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**US Army Corps  
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of Engineers

# **Engineer Profiles**

## **The District Engineer**

**Colonel William W. Badger**

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ENGINEER PROFILES  
The District Engineer

Interviews  
with  
Colonel William W. Badger

by  
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## Foreword

Over the years the program of the Corps of Engineers has changed significantly. National goals have changed with the times, and the amount of money and manpower to carry them out has varied as well. Whatever the mission and resources allotted, the District Engineer (DE) has retained a pivotal role in its execution.

In recognition of the central position of the DE in carrying out the work of the Corps, I have asked the Historical Division to undertake a series of interviews with incumbent DEs. These periodic conversations are intended to show the evolving viewpoints of DEs, their approaches to problems, and their techniques of management.

This publication contains the first group of interviews in this series. Future DEs should find Colonel Bill Badger's reflections on his responsibilities and performance instructive in preparing for their assignments. Military personnel and civilian employees who wish more information on the execution of our program should also find this useful.



J. K. BRATTON

Lieutenant General, USA  
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## Interviewer's Introduction

This series of four annual interviews presents the changing viewpoints of an incumbent District Engineer. The conversations cover a wide range of subjects, from the civil works planning process to personnel management. Yet they have a coherence, because all of these matters are pertinent to the management of an Engineer District.

The interviews did not begin with the intention of providing a record of a District Engineer's tenure. Before Colonel William W. Badger went to St. Paul as District Engineer in June 1979, he served the Chief of Engineers as special assistant for international programs. He was the first to hold this position. During his tenure as special assistant, he oversaw and helped develop a growing overseas program financed by recipient countries. When he went to St. Paul, he agreed to my suggestion that he record his views on his tour of duty as special assistant.

We conducted the first interview at his office in the Customs House about 60 days after he became St. Paul District Engineer. Most of the morning's discussion concerned international programs. We also touched briefly on the transition from staff officer to District commander.

Afterward, when we talked at more length about the change he had made, it became evident that he had already given considerable thought to his new assignment and to the nature of the District organization and operation. Based on this conversation, I suggested that we meet yearly to record his views of his responsibilities, goals, and problems as District Engineer. He agreed to do so and the series began.

Initially, the Historical Division did not intend to publish the interviews. Instead, the office considered the transcripts as source material for later writing projects. As time passed, it began to seem that the interviews might be more immediately useful. The District Engineer holds a key position in the Corps of Engineers, but there is little to which future district engineers can turn for insight into the methods and procedures of their predecessors.

Colonel Badger also saw the need for such material. During 1982, he prepared his "Notes for New District Commanders," which was published by St. Paul District. North Central Division's commander, Brigadier General Scott B. Smith, approved the pamphlet and recommended it to new district engineers, observing that Badger's "Notes" could be "very helpful in getting a fix on the complexities of your new job as well as provide you with some insights on how to do it."

This set of interviews represents the beginning of a program in which we hope to achieve the same goal through recording the views of a number of district engineers. We will choose districts of different kinds, for example, some with major ports, and others with responsibilities for navigation on major rivers or for part of the Great Lakes system. By so doing, we hope to document the problems and possibilities faced by district engineers in a variety of locations as well as their common concerns.

Frank N. Schubert



30 July 1979

First Interview

Q: Well, now that you're District Engineer in St. Paul, you've made an interesting transition from the staff officer to a commander of a huge organization. How do you find that transition?

A: I've found that there's no experience an Army officer has that trains him to be a District Engineer. The District Engineer is a unique position, one of great power, one of great respect, and one with a large mission. Coming in as staff officer, where you did the work yourself, to a position where you're supervising a large number of people who do the work is almost a day-night thing. You have to turn off the "I will do" mode of operation and turn on the "I am supervising, I am managing" mode. Hopefully, I am doing just that. The District job is a joy to do. It's just so big and it is so different that when you're going through the learning phase, you're always concerned that things are not continuing on without someone guiding the ship. When I go out and check, though, it's always that Corps civilian who's a real professional, and he or she is getting the job done for you whether you're there or not. So the system is good, and I guess that after being here for 60 days, it reconfirms my thoughts that the Corps is a professional organization. And it is doing well.

Q: So you're managing, with the engineer's impulse to put your hands on a project, you're managing to keep your hands off the projects?

A: Yes. I have certain rules. Since I have three engineering degrees, I try not to do any engineering. I feel that the job requires you to be a leader and a manager. So, if anything, I'm trying to be a good manager and use those techniques of leadership and management that will make this thing go. The one thing that I've dedicated myself to now is how we in the District can do more expeditiously those things that we're charged to do. Take those studies, take those designs, or take those programs and make us respond quickly and get the program from the study phase through the construction phase. My efforts, basically, are to try to make this good machine run a little faster.



Second Interview

Q: When we talked last summer, Colonel Badger, you had been District Engineer (DE) here for about 60 days, and I asked you how you found the transition from OCE staff to District Engineer. You said you had to consciously move out of doing things into supervising. Has it been difficult to keep your hands off projects?

A: Not really, because there is so much going on, I just don't have time to get involved in all the different projects and activities. It becomes obvious when you see the scope of your responsibilities and authorities that the job will keep you very, very busy.

To stay on top of the job, you have to establish a management style that will give you the information and you have to decentralize to the maximum. You have to get the right personnel in the right jobs so that, when you delegate to them, they make the jobs go for you.

You see that when you are at the management level -- dealing with state and federal representatives, attending meetings for the Corps or briefings, meeting with the local people -- you have time for only a certain level of involvement with any given topic. To be able to see the big picture, you have to look at all the problems a little bit and not get too involved in a single problem or in one project.

You do get more involved in the projects that have problems. Each time you get involved in an old problem, you get in a little deeper. There are certain problem areas that I can talk about to a great extent because they seem to be recurring. The rehabilitation of Lock and Dam 1 is an example. We closed the river for five months and that meant the city of Minneapolis, the port of Minneapolis, was closed off. That cost them about a month's shipping time in April, so they were conscious of that closure. We were meeting with them monthly in Congressman Sabo's office and reporting on that project. Each time before I would meet I would get more deeply involved in Lock and Dam 1's rehabilitation. So the problems were recurring and each time you get involved to a greater depth.

Q: What are some of the other problem areas that have taken a lot of your attention?

A: Well, you come into the District and the boss gives you your goals and objectives. One of the things that General Morris has been up-front with is that my primary mission as District Engineer is to be the contracting officer. We have a system where you go to Huntsville and study contracts. I did that before I took over the DE job and I also had experience with contracts in Saudi Arabia. The shortfall, though, is that you have no experience as a contract manager. You do not have the training in management indices to know when a contract system is not working.

When I got here I encountered large numbers of contracts. Now I have 56 active contracts. You find yourself so busy with managing the contract system that your knowledge about contracting is not what is really needed.

A different type of course should be explored and I recommended a change to General Harris and also to General Noah in Huntsville. The Huntsville Division should have the responsibility for putting a contracting management course on video tapes. They would make 15-minute professional tapes to be sent out to the field to redirect the contracting course to contract management, not just contracting. So when the DE comes in, he will be able to look at the contract management video tapes and be able to determine as a manager that the contracting system is working.

The first problem area that I got into was to improve the contracting capability, allocation of funds, and fund control. I hired a new chief of P&S (Procurement and Supply Division) who does the contracting for us. We hired an extra contract person in the division and established some cross training. When I first arrived at St. Paul we depended on one person to do all the work herself. Now she has extra help and we have the flexibility to insure that every contract action is done right. Since this is one of General Morris' top priorities and such an important area, we felt we had to make great strides in improving the contracting system. I believe we did.

Q: You also told me last year that you were satisfied with the organization's structure and the professional level. You said that your efforts are to try and make this good machine run a little faster. Is that still your goal?

A: Yes, but I find that the system is working against me in attempting to make things go faster. We're going through a period of more public interest in water resources management. States are now making demands for more states' rights. They feel they should have greater involvement in water resource development.

Senator Durenberger was pushing for a new water resource policy. The federal government would grant funds to the states, the governor would set the priorities for water resources work and allocations of funds, and the Corps would be used more in a technical role.

I think the states feel the Secretary of the Army and the Corps of Engineers play too large a role in the decision-making on water resources. I feel the trend in water resources is in coordination and accommodation of the environmental groups; trying to get balanced plans; and looking at the environmental, economic, and social aspects. We are trying to do more coordination when we develop projects so that the projects are better, and this process takes longer.

As our system becomes more involved, the time drags out. Even though we want to speed up the process so that we can better help the people in water resources, or in regulatory functions, we find there are more obstacles in the way than we first thought.

We are looking for ways to streamline and make the Corps perform better. I think we have many innovative approaches to do that and, if you like, we'll discuss it.

Q: Well, this is what I actually wanted to get at. My question was in terms of the organizational structure and professional level within the District. The problems that you are talking about are actually outside the District organization, is that right?

A: Yes. I thought I would spend more time during my first year, my learning year, working within the District. The second year would be more for formulation of strategy and plans, moving projects. My last year would be more dedicated to institutionalizing what we have established.

In the learning year, looking within, we found that we really needed to have team-building in the Engineering Division. We conducted team-building classes so we could communicate better within the Corps family and determine what our problems were. I thought it was very productive. People became more sensitive to each other and we now have much better communication.

Then we had a team-building course by the same consultant for the project managers. Now the project managers communicate better. The project manager is primarily concerned with the project and the functional managers supervise the technical people who do the hard-core engineering or environmental work on the projects. So you have this dual supervision, one supervising the project and the other supervising the function. Communication is essential in this dual system.

We have worked that out quite well. We established monthly meetings where the project managers brief me. I have delegated responsibility in guiding these projects to the project managers. I try not to be the driver of the train from the executive office. I let that happen with the project managers.

We have set up a system of two types of staff meetings. One week we have the standard staff meeting of the personnel officer, the safety officer, etc. The next week we have a staff meeting of the construction-operations and the engineering personnel -- the technical staff. It gives me a chance to interface with the standard staff and with the construction and engineering areas. Sometimes actions go on without the District Engineer having the chance to interface with them. Alternating staff meetings provides me a chance to see all the actions.

This is one thing I noticed in OCE when I was in the Civil Works Directorate. A lot of time the management element or the "green suit" element will be working in an area of hot issues or reacting to problems while the civilian staff is plugging along with water resource projects. Sometimes I felt there was not a close working relationship, so by having alternating staff meetings, I am hoping to get a closer relationship with the projects.

Q: How does it look so far?

A: Well, I think it is good from my viewpoint. I am more aware of what is happening in the engineering and planning and on the technical side than I would be if I had just the standard staff meeting. It helps build the importance of the corporate image. About 30 people in this organization attend one of the two staff meetings, and those people form the corporate body. What you want to do, or at least strive for, is to make them feel this is their District, they play a major role in the management of this corporate body, and they influence where we go as a corporate body.

I am trying to get those 30 people involved as a corporate body and moving as a family instead of saying "This is Bill Badger's District and if it fails we don't care." This is our corporate body and the survival of the organization is important to all of us.

Q: Dependent on all of us.

A: Dependent on all of us. I think the corporate image is built by having two different types of staff meetings. I think the communications have been great. The thing about communications is this: communicate internally continuously and you should communicate externally very selectively and very professionally. Tell your story correctly the first time when you go outside the Corps family. Inside the Corps family, you can tell the story all the time instead of occasionally.

Q: Now, as far as internal communication is concerned, you have more contact with your staff than just these two kinds of meetings?

A: Well, I try to keep my involvement in any one problem to a minimum so I have time to see all the problems. I try not to get bogged down in the administration so that I have more time to spend with the people who have problems or to visit. The more time I can spend with them, the more time they can spend with the boss, the better the feedback. Hopefully, I have created an environment of trust so that there is continuous feedback and I, as District Engineer, am informed of what is going on with the problems we have.

The greatest fear I have as a manager is that there are problems that are not recognized by other people or myself and do not get corrected. Once you have identified the problem, you can usually



solve it. I have found in my career that problems do not come with red ribbons around them. You have to be very perceptive to determine where the problems are.

Q: How candid do you think your staff members are with you? Do they come to you with their problems?

A: Well, I think so because they are the District and part of the corporate body. We spend a lot of time developing feedback. We have gone into the retired community and we had a luncheon with 200 retired people. On the Corps' birthday we had all the employees in the auditorium and gave them a state-of-the-Corps message and told them about what is going on in the District.

So I think communication within has been helpful. We put together a 21-minute briefing called "Keeper of the Waters" and, if you can, I would like you to come in tomorrow morning and see this.

Q: What other items have you worked on?

A: On my arrival, General Harris said, "Badger, improve the professional image of the Corps." So I said to myself, "How can I do that?" Well, the obvious way is to improve our performance but after you improve your performance, you need to improve in telling your story.

So we contracted for a professional voice, we drafted a good script, took color slides, and put together a professional briefing with background music. We have done that with six key areas within the District. So we have vastly improved our briefings and communications. Any time Corps employees go to a meeting to represent the Corps, they have all the latest information and they know the Corps' position. They also know the objective of the meeting and what they want to accomplish. They represent us in a professional manner and communicate in the best way possible. When Corps employees go out, they are prepared. Preparation is the key to success.

I think all the above has helped to raise our professional image. I've talked so long I've missed the question.

Q: No, you've been right on the question, which was the efforts to improve the organizational structure and professional level of the District. You centered pretty much on communication.

A: Yes, but I think we have gone into deeper and more meaningful areas. Hopefully, we haven't done the cosmetic fix: we have been fixing the system on the long term. We have established a sabbatical program. The professors from universities would come to work with us for a year, or a year-and-a-half, and we would improve our engineering skills in exchanging information with the university. They would see what we are doing and go back and improve our image with the university.

The only problem with that was the moratorium on funding. They cut the money and I had to stop the sabbatical program. I was setting it up for 12 professors from 12 different universities. Next year, when the funds start flowing, I will set up the sabbatical program.

We have started different training programs within. We recognize that, with the high cost of housing, we will not be able to hire new employees to come to St. Paul because they probably can't sell their houses in their old location and they can't afford the interest rates in the new location. This situation has made us less mobile with our civilian workers, so when we promote, we probably will have to promote from within. It is obvious that we have to train our own, so we are very concerned about this training.

In our Construction-Operations Division we have four GS-13 branch chiefs. On October 1, I will move the Chief of Regulatory to be the Chief of Construction and the Chief of Construction will become the Chief of Regulatory. The Chief of Maintenance will become the Chief of Project Operations and Chief of Project Operations to Maintenance. So I will have four GS-13s who will be trading places, energizing, getting new life, a new job. . . .

Q: More depth?

A: More depth, more experience. When we have to replace a very great Chief of Construction-Operations, we will have four supervisors who are trained and capable of moving up.

We are looking at the same thing in the Engineering Division; we are doing some cross-training and making some moves. We hope that it vitalizes the personnel in the system. I feel confident that we are moving in the right direction.

Q: How did you get this idea for cross-training branch chiefs?

A: Well, we will not be able to hire somebody from another organization because of the economics of moving. So we have to hire within.

Q: Is this something you developed yourself?

A: Well, we developed it together here. If I have to hire a GS-14 from within and I don't want to train my GS-13s, it's shame on me. We felt it was prudent to train our GS-13s.

Recently, when we filled two key positions, the Chief of Supply and the Chief of Planning, we decided to do it in the open. I set up part of the corporate body as an interviewing committee, including our Chief of Counsel, our Chief of Personnel, the Deputy, Chief of Engineering, and Chief of Construction-Operations. Later, on another nominating team, we added the Comptroller. Those people interviewed the candidates for the jobs. They made their recommendations through the Chief of Engineering to me and we made the selection.

The corporate body had a part to play in who was hired. I think we saw that we had a very good system of hiring people. We also saw that most of our hiring would probably be done within, since we do not have mobility in the Corps. We had better train our people from within so we have qualified people.

Q: They don't get bored that way?

A: Oh, no. Cross-training, I feel, gives people new life. When you have people who work eight years in a planning mode, and you are not getting water resource projects out of the pipeline because of the change in environment or change in administration, it is frustrating. I think we have some very difficult jobs in the Corps and we have to exchange jobs for these people to keep them interested. . . .

Q: Have you had any problems with people on the District staff who have risen beyond their levels of competence?

A: Yes, we have.

Q: People in jobs they cannot handle?

A: Yes.

Q: What did you do?

A: We had one case in the Regulatory Branch where somebody was promoted one grade above his capabilities. We had problems with English and we provided writing courses to get his ability up so that he could perform at that level. We were not successful.

The supervisors were getting frustrated and the man was getting frustrated, so we talked to him and we said, "Hey, we've got a problem. What's the solution?"

The solution was that we backed off a grade. We gave him a job that he had more talent for and was able to do. I think today the man seems happier. His supervisor is getting a better product. That was one solution. But when we identify a person who is out of his element, as managers we will help that person get back in his element so that he can perform better. I think in this case, treated as an individual action, it worked very well.

In another case we had an employee, the Planning Branch Chief, who was 70-years old. The job he was in changed during his 43 years of employment. The man had an uncanny ability in writing and understanding the planning system. But I had 50 percent of the Planning Branch work out on contract and that required the Planning Branch Chief to be the COR, the contracting officer's representative. This older manager did not have experience in contracting and I felt we needed a person who provided the leadership, had the technical qualifications in planning, but also could be a COR since we did half of the work on architect engineer

(A-E) contracts. This required a change in management style. The man in that job did not want to make the transition because his strong points were in planning, writing, and doing projects. So he retired and we hired him back as a retired annuitant to work on the most important study we had, the District Engineer's report to the GREAT (Great Environmental Action Team) I study.

He is happier now because he is working in an area for which he has the most talent. We have a younger man who is 42 now managing the Planning Branch and doing contract work. He had experience in contract management.

I think you have to be very careful. We take the people and get them in the right box. I find that once you make those decisions, once you do those things, everybody is happier.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: I felt very good about both of those examples.

Q: When did you last command troops?

A: I had the command of the 52d Engineer Battalion Combat Heavy at Fort Carson from 1975 to 1977.

Q: It may sound like a drastic change in my line of questions, but the reason I asked you that is -- have you thought much about the difference between military command and your job here?

A: Well, you know, the similarities are amazingly close. There are certain aspects of the District Engineer's job where you are commander and director and certain aspects where you are manager of resources. The tie-in is that you are a leader of people, you are a commander; you are still a manager of resources, but in a lesser role than in the District.

We have a 60-40 split in the District, but the skills are the same. People have people problems and I am a people manager. Organizations have organizational problems and I manage an organization. You have a budget for the battalion and you have a budget for the District. So the training you get as a battalion commander fits very nicely into the training you need for a District. The one significant change is that with the troops you are dealing with much younger people. You may have different types of problems: drugs, drinking, sex. . . .

Q: Maybe the need for a surrogate father?

A: It's more of a need for counseling. In the Engineer District, you have more professional people who are older, have established families, and are established financially, so you don't have the



personal involvement with their problems. But you still have sickness and death. You play a role as a commander. But amazingly, Mickey, the two jobs are so similar.

Q: I was going to ask you, the more we talk, about it -- there are lessons you can take from one area of leadership to another.

A: I sat down after being battalion commander and came up with ten rules, management philosophy. One was to create an environment of trust. Another philosophy I had as a troop leader was to always have a plan B. The same goes for District work. You can make the best plans in the world, but if something goes wrong with that plan, you have an alternative, plan B.

Know your boss. You have to know who you are working for; you have to know what he wants. We as managers are commanders; we owe it to our bosses to be supportive. They have objectives and goals and we should be listening to our boss and doing a good job here. There are many similarities between commands.

Q: I was going to ask you which projects in the District are causing the most trouble. You mentioned that Lock and Dam 1 has been difficult because it was closed for so long.

A: Well, Lock and Dam 1 is difficult from the management-construction viewpoint, the technical viewpoint. We, the Civil Works District, don't have the depth of construction management and contract

management experience that we should. We gave up the military programs out of the District, all those little construction projects scattered all over. The many engineers who have been trained in contract administration and construction management have left us. In the civil works area you have large, long-term projects and you put your construction manager and contract people on those and they stay with them. We didn't have the broad base in construction management and contract management in the Civil Works District that I thought we would.

When we moved into a \$40-million total project, the Lock and Dam 1 rehab, we found that we had a real need for a lot of those extra people we didn't have. So we had a training program. When we closed the river, the port of Minneapolis was closed off and we had a time problem. We held meetings every month with congressmen and people from Minneapolis and they were very concerned that we live with the opening date.

When you do blasting and open up the 50-year-old locks, you don't know what you're getting into. We were basically going into the unknown. We used demolition to internally blast a reinforced concrete structure; this had never been done, so we were pushing the state of the art.

We put our two young captains and the project officer out there and we built the office up. We got the Chief of Construction and the Chief of Construction-Operations involved. We did a cost analysis

to see if our decision for a cost-effective acceleration was cost-effective and looked for new ways to get it done.

We opened it six days early and stayed within the financial bounds. It was a well-run project. We were not geared up for it so it became a challenge to get squared away so we would do well. We have another year of it, but I am not nearly as apprehensive because the people have proved during the first year that they can stay with a schedule and can do quality construction.

Now, you were asking about other problems.

Q: Yes. One I had in mind particularly was La Farge Dam on the Kickapoo River. It's been a real political problem.

A: Well, that's right. As you know, La Farge Dam matured at the time when the environmental movement was at its height and had its greatest influence. La Farge Dam was built in Wisconsin, which is probably the most environmentally sensitive state. The project was about 30-40 percent completed.

The people in the Kickapoo Valley were for it because they needed flood protection. The environmentalists were against it. They envisioned problems with water quality and they said that the reservoir behind the dam would become a dead lake. They had a governor at the time, Patrick Lucey, who didn't support the project

and two senators, William Proxmire and Gaylord Nelson, who were against it.

Q: For different reasons, I presume.

A: For different reasons, but they were against it. The governor stopped supporting it and when you lose your state support, the project is going to stop. And it was stopped.

Now Congressman Baldus has put an item in a House bill that the La Farge Dam in the Kickapoo Valley should be studied for a dry-dam concept, and not be deauthorized.

The official Corps position is that if the people want to deauthorize it, so be it. The Corps has recommended that it be deauthorized. So it's kind of in limbo.

Of course, it really creates problems for me because it is not being funded and yet I have to maintain it. I have to keep it clean and keep security on it. I have a small amount of funds this year and I'm still relocating a transformer station. I've run out of funds this year. On 1 October I will have no more funding but I will have the responsibility for it. It's still on the books.

But this project won't be deauthorized, I guess, until Congress makes a point or the study is done on the dry dam. A task force was

formed in Washington. The White House, Kathy Fletcher, was involved in this task force as the Corps was. This task report was finished and it really didn't give a lot of direction on how to solve the flood problem in the valley.

HUD has moved at Soldiers Grove and put out some funds to help relocate part of the town. The town of Gay Mills wanted me to come in and do a section 205 small flood control project study under the continuing authority. Since the project has not been deauthorized, I am unable to do a 205 project. Since then, the government has said that the FEMA, Federal Emergency Management Agency, now has overall responsibility over the Kickapoo Valley.

So it's one of those areas where we were taken out of our traditional role of flood control and a lot of other people got involved and they haven't been any more successful than the Corps. I always said that people who get into water resources management areas and haven't been there before need to learn the lesson of how difficult it is. Usually they won't get involved a second time.

I think there's a lesson learned for everyone. It's a very difficult problem. It doesn't take much of my time. It happened before me. I'm aware of it, I answer questions when they come in, and keep tabs on it, but it's not one of our real problems in the District.

When you look at the Corps -- I think we have real problems. I

would say that you come into a District and you say, "What is the strategy, what is the management philosophy, where is the District going for the next 20 years?" You will probably get the answer "I don't know."

And we had to get the realignment problem behind us when the Duluth area office was transferred to Detroit. Anytime you reorganize or realign, you have all kinds of political headaches and internal headaches. We did realign and I think it was done for a good reason. We wanted to make two lake districts and two river districts within the North Central Division, with St. Paul being a river district and Detroit a lake district.

So we dedicated ourselves to making a smooth transition and transferred Duluth to the Detroit District. And I think we've accomplished that. Since it was done, we have two major areas in the St. Paul District; the Upper Mississippi River where I have 240 miles, and the Red River Valley up north. The Red River basin is about the size of Kentucky. The Red River flows north and has all kinds of problems and it seems to flood annually.

So I said that to have a strategy and philosophy and direction for the District, I need something for the Red River Basin and the Upper Mississippi. On the Upper Mississippi River, we have a combined state and federal agency team working on the GREAT I study. The study was a \$3.5 million, five-year effort and involved the Fish and Wildlife Service, the EPA, the states of Wisconsin, Iowa, and

Minnesota, the Corps, and the Coast Guard. The Corps cochairs it with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Now the GREAT study is being printed; we are putting it together. This is a time where, hopefully, we have a balanced interagency plan, economically, socially, and environmentally. The environmentalists have their say in where we should go in the Mississippi River.

So I am doing the District Engineer's report that will try to implement the GREAT I report. After I saw what the GREAT report was trying to do, I said we have to set up a philosophy and here is what we are going to do. We are going to support the GREAT report even though we don't fully agree with it. We know it's a multiagency report and we can never fully agree with a multiagency report. But I think the effort that went into it was good, the ideas were good, and they are trying to do the right thing. So we anticipated that the Corps should support it, and I am supporting the findings and trying to implement them as quickly as possible.

We put together a task force to work on the DE report that will help implement the GREAT report. Maybe before this year is out we'll have those two reports. I will use those reports as a plan to give the District a 20-year strategy for where we're going in the District.

Now we have a Red River recon report. This is a six-month effort

which has taken all the water resource reports and activities in the Red River Valley and put them together in one report and an executive summary. We're looking for direction on what needs to be done in an innovative sense, what we have to do so the Corps can help the people in the Red River Valley.

Currently we're doing well in emergencies in the Red River Valley. In a flood we can demonstrate to the people that we can get something done and go right out on emergencies. We're giving them technical assistance on the Red River. We're doing a computer model. We're working with the two states on the levee problems that they have. Minnesota would raise the levee on one side and North Dakota would do it on the other side. The standards were different and it's causing interstate problems. So we're working in that area.

We have the standard water resource projects in the Red River Valley. We also have a new concept we call short-range, ring levees around the farmsteads, because in the Minnesota Valley-North Dakota area, the farms are built in the glacial lake bed and it's very flat. A one-foot rise of the Red River and it floods for 20 miles. It's good farmland and the farms, in essence, are little businesses with silos and equipment. We found that, cost-benefit wise, we could ring-dike the real property, the farmsteads, and the federal government would get an agreement from the farmer that he would not ring-dike the agricultural land. We would be using it for temporary storage.



Because of all that water in the Red River Valley and no place to go, we need to get storage, so that's the trade-off. Build ring levees around these farmsteads and get temporary storage. The floods in the Red River are snowpack floods. They happen early in the year. We can have that temporary storage, and then it drains off and you can plant your crops in time to get a full crop. So we've used that ring-levee concept and I think it's worthwhile.

Q: Do you deal with the Canadian Government a lot? The Red River problem?

A: Yes, but I'll get to that in the next question. Let me finish up on the Red River.

Q: Yes.

A: So we've made those efforts. We're going to take this recon report, brief all of the congressmen from the states, and try to come up with a strategy of what to do in the Red River Valley in the next 20 years. With that document and strategy and the GREAT document and strategy, I think the St. Paul District can plan from where we're going. So as a corporate body, we have a direction.

So much for management and let's move on to the IJC (International Joint Commission).

Q: Carrying this one a little further, one of the problems you mentioned last summer was that the District was too often reactive -- to the press, to politicians, to environmentalists -- it didn't have any real direction, didn't know where it was going.

A: Well, I think maybe it's a little hard because Colonel Gay had. . . .

Q: Maybe I misquoted you a little too.

A: Oh no, you're right. But I think Colonel Gay, the former District Engineer, had a real good management philosophy, he had the direction. I think the organization was such that when I came in as a new person, I did not know where I was going, and in that learning year had to learn those things that Colonel Gay learned to be able to get this direction.

I want to get some documentation so that when a person comes in to replace me, there is a corporate body plan. The district will know where it's going. A new DE can come in . . . .

Q: And know where he's going?

A: And take over. He can go with the District or he can change direction as he becomes more attuned to what's going on. I guess when I first came in, I wasn't attuned and I felt that we were in this transition. I think the transition was typified by this realignment study. So we had to do a regrouping. I don't want to

leave the idea that I took over an organization that was floundering around. That's not true. I took over a good District from a good District Engineer and I tried to make it better.

Q: Do you have dealings with the Canadian Government over the Red River?

A: Well, let's get to that. I think that the St. Paul District job is exciting because I'm on three different boards with Canada -- I'm on the Souris-Red River Board, the Lake of the Woods Board, and the Rainy River Board. We meet every six months. In October we meet in Canada and usually in April we meet in Washington. On the Red River Board there is a representative of the United States Geological Survey, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Corps. There are three members from the Canadian side and we deal with problems in water resources that affect Canada and the United States.

They're very concerned in Canada about what we do on the Red River because the Red River flows north. They don't want us to channelize it and dump our flood problems into Canada. They want us to handle our flood problems and they're very concerned about our actions in the Red River because it has international impact. So our dealings with the IJC with Canada are very extensive.

Q: Do you deal with any particular Canadian agency or just as a member of these boards?

A: Well, the members of the boards I'm on from Canada belong to water resource-type agencies in Canada. One is regional and one is national, so it's the same.

They don't deal with the Corps, they deal with me but I represent the Corps and I represent the United States. So there's kind of a dual-hatting there.

I deal with an agency in Manitoba which is similar to the Corps of Engineers and they deal with me. But we do it through the board. And the board that I'm on, the Souris-Red River Board, is a board under the International Joint Commission. The International Joint Commission overlooks the entire border from New York to Portland.

Q: Burlington Dam. Has that been the focus of controversy with the Canadians? That's on the Souris River, isn't it?

A: Yes. We had a task force that looked at the impact on Canada. The impact and dollar values came out like \$360,000, so it's very insignificant. But it's significant in doing the report well and we're going to brief the commission in October so that the people understand the impact. We're looking at the impact of floods on water quality, carp migration, and the environment. We will set up the system so that Canada will be reimbursed even for the small amount which will never go over the \$300,000 range. But I think

it's healthy that we make this effort, even though it's a token effort, so it clearly demonstrates that the Burlington Dam has really a minor impact on Canada.

Q: Yes, that's important. How would you characterize your relationship with the press here in St. Paul?

A: Well, when I came into the District I was very skeptical. I had seen cases where District Engineers had been used by the press. I was very fortunate that my boss said, "Bill, tell it like it is." So I have the freedom of being up front, as honest, I guess, as I would ever want to be. It helps you sleep better at night.

The main thing is that if you're candid and up-front with the press, they sense this. I feel our relationship has been excellent from the point of view that we haven't been misquoted or abused by the press or television. We've had a policy in the District of our people being encouraged to talk about their area of expertise with the press. I think it's important that we qualify that a little bit. We want our engineers to talk about engineering, legal to talk about legal.

I feel that our coverage from the press has been very good. General Morris has said when the facts are not straight, write them a letter and straighten them out. I haven't had to do that.

The other day I wrote a letter complimenting the Minneapolis Tribune because a story on a very difficult project, on a Control Data permit and a Department of the Interior moratorium, was handled very factually. This factual handling of it really defused the issue. The newspapers help me tell the people our story.

So I wrote the editor and said, "It really makes my job easier when you do a complete reporting job like this."

I'm pleased to say the editor printed the letter.

Q: Yes. What about with politicians, with the congressional delegates?

A: You know, you always get the image that everything is done in the back room, cigarette smoke and cigar smoke behind the scenes. In my dealings I have not seen that with the 22 congressional people I have in my area. They have been well chosen by the people. They are concerned citizens, concerned with their states, and have been very helpful. They seek out information and we in the Corps give it to them in a timely manner. We do that quite well. So I think that we serve a real purpose in providing good information to the congressmen and senators. I was pleased that they received me in a friendly mode.

They don't seem to second guess you when they ask for your determinations. I have not had a single case where a Member of Congress tried to put pressure on me to get the Corps moving in a certain way.

We have a very good relationship but I have the feeling that they are seeking changes in the system. I feel that they are very, very open to make changes and that they are not happy. Senator Durenberger is looking for new ways to handle the money and priorities in water resources projects so it's not all roses for me. I don't feel they all agree with what we're doing. But I think that they're very cordial. Senator Durenberger kind of disagrees with where we're going, but we are working well together.

Q: Yes, but you're honest with each other?

A: Oh, I think so. We give a lot of information. This is helpful because one time I was in Rochester talking about my flood control project and an unhappy person who was being displaced because of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) reservoir attacked the Corps instead of SCS.

I felt a little chagrined because it's hard to come to your own defense. Congressman Erdahl stood up and said, "Hey, you're wrong. The Corps did not do that. The Corps is a good organization." He set them straight. It really set a nice tone for me because the congressman stood up and defended the Corps and our action. Even when you're right, it's very difficult to counter accusations. But someone else, a third party, can very easily do this. I felt very, very good about that type of action.

Q: The pamphlets -- "Water Resources in Minnesota" and "Water Resources in Wisconsin" -- list reduction of flood damage among the major needs of all river basins in the District. Is flood control the main focus of the District's program?

A: Interesting question. I never thought of it in those terms. I would say flood control on the Red River is our greatest concern. Probably our greatest concern on the Mississippi is navigation, and maybe environmental aspects because when we deal with the navigation problem we are more sensitive to the environmental issues right now. So I would say that I have to divide that out.

Navigation on the Mississippi: I have the 13 locks and dams and 240 miles. This is so important because we are in a period of difficult economics. The nine-foot channel is an economic lifeline to the Upper Midwest.

It is very important, in terms of mobilization effort, if our nation had to mobilize. The importance of the nine-foot channel is in feeding the nation during mobilization -- this is really the focus of how important the navigation is.

So I would say it is two answers: the lower part, navigation on the Mississippi, and the upper part, Red River and Minnesota River flood control.



Q: How can you reconcile the need to maintain that channel and the pressure from environmentalists?

A: Well, before they built the nine-foot channel, they had a river that was lazy and moved around. I would say once we built the dams and the slack-water pools, we had more wetlands, more fisheries, and more environmentally sound areas than we did before.

I'm not so sure that, by building the dams for the nine-foot channel, we weren't the environmentalists' friends even though we might not have been thought of as friends. Probably the greatest concern the environmentalists have today is the silting in of backwaters, where some of these nice wet areas that are now slack-water pools will be lost in the future. I think the environmentalists' greatest concern is in the future and where we will go from there.

The environmentalists probably want us to develop more recreation. We own a great deal of land in these slack-water pools, and we have signed over a large amount of it for fish and wildlife refuges. I feel that we do quite well environmentally in the slack-water pools and I think probably our public image in this area has not been recognized. We're sensitive now to where we put our dredged material. We are spending a great deal of money to put the dredged material where it is less damaging to the environment.

I think the nine-foot channel and the environment can live well together on the river, and any plan you have has to be balanced socially, economically, and environmentally. The impact of the nine-foot channel on the economics is great, great, great. The GREAT study will show that. I think that the plan we will get out of this GREAT study will be a balanced plan that will be better received.

Q: Yes. Do you still think this is the greatest job in the world?

A: Well, I enjoy being the District Engineer because it's a challenging job and one that can hopefully help people. We do the water resource planning, stop floods, have the nine-foot channel operating. We are serving people so this is a service job.

It's a job where I meet a lot of people. I enjoy that aspect of it. I enjoy being the boss. I think that there are too many jobs around that have undue pressures and all these pressures are self-induced or induced by the boss. And I think we have set up a climate here for getting the job done, being efficient. That's where the job is rewarding and satisfying to me. I don't think that I'll ever get a job again that is as enjoyable as being the District Engineer.

It has changed over time. When I first got in the job, the challenge was more work and fewer spaces, but the money was not a problem. Twelve months later the money was a problem and the

spaces were not a problem because I wasn't getting enough money to pay for the people I had. Then the real challenge was to pare down what we were doing so that we didn't overspend.

So within a year, the management emphasis reversed itself 180 degrees. You can't get complacent in the job because the challenges are there. But they are challenges that every engineer manager would enjoy because they are the kinds of things that we were trained for. It is a rewarding job.

Q: What do you think about Ray Merritt's history of the District?

A: Well, the District history by this gentleman was a contract effort over a three-year span. The scope of work given to the man on this contract must have been well-written because the history was well-written. It's not one glorifying the Corps or reciting the names of everybody who served in the District. It's not something we tried to do to build the image. I think it was written with the idea of telling the story.

From my reading of it, I get the idea that the gentleman did very well telling the story and looking at it across the board, not dwelling on any one area too long. I think there was a good balance. I gave a copy of it to Governor Dreyfus of Wisconsin, the former chancellor of the University of Wisconsin. He is a local history buff and it just tickled his fancy. He read every bit of that history that dealt with Wisconsin.

I think Merritt did a very good job of showing what the Corps does without harping on the Corps and yet treating the history well. I feel pleased with it and I'm going to recommend that each District Engineer write a supplement chapter at the end of his three-year tour and put in perspectives hopefully in the same professional way as Ray Merritt did in his writing so that each three years will have an update. Maybe after another 10 or 20 District Engineers, someone will go to volume two.

Q: You're going to give us an update at the end of your tour?

A: Oh yes, I'm saving all my letters to the General and interviews with the press and yourself -- I'm going to take all those at the end of my tour and sit down and do something that -- I'll break my own rule and write it myself.

I've always felt that a District Engineer who picks up a pencil other than for his signature was taking his time away from guiding the ship of the state. So I'm going to break my rule and write this myself, because I feel this hopefully will be something that the new DE can use to bridge the gap.

Q: Is this volume by Merritt useful to you?

A: I'm sure that anytime we tell a story well, it is useful to the organization in the sense that it improves the professional image of the organization.

I read it as a new DE and it gave me an understanding of where the District came from and a feel for history. Hopefully, when we understand history, we don't make the same mistakes. So I would say yes, in the personal sense, it prepared me for the job. For an organization, it's helpful to tell the story in a professional way, but, if there are other benefits, I haven't run across them yet. I'm still looking for ways to use the history. The other day I did use part of it in a speech; it was good background for that.

Third Interview

Q: Last summer when we talked you referred to your tour of duty here as consisting of three one-year phases, where you learned, formulated strategies and plans, and then institutionalized what you have established.

How would you evaluate your second year now?

A: Well, the second year was driven by a number of outside forces. The most significant was a new Division Engineer who had a different management style than the old Division Engineer. Both effective, both different. Driven also by the Reagan administration coming in and the Carter administration going out and the development of the concept of giving the government back to the people. Signals very quickly came down through the system. People were stating over and over again that government should get off the people's backs.

At the start of 1981 I established a number of objectives. They were to improve the District, improve mobilization training, and improve the way we do business. I eased back on the main thrust of the job of getting the projects through the planning cycle, approved and built, and this was probably unfortunate.

Now it is clear, having overcome many of the management problems, our people are now working almost full time in getting projects built. So my time spent on extraneous things has dwindled. My role as a planner and mover of projects is almost full time, characterized by our reorganizing to establish an independent Planning Division. The institutionalizing of this division and having it in place with the bugs worked out when I leave in June is first priority. So, I suppose, the second year had many changes in it for the system and for me.

Q: You mentioned the change in administration in Washington. There was also a change in the Chief of Engineers in the past year. Would that have a significant impact?

A: Well, I think so, but not because General Bratton doesn't think like General Morris or doesn't have the same goals and objectives. I think most Chiefs of Engineers reflect the national policy and it was very natural that, when General Bratton came in, he began to reflect the policies of the Reagan administration.

It was probably because of the change of Chief of Engineers that we saw the impact of the Reagan administration quicker; while we were looking for General Bratton's policies, what we saw coming were the administration's policies. The timing of the changing of the Chief and the administration was such that both events seemed to reinforce each other.

Q: Where does the change in the administration hit you the hardest?

A: People started saying that the government should get off your back. Let's make a decision. Let's move things. This chorus supported the quote that I love so well, that delay is the most devious form of denial. The thrust of the Reagan administration is to make things happen. Stop delaying. Make decisions on the information you have and move on. That was very evident when I took my Marshall project before the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors.

Q: What's the Marshall project?

A: It is a Marshall, Minnesota, flood control project. I had to go up to the Board of Rivers and Harbors with it. The members of the board reflected the sense that they would not go back to get more data or to restudy, but announced, "Let's look at what you've got, let's make a decision and be decisive, and move on." So most of those generals on the Board were reflecting General Bratton's attitude of "Let's move."

Q: So getting government off people's backs comes to moving projects faster rather than stopping them?

A: That's right. And it comes to "Hey, let's make decisions." We also translate it into "Let's be more concerned about the dollar. Let's move things now because we are continually having personnel cuts."



So we get, I think, a sense of urgency of "Let's get something done," more so than with the Carter four years, where it was "Let's have more study." Or, "Let's answer more environmental concerns." And we got bogged down with the bureaucracy. I think in the Reagan realm of things there is less bogging down with the technocrats and bureaucrats.

Q: What about regulatory functions?

A: I think the new administration will take a hard look at the rollback and reducing the Corps' 404 and section 10 permitting. But we in the St. Paul District are in a very environmentally sensitive region. We have the potholes, the wetlands, and the 10,000 lakes and the people that we serve are locked in step to preserve these wetlands. So they favor Corps involvement in the regulatory program. But there are other parts of the country where I think there should be a rollback and the Corps should get out. The administration reflects this rollback philosophy -- less regulatory, less involvement.

The difficulty is that while we are regulating, with federal regulations that are uniform countrywide, the regions are so drastically different. So I feel that Minnesota and Wisconsin don't like being under the big umbrella. They would like federal regulation to be more sensitive to the regions and more reflective of what they want.

I think that the 404 program now in effect is working well. Every one understands it. I guess my approach for this region would be to fine-tune it and retain it, not roll it back.

Q: Do you have local demand to maintain the regulatory program?

A: Well, we have local demands and supports. We had one of the two Corps of Engineers public hearings on the new 404 permitting regulation carried in the Federal Register. General Smith held the meeting here and Wisconsin and Minnesota came out loud and clear that they don't want to rollback the program or take the discretionary authority away from the District Engineer and move it to Washington. They more or less like the manner and the way things have been handled in the old regulation, and the trend of going to more nationwide permitting is pretty suspect. They have great concern about this proposed change.

But I think the administration will look at the new proposed change of 404 and see that the lessening of the regulatory functions through more nationwide permits will be a way of getting the government off of people's backs.

Q: Are you establishing a Planning Division this year?

A: The groundwork is being laid. The thrust of Generals Heiberg and Smith is concern that planning is not getting the visibility it should and the planning system is not working the way it should.

Much of what needs to be changed in the planning procedure is not in my province to affect. One thing that I can do is set up a Planning Division. For some time I fought against going to a full Planning Division. The reason I was against it was that I found it takes less expended energy on our part not to be the front runner until higher headquarters are ready for such change.

Citing an example -- everyone was advised, "Go to the Planning Division." The New York District ran through the exercise and put their paperwork in, and then the RMO (Resource Management Office) disapproved it and said, "Go back and do more justification." I felt that if I waited, the groundswell would be such that when I put in my paperwork, I could do it with less wasted time and energy.

General Smith said he though the DE should be the planner and should be more involved in planning. So I came back and met with all my supervisors and project managers. We talked about the Planning Division concept. One of the key factors that helped make my decision was the attitude of support from supervisors and the functional managers who obviously felt that getting ready to go to construction and turning dirt should have higher priority than planning projects.

But the whole thrust of having a Planning Division would be to give more visibility to planning. I began to realize that all my study managers and planners were a little more frustrated with the system

while my project managers who handle design and engineering were not. Obviously our District was giving more support to engineering than to planning.

To give planning equal footing, I decided that the only thing I could do was to move to a full Planning Division. Now we have the Deputy District Engineer working with the corporate body to come up with a proposed organization. But I started to make the informal changes immediately. I have built a new office next door to my office for the Planning Chief. The Chief of Engineering Division is in an office on the other side of me. So physically and psychologically we are creating a balance between engineering and planning. Also, as a consequence, I'm more involved in the planning process.

Q: You talked about planning problems last year. You talked about that as a basis for moving branch chiefs around. The guy who sits in planning for eight years, I think you said, doesn't see anything come out and gets frustrated.

A: Well, as we're coming up with the organization of a new Planning Division and a new Engineering Division, we are identifying spaces at the GS-12 or 13 level that will allow interchange of planners and engineers between the Engineering Division and the Planning Division. The reason for this, as we develop the organization, is to build in an executive development program. My greatest fear is that, by splitting planning out of engineering, we polarize the

activities and have a greater split and less support. Planning needs engineering to complete their studies. By cross training and having the executive development program, I hope that we will reduce the chances of polarization. This program will give a broader base for the young executives when their turns come to get promoted. Hopefully, they won't have tunnel vision. They will have served in more than one position.

Q: Last year you emphasized as important two particular programs or project areas: the Red River basin and the GREAT I study. Where do these stand now?

A: As you know, GREAT is the "Great Environmental Action Team," established to study the upper Mississippi River. The study team was a joint team composed of federal agencies and the respective states. The GREAT I study has been completed and published. The District Engineer implementation report has been finished and published. The Division Engineer notice that endorses both GREAT I (St. Paul) and GREAT II (Rock Island) has been completed. So we have sent the GREAT studies, the implementation studies, and the Division Engineer notice to Washington.

The studies basically promote a balanced use of the river -- navigation, fish and wildlife refuge, and recreation.

We have determined that we will recommend funding in 1983 for the GREAT I implementation up to the \$3 million level, which will fund up to the basic program. The basic program is probably the two-thirds point of what the total recommended GREAT I wanted.

The last one-third is the big dollar value items. It is going to take many years to get there. So I would see a yearly budget of around \$3 million for a number of years to help us implement GREAT.

Obviously, there is some opposition. There are some folks from the navigation interests who will lobby in Congress to keep us from spending the extra money because they feel that all the funds the Corps is getting through collection, through the fee-added tax, should be spent on navigation and not on the environment. And they look at the additional \$3 million in the GREAT study as largely being spent on environmental enhancements.

Q: Environmentalists aren't happy with it either, are they?

A: Well, no one is because, I think, it's a balanced plan. Obviously, we tried to swim in the middle of the river. We tried to do those things that we thought were environmentally sensitive as a trade-off. The whole report was put together by a committee and different special interest groups. So obviously it is a compromise report. And everybody who had to compromise is concerned. The Coast Guard is concerned about reduced depth of dredging. The navigation

industry is concerned about increased barge traffic. But I think it is a balanced plan and a significant improvement over what we had ten years ago.

Q: Is the Red River basin still a primary area of concern to you?

A: Yes, it is. I have the General scheduled to come up here in early September. We're going to have the conference report on the Red River basin completed. The task force report -- which was worked out with the states of North Dakota and Minnesota -- will soon be finished.

We're going to brief General Smith on our new initiative or innovative ideas on how to solve the problems in the Red River Valley. Basically, we are looking at it as a basin-wide approach. We are looking at all the missions that all the state and federal agencies can perform to make it a better flood-proof plan. We're looking at new initiatives. Some of them are not traditional. And I'm sure that I'm either going to have to sell them or the Corps hierarchy may not buy.

Q: Which ones are these?

A: Well, the most significant is the concept of a technical resource center. We, over the years, provided the states and the watershed districts with technical information and analysis of hydraulics or computer runs of river profiles.

Currently, we are running four different kinds of computer models on the Red River, and the data and information are distributed. We have been paying for that service piecemeal out of General Investigation (GI) funding. There is a trend to change the thrust of the GI funding to identify what we are really doing and call it what it really is. So we came up with the vision that the technical engineering resource center would be a small organization within the St. Paul District that would do the computer modeling and other hydraulic engineering in the valley, and provide that engineering data to the states, watershed districts, and other federal agencies.

The primary benefit to the Corps is to maintain the skills that made the Corps great -- the engineering skills. What the country gets is engineering data going down to the grass roots levels to help decision-makers at those levels make better water resource management decisions.

What's happening now is that those people are making their decisions with inadequate engineering data. Their chances of making a wrong decision in a piecemeal sense that affects the total basin approach are quite great.

What we want to do is help them get better engineering data so they can do their mission better. Now, their mission at the local engineering level is really not infringing on our larger federal mission, so I can't see it as a turf problem. In a sense, having



this resource center is an innovative approach, and the concept of having people and maintenance dollars provided each year to run it may be difficult to sell. Right now, anything new is looked at very closely because you don't have spaces or money to do it.

The technical resource center is a vision that I have for the future. I can see the Corps maintaining engineering groups throughout the country with great engineering expertise in their basins. This would maintain the grass roots level of the Corps' expertise as we continue to lose engineering skills as projects are designed and built. If we don't have some place for these people to work to maintain that center of expertise, when the new missions of the future come along, we won't have the skills to do them.

Q: Ring levees aren't considered that innovative any more? That's pretty accepted?

A: Well, we had a prototype 205 project in a county in North Dakota. We did a recon report and sent it out trying to get the ring levees around the farms done under nonstructural alternatives. It was accepted here. It was accepted by local people, but I have a feeling that I'm going to have trouble with selling this concept or trying to fund through the small project program. There again it is a new approach and we know the age-old fright about trying to get people in the system to look at something new. If it's new, it should be justified; I support that concept. We don't want to go off half-cocked and do something that doesn't make much sense.

Q: Sure. It is being considered in Washington now?

A: No, the Red River basically is going to be pushed in two directions. One is flood protection, because it has a history of flooding. The other is drought contingency. One of our findings on a basin-wide approach is that we're in a cycle where we have plenty of water. But if we go back to conditions like in the thirties, when we had very little water, then water conservation contingency is a very big deal. We're asking for quite a bit of money in FY 83 to start drought and water conservation contingency planning. So I would see the Red River going in two directions. We've got to continue to provide flood protection, and we've got to have this drought and water conservation contingency planning.

Q: Drought and flooding are just two sides of the same coin.

A: That's right, and now we're looking at only one side.

Q: In the year coming up you mention a Planning Division that is being considered and developed now. What other plans do you have for institutionalizing the programs that you've developed?

A: Well, when we started out the first year, I didn't like my computer shop. Now we have the new Harris computer. We've been hiring college students, co-ops, and masters degree level students from St. Olaf College who studied on the Harris 500 and they are adapting all our software. By the time I leave here, we're going to have the

computer operation squared away. We recently let a contract to buy the automatic word processors. This equipment will be compatible with the Harris, so we'll have a lot of flexibility in automatic word processing.

We've improved office spaces. We've had a number of walking tours and inspections. We're now giving our people a more comfortable place to work.

We have been concerned about the management of the District. So we started what I call the "decentralization and delegation system" and the use of the corporate body concept. This includes training the project managers, alternating the different types of staff meeting, and briefing me on different projects on a monthly basis. We incorporated a strategy session every two months with the Chief of Engineering, the Chief of Planning, and the Chief of Program Development where we lay out the strategy of the District.

We have worked on and are developing our ten-year plan. We wanted a 20-year plan and weren't able to do it. So we cranked back and now we call it a five-to-ten-year plan. And we are looking at that so we can get our strategy set in the out years. The only real planning the District does is the planning required to get the budget together. We talk about the '82 budget, which is the one coming right around the corner, but we plan for what is in the FY 83 budget. If it weren't for those budget exercises, some Districts wouldn't really do any long-term planning.

I've written a management by objectives regulation for the District, I have taken all the things we've been doing management wise and put them in that regulation. I felt very pleased with the recent visit of the Inspector General (IG). We told him what our management philosophy was and he went down and talked to all the people and said, "Hey, it's working." This was one of the few Districts he's seen where every 15 minutes they don't run to the head shed to ask for a decision.

We delegate it down so the people who should be making the decisions, at the project manager level and the branch and division chief level, are making them. I think to institutionalize you have to put it in regulations. You have to get it down in black and white and use it so that people are familiar with it. Then the next manager who comes in, hopefully, will fine-tune it and continue the established management technique.

Q: I hope you share it with me before I leave today.

A: Oh, would you like a copy? I'd be happy to give you one. I recently realized that we didn't have a mechanism for sharing good ideas from one District to the next. I wrote General Smith and recommended that the IG be given a new mission -- to be the mechanism for sharing good ideas. The way I envision this working is that the IG would come in with a 30-minute new idea briefing, or a "lesson learned" document he picked up in his visits to the

Districts. This would always be a changing list and the District Engineer would see the good ideas being developed, and the good things being done in other Districts.

Q: The constant exposure. What have been your greatest challenges and problems this year?

A: Well, we had a little problem. Some of the people from one of the dredges falsified travel vouchers, a travel fraud.

We caught this in the office and we started an investigation. We found that it was pretty extensive. We called the FBI and they completed an investigation of 12 people. Working with the U.S. attorney, they indicted the four worst cases and tried them. I took the hard position of having the people go to court in a criminal prosecution. However, the judicial system was very inconsistent. Of the four cases indicted, one pleaded guilty, one was found not guilty, one was found guilty, and one case was thrown out of court.

Q: Every possibility.

A: Like rolling dice. There was an article in a local paper about justice rolling dice which referred to this case.

Q: When did this take place? When were the trials?

A: The trials were conducted about two months ago. I think my PAO (Public Affair Officer) would probably have the article I was talking about. The U.S. attorney came to me and said, "Colonel Badger, I think there is such inconsistency in the federal court, I would like to give you the cases back so that you could take care of them administratively." Of course, I'm doing that. During the trial it came out through some of the witnesses and some other things that maybe the fraudulent practice was more wide-spread than just the dozen. So I formed another inspection team and we went back, and the number of suspected individuals may approach 30.

I'm not sure where it's going, but my approach has been that you obviously cannot tolerate this and we should take a firm stand. So we are suspending people and collecting all the money back for the government. We are making it part of the individual's official record. I feel that some of the penalties are quite heavy.

One worker who had vouchers running back for a number of years, maybe from the '75 time frame, falsified vouchers worth quite a sum of money, thousands and thousands of dollars. His probation officer came to me, and he ran through the list of things that had happened to him since he made those false travel claims. One, he hired a lawyer at \$11,000. Two, he was convicted. Three, he lost \$800 worth of work during the trial. He is being suspended three days for each bad voucher, so that's another suspension of 69 days or about \$7,000 worth. When you total up the payback, this man's indiscretion has cost him about \$33,000, plus the adverse publicity,

the mental duress and the stress of the FBI investigation, the stress of going to federal court, and the publicity in the newspapers afterward. So we felt we took very strong action toward these people. I feel there will be a signal sent throughout the Corps that you can't get away with travel voucher fraud.

So I spent quite a bit of time that I didn't want to spend on this personnel problem, but being Commander, the District Engineer, I had no choice.

Q: During this period, what happened to your ability to manage your program?

A: Well, we decentralized and we delegated. We have a corporate body of 30 to 35 good people running this District. So if I am out of the net by being up at the International Joint Commission meetings, or if I'm out at a project, or if I'm handling a travel voucher fraud case, the District still runs, because it is a corporate entity. It is not dependent on any one person. That's the beauty of decentralizing and delegating. The other benefit is that you train the young managers and then when it's their turn, they will do a better job. I think that the decentralizing I've done here, the delegation, and all the training of the executives is going to pay great dividends for the next three District Engineers. But it has also paid dividends to me because I didn't have to be here with my hand on the throttle every day.

Q: You can turn your back.

A: You can turn your back and be assured that things run well.

Q: What other significant challenges have you had in this past year?

A: I think that probably the realization that you have to change your method of operation to get projects through the system.

We here always worked through the system. If something is wrong, you work with your higher headquarters, and you try to move projects through the Corps system. I guess maybe in the last few months I have come to realize that my three years are running out and that I'm not moving projects. The projects are not getting through the system.

I guess I realize that I have to stir the pot more, that I have to go to the congressmen and senators, build fires under our people, and that we have to work projects through the Corps system and through the political system. I have come to the conclusion for my last year I can't just wait until all the minutia is done before sending a project forward, and the technocrats or the termites, the minutia people at that level, ask a lot of questions and send it back. I can't live with a system that runs back and forth between termites. What I have to do is wrap up my projects, kick them up to the higher headquarters, and encourage General Smith to support me and pass them up to higher headquarters.



What you do is find yourself going outside the system, getting the language written into law so that the Corps system is short-circuited. That bothered me because philosophically you want to support the system, you want to support your boss, and you want to work through the chain of command. On the other hand, if I'm going to move some projects out, then I've got to go both ways.

Q: How does the OCE react to this?

A: I think the key managers, the General Smiths and the General Heibergs, understand the system and they probably say "Fine, he's getting the work done." And they will probably be tolerant. At least I hope so. The technocrats will never own up that they are technocrats and they are the termites trying to sink your wooden ship.

Q: Of course, General Heiberg came up through the same system you came through, right?

A: That's right, but it took me a while to get to the point where I was saying, "Hey, I can't be a good soldier alone and get it done. I've got to be a good soldier and I'm going to be a good manager, but I've got to work on it in more than one direction." So far I'm doing this. My projects are getting attention. Things are happening and I haven't been called down. But it makes me feel uneasy, because it is not what you'd think the standard DE role would be. I have the fear, Mickey, that I'm going to finish my tour

and that I've not done everything I was supposed to do in getting my projects built. So I guess at the end I'm beginning to reach the point where, damn it, I've got to push something through. I've got to get this done. I've got to clean that up. So this year, I'm going to push and pull and yell and scream and see what happens.

Q: I want to remind you that two years ago you told me you saw the District as tending toward being in the reactive role -- reacting to NCD (North Central Division), reacting to OCE, reacting to the congressional delegation, and so on. You're taking the District out of that kind of role though with this kind of activity, aren't you?

A: Well, when you go political, or you start stirring the pot, then people are put under pressure. So we find ourselves still reacting to get information out. But I think that as a management style, we in the District now are planning out one year, we're looking to the future in our strategy sessions. We know where we have to work and where we have to put our manpower. So we're getting ahead of the problems by creating outside influences, by working both sides of the street. We get short-fused inquiries now because people need this data or that data to help handle the pressures. I guess we are doing better on anticipating problems, we're doing better on managing and not being in the reactive mode in management. But when you stir the pot, something will bubble up and you have to be in a reactive mode to handle that bubble.

Q: I guess District Engineers do need close relations with congressional delegations. Are you suggesting that a District Engineer ought to go out and actively seek help from the congressional delegation by saying, "This is what we are doing, this is what I need"?

A: Oh, absolutely. Most District Engineers do this. Most of them are visiting their congressmen and senators on a yearly basis. But there is a tendency as a new District Engineer not to speak out. So the tendency the first year when you visit your congressmen is to smile and listen and not stir the pot because you have enough to keep you busy.

Q: Right.

A: And the second year, you stir half the pot because you are busy within your own organization. But your third year you say, "My gosh, I'm leaving," so you are more actively stirring the pot.

One reason is because you are more knowledgeable. Another is because you want to get things done before you leave. So a third-year District Engineer is much more effective than the first-year District Engineer in getting things done.

That is why I recommended to General Heiberg the big brother system, because each incoming District Engineer needs to get a feel for how things are done. I felt that since we don't have a school for

District Engineers, one approach would be the big brother approach. An incoming District Engineer would visit a third-year District Engineer and spend three or four days with him and they would share ideas, techniques, and comments.

The big brother program was cut by the Deputy Chief because of travel funds. I believe the program would have worked well and I'm a little disappointed that it didn't catch on.

Q: What are the major challenges you foresee in the next year here?

A: Well, I think we're going to have problems getting monies. I think we're going to have problems with continuing manpower cuts. And the challenges there will be to fence off the heart and soul of the District so that you're not cutting out the skills that will significantly reduce our capability to do good water resource projects for the people.

I think we are going to see caps or upper limits put on budgets. If you have a budget of \$100 million, obviously people are not going to look favorably at an increase to \$120 million. It will require some long-range planning to figure out which monies to ask for in a priority sense to do the most good and be under the limit. I think with the Reagan administration you are going to see many caps. You're going to have to plan your program so you can work on those projects that have the most economic benefits for the people. I

think the long-range plan is going to be very essential, because you're going to have to work to get the best projects done within those limitations.

Q: How did the rotation of branch chiefs in the Construction-Operation Division work?

A: I have a story that typifies the advantage to a District of rotating branch chiefs. We moved all four branch chiefs in the Construction-Operations Division, construction supervisor to regulatory, regulatory to construction, project operations to maintenance dredging, maintenance dredging to project operations. Two months later we were getting ready to brief General Smith, the new Division Engineer. Each of the branch chiefs had about a 20-minute briefing on their branch. The briefings were rescheduled to a nighttime setting and one of the branch chiefs had a sick wife and went home. And so, in the eleventh hour, the former branch chief briefed his current branch and then an hour later briefed his old branch, and did an outstanding job on both. Isn't it wonderful to have people there who understand both branch functions? Currently, one branch chief has had experience in three of the four branches. So when he is acting Division Chief he is much more able. Each of the branch chiefs had misgivings about the changes. I have talked to all of them since and they are now all enthusiastic and convinced that we did the right thing.

I think the real advantage for the Corps of Engineers is that we have broadened the base for each of the managers and have improved the quality of the executive. We've made each of those supervisors better qualified to compete for the next higher position when it comes along. I have the feeling it will be looked on very positively by the other divisions and other branch chiefs and it will make it easier for me to do an executive development throughout the District. Since then the Division Engineer has put out an executive development regulation which is very supportive of our program.

Q: Have you carried it over to the other divisions?

A: Yes, we've moved two section chiefs in the Engineering Division. We have moved all the section chiefs in the Comptroller's shop. We're going to build in the executive development program when we go to a Planning Division and Engineering Division concept. By the time I leave here most everyone will have a chance to work in a new job, with a positive long-term impact on the organization.

Q: What other efforts have you made this year to increase that sense of corporate responsibility and cohesion that you talked about last year?

A: Well, a lot of ideas, jobs, or actions come up that have to be tried. We have to have the corporate body enter the discussion so that it can develop good ideas and good concepts.

When we had General Smith or other VIP visits, we've let all our project managers brief. On the next visit, we let all our branch chiefs brief. On the last visit, we had our section chiefs brief. So we've made sure that everyone in the corporate entity is getting visibility and is participating.

We've insured that project managers brief the District Engineer monthly. The section chiefs and the branch chiefs answer in a feedback role to the successes and failures. I think that by sharing the work and sharing the success with the corporate body we have started making these people feel that they are part of the corporate body.

Q: General Smith's reaction was pretty good, too.

A: Yes, he has let me use the corporate body approach, delegation and decentralization. The key disadvantage to this approach is that the decision-maker, the District Engineer, has to have feedback to know what's going on. If you delegate and let somebody else do all the work and make decisions, then it is very easy, if they don't communicate with you, to have a serious breakdown in communications. My managers have been very good about feeding me information and I've made a strong effort by notes, letters, and phone calls to keep General Smith informed.

He's been very good about not getting on my turf and he has let me do my thing. His only concern is, "Don't surprise me." I think that because we keep him informed, he feels comfortable with what we're doing. He has endorsed it and supported it.

The Engineer Inspector General who has inspected us, who liked our management style and the high morale of the people, lived next door to General Smith and maybe reinforcement from the Engineer Inspector General convinced the General that the St. Paul District is running well and the system is working.

Q: I don't know if you mind getting back to this, but you talk about your morale and your corporate body, and this travel fraud thing must have been a real shock to you.

A: Well, no, because I guess human nature being what it is, we are not all perfect and we all make mistakes. It was kind of isolated among the crew on one dredge. That dredge throughout the summer would move up and down the river, and those people are traveling quite a bit. The fraud started happening in the '75-'76 time frame. I picked up on it in 1979. Now the morale on the dredge obviously is very low because all of the crew want to see the black cloud moved and just get back to normal.

This is an isolated area of low morale. I think when the majority of people see that they have submitted correct travel vouchers all



these years and when someone does wrong they are punished, this doesn't tend to lower morale of the people who do what is right. In fact, it may increase their morale.

Q: How has your relationship with the press been?

A: I started out with the Badger philosophy of openness and everything done in a fishbowl. And we have a little different PAO concept here. My Public Affairs Officer doesn't necessarily do all the coordination with the press. He runs the office and does the PAO planning. But our project managers and our project engineers have the authority to speak to the press or TV and make statements. The only thing I ask of them is to tell the truth, tell it like it is, and give your name. Own up to the fact that you are the person talking. I don't like these statements, "Some Corps official said." And so, by delegating that authority down and allowing them to talk openly to the press, they come across as being open and not trying to cover up. So we don't have a lot of digging and scratching and reporters coming to me with embarrassing questions. I've used that open approach and we haven't been burnt yet in two years. Knock on wood.

Q: Last year was pretty good then?

A: It was very good. We have continued with this open window policy, allowing everyone in the District to speak to the press. I'm convinced that is the way to go.

Because if you gag your people and they don't come across, the reporter has to talk to the Colonel to get the word. Then it comes across as a cover-up because I'm not as prepared as the project manager would be, and the good or straight information is delayed in getting to the press. So I would feel that this aspect of our public affairs is good.

Now, obviously, you get the opinions of people in the press who don't agree with what you're doing. Obviously, the press writes up the proponent's and the opponent's points of view. But at least the articles are coming out and are factual. And at least the opponent's point of view doesn't, in most cases, misquote us.

Q: As far as how you are getting along with your congressional delegation, I think you were telling me last year that you had disagreements with quite a lot of them, but your relations were cordial and open. Has that held?

A: I'm not sure how many we've had disagreements with. I think that the congressional people could be put in different categories. Some are very active in water resources. Others are not. Their specialty may be social programs, social security, financing, and so

forth and they are not active in my programs. So how active a congressman or senator is will be predicated on whether there is a critical project in his area. If he is subjected to a groundswell of local pressure, then he is going to be interested.

Whether the project is developed to a decision point is also important. Or is that project at a point where he can enter the net and do something constructive with it? So we briefed those local congressmen who have an active interest, who have local support for a project, who are trying to do something. We have a couple of congressmen whom we hear from only on a regulatory matter when they are contacted by a constituent. So I won't say there are disagreements. I guess there are different levels at which the congressman wants to be engaged in the Corps' programs. I don't think we have anybody in our congressional delegation who is anti-Corps.

Q: Is it Senator Durenberger from Minnesota who wanted more state involvement?

A: Senator Durenberger has been very active and I worked with him quite a bit. He wants to be very supportive. I think he was quite a supporter of the Moynihan-Domenici bill, which supported federal grants to the states with a priority of water projects within the states, where funds would be transferred from the states to the Corps. I don't think that would help any. I think what helps is

trying to improve what we are doing project-to-project. But I think Senator Durenberger was concerned that the Corps' planning process was not moving fast enough and this was one means of making it move faster. This was a change. I feel that this is the wrong change. Or maybe we are not ready for that change.

Q: I'd like to question you about a few specific aspects of the District's program. For instance, Operation Foresight. Is the District still involved in Operation Foresight?

A: Operation Foresight was a snowpack emergency in the '68-'69 time frame. Snow pack in this part of the country was related directly to a flood situation if you had rapid thawing and melting. Operation Foresight set the groundwork for a lot of things that happened in Public Law 99 emergency funding. One was that you could spend emergency funds before the emergency. And Foresight was the mover of that policy decision. It was a good decision. We in this area went through Foresight, which was quite extensive in the potential flood areas. Today you can see evidence of Operation Foresight in almost every community in the Red River Valley. We have detailed plans and have identified people who will go out and be area engineers at various locations. So we carry out extensive emergency planning for our area, and this was probably a fallout from Foresight. Foresight itself we don't use.

Q: I see.

A: Now one thing I should say is we haven't had the major floods in my two years as District Engineer. The Corps performs superbly in a flooding situation. It is where we get the highest marks, the highest visibility. That's where we help the people the most -- during emergency floods.

Q: Two or three weeks ago you had substantial floods.

A: We had some high water in Rochester, but not really a flood. So I guess my last chance at fighting floods will be next year. In the fall I plan to have all my emergency plans reviewed. We'll have a planning exercise (CPX) to be sure that if in March, April, or May of next year we have floods, the St. Paul District does well. I think it is crucial that the Corps continues to do well in emergency situations.

Q: What is the status of Lock and Dam 1 now?

A: Lock and Dam 1, as you remember, Mickey, is the four-year, \$44 million rehab of a 50-year-old lock. We had a situation where we had to close the river in December, de-water the lock, work until 1 May, and reopen the lock so that we had river transportation during the summers. We put a condition on ourselves of doing work during the winter and not being allowed a slip in the schedule. We accomplished all the blasting, put it back together, and opened the

lock on 26 April, about five days before the 1 May suspense that I gave Congress and the Port of Minneapolis authorities.

This year we went into the lock again. We kept finding changes and poor site conditions. We had to accelerate the contract, like we did the year before.

We had many modifications to contend with but still we opened the lock on 2 May, missing the target by one day. I feel that when the Corps promised the people, the river interests, and the port interests that we would have the river open, we had to live up to our promise. It is a good project and Lock and Dam 1 is in good operational shape. We're getting ready to let the stage 2 contract. By this time next year we ought to be in great shape with a completion date scheduled for around September 1982. It has been a good project and it's been a good training vehicle in contract management and administration for the engineers of this District. The capabilities of the people in this District are much greater now than they were three years ago when we bid this project.

Q: Last year you mentioned the utility of the nine-foot channel in the event of mobilization. What's the District's role in mobilization planning?

A: Mobilization planning has been getting a lot of visibility. We've had Mobex '78 and now Mobex '80. We tried to get out front in mobilization planning and we conducted the workshop on mobilization planning for NCD. I increased the manpower in that area from one to four. I put a lieutenant into the function, so we were getting green suit visibility.

Our mobilization plan has been completed and published. When we get the OCE-NCD plan, we'll adjust our plan to be sure that we are in sync. We have identified many things and lessons learned in Mobex '80.

Also, we have identified in-house a lot of things that we want to do to improve the operation of the nine-foot channel in case of mobilization. Basically, I felt that the security of the locks and dams could be improved. Maybe resiting of security fences. Maybe removing a tree here and there. Maybe some better lighting or some TV monitoring cameras. Then in the event of potential sabotage, we would have better security. Knowing that no system would be foolproof though, we have to analyze what would happen if a saboteur got into one of the locks and dams. Probably the weak link would be the miter gates, so we did an interchangeability study on miter gates. We knew the dimensions of all miter gates and we could change the gate at one location to another location. In our miter gate interchangeability study, we coordinated with the Division and

we are looking at interchangeability Division-wide. We are looking at some spare miter gates. We're looking at a barge loading and unloading facility up and down from each lock and dam, because if something happened to your locking capability and you had a barge loading and unloading site, that would give you two advantages.

You would have the capability to bring in your rock and construction material to do repairs, or you could do a portage operation.

We are trying to make improvements between Mobex '80 and '82, so that when Mobex '82 does come down we can say, "Hey, here are the things we've done, month by month, in the last two years. You can't wait until the mobilization exercises and try to do them during that 30-day exercise. You've got to be continually working on mobilization capability.

Q: Still the best job in the world?

A: Oh, no doubt the District Engineer position is the best job in the world. No place in the Army where you have the autonomy, where you have the freedom of running an organization, where you have the organization that has the capability to do the planning, to do the engineering, to do the building. We're self-contained at the District level. And to manage an organization with a \$60-million budget and 850 people doing important, vital work for the nation and helping the people in the region, protecting them from floods, this



is rewarding. It is obviously the best job I've had. Probably the only disadvantage of the job is that it is only three years long, and I don't think the Army will have another job that is so great to put me in after this one is finished.

Q: It's not really autonomous, is it?

A: Amazingly, if you read the laws, most of the decisions are the District Engineer's decisions. Obviously, no job is ever such that you don't have a boss. But I think that probably within the Army system, or the federal government system, the District Engineer more fully runs his organization than any other boss I've seen. Even with controversy, I don't know of a single incident in two years where someone came in with the role of the Monday morning quarterback and criticized a decision, a judgment, or an action. Most people in the Corps system support the District Engineer and most of them are there to help. I think the Corps is a very healthy organization. We don't have people running around in Washington or other places second-guessing the District Engineer or making him change his decision or firing him. So I would say it is a damn good job.

Q: Anything else I should ask you this morning?

A: I'm trying to think of the different subject areas we could run through. We've talked about the most important things: the

mission, people, money, the future, the past. I guess we could close by saying that the District continues to be healthy and well, and that it continues to become leaner with the personnel cuts, but performs better. But I guess I have a certain fear that there's no more fat in the system.

That if we keep cutting, we're cutting muscle now. I continue to be concerned that we in the Corps grow with the times and that we continue to adjust our mission to the needs of the people. I would hope that we would continue to be innovative and that we would look for our new mission that we can help people with and not wait until the problems are so large that we don't have time to adequately solve them.

But after two years I regret that I didn't have a long-range plan earlier, so that I could have started quicker on some things. Ultimately you begin to have fears that you are running out of time to accomplish what you want to accomplish. But you hope sincerely that your contribution will be lasting and important.

Fourth Interview

Q: Colonel Badger, last summer you identified the District's future as tied to the Red River Study and GREAT I. Now, how much control does the District have over its own future?

A: Well, when I first took over the job, I thought we had quite a bit, but as we developed both the GREAT I Implementation Study and the Red River Strategy Report, we faced the problem of having to get both of those reports through the system.

The GREAT study was endorsed by the Division and went before the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors and is pretty well intact. It lays out what we would like to do in the St. Paul District on the Mississippi River for the next 20 years. I think that the GREAT document represents half of the master plan to where we are going.

The Red River Strategy Report is a little different in that the Division hasn't bought off on it. It contains some innovative approaches and we are coordinating with the Division now. Obviously, Division is improving our approach in some ways, but we may be getting away from the original conception of the District,

local, and state people. I am hoping that what the local people see after we have done our modifications is not something that makes them unhappy because it appears to be diluted.

But I have been working during all of my three years on those reports and still they are moving slowly. Basically I wanted strategy reports covering both of my large river basins which would set further directions for the St. Paul District.

Q: What about the DE, of course, who comes and goes. The District stays. Given the length of your tour of duty, what kind of imprint do you leave on a District?

A: Well, in the military sense of assignments, three years is a long time. I thought that I could do those things that I wanted in three years.

But you have external influences, such as the reorganization where we lost the Lake Superior part of our area, and a major reorganization where we went to an independent Planning Division. Space and money cuts and other external requirements make heavy demands on your time. Just running the organization and handling the external forces subtracts from the efforts to leave the desired imprint.

I have accomplished most of my personal objectives with the exception of that computer area.

I felt that a fourth year would have been good. General Smith asked me to stay a fourth year. It went all the way to General Bratton in a District Engineer slating session, and the Chief of Engineers faced a decision that could have been precedent-setting: to have a four-year DE.

There are many prominent reasons why it would be good to have a four-year DE, and the obvious reason is for continuity. But the greatest disadvantage is that the management and leadership skills you develop as a DE are skills the Army needs in other key jobs. But the decision was made not to set the precedent on a four-year DE, so I will serve my three years and move on to a new job.

Q: You wanted to stay a fourth year?

A: I said yes when asked. The reason I said yes was that I wanted to do more work with the District. I wanted to get my projects farther through the system. I thought I could contribute more and, personally, I didn't think the Army had another job for me that had the pleasure, the scope, and the significance of being DE. I think I was wrong. The job I'm going to, Director of Engineering and Housing at the Military Academy, appears to be just as challenging.

Q: I remember when you started at St. Paul, you were talking about learning and then establishing -- doing things you wanted to do in the second year (I forget the words you used) and then institutionalizing what you had done in the third year. You were confident that you could go from one of those stages to the other. How has it been?

A: Well, I think the third year has been a time of institutionalizing. We completed the study on the Planning Division and we reorganized effective 4 April 1982. The concept of having a full Planning Division within a District that did not have one before has taken root and is accepted.

We are giving the planning function more visibility now than it's had before. We have streamlined the Engineering Division and I feel that we are working better under the project manager system than we did before.

The new organizations will be in place in April and by the time I leave in June we will have them debugged and working.

Q: You wrote to Colonel Art Williams last fall that long-range planning is one of the niceties the District won't get unless it is demanded by the DE.

But I'm wondering, you know, how much long-range planning you are able to do given all these things that do affect your own system, plus the political context in which we work . . . ?

A: Well, we still haven't done well with the 20-year plan. However, we are going to brief the Division Engineer in April, during the command inspection, on our long-range plan.

What we've done is put the projects that we know about in a time scale envelope and projected how much money would be required each year to develop those projects. Then we totaled the envelopes to see if we had an average budget in the out-years that would support the people. Under the resources analysis table, the RAT, you take the money coming in and you justify your spaces and manpower distribution.

Obviously, you have to have a level workload and obviously a long time to get projects through the system -- planned, engineered, and built -- you are talking in the 20-year time frame.

So we are trying to analyze the 20-year period and attempt to determine what truisms there are, what rules of thumb. It is obvious to me that if I don't reach the four-to-five million dollar level of General Investigation funding, then I cannot support the planning effort, and I will not have projects in the pipeline that will keep the District healthy in the future.

This may sound like survivalism, and in a way it is. I look at the District as a national asset, especially during a time of mobilization. If the District isn't healthy, then it is not going to be effective in a mobilization.

If we can keep the civil works program performing flood control for the people, and by doing that, we receive monies that keep us trained as an organization, then we will be a national asset that is ready if we have to mobilize and support our armed forces.

Q: When the administration changed in 1981, did the framework of your planning change? Or has it changed since? Have your options been changed or reduced or expanded?

A: Well, when you change from one administration to another, the new administration seems obliged to make a change, distinguish itself from the last administration. So regardless, there is always a change. Change always creates delays and it usually slows down the process.

I see a real marked streak of conservatism in our new policies. People within the system are more concerned about the DEs speaking out. We have been cautioned more and more to discipline our comments. We have been cautioned more and more to play as a team.



Q: By whom?

A: By the system. I think that, traditionally, people feel that the Reagan administration is in our chain of command, that we as good soldiers have to support it, that we are speaking the administration's position more often and more forcefully than ever before. And I think that the Corps system has aligned itself to be supportive of the new administration, and I find that throughout the system there is conservatism.

Q: But did your options change much? I mean, your operational options?

A: Well, yes. Because when you have more discipline, you have less freedom, you have less innovation, you have less ability to do your thing. A conservative approach makes people more inclined to go to higher headquarters.

So decision making shifts from the lower levels up the chain of command. There is more centralism. There are more people in higher places who want to control what is going on.

Probably this is realistic inasmuch as there is less money and there are fewer spaces, and commanders feel every decision that affects money and spaces has to be made at the highest level.

But there is a definite shift in my three years from a decentralized operation toward a more centralized operation.

Q: That is very significant for the Corps of Engineers, which has been accustomed to operating on a more decentralized basis.

A: Obviously. I believe the decentralized mode is best, but I can't control the shift and the people who run the Corps can't control it either. I guess my intuitive feeling is that what made the Corps great was a decentralized organization with all the capability at the District level and many of the decisions made at that level. I am not as positive in my own mind that we are going to be as effective if we continue to shift to a centralized decision-making mode and fewer and fewer of the decisions are made by the District Engineer.

Q: Is there a certain paradox involved in the increasing centralization of decisions in order to increasingly decentralize government?

A: I think that the administration wants to be sure that we are speaking with a common tongue and that when they say decentralization, they want to be sure that the central issues and the central policies are those of the new administration.

I think that people are trying to transfer things back at the state level, but effectively within the course of work. I don't see the shift of the federalism that people talk about back to the states.

I still see a centralized position throughout the Corps of Engineers.

Q: Were you caught by surprise or were you surprised by the magnitude of the change from one administration to the other?

A: I didn't think the changes would be so drastic. I didn't think they would happen so quickly. The essence of the new policy arrived very quickly and the comments about what we could say and could not say about cost sharing were very exact. The comments about the District Engineers being more disciplined in what they say were very graphic.

Q: From Mr. Gianelli's office?

A: I would think from the President to Mr. Gianelli through the Corps. And I guess there was a credibility among us at the bottom that what was being said was true and that we had to toe the line quickly. Maybe this is the strength of the Corps' system, that you have the military in charge and when policies do change they change quickly and we listen well. Because usually you would expect that in a large organization it would take months and years to get policy from top to bottom.

Q: Yes. When you told me last summer that much of what needs to be changed in the planning procedure was not in your province to affect, what did you have in mind?

A: Well, General Heiberg did his study at the OCE civil works level and made a list of ways he was going to revitalize the planning

process. The only part of that list at my level was to reorganize into a Planning Division, which I am doing next week. The other part was that my Division Engineer said that he wanted me to be the District's chief planner, so he is saying that the District Engineer should be more directly involved in the planning process. Let your deputies run the day-to-day business of money, spaces, and personnel.

I have done this. My people have reacted a little bit because they see me spending more time in planning and engineering. They feel that maybe I'm not as concerned about the other functional areas that have been delegated to the deputy, so they feel that I am not as open to them and that I'm not communicating downward as well as I used to. But when the General directs you to become more involved, then you become more involved.

I moved the Chief of the Planning Division next door to me on the right, and I have the Chief of the Engineering Division on the left, and I am very closely involved with both. I am playing a much larger role, much more of my time is spent in planning than ever before.

Q: What kind of hopes do you have for this Planning Division?

A: I think that it will go well from the viewpoint that every part of it has been scrutinized in the reorganization, so probably once it's

formed it will be healthy, it will be streamlined, it will be understood by our own people.

The problem I see is if you cannot maintain the General Investigation funding to support it, the Planning Division will shrink and that's going to hurt us more than anything else. I would say the greatest thing that anyone could do for me to improve planning is to give me a benchmark level of GI funding. If I am sure I can keep the GI funding going, well, then I can get a consistent level of effort in the Planning Division, and then year in and year out we can more consistently pump out well planned projects. The key is to keep the GI funds flowing so that the Planning Division can afford to work.

Q: And that's something we are really not certain about, can't be certain about now.

A: Well, it seems like every year there is more and more GI funding cut out and that's the life blood. And as GI funding goes for planning, so goes the future of civil works. Because if the new projects are not coming out of the pipeline, then the organization will continue in a declining mode, losing spaces, dollars, people, and capability.

Q: You have expressed some frustration regarding trying to move projects through the system. How have things been this year?

A: Well, with the conservative approach on getting things done, going to the congressman or to the senator and speaking your mind has almost ceased. Now we work fully within the system. So the system is more responsive at the management levels to getting projects through, but it is still ineffective and inefficient in the technical channels.

I feel that if you have a project and you keep it in the management channels, it moves. But once the technocrats get a hold of it, it slows down. This hasn't changed.

Q: That's the same.

A: Yes, after three years I guess I feel that the technocrats probably won't change and my greatest fear is that they will sink us with good intentions, never knowing that they are our problem.

Q: That's here in this building?

A: Yes. And I have a feeling that no matter who is in management, we leave the technocrats to do the revisions, the reviews, and the policy setting. They won't police themselves. None of the efforts to improve the planning process I've seen have reached down to the technocrat level.

Now, I understand that the Chief of Engineering Division in civil works has an engineer excellence group looking at this problem.

But I did not realize, when I took over, the significance of the internal reviews and what that does moneywise, manpowerwise, and project timewise, to my projects. It is very frustrating for a District Engineer to live with milestones, push projects hard, and then once they clear the District and clear the Division, find that there is not someone pushing as hard in the Office of the Chief of Engineers. A District Engineer can push it, but it is very difficult to motivate people in Washington from St. Paul.

So I guess my greatest frustration is with the technical reviews, the redundancies within the system, and with the parochial points of view, which are well-meaning, but each one of them delays the project. They delay by sending it back and you keep changing and updating.

So it's a constant review and reiteration when the crucial thing about the project, once you have it at a C+ level, is getting it through the system. We worry too much about getting it at A+ level and then it gets so old it doesn't get through the system. I'd like to see more attention on getting projects through the system and less on raising project quality from the C+ to the A+.

Q: So, if you were talking to an incoming District Engineer about where the obstacles were to move projects, you would say they were in our system and in the technical review of our system.

A: Yes. I initially thought the problem was all the agencies I had to deal with outside the Corps. I thought that was 80 percent of the problem. I guess after three years I would have to turn that around and say I think it's 80 percent us. I have a feeling that our biggest problem is ourselves and I hope people in the hierarchy recognize this and are working like mad to change the system.

I see evidence that we have improved. We sent a policy letter up on our Burlington project four years ago and the answer was never received. General Harris, the previous Division Engineer, wasn't able to get an answer. We sent a letter from General Smith, the new Division Engineer, on Burlington -- now renamed Lake Darling -- and we got an answer in four months. But I think we should be striving for three to four weeks turnaround on policy letters and we are not getting it.

Q: Do you talk to other DEs who have the same kinds of problems?

A: Well, one of the peculiarities of the system is I don't see many other DEs outside this Division.

Q: I was going to ask you that.

A: And I don't get a chance for cross fertilization. We had a planning conference and we had all the DEs together and that was quite good. But the mechanism for exchanging lessons learned and good



ideas doesn't seem to be there, and so we each work at trying to get our work done individually and we are each left to our own devices. We do get together with other DEs within the Division, which is helpful. General Smith has worked hard to get good ideas exchanged between Districts within the Division.

I think that spending more time with other District Engineers and exchanging success stories might help all of us have more successes. But there is a lot of cost and wasted motion in getting all the District Engineers together.

Q: I remember once you suggested that the Engineer IG teams could be a good vehicle for transmitting innovation from District to District. How has that worked out?

A: Yes. Well, General Smith sent my recommendation to the Engineer IG. Basically, I recommended that the IG collect ideas from Districts inspected and present a "good ideas" briefing to other Districts. I think that the IG borrowed some of the tone and nuances from that recommendation, although he may have watered it down a bit.

But I believe the proof of the pudding will be when the IG team comes around to St. Paul next year, whether he is, in fact, exchanging good ideas from one District to the next District.

I spoke informally to the Engineer IG one day and recommended that we detail the Deputy District Engineer one week a year with the IG team inspecting another District. The advantage is that then he could relate how he is doing things in his District. And he could bring back the good things he saw from that inspection.

So, by giving up your Deputy one week a year, you could have cross fertilization among Districts. The IG seemed to like that idea. I'm not sure if that will ever be incorporated, but we have to continue to work on cross fertilization.

Q: Are you satisfied with what you have done to try to move projects through?

A: No, I don't think I am satisfied.

I feel that we have been effective enough to keep my District healthy. There is much more work. There are many good projects in the St. Paul District that we could have in the system and we could have under way.

However, there is a built-in cap though and that's the manpower you have and the money you get, and the systems are not going to let you grow in size, even though the work is there.

They are going to let you work at a constant level or a shrinking level, and many projects out there that need to be done are put on hold.

A lot of times when we see that it takes a long time to get a project through, part of the fault is that you are out selecting simple and easily put together projects. So we have a normal sorting system, based on our capabilities, resources, and manpower. My concern is that some good projects are piecemealed and only parts of the projects will be completed. I don't like patchwork solutions.

Q: You want to talk politics a little?

A: If I have to.

Q: This is not that kind of environment.

But I wonder if you would -- well, you already have, actually, to an extent -- compare the Carter and Reagan administrations for me relative to how they affected your operations?

A: Well, I think the politics now is in the cost-sharing and money. We are in an era where economics is the driving force. You find the District Engineer in a position of talking about three levels of cost sharing. The first, applied to many old projects, was used for

years and basically endorsed by Congress. We call them the old ABC's of cost-sharing.

Then you find yourself talking about the Carter administration's cost-sharing, which was a 75-25 percent split, the 25 percent being local and state combined.

Then you find yourself talking about the new Reagan cost-sharing and the new cost-sharing is tentatively in the 70-30 range, but really hasn't been defined well. District Engineers have been cautioned not to be too aggressive in discussing the current cost-sharing. That's being discussed basically by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works office and staff.

So you go out to people and you talk projects and you try to explain the setting of three types of cost-sharing and you are very cautious that you are being supportive of the new administration's cost-sharing plan, which is not yet totally formulated.

Obviously, cost-sharing is mandated in the legislative language when the project is approved. But we are not having projects approved by any new Water Resources bills.

When you talk in the political sense, I think that probably the thing that is most sensitive is cost-sharing. Along with cost-

sharing, the other thing that is sensitive is stating capability on projects. The administration is very concerned about capability, because they don't want separate compartmentalized capabilities quoted that haven't been formulated by the total organization.

When you have a budget that is approved by the administration, each project will be tagged with a stated capability. You have to be very careful not to make statements to a congressman saying, "Oh, we have a capability twice that much or three times that much," then have that congressman go through the back door and force more money into that project.

When we support that budget, we support the stated capability. Now, that stated capability is controlled at a higher level than ever before, so you have to be very careful in stating capabilities.

I have told my project managers that any time they are asked for capabilities, they say, "Please ask in writing," and we very carefully staff the capability because we want to be supportive of the administration.

Q: Are there significant differences between how Mr. Blumenfeld operated and how Mr. Gianelli operates?

A: Well, it's hard for me, from the St. Paul hinterland, to evaluate the management of new people. It is obvious that Mr. Gianelli had

much greater background and experience in water resources. It is obvious that he is better connected politically with the administration and it is obvious that he is a very strong, forceful man who knows what he is doing.

I think probably, as a manager engineer, we've got a more powerful, strong manager than we ever had.

I think the things he is doing really show that he's very capable. I believe that he's probably had a greater influence on the system and District Engineers than any other Assistant Secretary of Army-Civil Works.

But that's just an impression. I'm a long way from the flag pole.

Q: Well, I understood that when I asked the question. But you know, I'm curious about the impact it has on you out here.

During the flood season President Reagan went to Indiana and made a fuss over volunteers filling sandbags. Did this become a major topic of discussion in your office?

A: No, it didn't. I don't think I ever heard anyone mention the President being there. It had no real impact. I guess any time the President stops by an emergency or civil works project, the Corps

should feel it has received some visibility. But it was not discussed and it was just business as usual.

Q: This was a strange kind of visibility and it got some notice here, because it wasn't the Corps of Engineers or FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) that he had gone out there to praise. It was neighbors filling sandbags and it disturbed some people, you know, in this office.

A: Well, I think President Reagan obviously feels his strength is with the people and I am not surprised that he would take that approach. I believe the District Engineer and the Division Engineer received a lot of publicity about the good work that we did in Indiana, and major floods highlight the need for additional well-planned, well-engineered water resource management projects. So when you have a flood that gets national attention, that really highlights the need for an agency like the Corps to do the long-range planning.

Q: We talked a lot about management in our previous discussions and I want to try to catch up on a few issues.

What have been your greatest challenges and problems since the last time we talked?

A: We spend more time and more effort on the budget and the data for the budget than ever before. We were five months in getting the 1982 budget. We were operating by rule of thumb at the same rate as last year, but really we didn't know what our budget was going to be until five-twelfths of the year were out. Parts of the budget were cut almost on a weekly basis, and this has been true of the 1983 budget. We constantly have changes and turmoil with the budget, and this causes a great deal of pressure on the organization.

The project managers are frustrated because they spend so much time on writing up budget estimates and justifications. The branch and division chiefs are frustrated because they always have to cut, add or subtract budget amounts . . . .

Q: A constant state of flux.

A: It created a difficult management situation.

Finally the 1982 budget was approved and we had our allocations. As soon as that came in, the personnel space procedure changed. Before, I had a personnel space ceiling for full-time permanent appointments. At the end of the year I had to get under that number. It did not matter how much overhire we had during the year. I had a glide path that I could stay on by attrition to handle the space cut and overhire. No problem.



Well, five-twelfths into the year they changed the system. Now we use a full-time equivalency system, an accumulative procedure of man-years effort. Since I've been overhired most of the years, I'm going to go over in man-years effort. I've got the money to pay the people and I've got the work to be done, but now we've got this full-time equivalency problem to handle.

Every year there are different restrictions from a management point of view, and one year you will get your system organized, and the next year you have a continually changing system of management. My first year I had a space problem, but no money problems. Next year I had money problems, but no space problems. This year, I'm having both.

And so these are the kinds of ills of a declining organization that has continued management problems. Hopefully, the next iteration of cuts will be done at some other level in the Corps and maybe we can leave our organization alone for a year and get some stability.

Q: There are other areas . . . ?

A: Another challenge was to continue the institutionalizing of management innovations because I wanted to clean things up for the new District Engineer.

I developed a program of bringing the new District Engineer on board -- providing him with the history, copies of state books, and letters on what we were doing within the District; taking him to see the congressmen and senators; taking him to International Joint Board meetings; and having him visit the District for several days where I introduced him to all the governors, all the key federal agencies, and the people within the District.

The last few months, I have been focusing on an orderly transition. But if you ask me about other challenges, I have one problem that I haven't solved and it's a big one. It's computers. We can talk about that now or later.

Q: Now is good if it's all right.

A: Well, for three years I have been working to improve office automation, word processing, and the computer operation. We had an old piece of hardware and it took me the first year to get rid of it and to lease a new minicomputer -- Harris 500.

Then I spent the next year trying to get the software up on it. This last year, I found that we are just not managing computers well. I don't know if it was the computer technology, the engineer, or the District, but the computers cost more, gave us less of the data that we wanted, and were less supportive of me than I ever

thought possible. I am going away with a gnawing feeling that I was not solving the problem . . . .

We depend so much on the computer, we've got it doing so many things for us, but it's not fine-tuned and we are not properly managing this great capability. I don't really see great talent in the Corps in the computer management area and I feel bad about saying this. We have a lot of technicians who run computers, but it doesn't appear that we have a lot of managers managing the computer system.

I have a feeling that one of my goals of being able to provide the St. Paul District with the best computer support in the Army will not be met. Now, it's improved, but we are not there. And I have the feeling that it will take the new DE another two years to get there.

Q: How did you come to this realization?

A: Well, when people talk to you, they always surface one item that they are most frustrated with. The one item that continually showed up has been computer support.

We have a system where project managers charge obligations and expenditures to their projects. There is always a lagtime. The computer doesn't have the latest charges, or there are mischarges. Or we get extremely high overhead charges. Or you use a computer

and you think you are getting a \$1,500 job and it comes back \$20,000.

We have gone to an extensive program now of trying to get cost estimates so that people who want to use a computer will know how much they are going to be charged to use that computer. Now they can make a management decision whether or not using the computer is cost-effective.

This has been a significant problem in my District and I have some good people working on solving it, but we haven't solved it yet. I have a sneaking suspicion that there are a lot of people in the Corps who are having computer management problems because the problems appear inherent in the system.

Q: You can't establish a sophisticated system to take care of all your perceived needs in a short period of time. Maybe you haven't waited long enough.

A: Well, when I visited someone within Military Programs of OCE three years ago, they had two management information systems and neither of them was humming well. Of course, the promise was, "Well, the next generation is going to be better."

But still you visit places that get a lot of mileage out of computers. I recently visited West Point's admissions office and they have a computer application for all the people trying to get into West Point. They say they couldn't do their jobs without it and they seem to get excellent day-to-day support from it.

With my computer operation, certain applications are very supportive, others just do not seem to get there. My deputy is taking almost one-third of his time to manage the computer and office automation. We have gone to word processor clusters for the District and they are working well.

We have installed smart terminals at each lock and dam to compile shipping information. We have probably 70 terminals within the District so a lot of people get into the computer.

I think the weak area, though, is the management of the funding and the management of the computer use. We haven't got a handle on that. We are working hard on it. We are going to go out Army-wide and try to hire a "manager" first and a computer-knowledgeable person second.

Q: There's been a lot of snow this winter. And I guess it isn't melting yet, is it?

A: We set the all-time accumulative snow record for Minnesota of 95 inches. We received 36 inches of snow in one week. We had a very fortunate thawing in early March. Then we had a number of freeze-thaw cycles and most the snow now is gone without flooding.

Q: So there is no flood problem?

A: Well, the flood potential in mid-January was great. If it had kept snowing and we had a cold winter up until April and then a quick thaw, we would have faced probable flooding. But March has been good to us. We haven't had much additional snow and the thaw cycles have been ideal.

It looks like, if I had to give a forecast, that we could finish my tour without a major flood. In the Red River, we were having floods 9 out of 14 years, so the percentages were against me going 3 years without a major flood.

I was expecting a major flood, and we had a flood emergency exercise CPX where we had 80 people from the states and from my office and we practiced with the data used in the 1979 "flood of the century."

But it looks like, even though we are ready and capable of going out and doing a superb job of fighting the floods, that we are not going to have the chance to demonstrate how well we could have done.

Q: Which is all right.

A: Oh, yes. Obviously, the best of all worlds is to be well-trained and ready to take care of the problem and not have to take care of it.

Q: When did you have that exercise?

A: We had it in January and we had people from the Division and other Districts, the states, all my area engineers, and my military. We practiced laying sandbags. We practiced with the Crisafulli pumps. We had briefings. We ran our operations centers. We used our communications. We brought in the state people we were going to deal with in emergencies. Everybody got to know each other eyeball to eyeball. It was just a healthy exchange and review of our emergency planning and plans.

And I think that the District is better able to cope with major floods than ever before.

Q: At whose initiative did you have this?

A: Well, I guess my initiative for the CPX -- General Smith took the initiative to have exercises for mobilization planning and now General Smith has implemented this flood emergency CPX annually for all Districts in NCD.

Q: Good. What other initiatives did you take?

A: The National Weather Service has a river forecasting section and we had a number of meetings with those people so that when they give forecasts, we would be a verifier and speak the same language and not be at odds. Now anytime there is a press release, we coordinate and we have not had dissension between the Weather Service and the Corps -- a very healthy first step.

The second thing is, I spoke at the Minnesota Emergency Managers meeting in February and we updated them on our capability and what we had done.

Governor Allen I. Olson, from North Dakota, wrote me a letter and said, "I am concerned and I want you to do these things to get ready." We have met with North Dakota, we have prepositioned our sandbags and pumps and we wrote back a letter to Governor Olson saying, "Sir, we are sitting on the edge of our seats. We are ready."

I think probably we have a higher level of consciousness of emergency actions than we ever had before and we have the right people in management, in the executive office, looking at the



emergency problem. It is not buried within the organization. So emergency management and flooding are getting good visibility and that keeps Emergency Management ready to operate.

Q: Ready. I remember during the height of the snow we listened to Prairie Home Companion and Garrison Keillor said he'd go to visit his parents, but he didn't know how to start the pile of snow that his car was in.

A: Well, my driveway -- I have an Oldsmobile -- you could not see the Oldsmobile in the driveway until you got to the end of the driveway and you looked down it. I had about six-foot banks of snow on either side of the drive. But it is all gone now.

Q: Good. Last year you told me about a case of travel fraud, travel voucher fraud. Has there been a continuing or lingering problem of effects of this or is it pretty much wrapped up?

A: Well, I think last year we talked about the impact of my taking vigorous actions to correct the fraud problem within the work force. I would say the travel fraud problem was isolated in a very small group who worked on dredging and not the bulk of the District, so there was no morale impact other than the group that was involved.

We checked and reinvestigated and the fraud problem has come into focus. Through the system of review and corrective actions, we have the total number of cases down to where we are finishing up. We gave out quite a few suspensions. We have collected quite a bit of money back. I hope to have this completely wrapped up by the change of command.

Q: Are you satisfied with how you handled it?

A: Well, I tried to use the federal court system and that was unresponsive and then the U.S. attorney gave me the cases back to handle administratively. Now that we are handling them administratively within the Corps, they are being done much more systematically and there is consistent punishment dealt out for the violations.

I wrote an open letter to the employees explaining our actions. The problem is behind us, but it got a lot of visibility throughout the Corps. It's a very difficult type of problem to handle and I'm afraid the judicial system doesn't consider it as important as a lot of other cases brought before it.

I think probably the greatest lesson learned is don't let it happen and if it does, we have to handle it ourselves.

Q: Your management memo, that you wrote last spring, 30 April 1981, emphasized a flexible and informal management system. Are you satisfied with that characterization?

A: Well, I worked hard at creating a decentralized management style and in using the corporate body. My management style was designed to get our top managers directly involved in the decision-making. If something is new and innovative, you test the bright young minds you have, you war game it, and get the good ideas put together so that any strategies you come up with are well thought out. I think we in St. Paul do that very well and I am very comfortable with how the District runs.

I realize that every District Engineer has a different management style and that each District will have to adjust to the DE's style. My style is spelled out pretty well in memos and letters. A new District Engineer coming in can understand how I ran the District and have the option of continuing the same way or moving from that point.

So I think the corporate body is working well. Obviously I have grown, hopefully, matured. Looking at my management style over three years, I find that it is dictated a little bit by my boss's management style, and by what the administration wants to do in centralization. It is influenced also by the budget and how quickly we have to react to budget cuts and restrictions.

So you don't have unlimited opportunity to run your District and do your management your way, but still you have the freedom of 80 percent of it. The beauty of it, the system, is that they do let you do your thing and they do let you do it your way and I am very appreciative of that fact.

Q: Have you discussed this with your successor?

A: Not management style, per se. Recently I have had devised a management supervisor test that was given to ten supervisors and they rated me in my management style and their supervisors rated them. So we as supervisors are evaluating the corporate body concept.

I recently took a personal profile test to determine what kind of manager I am and I found I fit the "I" category, which means I try to influence people. I fit next in the dominance category, so I kind of dominate people, but to a lesser degree than the influencing.

Many military people maybe would fit higher in the dominance and less in the "I," so I guess my personal traits support the corporate body and decentralization approach. I will discuss my style with my successor to give him a better understanding of where we are management wise in the District.

Q: The next couple of years will be very interesting. You are still continuing with cross training?

A: Yes, cross training is paying great dividends. We have changed attitudes within the District. Before people were skeptical but now all of the managers want cross training because they see advantages in their growth, and the training they get as executives. I think cross training is something that has taken root in St. Paul and will be here for a long time because our civilians will demand it.

We have a group of civilians who are much broader gauged than before, much more capable. As the lack of mobility problem in the Corps worsens, people cannot afford to change from District to Division to OCE for a grade promotion. More and more of the promotions in the District will be from within, and we are going to have to have a better pool of engineer managers to promote from.

So I think this executive development program has a very positive long-term benefit to the Corps and the next three or four District Engineers will see that positive long-term benefit.

Q: You have been holding that pretty much at the branch chief level?

A: No, we have gone down to the section chief level. Each level sees what is going on at the next higher level and they want to buy in.

So the executive development and the cross training are really taking over in St. Paul District.

Q: You just expanded from the branch chiefs then this year, didn't you?

A: Yes, the young people see it, and I have had people come in saying "Hey, I've got to broaden my base." So it is throughout the organization now and it is very pleasing because I think it is healthy and it is something I feel that I started and I feel like a father.

So it is a pleasure to me to see this executive development taking place.

Q: You are making the transition now, out of the job, and you are helping someone make the transition into the job. And you talked about it a little bit this morning. What are the important things you have to say to your successor?

A: Well, the first thing is you have to find out whether he wants a transition. There are some people who don't want an overlap. They say "You walked out. I am a manager. I am a commander. I've been through the systems. I have the experience and I will do it myself."

Other people will say, "Hey, that outgoing DE has a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge and I want to know as much as I can."

So the first thing you have to do is find out if your replacement wants to buy in and how deeply he wants to buy in.

Recently when I talked to Colonel Ed Rapp, I asked, "Am I overkilling you with visits and meetings and so forth?" And Colonel Rapp said, "No, I love it. Keep it coming."

So he's already read the history, the state books, the congressional data for the testifying officer.

We wrote him a letter that spelled out what each staff area did within the District. I had each of my branch and division chiefs put together one paragraph for the new DE and I put an entry paragraph on it and a closing one and mailed it to him.

He is going to go to the International Joint Commission meetings with me. He is going to go around and meet senators and congressmen with me.

He is going to take the contract course and the DE course before he shows up in St. Paul. So I take pleasure in thinking that Colonel

Rapp is going to be a well-informed replacement when he takes over on 7 June.

Q: How does this compare with the transition you made into the job?

A: I was treated well. General Gay was the District Engineer when I took over. I went out and visited. We visited the governors and I suppose much of my transition plan is predicated on what General Gay did for me. General Gay's management style was close to mine in certain areas and I tried to, the first year, not drastically deviate from what he was doing.

I guess one of the advantages in transitions is that most of the old DEs are good folks and most of the new DEs are good people, so that you are not taking over an organization that is down and out.

You are taking over an organization that is functioning and hopefully the transition is smooth. With minor fine tuning, the new DE is off and running.

Transition is hard on the civilian employees. They look at it as, well, another District Engineer that they will have to educate.

Q: Some new idiosyncracies come into the office.



A: That's right, and so they are very eager to see this new person and they look him over very closely and he's slowly met by a number of our civilians and they have formed opinions. So the transition is already underway. The information exchange is already underway. What we want to do is build the confidence and the trust so that when he takes over, he will take over a good District and be off and running.

Q: Who are the essential contacts in the community? What are the contacts the new DE has to make or that ease his job the most?

A: Well, you find that you have got a few, maybe one-third of your congressional delegation, who really enter the Corps net. Some congressmen have other interests and they do social programs or concentrate on their own different committees. So you find one or two or three in each state who have as their thing the Corps and our projects. So those are the key contact elements.

Q: So you can help the new DE identify those.

A: Yes, then you have certain mayors and sponsors of certain projects that are in the right stage of development. That mayor, those sponsors, play key parts. So there are about a half dozen key mayors and sponsors.

Q: What do you mean by sponsors?

A: Well, every project has to have a sponsor. We don't go out and promote Corps projects. There is a locally recognized need for a project and the local sponsor, which could be the county or watershed district or the city, has gone to their congressional representatives, which results in legislative language that says, "Corps, come down and do a study and here is the money." So if you don't have an active sponsor who will sign the letter of agreement and pay local shares, you don't have a project.

First, you have to have a viable sponsor. Second, you have to have state support. If the governor doesn't support the project, you don't have a project.

The third thing you have to have is a benefit-cost ratio greater than one.

So the general rule of thumb or the three things any project needs are: an active sponsor; state support with the governor backing you, and a benefit-cost ratio greater than one.

Other important people would be agency heads, the head of the National Weather Service, and the head of the Soil Conservation Service. Others are the Fish and Wildlife regional heads and area people. Important agencies for me are the Minnesota Pollution

Control Agency, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Water Commission for the State of North Dakota.

Each state is wired differently. I have wiring diagrams for each state and I will explain how the Corps interfaces in each state. I will take the new DE by and introduce him to the shakers and the movers.

Q: What about environmental groups?

A: They don't seem to be as prominent as they used to be. I think the economy has hurt them inasmuch as I don't think they have the funding they used to have. I don't see as many environmental interests and I don't see as many environmental actions from environmental groups as in the past.

Q: Of course, we don't see as many projects as we used to either.

A: Right. And I think that they have tended to feel that they have helped realign the Corps' thinking. They feel that we are more environmentally sensitive, that we are doing fewer things wrong, and that there are other people doing more and worse things, so they are after them. I feel maybe we have more credibility now with these environmental groups than we had before.

Q: Do you have anything in particular to tell your successor about how to keep relations good with these important people, different groups?

A: Well, obviously you can't allow the technocrats from your organizations to have their petty wars and when that happens you have to quickly meet with their bosses and solve the problem.

You can tell when this is happening by the poison pen letters coming out of your organization. Some people will be venting their emotions. I don't allow poison pen letters. I don't allow emotionalism. The managers have to get together and let the lower levels know that we have got to work together.

I think that you have to be very careful of their areas of responsibility and their turf and be sure that you are not infringing on their areas. There has to be consciousness on their part of what your areas are.

So there has to be communication between organizations. I made a conscious effort of improving the relationships with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Weather Service, and Fish and Wildlife.

I met with the heads of these organizations and we have slowly

gotten rid of the poison pen letters. We talked more. We tried to understand each other's problems. And I think that we have achieved some real-good professional relationships with these other agencies.

And that communication is key to having a healthy program.

Q: The Department of Defense professionals have a tendency to speak in Pentagonese dialect. Does this mode of expression represent a problem for potential DEs?

A: Well, that's interesting. With any new job you have a new vocabulary and I am working on notes for the new District Engineer by expanding my Colonel Art Williams letter. And in those notes, the last three or four pages, are listed acronyms or terms that a civil works District uses that the average Army officer may not be aware of.

Now, I would think that we in civil works, speaking a civil-workese, could be just as bad as the Pentagonese that a military officer may speak. Any new DE should quickly learn the language of the new organization and forget those of the old.

Q: What about the press and the new District Engineer? Are there any important principles to guide relations with the press?

A: Well, I think we have discussed this before. My philosophy is to let a project manager speak openly, in order not to give any appearance of holding information back, and to be as candid as possible. We in St. Paul are very lucky that the press in this area seems to play fair with us.

We are not misquoted and we are not abused by the press. I guess my feeling of skepticism when I took over is now one of optimism.

You just do your job and tell the truth and good press will follow.

Q: What about the new administration in Washington? Are you able to be as open with the press as you were before?

A: I think there is a new caution now because, obviously, if the press misquotes you and the misquote is not supportive of the current administration, I think you will have to answer for it. When you have centralized control and a more conservative approach, the press has to be taken more seriously. The press may view caution as cover-up. But I think that the signals are clear. I understand what the administration policies are so I am able to deal with them even with the press. The relationship with the press has not been the problem I envisioned three years ago.

Q: How do you feel about leaving?

A: Well, you know, I was almost looking at it as the end of my career and going into the twilight zone because I believed there wouldn't be a job that is as good as the one I'm leaving. But the Army and the Corps were very good to me. It looks like the job at West Point will be very challenging.

I will have my own flagpole and my own people and my own budget and there are some new challenges ahead. That has helped soften the blow of leaving the District.

Another thing that has helped soften the leaving is that I feel that I have had a good tour and have been able to do some positive things in moving projects and helping the St. Paul District. I am leaving a good District with a good incoming DE and I know that St. Paul will continue on and will do great things.

Q: Here comes the last question every time, right? What should we have talked about? What didn't I ask you that is important?

A: Mickey, you have a way of doing your homework by going over all your old interviews. I'd say you are pretty thorough.

The Corps has to worry about where it is going in the future, and I

guess that the bottom line has to be this: can we maintain a base of engineering knowledge so that in the event we ever have to mobilize and support our armed forces, we would be a viable organization?

With the budget problems, space cuts, and the long time required to plan a project, all meshed together with local interests being able financially to handle cost-sharing, I am concerned that some Districts may not be able to remain viable entities.

There is a certain element out there that says, "What will be will be, and if they don't have a program, then they should not be viable entities." But I would hate to think that if we ever had to mobilize, that this engineering, planning, and construction organization would not be available to serve the nation.

And we have the civil works projects out there that need to be done for the people, but are not being done and not being funded. Because they are not being done and not being funded, they don't provide the lifeblood of training for the organization that we may need for mobilization.

So there is a very deep concern about the survivability and viability of organizations. The base line, I feel, is that we have got to have new missions and new jobs.



We just picked up \$100,000 to do the master planning at Fort McCoy and Camp Ripley. We just picked up \$10,000 to do installation support books for those two installations.

We are taking a much greater role in mobilization and military programs and are working closer with our District in Omaha. We have to get military programs to each District. We have to get EPA super-fund monies into each District. We have to insure that the budgets of Districts stay healthy to maintain their capabilities so in the future we can meet the challenges.

I am very concerned that we don't lose our engineering hard skills, our management hard skills, and our contracting hard skills and that we stay viable as an organization.

Sounds like I'm running for office, doesn't it?

Q: Sounds good. Thank you very much for four delightful and stimulating interviews. I appreciate it.

A: Thank you, Mickey. I've enjoyed them.

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