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St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Newest addition to the district's dredging fleet
M.V. General Warren christened



Final column from Col. Pfenning

Professionalism, technical competence and genuine concern distinguish district

by Col. Mike Pfenning
St. Paul District Commander



"...the continuing passion, positive attitude and commitment demonstrated by the employees here is nothing short of inspirational."

Col. Mike Pfenning

It's been a great ride! It's hard to believe that three years have gone by so quickly. As your commander, I have never ceased to be amazed at your levels of professionalism and technical competence. But, more importantly, the genuine concern that you have for others – not only locally, but across this country and the world – inspires not only me, but our American public. I take great pride in the personal courage and the commitment that you demonstrate in making a difference in our region and our world. You have made excellence your standard, both at the district level and across our regional business center.

Since 2004, you have made tremendous strides in transitioning the Mississippi Valley Division to a regional business center that is more effective and efficient in delivering our services to our region and the people of our great country. Your proactive approach and leadership in developing the region's capability to deliver these services has made you an invaluable asset to the region in this ongoing effort. You are never satisfied with "change for change's sake," always searching for ways to deliver better services to our customers – both cheaper and more quickly. You truly do make a difference in the projects

of our regional customers and stakeholders.

Having just returned from my two week pre-deployment site survey to the Northern District of the Gulf Region Division in Iraq, I thought it appropriate to share some insights on what I experienced. The world order will be defined by what we are doing with the Iraqi people to develop their country's capacity. The types of projects being built in Iraq as part of the Corps' mission touch almost every Iraqi citizen. Powerful forces continue trying to undo what has been accomplished. As the nation of Iraq transitions – either up or down – it will have second and third order impacts on the surrounding region and the world.

There is no better place for an engineer to be. It was a very busy and encouraging 10 days of visiting our Corps' employees in this area of Iraq, learning about their daily challenges and successes, as well as seeing the positive effects of their construction projects on the country. I've seen again, how effective a dedicated employee team of uniformed Army, Department of Army civilian, contractor and local/third country nationals can be in making a difference in the lives of the local people – in this case – Iraqis and each other – every day that they come to work.

As it is elsewhere in the Corps of Engineers, our customers' (both Iraqi and U.S. military forces) needs, their understanding of our capabilities, and our consistent on-time delivery of quality projects within budget and to standard, remains critical to our mission success. While that project delivery in this area of Iraq presents unique challenges and opportunities only really understood by those who've served here, the continuing passion, positive attitude and commitment demonstrated by the employees here is nothing short of inspirational.

In parting, know that I will always value our friendships and the experiences we've shared in developing solutions to water resource problems will make me a more effective district commander in Iraq.

It has been an honor to serve with you.

Thank you for your continued service in making the U.S. Army and the Corps of Engineers 'Army Strong'.

Well Done!



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Lugene Martin, right, wife of Captain Arley (Butch) Martin, at left, christened the M.V. General Warren, May 14 in Fountain City, Wis. The Warren is the latest addition to the district's dredging fleet.

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Photo by Shannon Bauer

4 Left, Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, Mississippi Division commander, and Col. Jon Christensen, St. Paul District commander, at the district's Change of Command ceremony on June 8.



Photo by Peter Verstegen

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Christensen assumes command of the St. Paul District

Col. Jon L. Christensen assumed command of the St. Paul District on June 8, 2007, becoming the district's 62nd commander and district engineer. His



Col. Jon L. Christensen

previous assignment was as program director for the electricity sector at the Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division in Iraq. Christensen was commissioned into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, following graduation from the United States Military Academy in 1984. In 1992, he was awarded a Master of Science degree in applied mathematics from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Cal. In 2006, he was awarded a Masters of Arts in national security and strategic studies from the

Naval War College.

His previous assignments include: platoon leader and executive officer for Company D, 84th Engineer Battalion (Combat Heavy), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; assistant S3 and C Company commander for the 326th Engineer Battalion (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Ky.; instructor of mathematics for the United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y.; and battalion executive officer and assistant division engineer for the 326th Engineer Battalion (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Ky. He also served as the battalion commander of the 30th Engineer Battalion (Topographic) (Army) in Fort Bragg, N.C., and as an instructor in the Operations Research Department at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Christensen's military education includes Engineer Officer basic and advance courses, Fort Belvoir, Va.; Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.; and Naval War College, Newport, R.I.

His awards and decorations include: Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal and the Saudi Arabian and Kuwait Liberation Medals. He has also earned the Ranger Tab, Senior Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Pathfinder Badge and the bronze de Fleury medal from the Engineer Regiment.

Col. Mike Pfenning, the 61st St. Paul District engineer, and Col. Jon Christensen, the 62nd district engineer, shook hands at the close of the change of command ceremony, June 8. (Photo by Peter Verstegen)





Photo by Peter Verstegen

From left are Arley “Butch” Martin, captain of the General Warren; Lugene Martin, his wife; and Lt. Col. John Kunkle, deputy district commander. They are standing on the “Texas Deck” of the towboat, the second highest deck on the boat.

Gen. Warren makes Upper Mississippi River its home base

The Motor Vessel General Warren traveled about 1,600 miles from Texas to Wisconsin to join the new dredging fleet on the Upper Mississippi River this May. The district christened the Warren in a ceremony at Fountain City, Wis., May 14. About 80 attended the christening ceremony.

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Photo by Shannon Bauer

Charles Shultz, a leverman in operations division, presented the vessel and crew blessing at the christening of the Motor Vessel General Warren in Fountain City, Wis., May 14.



Photo by Shannon Bauer

From left are David Diamond, Bart Spriggle and Stan Marg, all operations division, at the christening of the Motor Vessel General Warren at the Fountain City Service Base, Fountain City, Wis., May 14. About 80 attended the event.

Warren, continued from Page 5

The Warren is part of a new district dredging fleet that also includes the Dredge Goetz and the Quarters Barge Taggatz.

This fleet will be used to maintain the nine-foot channel on 850 miles of the Upper Mississippi River, 355 miles of the Illinois River and 24 miles on of the St. Croix River.

The towboat is named in honor of the district's first engineer and commander, Civil War hero Gen. Gouverneur Kemble Warren. He opened the district and conducted initial surveys of the main river and tributaries. He arrived in St. Paul in 1866.

The fleet replaces the Dredge Thompson, which will be handed over to a museum in Winona, Minn.



Photo at bottom by Shannon Bauer. Photos above and below by Peter Verstegen

Above, John Anfinson, former district historian, briefed members of the audience on the importance of Gen. Gouverneur Kemble Warren's contributions to the U.S. Army and the nation. Right, a member of the news media interviews Jim Maybach, physical support branch, for the christening on May 14. Below, the Gen. Warren at Fountain City.



News and Notes

Announcements

Jon Petersen was selected for the Mississippi Valley Division Emerging Leader Program. Brig. Gen. Robert Crear, division commander, selected Petersen to join **Mike DeRusha**, Lock and Dam 1, Minneapolis, and Terry Zien, project management, in this division-level program. The program provides Petersen the opportunity to refine his leadership skills and to gain broader perspective and insights on command-wide responsibilities and issues being addressed at the regional level.

Retiree supports hurricane recovery in New Orleans

“I’m here in N.O. until June 8, when I return home,” wrote **Doug Hoy**, a retiree from St. Paul District engineering and construction. “After that I may be back for some pump installation work in late summer.”

Hoy began his current tour in New Orleans District on April 16.

“My access card says ‘contract employee.’ Right now I’m doing shop drawing submittals and working up plans and specifications for small Katrina-

related repairs at Corps’ sites.

“Last year I was here for a 60-day and a 90-day tour. If I come back again, it will be to oversee, inspect, test the portable pumps to be installed at the Harvey canal sector gate.”

However, Hoy may leave a week early than planned, “because of grandchildren baby-sitting duties for a week in La Crosse,” he said.

Taps

Walter O. Stadelman, a retiree from the old planning branch, passed away. His funeral was May 21.

Awards Ceremony and Picnic on July 27

The summer awards picnic is scheduled for Long Lake Regional Park, New Brighton, Minn., July 27.

The lunch menu with meal ticket includes herb roasted chicken, pork carnitas and hot dogs, potato chips potato salad and watermelon.

Snacks include popcorn Snocones®, pop and water.

- Meal tickets cost:
 - \$12 for an adult, non-EBF;
 - \$10 for adult, EBF member;
 - \$8 for children, ages 4-12; and
 - \$3 non-meal, non-EBF;
 - \$1 non-meal (EBF member)
- Starting time: 9 a.m.;
- Lunch: 11:45a.m.-1 p.m.; and
- Awards ceremony and door prizes: 2-3 p.m.

Adult (golf, softball, volleyball, etc. and children’s activities scheduled throughout the day

For additional information or to reserve tickets, contact **Tim Grundhoffer**, engineering and construction, at 651-290-5574.



St. Paul District photo

Kurt Brownell, natural resources specialist, LaCrescent, Minn., spoke at Trempealeau Elementary School on April 27 for environmental awareness days.

Letter from Iraq

May 13, 2007



Somewhere between Iraq and Minnesota...

I thought I'd take a few moments while I'm waiting to re-deploy to give you and the GRN PAO [Gulf Region North Public Affairs Office] a bit of an update on my pre-deployment site survey.



It's been a very busy and encouraging 10 days of visiting our Corps' employees in this area of Iraq, learning about their daily challenges and successes, as well as seeing the positive effects of their construction projects on the country. The employees' insights have already made this the best transition into new duties and responsibilities in my Army career.

On May 6, Col. Mike Pfenning, former DE, met Sue Lenski, real estate division, on duty in the Gulf Region Division. She works as a realty specialist there.

I've seen again how effective a dedicated employee team of uniformed Army, DA Civilian, contractor, and local/third country nationals can be in making a difference in the lives of the local people – in this case – Iraqis and each other – every day that they come to work.

As it is elsewhere in the Corps of Engineers, our customers' (both Iraqi and U.S. military forces) needs, their understanding of our capabilities, and our consistent delivery of quality projects on-time, within budget, and to standard remains critical to our mission success. While that project delivery in this area of Iraq presents unique challenges and opportunities only really understood by those who've served here, the continuing passion, positive attitude and commitment demonstrated by the employees here is nothing short of inspirational.

I am looking forward to joining this high-performing team and continuing its legacy. This mission success is sustained by excellent life support near the district headquarters, sleeping trailers with showers, air conditioning, hot and cold water, a super dining facility nearby, a decent post exchange and excellent workout facilities. Finally, there is a very well-trained and professional contract security detail to protect us during required ground travel outside the camp.

COL Pfenning
MICHAEL F. PFENNING
COL EN

Cdr, St. Paul Engineer District

[Col. Pfenning wrote this during his pre-deployment tour to the Gulf Region, May 13.]