DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

CECW-ON 5 September 2003

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS

SUBJECT: Critical Incident Stress Management in the US Army Corps of Engineers

1. As many of you are aware, our Southwestern Division (SWD) has established a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program for team members within their division. CISM is a peer-driven stress management program that combines pre-crisis preparation, stress education and post-event response to help people recover more quickly from abnormally stressful job-related incidents and trauma, collectively known as "critical incidents." CISM does not replace professional counseling and other services available to employees through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), but rather compliments that program.

2. CISM concepts were first developed during the 1970s and then widely applied in the 1980s for police, firemen, and other emergency personnel. The success of the program grew across the nation as other agencies sought help for their employees that were dealing with life changing stressful events. Today, CISM is accepted and used worldwide. The National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, American Airlines, U.S. Air Force, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), American Red Cross, and many other private, county, State, and Federal agencies have successfully implemented the program.

3. The job duties of many Corps employees can expose them to many critical incidents. Some specific examples might include a park ranger performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on a drowning victim, an emergency operations response team member working long hours with disaster victims who have lost everything, a closely-knit work unit which has lost a team member due to suicide, or a tragic event such as the I-40 bridge collapse. A new and unexpected type of job-related critical incident that some of our Corps team members may experience is the sound of hostile gunfire or SCUD missiles while deployed overseas.

4. In its first year of activity, the SWD CISM program has met with considerable success, providing over 50 team members with services to mitigate the effects of job-related critical incidents. Word of the program has spread, and team members from other MSCs have been inquiring about how to bring this program to their areas.

5. Rather than have other divisions and districts re-invent the same wheel, I have decided to form a Project Delivery Team (PDT) to determine and propose the best

way to establish a model national CISM program, suitable for adoption at the MSC Commander's option. The PDT will be comprised of elements from all MSCs and representative Corps functions - a separate letter will arrive shortly requesting nominations from your MSCs for participation on the PDT. Part of the PDT's task will be to assure that the model that they recommend will provide a uniform program and a recognized standard of care to all team members. I have tasked the Operations Division (CECW-O) at HQUSACE with establishing and coordinating the PDT.

6. A CISM webpage has been added to the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Gateway at http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/cism/cism.html where some information is already posted.

7. I fully support making the CISM program available to all of our Corps team members. It is an excellent example of how we, the Corps family, can help take care of our own people.

ROBERT B. FLOWERS
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

CECW-ON
SUBJECT: Critical Incident Stress Management in the US Army Corps of Engineers

DISTRIBUTION:

COMMANDER, GREAT LAKES AND OHIO RIVERS DIVISION
COMMANDER, MISSISSIPPI VALLEY DIVISION
COMMANDER, NORTH ATLANTIC DIVISION
COMMANDER, NORTHWESTERN DIVISION
COMMANDER, PACIFIC OCEAN DIVISION
COMMANDER, SOUTH ATLANTIC DIVISION
COMMANDER, SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION
COMMANDER, SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

INFORMATION COPIES SENT TO:

COMMANDER, ALASKA DISTRICT
COMMANDER, ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
COMMANDER, BALTIMORE DISTRICT
COMMANDER, BUFFALO DISTRICT
COMMANDER, CHARLESTON DISTRICT
COMMANDER, CHICAGO DISTRICT
COMMANDER, DETROIT DISTRICT
COMMANDER, FORT WORTH DISTRICT
COMMANDER, GALVESTON DISTRICT
COMMANDER, HUNTINGTON DISTRICT
COMMANDER, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT
COMMANDER, KANSAS CITY DISTRICT
COMMANDER, LITTLE ROCK DISTRICT
COMMANDER, LOS ANGELES DISTRICT
COMMANDER, LOUISVILLE DISTRICT
COMMANDER, MEMPHIS DISTRICT
COMMANDER, MISSOURI RIVER REGION
COMMANDER, NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT
COMMANDER, NORTH PACFIC REGION
COMMANDER, MOBILE DISTRICT
COMMANDER, NASHVILLE DISTRICT
COMMANDER, NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT
COMMANDER, NEW YORK DISTRICT
COMMANDER, NORFOLK DISTRICT
COMMANDER, OMAHA DISTRICT
COMMANDER, PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT
COMMANDER, PITTSBURGH DISTRICT
COMMANDER, PORTLAND DISTRICT
COMMANDER, ROCK ISLAND DISTRICT
COMMANDER, SACRAMENTO DISTRICT
COMMANDER, SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT
COMMANDER, SAVANNAH DISTRICT
COMMANDER, SEATTLE DISTRICT
COMMANDER, ST. LOUIS DISTRICT
COMMANDER, ST. PAUL DISTRICT
COMMANDER, TULSA DISTRICT
COMMANDER, VICKSBURG DISTRICT
COMMANDER, WALLA WALLA DISTRICT
COMMANDER, WILMINGTON DISTRICT
COMMANDER, WATERWAYS EXPERIMENT STATION