

Patricia Graesser: This Flagship is for you

Patricia finished her career as the District's Chief of Public Affairs. She had been with the District since 1988. Over her career, she supported, mentored and coached 11 commanders and two Department of the Army Public Affairs interns. She has created a PA team highly respected within the Northwestern Division and has established a legacy of unwavering professionalism and service.

Thank you, Patricia!





Cover:

Seattle District Assessment Team members Keith Rudie (left) and Scott Long go over facility plans as they evaluate University of Washington's Dempsey Indoor Practice Facility as a possible location for an alternate-care-site. March 26. At the request of FEMA and Washington State, Corps teams and other federal and state officials evalutated 20 state-identified facilities. (U.S. **Army Corps of Engineers** photo by Bill Dowell)

Flagship

Col. Mark A. Geraldi. Commander Andrew Munoz, Chief, **Public Affairs** Dallas Edwards, Editor Kalyn Curtis, Editorial **Assistant Contributors Bill Dowell Scott Lawrence**

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Individuals Matter

The Source of Our District's Strength & Resiliency - Reprise

After my initial six months in the District, I wrote about my reaction when a few team members raised a concern to me that some of their peers don't see how their individual job fits into achieving our overall District mission or vision.

I wrote, "In the daily grind, it can be easy to lose sight of how what we do matters. However, each and every job in our District is important even if it may not be easy to see it in the moment when you are filling out forms, sitting in a meeting, or repetitively executing a routine task."

I shared a mountaineering analogy about climbing ropes and the important role that each of you plays in accomplishing our mission and achieving our vision.

Modern climbing ropes, known as kernmantle ropes, are constructed to optimize strength, durability, and flexibility. Kernmantle ropes are made up of a core (kern) of individual nylon filaments braided together into larger strands that are then encased in a smooth, woven sheath of nylon (mantle). Likewise, the core of Seattle District with each individual team member joined together with other team members into PDTs and support groups, is what al-

lows our District as a whole to deliver strong. Held together and protected by the sheath of shared District Values and our Strategic Vision, our District workforce is strong, flexible and durable, able to sustain the strain of heavy loads.

What if an administrative officer didn't expedite a hiring action? Or contract specifications didn't reference current building codes? Or a high hazard safety plan didn't

get reviewed with a critical eye? The strand would unravel and the rope would be weaker at its very core. Ask any climber which strand in a rope that they could do without, and the answer is "none, I need all of them!"

What if our District had no foundational values or strategic vision? Old style ropes without sheaths were inflexible



Seattle District Commander Col. Mark A. Geraldi

and susceptible to cuts and abrasions – without our values lived on a daily basis or lacking a strategic vision to focus our energies for the long haul, our District cannot pull its weight for long.

> Thanks to the strength and resiliency provided by our kernmantle rope here in our District, we've been lifting heavy weights together that have enhanced our reputation at the national level: Mud Mountain Dam Fish Passage is on track for its completion deadline of this December,

Tacoma Harbor met its tentatively selected plan milestone, critical repair work has been completed at our operating projects, we've broken ground on the confinement facility

at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, important contracting tools have been awarded, we've contributed to tremendous national disaster recovery efforts and local flood fights; and the list goes on.

Our continued success as a District to excel in a dynamic environment and deliver strong for the Pacific Northwest, relies on EACH of you, who together comprise our kern/core as a team of teams, and it also relies on the protective mantle of our shared District Values and Strategic Vision that keeps us focused on our mission first and our people always.

You have set the conditions for an orderly and seamless transition from the 51st to the 52nd District Engineer and Commander, with no loss in momen-

tum across our District. Thanks for all you do! -Delivering Strong for the Pacific **Northwest!** Apr-Jun 2020 | Page 3



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Mark Slominski likes the fact engineers and architects live in the world of natural laws.

Gravity, statics, dynamics, electrical circuits, physics and chemistry all work the same no matter who uses them, including U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine engineers.

The inter-service engineer organizations are symbiotically linked, according to Slominski. Whether it's the Navy Civil Engineer Corps, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) or the Air Force Civil Engineers, he said none succeed without the other.

"But along the way we introduce 'isms," said Slominski. "Navy 'isms, Army 'isms and Air Force 'isms. There's definitely a need to customize commonly learned skills and definitely value in each service fielding organic engineering forces."

From an external viewpoint, Slominski said it must be a head scratcher for the Defense Department and American public to see gaps emerge in mission effectiveness or quality of products.

"How can we find ways to close seams rather than

expose gaps?" is a question he often asks himself.

Slominski is intimately familiar with the various 'isms because of his career. He's an accomplished engineer serving both the Army and Air Force. Over the past 26 years he has transitioned from an active duty Air Force engineering officer to Air Force civilian to Army civilian, with several years of private sector architect and engineer experience.

To top it all off he's also had an prodigious Air Force Reserve engineering career along the way.

His Air Force career recently hit a milestone with promotion to brigadier general. His promotion ceremony was attended by senior Army and Air Force engineering officials; and during it Slominski offered perspectives on the value of viewing each other as more alike than different.

"Seeking ways to close seams rather than open gaps requires self-reflection and thought," he said. "The opportunities surround us. There are many military doctrines which address mastering the high ground. In our day to day operations, there's as much power in mastering the common ground. I'm convinced that embracing the notion of



more alike than different provides purpose to our people and positive momentum to our mission."

In his Army career, Slominski serves as the Corps' Seattle District Construction Division chief. His staff administers \$300 to \$500 million in construction contracts annually across Seattle District boundaries. Construction contracts support Soldiers and Airmen at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, as well as Airmen at air force bases Fairchild in Washington, Mountain Home in Idaho, and Malmstrom in Montana. The division also supports six dams in Washington, Idaho and Montana, as well as the district's civil works and interagency programs.

In the Air Force Reserve, Brig. Gen. Slominski serves as the Mobilization Assistant to the Air Force Director of Civil Engineers, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection.

"I've found through concurrent USACE and Air Force service the value of seeing where we are alike and engaging our strengths," he said. "So far, it's allowed me to walk the fence between the two and not get shot off of it."

He points out how the services are alike in so many ways, rooted in common education, accreditation and standards. The federal government also has unifying frameworks, such as Unified Facilities Criteria, Unified Federal Guide Specifications and Federal Acquisition Regulation.

"Our enlisted learn specialties in joint environments -carpentry, heavy equipment operations, utilities, fire protection and many others are built on common grounds of capability and training," he said.

Others may point out sister service rivalry, or just the differences in how each service approaches or interprets the unifying federal frameworks. For Slominski it's seizing opportunities.

"When I left Air Force civil service, joined USACE and continued service as an Air Force Reservist it raised some

(Far Left) Construction Division Chief Mark Slominski at the Tactical Response Force military construction site, Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana. (Left) Mark's sons, Joel, left, and Zack, pin stars on his epaulets during his promotion ceremony. (Below) Brig. Gen. Mark Slominski's official

eyebrows," he said. "One seasoned leader at the USACE district felt I couldn't succeed...they said there was too much Air Force in me. This provided another opportunity for me to close seams rather than expose gaps."

It's a balance he's obviously been able to maintain since his career began with his 1994 commissioning through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps program at Duke

University, and rising to brigadier general as a Reservist and USACE construction division chief.

"I'm both on many days," Slominski said. "I've learned to not be a split personality, but to embrace the opportunity to be the same person in different but compatible roles. I'll admit the challenge serving in both USACE and the Air Force...some of my days turn into arguing with myself over performance."



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Sturgeon recovery efforts begin to yield results

By Scott Lawrence Public Affairs Office

After decades of collaborative effort to recover Kootenai River White Sturgeon, biologists are beginning to see tangible results.

For years, scientists have improved their understanding of the species and experimented with different approaches to encourage sturgeon migration and reproduction in suitable spawning areas.

Those efforts began paying off in spring 2018 when Idaho Fish and Game biologists discovered the first wild spawned fertilized sturgeon egg within restored critical habitat upstream of Bonners Ferry, Idaho.

The distinct population of Kootenai River White Sturgeon was listed as endangered in 1994 under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and later under the Canadian Species at Risk Act in 2006. The first U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recovery plan was finalized in 1999.

In subsequent years representa-

tives from multiple agencies have been involved in the recovery effort, including: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Kootenai Tribe of Idaho; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Idaho Department of Fish and Game; and British Columbia's Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development.

"We've been working collectively and adaptively to provide more suitable riverine conditions for successful sturgeon spawning and that's what makes this discovery significant," said Greg Hoffman, the Corps' senior fishery biologist at Libby Dam, Montana.

"It's the first fertilized egg collected over the rocky substrate upstream of Bonners Ferry, indicating that the population is responding to what we've been doing to encourage sturgeon to migrate upstream and spawn in that area."

Prior to Libby Dam construction in the 1970s, Kootenai sturgeon spawned in the roughly one-mile stretch of the Kootenai River below Kootenai Falls. Since the dam's construction, however, most spawning occurs downstream of Bonners Ferry over sandy substrates which are not conducive to egg and free-embryo survival.

"When sturgeon eggs are fertilized they become adhesive," said Jason Flory, U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologist. "And if they land on sand and silt, they become entombed and don't survive. So it's important that we induce them to spawn upstream over the rocky substrate."

To encourage migration, biologists worked with Corps' water managers to test whether additional flows from Libby Dam during spring spawning season would cause sturgeon to migrate upstream of Bonners Ferry.

From 2010-2012, spring sturgeon operations included increased flows from Libby Dam and higher river stages, but telemetry data from tagged fish failed to show a significant change

Dozens of over-wintering Kootenai sturgeon rest on the substrate downstream of Bonners Ferry. (USACE photo)



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in sturgeon behavior.

Using an adaptive management process, the recovery team went back to the drawing board in 2013 and tried alternate approaches to managing outflows at Libby Dam. The team settled on experimenting with a double peak of increased flows during the spring freshet. The first peak was intended to provide cues for sturgeon to begin upstream migration and the second peak was meant to encourage further migration upstream from staging areas and spawning toward the end of the operation.

The team also made use of Libby Dam's selective gate withdrawal system, which allows dam operators to control discharge water temperature and mimic the natural annual temperature cycle for the benefit of resident fish. Operators target discharge temperature at 50 degrees Fahrenheit as flows are receding to trigger spawning after Kootenai sturgeon have fully migrated upstream.



"All fish species are primarily triggered by temperature as a cue that it's time to spawn," Flory said. "So careful temperature management during spawning season is vital."

The double peak approach was implemented in 2013-2017, but low water supply meant that there was only one peak instead of two in 2015 and 16.

Telemetry data showed a 20 percent increase in spawning sturgeon migrating upstream of Bonners Ferry in 2017. Additional analysis by IDFG indicated the number of days with river flows above 30,000 cubic feet per second best predicted the likelihood of spawning sturgeon migrating above Bonners Ferry.

Armed with these results, the 2018 sturgeon operation focused on maximizing the duration of days at higher flows which led to the discovery of a fertilized egg in the river reach upstream of Bonners Ferry.

In addition to the Corps managing flows and temperature, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho led an ambitious Kootenai River Habitat Restoration Program, constructing 10 large-scale habitat improvement projects since 2011.

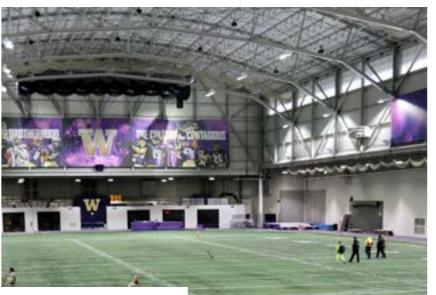
Left: British Columbia fishery biologist Sarah Stephenson releases a large wild female Kootenai sturgeon at the mouth of Kootenay River near Creston, BC. Right: A wild Kootenai River white sturgeon is released back into Kootenay Lake after capture and data collection. (USACE Photos.)

The projects include restoration of side channels and tributary habitat, installation of large woody debris, bank restoration and re-vegetation to increase and improve sturgeon and other native fish habitat.

The Tribe also incorporated a network of excavated and naturally-enhanced pools where fish can rest and feed as they move up and down the river, as well as a staging area when they are getting ready to spawn.

"While 2019 wasn't a good water year in terms of volume and we didn't see the results we hoped for, we definitely believe we're on the right track with sturgeon recovery," Hoffman said. "We've adopted the Tribe's holistic ecosystem recovery approach -- providing normative flows, temperature management and improving spawning conditions and critical habitat for sturgeon. There's still much work to do, but we're in a better place today and looking confidently to the future."





SEATTLE DISTRICT RESPONDS

Assessment teams scour Washington

photos by Bill Dowell





At the request of FEMA and Washington state, Corps teams and other federal and state officials evalutated 20 state-identified facilities throughout Washington state. (Clockwise from top left)

(Left to Right) Bridget Bentley, Joe Marsh and Jon Springer examine an operating room at a former hosptial in Yakima, Washington.

Team lead Sid Jones (left) and Scott Long look over University of Washington's Dempsey Indoor Practice Facility.

Nowell Grothe photographs and inspects an electrical connector at a possible location for an alternate-care-site.

Team members (left to right) Joe Marsh, Keith Rudie, Rob Didenhover, Capt. Gregory Hutchison, Bridget Bentley, Jon Springer and Joshua May out brief following an assessment of a former Yakima, Washington, hospital.

Jon Springer photographs an electrical panel during an inspection.

Joe Marsh inspects mechanical equipment.





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Corps Day 2020: Recognition while social distancing





In order to recognize Seattle District's top performers during the public health pandemic, the 2020 Corps Day awards ceremony was held virtually. Leaders were able to stream the ceremony live so employees could view the ceremony from their computers at home. In addition to the awards ceremony, there were other events that took place including a baby photo guessing game and a live streamed origami class for kids.







2020 CORPS DAY AWARDS

Commander's Leadership Award (supervisory)
Commander's Leadership Award (non-supervisory)

Engineer or Architect of the Year

Project Engineer of the Year

Scientist(s) of the Year

Employee of the Year (up to GS-9)

Employee of the Year (GS-10 and above)

New Employee of the Year (up to GS-9)

New Employee of the Year (GS-10 and above)

Support Employee of the Year (up to GS-09)

Support Employee of the Year (GS-10 and above)

Project Manager of the Year

Program Manager of the Year

Innovator of the Year

Outstanding Accomplishment at a Project or Field Office

Individual Safety Award

Team Safety Award

Team of Teams Award

Support Team of Teams Award

Tina Tong

Kristian Mickelson

Michael Swenson

Rodney Zion

Juliana Houghton and Kristin Addis

James Nowak

Bridget Bentley

Ramy Alyatim

Breanna McBride

Jojo Tan

Amanda Pease

Daryl Downing

Karen Peterson

Bill Dowell

CJD Spillway Gates Life Cycle Maint. Construction Team

Kenneth B. Parsons

Hazardous Energy Control Program PDT

JRCF Team

Emergency Management Construction Team

Col. Geraldi's farewell to the District

By Col. Mark Geraldi

(Outgoing) Seattle District Commander

Note: The following is the transcript of Col. Geraldi's remarks during the June 30 Change of Command Ceremony.

General Helmlinger, Friends, Families, Tribal and elected officials, and most importantly, our dedicated Seattle District workforce, thank you all for being here, either physically here at our beautiful Oxbow Building overlooking the Duwamish River, or virtually.

The I Corps Band – you sound great and you being here is a testament to the special relationship we share with Joint Base Lewis McChord -- please join me in a round of applause for these Army professionals.

General Helmlinger talks about the three P's: Program, Partners, and People, so I'd like to use that framework to offer my final thanks for the past three fantastic years here at our District.

The first "P", Program. You just heard General Helmlinger describe many features of our diverse program with responsibilities across four states, so I'll just briefly highlight a few more. As a full-service district, Seattle has both civil works and military construction missions. I want to start with recognizing the civil works side, specifically our six operating projects, which are the heart of our district and are physical manifestations of the many superlatives that define Seattle District's uniqueness.

• The carpet where we just conducted the transfer of our District colors is actually from the Lake Washing Ship Canal, the site where we (under non-COV-ID-19 circumstances) traditionally hold our change of command ceremony. On the carpet it states: "Serving the World since 1917" – our 100-plus

year old locks are the busiest in the Nation and they, along with the only botanical garden in the Corps, are either the top one or two most-visited destination in Seattle.

Our Chief Joseph Dam on the upper Columbia River is the highest generating capacity hydro-electric dam in the entire Corps of Engineers.

Libby Dam in the beautiful Kootenay River Valley, Montana, another top hydro-electric workhorse is also considered one of the most architecturally aesthetic dams in the Nation.

Albeni Falls Dam is home to some of the most visited recreation sites in the Corps and with its unique ability to store extra

Just up-river

from where

Howard A.

Han-

we stand is the

GERALDI





Col. Geraldi presents Lt. Col. Andrew Olson his deployment flag at Seattle District headquarters. (USACE photo)

son Dam, which through its water storage capability, provides much of the area's water supply and mitigates flood risk to the entire valley.

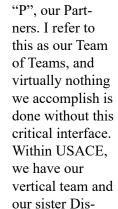
 Last but not least is Mud Mountain Dam, which is in the final stages of constructing the





civil works umbrella, our team also executes maintenance of deep-draft federal navigation channels for the Ports of Seattle, Tacoma, and Grays Harbor to name a few, and our nationally-renowned Emergency Management Team, manage two distinct flood seasons every year, one on either side of the Cascade Mountain Range.

In the interest of time (trust me I could gush on for hours about our team), I'll only mention one project to represent our entire military portfolio, the Selah Air Field at Yakima Training Center. Despite a 5-week delay due to an engineer equipment operator union strike, our team delivered this C-17 capable airfield two days ahead of schedule, adding a strategic force projection platform to the joint base. At the programmatic-level, even though we're still only in 3rd Quarter of the FY, this is the second fiscal year in a row our team has achieved 100% of military construction project awards.



Now the next

tricts within Northwestern Division. I already made reference to this partnership earlier describing our design of the fish passage. In my opinion, the most important thing that commanders can do is set a positive command climate — I have been fortunate to have served under two Northwestern Division Commanders who have done just that: General Spellmon and our host today, General Helmlinger — sir, thank you for enabling us to deliver at the speed of trust.

External partners include our Congressional delegations, sister federal agencies, state and local governments, and private industry. In our Area of Responsibility across a large swath of the greater Pacific NW, we are also fortunate to work with 50 federally-recognized Tribes, including the Salish SeaArea Treaty Tribes. They are tremendous partners in what one of the chairman described as our "arranged marriage" between the Tribes and me

as a treaty right trustee. They offer rich perspectives on the environment and creative solutions, and many of our projects simply would not be possible without their support. I want to thank them all for sharing their knowledge, wisdom, support, and their friendship.

Finally, People. Our dedicated workforce is our center of gravity and the bedrock of our Team of Teams, without whom nothing happens. The care and precautions our supervisors and employees continue to take for our workforce throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, all while delivering our program, is emblematic of their commitment to each other and our district.

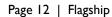
I want to highlight our senior civilian leadership who make up the commander's advisory group, as representatives of our entire civilian workforce. I affectionately refer to them as "The Titans":

- Operations Division Chief Amy Reese, who heads the largest and most geographically dispersed division in our district.
- Engineering Division Chief JoAnn Walls, whose purview includes a full-service design branch and an internationally renowned hydraulics and hydrology branch.

(Top) Col. Geraldi receives the guideon during his change of command ceremony. (Bottom left) Col. Geraldi is photographed with a work crew in the large lock chamber at the Chittenden Locks. (Bottom right) Col. Geraldi is photographed with is name displayed on the sign at Malmstrom AFB, Montana. (Courtesy photos)







Construction Division Chief Mark Slominski, who has developed the most versatile set of subordinate leaders in our district that excel at placing the actual steel and concrete under the most trying conditions, to include multiple contingency deployments across the nation and the globe.

Thank you Titans, and by extension, our entire civilian workforce for your incredible professionalism and dedica-

I have also been blessed with three of the finest field grade engineer officers with whom I have ever served over a 27-year career – Lt. Col. Andy Olson, Maj. Ryan Baum, and here today, Lt. Col. Mark DeSantis – all 3 who have excelled as Deputy District Commander, each serving for extended periods as the acting district commander. They are also representative of a small but professional cadre of officers and non-commissioned officers who serve in our district. Thank you all.

Earlier, I had intentionally left out the 4th Titan of the Commander's Advisory Group I had described a minute ago, and that is our civilian deputy, the DPM. The DPM is the senior civilian of our district and serves as both the programs division chief and as the deputy district engineer. In other words, the DPM is my battle buddy. I have been blessed with 2 exceptional DPMs, initially Damon Lilly who has been promoted to the

Senior Executive Service and is currently the Programs Director of Pacific Ocean Division. For the past year and a half, Ginny Dierich our honorary Sgt. Maj. for today's ceremony, has carried that mantel in exemplary fashion – I simply could not have asked for better. Thank you Ginny!

To the 52nd Seattle District Commander, my friend, colleague, and comrade in arms for over 20 years now – I cherish our shared memories, first serving in the 101st Airborne Division together and later on distant battlefields in Afghanistan. Xander and Judy I wish you and your entire family the best of luck as you begin this new chapter as a military family, and I know you will be brilliant as always.

Finally and most importantly to me, to my military family, Stephanie, my beloved bride for 24 years. There are no words to adequately express my gratitude for your devotion to

me and your continued sacrifice for our Nation. In just four scant days, you will be thrust once more into the breach as I head to assume command of the Afghanistan District. Babe, you are my steel magnolia, and I love you with all of my heart and soul.

It has been an honor and privilege to have served as the Seattle District's 51st Commander and District Engineer the past three years. I hope I have adequately fulfilled my sacred duty to provide the leadership our district and dedicated workforce so richly deserve.

Essayons!

Building Strong!

Delivering Strong for the Pacific Northwest and the Nation!

(Top left) Col. Geraldi and Northwest Seaport Alliance CEO John Wolfe sign a Feasibility Cost-Sharing Agreement (FCSA) to initiate a study at Tacoma Harbor. (Bottom left) Col. Geraldi briefs visitors of "Bring Your Child to Work Day." (Bottom right) Col. Geraldi and Damon Lilly poses for a photograph with Santa (John Hicks). (Courtesy photos)







ERDC delivers augmented reality solutions in the fight against COVID-19

By Mary Margaret Edney

U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center

Scientists and engineers at the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) are using augmented reality technology to assist peers throughout the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in virtually conducting site assessments of alternate care facilities (ACFs) across the country.

Augmented reality technology, developed by researchers at the ERDC Information Technology Laboratory (ITL), offers a way for the USACE to assess potential ACF locations while assisting with social distancing and safety considerations.

"The ERDC team is forward thinking in terms of how immersive computing can be applied to solve real-world

engineering science and defense-related challenges," said Jonathan Boone, an ITL research civil engineer.

Using live-streaming and mixedreality overlays, smaller groups of engineers located on-site have the capability to share information with subject-matter experts working remotely. In addition to the safety benefits of leveraging the technology, real-time collaboration of assessment results has expedited the delivery of information to FEMA.

Currently five USACE districts are prototyping the technology, with two more districts planning to use the technology soon.

"Facility assessments are critical to the success of the ACF mission." Boone said. "Having reachback, livestream capabilities allows engineers and architects who are leading efforts from a 'boots on the ground' team

perspective to get virtual support from other USACE subject-matter experts."

Using augmented reality for ACF assessments is just one way that the ITL team has and continues to identify ways to use innovative technology to address real-world challenges. "Innovate, immerse and inspire" is the mission of the ERDC team members delivering solutions with augmented reality technologies.

"Augmented and virtual reality is the connective tissue for all things the ERDC is doing with artificial intelligence and robotics to leverage more informed decision-making for the nation and the warfighter," Boone said. "In a virtual world, our stakeholders can practice, fail, learn and improve through repetition in a safe environment. That way, they'll be better suited to perform their duties."



Retired/Moving On: Patricia Graesser

Deployed:

Christopher Brooks Young Phoenix Edward Pena

Please submit Around the Disrict announcements to DLL-NWS-PAOTeam@usace.army.mil







Lejla Hanlon Paralegal Specialis



Joshua May Architect







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CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



You can help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses with these actions:

- · Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- · Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth.
- Practice social distancing by putting space between yourself & others.
- Wash hands often with soap & water for at least 20 seconds.

cdc.gov/coronavirus