VIP hangar project completed at Osan Air Base

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VIP hangar project completed at Osan Air Base

By Stephen Satkowski
FED Public Affairs

Engineers at the Far East District central resident office completed construction surveillance on the VIP hangar and parking pad renovation project at Osan Air Base last November. The hangar will house twin engine turbo prop aircraft for executive missions throughout Asia. FED engineers assisted in the renovation of the two existing hangars and parking pad which include fire protection, high expansion foam and four foam generators hanging from the ceiling. An overhead hoist and aircraft wash system were also included in the project.

Steven Haselman, FED project engineer, said there were initially some issues ensuring the quality of the fire protection system but through cooperation and hard work the matter was resolved.

“We were able to overcome that issue by working together with the contractor and our Korean partners and deliver the project for aviation regiment,” said Haselman.

To mark the completion of the project, which was initially awarded in 2017, an acceptance release letter ceremony was held Jan. 21 inside the hangar at Osan Air Base.

Col. Lee Woo-sig (left), Chief, Program Management Team, Ministry of National Defense USFK Base Relocation Program Office (MURD), and Col. Garrett Cottrell (right), Deputy Commanding Officer - Transformation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District, gather for a photo after signing the Acceptance Release Letter for the VIP hanger and parking pad (AV040M), Osan Air Base, Jan. 21. (Photo by Son Seukhwan)
Engineers Week 2020: Resident Engineer speaks about building a career with USACE

By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) employees are provided opportunities worldwide to grow with the organization and continue to influence potential future employees of the organization.

Ken Ward, a Far East District resident engineer, has been a member of USACE for more than 10 years. He was hired as a local intern at Fort Gordon, Ga., after completing his civil engineering degree at Georgia Southern University.

“Working with the Corps of Engineers became the first option I had and I enjoyed it once I got onboard,” said Ward. “I actually started out as a construction representative and was eventually transferred to an engineering position.”

Ward came to the Far East District in 2013 as an office engineer at Central Resident Office on Osan Air Base. He said there he dealt with a lot of negotiations and contract administration. Later he moved on to other areas within the district.

“I got a promotion to be a project engineer at Kunsan Resident Office, where I led a lot of the O&M projects [Operations and Maintenance Program],” said Ward. “I applied and was selected for a resident engineering position here at Camp Humphreys last year.”

To help address the nation’s Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) challenge, USACE employees participate in mentorship programs, science fairs, robotics competitions, teacher-training workshops, recreational events, STEM camps and other educational opportunities.

Ward is no stranger to participating in enrichment programs such as STEM and he is currently the Advancing Minorities’ Interest in Engineering (AMIE) program director for the district.

Initially, Ward was asked to volunteer with the STEM program, but since that time has continued to provide support whenever possible.

“T have always liked volunteering around the community and working with kids,” said Ward. “It’s fulfilling to work with kids and spark their interest, and it’s something I have been trying to do every year.”

Last summer, Ward was in charge of guiding two university students who came to the district as interns participating in the AMIE program.

“Being a minority myself, I wanted to get involved with this program a little more” said Ward. “It’s rewarding to have someone look up to you and ask you questions and eventually become a mentor to the participants of the AMIE program. I’ve kept in contact with last year participants, they have been talking with me and asking for advice to help them with their future.”

As for now, Ward plans to remain with the district for the foreseeable future and has a few personal and professional goals he’d like to accomplish.

“I want to get married to my fiancé, earn my MBA [Master of Business Administration], and earn the Professional Project Manager certificate,” said Ward.

Ken Ward, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District, resident engineer, volunteers during a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) event held at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, May 23, 2019. (Photo by Antwaun J. Parrish)

Col. Lee Byung-seok (center right), United States Forces Korea Program Division and Ministry of National Defense-Defense Installation Agency chief, and Col. Christopher Crary (center left), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Far East District commander, gather for a photo in front of the Unaccompanied Enlisted Personnel Housing, UEH110, following the Acceptance Release Letter signing ceremony for the building, Camp Humphreys, South Korea, Jan. 10. (Photo by Son SeukHwan)
By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

ARL ceremony signifies another completed project for 65th Medical Brigade

By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

The district continues to build upon its legacy as it has been a significant contributor to the Yongsan Relocation Program in supporting units such as the 65th Medical Brigade. The YRP relocates most U.S. Forces and headquarters United Nations Command activities from the Seoul metropolitan area to areas south, most notably to U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Humphreys. USAG Humphreys has grown exponentially over the past 10 years due to projects led by the Far East District.

The 65th Medical Brigade provides Army Health Systems in support of Unified Land Operations and Armistice Health Care in the Korean Theater of Operations.

“First and foremost all projects are important and critical to being prepared to fight tonight,” said Col. Garrett Cottrell, Deputy Commanding Officer – Transformation, USACE FED.

Although this project wasn’t as intricate as the construction of the $300 million newly built Brian D. Allgood Army Community Hospital, it was significant in the fact that it is the next to the last project specifically designed for the 65th Medical Brigade.

“No matter if it’s a $1.6 million project renovation or a $300 million hospital, all facilities are important to the 65th Medical Brigade to be able to meet their mission,” said Cottrell.

It takes aligned partnerships working together as a team to be able to successfully complete the projects being overseen by the FED.

“We appreciate the efforts across the entire team, including PMC [Program Management Consortium], MURO [Ministry of National Defense United States Forces Korea Relocation Office], and the contractors,” said Cottrell.

“Richard Byrd (third left), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Far East District, Deputy District Engineer, held a leadership forum with the USACE Leadership Development Program (ULDP) class, at the district headquarters, Camp Humphreys, South Korea, Jan. 28. The session was interactive and allowed the students to ask questions as he spoke with them about things that are important to him as a leader. He also talked to the team about his commitment as a leader to ensure his people know that he will resource them, underwrite their mistakes, and watch them run and work toward the mission. Byrd also shared some of his leadership philosophies, such as sharing the pain when things are hard, knowing when to task something that will make them better, and how important it is to make the tough calls even though they may be difficult or not popular. The students also learned what it means to “lead up.” (Photos by Antwaun J. Parrish)
Far East District participates in job fair aimed at increasing military spouse employment

By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys Employment Readiness Center hosted its first local recruiter job fair at the Morning Calm Center. This job fair was unique in the fact that it was a part of the Military Spouse Hiring Initiative.

The Military Spouse Hiring Initiative is a new program that will allow military spouses to meet one-on-one with a local human resources (HR) representative to review their qualifications and receive feedback and career guidance.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Far East District (FED) workforce management office was present as a vendor at the fair to answer questions and provide insight into the district’s function in the Republic of Korea.

Penny Ferguson, a workforce management specialist and also a military spouse, was readily available to speak with fair participants and explain the many opportunities within the FED. “We have so many more positions inside the Corps of Engineers, that people don’t expect,” said Ferguson. “We have everything from mechanics to logistics, to support services and workforce management, most people think we only hire engineers. So I am here today trying to educate them that we are much more.”

Spouses who attended the fair were able to not only speak with FED, but many other agencies as well. There were also counselors from CPAC present who could answer their questions regarding the overall hiring process.

“Many spouses just wanted to speak with me about the positions they can apply for and after I educated them on the Corps of Engineers, I directed them to speak with Stephanie Nishimori for more information,” said Ferguson.

Nishimori is a human resource assistant with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC), and also the lead for the Military Spouse Hiring Initiative.

Sherry Dresse is a 21-year Army veteran retiree and has been located in Korea for the past seven months with her family.

Dresse worked in logistics during her military service and is looking to use her more than two-decade expertise to land a position here.

“I am here so I can network with the organizations that are here and hopefully find a position as a contractor or GS [general schedule] employee in the logistics field,” said Dresse.

Since being retired, Dresse stated that she has maintained contact with active duty personnel to ensure that she stays abreast to changes in the career field in order to be up-to-date on the skills required to land a position. She went on to share her opinion on the Military Spouse Hiring Initiative.

“I think it’s a great program, and it is going to help a lot of spouses find employment and utilize their skills while here,” said Dresse.

There were many vendors providing education and information to job seekers, and Dresse stated that she wanted to speak to as many people as possible with the hopes of it being beneficial to her desired outcome.

“There are a lot of great opportunities here, so hopefully something will come to fruition,” said Dresse.

Soldiers from the Far East District clean their M9 9MM pistols as they prepare to turn them in and receive the Army’s brand new Sig Sauer M17 modular handgun system. The Beretta M9 has served us well and with great distinction during simultaneous operations across multiple theaters, including the mountains of Afghanistan, the sands of Iraq, and of course here in the Pacific.

(Photo by Jessie Lindor)
Women’s History Month 2020: Valiant Women of the Vote

By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

Each year, the month of March is designated as Women’s History Month by presidential proclamation. The month is set aside to honor women’s contributions in American history.

This year’s theme is, Valiant Women of the Vote. The theme honors the brave women who fought to win suffrage rights for women, and for the women who continue to fight for the voting rights of others.

This year’s Women’s History Month is also significant as it’s the centennial of the extension of the right to vote to women. When Congress passed the 19th Amendment in 1919, and the 36 states ratified it by August 1920, women’s right to vote was enshrined in the U.S. Constitution.

Women’s History Month began March 2, 1980 as just a week-long celebration, but since 1995, each president has issued an annual proclamation designating the observation for an entire month.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has many women who make strides to build upon that legacy every day, in both leadership and support roles.

A few women within the Far East District shared their thoughts and reflections on Women’s History Month and the importance of this annual observation.

Pamela Lovasz serves as the Chief of Engineering Division. She took a moment to describe what this Month means to her and how it impacts the world.

“Every year, during Women’s History Month, both men and women recognize the power, the compassion, the leadership, the strength, the intellect, the achievements and the creativity of women around the world,” said Lovasz. “The ones who are alive and the ones who have passed.”

Jessie Lindor, serves as a property book officer with the logistics management office. She shared her thoughts on Women’s History Month, and what it means to her personal legacy.

“It [Women’s History Month] means progress, being strong, and finding new ways to advance women’s equal rights within the workplace,” said Lindor. “It means to create a path to inspire young girls and to show them that they can accomplish whatever they desire. Women’s History Month means carrying the torch that my mother passed to me and her mother before her.”

Carol Spratley, a district project manager, stated that she has always been surrounded by women who told her, “You can do it!” She went on to state that they also set the example and led the way.

Spratley also reflected on her time being one of the only women in construction division and how she persevered through difficult times.

“When I started working in construction, most of the time I was the only woman in the office; rather it was back when I was an engineering tech, clerk typist, or when I moved into construction inspection,” said Spratley. “I had to make a choice to either give up, complain or fight and prove that I could do the job. I chose to prove that a woman could do the job.”

Women continue to make meaningful contributions to society, and these contributions will affect all for decades to come.

“As women we have to reach back or give a hand or encouraging word to others, either leading us or following behind us, because the success of one is the success of many,” said Spratley.
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Far East District (FED), supports the Far East region’s military spouse hiring initiative by ensuring it provides opportunities to personnel and their family relocating to the region.

In 2019, we highlighted the military spouse hiring initiative, which is a program that allows military spouses to meet one-on-one with a local human resources (HR) representative to review their qualifications and receive feedback and career guidance. We decided to follow-up on that article highlighting another military spouse employee who chose to work with the Far East District.

According to Stephanie Nishimori, a civilian personnel advisory center (CPAC) assistant, often times military spouses don’t accompany their servicemember to Korea due to concern with finding a new job.

“So what we are trying to do is expedite hiring processes for spouse hiring and for Korea to be the assignment of choice,” said Nishimori. “We are working to provide our spouses with enough opportunities to get work that they’re qualified for and that they enjoy doing to keep them happy while they’re overseas.”

Prior to introducing this initiative, the military spouse non-competitive hiring process was and still is a system that allows spouses to be prioritized for jobs based on spousal preference. However, the new initiative streamlines the process and ensures that spouses have the proper qualifications for potential jobs opportunities.

“It’s very much the same program, except now, spouses are able to come in and talk with any of us and get some feedback on their resume,” said Nishimori. “We are actually sending the resumes to the HR specialists that have available positions.”

Jennifer Christian, a management assistant, who has been a government employee for the past five years, relocated to Korea with her family from Fort Eustis, Va. Christian’s husband is an Army warrant officer who has served for more than 16 years.

Christian came to Korea without a new job but was able to secure employment with the Far East District’s logistic management office. She wanted to offer encouragement to spouses who may be hesitant to relocate here due to job uncertainty.

“Being a military spouse provides you a hiring privilege to secure a job,” said Christian. “When you don’t get a job right away don’t be discouraged because there will be a job for you.”

Christian and her husband went on to thank the federal service for the opportunities they provide and the FED for hiring her at her current position.
Far East District welcomes new Assistant District Counsel

By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Far East District (FED), Office of Counsel recently announced the addition of a new Assistant District Counsel, SoCheung Lee. Lee previously worked at the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency.

Lee earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology, with Honors, from the University of Chicago and her Law Degree from the University of Maryland. She is a member of the Maryland Bar.

As a Korean-American, Lee was raised in the U.S., but she does have some experience living in Korea while pursuing her undergraduate degree.

“When I was a college student I went to Yonsei University to learn Korean a bit more formally,” said Lee.

She has traveled to many countries outside of the U.S., but as a working professional it has always been a desire of hers to work abroad, and accepting a position with the district fit her aspiration.

“I have always wanted to work overseas. It’s been both a professional and personal dream of mine,” said Lee. “After many years I have attained a job overseas, and here I am.”

Lee has an extensive background as a legal professional, with over 15 years of experience. She brings considerable legal experience working government procurement formation and administration issues; procurement policy while drafting proposed rules for the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) Council’s Working Group; contract dispute litigation before the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals (ASBCA), and bid protests before the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Court of Federal Claims (COFC).

Her experience also includes working on fiscal law, government ethics, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act issues, as well as drafting interagency memo-

randums of understanding, and advising Inspector General (IG) investigations.

Working with the district is a unique experience for most Americans as they get a chance to work alongside foreign nationals. With her legal background, and understanding of the Korean language, Lee has noticed that Korean Nationals (KNs) feel comfortable speaking with her.

“For work matters, the language of choice is English, but in terms of socially interacting with folks whose dominant language is Korean, it helps facilitate things a little more,” said Lee.

The Corps of Engineers is said to be a unique organization within the Department of Defense (DOD) community, and learning its structure is an important element to being successful within the district.

“I am learning about the organization’s structure and hierarchy, and how the Corps does business,” said Lee. “Previously, I worked in pretty flat organizations that were also much smaller as far as DOD components were concerned. But I think the Corps of Engineers is reminiscent of my experience with the Navy, and having to be familiar with different sets of instructions from the DOD, Army, and the Corps of Engineers.”

Lee has set a few professional and personal goals for herself during her time here at FED.

“I would like to improve my Korean,” said Lee. I am conversationally pretty fluent, but I need to improve more on the technical side, since I haven’t had the opportunity to learn or had the need for it. Also I would like to expose my kids more to the culture. So being here is really a fantastic opportunity for them and I think they are going to get the best of both worlds.”

Currently, Lee is geographically separated from her family, but they are scheduled to join her later this year. Her husband is an architect who she hopes will become a member of the FED team.
David Montes finds his purpose within ministry

By Antwaun J. Parrish
FED Public Affairs

David Montes, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Far East District (FED) project manager, was commissioned from Master Sgt. to Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Reserve as a chaplain candidate, Nov. 20, 2019.

Montes previously supported the district as an operations noncommissioned officer (NCO) from Aug. 2018 - Aug. 2019. He is a reserve Soldier that has served in the Army for more than 20 years. After completing his time at the district, he left Korea and went back to his civilian job as a police officer in Savannah, Ga.

During his time in Korea, Montes and his family made many connections and wanted to return to Korea and find a civilian position within the FED. He applied and was hired as a project manager with the Installation Support Branch.

“I am enjoying the job thus far,” said Montes. “It’s extremely challenging and it requires another operating language I have to learn now. There are a lot of small details that you have to master in order to keep projects on track.”

Prior to working as a Soldier with the FED, Montes was assigned to work in Afghanistan. While working in Afghanistan Montes began speaking with a recruiter who assured him that he could fulfill his desire to become an Army chaplain.

“Once I am done with that I will go ahead and get selected to be in the chaplain corps and be promoted to Captain,” said Montes. “In the meantime I will be shadowing a chaplain and performing certain type of duties related to the chaplaincy, learning about the job, actually going through practicums and certain types of training like chaplain BOLC [basic officer leader course]. As I understand it that will be the scope of what I will be doing for the next few years. The main focus will be to finish my masters.”

Montes plans to complete his graduate studies by May 2024 and looks forward to learning and growing more within his job as a project manager with the district.

“I am grateful to be here,” said Montes. “We [My family and I] are really grateful to the team for bringing us on board. We are proud to be a part of a great team. There are a lot of great people here and a lot of great leadership.”

Montes went on to state that he felt it was a natural transition for him to become a chaplain.

“I had the chance to minister to Soldiers in an unofficial capacity when they would come to me with problems,” said Montes. “I would approach their problems with my life experience. With that it gave me the opportunity to talk to people about the Lord, with their permission.”

While working as an operations NCO, Montes began the process to become a chaplain. He stated that it was a long process but definitely worth it for him to complete his goal.

After receiving a direct commission to second lieutenant, Montes still has requirements he must fulfill as a chaplain candidate such as completing his graduate degree studies.

David Montes, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Far East District (FED) project manager, took the Oath of Office and was sworn in as a U.S. Army Second Lieutenant and Chaplain candidate at the district headquarters, Camp Humphreys, South Korea. Montes’ family and other members of the FED were present at his ceremony. (Photos by Antwaun J. Parrish)
The Internet has changed the way the world communicates. People are increasingly looking to the Web as their primary sources of news and information. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Far East District has connected with the community through social media. Check out our sites below to stay informed with the latest and greatest from the Far East District.

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US Army Corps of Engineers
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• As a customer you can provide feedback or ask a question to any of our divisions and offices.
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