someone did do the work," said HED trial attorney Gayle Chestnut. "Harbert's contention was that they were entitled to more, and ours was that they weren't."

HED was able successfully to resist any payment under the contested claims, although at one

point in the negotiations the two sides did come within about \$600 of negotiating a settlement on 10 of the appeals involving over a hundred claims, said Chestnut.

Now, because the ASBCA judge dismissed all 19 of the appeals, in part because of an ongoing Department of Justice probe, Chestnut said that he is happy that those negotiation efforts broke down. Fulfilling requests for additional payment should never be an automatic response, even though close examination entails a lot of additional work, he said.

"I think it always pays to examine all the supporting documentation before agreeing to additional payment," said Chestnut. "With the help of Bruce Stevenson, at the time a litigation technical advisor with the HED Office of Counsel, we were able to do just that."

"In this case, we stuck to our guns," said Chestnut, "and it paid off. We ended up saving USAKA millions of dollars."

Ho'okupu Ohana needs your support

Although HQ POD and HED are now two stand-alone organizations, the employee-oriented morale and welfare committee "Ho'okupu Ohana" is still very much in existence and it needs support to keep going, said chairman David Lau.

The Ohana itself is a stand-alone organization and promotes both the Division and the District by providing things not available through normal funding, such as refreshments for the savings bond drives, lifeguards for Organization Day, gifts for people in the hospital, and condolences for funerals. It also provides flower leis for retiree day, the executive board luncheon and various ceremonies.

One way employees immediately can show their support is by purchasing

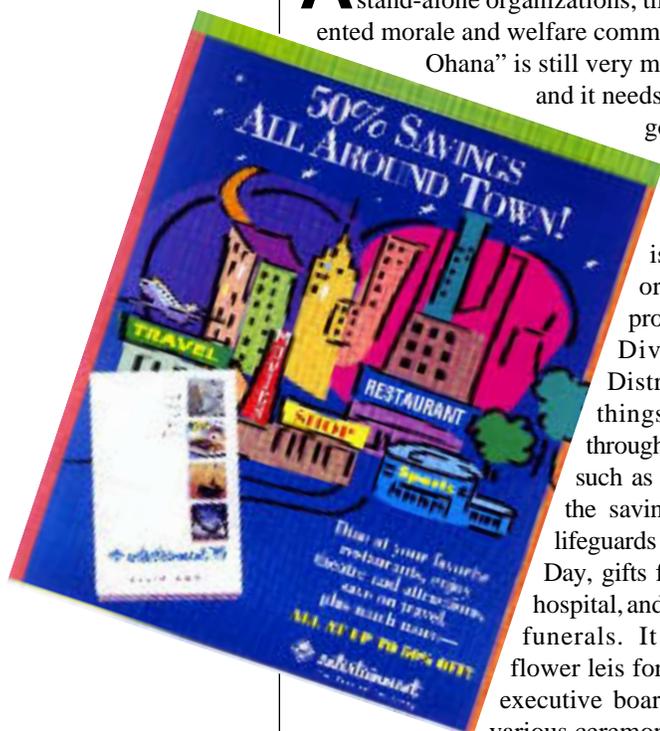
Entertainment '99 books, which at \$30 are more of a bargain than they have ever been. That's eight dollars less than last year, said Lau.

"The book is loaded with coupons that give people tremendous discounts for all kinds of restaurants and services," said Lau. "We really like using it for fund-raising because people tap into great bargains while helping the Ohana."

To obtain a copy of the book, call any committee member:

- ◆ David Lau, POD-PM, 438-6912
- ◆ Bingo Chee, POD-ET-C, 438-6965
- ◆ Val Lee, POH-PP-MM, 438-2573
- ◆ Wendy Mow, POH-PP-MM, 438-6907
- ◆ Helen Stuppelbeen, POH-ED, 438-7009
- ◆ Tim Young, POH-ED-CP, 438-7013
- ◆ Ron Pang, POH-ED-S, 438-9530
- ◆ Dawn Awaya, POH-OC, 438-1104
- ◆ Jody Yoshishige, POH-ED, 438-8416

The \$30 Entertainment '99 books are currently available and may be used immediately all the way until the end of October 1999.



Adherence: *Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative.*—Oscar Wilde, Irish author, 1854-1900

Homeowners assistance still available

Demonstrating that the economic impact of base closures is not something to be taken lightly, the Homeowners Assistance Program (HAP) was developed as a means to minimize consequences for federal government employees forced to sell their homes. In Hawaii alone, the program has received 656 applications since its implementation in the spring of 1997. (*The Pacific Connection*, November/December 1997 issue.)

HAP purchases homes outright or provides payment that can help fill the gap between purchase price and current market value. The Hawaii program is being administered by the Sacramento Engineer District with technical support by HED (Honolulu Engineer District). In its support role, HED provides on-site appraisal data to Sacramento as well as assistance to help get the homes in marketable condition.

“We’ve seen a real decline in Hawaii property values in recent years, but there certainly hasn’t been a decline in people’s interest,” said Elizabeth Easley, chief of the benefits section at Sacramento’s HAP office. “We do more than simply help dispose of a home when a facility is closing, we actually help people to relocate for future employment.”

According to figures provided by the Sacramento office, to date 108 Hawaii homes have been acquired by the program and 50 have already been resold. The remaining 58 are being managed by HED and are either available or currently being prepared for sale. Payment can be an amount up to the difference between 95 percent of the fair market value prior to the announcement dates based on the closure of Barbers Point Naval Air Station and the appraised value at sale time. Jill Tomishima, HED’s HAP coordinator, said that because there has been so much interest locally, her role has expanded from that of providing preliminary evalu-

ations to Sacramento to assisting with post-closing maintenance and repair, and procuring services such as utility activation, house-, yard- or pool-cleaning, repairs to windows, plumbing, house wiring or appliances, carpentry, painting, fumigation and even carpeting to place property in sellable condition. She also functions as coordinator between applicants, contractors, realtors and the Sacramento HAP office.

Eligible individuals who qualify for benefits under HAP can receive them by having the government buy the home by paying off the mortgage, by being reimbursed by the government for part of the loss from selling the home or by receiving assistance if the homeowner defaults on the mortgage.

HAP guidelines state that prior to enrollment in the program, the homeowner has to assemble proof of ownership, transfer orders, or a separation letter, or even retirement orders, together with receipts from the utility company verifying that the applicant occupied the house being sold on the date of the base closure or realignment announcement. In the case of Oahu, those dates are April 12, 1991; March 12, 1993; or May 1, 1995 according to Mary Jorgenson, chief of the Relocation Services Branch in Sacramento.

HAP will accept applications through Sept. 30, 1999. Easley said that applications received after that date must be accompanied by a letter explaining why the original deadline couldn’t be met.

USACE is executive agent of the program for the entire Department of Defense and the Coast Guard. The California HAP office is one of three nationwide, with others in Ft. Worth, Texas, and Savannah, Ga. All homeowner’s queries and applications must be made directly to Sacramento. To start the process, call the toll free number: 1-800-811-5532 or visit HAP online at www.usace.army.mil/.

HED affordability...

Continued from page 1

because of the District’s determination that 11 of the positions that were formally identified for abolishment now will be required or supported with the increased workload. Those include slots for project managers, construction representatives, design manager, maintenance worker and EEO representative and six positions related to the flood work in Korea.

“RIF action is a tool that is used to adjust the size of an organization,” said Walters. “And, like a sledgehammer, it is difficult to use. Especially now when we are trying to tune something the size of a watch.”

Although the threat of a RIF is past, said Walters. HED still needs to complete its downsizing, noting that the organization has been on a “glide path” down to its correct size since 1994. He also said that HED needed to reduce operating costs by examining its processes and complete its physical separation from POD. In the immediate future are plans to renovate building 525 so that HQ POD can move to the third floor there and so that HED can vacate building T-1, which is scheduled for demolition.

Walters also said that there is no question that a RIF, and even a mock RIF, is divisive and everyone needs to mend the “Ohana” and take care of each other.

Education: *Education doesn't change life much. It just lifts trouble to a higher plane of regard.*
—Robert Frost, American poet, 1874-1963

Year-end a concert of cooperation

Story by Alexander Kufel

Appearances can be deceiving, goes the old maxim. Even though it was the end of September, traditionally the busiest time of the year for Contracting Division, if the amount of work being done this year to commit funds and wrap up the fiscal year was equated with motion and a big flurry of last-minute activity, then, obviously, very little went on.

“Appearances are definitely deceiving,” said Joe Swift, chief of Contracting, “particularly this year.” The big difference this year is that the use of CEFMS (Corps of Engineers Financial Management System) and Electronic Bid Sets (EBS) has moved the action out of the middle of the floor and onto the computer terminal, he said. “The 11th hour action is still there, but we haven’t had to recruit people from other offices to bundle up sheets of plans, specifications and amendments for mailing; now it’s pretty much all done electronically.”

“Although EBS is still in its infancy, we are moving away from paper solicitations, as well as from paper sheets of drawings and reams of specifications,” said David Kam, head of HED construction contracts branch. “Now it’s all on a CD-ROM disk. And, as far as amendments go, if they’re extensive enough, we’ll re-issue the CD. Otherwise, we copy the changes onto computer diskettes and send them out. The recently awarded Whole Barracks Renewal requirement is our second project that was successfully solicited and awarded under EBS procedures.”

The obvious advantage of EBS solicitations is that it’s considerably less costly to our customers and vendors since the cost of a CD-ROM solicitation is \$31 compared to hundreds of dollars for a typical paper solicitation, said Kam. “Furthermore, it’s cheaper to mail the CD-ROM; they weigh far less than paper does. Working as a team with Engineering and Construction, we also have established

procedures to ensure that the specifications and drawings in the CD-ROM are accurate and complete,” he said. This is significant because construction contracts are largely bids in response to set specifications,

Alex Lau, who heads HED supply and services contracts branch, said that the system was instituted at the end of last fiscal year on a trial basis, but since

then USACE has mandated it Corps-wide.

“We have conditions of a different nature than David’s branch,” said Lau. “We handle contracts dealing with supplies, services and AE services. The contractors come to us with proposals which are then negotiated. We’re negotiating right up until the end when the contract is awarded. Because CEFMS creates a *real-time* environment, any huddling that is going on as people from dif-

ferent departments get together to expedite a contract takes place over computer terminals, often in completely separate offices,” said Lau. Thus, while the intensity is still there, the team activity this year is much less noticeable than previously.

There will still be a certain amount of last-minute awarding going on, said Lau, because the various organizations that are HED customers frequently get additional funds just before the year ends.

“Once our customers let us know which projects they want to proceed with, we can move quickly,” said Lau. “I think that CEFMS has gone a long way toward helping the Corps obligate funds within the necessary time constraints. Because accounting entries are so much more timely, decisions can be made in advance of the deadlines.”

Otherwise, it’s just another end to another fiscal year. Attorney Bob Sundberg, HED OC, said that some things don’t change, and the requirement for legal review remains the same whether publication is electronic or on the printed page.



Contract specialist Lynn Arakaki holds a single CD-ROM disk which has enough storage space to contain all of the specifications and drawings for a construction contract. Photo by Alexander Kufel.

Children: *The crisis of children having children has been replaced by the greater crisis of children killing children.*
—Marian Wright Edelman, president, Children’s Defense Fund

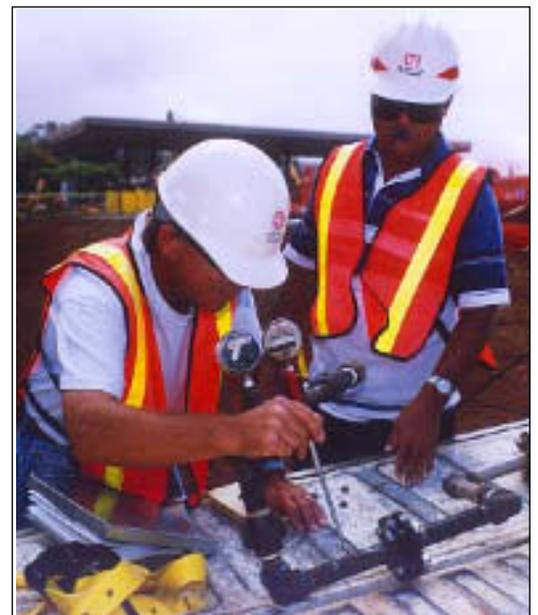
New solutions circumvent old problems

Story and photos by Jim Dung

Renovation of the Fort Shafter Service Station necessitates the removal of five, leaky 10,000-gallon underground storage tanks and construction of two same-capacity concrete-lined, above-ground tanks as replacements. The project is nearing completion and has been done under the guidance of team leader Frank Ono and construction representative Edward “Joe” Mau, both of the Schofield Resident Office.

The project also includes two other contracts: soil remediation which is being overseen by chemical engineer Uyen Tran of the HED Environmental Branch, and repair of the roof and canopy for buildings 535 and 536, which involve Gerald Young as team leader and Randy Chun as construction representative. Both are from the Fort Shafter Resident Office.

In the photograph at bottom, right, Mau looks on as Steve Fuller, quality control representative from Morrison Knudsen Corporation, performs a pressure test on the underground fiberglass piping before installation.



Interference: *Do not thwart an enemy returning home.*—Sun Tzu, Chinese General, c. 500 B.C.

Regional Roundup



Mongolia Army officials view construction projects in Alaska. *A delegation of Army Engineers from the nation of Mongolia recently visited Army and Air Force installations in Alaska. Being briefed at the new Elmendorf Air Force Base visitor officer quarters recently completed by Alaska Engineer District are (from left): Mongolia Army Col. Ragcha; Mongolia Army Lt. Col. Tsoodol; Maj. Gen. Jargan, Mongolia Army Director of Military Construction; Col. Schnabel, escort officer from U.S. Army, Pacific; and Capt. Fabrizio, AED project officer for the new building. Photo by John Killoran, AED.*

FED and Korea Military Construction Association partner in safety

Story by Gloria Stanley, FED

Seoul, Korea—As part of enhancing construction safety practices in the Republic of Korea, the Far East Engineer District (FED) of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Korea Military Construction Association (KMCA) worked together to translate into the Hangul language the Engineer Manual 385-1-1. It is the Corps' Safety and Health Requirements Manual.

Sung-Chan Hong, a retired engineer who has a home in the United States as well as in Seoul, and C. H. Kim, who is a personal friend of Hong and an officer of the KMCA, decided to translate the manual. Col. David Rehbein, FED Commander, and Sam Barnes, FED chief of Safety and Occupational Health, received the first copies of the translated manual.

Due to the problems involved in translating a technical publication, a Korean engineer familiar with the English language, construction, and engineering terms had to be found to do the translation. Hong, on his own time and without pay, undertook the challenge.

"The importance of safety cannot be overemphasized," said Rehbein. "This translation is an excellent example of two governments working together to improve the quality of life for both Koreans and Americans working in the construction business in the Republic of Korea."

The KMCA printed the manual and will sell it to Korean contractors at a nominal price just to cover the printing cost.

The Corps' Pacific Ocean Division Safety and Occupational Health Office originally sought funds from the headquarters USACE Safety Office in Washington, D.C. However, Hong's efforts saved the Corps approximately \$50,000, which is the estimated amount for the translation by a English/Korean professional engineer.

The Korea Military Construction Association presented one of the first copies of the translation to both Rehbein and Barnes in appreciation for the Far East District's contribution to this effort.

"The impact on safety and accident prevention

Continued on next page

Trial run: *If you have great talents, industry will improve them; if you have but moderate abilities, industry will supply their deficiency.*—**Sir Joshua Reynolds, English painter, 1723-1792**

Continued from previous page

due to Hong's efforts is immeasurable in terms of costs and quality of life for our Korean construction workers," said Barnes.

"The translated manual will provide the Korean workforce with the skills and knowledge required to perform their work in a more safe and healthful manner. Increased safety understanding and subsequent improvements in the quality of life of construction workers in the Republic of Korea can be directly attributed to Hong's unselfish contribution and his personal investment in the Korean construction industry."

Pillar of POD retires

Story by Maureen Ramsey, JED

Camp Zama, Japan--Over 175 people representing the Government of Japan, U.S. Forces Japan, U.S. Naval Air Station Atsugi and members of JED gathered to honor Akira "Sammy" Sameshima with a retirement luncheon at Camp Zama, Sept. 22. Sameshima retired Oct. 1 after 51 years of federal service with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"I love you all," said Sameshima as he paused to control his emotions. He then adroitly turned the tables on those showering accolades on him.

"Thank you for attending this wonderful luncheon...What a great way to end my life-long career... We are not very skillful in praising ourselves. However, today I am pleased that at this luncheon is an outstanding team... We need to take a moment to recognize and appreciate the fact that this team has brought great recognition world-wide as we continue to seek to 'Build for Peace and Harmony in the Pacific.' We should be proud of this effort. Each person here today deserves public recognition...."

Sameshima began his formal 51-year odyssey with the Corps in 1947 as an architectural draftsman in Gen. Douglas MacArthur's Pacific Headquarters in Tokyo. He and his family were among 110,000 Japanese-Americans interned by the U.S. government during World War II. The family lived in Los Angeles at the time.

During the 1950s, Sameshima worked on construction plans for family housing and community facilities throughout Japan. As one of his early projects, Sameshima assisted with the preliminary design sketches for the current U.S. Army Japan Headquarters at Camp Zama. Following the Korean War, he concentrated his efforts on the projects to rebuild South Korea.

Assigned to the POD in 1973, he worked on

such high profile projects as the Tripler Army Medical Center, the Armed Forces Recreation Center, the Hale Koa Hotel, and Aliamanu Military Reservation housing. He also supervised the relocation of facilities when Okinawa reverted from U.S. control to Japan.

During this period, the "forward-thinker" devised a process now used nationally as the "Simplified Design Method." He was also instrumental in the formulation of the Army's multimillion dollar Facilities Standardization Program.

Sameshima cited Corps of Engineers' Kisuk "Charlie" Cheung and Thomas Ushijima as his mentors and recognized their "caring leadership throughout my career."

What are his plans for the future?

"I may be old in body," said Sameshima with twinkling eyes, "but I am young in spirit and full of energy. I am told this energy comes from the fact that I was bitten by a California rattlesnake when I was a kid and the snake died because of my venom and I survived," he laughed.

"I plan to organize a small firm in San Francisco and eventually in Hawaii and Japan. My two sons and daughter will perform as consultants for my corporation. I hope to continue my interest as an innovator and eventually be a bridge between our two great nations in a small way to promote peace and harmony in the Pacific."

New deputy announced

Anchorage, Alaska--Col. Sheldon L. Jahn, AED Commander, has announced the selection of Scott R. Bearden to become Deputy District Engineer (PPM) and Chief, Programs and Project Management Division of the Alaska Engineer District. Bearden is presently serving in the same position in the FED, where he has been since September 1996.

Bearden will take over duties in Alaska in mid- to late-October, Jahn said. He fills the position vacated by the retirement of Kirk Shadrick, and now occupied by Claude Vining in an acting capacity. Vining will return to his permanent position as Chief of Engineering after Bearden arrives, Jahn said.

Prior to his present position, Bearden served as the first Reinvention Center chief in Fort Worth District and as deputy PPM chief in Fort Worth. He served three years at USACE. From mid-1986 to late-1990 he was Chief, Housing Section of the Corps' European Division in Frankfurt, Germany.

Following graduation from Texas A&M in 1980, Bearden served two years as an Army First Lieutenant assigned to the Pacific Ocean Division.

Contribution: *A man should never be ashamed to own he has been in the wrong, which is but saying in other words, that he is wiser today than he was yesterday.*—Jonathan Swift, Irish-born English satirist, 1667-1745

The Electronic Library

By Ruby Mizue

Construction Criteria Base (CCB) Update

The newly formatted CCB on the web is finally online! This electronic collection of over 10,000 design and construction documents is accessible from CDROMs over our network or through your web browser at

<http://www.ccb.org>.

All of the documents are now available in PDF format, and conversion from the old system is nearly complete. Log on as a guest or call me at 438-8348 if you need a subscriber number. Try the tutorial or guided tour for an overview of the new system. We have received the current CDROM release #45 and will be placing it on the network soon—watch for announcements!

FERS Election

Need help in deciding whether to switch to FERS or stay with CSRS? There are several excellent resources on the Internet that provide tools to help you in this very important decision. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has a FERS election website at:

http://www.opm.gov/fers_election/index.htm.

Another excellent resource is the DoD Civilian Personnel Field Advisory Services website at:

<http://www.cpms.osd.mil/fas/fas.htm>.

Both sites provide everything you need to make your decision: essential facts, helpful publications, required forms, models to generate benefits comparison, and links to related agency resources. For example, you can go the Social Security Administration site and make a request for your Personal Earning and Benefits Estimate Statement online, or visit the Thrift Savings Plan site to monitor the growth of your TSP component.

Visit the POD home page on the World Wide Web.
Find it at: <http://www.pod.usace.army.mil>

PRODUCTIVITY CORNER



Arbitration as a cure-all?

Two men were strolling along an ocean beach at low tide when they simultaneously spotted an oyster and both bent down to retrieve it. They started jostling each other, disputing right of ownership.

A third beachcomber happened upon the quarrel and the two men asked the stranger to act as arbitrator. The man agreed, and each man told his version of

the story, each claiming to have seen the oyster first. As the stranger listened, he took out a pocket knife, pried open the shell, and loosened the oyster.

When they had finished their stories, the arbitrator popped the oyster in his mouth and swallowed it.

"The court," he announced solemnly, "awards each of you one half-shell. "The oyster will cover costs."

—B. A. Botkin, *A Treasury of American Anecdotes*, New York, N.Y.

Inefficiency has its supporters

According to a story of uncertain origins, an efficiency expert was hired to conduct a study of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and recommend areas that could be improved upon. After he attended several concerts he issued his report, which read in part as follows:

- For considerable periods, the four oboe players have nothing to do. Their number should be reduced and the work spread more evenly over the whole of the concert, thus eliminating peaks of activity.

- All 12 first violins were playing identical notes. This seems an unnecessary duplication of effort.

- Much effort is absorbed in the playing of semiquavers. This seems an excessive refinement. It is recommended that all notes be rounded up to the nearest quaver.

- No useful purpose is served by the repetition on the horns of a passage which has already been played by the strings.

- It is estimated that if all redundant passages were eliminated, the whole concert time of two hours could be reduced to 20 minutes and there would be no need for an intermission.

—Eric W. Johnson, *A Treasury of Humor*, New York, N.Y.

Consideration: *Kindness begets kindness.*—Sophocles, Greek dramatist, 496(?)–406 B.C.

PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE



Capt. David S. Troutman

Hometown: New Cumberland, Pa.

Years with Corps: 1

Works in: Headquarters POD

POD executive officer Capt. David Troutman has been wearing his new bars for a short time. A side effect of this happy circumstance is that his promotion coincides with his selection for the Engineer Officer Advanced Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., to be followed by attendance at the Combined Arms and Services Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. and further developmental assignments. He will be leaving POD mid-October.

Troutman said that he came to POD a year ago from two years with the 84th Engineer Battalion at Schofield Barracks. In his time with the Corps he has functioned as “aide-de-camp,” an experience that has allowed him to observe firsthand the daily concerns of people in leadership positions. He said that among other duties, he’s had the responsibility of seeing that the commander is in the right place at the right time and not burdened with details. That still has left him with time to enjoy year-round running in Hawaii, often accompanied by his wife Jenny on a bicycle, and lately he has learned about both sailing and surfing.

Married for two years, he tells a story of flying back to Ohio the day before his wedding because he was involved in a humanitarian mission to Laos. Relieved that he was able to make it, the wedding went off as planned and Jenny accompanied him back to Hawaii where she has worked as an elementary school teacher.

Dave is making POD more productive.



Valerie Kidani

Hometown: Pearl City, Hawaii

Years with Corps: 18

Works in: Audit Office

The calmness that surrounds Valerie Kidani belies the fact that she is currently in a “dual-hatted” position. She is the Division auditor and also in charge of Internal Review for the District. She performs both functions as a one-woman band. How she is able to accomplish this is revealed by her intense powers of concentration. She clearly focuses on the task at hand.

“I’m basically a listener,” she said. “I vocalize when I feel I have something to add, but for the most part I like to give others a chance.”

Kidani went to college at Lewis and Clark in Portland, then worked on the mainland. Returning to Hawaii, she got a temporary position with POD, left to take a permanent job with the Navy, then returned to the Corps where she’s been ever since. She met her husband of 17 years, Robert, while they were both on the POD bowling team. Robert works in HED as an engineer technician in design branch. They have a daughter, Kristin, 15.

After-work activities center around daily chores and Kristin’s activities, but Kidani finds time to read “adventure, suspense, mystery, whatever’s there at the library.” Family life is important to her and she said she really enjoys traveling with her husband and daughter and also with her parents and other family members. Earlier this year much of the group went to Seattle; in a few months they plan on going to Disneyland and Las Vegas.

Valerie is making POD more productive.

Lying: *The most common lie is that with which one lies to oneself; lying to others is relatively an exception.* —Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, German philosopher, poet, 1844-1900

From where I sat...

Continued from page 2

HED should assume in work for FED. The possibility of canceling the RIF is privately suggested to me for the first time.

Wednesday, Sept. 30: Reached agreement among District leadership and with FED on additional work. VSIP/VERA campaign ends with 15 applications. Recalculation of District budget based on these and other departures suggests affordability and executability of FY99 program may no longer depend financially on involuntary RIF reductions. End-of-year closeout proceeds successfully, important to assuring work in the future. This period also brought an unexpectedly large number of project orders.

Thursday, Oct. 1: Further District leadership discussion about the RIF. District leadership is divided among options to proceed with the RIF and make modest reductions, to proceed as a tool to realign positions without involuntary separations or to cancel the RIF. Concern is expressed that if RIF is cancelled, too many individuals will withdraw VSIP/VERA applications and cancel departure plans to allow for affordability. Assured that individuals can be realigned to other positions without using a RIF, but that this will be more difficult and require more workforce cooperation.

Friday, Oct. 2: Still facing divided opinions among District leaders, made the decision to recommend

cancellation. Forwarded formal recommendation to Division commander.

Tuesday, Oct. 6: Received Division approval of recommendation.

Wednesday, Oct. 7: Town Hall announcement. Received comment that some were disappointed that the decision was not made more quickly. (Can't please everyone!)

Thursday, Oct. 8: Discussed with Design Branch need for reductions/realignment beyond FY99 as Korea flood support work ends.

Reflecting back on how this decision was reached I am pleased by the agility of the District's other leaders to debate this major issue so quickly, the honesty and candor with which everyone expressed their opinion, and the District's concurrent success meeting other demands such as end-of-year closeout. I am grateful to each of them, and for their willing support once the decision was made.

Also noteworthy was how readily the decision could have been to proceed with the RIF instead of cancelling it. The reasons to conduct the RIF were almost as compelling as those to cancel. The burden on the leadership and the rest of the organization to realign without the RIF is not insignificant. However, with faith in everyone's cooperation and in order to lift morale and productivity, the opportunity to favor more gradual adjustments was one I felt should not be passed up.—*Lt. Col. Wally Walters*

Election season demands heightened awareness

The Department of Defense does not engage in activities that could be interpreted as endorsing partisan political causes, issues, or candidates, said ethics counselor Bob Sundberg, OC.

"That impartiality must be reflected in the actions of government employees," he said.

These actions are governed by the Hatch Act, which not only defines acceptable behaviors, but also places ceilings on campaign expenditures. Its purpose is to separate civil service from politics. Although not as restrictive as it once was, there are still specific things federal employee interested in politics may and may not do.

On off-duty time, civilian employees may:

- Take an active part in political campaigns.
- Register and vote and assist in voter registration drives.
- Express opinions about politics and candidates.
- Contribute up to \$1,000 per candidate to political organizations.
- Attend political fund raising functions.
- Wear or display political badges or stickers.
- Solicit, accept or receive a political contribution on behalf of a multi-candidate political action committee of your federal employee organization, from fel-

low, non-subordinate members of your organization.

• Run for nomination or as a candidate for election to a nonpartisan political office or for office within party organizations and affiliated groups.

However, civilian employees may not:

- Be a candidate for public office in partisan political elections.
- Use their official authority or influence for the purpose of affecting the result of an election.
- Solicit or discourage political activity on the part of any person who is doing business with their agency.
- Pressure employees to engage or not engage in political activity, vote or refuse to vote, or make or not make a political contribution for a political candidate.
- Engage in any political activity while on duty, on government premises, in a government vehicle, or in a government uniform.

These rules do not apply to civilian employees who are members of the Senior Executive Service (SES). Their political activities are governed by a similar, though different, set of rules.

The political activities of individual military members are regulated by DOD Directive 1344.10.

