



# Information Bulletin

**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Engineer Research and  
Development Center

Topographic Engineering Center

*U.S. Army 1999 Research & Development  
Organization of the Year*

Sept. 14, 2000  
Number 00-37

## OFFICIAL

### Commander's Column

Let me start by thanking all the great folks of the ERDC who have worked so hard to make my transition so smooth. I am truly thrilled by the opportunity to work with all of you and represent your work to our customers across the Nation. While I am no stranger to USACE, this assignment is certainly a change of pace and direction, and I am excited to have this opportunity to see a different part of the organization.

In my first few weeks I have been on the road visiting TEC, CERL, CRREL, the Aquatic Plant Research Facility in Lewisville, Texas, and the Field Research Facility in Duck, N.C. At every stop I continue to be impressed by the scope of work being accomplished, as well as your dedication to the mission. Another amazing aspect is the complexity of what you are doing on a day-to-day basis. My next focus is to spend time in Vicksburg visiting the labs at this location. From what I have seen so far, I am confident the trend will continue.

I would like to take advantage of this column to discuss some issues which to date have been a continuing source of question and concern by the employees I have met.

There continues to be concern over just who is in charge. Let me try to clarify that. We are very fortunate to have Dr. Jim Houston as the Director of the ERDC. As ERDC Director, he is directly responsible for the technical aspects of the ERDC effort and the individual lab directors report to him. With very few exceptions, the members of the labs fall under his leadership.

My role as Commander is focused on the support side of our mission. It is my job to remove or minimize the roadblocks that prevent the accomplishment of your mission. Bottom line -- **my job is to take care of the people of the ERDC so the people can take care of the mission.** Clearly I cannot do this alone. I look to the support staff to handle this for me. My deputy is Mr. Joe Roberto, who is located at CRREL. The support staff chiefs report to me through Mr. Roberto. Another important part of both Dr. Houston's job and mine is to jointly represent your work to our customers. As you know these customers vary from the USACE divisions and districts, to military installations, to state and federal agencies, foreign governments and various civil customers, just to name a few.

A compounding problem continues to be the number of "actings" we have in key leadership positions, as well as the on-going fine-tuning of the organizational structure. I would like to officially thank the "actings" – they are doing an outstanding job in a difficult situation. I am well aware that it is extremely challenging to be an "acting" and I assure you that we are moving as quickly as possible to hire permanent people to fill these key positions. In the interim, I ask you to be patient; things are getting better every day.

Those of you who attended or viewed the town hall meeting in August heard what I consider to be my non-negotiables, but I would like to review them quickly with you. I truly believe they are the basis of a quality organization, which the ERDC is without exception.

- Honesty
- Treat People Fairly
- Zero Tolerance for Sexual Harassment
- Fraud, waste and abuse – call someone or me in the chain of command.
- Integrity is the cornerstone upon which all actions are based.

Finally, let me address what I view as the overall morale of the ERDC. As I already stated, in every corner of the organization great people are working hard to accomplish the near impossible. Behind that, however, I sense a tension or concern about this new organization called the ERDC. In short, there is still a general distrust of the “other” labs. Each of the labs had worked independently for so long that it is now a challenge to have a different organizational structure and loyalty.

In reality, nothing has changed. You still have the same responsibilities. It is just that we now have a larger organization to draw on to resource and solve the problems you are working. Granted, the majority of issues can still be resolved within a given lab, but often we gain by sharing across lab boundaries, which we will need to do in order to face the complex problems of the future. That may mean sending money to another lab, but that is okay because over time, things will all balance out. Please keep in mind that when we successfully meet a customer’s budget and schedule we all win; **that needs to be our ultimate goal.**

I also see this concern expressed in the Commander’s Mailbox. I encourage you to continue sending me your issues and I would also ask you to address the appropriate ones with your leadership. Before I leave this assignment, my goal is that while I continue to receive e-mails in the commander’s mailbox, I receive them with the person’s name on them. There should be no reason for someone to be concerned about sending something in anonymously. If you send me your name, it can still be confidential if you desire, but we (sender and commander) have the added benefit of being able to enter into a dialogue to better understand the true issues. The written word leaves a lot out that is actually an important part of the discussion.

In closing, for what it’s worth, I am looking forward to another exciting football season. My favorite teams are the Denver Broncos, Army, and whoever happens to beat up on Navy that day!

Thanks again for the warm welcome and I look forward to meeting more of you personally down the road.

Essayons,

COL Jim Weller

## Departure

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>EOD</u>
Christian Berger	GID	Sept. 30

## Calendar of Events

Sept. 15	Q&A session with Dr. Pennington and Mr. Murdock in Conference Room 1 from 10:30 a.m. to noon.
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## Travel Update

Here is the current schedule for approving travel in CEFMS:  
Sept. 18-22                      Betty O'Donnell                      Hanover Site                      (603) 646-4355

The ERDC travel web page is now available at  
<http://erdcinfo.erd.usace.army.mil/lmo/travel/index.htm>.

As always, if you have a question, please contact your local travel specialist. In the event she is not available, you may contact any ERDC travel specialist.

## Commander's Mailbox

ERDC team members are reminded that an electronic mailbox has been established to allow employees to send questions and/or comments to the Commander. If an employee wishes to remain anonymous, his or her name will be deleted from the question before it is forwarded to the Commander for comment. Employees' questions will be answered via return e-mail. Answers to anonymous and frequently asked questions will be posted in the Employee Information Bulletin.

The address in Outlook is, "ERDC Commander." Again, all information is kept strictly confidential and all questions are addressed directly by the Commander.

## ERDC Publications on Internet

The ERDC Publication Bulletin serves as the official notification of new ERDC forms and publication, as well as rescissions or changes to existing forms or publications. As of Sept. 10, 1999, ERDC official publications ceased to be printed (i.e., Center Regulations, Circulars, Pamphlets, or Commander's Policy Memoranda). All ERDC official publications are now distributed in electronic format on the ERDC web site located at <http://erdc.usace.army.mil/pubs/index.htm>.

## ERDC News Releases Now on Internet

ERDC News Releases are now on the Internet at <http://www.erd.usace.army.mil/news.html>. New releases will be added as they are released to the media. Please visit this site for the latest ERDC News. (Jennifer L. King, ERDC PAO, (601) 634-2505)

## ERDC Job Vacancies

Reminder: Information on all current ERDC job vacancies can be found on the ERDC Intranet at <http://erdcinfo.erd.usace.army.mil/hr/vacancies/index.htm>. All job announcements are also posted at the CPOL web site <http://www.cpol.army.mil/va/scripts/public.html> and at the OPM USAJobs web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a9.htm>.

## Opening Announcements

General Biologist (Supervisory) (DB-0401)	CRREL	Open: Sept. 12 Close: Sept. 25
General Engineer (Supervisory) (DB-0801)	CRREL	Open: Sept. 12 Close: Sept. 25
Physical Scientist (Supervisory) (DB-1301)	CRREL	Open: Sept. 12 Close: Sept. 25

## **National POW/MIA Recognition Day**

National Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) Recognition Day is Sept. 15. The event is observed each year on the third Friday of September. The web site [www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo) contains more information and background material. The web site includes information that both military units and civilian organizers may use in planning their events.

## **National Hispanic Heritage Month**

National Hispanic Heritage Month is from Sept. 15 to Oct. 14. During this month, America celebrates the hispanic cultures, achievements, and heritage by commemorating the following historical events:

Sept. 15 - Independence Day for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua

Sept. 16 - Independence Day for Mexico

Oct. 12 - El Dia de la Raza

Initiated by the U.S. Congress as Hispanic Heritage Week more than 20 years ago, the celebration has grown and expanded to a month in 1989.

FOR THE DIRECTOR

JACKIE L. BRYANT  
Public Affairs Office

## **U N O F F I C I A L**

### **Third Annual Water for Life Salsa Event Slated for Sept. 16**

Volunteers for Water Partners International are sponsoring the **Third Annual Water for Life Salsa Event** to raise funds to install a potable water system in the needy village of Cololaca, Honduras. This event will take place on Sept. 16 at the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, 1740 Massachusetts Ave. NW, D.C. from 7 to 11 p.m.

Admission is \$20 for adults and \$15 for students with valid ID, and will include free salsa and swing lessons, snacks and non-alcoholic refreshments from area establishments, live Latin band "*Orquesta Melao*", and water theme games for the kids. Beer will be for sale to adults with valid ID. A silent auction featuring international native crafts will be raffled. Come have a fun time and support a noble cause!

For more information contact Paul Reed at 428-7206 or check out [www.water.org](http://www.water.org).

### **No Waiting at Museum for You**

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has a special deal for federal employees, U.S. Postal Service workers, military members and retirees of those entities. From Oct. 1, 2000 to March 1, 2001, they can enter the Museum's acclaimed Permanent Exhibition at any time during museum hours by presenting an official government ID; retirees must provide a CSA or

CSF (retirement claim) number. The museum is located adjacent to the Mall in Washington, D.C. and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. It's closed on Yom Kippur (Oct. 9, 2000) and Christmas Day.

For more information, contact the Museum at (202) 488-0448.

### **Calendar of Events**

Sept. 19	TEC Golf Association 2-Ball Scramble Open Golf Tournament
Sept. 21	ASMC Luncheon: Belvoir SOSA Community Center (Reading Room) at 11:30 a.m.