CONREP Tom McDonald Recognized as Far East Hard Hat of the Year

By Edwyna W. Brooks
FED Public Affairs

Tom McDonald, Construction Representative was recognized as the Far East District Hard Hat of the Year Award Winner by the FED Chief of Construction Chad McLeod and FED Commander, Col. Christopher Crary. The Hard Hat of the Year Award is given to the most outstanding construction field office employee capable of best demonstrating successes in construction quality management, contributions and innovations.

McDonald’s efforts have been instrumental in providing quality assurance and construction management for the USFK Operations Center, Camp Humphreys. This project is a critical part of the $10.8B Yongsan Relocation Program, moving USFK out of the Greater Seoul Metropolitan Area.

As one of the most experienced Construction Representatives(CONREP) in the Security Operations Resident Office(SORO), his team has benefited immensely from his knowledge and experience. According to his superiors, Tom has utilized, “his outstanding communication skills to share his knowledge and experience across cultural boundaries ensuring understanding with our Korean Government counterparts and contractors.”

Additionally, his personal dedication to his team has been consistently exhibited in his willingness to successfully overcome intricate issues. He ensured that USACE quality standards are met despite the complexity of the facility. His work for the Corps has positively affected the project budget, schedule and relationships between all stakeholders; far exceeding the normal expectations of a Lead CONREP. In fact, McDonald has performed the duties of both Office and Project Engineer at times to provide project continuity and minimize delays.

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In support of Anti-Terrorism Month, Security Manager Aubrey Cook placed a display in the main lobby of the FED building. This month-long campaign provides tips and strategies to recognize and report indicators of terrorism via posters, leaflets, and short videos. (FED file photos)
A call to awareness has been released to the Soldiers, Civilians, and families of the US Army Corps of Engineers with the release of Lt. Gen. Semonite’s Proclamation for Antiterrorism Awareness Month. The document strongly urges the Corps Community to take action by way of vigilance to prevent and defeat terrorism.

While there have been less than 20 terrorist attacks on average per year from 2000-2013 and law enforcement has gotten better at thwarting terrorist attacks, they cannot stop them all. Soldiers and civilians can help to prevent their communities from becoming victims of this heinous act by recognizing and reporting suspicious activities.

For example, reporting instances of people drawing or measuring important buildings, unattended briefcases or backpacks, chemical smells that cause concern, questions about building blueprints or VIP travel schedules when there is no need to know, or cars left in no-parking zones in front of important buildings are all activities that should be noted and reported.

Marking the date, time, and place of such activities along with physical descriptions of the people involved are key elements of the successful community involvement Lt. Gen. Semonite was referring to in his proclamation.

This increased level of awareness will help protect the Corps’ critical resources. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Far East District Commander, Col. Christopher Crary echoes Lt. Gen. Semonite’s sentiment and encourages his area leaders to adopt this proactive mindset. “It is good to bring these reminders back to the forefront of our daily lives as vigilance and awareness are essential parts of protecting our force.”

South Korea offers a plethora of great tourist destinations across the peninsula. Traveling over holidays and summer vacation provides an opportunity to practice family-wide vigilance and attentiveness to our surroundings. Practicing simple exercises such as this will improve our chances of remaining safe.

As the world of terrorism has evolved with our use of the internet, antiterrorism’s vigilance must include social media. Families must be mindful of their postings on social media and use the proper security features embedded within the social platforms to limit the exposure of their personal information and movements.

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The FED Played a Big Part in My Career: A Conversation with Carol Spratley

By Edwyna W. Brooks
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In a time when the Scientific American Newsletter reports that 45 percent of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) leave their jobs because of feeling underpaid and unrepresented, Carol A. Spratley, Project Manager for the Korea Program Relocation Office defies this statistic by virtue of her 41 years as an employee of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. Twenty-one of those years were spent in her most recent of two tours to South Korea in service to the Far East District.

After sharing that daunting statistic with Mrs. Spratley she shook her head in acknowledgment as if I wasn’t telling her anything new. Then, when asked if she could put her finger on a reason this statistic rang so true, her response was immediate.

“A lot of people don’t last because even nowadays, you’re the only female on the site and depending on where you are, the culture of the job site can contribute to if you stay in the field and do that job because a lot of times it doesn’t matter how much experience you have. As soon as you get there, they act like you have no experience.”

However, Mrs. Spratley recounted that working in the FED in 1999 afforded her a certain level of instant respect for her work that wasn’t automatically afforded her in the states. “I can say that my contractors here in the Far East District, they were all very nice, accepting, and very eager to work with me. That was the good thing about coming to Korea and it really started with our resident engineer back then, Woody Barger. He called the contractors in and told them they would have female construction representatives, female engineers. They work for FED, you will respect them and we will not have issues. He set the standard for us. He set the bar.”

As a part of the 28 percent of present-day women working in the science and engineering workforce, Spratley has done her part to rid the industry of the stereotype that females demonstrate less confidence in STEM subjects.

“I think each person has to look at what they’re trying to accomplish and how you need to make it happen. I began in clerical and back then GS-7 was as high as I could go and I’d accomplished that but I wanted to go into construction so I took a downgrade. I took a GS-5 to get to become a construction inspector. I went up in the ranks, 5, 6, then 7, and then when I came to Korea, they hired me as a GS-9 and some people laugh at me about that but sometimes you have to take a step down to go forward. For me to break that glass ceiling, I had to come to Korea and I made it to GS-11, and then I had to leave again to pass that.

Sometimes you just have to wait. It used to take a long time to get promoted and I’m seeing that Millennials don’t always understand what some of us have gone through when some of them start out their careers in these higher-level GS positions. You have to take one day at a time. You have to be prepared and know that you may sometimes have to do twice as much to get half as much credit and even though some people try to tell us it’s not true, we all know that it is.”

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Carol A. Spratley works at Far East District Korea Program Relocation Office as a Project Manager. (FED file photo)
The FED Played a Big Part in My Career: A Conversation with Carol Spratley

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My gold star is the fact that I made it. After I made GS-12, I thought that would probably be the end. I thought I was probably going to retire then but when I got the opportunity to come back to Korea and get a promotion, that was it really. FED has played a big part in my career in the fact that in order for me to break through the ceiling in the beginning I had to come to Korea. Then I left here, worked, and the opportunity came for me to come back again and I went even higher and that’s been it.

I tried to tell Mrs. Spratley just how amazing her story is but she wouldn’t let me. She says, “no, I’m just blessed.”

This Carolyn Spratley feature is a part of the FED Women’s Equality Day Tribute.

As an additional part of Women’s Equality Day, USACE EEO Manager, Steve Brown will be hosting a FED Women’s Equality Day Discussion featuring a diverse panel of dynamic women who work within the STEM field on August 26th at 10:30 am in the USACE conference room.

The national proclamation to name August 26th, Women’s Equality Day was approved as a joint resolution in 1973 and commemorates the passing of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote. However, it also calls our attention to women’s continuing efforts to achieve full equality.

While written in 1973, much of the original resolution unfortunately still rings true for women in our society. Please read the full resolution below.

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His awareness of critical issues has allowed him to define and eliminate key risk factors that have saved both project time and cost savings.

Mr. McDonald is a wealth of knowledge who strongly supports the idea of mentorship and is always open to share his experiences with his fellow CONREPs and Project Engineers. His leadership shines past the job sites through his creations of presentations and training classes to mentor less experienced members of the team, ensuring they understand USACE’s requirements for successful mission completion. Seeking no credit for himself, McDonald remains focused on the best interest of the project and praising his team’s efforts.

Tom McDonald’s unwavering commitment to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Far East District have strengthened stakeholder relationships. He is also an active member of the community who spends his spare time helping local farmers with no children or family work on their land, reinforcing the bond between U.S. and Korean culture.

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Joint Resolution of Congress, 1971 Designating August 26 of each year as Women’s Equality Day

WHEREAS, the women of the United States have been treated as second-class citizens and have not been entitled the full rights and privileges, public or private, legal or institutional, which are available to male citizens of the United States;

and WHEREAS, the women of the United States have united to assure that these rights and privileges are available to all citizens equally regardless of sex;

and WHEREAS, the women of the United States have designated August 26, the anniversary date of the certification of the Nineteenth Amendment, as symbol of the continued fight for equal rights;

and WHEREAS, the women of United States are to be commended and supported in their organizations and activities,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that August 26th of each year is designated as Women’s Equality Day, and the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation annually in commemoration of that day in 1920, on which the women of America were first given the right to vote, and that day in 1970, on which a nationwide demonstration for women’s rights took place.
From growing up as a little girl who loved earth science and collecting rocks to becoming Chief of the Far East District’s Engineering Division, Pam Lovasz has made a career of doing what she loves and asking for what she wants.

Pam says she knew exactly what she wanted to do after attending her first Geology 101 lecture in college. Suddenly her love for everything under the ground was explained and her future defined. However, graduating as a geologist didn’t send career opportunities knocking on her door. Instead her extensive job hunt required her to move to San Antonio, Texas where she worked under an engineer in the private sector.

Upon realizing the lack of professional credentialing available for geologists in Texas at the time, Pam returned to school where she obtained her Bachelor’s in Civil Engineering specifically to take the Principles and Practice of Engineering (PE) Exam. This exam is required to become a professional engineer in the United States. Now, instead of facing an extensive job search, Pam was recruited straight from campus into the private sector where she would work for 11 years.

Lovasz would leave the warmth of California for the freezing temperatures in Alaska to obtain her first position within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers where surprisingly enough, the chief of engineering and construction was a woman. One of the interesting reasons for Pam’s swift introduction with her new chief was her request for superior qualifications within her GS-12 position, which allowed her to begin as a step seven instead of a step one. Her chief had to meet the woman who negotiated her salary with the government right away.

“When I was hired, I have to admit the Corps treated me very well,” said Lovasz. “I just want to tell you that the first time I asked for a raise was when I was that geologist back in San Antonio, Texas. I came in early that day, pacing back and forth in front of my boss’ office, and nervous – nervous to ask for more money but I wasn’t going to take no for an answer and got a 22 percent raise.”

This current chief of engineering says, “That is why I encourage everyone, especially women to always be brave enough to ask for what we need and what we want.” She explains career growth and mobility as, “the willingness to accept new challenges. Get in over your head,” she says.
The District participates in job fair

By Edwyna W. Brooks
FED Public Affairs

The Far East District supported Camp Humphreys’ Job Fair at The Morning Calm Aug. 5. The district employs more than 450 individuals in 120 job titles and is the largest public engineering design and construction management agency in the world.

With current openings for the positions of Interdisciplinary Engineer/Architect, Project Manager, and Civil Engineer, many job seekers were surprised by the Corps’ need to hire educated and experienced professionals outside the obvious categories of engineer or carpenter.

In fact, one of the most interesting obstacles recruiters for the US Army Corps of Engineers encounter is making the public at large aware of the wide array of career opportunities available within the organization. Job fair attendees tended to not consider the huge number of support positions needed to complete any one piece of major construction.

The Corps offers both technical and administrative careers in the United States and abroad but contrary to popular belief, it is not just an organization for people who enjoy working outdoors. From lawyers and accountants to administrative assistants and project managers, the organization encompasses nearly every possible career choice there is, evident by their over 32,000 civilian employees who help deliver engineering services and support to over 90 countries all over the globe.

These types of undertakings make it essential for recruiters and hiring managers to have access to the best talent, trained with the critical skills needed to meet the programmatic demands of the Corps. Commitment to delivering projects on time and according to specification are parts of an essential skill set for someone looking to establish a career with the Army Corps of Engineers.

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Far East District participates in job fair

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In order to create a workforce ready to meet the agency’s current and future needs, recruiters must acquire employees who are ready to share from their knowledge bank to help the Corps deliver the innovative and sustainable solutions they are known for worldwide.

In addition to the wide array of job opportunities, applicants with the Corps also have access to a number of hiring initiatives and being a part of Humphreys’ job fair was an optimal opportunity to share information with job seekers about the diverse types of careers veterans and military spouses can pursue with the team.

Some of the US Army Corps of Engineers special hiring initiatives include:

- Federal Career Intern Program. Students accepted into this program can work part-time or full time with flexible hours, while earning benefits such as vacation and sick leave, as well as public transportation subsidies.
- Internships. Interns that complete this program may be offered permanent positions.
- The Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP). STEP provides part-time and full-time employment opportunities to students during the school year or summer.
- The Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). SCEP provides cooperative education opportunities to students as they relate to their majors and could result in a permanent position.
- The Student Educational Employment Program (SEEP). SEEP provides students with year-round employment with flexible work schedules and assignments.

Check out the available job openings with US Army Corps of Engineers’ today on USAJOBS. For more information on the Far East District, visit https://www.pof.usace.army.mil/.

Representatives from the FED were on hand to speak with job seekers and provide them with literature on the Corps and its current job openings. (FED file photo)

Lt. Gen. Semonite Proclaims August 2020 Antiterrorism Month in the Corps of Engineers

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Additionally, Soldiers and their family members should steer clear of actors or pages that seek to polarize strife or division to lure groups or individuals to commit acts of violence and also report potential acts of terror on social media to authorities. For example, anyone who posts about harming themselves or groups of people on social media should be reported to reduce the likelihood of a terrorist act.

It is up to us to make the US Army Corps of Engineers more secure by remaining aware of potential threats and reporting suspicious behavior wherever we encounter it. We may not be able to prevent a terrorist attack but knowing how to identify and report suspicious activity is the beginning of stomping out terrorism and keeping our families safe.
Col. Christopher “Wolf” Hammond, 8th Fighter Wing commander, along with leadership from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of the Far East District (USACE of the FED), and Republic of Korean Air Force representatives conducted a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the completion of construction of new hardened aircraft shelters (HAS) on Kunsan Air Base, July 31, 2020.

Thanks to the joint efforts, the aircraft units now have 20 new third generation HAS facilities.

“In addition to the normal ‘red tape’ and hurdles that come with a construction project of this magnitude, this team had to work through the impact of COVID-19 and they rose to the challenge,” said Hammond. “A huge win not only when it comes to protecting our aircraft, but also for our maintainers who take care of them and the operators who fly them.”

Col. Christopher Crary, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Far East District commander, also spoke at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

“This project and this team was selected as a Far East District Project Delivery Team of the Year,” Crary said. “With over 300-plus projects in the planning, design, or construction phase, that is a great accomplishment.”

The project was a $125 million ROK Funded Construction project that administered the Ministry of National Defense-Defense Installations Agency (MND-DIA) for 51 months.

“That’s not a small build,” said Crary. “This is a special project that signifies true excellence in mission execution.”

The HAS’s have ventilation and engine exhaust systems to allow aircraft engines to run inside the shelter with the hangar doors closed. It also has new fire prevention systems and improved storm drainage systems, along with other safety features. This provides an upgraded protection area for Kunsan’s fighters, and a safer working environment for Airmen.
The 11th Engineers have concluded a refresher course held during the week of Aug. 3 designed to leverage the use of ENFIRE, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) rapid data collecting tool kit. Instruction set, reconnaissance, and surveying (commonly known as ENFIRE) allows Far East District (FED) Soldiers and civilians to conduct reconnaissance with modernized collection and dissemination technology from a safe distance, making it possible to deliver data with a greater level of precision than ever before.

The ENFIRE software application allows Soldiers and civilians to use advanced software components to share mission information with decision makers in real time by automatically populating field data back to their commanders. The system’s long-distance laser range finder allows Soldiers to quickly gather information about a target from up to a six-kilometer range.

“The use of ENFIRE will help make missions safer for our troops and DOD Civilians,” said Spc. Christopher W. Bowden, course instructor.

Use of ENFIRE equipment within USACE will allow Soldiers and civilians to provide vital intelligence using cutting edge software that will reduce the time on target and greatly improve Soldier and civilian safety by reducing exposure to potential threats because of the system’s rapid information collection and dissemination processes. This will allow teams to move in and out quickly when conducting their reconnaissance.

Additionally, combat engineers will be able to better manage construction projects with ENFIRE’s construction site planning software. These tools within the construction interface assist with facility and inventory management, obstacle planning and surveying, making this an important training for FED civilians.

Woo Sang-yoon, Civil Engineer in the FED’s Geotechnical Section said, “This was my first ENFIRE training and a great opportunity to understand how this modern kit is actually used for engineers.”

ENFIRE equipment will also be utilized by civilian engineers to share their findings with others such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other government entities during natural disasters. The kit is also helpful in underwater operations to view integrated data from the kit’s sonar and GPS survey equipment.

“It has been great to engage the Far East District and set them up for success in upcoming missions,” said Staff. Sgt. John B. Lack, refresher course instructor.

Instructors provided real world scenarios for potential contingency and peacetime requirements, preparing attendees to serve in both technical tasks and the important role they would have to play in a project or potential contingency environment.
Last week, Chris Caywood, Chief of the FED’s Design Branch and a group of seven Engineering Division engineers met with customers from Story Range to complete a site assessment on three of the complex’s ranges.

The event kickoff meeting and safety briefing immediately eliminated sites that would not be a fit for the needs of a contingency environment. The design team, Training Support Activity Korea, and the 2ID Abrams Master Gunner reviewed a number of sites to determine the feasibility of each range. This preliminary review determined the ranges that would be the best fit to meet the width and terrain requirements for the contingency environment and was followed by a visit to all of the ranges within the Story Range complex to better visualize and understand the mission.

After validating the range requirements, Woo Sang-yoon and Yi Min-u from the FED’s Geotechnical Branch along with Hyon Ku Choe from the Design Branch, provided ENFIRE training to the rest of the team. Equipped with the knowledge to train their co-workers, these experts were able to utilize the range as a training ground to train-up the team on the ENFIRE Reconnaissance tool after attending a week-long ENFIRE train the trainer class.
Building Strong in Korea!

ENFIRE Technology used in real-world environment to conduct District’s latest training

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Choe Hyon-ku, Structural Engineer speaks on his training, “First, the ENFIRE training provided by the 11th Engineering Battalion was very helpful in regard to carrying out the Story Range Mission. Some of our team members were able to operate the ENFIRE equipment for the first time and I believe we performed our mission very well. We really enjoyed the exercise! I was impressed with every member’s pro-active attitude as well as Mr. Chris Caywood’s leadership.”

The second day assessment included reconnaissance of the MK-19, Georgia, and Montana/Utah ranges using the ENFIRE system. Targets are required to be set at 800m, 1200m, and 1500m intervals. However, these metrics must be set relative to terrain, angle of fire from tank to future firing point, and available width of range. The team used the technology’s range finder capabilities to determine the key variable ranges and the ENFIRE’s handheld GPS to identify existing firing point locations and the camera to identify the current condition.

“The Story Range Mission provided our engineers a unique opportunity to test out the ENFIRE training equipment in a real-world scenario with real world deliverables. This experience was extremely beneficial for our FED engineers as it offered us a preview of what our mission would look like in a contingency environment,” says Chris Caywood, Chief of the Design Branch.

Yi Min-u from the FED’s Geomatics and Support Section remarked, “I was very happy to share information about the ENFIRE equipment with my co-workers. This was a great chance to optimize our skills in the use of the technology.”

This assessment created a contingency solution for the KSC that meets their live-firing accuracy screening test (LFAST) requirements for the range. Caywood’s design team will meet with the customers again in the upcoming weeks to confirm the proposed scope and finalized project deliverables in a summary report that will detail the new proposed layouts.

ENFIRE refresher course produces renewed contingency preparedness

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This 11th Engineering Refresher Course, organized by Capt. Heathra King, Plans and Exercise Officer, was a success for all involved. Attendees left with renewed technical proficiency in the required data retrieval tactics for any upcoming U.S. Army Corps of Engineering project or mission.

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ENFIRE is a rapid data collecting tool kit designed to help improve mission safety and efficiency. (FED file photo)
Safety Tips for Autumn/Outdoor Activities

Prepare for the changing weather of the fall to ensure that your family is both happy and healthy the autumn season.

**Hiking Safety:**
- Be aware of changing weather conditions.
- Make a list of what you need to bring in your backpack.
- Ensure you know the terrain where you are going.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you will be back.
- Pack for insect prevention.
- Keep to a planned route and don’t overdo it.

**Bicycle Safety:**
- Always inspect your bike prior to riding.
- Plan the route where you will be going.
- Go with the traffic flow. Ride on the right in the same direction as other vehicles.
- If possible, ride a bike during the daytime with wearing reflective cloths or vest.
- Ensure you obey all traffic signs for bicyclist.
- Stay alert at all times, keep your head up and look around.
- Watch for car doors that open suddenly on bicycle paths.
- Look before turning.

**Prevention of COVID-19 Infection:**
- Ensure you wear a mask every time you go into a public area.
- Wash hand several times per day depending on activities.
- Use soap and warm water for 20/30 seconds while washing hands.
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if water and soap are not readily available.
- Keep from congregating with people at parties or social gatherings.

Following autumn safety practices gives you piece of mind that you are taking the proper precautions to keep you safe as you enjoy this special time.