News Castle



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May 2012

Corps team shares in EarthFair 2012



Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined the 23rd Annual Earth Day celebration in Balboa Park, April 22. During the Children's Parade participants dress up as an endangered species or present their favorite earth-friendly message.(USACE photo by Raymond Salas)

By Jennie Ayala

SAN DIEGO — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District team members participated in EarthFair 2012 held in Balboa Park April 22. The 23rd annual San Diego Earth Works' event is the largest free environmental fair and Earth Day celebration in the world.

The Corps joined more than 350 exhibitors to highlight the positive ways it preserves and impacts the environment. Erin Mercer, Corps contractor and project manager in the San Diego Office was among 400 event

volunteers who helped set up the event.

Event sponsors, estimate that approximately 60,000 visitors attend the one-day celebration.

"Today we spoke with people who either knew nothing about the Corps; people who knew about our national presence and negative things, or people whose relatives worked for the Corps in other parts of the country," said Ray Salas, lead construction representative in the San Diego Project Office. "It was good to pass on information about what our district does and the types of projects we do in our area."

Office Engineer, Rachel Popp spoke with visitors about her previous work on the Tres Rios Wetlands Restoration project in Phoenix and about ways the Corps helps restore plant and animal habitat.

Peggy Bartel, a regulator in the Carlsbad Office explained how and why USACE regulates the waters of the United States and its connection to preserving our environment. Members of the executive office, construction, regulatory and public affairs met with visitors during the full-day event.



Area prepared a million for World War II, millions more enjoy it today. Page 4



The clamshell dredge Paula Lee works 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Page 5



Leaves of three, let them be! Page 10

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TEMPLE SENDS

USACE Teammates,

I wanted to take a moment to share some terrific news. Last Thursday evening, the Senate confirmed Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick as our 53rd Chief of Engineers and Commanding General.

Lt. Gen. Bostick comes to us from the Pentagon, where he is the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, US Army. Since his commissioning in 1978, he has served in a variety of command and staff assignments, both at home and abroad, including previous USACE assignments as Director of Military Programs, with duty as Commander, Gulf Region Division, Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq; and Executive Officer to the Chief of Engineers. He is a superb leader, officer, and engineer and he will take USACE to the next level.

Plans are underway for a formal Assumption of Command ceremony that will take place later in May and we look forward to welcoming Lt. Gen. Bostick and his wife Renee to the Corps of Engineers family.

There are a number of other leadership transitions at Headquarters USACE in the coming weeks. Since Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Dorko's retirement in February, Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre has served as both the Deputy Commanding General for Reserve Affairs (DCG-RA) and the Deputy Commanding General for Military and International Operations (DCG-MIO). Last week Maj. Gen. Eyre took command of the USACE Transatlantic Division from Maj. Gen. Kendall Cox, who will now assume the role of DCG-MIO at HO.

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Buxbaum will be retiring at the end of May and he will be succeeded by Command Sgt. Maj. Karl J. Groninger as the 11th U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Command Sergeant Major. We welcome him and his wife Vicky to the team.

Lastly, on Friday Maj. Gen. Todd Semonite will relinquish command of our South Atlantic Division, and will be arriving in Washington D.C. soon to become the next USACE Deputy Commanding General and Deputy Chief of Engineers.

Next month I will retire after 37 years in the Army. It has been an honor to serve and a privilege to lead the Corps as the Acting Commanding General and Acting Chief of Engineers for the past ten months. Nancy and I are grateful for the encouragement and support that you have always offered. The details on my Retirement Ceremony are still being finalized and will be released soon.

The Corps of Engineers is facing challenging times as we adjust to new operational and fiscal realities. We have delivered on missions that many thought were impossible and have always answered the call of the Army and our Nation at home and abroad. Greater challenges may lie ahead, but these outstanding leaders will bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to USACE and I know that you will join me in congratulating and welcoming them.

While our Military team members transition on a regular basis, the continuity of USACE programs and missions is ensured by our more than 35,000 Civilian employees. Your leadership, hard work and dedication are vital to preserving the Corps' legacy of service. Thank you for all that you do.

Essayons!...Building Strong!...Sappers Forward!

Temple

Maj. Gen. Merdith "Bo" Temple



Contact Security at 213-452-3969 to report any suspicious activity, behavior or objects.

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COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Dear District Teammates,

Many of you may not know this, but last Thursday April 26th, the Senate confirmed the military nomination of Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, USA, to be lieutenant general and Chief of Engineers/Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Washington D.C.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we finally have a Chief! This is big news so I thought that I would share some information with you about our new Chief of Engineers.

He is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point (1978) and he has graduate degrees in Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering from Stanford University. He is also a Registered Professional Engineer. Lt. Gen. Bostick has commanded at all levels in the U.S. Army including:

- Commanding General, U.S. Army Recruiting Command, Fort Knox, KY
- Commander, Gulf Region Division, OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM, Iraq
- Commander, Engineer Brigade, 1st It's an excit Armored Division, OPERATION JOINT FORGE, our 53rd Chief of Engineers! Germany and Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Commander, 1st Engineer Battalion, Fort Riley, KS
- Commander, B/54th Engineer Battalion, Germany

He has served at the highest levels of the U.S. Army. Prior to his confirmation as Chief of Engineers, he served as the Deputy Chief of Staff, G-1, for the U.S. Army. In this capacity, he was in charge of managing and executing the Army's Human Resources manpower policies and programs.

Lt. Gen. Bostick brings a wealth of knowledge, skills and experiences with him into his new job. His staff at HQ/USACE has been meticulously planning his transition to USACE for

several months. Now that his confirmation is official, he begins a transition timeline that includes strategic engagements across numerous mission-critical focus areas.

As part of his strategic engagement, Lt. Gen. Bostick will make various trips across the USACE area of responsibility including the South Pacific Division. Right now, it looks as though he will initially visit our Northern California districts. However, based on past history, the Chief of Engineers typically attends the annual Beavers Dinner held every January in Los Angeles. Perhaps we will have an opportunity at that time for Lt. Gen. Bostick to visit our district.

It's an exciting time for USACE; Welcome to

Warm Regards,

COL Toy

Col. R. Mark Toy



The following excerpts are from Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick's testimony during senate confirmation hearings on Feb. 9, 2012:

It has been my privilege to serve our country in uniform for over 33 years. My wife Renee, who is here today, is a principal of Randolph Elementary School, Arlington Public Schools. Renee and I have been married for over 30 years, and she has managed to support our Army, our communities, her many different schools, 26 in total, and our family. Our son Joshua, who has moved with us 14 of our 19 moves, is a student at Stanford University and could not be here today.

We often say that we enlist the soldier, commission an officer, but we retain a family. I am here today still serving because of Renee and Joshua, my extended family, friends, and our great soldiers and civilians. I deeply appreciate their love and support. My father was an Army master sergeant, and Renee's father was a Marine Corps sergeant major. So we have been in the military our entire lives, and we are very proud and honored to continue serving.

I will focus on maintaining trust in the Corps of Engineers through consistent and clear communications with all stakeholders to achieve a common vision, will continue developing the professional teams that must collaborate within and outside the Corps.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a key member of the Nation's team that must collectively address complex engineering and changing defense requirements with the precious resources provided by Congress and the American people.



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Patton's desert training area everyone's playground now



Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., used the California-Arizona Maneuver Area's roughly 12 million acres to prepare a million troops for desert warfare. There are more than 25 separate Formerly Used Defense Sites designations within C-AMA. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Dave Palmer

LAKE ELSINORE, Calif. — The Formerly Used Defense Sites program wants everyone to get acquainted with the 3Rs; recognize, retreat and report. 3Rs for a straight forward approach to explosives safety.

To raise public awareness about the danger of un-exploded ordnance, a team of Corps employees and contract partners have set up shop at numerous special events in what was once the California-Arizona Maneuver Area.

"Even people who live near FUDS don't really know, so this is a nice way for us to reach out to a high number of individuals," said Stephanie Baldwin, Bristol Environmental Remediation Services. "It's nice because it's an informal engagement."

Not long after the gates opened, a gentleman walking by the FUDS display pulled out his smart phone to show the team a picture of his desert trophy... a 155mm howitzer round (complete with fuse) that he has had in his garage for about two years. Too late for "recognize" and "retreat" the team went straight to "report" and asked him to dial 911 immediately.

"Since most of the former C-AMA lands are now managed by Bureau of Land Management, we have folks take a short survey that provides information on what types of activities (ATV, motorcycle, hiking, hunting) they participate in on public lands and where they have seen ordnance. The results of these surveys allow the Corps to provide more targeted outreach to those most likely to encounter ordnance," said Baldwin.

In the early 1940s, Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., used C-AMA's approximately 12 million acres to prepare a million troops for desert warfare. There are more than 25 separate FUDS designations within C-AMA and thousands more nationwide.

The Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series event at the Lake

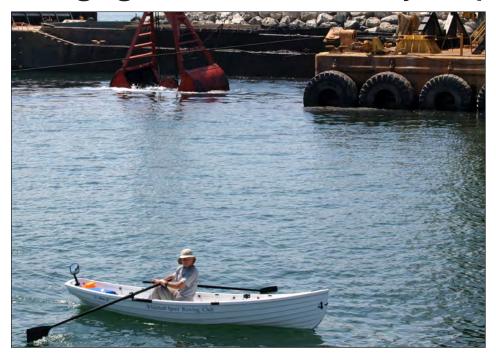
Elsinore Motorsports Complex gave them access to roughly 12 thousand fans and avid off-roaders. The lake is in proximity to the C-AMA and during World War II it was used by amphibious airplanes as a training ground.

To learn more about the program visit http://www.fuds.mil.

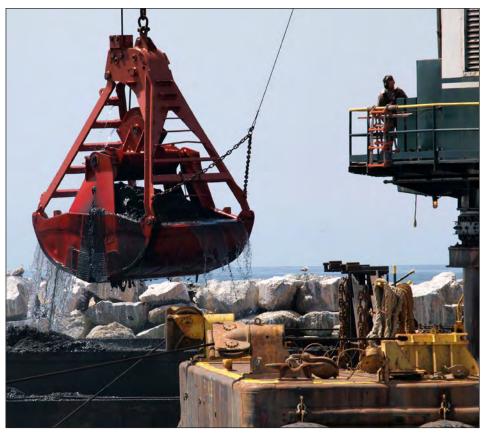


Stephanie Baldwin, of Bristol Environmental Remediation Services, speaks with a young couple about the Formerly Used Defense Sites program during a special event held at Lake Elsinore, Calif., April 21. Baldwin and other team members who attended the event asked residents who visited the USACE booth to take a short survey that provides information on what types of activities (ATV, motorcycle, hiking, hunting) they participate in on public lands and where they have seen ordnance. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

Dredging benefits boater safety and port redevelopment



A Whitehall Spirit Rowing Club member rows past the dredge Paula Lee at Marina del Rey Harbor April 8. The dredge is removing sediment from the navigation channel to enhance safety for government, commercial and recreational boaters. (Photo by Dave Palmer)



The clamshell dredge Paula Lee, shown here, is scheduled to work 24 hours per day, seven days a week, with completion expected in late summer. (USACE photo by Dave Palmer)

By Greg Fuderer

MARINA DEL REY, Calif. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District began a \$13 million dredging project April 5 that will remove up to one million cubic yards of accumulated sand from the entrance channel to Marina del Rey Harbor, improving navigational safety and providing material for use at several other locations.

"We've had problems over the years with sediment," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe. "This project will improve safety for our first responders and other boaters and has the added benefit of providing material the Port of Long Beach needs. This is truly a winwin."

Dutra Dredging Company, of San Rafael, Calif., will use the clamshell dredge Paula Lee to place about 520,000 cubic yards of the sand into barges that tugs will then transport to the Port of Long Beach for its Middle Harbor Redevelopment Project. The remaining sand will be used to renourish a segment of Redondo Beach. This sand will be placed just offshore at Dockweiler State Beach and Redondo Beach.

"This project provides benefits at three different locations and demonstrates the sort of multiple beneficial uses that are becoming a necessity in today's era of increased environmental awareness and diminished financial resources," said Lt. Col. Steven Sigloch, deputy commander for the Corps' Los Angeles District.

Knabe said the project is an example of how coordination among several levels of government can resolve regional issues.

"We're saving over \$85 million and eliminating 47,000 truck trips," Knabe said, referring to another alternative where material is hauled to a land disposal area.

A port official estimated a similar number of truck trips would be necessary to haul fill material to the port for its redevelopment project.

"We're doing what needs to be done to make the harbor safe," Knabe said.

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International commission takes a look at the Tijuana River

By Greg Fuderer

IMPERIAL BEACH, Calif. — "It's not the fences that matter, it's the gates," Dave Gibson told attendees at the U.S. International Border and Water Commission collaborative meeting held here April 19 at the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Gibson, executive director of the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, was not talking about the international border fence that is visible across the estuary on a clear day. He was speaking metaphorically about the opportunity to communicate between the nations and among the agencies responsible for the protection and preservation of the adjacent estuary, the Tijuana River and other sources that feed it, and, by extension, a host of other water resources issues along the nearly 2,000-mile border between the U.S. and Mexico.

"Meetings like this not only help us create synergy with all the agencies doing work," said Col. Mark Toy, commander of the Corps' Los Angeles District, "but they help us determine how we can contribute to the process. To gain the momentum to put projects into action, they have to resonate locally. That's a big thing with me, the public/private partnerships. This group may give us entree to those organizations. We need to be viewed as not merely an organization they come to applying for a permit, but as part of a team with a common cause. This is a lot bigger than the Los Angeles District."

The meeting assembled nearly two dozen representatives from the Corps, the IBWC, California Water Quality Control Board, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Environmental Protection Agency, the City of San Diego, the Estuary, and the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission.

"It's important we take the information we have here and try to resolve these issues," said Edward Drusina, IBWC commissioner. "A collaborative effort is the only way to get things done."

Attendees discussed ways to comply with new guidance from the



Kevin Wohlmut (left), a planner in the Coastal Studies Group for the Corps' Los Angeles District, discusses Tijuana River watershed issues with district commander Col. Mark Toy during a break at a meeting hosted April 19 by the International Border and Water Commission at the Tijuana River Estuary Visitors Center in Imperial Beach, Calif. (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer)

Office of Management and Budget about interagency Memorandums of Agreement. They also presented updates on specific local cross-border water resources, all of which may need the Corps' engineering expertise under the new MOA framework of cooperation.

"I was pleased that the discussion wasn't limited to generalities, but that it addressed specific projects in the watershed," said Kevin Wohlmut, a planner in the District's Coastal Studies Group.

Bryn Evans, a water resources project manager for URS Corporation and a member of the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team, said the commission needs to address three main issues regarding the river: bacteria, sediment and trash. The combination of residential, construction and commercial dumping, raw sewage and loss of water through supply lines, poorly constructed roads that are prone to erosion, and ineffective storm water management practices have had severe impacts on local resources.

"We should investigate both short term solutions, such as manual trash removal, channel clearing and excavation, and long term solutions, such as source control, installing capture devices on both sides of the border, and balancing ecosystem restoration and research," Evans said.

Solutions, whether short term or long term, require cooperation among agencies that have a multitude of responsibilities and face significant limitations on the assets they have available to remedy the situation.

"Now is the time to figure out the strategy to get this going," Toy said.

DOD announces new teleworking policy

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Department of Defense has announced a new policy that will promote more teleworking across the civilian workforce, according to a DOD news release.

Changes to the existing telework policy were prompted by the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, officials said, and will help DOD achieve greater flexibility in managing its workforce.

"Telework is a powerful tool, one that helps DOD maximize the agility it needs to operate in all kinds of conditions, while promoting workforce efficiency and quality of life," Paige Hinkle-Bowles, deputy assistant secretary of defense for civilian personnel policy, said in the release.

The new policy requires DOD leaders to promote telework within their respective components, make every effort to overcome artificial barriers to program implementation, authorize telework for the maximum number of positions without compromising mission readiness, and integrate telework into continuity of operations activities.

The Defense Department finds telework to not only be an effective recruiting and retention tool and key to quality of work-life, but also an integral readiness strategy when planning for continuity of operations during a crisis or emergency.

LA DISTRICT TELEWORK BY THE NUMBERS

- 3 Level and below rating in TAPES not eligible....
- 2 Days per 5/8 flex week authorized....
- Day during 5/4/9 RDO week....
- Days for Supervisors on Alt. Schedule....

Army Values Campaign Plan

Since September 11, 2001, the world has witnessed the very best of our Soldiers, Army Civilians, and their Family members, as evidenced by their dedication to duty, professionalism, and compassion as they have lived the Army Values.

Many of our Army Family have made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives honorably in the Global War on Terrorism. Others have provided aid during times of need resulting from natural disasters or emergencies, at home and abroad. These honorable deeds epitomize the Army Values and earn the respect of people around the world.

The Army Values - Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage (LDRSHIP) - are our baseline, our foundation, our core. They define who we are, what we do, and what we stand for.

Actions counter to the Army Values weaken the Army team, our morale, and our readiness. They discredit our service to the Nation, and can lead those we serve to question our values. We must never accept actions inconsistent with the Army Values.



Army Civilian Corps Creed

I am an Army Civilian – a member of the Army Team I am dedicated to our Army, our Soldiers and Civilians

I will always support the mission
I provide stability and continuity during war and peace
I support and defend the Constitution of the United States, and consider it an honor to serve our Nation and our Army

I live the Army values of

Loyalty
Duty
Respect
Selfless Service
Honor
Integrity and
Personal Courage

I AM AN ARMY CIVILIAN

BUILDING WELLNESS

Weight loss: just basic math really

By Cecy Ordonez

LOS ANGELES — Weight loss is simple. It is a basic mathematical equation of consuming versus burning calories. To lose weight, the calories burned through daily activity needs to be higher than the caloric intake, i.e. "move more and eat less". How ever simple this may sound, simple is not synonymous with easy.

Weight loss becomes difficult for many people for several reasons including: emotional control, social eating, your eating routine at a specific time of day, eating "comfort" food, and social pressure.

Thirty-nine of your teammates participated in a Biggest Loser Challenge and successfully lost a combined total of 241 pounds in eight weeks!

With a 12.3 percent weight loss in eight weeks. weight loss, Sandra Willis, our a week Landscape Architect, won the title of Biggest Loser. Coming in a close menta second, Eric Cadena, our Cartographer, who lost 10.2 percent.

The following is a Q&A with each of these winners to give us insight of how they conquered their weight loss challenge.

Was losing the weight easy?

Sandra: No it wasn't easy, but having the Biggest Loser Challenge helped with the motivation. It was hard getting used to eating a lot less food.

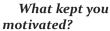
What are some of the challenges you faced and how did you overcome it?

Sandra: I found when I looked at the total amount of pounds I had to lose to be in the "normal" range, I became overwhelmed and discouraged. I had recently read that even losing 10 pounds will make a difference in my health. I decided to concentrate on losing an attainable 10 pounds as a long term goal and break that 10 pounds into even smaller manageable goals. Once I reached the 10 pounds, I would then

start all over again and set another 10 pound goal.

I also found I needed to adapt to challenges that came up. For example, when I didn't have time to prepare my lunch in advance, I learned that I can stick to my low fat/low carb diet when I ate out. If I happened to make a poor food choice I wouldn't beat myself up. Instead, at my next meal I'd just stick with my food plan. Another challenge was getting home late from work with

only an hour before bedtime. Instead of eating right before I went to sleep, I would eat a snack on my commute home.



Sandra: I kept a food/exercise diary, frequently looked at my next mini goal, and tracked it when I achieved it. For example, I would set a goal to lose 2 pounds in

a week and told myself that "I can do it". Once I did achieve my goal, I would mentally get excited about the next mini goal. For instance, if I lost 3 more pounds then I know I would be one step lower on the BMI chart.

What is your weight loss tip for those who are reading this and feel they can't do it?

Sandra: Set mini goals. For example: losing 5 pounds this month, adding 10 more minutes of exercise this week, and/or drinking 6 glasses of water today. If and when you make a mistake, learn from it and go back to achieving your mini goals.

What did you change about your daily routine to help you lose weight?

Eric: The biggest change I had to incorporate was the way I eat. I've been working out for years now and



Eric Cadena lost 10.2 percent body weight in the eight week contest. (USACE photos by Richard Rivera)

always figured I could accomplish my goal by only exercising. When I wasn't seeing the results I wanted, I knew something had to change. Cecy taught me how many calories I needed to eat; specifically how many calories I needed for my weight, height and age. She also taught the reasons why I was maintaining my weight and more importantly how to lose it. I started to count my calorie intake and learned to eat more often (three meals and three snacks). Eating often helped me fuel my body for a more intense exercise session, aided in my recovery, as well as helped curb my hunger cravings. I also increased my calorie burn by adding more cardio into my daily exercise routine.

What kinds of foods were you eating or not eating anymore?

Eric: I love food so I didn't want to sacrifice eating a particular food. Although I mostly ate chicken, turkey, salads, and fruits, I learned how to balance other foods into my calorie intake such as beer, pizza, etc. It helped that I didn't deprive myself; I could eat anything I wanted, of course, in moderation.

What kept you motivated?

Eric: Progress helped keep me motivated. I would challenge myself everyday to do better than the day before. I simply believed in the process and made a commitment to myself to work towards my goals.

What advice would you give to people trying to reach the same goal?

Eric: Set a goal and go for it. Get out of your box and try new challenging workout routines. Boxing and spin class held at the wellness center are new workouts for me. I always been a big boxing fan but never thought it was something that I would do - but I love it now. I would always tell myself, "look forward, never back".

Joe Derungs, project manager for military projects in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Arizona-Nevada Area Office, speaks with Col. Mark Toy, the L.A. District commander, at Luke Air Force Base during the commander's visit Apr. 4. Toy visited project sites throughout Phoenix and spoke with team members and stakeholders about Corps projects during his three-day visit. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

Commander visits Arizona team



Col. Mark Toy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, speaks with ASU students during a visit to Phoenix Apr. 5. During his talk, Toy discussed opportunities for students within the Corps and explained the Corps' mission. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)



Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District team and their families enjoy a round of volleyball during the 2012 Engineer Day Celebration held in Phoenix at the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park Apr. 6. The Arizona-Nevada Area Office holds the celebration earlier than the official June timeframe in order to allow for more participation before the Arizona summer time. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderón)



Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Arizona-Nevada Area Office pose for a picture during the 2012 Engineer Day Celebration held at the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park Apr. 6. In order to be allow for more participation before the Arizona summer sun comes on in full force, the Arizona-Nevada Area Office holds the celebration earlier than the official June anniversary. (USACE photo by Jay Field)



Protecting Yourself from

Poisonous Plants

Any person working outdoors is at risk of exposure to poisonous plants, such as poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. When in contact with skin, the sap oil (urushiol) of these plants can cause an allergic reaction. Burning these poisonous plants produces smoke that, when inhaled, can cause lung irritation.

Workers may become exposed through:

- Direct contact with the plant
- Indirect contact (touching tools, animals, or clothing with urushiol on them)
- Inhalation of particles containing urushiol from burning plants

Symptoms of Skin Contact

- Red rash within a few days of contact
- Swelling
- Itching
- Possible bumps, patches, streaking or weeping blisters NOTE: Blister fluids are not contagious

First Aid

If you are exposed to a poisonous plant:

- Immediately rinse skin with rubbing alcohol, poison plant wash, or degreasing soap (such as dishwashing soap) or detergent, and lots of water.
 - Rinse frequently so that wash solutions do not dry on the skin and further spread the urushiol.
- Scrub under nails with a brush.
- Apply wet compresses, calamine lotion, or hydrocortisone cream to the skin to reduce itching and blistering.
 - Oatmeal baths may relieve itching.
- An antihistamine may help relieve itching.
 - o NOTE: Drowsiness may occur.
- In severe cases or if the rash is on the face or genitals, seek professional medical attention.
- Call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room if you have a severe allergic reaction, such as swelling or difficulty breathing, or have had a severe reaction in the past.



Don't Spring into these plants

There's an old saying, leaves of three, let them be





By Steve McCombs

LOS ANGELES — Spring, as they say, has sprung in the Los Angeles District. Love is in the air! Pollen, is in the air as well. For you folks who suffer pollen allergies – my sincere sympathies. The fetching Mrs. McCombs lives on antihistamines this time of year so, I know how miserable it can be. But that isn't the subject of this month's article. Let's talk about a nasty little substance called Urushiol Oil!

Urushiol (you-rue-she-all) oils are the substance found in Poison Oak, Poison Ivy and Poison Sumac. Roughly 90 percent of people who come into contact with it, will get an allergic reaction – typically a rash.

This rash can be very nasty and, in some patients, requires some serious medical intervention. We have one employee who reacts so badly to the stuff – they are not allowed to perform field work.

Of the three plants I mention above, we don't encounter Poison Sumac. According to the Centers for Disease Control, it's a largely eastern United States menace. But, we do have Poison Oak (above left) in abundance throughout California and Nevada, and Poison Ivy in Arizona.

Since the warmer weather is approaching, folks will be out and about in the wonderful wilds of the west! It's well worth your time to learn how to recognize these plants and avoid them, whether on or off the job.

Do you notice the 3-leaf pattern? That's the key to quick identification. There's an old saying, "leaves of three, let them be." Don't handle it. Don't walk through it. Don't burn it. Keep your kids and your pets away from it.

The urushiol oil is very sticky and will stay on your clothing, skin, pet hair, etc. You can end up taking it home on your clothing and causing other to come into contact as well.

As is my wont, I like to provide a good web link so you may read more in detail. Information on prevention, treatment, recognition and other goodies can be found here: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/plants/

And, as always, drive safe, drive sober and buckle up!

Safety Steve

Career day at Patrick Henry High School

By Greg Fuderer

SAN DIEGO — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District continued its support to area secondary schools March 30, by participating in a career day at San Diego's Patrick Henry High School.

"It was a good feeling to encourage a new generation of scientists, engineers, economists, biologists and managers" said Jonathan Guerrero, a study manager for the Corps. "Information exchange was great in terms of our oneon-one conversations with teachers and students."

"If the Shoe Fits" is a recently-expanded annual career day hosted by the San Diego Unified School District's Office of College, Career and Technical Education. Its purpose is to "prepare students for 21st century challenges and opportunities." Previously designed to address only scientific and engineering professions, it now includes 15 industry sections as diverse as child development, entertainment, marketing, education, fashion and interior design.

The Corps hosted one of 35 booths representing private sector businesses and government agencies at the event designed to share the requirements for and the responsibilities of future job opportunities for the nearly 1,800 students who participated.

"I think it's important to talk to them about life after high school, to



Los Angeles District project manager Ed Louie (right) and planner Jonathan Guerrero (second from left) discuss Army Corps of Engineers career opportunities with students at "If the Shoe Fits" career day March 30, at Patrick Henry High School in San Diego. Nearly 1,800 students in the 9th through 12th grades attended the event that featured representatives from 15 different Southern California industries. (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer

encourage them to seek technical fields and to expose them to something that's going to be able to get them a job," Guerrero said. "It's just as important to talk to the teachers to let them know about job opportunities and internships that can benefit students in the future."

Ed Louie, a project manager for the Corps, said there was a good exchange of information with students, especially those who were in the school's Engineering Academy.

"The students asked a lot of

questions," Louie said. "It's a great feeling, knowing we're providing more information about Corps missions when it comes to environmental restoration, navigation, flood risk reduction, recreation and the numerous other 'business lines' we're involved in throughout the nation."

"They were definitely interested," Louie said. "If we could recruit just one or two of them, then it is a worthwhile endeavor."

Jonathan Guerrero, a Corps study manager, answers students' questions during "If the Shoe Fits," an annual career day held March 30, at Patrick Henry High School in San Diego. (USACE photo by Greg Fuderer)



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District employee dons Navy blue and gold

By Daniel J. Calderón

PHOENIX — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District now has another Navy Reserve officer in its ranks of civilian employees. David Rodriguez, a field engineer with the District's Arizona-Nevada Area Office, recently received his commission in the Reserves.

"The strength of our district will always be our people," said Col. Mark Toy, the District commander. "David's commissioning exemplifies the quality and talent level of our district employees. We wish him the best as he continues to reach all of his personal and professional goals."

Rodriguez, who has been with the District since 2010, spends most of his time in Nogales, Ariz. working on the Morley Ave. Drainage Tunnel project. The goal of the project is to build an access point to the Morley Ave. drainage tunnel similar to the one at Grand Ave. for the Customs and Border Protection Agency. The project began in March and should be done later this summer. His path to becoming a Navy Ensign has taken a bit longer.

"Being a first-generation American, there wasn't a lot of talk about college when I was younger," Rodriguez explained. "Finally, in high school, my guidance counselor asked me where I was planning to go to college. When I told her I didn't really plan on it, she got to work."

His counselor was married to an Army Sgt. Major and she dealt with service academy nominations throughout Arizona. At the time, Rodriguez was interested in a career in law enforcement and his counselor asked if he would consider an appointment to the Coast Guard Academy.

"I didn't know much about the military at the time," he said. "All I knew was that it was a chance to have my college paid for and chance to have a career that would lead to another career in law enforcement."

He agreed and ended up receiving an appointment. Shortly into his university career, the United States was hit with the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

"At the time, the Coast Guard wasn't doing much of the missions overseas," Rodriguez said. "I wanted to have the chance to do my part. I think my generation felt this was their call to action. But, I knew I would be leaving a good career behind."

After many discussions with instructors, chaplains and others, Rodriquez decided to leave the Academy. He tendered his letter of resignation and left for a career in the Marine Corps. It was tough going. He said the Marines didn't understand why anyone would leave a service academy, turn down an opportunity to serve as a Marine Corps officer, since he had declined that option to his recruiter, and push to join as an enlisted infantryman. After the investigation and time in the Delayed Entry Program, Rodriguez finally went into the Marines and served from 2003 to 2007. He served a tour in Iraq, in the Philippines and had a tour in Japan. When he completed his enlisted obligation, he returned to college and used his G.I. Bill benefits to graduate with his Civil Engineering degree from Arizona State University in 2010.



David Rodriguez (left) speaks with Louis "Dutch" Bonnet and Col. Mike Wehr, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander (who has been promoted to Brig. Gen. since the time this image was taken) during Wehr's visit in November 2011 to the Tres Rios Ecosystem Restoration Project in Phoenix. Rodriguez recently received a commission as an Ensign in the U.S. Navy Reserves. (USACE photo by Daniel J. Calderon)

At the same time, he had signed on with the Los Angeles District as a Department of the Army intern and began the process of receiving a commission in the U.S. Navy reserves. He said the intern program involved a lot of travel and temporary duty. However, through the travel slowed the pace of his commissioning, it didn't diminish his desire for service.

"I'm doing this strictly for the service," Rodriguez said.
"I did start my engineering career at 30, so I'm an old new engineer. Hopefully, being with the Seabees can help speed up the learning process."

As a Department of Defense civilian in the Army, Rodriguez's choice to enter the Navy Reserve might seem odd. However, he feels it ties in well with his background.

"I wanted to stay in the naval traditions I learned while in the Marine Corps so this is a nice logical lateral move for me," he explained. "I'm really glad to be a Seabee."

Rich Fontanilla, area engineer for the Arizona-Nevada Area Office, said he was ready for Rodriguez to join Construction Division while the new Ensign was still in the intern program.

"David fits the mold for what we were looking for," Fontanilla said. "He takes the initiative on tasks, has a strong desire to learn and grow and he is highly dedicated to duty. A lot of our CBP projects are out in isolated, austere back country. Given David's prior service as a Marine Infantryman who fought in Iraq, I had no doubt David would be an excellent fit for administering the CBP projects."

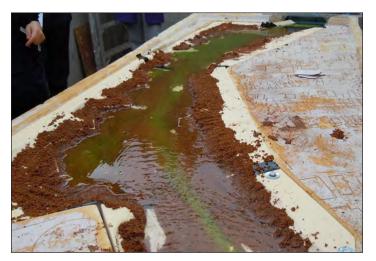
Rodriguez said he plans to complete at least 20 years in the Navy along with his career in the Corps of Engineers. He begins drilling with a Seabee unit at the Navy Operational Support Center on Luke Air Force Base this summer.

Spring: job fair season



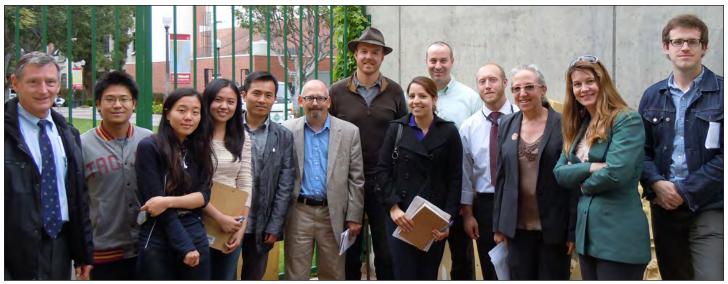


Representing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers the Los Angeles District joined 140 other organizations for the Cal Poly Pomona Spring Career Fair April 19. On behalf of the District, Tyler Overmire, Victor Andreas and Steve Dwyer accepted resumes and spoke with engineering, geographic information system and planning students. The job fair was open to undergraduate and graduate students of all majors.

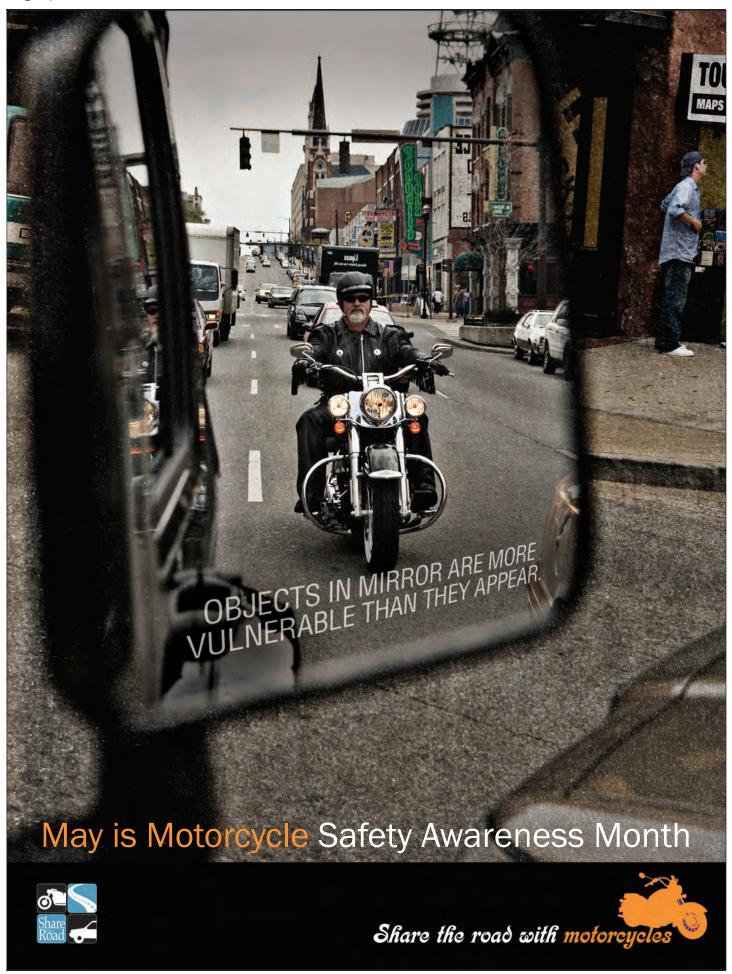


USC students study LA River

University of Southern California School of Architecture students demonstrate a hydraulic model (left) focused on the feasibility of projects at the "Bow Tie Parcel" near the Los Angeles River downtown. The students are researching ways of softening the concrete hardscape and making it "greener." Steve Dwyer (below left), Stuart Strum, and Scott Sanderson joined City of Los Angeles Engineering, Los Angeles County Public Works in viewing the demonstration April 25. In January, Professor Alex Robinson (in hat) invited Dwyer and Alison Lind to speak to a group of Graduate Landscape Architecture students at USC. In March Corps employees judged student's mid-term projects.



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Public takes a look at Santa Ana River Marsh study

By Greg Fuderer

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — A proposed project to remove 50,000 cubic yards of material from a tidal marsh took an important step here April 30 when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers presented and sought public input on the project's environmental assessment.

"This project will restore channels that have shoaled in and restore tidal circulation within the marsh," said Erin Jones, a Corps biologist working on the project. "It will improve water quality and prevent the degradation of marsh habitats used by endangered species, and it will provide beach nourishment."

Lying at the mouth of the Santa Ana River, the marsh is part of what once was a 400-acre marsh system between Anaheim Bay and Newport. The area became degraded over time, and in 1992 the Corps and local sponsors restored 92 acres, including a seven-acre island designed as a nesting area for the endangered California least tern.

The project consists of several phases, and the material will eventually end up in one of three places, depending on its physical characteristics: in about 15- to 20-foot

water just off the beach, at an EPAapproved placement site about six miles offshore or at an upland disposal facility.

The environmental assessment presented at the meeting analyzes the project's impacts on a host of issues, including the environment, biological resources, threatened and endangered species, water and air quality, noise, cultural resources, land use and recreation.

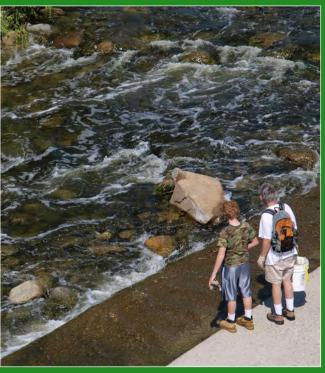
The Corps will accept comments on the draft until May 18. Construction is scheduled to take place between September 15 and March 15, 2013.

'The Great Los Angeles River CleanUp'



The goal: 25 tons of garbage, out of the river and surrounding trees. Roughly 4,000 volunteers spread out over 15 community sites for FoLAR's 23rd Annual La Gran Limpieza: The Great Los Angeles River CleanUp on April 28. Chief of Planning, Josephine Axt, (above left) was a popular interview for community reporters during the cleanup. (USACE photos by Dave Palmer)





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DOD Facilities Drive Technology for Secure Power

By Cheryl Pellerin American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—As the nation's top energy user, the Defense Department is pushing commercialization of the technology it needs to lower costs and keep its facilities secure, the deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment said here today.

Dorothy Robyn addressed an audience of military, federal and industry experts at the Military Smart Grids and Microgrids Conference in Arlington, Va.

Robyn manages and oversees permanent military installations worldwide and manages installation programs that involve energy, the environment, safety and occupational health.

In fiscal 2011, the cost of electricity spent to power 300,000 buildings on Defense Department installations -- barracks, data centers, offices and hospitals -- and to operate 160,000 vehicles was \$4 billion a year.

"Wealsoaccountforadisproportionate share of the department's greenhouse gases," Robyn said.

And such U.S. military installations depend almost entirely on a commercial electric grid that experts say is vulnerable to disruption.

"In 2008 the Defense Science Board called us out and said, 'Your critical missions are at risk because of the potential for disruption to the grid," Robyn said.

Today the strategy for bolstering DOD facility energy security and innovation, she added, includes reducing demand for traditional energy, expanding the supply of renewable and other forms of on-base energy, focusing directly on base security, and leveraging advanced technology.

In the area of advanced technology, Robyn said DOD is uniquely positioned to overcome barriers to commercialization for some of the most potentially groundbreaking energy innovations. Among these are smart grids and microgrids.

A smart grid is an electrical grid whose

capabilities are boosted by computer technology to monitor and regulate the energy that utilities generate and distribute to consumers.

When it becomes fully functional over the next decade in the United States, the automated grid will be able to communicate with consumers, remotely sense and fix problems on its own network, and save users money by better managing energy use, and by integrating power from wind, solar, biomass and other renewable energy sources.

Microgrids and minigrids are smaller, less-automated versions of smart-grid technology. They interconnect small, modular electricity-generation sources to low-voltage distribution systems, and some can be powered by a combination of petroleum-fueled generators, solar, wind and other sources.

"I am something of a cheerleader for microgrids, because they solve a huge problem we have -- namely the energy security of our bases," Robyn said.

But also, she added, "because I have spent much of my career working in the economics of network industries, primarily transportation and telecom, and I've seen what disruptive technology and competition have done in those sectors, and I think we're due for that in the utility sector."

Impediments to such emerging technologies, Robyn said, include a highly fragmented building industry, high costs for first users of new technology, and a lack of operational testing that deters potential technology adopters.

DOD is uniquely positioned to help overcome these barriers, the deputy undersecretary added.

"The key to this is using our installations as a testbed for next-generation energy technology, precommercial technology that we think has promise on our installations," Robyn said.

"We think that we have a role to play here in being a first user. It's a role that is justified by the huge infrastructure that we have -- 300,000 buildings. We look at risk differently," she added.

"If we try 10 things out and seven of them work and three don't, ... we can deploy those so broadly as to make it profitable," Robyn said. "So that's what we're doing."

Robyn's team is working on advanced technology in three areas -- smart and secure installation energy management, efficient integrated buildings, and onsite power generation.

The flagship project, she said, is in development at Twentynine Palms Marine Base, the nation's largest, in California. The smart microgrid there is capable of "islanding" about a third of the base's total load and meets DOD cyber security criteria. In islanding, a distributed generator continues to power a location even when there is no electrical grid power from the utility.

Electrochromic windows are an example of emerging technology for efficient integrated buildings. These windows can be darkened or lightened electronically, controlling the amount of daylight and solar heat gain through the windows of buildings and vehicles.

Robyn's team is putting these windows on three sides of a building at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in Southern California and will systematically collect performance data.

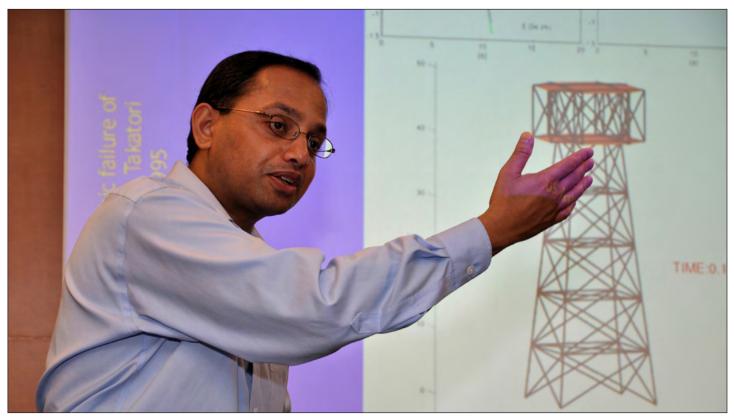
"This is a great example of the role we can play in reducing risk," Robyn said.

Historically, the Energy Department has invested in this technology, but the windows are still very expensive, she noted. "And architecture and engineering firms are understandably reluctant to incorporate them into a new building without rigorous data on their performance," she said.

Collecting data from the test bed building at Miramar, she added, can help to jumpstart the market.

Many more demonstration projects are under way at DOD facilities around the country, and some are beginning to show results despite challenges that include collecting high-quality data on building energy consumption and performance and getting successfully test bed technologies widely deployed.

"I didn't list any [challenges] having to do with microgrids," Robyn said. "I feel like there is tremendous momentum there, and I don't see the kinds of [comparable] impediments."



Dr. Swaminathan Krishman and his colleagues at the California Institute of Technology are trying to answer a critical question. What is going to happen to modern, tall buildings when an event like a 7.9 magnitude quake happens? Krishman spoke during a "brown bag" luncheon held for professional development and, on occasions like this, to inform employees so they are better prepared for the "big one." (Photo by Dave Palmer)

Earthquakes should have a season

By Dave Palmer

LOS ANGELES — Wouldn't it be less menacing if you knew when to expect an earthquake, if they had their own time of year?

San Francisco's "big one" was April 18, 1906 and April is "Earthquake Preparedness Month." Is this earthquake season? How about October? The Loma Prieta quake was Oct. 17, 1989 and the "California Great ShakeOut" is Oct. 18.

Maybe the experts are saying: it's always earthquake season.

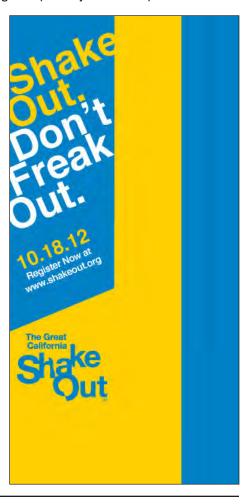
During a brown bag luncheon April 24 in the Los Angeles District Headquarters conference room, Dr. Swaminathan Krishman spoke about the critical question he and his colleagues at the California Institute of Technology are trying to answer. What is going to happen to modern, tall buildings when an event like a 7.9 magnitude quake happens?

"If you compute an average, it's about every 150 years that you see a big event on the San Andreas Fault," said Krishman. The data they are using for their modeling is the Fort Tejon earthquake of Jan. 9, 1857. The quake opened up a 220 mile long rupture from Parkfield, Calif., running from north to south. At the time, the Los Angeles Star newspaper quoted witnesses describing the water in the LA River as sloshing from side to side, like shaking a bowl of milk.

Krishman explained that because of the very deep sedimentation in this area (river basin), the earthquake waves slow down and create long-period motion. Simply put, long duration waves cause tall buildings to sway for longer periods of time, increasing their risk of failure.

Today, we have the ability to do very good modeling of earthquakes, added Krishman. He had a captive audience during his presentation.

The luncheons are held for professional development and, on occasions like this, to inform District employees so they are better prepared for the "big one."



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October 18, 10:18 a.m.



Register at www.ShakeOut.org

Time for moms, memorials and the start of summer

By Daniel J. Calderón

April showers bring May flowers and what to Mayflowers bring? Yep – Pilgrims. It's an old joke, I know, but it felt like the thing to write.

We're in the month of May now. Summer is staring us from just outside the door and beckoning us to start having our fun in the sun. The days are getting hotter and temperatures exceeding 100 degrees are getting more and more commonplace in Arizona.

If anyone hasn't gotten mom, grandma (or whoever is your mother figure) that special something, there's still time. That's assuming you're reading this early in the month. If not, you're out of luck.

What are some good Mother's Day gifts? Some folks will say chocolates. Others will answer flowers. Some will even say a combination of things. I still like to send a little poem or a hand-made card. Store-bought is nice, but it's not as personal. Granted, I can hear the "Oh,

you're just being cheap" crowd out there. I understand that position. But, I disagree with it. I encourage my kids to make something on their own when they ask me what they should get for Mother's Day. There's nothing wrong with pre-packaged candies or a card from a store; but, there's just something about getting something that went from an idea to actuality in the minds and with the hands of your own children that makes it not only special but precious.

So, I encourage all of you to go ahead and buy some crafting supplies and try to make something fun for your mom. It might end up being the worst bird house every built; but, it will have come from your own efforts and that will make it uniquely your own. I have no doubt your mom will enjoy seeing it. She'll enjoy knowing you took time to celebrate her. What else can you try? Breakfast is usually a good thing. It's a Sunday so you should have time to get up and get something cooking – assuming your mom lives in

your town. Mine is in Texas so I don't think I'm going to be able to get up and get her breakfast. C'est la vie.

Another observance this month is Memorial Day. It's a day we take time to remember our honored dead. I think I wrote on this topic last year. Since it's a long weekend, it's less likely to be a time of bowing heads in remembrance and more a time of barbecuing beef in backyards.

Once upon a time, I would have been offended by this.

But, I realize people are just people. If I had ended up dying during any of my deployments, I would hardly expect the people in my neighborhood to stop what they were doing to mourn my loss. I would never think any less of them for not stopping on Memorial Day to lay wreaths at my grave or give flowers to my widow and kids. I wouldn't expect it because I have volunteered to put myself in those situations where death is such a looming possibility. My brothers and sisters in arms who have died did so to make sure that the people back home could enjoy the fruits of liberty without suffering the thorns of its maintenance.

I know what price wearing the uniform and swearing the oath can entail. I'm sure those men and women who paid the ultimate price understood the same thing. Remember that and honor that (especially since only a fraction of a percent of our population serves in the military now) but don't let it stop you from enjoying the weekend.

Life is for the living. Those who are gone might have been taken "too soon," but only by the reckoning of those to whom they mattered the most. We're each allotted a certain number of beats of the heart, breaths in our body and ticks on the clock. Once those limits are reached, we move on. How we choose to use that time we're given determines our legacy. Our honored dead left us a legacy of self-determination and a plethora of possibilities. How we use those gifts will determine whether we truly honor their sacrifice.

Just a thought...



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