



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Far East District

EAST GATE EDITION

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Construction Division chief retires after 39 year career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

By **Stephen Satkowski**
FED Public Affairs

George Ward has a lifetime of memories with the Far East District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is a career that has included stints in Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, Kwajalein Atoll, Russia, Hawaii and South Korea.

“I’ve spent 39 years with the Corps and 14 with the Far East District,” said Ward. “I’ve always found the work very interesting.”

Ward began his career with the Corps when he was still a college student at the University of Georgia. The year was 1979 and during a career workshop class one of the instructors mentioned the Corps as a future job possibility for the students.

“The Savannah district was performing construction on Russell dam which wasn’t far at all from my home,” said Ward. “I stopped in their offices one day and managed to get in the co-op (intern) program where I worked for a quarter and went to school for a quarter. I did that for two years until I graduated and was hired full time.”



George Ward, Construction Division chief retires after 39-year career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (Photo provided by George Ward)

Ward’s career took many winding turns as he later set off for Charleston district, then the isolated Kwajalein Atoll resident office with Honolulu District where he gained valuable experience.

“It was at the time I was serving in Kwajalein that a former co-worker of mine had taken a job with the Far East District in Korea. I visited him

there and really liked the country and the challenging work they offered,” said Ward.


Ward took over as resident engineer of the Far East District’s northern resident office in 1993 where he had projects from CP Tango all the way to the demilitarized zone (DMZ).

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Korean National Union Picnic



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FED employees host STEM event which sparks students' interest in Engineering

By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

Employees of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District, served as instructors at the district's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) events held at Camp Humphreys, South Korea.

The STEM events were held May 24 at Humphreys Central Elementary School and May 31 at Humphreys West Elementary School. The STEM event held on May 24 was attended by students as well as their parents, as it was scheduled in the evening.

According to Dr. Jeff McGee,

Humphreys West Elementary School principal, these events add an element to the student's education that they wouldn't receive until much later.

"We don't have an engineering program in elementary school," said McGee. "So the great thing about STEM is that it provides a cohesive opportunity for students to build background knowledge, which they can build on when they get to middle and high school."

Camp Humphreys is one of the largest overseas military communities, and according to McGee it's important

to use all available resources to enhance the student's learning capabilities.

"One of our focus areas is to engage our community toward the increase of student learning," said McGee. "We have wonderful parent volunteers, however, engaging the students in meaningful ways in an educational manner that helps our students learn, that's a challenge. But in a military community, with so many engineers on our installation, this is a gold seal type of activity that promotes the activity we want to focus on."

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FED employees host STEM event which sparks student's interest in Engineering

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Although the school doesn't provide an engineering curriculum, it does have a few resources that spark the student's interest in the subject area.

McGee explained that the STEM program along with the resources the school has, prepares the students for their future and continues to build upon already acquired knowledge.

"We have engineering in education kit Legos, and robotics kits, which the children are always interested in using those kits," said McGee. "These types of learning activities are things that students remember, and each year we're able to layer on a new understanding and build a complex type of Lego or robot."

The district provides these pro-

grams to the military community here in South Korea every year. All employees who are a part of the event are volunteers.

"I want to thank the Corps for being such active participants in the lives of our children," said McGee. "Bringing instructors in from outside the school adds value, further than what we can do internally. So thank you so much."

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District employees volunteer as instructors at a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) event held at Humphreys West Elementary School, May 31. (Photos by Antwaun J. Parrish)



Construction Division chief retires

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“I did work at the DMZ to fix cameras which were installed incorrectly, one of which had fallen off its mount,” said Ward. “We got the cameras back in operation all across the Panmunjom area.”

In 1996 he relocated to U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center, Huntsville where he helped construct facilities used to destroy chemical weapons as part of the chemical demilitarization program.

“They (chemical weapons) are very difficult to destroy, especially the ones that are weaponized,” said Ward. “It was probably the most challenging project I ever had and the most satisfying.”

As part of chemical demilitarization program Ward was sent to Moscow to be program manager and chief of the chemical demilitarization office in Russia.

Ward came back to the Far East District for a second time as chief of

construction from 2002 to 2009. He then went to Pacific Ocean Division as chief of the regional business technical division until 2014. He returned for his final assignment at the FED as chief of engineering and then chief of construction in 2015.

“As a friend of mine once said, not many people come to Korea but those who do come back,” said Ward. “I’ve enjoyed being back here being the chief of construction. This is a great place to end my career doing what I love doing – which is construction work.”

Ward said the people and friends he made at FED as well as the varied workload make it one of the best district’s in the Corps.

“Working with the Korean nationals is a lot of fun,” said Ward. “I found out they are very good to work with and have a lot of passion for their work. The host nation program is a challenging program, as well as mili-

tary construction and other projects. Also dealing directly with the service members who are going to be actually using the facilities is rewarding.”

Ward said those just starting their career in the Corps should look for challenging work that others may not be willing to take.

“Go where other people don’t want to go. Look for those challenging jobs where you would be given maybe a lot more responsibility than you would at a stateside district,” said Ward. “I’d also tell the younger engineers make a decision in your job. Know your job. Then make decisions. One of the worst things you can do managing a construction contract is to let things go and not make decisions. Any decision is better than no decision. Even if it’s the wrong decision you’ll learn from it.”

What is home leave?

By Kimberly Turnage
FED Workforce Management

Home leave is a period of approved absence with pay authorized by 5 U.S. Code 6305, for employees stationed abroad. The leave is granted to employees serving outside the United States for the accumulation of a maximum of 45 days (360 hours) of annual leave are eligible for home leave benefits.

An employee entitled for home leave (5 days annually) can exercise it’s usage after 24 months of continuous overseas service and it can be used in combination with other leave only in USA or US Territories. It is not related to Renewal Agreement Travel (RAT), however it may be used during RAT travel.

Home leave accumulates for future use without specific limitation, and the leave can only be granted when an employee is expected to return to an overseas assignment. The approval of home leave is at the discretion of the authorizing official. Home leave may be granted in combination with other leave of absence in accordance with the established agency policy.

Army Lieutenant gains invaluable experience working with the District

By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

Finding unique and developmental assignments for career growth is essential for Soldiers to succeed throughout their career. The United States Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District (FED) provides opportunities for young officers to grow and excel.

1st Lt. Zachary Hawkins, a project engineer, has worked with the Family Housing Resident Office for the past three months, after being part of the 11th Engineer Battalion.

“I was a platoon leader with the 630th Clearance Company,” said Hawkins. “Our company along with other companies throughout the Army came to Camp Humphreys to form the 11th Engineering Battalion in October 2017.”

Hawkins was educated at Georgia Southern University where he participated in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps. At the end of his time as a platoon leader, Hawkins explained how his battalion commander helped him figure out his next career move.

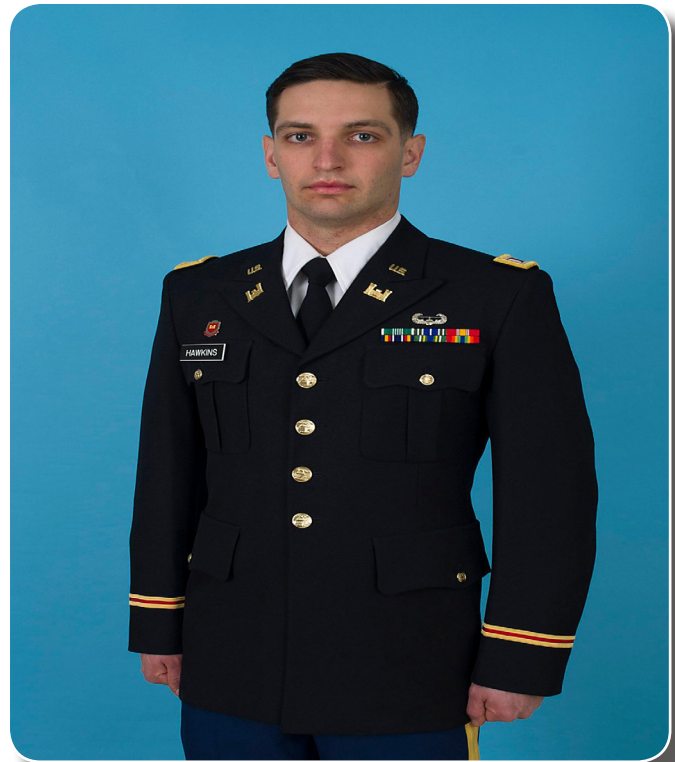
“He saw that I had applied for a USACE position back in the states, but due to my date eligible to return to the U.S., I wasn’t able to accept it,” said Hawkins. “So he [former battalion commander] talked to the FED commander to inquire if I could come over to the FED and work as a project engineer, and Col. Schlosser allowed it.”

Although Hawkins was educated as a civil engineer, during his first three years in the Army he worked in combat engineering. He explained that studying civil engineering in college and performing combat engineering tasks in the military are polar opposites, and he felt a little rusty in his technical engineering skills.

“So coming to work with the FED made me re-visit those skills and use what I actually learned in college and put it to use,” said Hawkins. “I have gained some valuable experience for my future career so it’s been great.”

Since working with the FED, Hawkins has been able to work on several projects which have allowed him to exercise his technical skills to the maximum due to an abundance of projects at Camp Humphreys.

He stated that his main project, the unaccompanied enlisted housing is set to be complete around spring or summer



1st Lt. Zachary Hawkins, a project engineer, has worked with the Family Housing Resident Office for the past three months, after being part of the 11th Engineer Battalion. (FED file photo)

2020. He is also heavily involved in the housing division’s mini-mall project at Camp Humphreys.

“The project [mini-mall] is the most interesting one because it is an important project on Camp Humphreys that all the commanders are pushing to have open as soon as possible,” said Hawkins. “Seeing the process of how things work and how they [projects] get turned over from the Korean contractors to the US government is pretty interesting.”

Working on the large scale projects being developed at Camp Humphreys and accepting a developmental assignment sets Hawkins apart from his peers.

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Army Lieutenant gains invaluable experience working with the District

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“I feel like it sets me up for success,” said Hawkins. “Using this experience with working on two opposite ends of the spectrum from civil to combat engineering shows my diversity. So in the future of my career, my commanders can see that and say that I am very flexible, meaning they can put me in any position and I can succeed.”

Hawkins has plans in place that will continue his career progression after departing the FED.

“My plans after this is to attend the engineer’s captain career course and while I’m there I’m going to obtain a master’s in civil engineering,” said Hawkins. “I hope to use these skills that I’ve learned here and apply them to my education so when I do leave the military I will have some engineering experience that I can take to the civilian side.”



Col. Jeong Se-ok (left), Chief, Program Management Team, MURO, and Col. Garrett Cottrell (right), Deputy Military Chief, United States Army Corps of Engineers Far East District, sign the acceptance release letter for the O6 and commander housing on May 9. (Photo by Son, SeukHwan)





Building *Safety* Strong

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



Preparing to Work & Play this Summer

In less than a month summer will officially begin and now is the time to commit to having fun safely at work and at home. During the next months, temperatures will increase and we will be spending more time outside with friends and family. Living and working in Korea means you are surrounded by the ocean and will have access to many lakes, rivers and streams. Please familiarize yourself with the potential work hazards and recreational water hazards associated with high temperatures and summer recreational water activities.

Take a Class or Two:

◆ **Learn CPR & First Aid for Work & Home Did you know?**

25% of all emergency room visits can be avoided with basic first aid and CPR certification.

Sudden cardiac arrest represents 13% of all workplace deaths.

75% of all out-of-hospital heart attacks happen at home.

◆ **Work, Live or Play Near Water? Learn how to Swim**

According to the red cross 61% of the children do not know how to swim.

94% of parents expect their children engage in some sort of water activity.

You don't need to be in deep water to drown. Please take the time to learn to swim as a family.

Protecting Yourself from Heat Stress on the Job and at Play:

◆ **Do you know the sign of heat illness?**

- High temperature and humidity, direct sun exposure, no breeze or wind
- Low liquid intake
- Waterproof clothing
- Heavy physical labor
- No recent exposure to hot workplaces

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Headache, dizziness, or fainting
- Irritability or confusion
- Weakness and wet skin
- Thirst, nausea, or vomiting

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- May be confused, unable to think clearly, pass out, collapse, or have seizures (fits)
- May stop sweating

*

This month in FED History

- **June** 1987: Health and Dental Clinic at Camp Humphreys opened.
- 1988: Yongsan commissary completed.
- 1997: FED Hydrology and Construction Section won Federal Organizational Excellence award.
- 1999: Combined Defense Improvement Program project at Camp Humphreys completed.
- 1999: Construction of bachelor officer's quarters at Camp Casey and Camp Hovey began.
- 2003: Youth Center at Camp Humphreys opened.
- 2003: Construction of Whole Barracks Renewal Project at Camp Carroll began.
- 2004: Anti-terrorist/Force Protection upgrades at Osan Air Base completed.



Ground breaking ceremony for Osan Air Base Dining Facility, 1994



- 2009: Talon Cafe Dining Facility at Camp Humphreys opened.
- 2012: Construction of new barracks and tactical equipment maintenance facility at Camp Carroll began.

EXPLODING VAPORS

The Dangers of E-Cigarettes

There are potential hazards associated with electronic cigarettes (e-Cigarettes) and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) due to the instability of the systems' lithium batteries, which could result in fire or explosion.

Lithium cells possess unique characteristics. If misused or abused (dented, dropped, overcharged or exposed to external heat), catastrophic results are possible and may include first-, second- or third-degree burns, respiratory problems, fire or explosion, resulting in serious injury or death.

Consider the introduced risk and mitigate when in, on and around Army vessels, vehicles and aircraft; or in vicinity of ammunition, explosives and flammable or combustible materials.



<https://safety.army.mil>