



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
San Francisco District

SPN Surveyor



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SPN changes leaders

LTC Baker replaces LTC DiCiro

Also inside this issue . . .

SPN boat crews rescue kayaker, page 3

HS students test robot at Mendo, page 8

Army specialists join VA project, page 11

COMMANDER'S CORNER

"Proud to join a talented and diverse team of employees"

By Lt. Col. John K. Baker
San Francisco District Commander

It is truly an honor and privilege for me to join the San Francisco District as the 53rd Commander and District Engineer. I am proud and humbled to join this talented and diverse team that has served the Nation from the San Francisco area since 1866. Thank you for the warm welcome you have given to me and my family, and thank you for your contributions towards the district mission.

I was impressed with our workforce long before I took command. In April 2011, I got my first introduction through a video posted on the district's Facebook page and on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSp6eIP-Zpw>). Through my transition with LTC Torrey DiCiro and in my first six weeks of command, I have continued to be impressed. In fact, of the 319 employees on our payroll, over 20 percent have professional certifications in their respective fields, and over 20 percent have advanced degrees (with eight earning a Ph.D.).

Qualifications aside, our employees deliver value to the public. The crew of the *M/V Dillard* recently prevented a potential drowning with the rescue of a kayaker, and our rangers on our lakes have ensured the safety of



hundreds of thousands of visitors. Dave Whedon, a recent retiree from our Operations and Readiness Division and long-time boatswain of the *M/V Raccoon*, participated in the removal of over 500,000 tons of debris from the San Francisco Bay through his 34-year career, and he had no reportable accidents under his command in 20 years on the *M/V Raccoon*.

Diversity is our strength in the San Francisco District. We have current and retired military, a former city mayor, volunteers for the Boy Scouts and youth sports, and prominent members of their respective communities.

We have distinguished retirees, emerging leaders, and young talent. Our employees come from across the country with unique backgrounds, contributing to our mission in technical, managerial, administrative and many other capacities.

The quality of our workforce is a constant across the breadth of our mission. We arguably lead the nation in the balancing of commercial navigation and environmental stewardship. In an area with over 30 endangered animal species, we provide navigation for 20 Federal ship channels along a 600-mile coastline and are helping to restore thousands of acres of wetlands. We have the only "NetZero" energy facility in USACE with the Bay Model Visitor Center (a unique and strategic asset in itself). We are the "incidental owners" of the last viable population of the endangered coho salmon. We provide flood-risk management and regulatory functions in 20 watersheds encompassing over 40,000 square miles. We have no shortage of complex and challenging projects and missions in the San Francisco District, but I am confident that our employees – our most valuable resource – will rise to every occasion to complete the mission.

You have my trust and confidence, and I am proud to join your team.

Building Strong!

District Commander

LTC John K. Baker

Deputy Commander

MAJ Christopher W. Crary

Editor

Brandon Beach

brandon.a.beach@usace.army.mil

Staff Contributors

JC Delgadillo

jasmin.chopra.delgadillo@usace.army.mil

Ryan McClymont

ryan.j.mcclymont@usace.army.mil



SPN Surveyor

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SPN boat crews rescue kayaker



Beach
Marty Plisch was one of the SPN crew members to help a kayaker to safety.

By JC Delgadillo
District Public Affairs Office

No sport, including kayaking, is risk-free. One local kayaker found out just how risky kayaking can be when he ventured into the frigid San Francisco Bay near Redwood City in July. The crew of the *John A. B. Dillard Jr.*, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco district vessel charged with removing hazardous debris from the bay, spotted the kayaker. Captain of the *Dillard*, Kixon Meyer, explained that he observed a man beach his kayak and go for a walk on a strip of land.

"I was making my passes, and I notice a kayak drifting into the channel without a kayaker in it," said Meyer. "Then I see the guy swimming like a mad man toward his kayak, and he takes off his lifejacket, so he can swim faster!"

Meyer alerted the local U.S. Coast Guard element as well as the crew of the *Tiburon*, one of the district's survey vessels that happened to be in the area. The *Tiburon* is a small boat, able to maneuver into shallow areas the *Dillard* simply cannot. *Tiburon* Captain Marty Plisch and crew were able to arrive on the scene quickly and fished the kayaker, his kayak and his lifejacket out of the chilly water.

Both captains recommend never removing a life jacket to swim after a kayak. No property is worth risking human life, they explained.

For their efforts, San Francisco District Commander Lt. Col. John K. Baker gave crew members certificates of appreciation.

On the cover

Arijs Rakstins, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District deputy district engineer, prepares to pass the district flag to Lt. Col. Torrey A. DiCiro, left, outgoing district commander. Lt. Col. DiCiro, commander since 2010, relinquished his command June 28, 2012, by passing the flag to Brig. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, top, South Pacific Division commander, who in turn, presented the flag to Lt. Col. John K. Baker, making him the 51st San Francisco District commander. (Photo by Liviu Tanase)

Aug/Sept 2012

Become a leader with the Army Civilian Education System

By JC Delgadillo

District Public Affairs Office

I got an unexpected thrill on a recent flight to Boston, Mass. Imagine my delight when I found myself seated behind Colin Powell. He is likely best known for having served as U.S. Secretary of State, but in fact, Powell's entire adult life has been in service to his country. From his days as a young Army lieutenant, to wounded warrior, to White House fellow, to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Powell has distinguished himself as both a Soldier and civilian.

"Will you let me take a picture with you, so I can post it on Facebook," did not seem like an appropriate request to ask of the former secretary of state as he was preparing for takeoff, so I just smiled at him like the nerd that I am and thought about the countless leaders Powell has inspired.

Perhaps my service in the Army and study of rhetoric in undergrad has influenced my fascination with military oratory. While it may be legendary football coach Vince Lombardi who said, "leaders are made, not born," it's a philosophy I believe Powell supports, as evidenced by Powell's numerous speeches on leadership. It's a philosophy the Army Management Staff College supports too.

Some may be surprised to



Middleton

Fort Leavenworth in Kansas.

You've already taken the first step to serve as a [DOA] civilian, why not expand your management skills and leadership ability too.

learn that nearly every full-time Department of the Army civilian, regardless of grade or education level, is eligible to participate in Army Management Staff College Civilian Education System courses. CES provides eight levels of sequential leadership and management development training. They include the Foundation Course, Basic Course, Intermediate Course, Advanced Course, Continuing Education for Senior Leaders, Action Officers Development Course, Supervisors Development Course, and Managers Development Course.

Most permanent Army civilians' tuition, travel and per diem are funded from central budgets. Since funds do not come out of local coffers, CES courses are a great option, especially when local resources are scarce or when local programs such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers districts' leadership development programs are at capacity. Upon completion of the Advanced Course, civilians may seek additional education at the Senior Service Schools, War College, and Defense Leadership and



Delgadillo

Elizabeth Greenwalt and Eduardo Savory, two Army Management Staff College Civilian Education System Basic Course students, collaborate on a presentation of the Teams of Leaders approach to leadership. The approach is used to rapidly build and deploy cross-boundary teams that are highly competent in making and executing decisions and in learning and adapting together. CES provides eight levels of leadership and management development training for fulltime DOA civilians.

Management Program.

The method of course delivery is distributed learning, which is online, resident instruction and blended learning, which is a mix of both online and resident instruction.

I just returned from Fort Leavenworth where I completed the resident portion of the Basic Course. I was thrilled to experience two weeks of intense personal reflection, problem solving, as well as management and leadership opportunities. Each course at

the Army Management Staff College is taught by master or doctorate-level facilitators with expertise in fields such as psychology, organizational leadership, conflict resolution and change management. Through a series of assessments, lectures and exercises, students expand their self-awareness and increase their ability to manage projects in a short period of time.

Another added benefit of

Continued next page

Aug/Sept 2012

Apply for classes now at www.amsc.belvoir.army.mil

Many have a stake in reducing floods in Napa

By JC Delgadillo
District Public Affairs Office

Hear the word, “Napa” and what often comes to mind includes wine, lush landscapes, remarkable restaurants and resorts. About six million visitors flock to Napa each year. Like any other tourist destination, Napa is home to everyday people. Unlike some other destinations, however, parts of Napa, including all of its charming, lively downtown, are in a floodplain. Local residents, business owners, employees and tourists are susceptible to the effects of flooding in Napa. Numerous floods have ravaged the city; the most recent one took place over New Year’s Eve 2005/ New Year’s Day 2006 and caused more than \$70 million in property damage.

“After every flood, some businesses close, some people move away,” said Napa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District’s Julie Blue Lucido, P.E. “Practically every winter, if not every other winter, you can walk around in November and December and see sandbags stacked by the door fronts. There is certainly an anxiety that goes with living in a floodplain,” she said.

The Napa River Flood Protection Project, a Sacramento District project with construction management support by the San Francisco District, is essential to reduce the impact of flooding in Napa. The goal of the project, which is currently under construction, is to provide 100-year flood protection. Its additional benefits, supporters argue, include improving the local economy and relieving angst too.

The cost of civil works projects



Delgadillo

An excavator moves large boulders at the Napa River Flood Protection Project in Napa, Calif., July 26. The project aims to provide 100-year flood protection while maintaining or enhancing the Napa River’s natural qualities.

is often shared by local, state and federal agencies. Although voters approved a sales tax increase to fund their portion of the Napa River Flood Protection Project in 1998, it took more than a decade to get the momentum on the project going due to a variety of factors including lack of federal funds. With the advent of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Napa River Flood Protection Project, deemed shovel-ready, was infused with the funds needed to make significant progress.

Rapid advancements have not come at the expense of the environment, explained Lucido.

“There is a balancing act we

are doing with our flood project here in Napa. Even though we are not an ecosystem restoration project by authorization, we are implementing strategies to restore the environment, to create those important ecosystem restoration pieces,” she said.

Wherever possible, bioengineered solutions were chosen, including rootwads, which are tree roots adjacent to streams that provide useful habitat for fish and other aquatic life, explained Iris Chavez, a civil engineer with the San Francisco District. Chavez is one of the personnel overseeing construction of the project. As a Napa resident herself, she too is excited about the

benefits the project will bring for her community, she said.

Since parts of the project, including floodwalls, coil through downtown, maintaining the Spanish Colonial and Victorian Gothic style of Napa was carefully incorporated into the project design.

Although portions of the project are being constructed in highly trafficked and even residential areas, most people are forgiving of the noise and traffic closures, because they support the benefits this project will bring, said Chavez.

One long-time resident who agrees is retired high school teach-

Continued next page

CES continued ...

these courses is that students participate with fellow civilians from dozens of Department of the Army and other Department of Defense organizations. Among my civilian classmates were folks from the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command who work to counter chemical and biological threats, personnel from the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command who work at a

school that teaches law enforcement, and medical staff with the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command who work to determine the suitability of would-be military recruits.

It’s a big world out there, and you might miss out on great opportunities to serve the nation while supercharging your own career if you don’t leave the comfort of your local surroundings. Your communities need high-performing people to serve on high-performing

teams. You’ve already taken the first step to serve as a Department of the Army civilian, why not expand your management skills and leadership ability too. Leaders aren’t born, they are made. Let the Army Management Staff College make a leader out of you.

Delgadillo is a former U.S. Army Reserve non-commissioned officer who now serves as a Department of the Army civilian within the San Francisco District.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

SPN leadership changes hands in June ceremony

By **Brandon Beach**
SPN Public Affairs Office

Lt. Col. John K. Baker assumed command of the San Francisco District from Lt. Col. Torrey A. DiCiro in a ceremony June 28 at the Bay Model Visitor Center in Sausalito, Calif.

South Pacific Division Commander Brig. Gen. Michael C. Wehr served as reviewing officer for the event attended by business and civic leaders from across the district.

"I'm proud to join the San Francisco District, a values-based organization whose distinguished history of service to the nation in the San Francisco Bay Area dates back to 1866," said Lt. Col. Baker. "Moving forward, my goal is to

focus on meeting the important needs of the region and building on the proud legacy established by the district commanders before me."

Before assuming command of SPN, Lt. Col. Baker served for the past two years as Brigade Executive Officer (Chief of Staff) for the 36th Engineer Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas.

He has supported Overseas Contingency Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and has served in various staff and command positions during his 17-year career.

Lt. Col. DiCiro served as district commander since 2010. His new assignment is at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, WA, to serve as Deputy Brigade Commander of the 555th Engineer Brigade.



McClymont

Brig. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, South Pacific Division commander, passes the San Francisco District flag to Lt. Col. John K. Baker, SPN's 53rd commander.

"I will always be grateful for the confidence you placed in me to serve as commander of the San Francisco District,"

said DiCiro, during his remarks. "It has been an honor to lead such a fine team of professionals."

SPD chief wins logistician award

Story & photo by **Ryan McClymont**
District Public Affairs Office

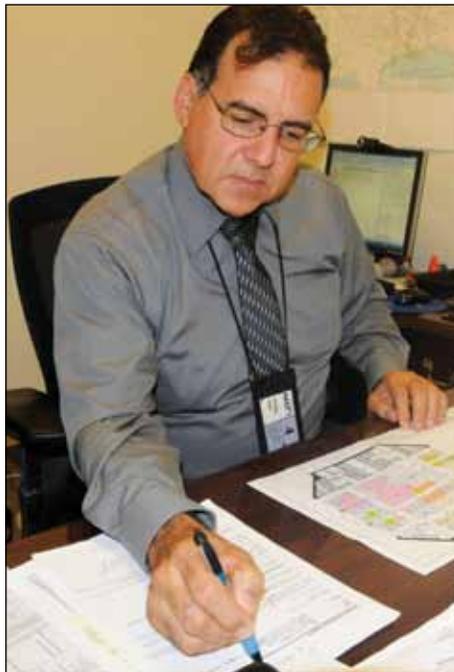
Ferdinand Gonzalez, Regional Chief of Logistics for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division, was awarded the 2012 USACE Meritorious Logistician of the Year Award for his extraordinary leadership and logistics management support to the South Pacific Division.

"There are a lot of great logisticians out there," said Gonzalez. "I was surprised I won, but I have served and supported DOD military and civilians my entire career, and I think that's why I was recognized."

His dedication to logistics management for the South Pacific Division and its four districts was recognized during an Aug. 6 ceremony in Little Rock, AK, where he received the award in front of his peers.

"Ferdinand is one of the most loyal, dedicated, and make-it-happen professionals within our entire workforce," said Brig. Gen. Michael C. Wehr, South Pacific Division commander. "He truly represents the Logistics community in an exceptional way, and we can all be proud of his accomplishments."

Gonzalez's said when asked about advice



Gonzalez received USACE's top logistics award.

to future leaders, "If you stay positive regardless of the challenges, and you focus on treating people right, you will meet success in serving people and providing support."

Napa continued ...

er, Frank Kerr.

"This is really a win for all the people who live in this area," he said. "I think the people who are bothered by the construction are the people who have moved into the area after the most recent flood," he added. "If you weren't here for the last flood, you may not understand what it's like and you may be concerned with streets being closed and the noise, but the people that have been through these floods, they are happy to see this (project) happening, very happy," he said.

Kerr has lived in the local area for more than 60 years.

A much-welcomed byproduct of flood protection could be investment in Napa, Lucido said.

"Providing a safer town has allowed new businesses to come in, folks to restore their homes, especially the historic homes," said Lucido. "People are willing to invest money here, so (the project) is creating a safer, happier community; a more vital community," she said.

With the project moving forward at a rapid pace, residents, business owners, employees and tourists are likely to continue enjoying Napa's charm with a much reduced risk of suffering the effects of flooding.



Allie Pearce, top, throws out the ceremonial first pitch on her 16th birthday before the Oakland Athletics game against the San Francisco Giants at O.co Coliseum in Oakland, Calif., June 22. Following the pitch, she was greeted by a surprise visit from her dad, Spc. Scott Pearce, who returned home on leave from his deployment in Afghanistan.



USACE reservist gets help from Oakland A's in making his daughter's 16th birthday sweet



Story & photos by Ryan McClymont
District Public Affairs Office

Allie Pearce celebrated her 16th birthday on June 22 by throwing out the ceremonial first pitch before the Oakland Athletics game against the San Francisco Giants at Oakland Coliseum. Her birthday was made a little less sweet since her father, Army Specialist Scott Pearce, is in Afghanistan for a year-long deployment.

Roughly 120 friends and family members, along with a sold out Bay Bridge Series crowd, cheered as she threw out the first pitch and then was directed to the Jumbotron for a surprise birthday greeting from her father in Afghanistan.

While she looked up at her father

It was the best birthday present I could ask for.

Allie Pearce

Daughter of Spc. Scott Pearce

wishing her “happy birthday” from so far away, tears began to roll.

“I just started crying I was so happy,” said Pearce. But the best was yet to come. As she turned to receive a personalized jersey from several A’s players, she was

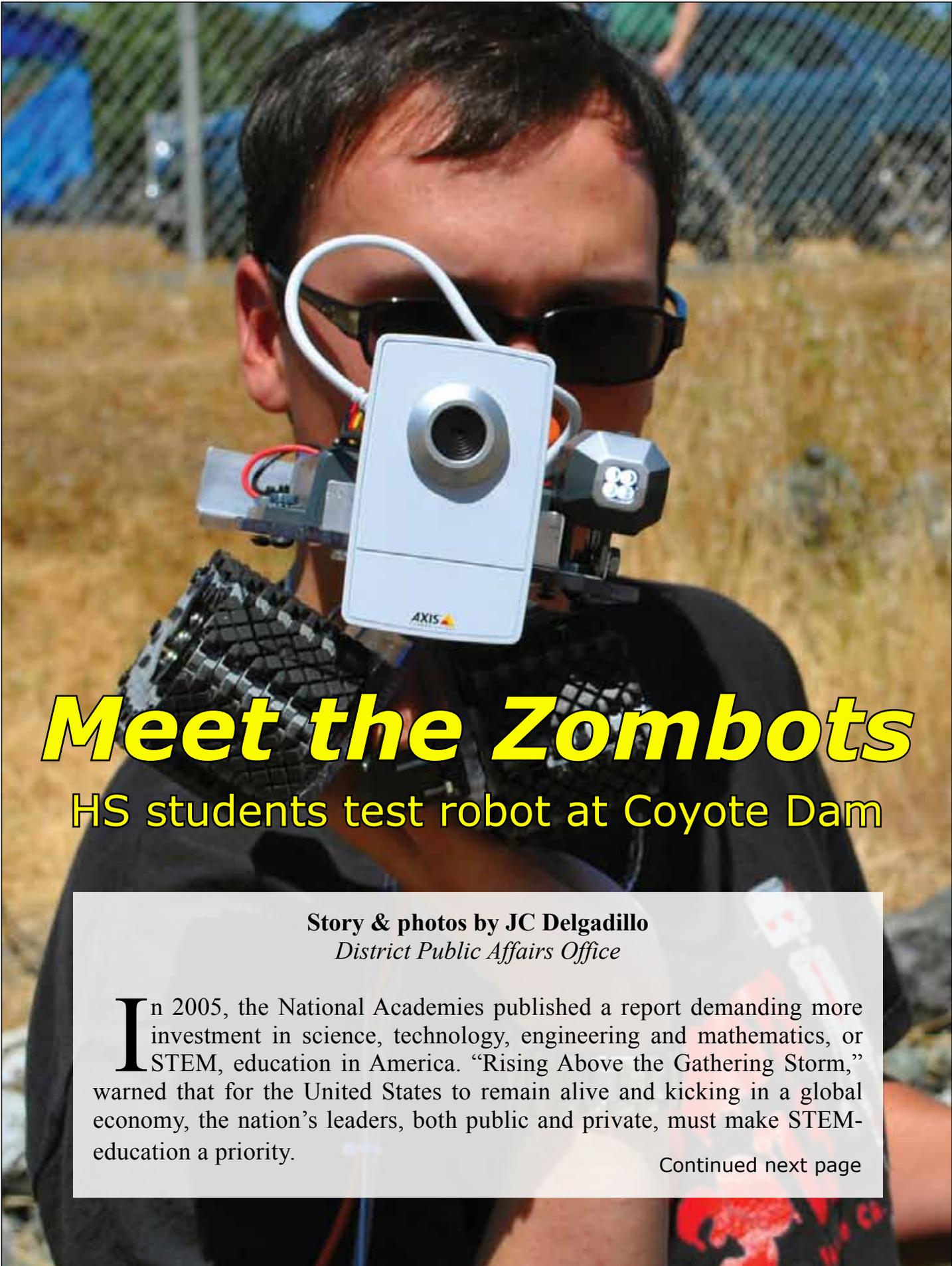
greeted by the greatest gift of all, her father.

“I knew her 16th birthday was coming, and I couldn’t miss it,” said Pearce, who deployed to Afghanistan in December 2011. He contacted the A’s in January to start planning the event.

“It was the best day ever,” said Allie. “It was the best birthday present I could ask for.”

Pearce, 40, is an Army reservist serving as a heavy equipment operator with the 721st Engineering Company based out of Grand Prairie, Texas, and also a seasonal engineering equipment operator for the Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District.

At the end of his two-week rest and recuperation leave, Pearce will return to Afghanistan to finish his tour, which is scheduled to end later this fall.



Meet the Zombots

HS students test robot at Coyote Dam

Story & photos by JC Delgadillo
District Public Affairs Office

In 2005, the National Academies published a report demanding more investment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, education in America. “Rising Above the Gathering Storm,” warned that for the United States to remain alive and kicking in a global economy, the nation’s leaders, both public and private, must make STEM-education a priority.

Continued next page

Zombots continued ...

To that end, determined educators like Beth Traub and Jack Gillespie are inspiring the next generation of innovators through their love of math, robotics and zombies.

Traub and Gillespie are the teacher-mentors of the Vallejo High School robotics team named The Zombots.

"We got that name because our first major sponsor owns a funeral home," explained Jack Gillespie, who happens to be married to Lyn Gillespie, the chief of Engineering and Technical Services Division at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District. No special math or science aptitude is required of students to join The Zombots, just insanity and commitment to the team, quips Gillespie.

But it's not the appeal of zombies rampant in today's popular culture that seems to be attracting teens to the club. Teens like Stephanie Bond, a senior who plans to continue participating in The Zombots throughout her final year in high school despite the tremendous time commitment. Bond and other students have dedicated about 300 hours each to The Zombots this semester alone.

"We warn people, don't join. You'll sign away your soul in blood on paper to the teachers. You'll have no life afterward. You're done, don't do it," she said. "But it's totally worth it."

Traub explains that the team has formed strong bonds over the shared hours of joy and misery building robots and all the busi-



Students from Vallejo High School look at images transmitted by a robot they built. The team brought their robot, Charles, to Coyote Dam to assess the interior conditions of a pipe that runs along the dam.

*It's something I find
interesting, figuring out
how things work.*

Stephanie Bond
Vallejo High School Senior

ness that goes along with supporting the team including website development, seeking sponsors and competing in robotics competitions.

The team has developed several robots including one called Charles, named after the 1980's sitcom *Charles in Charge*. Just two days into summer vacation, a group of twenty Zombots members deployed Charles at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Coyote Dam. The Coyote Dam project was authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944 and completed in 1958 for purposes of flood risk reduction, water supply, recreation and stream flow regulation. The six million cubic yard dam is compacted earth fill with an impervious core and measures 160-feet high and 3,500-feet long.

The goal was to see if Charles could inspect a toe drain on the Coyote Dam to assess the conditions of the pipe, essentially checking for any degradation, explained Derrick Dunlap, San Francisco District's Operations & Readiness Division deputy.

Charles looks more like a rover than C-3PO and operates a bit like a remote-controlled video borescope used for inspections. The robot weighs about 7 pounds and

has a 1/8"-thick polycarbonate frame with rugged polypropylene treads on its wheels. Charles is powered by a 7.2 volt battery and has a camera mounted on it that transmits images to a nearby computer.

"We want a device that can crawl up the pipe and provide some data about conditions such as rust, dents or cracks," Dunlap said. "So we were open to seeing what the kids' robot could do."

The students placed the robot in the pipe, which is at an angle, and began directing it upward through the dark and mucky space. Charles trudged his way up several feet, but after a few starts and stops, students determined that Charles couldn't get enough traction to move upward significantly due to a large amount of sludge in the pipe the robot's treads were not prepared for. Some students appeared dejected, but most offered up ideas for solutions to the traction problem such as adding sharp-edged zip ties to the treads or making the robot heavier.

Mike Dillabough, chief of the San Francisco District's Operations & Readiness Division, said he liked what he was seeing and hearing and invited The Zombots team to return to Coyote Dam in August after some modifications are made to the robot.

As reports urge the need for increased STEM-education in America, robotics team's like The Zombots are inspiring the next generation of innovators to build strong.

"I definitely want to take my experiences here and use them in college and my future career," said Bond. "It's something I find interesting, figuring out how things work, working with my hands, building things and making them work."



[Above] Jack Gillespie, an educator at Vallejo High School and mentor of the school's robotics team, The Zombots, looks at images transmitted by a robot built by his students

[Left] Anthony Kee holds up the team's robot.
Aug/Sept 2012

Sally Ride's legacy still relevant to women in science

By Teresa Johnson

Special to "SPN Surveyor"

It's the kind of scene you just can't make up. The year is 1983, and NASA is about to launch its seventh space shuttle mission. It's the second space flight for the shuttle Challenger. It's the first flight for 32-year-old Sally Ride—or for any American woman, period.

Ride is composed and professional at the pre-flight press conference, where she stands with her four male crewmates. She's an intensely private person and would rather avoid the spotlight, but all eyes are on her, and she's ready to handle the scrutiny with grace and tact.

A hand goes up. A reporter has a question.

"Will the flight affect your reproductive organs?"

What?

This moment deserves some context, Sally Ride holds a Ph.D. in physics from Stanford and has researched both astrophysics and free electron laser physics. She joined NASA in 1978 and served as ground-based capsule communicator on two missions before helping develop the space shuttle's robot arm. She's been chosen for the seventh mission because she and only one other crewmate are skilled enough to operate the robot arm. She has the kind of credentials most scrawny reporters can't even spell on their notepads.

And they're asking her questions like, "Do you weep when



firstpost.com

In 1983, Sally Ride became the first American woman in space. She died on July 23, 2012, at the age of 61.

Obviously, it's regrettable when people's minds are so clouded by gender misconceptions that they can't see women's true accomplishments.

things go wrong on the job?"

Her response is as succinct as it is poignant: "How come nobody ever asks Rick [her crewmate] those questions?"

But of course, she knows the answer. In the 60s, job postings for STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) careers would sometimes contain the phrase, "Women need not apply," and actually mean it.

Women like Karen Purcell, author of the recent book "Unlocking Your Brilliance: Smart Strategies for Women to Thrive

in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math," can look back on their careers and identify times when people would see them on job sites with male bosses and presume the women were assistants, not engineers. Even after Purcell pushed through the initial shock and got to work, people would still look to her boss for confirmation of everything she said, as if scientific facts can only be true if they come from the mouth of a man.

But that was the old days, right? Things are better now... right?

A study from the Society of Women Engineers surveyed 6,000 women and men who earned engineering degrees between 1985 and 2003. By 2006, one in four women were either employed in a non-STEM field or unemployed altogether. Only one in ten men were in the same boat.

In another study by the U.S. Economics and Statistics Administration, it was found that 40 percent of men who hold STEM degrees are employed in STEM jobs, compared to only 26 percent of women. The remaining 74 percent of women either can't find a STEM job

Women's Equality Day

Women in the United States were given the right to vote on Aug. 26, 1920, when the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution was signed. The amendment was first introduced many years earlier in 1878. Every president has published a proclamation for Women's Equality Day since 1971 when legislation was first introduced in Congress by Bella Abzug. This resolution was passed designating Aug. 26 of each year as Women's Equality Day.

that will hire them, or they can't stand to stay at the menial jobs they do find.

Given the insulting experiences of women like Ride and Purcell, I can't blame them.

At that pre-flight press conference, Ride had this to say about the misguided, gender-centered questions she field-

Continued next page

Aug/Sept 2012



Patch for the STS-7 mission.

Prime Power specialists join SPN team at VA hospital project

Story and photo by

Liviu Tanase

District Public Affairs Office

As Army prime power production specialists, Staff Sgt. John Scott and Sgt. Trang Chau, who come from the 249th Engineer Battalion, are the new replacements supervising the contractors on site while on rotation. They come from Fort Belvoir, VA, to support the San Francisco Veterans Affairs electrical upgrade project. They are replacing Staff Sgt. Jon Jackson and Staff Sgt. Gregory Laracuento.

Both are “happy about the assignment” because not only do they get a chance to make sure the work gets done on time and to the highest standards possible, but they also get a chance to see their military predecessors receive uninterrupted service as a result of the current work being done.

The SPN project engineer on site is Rachel Coyner, who has been with USACE since 2009 and has been at the VA project since January 2012. She is currently working with the 249th and said, “Staff Sgt. Scott and Sgt. Chau have great work ethic and are dedicated to their mission. No matter what task is presented



Staff Sgt. John Scott, left, and Sgt. Trang Chau inspect an electrical box at the SF Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

to them, they have shown a willingness to learn new things and assist with any challenge presented to them. They have become an important asset to this project because they are trained as electricians, so they know the lingo and how to communicate effectively with the contractor.”

Their primary mission at the VA is to perform QA of the electrical equipment being installed, and they also assist

with QA of exterior work such as transformer pad and equipment installation.

The service that they provide is very important to the patient moral as well because the upgrades being provided will keep the hospital equipment running smoothly. Staff Sgt. Scott has been active for eight years, while Sgt. Chau has been active for six, and they work together with clear understanding of what needs

to be done. They both attended the Prime Power Engineering School for one year.

The 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power) is a power generation battalion assigned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers providing commercial-level power to military units and federal relief organizations.

Learn more about the 249th at www.usace.army.mil/249thEngineerBattalion.aspx

Ride continued ...

ed: “It may be too bad that our society isn’t further along and that this is such a big deal.”

There are two sides to this simple comment. Obviously it’s regrettable when people’s minds are so clouded by gender misconceptions that they can’t see women’s true accomplishments. It’s essential to continue praising the example of women like Ride to overcome these faulty stereotypes.

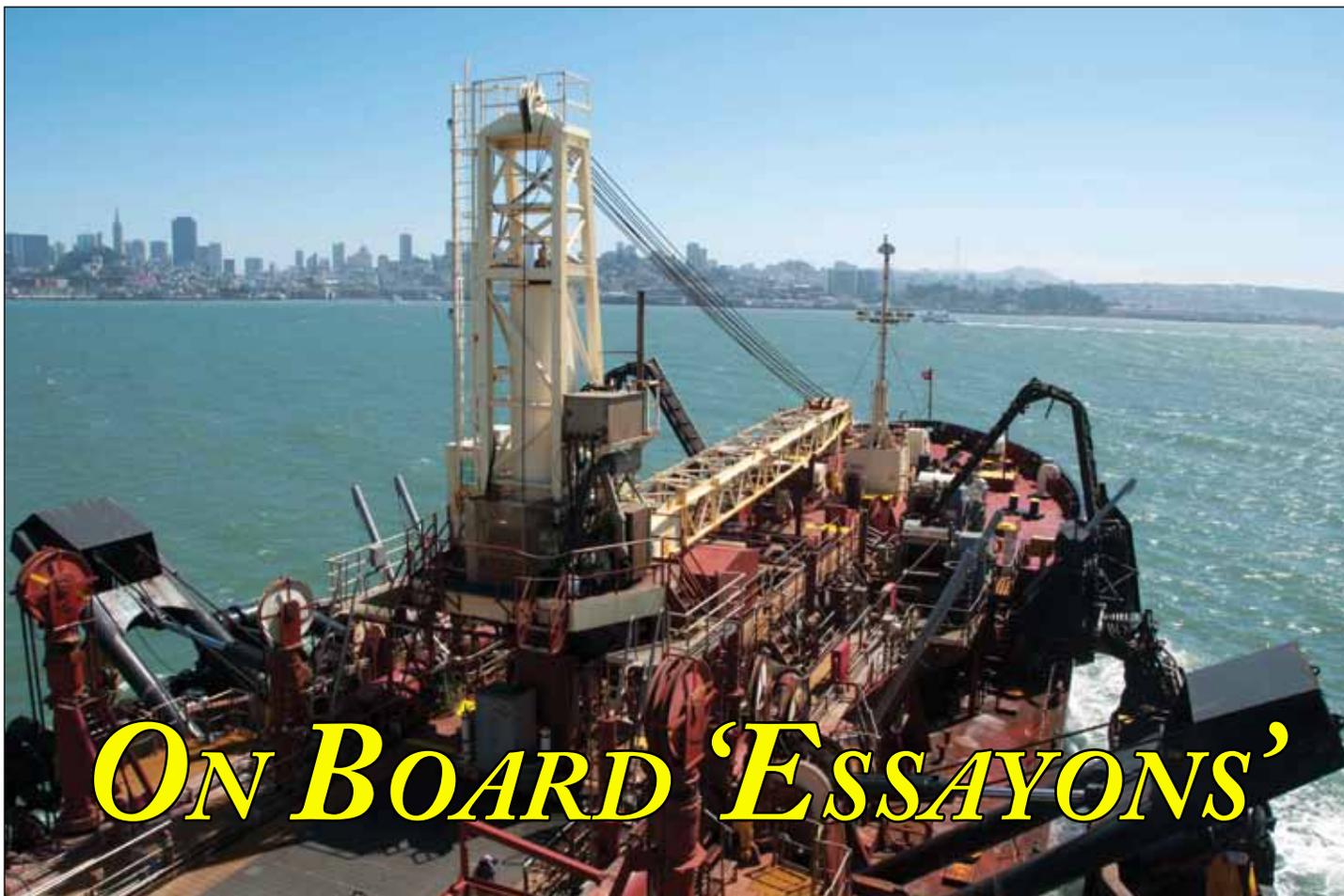
However, strong women like Ride also look forward to the day when women will no longer have to defend themselves from undeserved negativity in the first place. When basic assumptions of our society are not based on a masculine perspective, when being female is no longer considered an anomaly from the male norm, then women will enjoy true and lasting equality.

After her career at NASA, Ride devoted her life to achieving that exact goal. She co-founded Sally Ride Science in

2001 to create entertaining science programs for students, particularly focusing on girls. Her love for her profession and her commitment to creating opportunities for girls made her an icon to scientists and women in general.

It really is the kind of story you just can’t make up.

Learn more about America’s first female astronaut in space at www.readthehorn.com.



ON BOARD 'ESSAYONS'

Story & photos by Ryan McClymont
District Public Affairs Office

On July 31, a group of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees and guests visited the 350-foot *Essayons*. The ship, operated by a 22-member crew from the USACE Portland District, arrived in the San Francisco Bay on July 21 for a 26-day around-the-clock dredging mission.

“This visit was a command tour to familiarize the SPN commander [Lt. Col. John K. Baker] with Corps assets and capabilities and the importance of those assets to the San Francisco District navigation mission,” said Jessica Burton Evans, SPN Navigation Program Manager.

Referred to as a suction hopper dredger, the *Essayons* is able to vacuum up nearly 6,000 cubic yards of ocean sand in one hour using its two enormous drag arms.

Every year, the Corps’ San Francisco District contracts the *Essayons* to dredge in the Bay Area. For this particular visit here, crew members focused their efforts on deepening the Richmond Long Wharf, which is located near Point Richmond.

“Our job is to keep the channels clear

and deep enough so that the ships can come and go with their cargo,” said Larry Hibbs, the ship’s captain. “If we don’t dredge, the channels fill up, and the ships can’t carry as much cargo.”

Following multiple passes across the channel’s floor, by which the ship can collect up to 600 dump truck loads of dredged material into 12 hopper bins, crew members then travel to one of three designated deposit sites to unload, in this case it was just off the coast of Alcatraz Island.

This location was selected for off-loading the debris because strong currents in the area spread the dredged material back into the bay, but away from the shipping channels.

Keeping the bay’s navigation channels open to maritime traffic, such as container ships and passenger liners, is one of the key responsibilities that the Corps has under the Rivers and Harbors Act.

Working at a non-stop pace, crew members rotate every six hours, two shifts a day. Each crew member has living quarters. Onboard, there is a fitness center, laundry facility, entertainment room and dining area.

Crew members stay active most of the



The “Essayons,” a 350-foot suction hopper dredger, arrived in the San Francisco Bay Area July 21 for a 26-day dredging mission.

year, as the *Essayons* dredges up and down the western U.S. coastline nearly 220 days out of the year.