

## **Correspondencia y organigrama, remitidos por el Chief Engineer, Douglas C. Otto, Jr., USACE, y el Curator, Archives, USACE, Mr. Eric Reinert, Noviembre, 2012**

From: [Douglas.C.Otto.Jr@usace.army.mil](mailto:Douglas.C.Otto.Jr@usace.army.mil)  
To: [jvmogollon@hotmail.com](mailto:jvmogollon@hotmail.com)  
Subject: RE: Colonel Vanderburgh (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Date: Mon, 19 Nov 2012 20:30:54 +0000  
Classification: UNCLASSIFIED  
Caveats: NONE

Jose

Thank you for sharing your research. I particularly liked the part where Mr. Vandeburg was able to design his plans for the Canal del Dique in 6-days with only the use of a compass! I also enjoyed hearing of Mrs Claybourn and her dogs . . . certainly not someone one would forget.

You're certainly welcome to publish the organization chart and findings, although Mr. Eric Reinert was the person who was able to locate and likely should be cited.

Best wishes,  
Doug  
Douglas C. Otto, Jr., P.E.  
Chief, Engineering Division  
Mobile District  
251-690-2709  
-----Original Message-----

From: José Vicente Mogollón Vélez [<mailto:jvmogollon@hotmail.com>]  
Sent: Thursday, November 15, 2012 12:36 PM  
To: Otto, Douglas C Jr SAM  
Subject: RE: Colonel Vanderburgh (UNCLASSIFIED)  
Dear Sir:  
Re Vandeburg: the plot thickens.

The New York Public Library and the Library of Congress, which I visited personally, yielded nothing on the "elusive" C.L. Vanderburgh, or Vanderbough or Vandeburg. Mr. Juan Manuel Pérez of the Latin American Section of the LOC thinks that the College Park, Maryland, National Archives would be the last place that one would have to look at; I intend to do so in March 2013, just to make sure and for the sake of research rigor. However, I would like your permission to publish, in a coming booklet on the Canal del Dique, your findings and the organization chart of the Dredging Division of the Panama Canal, with all the credit that is due to you, to Mr. Eric Reinert, Curator, Office of History, Headquarters, USACE, and to Ms. Cheryl Martin.

My hope is that a truthfull account of the history of the canal will help decision makers at the Fondo de Adaptación and at Cormagdalena.

Thank you again for your invaluable help in discovering who "...the eminent engineer, second in command at the Panama Canal..." really was, and more importantly, who he was not. Why he was "billed" by the Junta as a great engineer is rather obvious in the legal context then dawning; a 1914 law made "previous studies" mandatory for public works. And because its members were prominent river navigation investors, they were wary of the mishaps that locks would entail; after all, George M. Totten's locks had failed in 1852, and blocked steam navigation for nearly 30 years.

The generation that one hundred years ago decided that a canal "à niveau" -- the de Lesseps of Suez, not of Panama, was their mentor -- was the way to achieve the permanent canal connection of the bay of Cartagena with the Magdalena, did not realize that Colombia's main river is a victim itself of the country's topography, geology and demography, conditions which produce the abundant suspended clays and loam silt, and bit of bedload as well, that clot and complicate its outlets to the Caribbean. Thank you again for your invaluable help.

Yours truly,

Jose Vicente Mogollon V.

\* The Isthmian Canal Commission Annual Report for 1914 mentions John Geronald Claybourn; the name rang a bell from my childhood (see below). I then searched for him in Google. It turned out that he had worked for the Dredging Division as a Surveyor and came to the Dique in 1917. He wrote several papers, of which one shows his strong penchant for dredging: "SEA LEVEL PLAN FOR THE PANAMA CANAL", 1947. Another paper: "Dredging on the Panama Canal", 1931. In 1937 he produced yet another that would be fascinating to look at: "The Dredging Division of the Panama Canal: Its Function, Organization and Equipment". His documents are at the Bentley Library at the University of Michigan; they include two Cartagena maps and one Dique map. He married a Colombian lady, Regina Flores, who was our neighbor in Bocagrande, Cartagena, in the 50s. They divorced in 1928. She lived alone with several large dogs, whose names were those of American States (Virginia, Georgia, Massachusetts, etc.). How could I forget Mrs. Claybourn?

From: [Douglas.C.Otto.Jr@usace.army.mil](mailto:Douglas.C.Otto.Jr@usace.army.mil)

To: [jvmogollon@hotmail.com](mailto:jvmogollon@hotmail.com)

Subject: FW: Colonel Vanderburgh (UNCLASSIFIED)

Date: Fri, 20 Jul 2012 13:49:25 +0000

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

Caveats: NONE

Jose

Mr. Reinert was able to find out a little more information about C L Vandeburg, although any reports he may have prepared on Canal Del Dique will likely never be found.

At a minimum we were able to determine the correct spelling of his name, that he was a civilian working for the Isthmian Canal Commission, and his position with the Commission.

See message below . . .

V/R

Doug

Douglas C. Otto, Jr., P.E.

Chief, Engineering Division

Mobile District

251-690-2709

-----Original Message-----

From: Reinert, Eric A HQ02

Sent: Monday, July 16, 2012 8:01 AM

To: Martin, Cheryl B SAM Contractor

Subject: RE: Colonel Vanderburgh (UNCLASSIFIED)

I have located the elusive Vandeburg, which is the spelling on the document.

I have attached a copy of this document. It is from the 1913 annual report of the Isthmian Canal Commission, from the appendix containing the additional documents. This particular document is one of the many organization charts of the administrative structure of the organization. You can look at it of course, but in short, C.L. Vandeburg listed as a Junior Engineer Surveyor in the Second District of the Sixth Division, in charge of dredging. He is a civilian, rather than military.

I should also point out that while on the Panama Canal, Vandeburg, and all civilians were employees of the Isthmian Canal Commission (ICC), not the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Army Officers, while they were USACE, also reported to the ICC and the President of the United States, rather than the Chief of Engineers. In other words, the Panama Canal was not a Corps project (though it is sometimes mistakenly described as such,) even though Corps' Officers built it.

It is certainly possible that Vandeburg went on to work for USACE after his time on the canal, though I cannot document this. (The head of the division listed on the attached document, W.G. Comer, went on to a distinguished USACE career after the Panama Canal, rising to the equivalent of the chief of dredging in the Chief of Engineer's office.) However, I could find no record of Vandeburg him outside of this material. It is possible to research Vandeburg outside of the Office of History; at the very least it can be checked to see if he was a Corps / Federal Employee by checking the personnel records at the National Archives (a Word document is attached on the procedure to do this,) but this may not be helpful, as it does not seem to lead to the 1917 and 1920 reports your requestor is seeking. And, it is

not possible based on what we know to determine if these reports were under the auspices of USACE or done independently by Vandeburg as a private consultant / contractor, or as an employee of some other organization.

I hope this helps some. At least I was able to find this person, though not the papers he wrote.

Let me know if I can help more on this. It has been a fun challenge.

-Eric

Eric Reinert

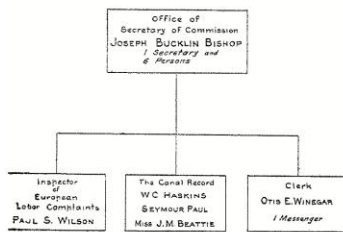
Curator

Office of History

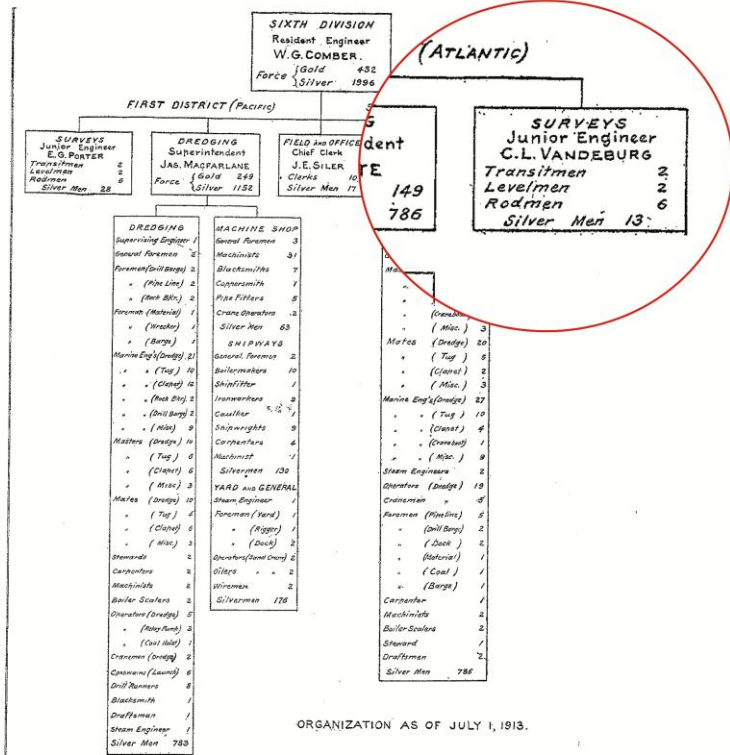
Headquarters

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

# Organigrama de la SEXTA DIVISIÓN de DRAGADOS de la Isthmian Canal Comission (ICC)



ORGANIZATION AS OF JULY 1, 1913.



ORGANIZATION AS OF JULY 1, 1913.

