



Col. Andrew Baker, right, formally marks his entry as the 64th commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District during the passing of the colors at the district's change of command ceremony July 14 at the LA District Baseyard in South El Monte, California. Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander, center, served as presiding officer for the ceremony. At left is Col. Julie Balten, outgoing LA District commander.

LA District welcomes new commander

STORY AND PHOTO BY STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SOUTH EL MONTE, Calif. — Col. Julie Balten relinquished command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District to Col. Andrew Baker during a change of command ceremony July 14 at the LA District Baseyard near Los Angeles.

Joining the ceremony were family and friends of Balten and Baker, along with congressional representatives and staff; federal, state, county and local leaders; private partners and stakeholders; military, civil and interagency program partners; and current and former team members of the LA District.

Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, South Pacific

Division commander, served as presiding officer for the ceremony.

Gant praised Balten's leadership throughout the past three years and the hard work of the diverse team of more than 800 personnel whose work covers 226,000 square miles, 420 miles of coastline, 14 harbors and the highest, lowest and hottest spots in the contiguous 48 states, while managing an annual budget of more than \$750 million.

The LA District area of responsibility also includes three Army installation, eight Air Force installations, numerous international and interagency customers, 52 members of Congress, 170 Native American tribes and numerous federal, state and county officials.

Gant said she was grateful to Balten for

leading the district team as its members supported numerous emergency management missions, including delivering hospital upgrades and alternate care facilities in support of COVID-19 relief efforts, providing advanced flood-fighting measures for communities impacted by unusually high levels of precipitation and snow melt, and mobilizing personnel and resources to support the Santa Barbara debris-removal mission and wildfire relief activities.

During Balten's command, the LA District delivered a significant portion of work for the Department of Veterans Affairs at both the Long Beach and San Diego health care system campuses, with more than \$650 million obli-

['COMMANDER' continued on Page 4](#)

Rio de Flag flood-control



Rio de Flag

Protect your Flagstaff Watershed - Keep it Clean!



Photos by Robert DeDeaux

Jim McCarthy, Flagstaff city councilman, left in top photo, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers LA District Deputy Engineer Justin Gay, right in top photo, discuss the Rio de Flag flood-control project July 12 in Flagstaff, Arizona. According to McCarthy, the project will prevent flooding of important downtown, residential and Northern Arizona University property.

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District Commander: Col. Andrew Baker

Public Affairs Chief: Dena M. O'Dell

Editor: Stephen Baack

Contributing Editors:
John Reese, Jay Field, Robert DeDeaux,
Dan Collins, Brooks O. Hubbard IV

Tel: (213) 452-3922 or Fax: (213) 452-4209.

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Address mail to the Los Angeles District
Public Affairs Office
ATTN: NewsCastle Editor
Room 1105, 915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-2325

Email the Public Affairs Office at:
publicaffairs.SPL@usace.army.mil



Farewell: It's been a privilege being your commander

Hello, SPL Team!

I can't believe it's already been three years since I first arrived at the district and started meeting the wonderful people I would be working with during our journey together and learning about the many opportunities and challenges we would face together.

Right from the start, we encountered a host of challenges with the pandemic being in full swing, but as a team you rose to the occasion and did what the Corps does better than anyone else in the world: provide world-class engineering solutions by responding to the needs of the nation, our environment and the communities we serve. In other words: We solve problems, and we get things done!

Shortly after I arrived, we were charged with the vital mission of managing hospital upgrades and alternate care facilities in support of COVID-19 relief efforts. This was a phenomenal opportunity to demonstrate how we can, as a district, turn on a dime to support something so important — all while making sure we continue delivering the program we've been delivering all along.

At the same time, we were (and still are) delivering VA projects and we were awarding the three projects for the Santa Ana Mainstem, which was a big deal to execute those by the end of that first fiscal year. And I really



COL. JULIE A. BALTEN
OUTGOING
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

am very proud of the team as we continue to support the Tulsa District and Southwestern Division in delivering these projects because it's still the majority of our team on the PDT. We're still delivering on those projects, but it's just a more collaborative approach than before. Now, we get to focus even more on the teams we're leading to deliver those projects.

There was also an unprecedented amount of work we received across the enterprise and in the district with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Our workload continues to increase every single year, and our district hasn't grown that much. We absorbed the Border District mission into the Phoenix Program Management Office. I have a list of so many design agreements and Project Partnership Agreements we've signed this past year — from the Port of Long Beach Design Agreement to the PPA for the Salton Sea Feasibility Study — that it's difficult to overstate how much we're doing daily. We're working on some new, innovative approaches to how we partner for things like the LACDA disposition study and the outreach we do with our international and interagency customers, with Army and Air Force installations, and numerous federal, tribal, state and county officials.

Together we took on crucial emergency management missions as we responded to fires

and floods. These efforts include Santa Barbara debris removal and emergency dredging, advanced flood-fighting measures with the Hopi Tribe and in Douglas, Arizona, as well as providing personnel to help combat the Northern California wildfires.

This is not to mention the historic rainfall that inundated Southern California recently. Regulatory has issued more than 190 permits just this year alone, which is a tremendous increase from previous years and shows how responsive our teams are. On the topic of permits, I'll add that our Section 408 permitting program has completely turned around — really because of the people in the program who have dedicated themselves to improving things.

When people in this district want to improve something, and they have a deliberate focus in carrying out what they know needs to be changed, it's going to happen. So, please continue to be the catalyst for that change, and collaborate to execute that change and innovate. It may be uncomfortable at first, but that's part of the process.

We have so many important missions — both in civil and military programs, from construction to real estate management, critical dam safety projects, water conservation, environmental service and so much more — and so many of you have made such a monumental difference for the communities in which we live in work every day that it would be impossible to thank every person I want to thank and highlight every accomplishment I want to highlight in this column, so if I leave someone or something out, it wasn't intentional.

I just can't express enough how much of an honor and a privilege it's been to serve as your commander. I absolutely couldn't have done it without you, your hard work, dedication, talent, teamwork and the innovative ways we have in delivering our program.

Leaving the district will be difficult, but transitions are part of being in the Army. As some of you know, I am now retiring after these three years as your commander and district engineer, but I know you are in good hands with Col. Andrew Baker, just as he is in good hands with you.

I am so proud to have been a part of this district. The Mighty Los Angeles District will always have an extra special place in my heart. For that, I am truly grateful.

Sincerely,

Col. Julie A. Balten



From left to right: Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander; Col. Andrew Baker, incoming commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District; Col. Julie Balten, outgoing commander of the Los Angeles District; after the July 14 district change of command ceremony at the Corps' Base Yard in South El Monte, California.



Photo by Stephen Baack

From left to right stand Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander; Col. Andrew Baker, incoming commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District; Col. Julie Balten, outgoing commander of the Los Angeles District; and Justin Gay, deputy district engineer, during the July 14 district change of command ceremony at the Corps' Baseyard in South El Monte, California.

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gated to VA projects this year alone. This includes mental health facilities in Long Beach and a Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center in San Diego, among other VA projects.

Gant said Balten has “been the driving force in numerous important civil works efforts funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to include the Port of Long Beach, the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Project and shoreline protection along San Diego County.”

“There are simply too many accomplishments and achievements for me to talk about that have happened over the past three years,” Gant said.

Gant thanked Balten for the legacy she is leaving not only for the Los Angeles District, but for the Corps as a whole.

“Your selfless service, your dedication to the region and to the nation and your follow-through on your commitments are all just models for other leaders to emulate,” Gant said. “I just want to say thank you. Your passion, your

energy — you have truly been an inspiration for the Los Angeles District. They’re going to continue to do great things, and it’s because of the foundation you have set.”

During her remarks, Balten brought attention to the many familiar faces in the crowd at the ceremony, including those with the LA District team, as well as county, city, military partners, fellow commanders, friends and family.

“I feel so fortunate to have had this opportunity to command such an incredible district just filled with people who are committed to service, finding those innovative, bold solutions to those tough challenges through transparent partnerships, where together we deliver projects that make a lasting impact and differences in the lives of others,” she said.

Balten took command in July 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which she said presented its own share of challenges as telework and social distancing made the process of getting to know her new team difficult at first.

“I am a people person, so going into the of-

fice and not being able to reach out and communicate directly with people was tough, but we all had to learn and navigate it together and overcome those challenges. Collectively we charted those waters through the unknown to where we are today — a more resilient workforce with the flexibility to be collaborative, while also delivering the program from everywhere and anywhere possible.”

Balten, who is now set to retire from the Army after more than 27 years of distinguished service, welcomed Baker and his family, and wished them well on the challenges ahead.

During his remarks, Baker made it a point to thank Balten for welcoming him and his family to the district and for making a smooth transition possible between the two leaders, including a weeklong visit to the district in early April.

“I can’t thank you enough for all you’ve done for my family and me, both in person back in April and during the past few days,

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getting me up to speed on the district and on living and working in this great, massive city, and really your friendship, mentorship and encouragement,” he said.

“It is so clear to me that your dynamic and optimistic leadership was tremendously impactful as the district successfully navigated challenge after challenge over the past three years,” Baker said. “We heard the impressive list of projects of such great consequence. It’s really amazing what you and the team have accomplished.”

Baker, who comes to LA from a previous assignment as the Joint Task Force Bravo chief of operations in Honduras, took extra time to express gratitude to his wife and two daughters

for “their example of service above self and their unwavering support, and then thanked Gant for helping make it possible for him to take on his new role as district commander.

“Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve in the storied Los Angeles District, for the warm welcome, counsel and mentorship over the past few months, and the lovely words about my family and friends,” Baker said to Gant. “I look forward to serving with you and the South Pacific Division team as we work to deliver vital solutions, in collaboration with our partners, to secure our nation, energize our economy and reduce disaster risk.”

Lastly, Baker said he was excited to start working with the many district partners and stakeholders, and with the district team itself,

which he said has “an amazing reputation throughout the Corps, earned over 125 years — starting with that breakwater way back, down in San Pedro, to today — delivering infrastructure critical to the nation’s economy, resiliency and defense on a massive scale.”

“Whether it be servicing our nation’s largest ports, providing outstanding support to nation’s service members, veterans and our defense or for our collective national resiliency through disaster risk-reduction projects, the LA District has always, always answered the call,” Baker said. “I’m looking forward to doing my part to support the LA District’s continued work to safely deliver quality projects on schedule and within budget for the American people.”



Photos by Stephen Baack

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Col. Andrew Baker, incoming commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, speaks during the district’s change of command ceremony July 14 at the LA District Baseyard in South El Monte, California.

Col. Andrew Baker, incoming commander of the LA District, left, salutes while Justin Gay, LA District deputy engineer, right, places his hand over his chest during a playing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the start of the district’s change of command ceremony July 14 at the LA District Baseyard in South El Monte, California.

Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander, presents a token of her appreciation to Col. Julie Balten, outgoing commander of the Los Angeles District, during a July 14 change of command ceremony at the LA District Baseyard in South El Monte, California. Gant served as presiding officer for the ceremony.



Photo by Stephen Baack

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander Col. Julie Balten, left, and Joe Mouawad, Eastern Municipal Water District general manager, right, reaffirm their partnership and formally recognize the next phase of project implementation for the South Perris Desalination Program during a July 7 visit to the EMWD facility in Perris, California.

Corps joins Eastern Municipal Water District to reaffirm partnership, chart path forward

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PERRIS, Calif. — A team with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District met with Eastern Municipal Water District officials July 7 at their facility in Perris to reaffirm their partnership and formally recognize the next phase of project implementation for the South Perris Desalination Program.

Col. Julie Balten, LA District commander, joined Joe Mouawad, EMWD general manager, for a ceremonial signing of a Project Partnership Agreement, an update on recent project developments and a tour of the new Perris II Desalter.

The Perris II Desalter, which uses reverse osmosis to remove salts from the groundwater in the Perris and Menifee areas in Riverside County, is the third such facility that the EMWD operates. Since its June 2022 commissioning, it has increased capacity by 5.4 million gallons of

useable water per day to help ensure basic human health and safety.

The desalter is the newest major addition to EMWD's desalination program, the goal of which is to support water supply diversity and reliability for the Perris South Groundwater Management Zone and surrounding areas in western Riverside County.

Nested in that overall goal is a set of objectives, such as developing unused brackish groundwater, decreasing reliance on imported water sources, protecting adjacent high-quality groundwater basins from salt intrusion, increasing reliability of the local water supply, improving drought resilience and providing water to disadvantaged communities.

"There's just been a number of benefits that have resulted from this effort," said Joe Mouawad, general manager.

The authority granted to the Corps to as-

sist nonfederal partners in water-related environmental infrastructure, resource protection and development projects comes from Section 219 of the Water Resources and Development Act. Other such activities include ecosystem restoration, flood control, navigation and wastewater infrastructure.

In this case, EMWD's desalination program includes not only treatment facilities, but also wells, pipelines, brine management facilities to extract, treat and move brackish groundwater throughout the Perris South Groundwater Management Zone.

Along with nearly \$4.5 million in federal funds received for the project for brine pipeline improvements through the fiscal year 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, an additional \$4.5 million in funds for the FY2023 work plan are being provided, which demonstrates an ongoing

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ing commitment by the federal government to fund the construction of infrastructure projects designed to strengthen the economy and tackle the nation's water resources challenges.

As it stands, EMWD produces half of its water locally, while the other half is imported from the Colorado River and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta via the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. As of the EMWD's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for FY2022, 5 percent of the supply is from groundwater desalination. With the addition of the Perris II Desalter, that number is estimated to have risen to 10 percent.

The Corps-EMWD partnership goes back to 2003, when both agencies first cemented design and construction agreements. Along with the Perris II Desalter, the LA District also has assisted with the management of construction for three wells within the last five years. These components help comprise Phase I of the water district's desalination program, together producing 6,000 acre-feet of water annually to about 12,000 households.

Going forward, planned projects include a brine pipeline access improvements project, a brackish well-siting study and a brackish transmission pipeline.

"We're really grateful for the history of our partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," Mouawad said. "We've shared that history and look forward to continuing that collaboration for many years to come."



Photo by Dena O'Dell

Joe Mouawad, general manager of the Eastern Municipal Water District, left, explains the process of the desalination program to Col. Julie Balten, LA District commander, second from right, during a July 7 tour of the Perris II Desalter facility in Menifee.

"I want to thank your team for its partnership and for the innovation in this project, and what it brings to the community," Balten said, adding it takes a "whole-of-government" approach to build water resilience in Southern California and Arizona, and to reduce reliance on external water sources.

"It takes all of us as a community, and Eastern Municipal Water District is spearheading

that effort in creating this innovative approach to water quality," Balten added. "There are so many great things to get behind in this project. Not only is this just a fantastic opportunity to get to see it today, but to sign this agreement that charges the project forward to the next phase into construction. That's why we're here today, so we can get projects delivered, to keep our word and be your partner."



Photo by Stephen Baack

Accompanied by a team with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, Col. Julie Balten, seventh from left, LA District commander, stands for a photo with Eastern Municipal Water District officials during a July 7 visit to the EMWD facility in Perris, California, during which both agencies reaffirmed their partnership and formally recognized the next phase of project implementation for the South Perris Desalination Program.

LA District signs flood-risk management project design agreement in Winslow



Col. Julie Balten, LA District commander, left, joins Alberto Peshlakai, chairman of the Navajo County Board of Supervisors, foreground-right, to sign the Little Colorado River at Winslow Flood-Risk Management Project Design Agreement July 11 in Winslow, Arizona.

BY ROBERT DEDEAUX
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, along with the Navajo County Board of Supervisors, signed the Little Colorado River at Winslow Flood-Risk Management Project Design Agreement July 11 at the Winslow Chamber of Commerce in Winslow. The signing ceremony marks the Corps' initiation of pre-construction, engineering and design to reduce potential flood risk along the Little Colorado River in Winslow. "This has been a long-awaited event, not only for the county, but for the city of Winslow," said Alberto Peshlakai, chairman of the Navajo County Board of Supervisors. "The purpose of this project is to eliminate the flood zone, protect the Santa Fe transcontinental train line, recognize Navajo/Hopi relocations, and, most importantly, improve public

safety for the city of Winslow." About 5,000 people – families who live, work and call this area their home – along with critical infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, nursing homes and utilities, are located within a flood plain and are at the potential risk of flooding. The project area includes about 4.3 miles of flood-risk reduction levee and improvements located along the Little Colorado River near Winslow. "The completion of this project will be a win for this community — not only by reducing the potential flood risk associated with the river, but also by creating stability, economic vitality and future growth for the area," Balten said. The Little Colorado River at Winslow Flood-Risk Management project received more than \$65 million in federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to fund the

project to completion. "The project is also very important to the nation," Balten said. "Flooding also poses a threat to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Bridge over the Little Colorado River — a critical transcontinental corridor for transporting goods to and from the Midwest to the West Coast." Initial project work will focus on geotechnical and cultural updates, as well as refined hydraulic modeling. "The Los Angeles District is dedicated to safely delivering quality projects on time to our Arizona partners and stakeholders," Balten said. The LA District supports the public and military in Arizona with a wide variety of projects and planning, engineering, construction and environmental services. Projects include flood-risk management, navigation, recreation, and infrastructure and environmental stewardship.

Farewell address to workforce



Col. Julie Balten, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, gave her farewell address to the workforce July 10 during a virtual townhall meeting at the LA District Headquarters in downtown LA. She shared successes and challenges about her time in the district, including coming into command in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how proud she was of the team. She also gave words of encouragement to the team, reminding them that "Anything is possible" as they continue to support the delivery of the LA District's program. Balten, who is retiring after 27 years of service to the Army, [relinquished command to Col. Andrew Baker during a July 14 ceremony](#) in South El Monte, California.

Photo by Dena O'Dell

Click the links below to find us on social media!



Around the District

"Within my limited time here, I have enjoyed the camaraderie within the district safety team. I enjoy being in a field I am passionate about and with an organization as respected as USACE."

Josh is in the Army Fellow Program working and gaining career knowledge with the Los Angeles District Safety and Occupational Health staff. He has been with the Corps for four months. Josh is from Phoenix.



Josh Pendergrass
Safety Specialist



Visiting HQ team trains LA District on accident investigations



Subject-matter experts become detectives as they study a mock accident June 28 to determine facts and circumstances necessary to complete an investigation at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Baseyard in South El Monte, California.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN REESE
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SOUTH EL MONTE, Calif. — District team members from various disciplines gathered at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Baseyard for Safety Investigation Board training June 27-29 in South El Monte.

A team from the Corps’ Safety Investigation Board led the instruction, while members of the Los Angeles District hosted the training.

Participants reviewed accident policies; procedures and responsibilities for initial notification; reporting; investigation; preparation; and submission of reports of Corps accidents. The 28 students learned the theory of accident investigations and got hands-on experience to determine facts and circumstances pertaining to an accident, such as identifying and describing what happened and why.

“The training is part of an initiative by Corps commander Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon to respond to incidents around the globe in terms of being able to do accident investigations in-

volving Corps personnel and property, as well as contractors working on project sites,” said Marty Werdebaugh, Headquarters USACE Occupational Health program manager. “This is for high-severity accidents involving fatalities, amputations, permanent partial disabilities and/or for high severity in terms of property damage in excess of \$600,000 or greater.”

Previously, LA personnel were taking SIB training hosted by the Sacramento District when LA District Safety Chief Cecy Ordonez saw an opportunity to increase the number of trained employees. She offered to host the Headquarters trainers in Los Angeles. More than half the participants of the June session were from LA.

“We have people from other districts here; we have the Sacramento chief here,” Ordonez said. “We have multiple other safety chiefs here.”

Ordonez said the focus was on Operations and Construction divisions for the South Pacific Division and Los Angeles District. The goal is to get division subject-matter experts to be

Safety Investigation Board-qualified for when an accident occurs.

“LA District could take somebody from operations or construction divisions and send them out to where an accident happened,” Ordonez said.

The Corps saw an increase in reporting over the past two years, especially learning in a COVID-steady environment, Werdebaugh said.

“But reporting is a positive aspect because, again, without knowing of these accidents, it’s very difficult to do any kind of a trends analysis or deep dive on where we need to focus our resources,” he added.

“When we conduct an accident investigation, it’s to ensure that we find all of the causal factors, so we can learn what went wrong, so that we don’t repeat those mistakes,” said Jason Walsh, loss control program manager. “Ensuring that we’re trained and competent to be able to conduct an investigation, it’s important to ensure we’re looking at everything we need to be looking at.”

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Photos by John Reese

Instructors and students gather for a photo June 28 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Baseyard in South El Monte, California.

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Safety Investigation Board training for Corps personnel around the globe decreases the amount of time needed to conduct accident investigations, Walsh noted.

“We have tools prepared for the teams to use, so it reduces the labor hours needed,” Walsh said.

The Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health Management System, or CE-SOHMS, saw an increase in accident reporting through training the workforce how to report and to whom.

“We average about 12-16 safety investigation boards throughout the Corps per fiscal year, and I would say there’s a 2-1 ratio of contractor safety investigation boards versus USACE, predominantly because we have more contractors turning wrenches,” Werdebaugh said. “We have about 350,000 contractors; we have about 37,000 Corps employees, most of which live in district offices behind desk jobs, and not as many maintenance personnel, not as many lock and dam operators, et cetera.”



Jason Walsh, loss control program manager, right, trains future accident investigators how to find the cause of an accident during a June 28 session at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Baseyard in South El Monte, California.



File photo by John Reese

Chris Rainwater, LA District deputy chief of safety, instructs CPR, automated external defibrillator and first aid training April 6 at the district headquarters building in downtown LA. About 100 district employees took advantage of the classes to learn the latest, vital lifesaving techniques.

LA District CPR training helps save life

EDITORIAL BY LA DISTRICT SAFETY OFFICE

LOS ANGELES — U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District employee Chris Niemas, one of about 100 LA District employees who completed the American Heart Association's training on CPR in April, was able to use his skills in early July to save a life.

Niemas, who works with the LA District's USACE Logistics Activity, or ULA, attended one of the April classes led by Chris Rainwater, LA District deputy chief of Safety, that also covered first aid and the use of the automated external defibrillator.

On July 5, Niemas was leaving a store when he saw a woman performing CPR on a man who appeared to be in his mid-20s. Niemas, who immediately realized the rescuer was exhausted and needed assistance, ran over to the scene and took over CPR by performing chest compressions on the victim. Niemas recalled his training and pressed fast and deep on the center of the victim's chest.

After about four minutes of performing CPR, first responders arrived on the scene and took over.

Exhausted himself, Niemas returned home.

Later, he contacted the responding fire department and was informed the young man was revived successfully. Niemas' extraordinary efforts, combined with those of the unknown woman rescuer, saved the man's life.

One never knows when and where CPR skills will be needed, but one thing is very clear — a victim in cardiac arrest has less than five minutes if they are to survive. Immediate and effective CPR is a victim's only hope

for survival, and yet only about 40 percent of Americans who experience cardiac arrest each year will receive CPR.

As a result of Col. Julie Balten's safety strategy, nearly 15 percent of all LA District employees are now CPR/AED/first-aid certified — an amazing accomplishment!

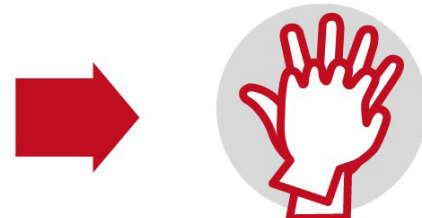
Thanks to Niemas for sharing this story and, more importantly, for his heroic efforts in saving a life.

2 STEPS TO SAVE A LIFE

1 Call 911.



2 Push hard & fast in the center of the chest



More detailed instructions on CPR are available on the [last page of this newsletter](#).

Safety Tip of the Week: Lead exposure safety

Know the areas and materials to be aware of to protect yourself from lead exposure

LOS ANGELES DISTRICT SAFETY OFFICE

What is lead?

Lead is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the earth's crust. While it has some beneficial uses, it can be toxic to humans and animals, causing health effects.

Where is lead found?

Lead can be found in all parts of our environment — the air, soil, water and even inside our homes. Much of our exposure comes from human activities, including the use of fossil fuels, i.e., past use of leaded gasoline, some types of industrial facilities and past use of lead-based paint in homes.

Lead and lead compounds have been used in a wide variety of products found in and around our homes, including paint, ceramics,

pipes and plumbing materials, solders, gasoline, batteries, ammunition and cosmetics.

When lead is released into the air from industrial sources or spark-ignition-engine aircraft, it may travel long distances before settling to the ground, where it usually sticks to soil particles. Lead may move from soil into groundwater, depending on the type of lead compound and the characteristics of the soil.

Lower your chances of exposure to lead:

- Inspect and maintain all painted surfaces to prevent paint deterioration.
- Address water damage quickly and completely.
- Keep your home clean and dust-free.
- Use only cold water to prepare food and drinks.

• Flush water outlets used for drinking or food preparation.

• Clean debris out of outlet screens or faucet aerators on a regular basis.

• Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers and toys often.

What do I do if I think my child or I have been exposed to lead?

Talk to your pediatrician, general physician or local health agency about what you can do. Your doctor can do a simple blood test to check you or your child for lead exposure.

This week's Safety Tip is from guest writer Aaron Burke, an LA District safety specialist in Phoenix.

If you have a Safety Tip of the Week suggestion, tell us about it!



Courtesy photo



Michael Martino, quality assurance lead with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, left, shows portions of the under-construction Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center to Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, the Corps' South Pacific Division commander, right, June 28 at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus.

Partnership key to success for VA San Diego projects

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SAN DIEGO — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' South Pacific Division commander met June 28 with the Corps and Department of Veterans Affairs teams working together on key projects at the VA San Diego Health Care System campus.

Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, who last visited about a year ago, joined the Los Angeles District and Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Construction and Facilities Management project delivery team to see the progress on the new Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center and seven-story parking structure.

"This is amazing work that this team is doing, and it's because of their partnership with each other," Gant said. "It's all about the (Construction and Facilities Management) and the Corps of Engineers collaborating, communicating and working through issues to make sure that, ultimately, the professionals at the VA campus here are getting what they need to serve the veterans."

The Spinal Cord Injury/Community Liv-

ing Center facility, which is slated to open in fall 2024, is designed to provide care to veterans and active-duty personnel with spinal cord injuries and disorders who live in San Diego and Imperial counties in California, and in Arizona and southern Nevada. The new facility, which is replacing the current building at the campus, will be a 197,000-square-foot, four-story standalone structure.



The nearly complete, seven-story parking structure is pictured June 28 at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus.

"I'm very pleased, and I'm very glad I got to come down here today," Gant said. "We've got some true rockstars on both sides of the fence here. Having them both here together, I don't think we could have had any better type of time to be put together. They truly are professionals in what they do, and that's what we want: to be world-class pro-

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professionals about what we deliver to any customer we have."

Joining Gant on the walkthrough were Col. Julie Balten, LA District commander, and Justin Gay, deputy district engineer.

"It's been a really great opportunity to show her the incredible progress the team has made for our veterans on this project, and we get to highlight the incredible work the team is doing and the collaborative effort in which they're doing it," Balten said.

Balten added the team is poised to deliver the parking structure on time, if not early, and although there is about a 12 percent time growth overall due to certain design challenges, "the team has been working really well to keep that to a minimum."

"There's always challenges on any job site and construction project, but this team is really collaborating to deliver," she said.

"It's still not done, but we are where we should be, and it's amazing to see," Gant said. "This is what happens when you have both teams fully committed to what the end product should be."



Photos by Stephen Baack

Scheduled for completion in fall 2024, the new Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center is shown June 28 at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System complex next to the main medical center building.



Brig. Gen. Antoinette Gant, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division commander, second from left, embarks on a walkthrough of the new Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center, scheduled to be complete in fall 2024, at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Health Care System campus. In this photo, Gant is accompanied by Col. Julie Balten, the Corps' Los Angeles District commander, center; Justin Gay, LA District's deputy district engineer, right; Andrea Vera, deputy director for facilities operations with the Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Construction and Facilities Management at the VA San Diego Health Care System campus; and Daniel Carpio, technical lead with the Engineering and Construction Division from the Corps' Albuquerque District, left.

HEARTSAVER®

ADULT CPR AED

1



Tap and shout.

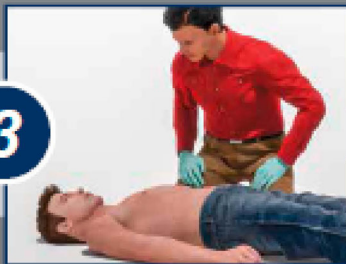
Shout for help.

Phone 9-1-1 and place phone on speaker mode so you can talk to the dispatcher, or send someone else to phone 9-1-1 and get an AED.

2



3



Look for no breathing or only gasping.

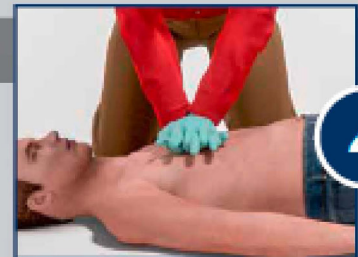
Push hard and fast in the center of the chest.

Give 30 compressions.

- Push straight down at least 2 inches.
- Give 100 to 120 compressions per minute.
- Let the chest come back up to its normal position.
- Try not to interrupt compressions for more than 10 seconds.

Open the airway and give 2 breaths.

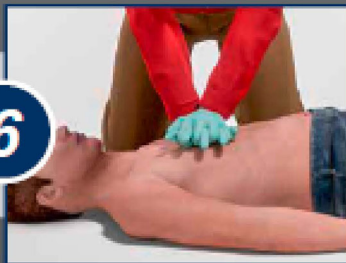
4



5



6



Repeat sets of 30 compressions and 2 breaths.

When the AED arrives, use it immediately.

Turn it on and follow the prompts.

7

