



THE MOBILE

Mobile District welcomes new commander



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COVER STORY PHOTO OUTLINE: *Incoming Mobile District Commander Col. Jon Chytka receives the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Command Flag from South Atlantic Division Commander Brig. Gen. Donald Jackson, accepting all responsibility and authority over his new unit. Mobile District's Change of Command Ceremony was held Aug. 1, 2013 in downtown Mobile, Ala. at the Alabama Cruise Terminal. Photo by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office.*

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Mobile District welcomes new commander

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office

Mobile District employees from headquarters and various field offices welcomed their newest commander, Col. Jon J. Chytka, Aug. 1, 2013 during a Change of Command Ceremony held at the Alabama Cruise Terminal in downtown Mobile.

District employees also said farewell to their outgoing commander Col. Steven Roemhildt who has since departed to Washington for his next assignment as the Operations Officer (G3) for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Change of Command tradition dates back to the Civil War and emphasizes the continuity of leadership and unit identity despite changes in individual authority from one another. The heart of the ceremony is the passing of the command flag - the symbol of the unit's identity - from the outgoing commander to incoming commander.

During the ceremony, the outgoing commander - Col. Steven Roemhildt - returned the unit flag to his next higher commander - South Atlantic Division Commander Brig. Gen. Donald Jackson - signifying his release of authority over the unit, Mobile District. When incoming commander Col. Jon Chytka accepted the flag, he accepted all responsibility and authority over Mobile District.

Chytka came to Mobile District from the Naval War College where he graduated in the summer of 2013, earning a master's degree in security studies. Before that assignment, he served as the Deputy Commander of the 130th Engineer Brigade at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

Prior to his tour with the 130th, he served as the Deputy Commander of the Afghanistan Engineer District (AED) and was responsible for construction of the facilities for Afghan National Security Forces (Army and Police) as well as others. Prior to the deployment, COL Chytka served as the Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Honolulu District.

A native of South Dakota, Chytka earned a Bachelor of Science degree in aerospace engineering from the U.S. Military Academy and a Master of Science degree in engineering management from the University of Missouri at Rolla.

He is a graduate of the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. and the Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced courses at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. His operational assignments include serving with the 1st Engineer Battalion at Ft Riley, Kan.; the 44th Engineer Battalion at Camp Howze, Korea; Company Command of the 82nd Engineer Company, Camp Edwards, Korea; and as an U.S. Exchange Officer with the Australian 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment. Chytka served as 1st Armored Division's Assistant Division Engineer in Germany. Chytka deployed as the Executive Officer of the 40th Engineer Battalion during Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07. He also served as the Assistant Professor of Military Science at Georgetown University.

The newest Mobile District Commander's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star; the Meritorious Service Medal (6 Oak Leaf Clusters); the Army Commendation Medal (1 OLC); the Army Achievement Medal (1 OLC); the Humanitarian Service Medal; the Air Assault Badge; Airborne Badge; and Ranger Tab. He has also been awarded the Bronze Order of the DeFleury Medal.



New Mobile District Commander Col. Jon Chytka addresses district employees. Mobile District's Change of Command Ceremony was held Aug. 1, 2013 in downtown Mobile, Ala. at the Alabama Cruise Terminal. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.

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New commander continued...

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office



Incoming Commander Col. Jon Chytka faces Outgoing Commander Col. Steven Roemhildt as Deputy for Programs and Project Management Peter Taylor presents the Corps of Engineers Command Flag while facing South Atlantic Division Commander Brig. Gen. Donald Jackson during Mobile District's Change of Command Ceremony. Photo by Lance Davis, Mobile District Public Affairs Office.



Mobile District's Outgoing Commander Col. Steven Roemhildt gives his farewell remarks to district employees. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.



New Mobile District Commander Col. Jon Chytka pictured with district park rangers from various projects after the Change of Command Ceremony. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.

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Camp Shelby Soldiers visit District Headquarters

Story by Capt. Desiderio Britton, Operations Division



Mobile District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Thomas Nelson receives a certificate of appreciation from Lt. Col. Christopher Kuhn, Commander of the 3rd Battalion Training Support Engineer 315th Regiment for his help in the professional development of the officers of the regiment. Photo by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office.

Active duty Army Engineer Officers from the 3-315th Engineering Battalion stationed out of Camp Shelby, Miss. came to the Mobile District Office last month to learn the inner workings of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Engineer Regiment has two faces consisting of the traditional U.S Army component and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The integration of both entities can be confusing for many who work within the Regiment.

The officers from Camp Shelby sought professional development of their knowledge concerning the other half of the Engineer Regiment and received an overview brief on the vast integration of the USACE and their efforts in providing a stronger and well equipped nation.

Lt. Col. Thomas Nelson, Deputy Commander for Mobile District, conducted presentation on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its varying areas of responsibilities nationwide. Mobile's area of responsibility in Latin America piqued their interest due to the varying roles and positions available to military personnel.

Capt. Desiderio Britton, a project engineer for the district, focused his presentation on dredging operations and the maintenance of disposal areas.

After the brief, the group was split-up due to time constraints. One group had the opportunity to tour a dredge and view disposal areas within Mobile. This allowed them to see first-hand the method in which USACE maintains and ensures the waterways are navigable for all vessels.

Travis Dyess, Operations Division, assisted in giving the tour of Inland Dredging Company's Dredge, Ingenuity. He was able to directly show details of a dredge that could only be best understood while physically aboard one.

The other group was viewing upland disposal areas nearby being used to pump material. The differing physical states of disposal areas, depending on their last use, were interesting to the group. Also, the details of maintaining such a site was new to them.

Following the tour, the battalion was introduced to the new Deployable Tactical Operations Systems Site on Halls Mill Road in Mobile. The DTOS Team introduced them to the several vehicles available to USACE in responsive efforts for disasters. The multi-functional capabilities of the vehicles astounded them. Many comments were made regarding the need of such communication capabilities at Camp Shelby for training purposes.

Guests from 3-315th EN BN learned much about USACE and its role nationwide. Soldiers in the Engineer Regiment learned how much their USACE colleagues support their efforts in combat and their families patiently waiting at home stateside.

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RE manages Forestry, Agriculture, Grazing Program

Story by Lisa Parker, Public Affairs Office

The Mobile District's Real Estate Division has many diverse programs. The Forestry, Agriculture and Grazing Program has its early roots in the 1950's.

The Forestry Program began after WWII with the Army and Navy procurement contracts. Legislation by Senator Walter F. George in the early 1950's began a reimbursable forestry account.

Mobile District's Civil Forestry Program was initiated in 1969 when there was a need for forestry management at Lake Allatoona and Lake Seminole. Operations Division contacted Auburn University for Forestry Management Plans. Management Plans were eventually approved in 1974 and included timber harvesting authority for all projects for Civil Works and Military Projects under their Land Management Plans.



Ernie Marlar, (left) and Richard Mullens, Corps Foresters, on Forestry Disposal Program Review at Fort Rucker, Ala. Photo courtesy of the Real Estate Division.

“The program exploded with requests from the public to harvest, plant crops and graze cattle.” said Richard Mullens, section chief for program management and control branch Forestry and AG Section. “The leasing and timber sales program allows all interested parties an opportunity to compete fairly for timber products and land use.”

“The Army’s military forestry program is self sustaining in that proceeds from the sales of forestry, agricultural and grazing are utilized for many natural resource management efforts including, tree planting, wildlife management, boundary line fencing, salaries, and other resource management support.” said Mullens.

In addition, counties receive a portion of the net proceeds from all timber sales.

Currently there are eight military projects, and approximately 160,000 acres under professional forest management. On the Civil Works side, there are currently 33 defined projects and approximately 280,000 acres under professional forest management. The Civil Works projects include lakes, lock and dam impoundments on the Tennessee and Tombigbee Waterways and Wildlife Mitigation tracts of land throughout Mobile District.

Other customers include Air Force installations and National Aeronautical and Space Administration’s Stennis Space Center (SSC). Stennis Space Center is the largest installation Mobile District supports in Mississippi with approximately 22,000 acres.

The project has been managed by professional forest management staff since 1988.

After natural disasters USACE is often contacted to provide disaster support and remediation.

“After Hurricane Katrina, 6,000 acres were damaged and the economic loss was approximately \$3.2 million. Salvage operation began one week after the storm,” said Mullens.

“These operations start with damage assessments. Reconnaissance from aerial flights, aerial photographs and ground surveys were completed to measure damage. The ability to reach across multiple states with existing contacts and contracts as well as the expertise in timber harvesting allowed 70 percent of the timber to be salvaged. Following harvesting operations, site prep including shearing, herbicide application and prescribed burning were used to reclaim the ecosystems.” said Mullens.

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The timber sale process is stream lined to enhance timber availability from each project. The Planning Division provides oversight on Civil Projects for archeological impacts, endangered species and future site planning.

“Site inspections during harvesting operations by trained forestry personnel ensure contract compliance. In addition, Resident Foresters are involved in reviewing environmental hazards, stream crossing plans, boundary line verifications, security passes and safety,” said Mullens.

Timber operation is tracked by using the Timber Harvest Inventory System (T.H.I.S.) developed in-house by the Forestry section. T.H.I.S. shows important contact information, start and ending dates, total of all payments and percentage of products harvested. The system is also linked to CEFMS to track dollars collected from sales.

The agricultural and grazing program currently has leases within the states of Alabama, Florida, Mississippi and Tennessee.

“Other than receiving income from leases, an added benefit of the agricultural and grazing program for military installations, is the offset of the cost of maintenance. By allowing grazing or row cropping, the installations don’t have to spend additional funding for mowing and maintaining the property,” said Mullens.

“An added benefit of the agricultural and grazing program for military installations is the offset of the cost of maintenance.” said Mullens.

By allowing grazing or row cropping, the installations don’t have to spend additional funding for mowing and maintaining the property.

“Managing the forestry and agricultural and grazing program is a win-win for the projects and the environment that shows good stewardship of the public interests,” said Mullens.



Trees marked for harvest at Fort Rucker, Ala. Photo courtesy of the Real Estate Division.

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Deputy Commander supports son's class with emphasis on STEM

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office



Lt. Col. Thomas Nelson speaks to 6th graders at Spanish Fort Middle School in Spanish Fort, Ala. about his career as a Soldier and with the U.S. Army Corps Engineers, emphasizing the importance of knowledge and skills in STEM - science, technology, engineering, and math. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.

Mobile District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Thomas Nelson made a visit to Spanish Fort Middle School in Spanish Fort, Ala. Friday, Sept. 20.

This was in support of a request from his son's teacher, Kimberly Langham of the Skills & Strategies for Success Class - an enrichment course for sixth graders that provides an understanding of how academic success correlates with career success.

Nelson spoke to several groups of sixth graders enrolled in the course about his career in the U.S. Army and with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District.

While discussing the various specialties of USACE Mobile District, Nelson emphasized the importance of science, technology, engineering and math - also known as STEM. This is an ongoing effort of USACE and many other agencies and organizations in support of efforts in the classroom to stimulate student interest for STEM.

"If we - as a nation - want to be able to compete globally in the future, we need to have our students developing these skills [STEM] now," Nelson said. "Ultimately, I believe our standard of living will continue to improve."

When Nelson asked the students what they would like to be when they grow up, many responded with STEM-related fields.

"I enjoy speaking to any group about the Corps because it's an opportunity to tell our story," Nelson said. "The questions they asked - some were quite thoughtful and some were completely off the wall - but in general, the students were very engaging and asked some very intelligent questions." One young man came up to me afterwards and said, 'I didn't know what I wanted to do before, but I know I do! I want to do that [work for the Corps]!'"

He also explained the crucial role Army civilians play in the U.S. and abroad to Army and USACE missions. The young people were most enthusiastic when the Deputy Commander showed them several pictures of him in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"We really enjoyed the presentation," Kimberly Langham, the teacher of the class, said. "My students always enjoy the military presentations because they learn about the variety of opportunities the military can offer."

According to Langham, the Skills & Strategies for Success course has been successful due to much parent participation from parents sharing their career experiences with the students.



Lt. Col. Thomas Nelson pictured with his son, Noah, at Spanish Fort Middle School in Spanish Fort, Ala. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.

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Workplace Workshop

Looking for good career advice? Consider avoiding these clichés...

Books, blogs, and motivational gurus are full of career advice for beginners and veterans alike. Much of it can be useful, but you've got to be careful to separate the good from the misguided and obsolete. Don't blindly follow these "words of wisdom" without a healthy dose of skepticism:

- **"Any job is better than no job."** Working at a job you hate can sap your morale and make any change harder to accomplish. You probably won't be motivated to do good work, and if you quit out of frustration, you could be labeled an undependable job-hopper. No job is fun all the time, but you'll generally do better at a job you can find some enjoyment in, even if that takes longer to find.
- **"Follow your passion."** On the other hand, don't wait forever for your dream job to present itself. You need to know what you're good at, and what you like doing, but chances are you can do well in a job that satisfies less than 100 percent of your ambitions. You don't want to give up worthwhile career opportunities because they don't fit with an unrealistic dream of success.
- **"You need an advanced degree to get anywhere."** Education is always a good thing, but without a clear purpose, you could waste years and thousands of dollars on studies that don't necessarily translate to career success. Decide on what you want to learn, be clear on how it will help you, and make sure the investment will really pay off in terms of increased opportunities and career satisfaction.
- **"Never quit a job."** You shouldn't jump ship at the first sign of trouble, but staying at a dead-end job with no hope of advancement and little chance of learning anything doesn't help your career. Look for opportunities to improve your situation wherever you are, but keep an eye on the job market so you're never trapped.
- **"The one thing you need to do is ..."** Be wary of any advice that offers a quick fix. Managing a career is complicated. You don't know what's coming up, and you won't always know the right decision to make. You'll make mistakes and encounter bad luck. Commit to learning and moving forward, and don't waste time following short-lived trends or depending on gimmicks to land your dream job.

Getting to 'yes' with your boss

Getting agreement from your boss when you've got a good idea, or want to take a training course, or have some other request, can be tricky.

You've got to be careful with your requests, but you can increase your chances of getting what you want by following these two pieces of advice:

- **Learn to think like a manager.** Get to know your boss's priorities and pressures. This will help you identify what he or she needs, allowing you to fashion requests that address the boss's needs.
- **Make agreement easy.** Emphasize the benefits to the organization and your supervisor when presenting your idea or request. Then lead up to a question that lends itself to a simple answer: "Is this OK?"

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Managers Mentor

Spur high performance with some straight talk

Developing a high-performance workforce requires good communication between you and your employees. You have to understand their ambitions and goals in order to guide their career development.

Here's what to talk about often:

- **Accomplishments:** What's been the employee's most important achievement lately? What is he or she most proud of? Do you agree that it's a worthwhile success?
- **Impact:** Quantify the employee's effect on your organization's bottom line. How has the person increased revenues, cut expenses, or otherwise enhanced your financial picture?
- **Failures:** Don't turn this question into a blame game. Just take a look at areas where the employee needs to improve. What is he or she least proud of? What has the employee learned from his or her failures?
- **Knowledge:** Top performers don't keep their knowledge to themselves. What does the employee have to share with other people in your organization? Brainstorm some strategies for spreading his or her knowledge: training other employees, leading committees or task forces, speaking to internal and external audiences, and so forth.
- **Future plans:** What does the employee want to do in your organization? Discuss what skills or experience the person needs to work on, and explore your own role in helping the employee to move up.

When employees don't perform, ask questions

When an employee isn't doing his or her job, your first instinct may be to blame the person for not following instructions, being lazy, or not caring about your organization. Take a step back and look at your own performance first. Examine these possibilities:

- **Do employees know what you want?** Go beyond just assigning tasks. Give employees clear performance standards that will help them understand when they're doing a good job: technical knowledge they need to master, quality and productivity measurements, and so forth.
- **Do they know why you want it?** Workers make better decisions about what they need to do if they know why a task is necessary: how it affects the company, the employee, and other people, and what happens when they don't perform the task correctly.
- **Do employees know how to do the job?** This comes down to adequate training, for both new hires and longtime workers. Make employees part of the training process by having them train others in their new skills.
- **Do they think they're already doing a good job?** A worker will think he or she is doing just fine if you don't offer frequent and regular feedback. Let employees know what they're doing well, and coach them to get better in areas where they're weak.

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Briefs

Columbus Day, Oct. 12. The annual observance of the date Christopher Columbus reached the Americas in 1492.

National Boss Day, Oct. 16. Show some appreciation for the hardworking managers who keep businesses and offices running smoothly.

Halloween, Oct. 31. Trick or treat!

World Space Week, Oct. 4-10. This United Nations effort explores and supports the peaceful uses of outer space and space-related sciences. The theme for 2013: "Exploring Mars, Discovering Earth."

Financial Planning Week, Oct. 7-13. The goal: Help individuals discover the value of financial planning and make smart financial decisions to achieve their life goals and dreams.

Earth Science Week, Oct. 13-19. This year's theme, "Mapping Our World," engages young people and the public in learning how scientists, geographers, and other professionals use maps to represent land formations, natural resource deposits, bodies of water, fault lines, and more.

Free Speech Week, Oct. 21-27. Raise free speech awareness by talking to your friends and your kids about freedom of speech and how it affects their lives. Exercise your free speech rights by posting a message online, composing a poem, writing a letter to the editor, and letting your voice be heard.

Hispanic Heritage Month, Sep. 15 to Oct. 15. Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on Sept. 15 and ending on Oct. 15. It was enacted into law on Aug. 17, 1988, on the approval of Public Law 100-402.

Italian-American Heritage Month. Celebrate the contributions of Italians and Italian-Americans to the arts, the humanities, and the sciences, as well as the impact of Italian culture and language on the U.S. and the world.

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Public service organizations, professional medical associations, and government agencies work together to promote breast cancer awareness, share information, and provide greater access to services during the month of October and throughout the year.

National Cyber Security Awareness Month. We rely on the Internet for filing tax returns, applying for student loans, following traffic signals, powering our homes, and much more. NCSAM is designed to raise awareness about cyber security and strengthen the resiliency of the nation in the event of a "cyber incident."

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