



**US Army Corps of Engineers**

**Mobile District**

**BUILDING STRONG®**

October 2012

Vol. 4, Issue 2

# THE MOBILE

**Breast cancer survivor Patricia Nance, her story**



[DISTRICT  
HOME PAGE](#)

[INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE](#)



Inside this issue...

Vol. 4, Issue 2

Oct. 16, 2012

**FROM THE DEPUTY COMMANDER**

[Click Here](#)

**DISTRICT DESIGN PROJECT GETS TOP AWARD**

[Click Here](#)

**DISTRICT COUNSEL RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY**

[Click Here](#)

**PM BRINGS FIRST-TIME AWARD TO DISTRICT**

[Click Here](#)

**RD RECEIVES GOOD NEIGHBOR AWARD**

[Click Here](#)

**HISPANIC HERITAGE OBSERVANCE**

[Click Here](#)

**TO YOUR HEALTH**

[Click Here](#)

**BRIEFS & LINKS OF INTEREST**

[Click Here](#)

**DISCLAIMERS**

[Click Here](#)

**COVER STORY PHOTO OUTLINE:** *Patricia Nance, a secretary to the Operations Division Chief William Fuller, stands in front of Mobile District Headquarters in downtown Mobile with her breast cancer awareness flag planted in the district's landscaping display. Nance was diagnosed with breast cancer February 2007. Her story tells how she overcome the cancer and has become a continued survivor.*

## COVER STORY



**[Click Here!](#)**

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## THE MOBILE

**PREVIOUS  
PAGE**

**NEXT  
PAGE**



### From the Deputy Commander...

Any time an employee--a member of our team--passes away, regardless of the circumstances, there results a devastating and far-reaching effect throughout the organization. Unfortunately, this summer, Mobile District lost three employees in rapid succession. Our hearts go out to the families and co-workers of Willie Thompson, Wayne Gulledge and Herron Abney.

Willie Thompson worked as a crane operator on the M/V Lawson and passed away of natural causes aboard the vessel. Wayne Gulledge was the Master of the Vessel General Irwin at Walter F. George in Fort Gaines, Ga. and a long time DTOS (Deployable Tactical Operations System) Operator, who succumbed to a long and courageous battle with cancer. Herron Abney was a powerhouse operator, also at Walter F. George, who also died of natural causes. It was due to these circumstances that we reached out for assistance to the Command Chaplain of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Col. Brent Causey.

In short order, Chaplain Causey flew into Mobile and off we went—in fact, in less than 36 hours from the initial request, he was in Mobile. We planned an aggressive trip through Alabama and northern Georgia, visiting several projects along the way. The end result was a trip that spanned two full days and covered over 870 miles.

We began our trip at 0600 hrs (6:00 a.m.) on August 22, driving to the Coffeerville Lock and Dam in Silas, Ala. to visit the crew of the M/V Lawson. The Chaplain spoke to the crew, both collectively and individually, working around their mission of breaking rocks to clean out the lower approach to the lock. All spoke very highly of Willie Thompson and about their time with him. From Coffeerville, we proceeded to Demopolis, Ala. for lunch with the employees there, and then to Tuscaloosa, Ala. at the Black Warrior-Tombigbee & Alabama River Project Office for more group and individual discussions with the Chaplain. Finally, at about 2230 hrs (11:30 p.m.), we arrived in Atlanta.

The next morning, we visited Wayne Gulledge and his family at Emory University Hospital. Wayne's dedication to the Corps was evident, as even in sickness, he wore his red Corps of Engineers DTOS hat. Chaplain Causey also had the opportunity to speak privately with Wayne and his family. We ended our trip with a visit to Lake Sidney Lanier to speak with the staff and park rangers. Rangers must deal with traumatic situations, including public fatalities and accidents, but must always remain upbeat and professional in dealing with large crowds to ensure their safety.

Most unfortunately, we learned of Herron Abney's passing while we were en-route during the trip. We look forward in the near future to coordinating another trip for the Chaplain to visit the Walter F. George Project. One interesting fact that I learned during this trip was about the nature of communication with a military chaplain. Although I have worked with great chaplains during my entire career, I did not realize the level of confidentiality in personal communication with a chaplain.

*(Continued on next page)*



*Lt. Col. Thomas Nelson  
Mobile District Deputy Commander  
Official USACE Photo.*

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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### From the Deputy Commander...continued

More so than legal or medical professionals, communication with a chaplain is considered “privileged,” and by law, a chaplain may not divulge any of this to anyone, including a commander. So I found it very neat to know that anything I discussed during our hours riding together would never be repeated by anyone, anywhere.

Finally, I'd like to point out that with any devastating loss comes a natural period of mourning, and people handle this individually in their own ways. Most feelings experienced by those, to include sadness or guilt, are perfectly natural. It really helps to talk over these issues with co-workers, clergy or counselors—to include the USACE Chaplain, who by his mandate ministers to all 37,000 members of USACE.

#### OTHER THOUGHTS:

Now that I have been here for over a year, and have an entire fiscal year—start to finish—under my belt, I'd like to congratulate all of you on the hard work and professionalism that got us through this one. I am continually impressed on a daily basis during my visits to field offices, or my wanderings around Mobile District Headquarters, on what a fine group of individuals we have. I'm proud to be a part of it!

Thank you and have a Blessed Day!

Building Strong! - **Lt. Col. Thomas F. Nelson**



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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### District design project gets top award from USACE Chief of Engineers

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office



*Pictured is an exterior view of Tyndall Fitness Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. Mobile District received the 2012 Chief of Engineers Award of Excellence for the designing the fitness center. Photo courtesy of Tyndall AFB.*

The Mobile District has been recognized in the 2012 Chief of Engineers Awards of Excellence Program with its highest award – Chief of Engineers Award of Excellence – for the designing of the Tyndall Fitness Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. The program was created in 1965 to recognize and promote excellence design achievements in two categories – military and environmental/civil design achievements – by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its professional partners. The current USACE Chief of Engineers is Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick. The Award of Excellence is the chief’s highest award and only one is given for each category. A unanimous decision is required for an entry that truly exhibits excellence in all major professional design disciplines.

Tyndall AFB Fitness Center is a \$17 million, 75k square foot, 2-story, state-of-the-art fitness center designed to follow the “Fit to Fight” maxim recently adopted by the U.S. Air Force. It was also designed to meet the Energy Policy Act of 2005 and exceeds the requirement to reduce energy consumption to 30 percent below the standard.

The facility is a bold architectural statement with dynamic interior features. Bringing together a mix of materials with vibrant color, architectural features with dramatic shapes, and an all-time first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or “green” certification for the Air Force, the facility exudes energy and fitness throughout a complex of interconnecting athletic spaces.

Open since August 2010, the fitness center is more than three times the size of the original gymnasium built in 1975. This much-needed expansion serves up to 1,000 visitors daily. The site, located within a half-mile walking distance to an existing community and several barracks, encourages walking. To enforce the “green” spirit of the facility, bike racks and premium parking were established for low emission, fuel efficient and alternative fuel vehicles.

Throughout the project, the design team relied on Building Information Modeling (BIM) solutions from Autodesk to explore and refine ideas quickly and efficiently. Early in the design phase, the design team also used sophisticated rendering technology to create preliminary building massing models and renderings to visualize ideas. In pursuit of LEED certification, project architects explored multiple approaches to shading and harvesting natural sunlight. Energy-saving features include the building envelope and cooling systems, increased wall insulation, an energy-efficient roof system, and roof mounted photovoltaic solar panels. Other sustainable design features include day lighting; solar thermal preheating of domestic water; rainwater collection for irrigation systems; low-flow toilets, urinals, and shower systems; and permeable pavers in overflow parking areas.

Receipt of LEED Platinum certification reflects the highest achievement possible in the five categories of green-build construction: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials and resources selection, and indoor environmental quality. The many sustainable systems incorporated by the design team to achieve the LEED Platinum level makes this facility representative of “The Building of the Future.” Underscoring the Air Force’s commitment to successful use of energy-efficient and sustainable design, the building is the most energy efficient facility in the U.S. military.

*(Continued on next page)*

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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### District design project...continued

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office



Interior view of the Tyndall Fitness Center at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. Photo courtesy of Tyndall AFB.

A major challenge of this project was overcoming the limitations and constraints of the original preliminary concept design. The preliminary design called for a single story, 89k-square foot facility built to LEED Silver certification, which exceeded available funding.

To resolve these funding issues, the design team led a three-day scoping charrette, conducted an on-site assessment, and reassessed individual and operational requirements using data collected during interviews with more than a dozen key stakeholder agencies, to accurately meet requirements.

As a result of this comprehensive reassessment, the design team was able to implement innovative, sustainable and cost-saving design approaches, and recommend the construction of a two-story fitness center with a considerably smaller footprint.

This new design maximized square footage within the established budget and generated approximately \$3 million in total cost savings from the original estimate. Recognizing the Air Force goal for the new fitness center to serve as a national showcase for sustainable military development, the design team strove to integrate proven energy and cost-saving solutions into the design, and performed life-cycle cost analysis on all of the energy-saving features.

An 11,000-square-foot cardio/weight room with a separate parent/child workout area hosts new equipment, while reusing some of the barbells and dumbbells from the old facility. Almost 4,000 square feet is dedicated to a Health and Wellness Center, which provides space where individuals can receive personal counseling for healthy living and cooking classes in the demonstration kitchen.

The design and construction of an energy-efficient building located in hot, humid Florida presents a number of challenges, and the Tyndall Fitness Center was no different. Using Revit Architecture software, the project architects developed and evaluated multiple approaches for shading the building while maximizing the harvesting of natural sunlight to minimize the need for artificial lighting, resulting in both lower "first in" costs and annual operating expenses.



U.S. Air Force personnel enjoy the Tyndall Fitness Center's workout equipment. Photo courtesy of Tyndall Fitness AFB.

"Throughout construction, close teamwork and coordination ensured that the project stayed on track and in compliance with LEED standards," said Brig. Gen. James Browne, 325th Fighter Wing Commander. "These facilities will, without a doubt, improve the quality of life for members of team Tyndall and their families."

## THE MOBILE

PREVIOUS PAGE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NEXT PAGE



### District Counsel recognized nationally by USACE Chief Counsel

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office

Mobile District Counsel Deborah Shoemake has been selected to receive the Bert P. Pettinato Award. This national award comes from The Chief Counsel Earl Stockdale's Honorary Awards Program of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is named for a former USACE attorney who is highly regarded for his 37 years of legal service. Pettinato, a World War II veteran, began his career with USACE in 1956 as a legal clerk for the Walla Walla District later advancing to the position of Pacific Ocean Division Counsel.

The Pettinato Award recognizes an individual in USACE legal services who has demonstrated the ideals of "Pride in Public Service" through leadership, concern for people and a personal belief that public service is both a noble calling and public trust. The award will be sent to the district from headquarters.

"I'm so honored the chief counsel and my peers would recognize me," Shoemake said during an interview in her office. "Pettinato was a wonderful attorney who devoted his life to the Army and the Corps."

Shoemake was nominated for the award by South Atlantic Division Counsel Neil Purcell. This is the third national award she has received. In 2005, she was named "USACE Attorney of the Year" and in 2002 was highlighted for her special contributions to the USACE legal services mission: "to practice preventive law."

Shoemake's law career with Mobile District began in 1983. Since then, she has grown through the ranks, working in various areas of the law: procurement; labor; environmental and general administrative law. Moreover, Shoemake has represented the government in many trials and handled numerous ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) actions. She became the deputy district counsel in 2001 and has been the district counsel since 2007. "It's great to work for the Corps but it's even better to work for the Mobile District," Shoemake said. "I'm very passionate about Mobile District, and I think that's why I've stayed here so long. We have an incredible work ethic. Everyone works hard, taking pride in what they do." According to Shoemake, one of her best practices is being proactive as opposed to being reactive. "It's a lot easier to prevent problems than solving them after they have happened." She also is very proud of her legal team. "This is the best Office of Counsel in the entire Corps of Engineers. We have great lawyers, paralegals and clerks. We all like each other and always give our very best in what we do."

Her advice to lawyers with ambitions of becoming district counsel is to "always do your best" and "make sure you want to be a manager." Shoemake obviously wanted to be manager and continues to lead well as evidenced by the testimonies of her peers. "Debbie is the epitome of a district counsel. Her people are her family. She motivates her staff to achieve more than they thought possible and leads them to their own fulfillment. She is more than a great lawyer; she is a great person, friend, mentor and colleague. Her legal work is exemplary; her leadership sets the standard; and her service knows no bounds," Purcell said.

Shoemake is originally from St. Francisville, La. just north of Baton Rouge. She received her B.S. in political science in 1976 from Spring Hill College in Mobile, Ala. and her Juris Doctorate in 1979 from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Shoemake and two of her classmates from UAB - Ann Taylor, who is Deputy District Counsel for Mobile District and Otto Thompson, District Counsel for Japan District - are among the 400 plus attorneys for USACE. Although Shoemake is a graduate of UAB, she says she is unashamedly a football fan of Louisiana State University.



Mobile District Counsel Deborah Shoemake pictured in the Office of Counsel. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.

## THE MOBILE

PREVIOUS PAGE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

NEXT PAGE



### Project manager brings first-time award to district

by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office

John Crane, a project manager for Mobile District, was awarded the Richard E. Bonner Award from the Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association Sept. 27 for his service and leadership on the Panama City Beaches Project at ceremony held in Naples, Fla.

The Bonner Award recognizes outstanding service by an individual representing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and this was the first time ever a Mobile District employee was selected by FSBPA. Awardees typically come from Jacksonville District because this district has more USACE Florida projects.

The award was named in honor of a former USACE employee of Jacksonville District whose career began in Mobile District. Richard Bonner's contributions to project management in regards to Florida shore and beach protection are highly regarded by the FSBPA.

The Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association is a not-for-profit entity with offices in Tallahassee, Fla. FSBPA was organized in 1957 at a meeting of 37 local government and university leaders concerned about the growing problem of beach erosion that had virtually destroyed important resort beaches such as Miami Beach.

"It was a pleasure to present this award to honor John," Lisa Armbruster, beach management consultant and government affairs liaison for FSBPA said. "John personifies Richard Bonner's commitment to serving his local sponsors, mirrors his excellence with an almost 40-year career with the Corps, and shares his reputation for getting things done!"

Crane has been involved with Panama City Beach since the 1970s. After Hurricane Eloise hit in 1975, he walked the entire 18.5 miles of Panama City Beach to inspect each and every beachfront structure. This effort included crawling under buildings the storm had washed out and even under high rises where he discovered major structural issues.

In 2004 after Hurricane Ivan, Crane resurrected USACE's involvement in the shore protection program. He was instrumental in the success of storm repair nourishment projects for 2005, 2006 and 2011. Crane also organized and led the development, funding, study process, approval, and eventual construction of the first federal project along the one-mile addition to the Panama City Beaches Shore Protection Project.

"I am pleased to have received many awards from the Corps, but it's very special anytime you are recognized outside of your organization," John Crane said. Although he is humbled to have been celebrated by FSBPA, Crane has made it known there are many unrecognized key players from his team, other agencies and the community.

"While I am honored to have received this award from the association for what the Corps has accomplished, I didn't do this alone," Crane said. When it comes to the planning, environmental, engineering, contracting, and construction inspection of the project; it takes a great team of people to make this happen, and we had an exceptional team on the Panama City Beaches project."

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*John Crane, a Mobile District project manager, holds the Richard E. Bonner Award with Lisa Armbruster, beach management consultant and government affairs liaison for the Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association. Photo courtesy of FSBPA.*

## THE MOBILE

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### Project manager...continued

by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office

Armbruster nominated Crane for the Bonner Award and the Bay County Tourist Development Council Board of Directors and the Bay County Commissioners passed resolutions in honor him and in support of his winning the award. She also spoke on what she believes is Crane's best attribute.

"If I had to pinpoint John's most outstanding trait, it would be his uncanny ability to draw everyone involved in a project together; inspire them all to believe they can indeed overcome whatever challenges lie before them; and more than anything, motivate them to solve these challenges in an expedited manner," she said.

Because John is one of the most senior employees of the district, he has achieved many contributions and accomplishments that include but are not limited to:

- Panama City Beaches Beach Erosion Control and Storm Damage Reduction Project, Project Manager
- Deep Draft Navigation Projects including Panama City Harbor, Pensacola Harbor, Mobile Harbor, Pascagoula Harbor, and Gulfport Harbor, Project Manager
- Hurricane Frederic (Mobile, AL, 1979), Hurricane Elena (Ocean Springs, MS, 1985), Hurricane Eloise (Panama City Beach, FL, 1975), and Hurricane Hugo (US Virgin Islands, 1989) FEMA response, Corps Office Manager
- National Park Service – Fort Pickens Pier (Pensacola, FL) and Fort Massachusetts Shoreline Stabilization (Ship Island, MS)
- Dauphin Island Emergency Berm, Project Manager
- Tenn-Tom Waterway Locks and Dams, Design Team Member



*The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District restores the Panama City beach with dredging operations to replenish the sand along the coastline. Photo courtesy of the Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association.*

In addition to numerous performance recognitions over the years, some of Crane's awards have included: Team Spirit District, Mobile Outstanding Planning Achievement Award (1988); the USACE Chief of Engineers Roger Hoell Excellence in Structural Engineering Award (1995); Special Act of Service Award (1999); the US Coast Guard's Recognition of his efforts on several projects (2002); the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association's Project Management Award (2006); the Commander's Award for Civilian Service (2006); and the Bay County TDC's Recognition of his efforts during the 2005-2006 nourishment project.

Crane's service with USACE began in 1973 at Mobile District's design branch of the Engineering Division. During this time, he became a registered professional engineer (P.E.) in the state of Alabama. He eventually transferred to the Civil Works Project Management Team of the Programs & Project Management Division in 1998 where he has managed the district's numerous, large civil works projects along the coastlines of Florida, Alabama and Mississippi.

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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### RD receives Good Neighbor Award

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office



*U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick (left) and Mobile District Regulatory Chief Craig Litteken (right) pictured at the 2012 National Awards Ceremony on Aug. 6 in Little Rock, Ark. Bostick presented Litteken with the USACE Good Neighbor Award, which Mobile District received because of its development of the Living Shorelines Regional General Permit. Photo courtesy of USACE Headquarters.*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Good Neighborhood Award was awarded to the Mobile District Regulatory Division Alabama Living Shorelines General Permit Coastal Alabama Team during the USACE 2012 National Awards Ceremony Aug. 6 in Little Rock, Ark. at the Clinton Presidential Library & Museum. Craig Litteken, Chief of the Regulatory Division, attended the event and accepted the award from USACE Commanding General and Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick.

The Good Neighbor Award recognizes a USACE team, project or facility for its exemplary application of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, Livability Principles and/or engagement with local or regional communities involving community planning and sustainability initiatives.

“I was very pleased!” Litteken said. “This was the first time we competed for an award like this.”

The Coastal Alabama Team developed a Living Shorelines Regional General Permit. The permit addresses erosion and degradation of shorelines by providing for the long-term protection, restoration and enhancement of both stable and degraded shorelines by using plants, stones and other natural materials.

The team expanded the concept to be more viable for a larger number of projects to allow applicants to avoid a lengthy, costly permit process. Litteken praised the efforts of the Coastal Alabama Team members Joy Earp and Sandy Gipson as significant throughout the entire process.

The LSRGP is the first general permit of its kind throughout USACE. Living shorelines provide for the long-term protection, restoration and enhancement of both stable and degraded shorelines which are subjected to a variety of energy regimes by using plants, stone, sand fill and other organic or natural materials. They also provide protection to local roads along the shoreline, thus creating millions in savings to taxpayers.

Mobile District’s Coastal Alabama Team took the living shorelines concept, and developed it to include structural and nonstructural alternatives, applicable for use over a range of freshwater to marine ecosystems, useable not only by the private landowner but also for larger acreages targeted for restoration and creation. LSRGP promotes the preservation, protection and restoration of dunes, beaches, wetlands, submerged aquatic vegetation, protection and propagation of essential fish habitat, shoreline restoration and nourishment.

The LSRGP is developed for use in areas subjected to scour, erosion, sloughing, high energy wave action, storm damage and other similar areas which are in need of restoration. It focuses on a minimalistic, naturalized approach with limited or temporary structural enhancement in order to achieve a self-sustaining, stabilized shoreline, in lieu of the traditional seawall or bulkhead revetments.

LSRGP is applicable over a wide range of habitats and ecosystems in waters of the United States. Marine, estuarine, riverine, lacustrine, and palustrine environments can be enhanced and restored by living shoreline activities and are not restricted to tidal or tidally influenced waters.

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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### Hispanic Heritage Observance: Cuban American speaks on immigrating to USA

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office



Keynote speaker Ed Seoane address an audience of Mobile District employees in the Federal Annex Building during a Hispanic Heritage Month Observance sponsored by the Equal Employment Office. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.

The Equal Employment Office's Special Emphasis Leadership Forum hosted a Hispanic Heritage Month Observance with a theme of "Diversity United, Building America's Future Today" Oct. 11 in downtown Mobile at the Federal Annex Building. The guest speaker was Ed A. Seoane, President of the Hispanic American Business Association of the Gulf Coast.

Seoane spoke to district employees about his homeland in the island country of Cuba, sharing his story about his family's journey to escape Cuba's communism to live in the United States – a place his parents envisioned as a better way of life.

He told the audience about his uncle who fought in the Bay of Pigs Invasion. This was an unsuccessful operation by a U.S. Central Intelligence Agency-trained force of Cuban exiles to invade southern Cuba, with support and encouragement from the U.S. government in an attempt to overthrow the Cuban government of Fidel Castro. The invasion was launched in April 1961, just three months after John F. Kennedy assumed presidency of the U.S.

The Cuban armed forces, trained and equipped by Eastern Bloc nations, defeated the invading combatants within three days. Seoane's uncle was killed in battle. After this tragedy, Seoane's family sought

permission to leave that same year, but they weren't allowed to leave until 1969. The family received a knock at the door from law officials notifying them of their approval to leave. Unfortunately, the family was only authorized to take a few belongings and had to give up the rest of their possessions, including household goods, their automobile and home.

"My family and I arrived to Miami in 1969," Ed Seoane said. "Like most Cubans, we came we just came with a suitcase in our hand. I understand what it means to come to this country with nothing because that's what we did."

Seoane and his family settled in New Orleans with a family member who helped his father find employment. Thanks to the efforts of Catholic charities, the family was able to move into a home of their own. Seoane was enrolled in school and found it hard to adjust because he didn't know the language. "I remember going home crying and not wanting to go to school because I had no idea what everyone was saying," Seoane said. "I often think back how difficult it must have been for my parents because they didn't know the language either yet they never seem to complain. They were happy for this opportunity."

Seoane said his father worked two jobs to support their family of eight (husband, wife and six sons) and taught him and his brothers the importance of hard work and education. As a result, Seoane and all his brothers went to college, obtaining their degrees and careers in various fields.

"We are so grateful for the opportunities the United States has afforded us," he said in his closing comments. "I haven't been back to Cuba since we left, but I hope when I do return it will be to a free Cuba."

*Continued on next page)*

## THE MOBILE

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### Hispanic Heritage Observance...continued

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office



*Ruben Rosales, the district's Hispanic Employment Program Manager, signals keynote speaker Ed Seoane during the question and answer segment of Hispanic Heritage Observance. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.*

The observance continued with questions from the audience followed by remarks from EEO Chief Catherine Cummings and a presentation from Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Thomas Nelson.

"I really enjoyed hearing Ed's story of how he and his family came to this country," Ruben Rosales, Hispanic Employment Program Manager, said after the presentation. "It's amazing to hear him express his gratitude of being in our country."

EEO Specialist Rhonda Callier added that she was inspired to hear Seoane and his family's success story.

Seoane was born in Camaguey, Cuba and grew up outside of New Orleans in Kenner, La. He is the Director of Procurement for LMS Shipmanagement, Inc. Seoane holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and a master's in business administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. He is bilingual in Spanish and English. As President of the Hispanic American Business Association for the Gulf Coast, Seoane

leads fundraising efforts to support Hispanic college-bound students.

Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 to Oct. 15) was approved by President Lyndon Johnson in 1968 and expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988. This is a celebration of Hispanic heritage and culture, as well as recognition of the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States.

The Department of Army requires establishing Special Emphasis Programs to ensure equal opportunity in hiring, training, advancement and treatment of women and minority employees. The SEPs were established to assist agencies in assuring that equal opportunity is present in all aspects of employment and that affirmative action addresses under-representation.

The goals for the programs are to eliminate discriminatory practices, to ensure targeted groups are appropriately represented throughout the workforce, and to sponsor special activities designed to enhance diversity awareness. The SEP managers implement presidential executive orders and federal personnel programs established by the Office of Personnel Management, work to eliminate demographic group imbalances in targeted occupations, and help achieve workforce diversity.

The Hispanic Employment Program is an integral part of the federal government-wide Equal Employment Opportunity Program under the authority of Executive Order 13171, Hispanic Employment in the Federal Government of Oct. 12, 2001. The goals of the HEP are to work toward enhancing employment opportunities for Hispanic employees and individuals seeking Federal employment and ensure Hispanic Americans are represented throughout the workforce at all grade levels and occupations.



*Lt. Col Thomas Nelson, the district's Deputy Commander, greets keynote speaker Ed Seoane as he presents Seoane with a certificate and Commander's Coin after the Hispanic Heritage Observance. Photo by Lance Davis, PAO.*

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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### **Breast cancer survivor Patricia Nance, her story**

Story by Lance Davis, Public Affairs Office

Back in April 2006 Patricia Nance – secretary to William Fuller, Chief of Operations – was at her doctor’s office having a routine mammogram, which uses a low-dose x-ray system to examine breasts. A lump was discovered in her left arm pit. Because the nurse who performed the exam did not show any concern or provide any recommendations about the lump, Nance did not take the matter seriously. After all, her husband was in and out of the hospital dealing with some major health issues and she needed and wanted to focus on his recovery. Therefore, she delayed her appointment to see her gynecologist (GYN) doctor for several months.

“When I was younger, I had cysts in my breast. There were always lumps. I didn’t think it was anything serious,” Nance said.

On Jan. 18, 2007 – just one day before her 29th Wedding Anniversary – Nance met with her GYN in Mobile. After she examined the lump, the GYN referred Nance to “the best cancer doctor” she knew. The surgical oncologist was alarmed with the size of the lump under her left arm pit. He said it was too large for a biopsy and immediately scheduled surgery for Feb. 2, 2007 to extract it. When the lump was removed, it was larger than a golf ball. Pathology findings revealed a diagnosis of Metastatic Large Cell Carcinoma/Nodular Lymphoma, hormone positive and complications with the HER2 gene (Human Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor 2). In other words, Nance had breast cancer.

“I learned a valuable lesson not to put off for tomorrow what you can do today. Time was of the essence, and I realized precious time was what I had lost,” she said.

The doctor then referred Nance to a medical oncologist who would administer chemotherapy in Pensacola but to also determine where the cancer had originated. First, Nance had another mammogram, but it did not reveal anything. Next, Nance had a PET/CT Scan (Positron Emission Tomography - Computed Tomography) – state-of-the-art imaging tools combined that allow physicians to pinpoint the location of cancer within the body before making treatment recommendations. The highly sensitive PET scan displays images for the biology of disorders at the molecular level, while the CT scan provides a detailed picture of the body’s internal anatomy. No sign of cancer was found in her body with the rate of 95 percent accuracy. The last option was to conduct a breast MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) – an advanced medical imaging technique that uses radiology to visualize internal structures of the body in detail. As a result, the cancer was discovered in both of Nance’s breasts.

“My journey with breast cancer was a very long road that I never imagined I would have to take in my lifetime,” she said.

Nance took this journey, focusing on her survival. Her husband immediately took charge, providing support, encouragement and research. For instance, he insisted they become vegetarians because being healthy was essential to Nance’s success. Their research showed that the longest survivors of any kind of cancer are those that are vegetarians.

According to Nance, telling her mother was one of the hardest things she had to do.

“The hardest thing for me was telling my mother so I called my dad and asked him to tell her for me. He called me the next day and told me he couldn’t do it and that I had to.”

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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### Breast cancer survivor...continued

Nance decided to tell her in person. She called her priest to accompany her for support because “I knew my mother would fall apart at the news, and she did.” In spite of that, Nance’s mother was her biggest supporter during her battle of breast cancer.

Throughout her mission to overcome breast cancer, Nance’s life was filled with continuous challenges. She endured nine surgeries, which included a double mastectomy; five and a half weeks of radiation; four months of chemotherapy treatments; one year of Herceptin therapy to combat the HER2 gene; and a 100 percent commitment to healthy eating.

“Fighting this disease temporarily stole my life and the very essence of who I am. It affected me both physically and emotionally, but I never gave up. I was able to overcome all my fears as I ventured down this long road to recovery.”

Nance did not have to do it alone. With the help of her family, friends, coworkers, support groups and medical teams, she overcame her struggle with breast cancer. The cancer was removed and has not been detected again since she underwent necessary medical procedures.

“I met so many wonderful women, professional medical doctors, nurses and staff. I will forever be grateful to those individuals because they helped me become a breast cancer survivor. Knowing my mother knew I had successfully beaten this battle with success before she passed was my happiest moment.”

It has been more than five years since Nance was diagnosed, but this breast cancer survivor is still holding on and standing strong. She is committed to living a healthy life and supporting breast cancer awareness efforts. She encourages women to have mammograms regularly. In addition, she provides support and mentoring to women coping with breast cancer by sharing her story.

Nance credits a retired, registered nurse and cancer survivor Helen Stansfield – who headed a local wellness group Nance joined – as a “tremendous help” for sharing her wisdom and being a good friend.

“Without Helen’s guidance, I would have been lost. [Breast Cancer Fighters] Reach out to others who have gone through this because you can learn a valuable lesson from them; keep a positive attitude and hold on to your faith.”



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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



## To Your Health

### Breast Cancer Awareness

Breast Cancer affects millions – and more groups than most people may realize.

For instance, did you know that young women can and do get breast cancer, even in their 20s, or out of every hundred cases of breast cancer, one will be a man? Many men think that only women can get breast cancer; this misunderstanding may cause some men to ignore breast lumps until the cancer has spread too far to be curable.

The American Cancer Society recommends women age 40 and over get one every year, along with a breast exam by your doctor. Whether you're a mammogram newbie or a veteran, knowing what to expect may help you navigate the process more smoothly.

It's best to schedule your mammogram for the week after your menstrual period. Your breasts won't be tender or swollen, which means less discomfort during the X-ray and a clearer picture.

The entire procedure takes about 20 minutes. Each breast is compressed for a few seconds while two or more X-ray pictures are taken. Flattening the breast tissue, while uncomfortable for some women, provides a clearer view of the breast and lessens the amount of radiation needed to take an X-ray picture.

You should get your results within 30 days. If doctors find something suspicious, you'll likely be contacted within a week to take new pictures or get other tests. But that doesn't mean you have cancer. A suspicious finding may just be dense breast tissue or a cyst. Other times, the image just isn't clear and needs to be retaken. Under the Affordable Care Act, Medicare and almost all private insurance plans now cover annual mammograms, with no co-pay or other out-of-pocket costs.

[CLICK HERE](#) for details regarding the Equal Employment Office's Breast Cancer Awareness Month Walkathon!



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## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



### Briefs

**Columbus Day (Oct. 8).** It is generally accepted that Christopher Columbus was the first European to have discovered the New World of the Americas on Oct. 12, 1492. Out of pride for their native son, the Italian population of New York City organized the first celebration of the discovery of America on Oct. 12, 1866. In 1869, when the Italians of San Francisco celebrated Oct. 12, they called it Columbus Day. Colorado became the first state to observe a Columbus Day in 1905. Over the next 20 years other states followed. In 1937, President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed every Oct. 12 as Columbus Day. In 1971 Congress changed Columbus Day observance as a federal holiday to the second Monday in October.

**Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15 - Oct. 15).** Approved by President Lyndon Johnson in 1968 and expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988, this is a celebration of Hispanic heritage and culture, as well as recognition of the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States and to celebrate Hispanic heritage and culture. Sept. 15 is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, which all declared independence in 1821. Mexico, Chile and Belize celebrate their independence on Sept. 16, Sept. 18, and Sept. 21, respectively.

**National Disability Employment Awareness Month.** Held each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. This year’s theme is “A Strong Workforce is an Inclusive Workforce: What Can YOU Do?”

**Domestic Violence Awareness Month.** Created by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed back in 1987. Its purpose encompasses mourning those who have died because of domestic violence, celebrating those who have survived, and connecting those who work to end violence.

**National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.** The National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) is a collaboration of national public service organizations, professional medical associations, and government agencies working together to promote breast cancer awareness, share information on the disease, and provide greater access to services. Since its inception more than 25 years ago, NBCAM has been at the forefront of promoting awareness of breast cancer issues and has evolved along with the national dialogue on breast cancer.

**National Bullying Prevention Month.** This is a campaign in the United States founded in 2006 by PACER’s National Center for Bullying Prevention held during the month of October to unite communities nationwide to educate and raise awareness of bullying prevention. Traditionally held the first week in October, the event was expanded in 2010 to include activities, education, and awareness building for the entire month.

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---

## THE MOBILE

---

PREVIOUS  
PAGE

INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

NEXT  
PAGE



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PREVIOUS  
PAGE



INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE

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# October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



Join us for a Fun Walk to Support the Cause

**Thursday, October 18, 2012**

**11:00 a.m.**

**(Walk from USACE to Cooper Riverside Park and Back)**

Wear **PINK**

Sponsored by: **EEO and SELF**



Equal Employment Opportunity Office

SELF – Special Emphasis Leadership Forum



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