



U.S. ARMY

ARMY STRONG™

MVK Flood AARs

Commander Vicksburg District

17 June 2015



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US Army Corps of Engineers
BUILDING STRONG®





SUSTAINS: RED RIVER FLOOD EVENT JUNE 2015

- **Sustain:** MVK LNO at sister District or State EOC
- **Discussion:**
 - Embedded an LNO with the Little Rock District EOC to coordinate operations with the State of Arkansas.
 - Later the LNO moved to the LA's State EOC
 - LNO had the right personality and skill set for the job, actively sought out information and coordinated support.
 - Force multiplier for the combined federal, state and local effort in the flood fight
- **Recommendation:** Identify the right person for the job and embed the LNO early into the operation.

- **Sustain:** Relationship with levee boards and county emergency management agencies
- **Discussion:**
 - MVK routinely worked with levee board members, city and county officials, and local emergency managers prior to the flood event.
 - Invited city, county and levee board members to attend emergency management training events
 - Pre-existing relationships enabled communication and a more comprehensive approach to the flood fight issues
- **Recommendation:** Establish and maintain relationships with local leadership through routine communications, meetings, and training events. The work will pay off once an event occurs.

- **Sustain:** USACE PAO support early in the event
- **Discussion:**
 - PAO presence allowed leadership and field personnel to focus on flood fight operations
 - Supported our Strategic Communications by developing clear talking points for the entire District
 - Augmented PAO support with knowledgeable, focused personnel from within the District
- **Recommendation:** Incorporate PAO support and strategic messaging early in the emergency operation



MVK LNO Charles Stokes with State Rep Peacock at the Louisiana EOC



LA National Guard air support coordinated through State Aviation Officer



COL Cross speaks at a local press conference with Senator Vitter and state leaders.



High water and debris during the closure of Lock and Dam #4



Richard Jones meets with leaders from Miller County and the Garland Levee Board.



HWY 71 closure by the LA Department of Transportation and Development



IMPROVES: RED RIVER FLOOD EVENT JUNE 2015

- **Improve:** Communication with Congressional Offices
- **Discussion:**
 - Early in the flood fight, we focused our communications on local leaders, but neglected to contact Congressional offices.
 - We received three Congressional inquiries within a 48 hour period.
- **Recommendation:** Communicate earlier with Congressional offices to alleviate concerns and answer questions.

- **Improve:** Flood fight roster personnel management
- **Discussion:**
 - MVK maintained a list of flood fight personnel and conducted annual training with the individuals to maintain skill sets.
 - At the start of the flood fight, several individuals were unavailable due to TDY, leave, and detail assignments.
- **Recommendation:** Establish considerable depth in the flood fight rosters in order to prepare alternate personnel for emergency management operations

- **Improve:** Access to levees on private/leased property
- **Discussion:**
 - Some levee districts would not open all the gates to allow unimpeded travel of levee patrollers.
 - In most cases, cattle was still present and land owners did not want to remove them.
- **Recommendation:** Routinely communicate the importance of levee access to local officials and land owners. The communication plan cannot start with the event; it must occur prior to it.



Senator Vitter discussing conditions on the Red River at a local press conference.



High water flowing the gates of Lock and Dam #1



Levee patrollers walking a levee section in Miller County, AR



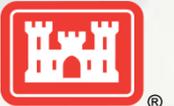
Local agency flood fighting at the Havens Neighborhood in Shreveport, LA



LESSONS LEARNED

- Many state and local Homeland Security agencies are inexperienced in current emergency management functions and require mentorship to fully execute their mission.
- Utilize STRATCOM to get in front of issues and shape the public perception.
- Leverage adjoining District for information and support from respective state agencies. The example is Little Rock District's support in linking Vicksburg into the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management.
- Put an LNO at the state EOC. The LNO is a key link for two way communication and coordination between the State and the District.
- Include Congressional offices in your STRATCOM plan. Early contact will alleviate concerns and facilitate clear information flow.
- Engage county/parish emergency management personnel and officials early into the flood fight. They were instrumental in acquiring state equipment/supplies and personnel to conduct the flood fight operations.
- Meet with local and state authorities on a regular basis. The interaction allowed us to develop the relationships and a comprehensive strategy to fight the flood.
- USACE PAO must be onsite early in the operation. PAO presence allow the flood fight personnel to focus on current operations while still meeting communication requirements.
- Utilize USACE Geotech if available. Most of the levee patrollers had a general knowledge of their requirements, but Geotech personnel are the subject matter experts. They are able to address most of the technical questions and concerns.
- Levee Safety Officer (LSO) should see the levees as the river crests. The LSO will gain additional insight on the performance of each levee segment and will be able to better rate them after the next annual inspections.

Questions



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