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of Engineers

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Huntsville Center

Bulletin



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Mark your calendar now...

**Huntsville Center's
Holiday Celebration
"Season of Giving"**
Friday, Dec. 15
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**Battle of the Bulge
begins Jan. 10**
Sign Up Now!



Family photo helps Corps find chemical warfare materiel

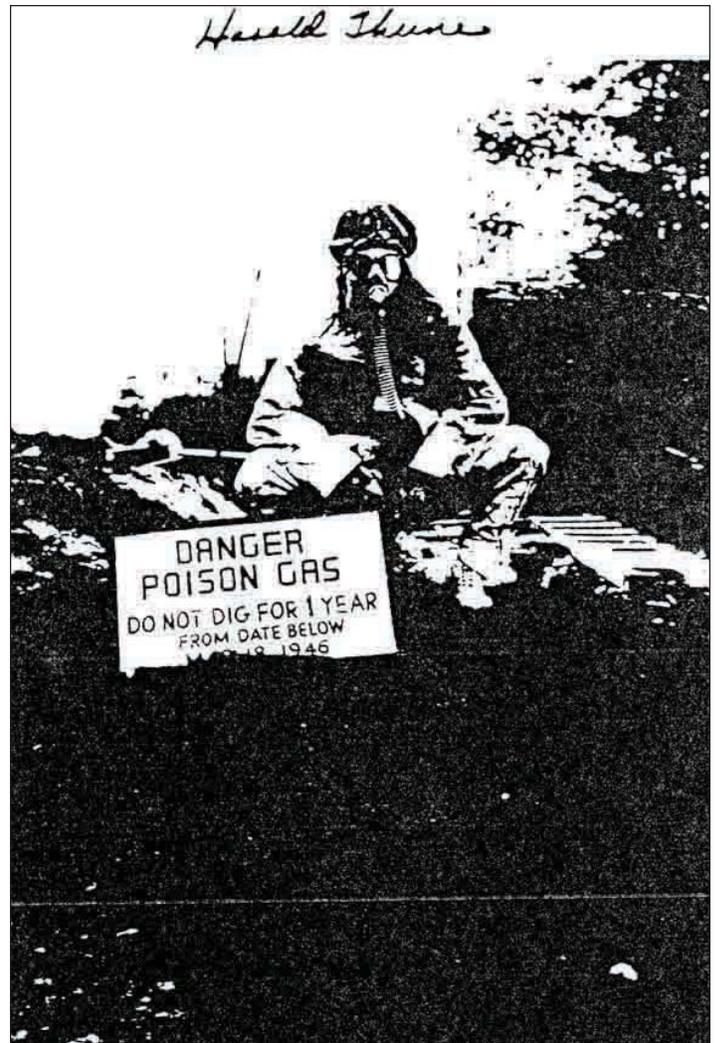
By Andrea Takash
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville and Seattle District joined together to remove chemical warfare materiel at the former Tulalip Backup Ammunition Storage Depot in Snohomish County, Wash., thanks to a letter and a picture from a concerned resident.

The Army used the former depot to store conventional munitions and chemical warfare materiel (CWM) during World War II and the Korean War.

"If it wasn't for Lila Brown's 1940s-era photo of her nephew, who was a Soldier, pointing to a sign that said 'poison gas area, don't dig for one year' we would have never known about this area of the site," said Betina Johnson, Chemical Warfare Materiel Scoping and Security Study project manager at the Huntsville Engineering and Support Center.

The Corps team is



Courtesy photo

This photo from the 1940s helped the team during the investigation.

performing a time critical removal action at the former depot, which is now owned by the Tulalip Tribe,

to remove cylinders and glassware that may contain

See Tulalip on page 9

Commander's thoughts

It's that wonderful time of the year again, the holiday season! Thanksgiving is over and we are preparing for the December holidays. Many of you will take leave during this time, visiting friends and family, and perhaps like me, eating your way through the season. However you choose to celebrate the season, I ask that you do so safely. You're a very important asset at the Center and I want all of you to come back in the New Year!

The Huntsville Center will celebrate the holidays Dec. 15 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Bring your spouse or a special guest and join us for a few hours. It will be fun. The Huntsville Center chorus and other vocal and instrumental artists will provide music beginning at 10 a.m. Food will be provided, pot-luck style, by employees on all three floors. And the results of the door decoration contest will be announced at 2 p.m. Retirees are invited to join Huntsville Center employees starting at noon. Special badges will be provided upon entering the building, so they may join the festivities unaccompanied.

I want to thank all of you for your participation in the Combined Federal

Campaign. Through payroll deductions, cash donations and special fund-raising events, as of Nov. 20, the Huntsville Center had raised \$54,500 of our \$79,818 goal. Sixty-eight percent of employees participated. We can still turn in pledge cards through Dec. 15, so if you haven't yet made your donation, there's still time!

The next two big events on the horizon for the Huntsville Center are the visit to the Center by the Chief of Engineers, and the conversion of most employees to the National Security Personnel System, both scheduled for January 2007. This will be the Chief's first visit to the Center as the Chief of Engineers. We will conduct a town hall during his visit. It is an opportunity to show off the great work our employees perform for the Corps and for the nation.

NSPS will be challenging for all of us. By now all of you should have attended the 8-hour training session for employees or the 16-hour session for

supervisors. Another way to learn about NSPS is to take the NSPS 101 training online. The most important element for ranking your performance during the year will be your objectives.

Under NSPS, you only need between one and five objectives, with three being the recommended number. Please take the time to ensure your objectives meet the Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) criteria. Follow the examples provided by the NSPS Project Delivery Team.

They've been working hard to make this transition as easy as possible.

As we start the New Year, if your resolution is to lose weight and get in shape join the Huntsville Center Fitness Challenge — the Battle of the Bulge! The competition runs Jan. 10 to April 4 with prizes awarded each week and at the end of the competition. See the article in this issue of the *Bulletin* for all the details.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!



Col. Larry D. McCallister

Hails and farewells

Welcome to new employees

— Felix Banis, Ordnance and Explosives Directorate; Joseph O. Conn, Chemical Demilitarization Directorate; Chris Gardner, Public

Affairs Office; Toby Harryman, Office of Counsel; Robert Hennessee, Installation Support; Gail Overman, Chemical Demilitarization Directorate; Randolph Scott, Ordnance and

Explosives Directorate; and Suzanne Zarger, Engineering Directorate.

Farewell to Kathryn Wallace, Contracting; and Bonnie Smith, Engineering Directorate.



US Army Corps of Engineers

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BULLETIN

Commander..... Col. Larry D. McCallister
 Chief, Public Affairs..... Kim Gillespie
 Editor..... Becky Proaps

COL. AND MRS. LARRY MCCALLISTER INVITE ALL
HUNTSVILLE CENTER EMPLOYEES TO THE
“SEASON OF GIVING,” FRIDAY, DEC. 15.

*Retirees are invited to come to the
Huntsville Center starting at noon.
Special badges will be provided.
Please R.S.V.P. by Dec. 14
to Lori Byrd, 895-1497.*

- * Music program begins at 10 a.m.*
- * Pot-luck dining on all floors*
- * Door contest judging/winners
announced*

It's time to Party!! See you there!!

The Bulletin asks:

What has/have been your major accomplishment(s) for 2006?



Dawn M. Scott
Contracting

I helped my little girls through some major milestones this year. My baby became a kindergartner, and my 12 year old made the transition to junior high. As a mom, having happy, healthy, successful kids is my first priority. They got their first trimester report cards in mid November, and both had straight As, so I guess that's an accomplishment for all three of us.

In May 2005, I found out that my husband was deploying to Iraq for a year. When he left in July I knew I would now have to do everything until July 2006. I made a pact with myself: 1) I would not let anything that he had been taking care of fall through the cracks (believe me, he has many things going on). 2) I would cook a meal every night and sit down to dinner with my son (teenager). 3) I would do everything in my power to design, award and oversee construction of military projects that would enhance the training and livelihood of Soldiers. 4) I would find time to talk to my siblings (all five of them) and my mother more often than I had been. I have such a sense of pride and accomplishment that I was able to do it all and have a lot of fun too. We just moved to the Huntsville area in November and are looking forward to a terrific 2007.



Maj. Marnie Smeen
Range and Training
Land Program

Two Huntsville Center contractor employees killed in Iraq

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — Two U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center Huntsville contractor employees were killed in Iraq during small arms fire incidents in November.

Misaele Matawalu Raiwale, from Fiji, was killed Nov. 15. Raiwale worked as a security specialist for Armor Group, which is headquartered in London.

Hussein Abid Mohammed,

from Pakistan, was killed Nov. 18. Mohammed worked as a transport driver for Armor Group.

This brings the number of contractor casualties killed while working for the Coalition Munitions Clearance program since September 2003 to 34.

“Our condolences go out to the families,” said Bill Sargent, program manager, Coalition Munitions Clearance Program. “Our personnel are highly trained and experienced

and are doing a superb job, but it remains a very dangerous mission.”

The incident is under investigation.

Huntsville Center is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Center of Expertise for Military Munitions. Huntsville Center’s Coalition Munitions Clearance Program is responsible for receiving, transporting, segregating and destroying captured or any other munitions posing a danger in Iraq.

Operation Homefront makes giving, showing support easier

America Supports You: online program sends care packages to troops, families

American Forces Press Service

SANTA ANA, Calif. — Just in time for the holidays, Operation Homefront has launched “eCarePackage,” an online service that allows caring citizens to send care packages to deployed troops and their families.

Operation Homefront is part of CinCHouse.com, a community for military wives, and is a team member of America Supports You, a Department of Defense program connecting U.S. citizens with members of the military.

Service members and families can register on www.ecarepackage.org, which protects their identity and location, and visitors can “adopt” them based on common interests. Then

visitors select individual items to create a customized care package for their chosen service member or family and include a personal message.

Operation Homefront’s team of volunteers takes the order, boxes the selected

items and ships them directly to the service

member or family — always protecting their identity and physical location.

“There’s nothing like a care package to cheer a deployed Soldier or a lonely military family, especially during the holidays,” said Amy Palmer, executive vice president of operations for Operation Homefront.

“With operational security for the troops so tight, we were concerned that care

packages weren’t getting through; so we built eCarePackage to ensure our troops and families continue to ‘feel the love’ from Americans.”

Items available in the eCarePackage store range from toiletries and necessities to games, books and candy. Most items were donated from sponsors, particularly The Dollar Tree, which runs its Operation Appreciation program in most stores nationwide.

Donated items are not marked up, so eCarePackage visitors often pay only the cost of handling and shipping — making eCarePackage less expensive than doing it yourself. Moreover, Operation Homefront has partnered with DHL, which provides postal service to overseas troops, to ensure direct and timely delivery of all care packages to deployed

troops.

The eCarePackage program is an extension of Operation Homefront’s mission to provide emergency support and morale to our troops, the families they leave behind during deployments and wounded Soldiers when they return home. Operation Homefront recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Defense Department to ensure greater collaboration.

For more information about various programs visit the Defense Department’s Web site “America Supports You” at <http://www.americasupportsyoudoing.com>. The site spotlights what Americans are doing in support of U.S. military men and women serving at home and abroad. (This information comes from a CinCHouse.com news release.)

Battle of the Bulge scheduled for January

By Andrea Takash
Public Affairs Office

Kick off the new year right. Sign up for the Huntsville Center Battle of the Bulge competition.

This competition is open to all Huntsville Center employees, including contractors, and is scheduled to start Jan. 10 and last for 12 weeks.

There will only be two required weigh-ins — Jan. 10 and April 4. The rest of the weigh-ins will be up to the individual.

“After the private mandatory weigh-in on Jan. 10, it will be up to you to keep track of your weight by using the scales in the men’s and women’s locker rooms located on the first floor,” said Marsha Russell, Fitness for You director. “Then, by 5 p.m. every Wednesday, you need to enter your weight in the spreadsheet located at <https://hnc-ws-intra/LifeCenter/WeightLoss>. This information will remain private.”

Each week, the man and woman who lose the most weight will receive a prize. At the end of the 12 weeks, a grand prize will go to the man and woman who lost the most weight during the entire competition.

The Battle of the Bulge also pits office against office. The office that loses the most weight at the end of the 12 weeks will receive a grand prize.

“We will determine the office that loses the most weight based on percentage; so offices with fewer people can compete fairly with offices that have larger numbers of employees,” Russell said. “This will be calculated through the Intranet spreadsheet. So please make sure to enter your correct office when registering.”

Russell encourages those who don’t want to lose weight to still sign up and participate in the competition.

“Even if you don’t want to lose weight, you can still help out your

office; so please register,” she said. “If you maintain your weight and waist circumference measurement, your office will receive bonus points added on to their total score.”

Russell added that it would be a good idea for each office to choose a team captain.

“The job of the captain is to motivate the team and inform them about events surrounding the Battle of the Bulge,” she said. “People are more motivated during contests. Competition is one of the best motivators for health and fitness results. Accountability to your co-workers also helps.”

Leigh Ann Toth, a project manager in the Electronic Security Center, agreed that there are many benefits to participating in a fitness contest.

“It’s a good change of pace from your normal fitness routine,” she said. “It’s a chance to push yourself into activities that you typically don’t do. And it’s always motivational to compete against your co-workers.”

Carol Sargent, a contract specialist in the Management Review Office, got the ball rolling by submitting the winning entry for the contest name.

Please register for the contest by Jan. 10.

Battle of the Bulge Rules

- 1) All Huntsville Center employees and contractors can participate.
- 2) Register for the competition by Jan. 10 at <https://hnc-ws-intra/LifeCenter/WeightLoss>. The information you enter will remain private.
- 3) Two mandatory weigh-ins, Jan. 10 and April 4. The mandatory, private weigh-ins will take place from 8 — 10 a.m. and 1 — 4 p.m. in the fitness center. In addition to your weight, Marsha Russell, the Fitness for You director, will also use a string to determine your waist circumference measurement. At the end of the competition, the person who loses the most inches will receive extra points.
- 4) Individual weekly weigh-ins — After the mandatory weigh-in on Jan. 10, it will be up to you to keep track of your weight by using the scales in the men’s and women’s locker rooms located on the first floor. When you weigh yourself, please don’t wear shoes, jewelry or badges. Also, make sure to wear light clothing. By 5 p.m. Wednesday, you must enter your weight in the spreadsheet located at <https://hnc-ws-intra/LifeCenter/WeightLoss>.
- 5) Prizes — Each week there will be prizes for the man and woman who have lost the most weight that particular week.
- 6) Individual grand prizes — At the end of the competition, there will be grand prizes for the man and woman who lost the most weight.
- 7) Top office grand prize — There will also be a prize for the office that loses the most weight based on percentage. This will be calculated through the Intranet spreadsheet. So please make sure to enter your correct office when registering.
- 8) Office captains — Each office is encouraged to nominate a captain, who will keep the office motivated and informed about events surrounding the Battle of the Bulge.
- 9) For those who don’t want to lose weight and still want to participate, you can earn bonus points by maintaining your weight and waist circumference. You will be asked to participate in both mandatory weigh-ins. (Suggestions on physical fitness and weight-loss tips will be distributed throughout the Battle of the Bulge.)



Tutorial online for Pay Pool funding

Did you know that a tutorial on Pay Pools is now posted on the Army NSPS Web site (<http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/nsps/about-paypool.html>) to help employees learn about the new system? This tutorial can be accessed by selecting the heading “All about NSPS” on the menu bar of the Web site, then selecting the heading “Pay Pool Management.”

NSPS has many built-in protections to ensure that civilian pay dollars previously spent under the General Schedule will continue to be applied to civilian pay after the implementation of NSPS.

The first protection is found in the law authorizing NSPS. The law requires that the Department of Defense allocate essentially the same amount of civilian pay after NSPS as it did before NSPS given the same number and mix of employees. The protection is provided through fiscal year 2008.

Thereafter, the law requires DoD to develop a formula to ensure, as a whole, employees are not disadvantaged in terms of the overall amount of pay available as a result of conversion to NSPS.

Another protection is embedded in DoD funding guidance for pay pools. This guidance ensures that money previously spent for pay increases that no longer exist under NSPS [e.g., within-grade increases (WIGIs), quality step increases (QSIs) and promotions to grades that no longer exist (In-Band Promotions)] continue to be spent for civilian base pay increases under NSPS. This ensures general schedule pay increase money will not be reallocated to hire more employees or to fund programs outside of civilian pay.

DoD advances this protection by establishing a funding floor for performance-based salary increases. This funding floor reflects the amount of money Army has historically spent for WIGIs, QSIs and In-Band Promotions under the General Schedule.

This information is from the NSPS Bulletin found at <http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/nsps/announce.html>. If interested in receiving these updates, you can subscribe through AKO. Instructions to sign up are available at <http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/nsps/subscribe.html>.

Writing SMART job objectives

Training materials are now available online to assist in writing job objectives for NSPS.

One of the key provisions of NSPS is its pay-for-performance system — a system that compensates and rewards employees based on their performance and contribution to the mission of their organizations. Accordingly, performance plans take on increased significance.

Job objectives reflect the critical work that employees perform and are aligned to the organization strategic plan and goals. Job objectives communicate major individual, team and/or organizational responsibilities and/or contributions, and the related outcomes and accomplishments that are expected of the employee during the appraisal period.

An acronym has been developed to assist employees when writing job objectives:

- Specific** – objectives should describe what you expect to accomplish
- Measurable** – employees should have some way to demonstrate their accomplishments
- Achievable** – objectives should be written within their control
- Realistic** – objectives should be something obtainable
- Timely** – objectives should identify realistic time frames

SMART objectives should focus on results, establish time requirements and provide measurement criteria.

Training materials have been released that are designed to assist employees and supervisors in developing job objectives. This course is now available online. To access the course, go to <http://www.chra.army.mil/nsps-training/curriculum.htm>, then scroll down and click on “SMART Objectives Workshop.” Open the material. The Instructor Guide is the third Word document.

Learning how to write job objectives that are clearly stated, achievable and aligned with mission goals will greatly facilitate your transition to the NSPS performance management system. Take advantage of the opportunity to learn and apply this valuable information!

'Own the Edge'

Think safety every minute, every day

By Becky Proaps
Public Affairs Office

Safety is everyone's responsibility 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center has developed a safety campaign referred to as "Own the Edge" in hopes of saving lives and resources.

"Losses in Fiscal Year 2005 alone represented over two battalions of combat power, yet less than half of these losses were the result of hostile action," said Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, U.S. Army chief of staff. "The preventable loss of even one member of the Army team — Soldier, civilian or supporting contractor — is

unacceptable."

The issue of safety is being addressed through a process called Composite Risk Management. CRM is a decision making process used to alleviate risks associated with all hazards that have the potential to injure or kill personnel, damage or destroy equipment or otherwise impact mission effectiveness. In the past, the Army separated risk into two categories, tactical risk and accident risk. The primary premise of CRM, however, is that it does not matter where or how the loss occurs, the result is the same — decreased combat power or mission effectiveness.

CRM is an easy five-step



Photo by Becky Proaps

Jill Winsett, a contractor with Interior Consulting, hangs the banner of the new 'Own the Edge' safety campaign in the lobby of the Huntsville Center.

process:

- Step 1 – Identify hazards
- Step 2 – Assess hazards to determine risk
- Step 3 – Develop controls and make risk decisions
- Step 4 – Implement controls
- Step 5 – Supervise and evaluate

Following these steps to analyze each situation can save lives and resources. CRM should become second nature. Doing

something safely, whether at work or at home, should be top priority for all Soldiers and civilians.

To learn more about the Own the Edge campaign and how you can effectively incorporate CRM into daily activities go to the CRC Web site at <https://crc.army.mil>. A CRM basic course is also offered on the Combat Readiness University Web site. You can register at <https://safetylms.army.mil/user/mycourse.asp>.



Photo by Becky Proaps

The Huntsville Center's Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council holds the banner of the U.S. Army's new safety campaign "Own the Edge." Council members include, from left to right, front row, Diane Mims; Sue Baber; Kim Kirkland; Col. Larry McCallister, the Huntsville Center commander; Wanda Griffin; Rex McLaury and Lt. Col. David Diehl, the Huntsville Center deputy commander. From left to right, second row, are Fred Williams, Shay Duckett, Marilyn Wurtz, Willie Mae Wade, Ray Waits, Greg Havo, Donnie Butler and Linda Hocker. The commander also presented each council member a new Own the Edge safety coin and encouraged each of them to stress the importance of safety in everything we do to everyone they work with. Other members of the council not pictured include John Matthews, Pam Draper and Bill Veith.

Civilian News Briefs

Visit MyBiz and MyWorkspace

As we prepare to transition to the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), both MyBiz (for employees) and MyWorkplace (for supervisors) will play an important part in Performance Management. It is important to familiarize yourself with the systems now and make sure the information is correct. Both systems can be accessed through the Employee Portal on the CPOL Web site. For login instructions go to <https://acpol.army.mil/cpolmain/MyBizUsrInfo.pdf>. Also the following two links will help familiarize you with the systems: <https://acpol.army.mil/staticportal/html/MyWorkplaceMarketingMaterial.htm> and <https://acpol.army.mil/staticportal/html/MyBizHomeMarketingMaterial.htm>. Employees need to go to “update your information” and ensure all the data fields are complete. And supervisors not only need to access the MyBiz system as an employee but also access MyWorkplace as a supervisor and ensure you have access to all the employees you supervise.

Open season for federal health programs

The 2006 open season for Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program is open through Dec. 11. There are three separate programs that will participate in this year’s open season:

- The Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program open season allows employees to enroll, cancel or change health plans. FEHB qualifies for pre-tax deduction of premiums (premium conversion for employees). In addition to the carriers from last year, AETNA is a new provider open to all employees this year. Also, SAMBA is a new provider to employees whose mission involves or supports activities to enforce federal laws or to secure the homeland. Individual brochures, rates and plan comparison information are located at <http://opm.gov/insure/>. To make a new election, employees MUST go to <https://www.abc.army.mil/> and log into Benefits/EBIS using your AKO user id and password. All elections are effective the pay period beginning Jan. 7, 2007.

- Eligible federal employees and retirees will be able to enroll in the new Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). FEDVIP offers enrollees group dental and vision insurance at competitive rates without pre-existing conditions. FEDVIP coverage is the only government-wide dental or vision program that qualifies for pre-tax deduction of premiums (premium conversion) for employees. FEDVIP is a voluntary benefit and there is no government contribution. Coverage will be effective on Dec. 31. Employees can enroll in self only, self plus one or self and family coverage. Premiums are deducted from salary with pre-tax funds. Employees must be eligible for FEHB in order to meet enrollment requirements for FEDVIP (an employee does not have to actually be enrolled in FEHB — eligibility is the key). OPM selected dental providers in this geographical area that include AETNA, GEHA, MetLife, United Concordia and CompBenefits. Also, the following are OPM selected Vision providers in this geographical area: Blue Cross Blue Shield, Spectera and VSP. Individual dental and vision brochures, rates and plan comparison information are located at <http://opm.gov/insure/DentalVision/index.asp> as well as links to individual Web sites.

Enrollment in FEDVIP takes place exclusively through New BENEFEDS Portal at <https://www.benefeds.com/> or by telephone at 1-877-888-FEDS. To create an account at BENEFEDS, you will need to enter personal information to create a user ID and password. One question you will be asked that you might not be familiar with is your Bureau/Office POI. For this question enter 97380800. The process only takes about 10-15 minutes to complete.

- Employees can set aside pre-tax funds to pay for a wide range of common, out-of-pocket health and dependent care expenses during the federal Flexible Spending Account (FSA) Program’s open season. FSA is a voluntary benefit and there is no government contribution. Current participants MUST enroll each year to continue participation. Enrollments DO NOT carry forward from year to year. For benefit information and enrollment procedures you can click on the FSA Web site at <http://opm.gov/insure/> or go directly to FSAFEDS at <https://www.fsafeds.com/fsafeds/index.asp>. Additionally, you can enroll by calling an FSAFEDS benefits counselor at 1-877-FSAFEDS (372-3337), (TTY: 1-800-952-0450), Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. until 9 p.m., Eastern Time.

Tulalip

continued from page 1

chlorine, phosgene, and in some rare cases, mustard agent.

“During a site inspection conducted at two areas within the former depot property in June, three small disposal pits were encountered. One of the disposal pits contained rusted storage drums and soil contaminated with chemical agent,” Johnson said. “We determined the need for a time critical removal action because there was a threat of a chemical agent release, and the tribe has scheduled economic development of this area.”

On Aug. 15, the team found two empty damaged cylinders and broken glassware. Work stopped after three contract workers reported an unusual odor and were taken to the hospital.

“We sent the contractors to the hospital just as a precaution,” Johnson said. “Based on medical screening, it was determined that the contractors had not been exposed to any chemical.”

The team decided to put the intrusive work on hold until December in order to amend the level of protection and update the work plan.

“We amended the work plan for safety reasons based on the discovery of the debris containers,” said Rodney Taie, Seattle District project manager. “So in the new work plan, we added engineering controls — a vapor containment

tent with an air filter system. This tent can be moved to any location where the team is digging.”

The suspect items are considered non-explosive by definition, but the vapor containment tent will be used as a precautionary measure for the public, workers and environment, Johnson said.

Huntsville Center’s Recovered Chemical Warfare Design Center is the executing agency for the time critical removal action. Seattle District is the geographic project manager and is responsible for coordinating with the Tulalip Tribe and regulators, and providing notifications to the public. Both Johnson and Taie agreed that the close working relationship between Seattle District, Huntsville Center and Tulalip Tribe has benefited the project.

“I have worked with the Tulalip Tribe on another project for the past five years, so it has paved the way for a good relationship on this project,” Taie said.

The prime contractor, Parsons, and its sub-contractors, are building the vapor containment tent and preparing the site for intrusive work.

“Intrusive work usually takes eight weeks,” Johnson said. “The contractors will dig the whole pit until there is no more chemical agent contamination left. After the removal is done, the team will decontaminate the soil with household Clorox, if necessary, prior to being transported to a permitted incinerator for final disposal.”

After the team completes the time critical removal action, it will publish the final results and recommend any further actions. During the 30-day comment period, it will also hold a public meeting.

“Huntsville Center will remain involved with the project after the time critical removal action to ensure proper closeout of the project and/or future land use controls, if necessary,” Johnson said.



Courtesy photo

A contractor with Parsons takes a composite soil sample from a backhoe at a site on the former Tulalip Backup Ammunition Storage Depot in Snohomish County, Wash.

Encouraging small businesses

Judy Griggs, left, deputy of Small Business Programs, Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville, and Col. Larry McCallister, center, discuss partnering opportunities with visitors to the Huntsville Center's exhibit at the 10th Annual Small Business Conference held Nov. 13-15 in St. Louis, Mo. The conference was co-sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Society of American Military Engineers.



Photo by Debra Valine

Huntsville Center worker returns to Iraq

**By Andrea Takash
Public Affairs Office**

Civilian employees with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have supported the Global War on Terrorism since the beginning.

Brad McCowan is one of many civilian employees who volunteered to serve in Iraq with the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville.

McCowan, an Army veteran and 30-year employee with the Corps of Engineers, answered the call to duty to serve a second tour in Iraq. He will serve from six months to one year as the program manager for Huntsville Center's Coalition Munitions Clearance Program.

McCowan said he raised his hand to join the mission again for two main reasons.

"One, I believe in what the United States is doing in

fighting the war on terror, and the work in Iraq is just one important facet of this war," he said.

"Second, as a Huntsville Corps employee, I believe in supporting to the best of my ability the directorate's efforts."

McCowan works in a vital role for Huntsville Center, and he wears many hats for the CMC Program.

"I actually have a multifaceted job here that involves several aspects," he said. "As the CMC program manager in Iraq, I am the liaison between the Army Multinational Corps-Iraq and the CMC activities of Huntsville Center. I am also responsible for all CMC personnel and equipment

assets, and I conduct contracting officer representative duties in support of the Huntsville



Courtesy photo

Brad McCowan serves his second tour in Iraq with the Coalition Munitions Clearance Program.

Center contracting officer."

Even though McCowan is working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, he said it is worth it for the personal satisfaction he receives from

doing his job.

"The most rewarding part of my job is knowing that our mission is providing a safer environment for Iraqi civilians and all Soldiers because we are getting rid of materials that insurgents use to make improvised explosive devices," he said.

Huntsville Center is the Army Corps of Engineers' Center of Expertise for Military Munitions. Huntsville Center's Coalition Munitions Clearance Program is responsible for receiving, transporting, segregating and destroying captured or any other munitions posing a danger in Iraq. Storage and disposal of the ammunition is performed at several locations throughout Iraq.

To date, more than 400,000 tons of ammunition have been destroyed by the Huntsville Center program, significantly reducing risks to Iraqi citizens and U.S. personnel serving in Iraq.

Ground Zero still packs emotional punch

By William Noel
Ordnance and Explosives
Directorate, Huntsville Center

With morning news shows marking the fifth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, my previously peaceful breakfast was quickly engulfed by the same shock and anger I remembered feeling when I'd watched TV coverage of the terrorist attacks live. So, as I prepared to leave for work, I announced to my wife, Anita, that I'd made a decision: In a few weeks, project work would have me flying to Newark, N. J., only a few miles west of Manhattan. Taking an earlier flight would allow me to take several hours of leave time and visit Ground Zero. She quickly endorsed the idea.

Anita and I have a personal connection with New York City and fond memories of the World Trade Center. Early in our marriage we worked in the city for three years. We celebrated our fifth anniversary by going to dinner at Windows on the World, the four-star restaurant on the 107th floor of the North Tower. That evening we'd parked on the same level of the underground garage where, 11 years later, a terrorist bomb would be detonated. I've lost count of the times I was in the buildings for various reasons.

Stepping aboard a commuter train for the trip under the Hudson River was like a step back to an earlier chapter in my life. Only this time I was on a personal pilgrimage. I was unprepared for the sight that would fill my eyes when we broke into daylight at World Trade Center Station. I was not at the top looking down into the pit as in most photos you see of the site. Instead, I was at the bottom looking up. It was an instantly disquieting site.

As the train looped around from the northwest corner to the south and then

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into the station at the northeast corner, my eyes were filled with the remains of devastation and the beginnings of rebuilding. Hundreds of anchors dotted the walls as they reached outside to keep it from moving under the pressure from surrounding skyscrapers. There were the portals we'd driven through going in and out of the parking garage all those years ago. Four stories up the capped end of a water main at least six feet in diameter stuck out into space. The open end of a subway tunnel hung in thin air as it reached off into the underworld.

Stairs and escalators take you to street level. At various levels there are displays with artist renderings of what the new Freedom Tower and the Port Authority train station will look like. There are signs warning of the air-horn blasts that will signal a construction blast. A collection of posters shows photos from that awful day and the names of those who perished. Tourists stare and snap pictures. Some cry.

Despite the obvious emptiness of the site, Ground Zero is not vacant. It is a very active construction site that one day will reach street level.

Taking pictures is a challenge. The entire site is surrounded by a two-story-high metal grating that serves as a see-through protective wall around all sides. The spacing between the bars is

too close to stick a camera lens through. A dust screen inside that further obscures photos.

My stomach reminds me that I'm late for lunch, so I select a deli on Liberty Street, the two-lane road along the south side of Ground Zero. Pastrami on rye refreshes memories more than 20 years old.

A few doors down Liberty Street is Fire Station 10. Firefighters from there were first to respond to Tower One



Photo by William Noel

William Noel visits Ground Zero in New York City.

that fateful day. As I approach, they roll-out on an alarm. A short time later they return. As they turn the trucks in that tight space to back into their bays I see 11 names inscribed on the sides: that day's entire shift. I've managed to hold my emotions until that moment, but that's when the dam breaks as I remember when I was a volunteer firefighter and a man on my engine company died fighting a house fire.

As I walk back to the train station, the enormity of what happened that awful day settles hard into my consciousness and two things become crystal clear: the reality of the hate-fueled brutality driving those who committed that atrocity and the absolute necessity of winning the Global War on Terrorism.

Ethics Corner



Holiday season in the office Santa Claus or Scrooge?

**By Margaret Simmons
Office of Counsel**

It's that time of year again. Time to decorate, spend time with family and start working through our holiday gift list. So many people, so many gifts, so many decisions and choices. Family and friends are easy, but what about gifts from contractors, supervisors and subordinates at the office? Let me discuss this in terms that I can understand — Santa Claus and Scrooge.

Gifts from contractors

I'm going to be Scrooge on this one. Generally speaking, gifts from contractors should be politely declined, with a few exceptions.

Some of those

exceptions include gifts from contractors that are less than \$20 in value and gifts from contractors based on a personal relationship with the contractor. There are other exceptions — but they are very limited, and generally will not apply in office settings. And to inject a little more Scrooge into this analysis, it is important to remember no matter what the rule, or exception, as a government employee, we are prohibited from creating an “appearance” of favoritism to one particular person or entity. So if by accepting a gift, even though permitted, it will give an appearance of special treatment to a particular contractor, I recommend the gift be respectfully declined — unless it's chocolate, then it should be accepted and promptly delivered to the Office of Counsel for further inspection and legal

analysis. And remember to share those perishable items with all.

Soliciting prizes from outside sources for office events

Generally speaking, federal employees may not solicit outside sources for contributions for a federal office party or event. And even if an exception would apply, the “Scrooge” factor may come into play if the asking creates the “appearance” that a federal entity is seeking a favor (an item to use as a prize). In this area, it's best just to use my favorite Army fallback — the office potluck.

Gifts between federal employees

I think it's safe to be Santa Claus here. Generally, supervisors may NOT

receive gifts from subordinates who receive less pay, but there are several situations where subordinate employees may play Santa. First, supervisors may, on an occasional basis, accept gifts with a value of \$10 or less, and if employees attend a social function at the supervisor's residence, a hospitality gift of nominal value (i.e., box of chocolates) is permitted. And for all those supervisors out there, you don't have to be a Scrooge, because there are no prohibitions (other than good taste) on giving gifts to subordinates or peers.

So in this season of giving, if you have any questions regarding the role of Santa or Scrooge, give us a “jingle” in Office of Counsel and we'll point you in the right direction!

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