

## In World War II, BWS Police Ensured All Was Quiet on the Watershed Front

**W**ith the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States was thrust into a world war. Life in every part of the country changed overnight with New York City being no exception. For its part, the Board of Water Supply (BWS) organized a seminar in February 1942 at which it presented a report entitled “Wartime Protection of Water Supply Systems” to the engineers of its sister agency the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity—the department responsible for operating the upstate and in city water systems. Both were predecessor agencies of DEP. In its introduction, the report gets right to the point with the assertion that “of all public utilities, water supply is the most affected by warfare.” This led to a detailed examination of how best to protect New York City’s water supply against enemy attack. The primary concerns were protecting



the water supply from sabotage and air attack, including explosives, poisons and bacteria.

The BWS Police constituted a key part of these protections. With a long and distinguished record of service before the war, these men were entrusted with additional responsibilities that lasted from 1941-1945. Normally assigned to protect water supply construction projects, expanded responsi-

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## Spotlight on Safety

### It Maybe Cold But Clean Air Is No Idle Pursuit

Now that the winter months are here, and temperatures drop—sometimes below freezing, some drivers of city vehicles keep the vehicle engine idling to keep warm.

NYC has sought to reduce air pollution through laws related to engine idling, and one of Mayor Bloomberg’s PlaNYC goals is to have the cleanest air quality of any big city in America. NYC has stringent engine idling regulations and fines. When driving a city—or any other vehicle—engine idling while parking, standing, or stopping is restricted. No motorized vehicle can idle for longer than three minutes unless it is being used to operate equipment.

Near schools, the requirement is even more stringent—one minute.

Excessive idling is not only a violation of the City’s Administrative Code and Rules, but idling wastes millions of gallons of fuel each year—not a small cost given today’s price of gasoline. Harmful air pollutants emitted from idling vehicles are hazardous to your health and have been shown to cause or exacerbate asthma, other respiratory problems and heart conditions. This winter, dress appropriately for the cold weather when carrying out your job duties and responsibilities, and turn off the engine—make NYC cleaner and healthier.

## Commissioner’s Corner

Nearly five months out, the effects of this summer’s storms linger upstate. DEP customers derive important benefits from our partnership with upstate communities, and DEP immediately sprang into action to provide emergency assistance, including when DEP officers hiked 10 miles on foot through washed out roads to evacuate 19 stranded residents in the Town of Shandaken. DEP has also committed significant resources to the recovery of our watershed, including debris removal and road repair crews as well as \$1 million to assist small business owners and \$7 million to remap flood plains to help local governments prepare in the future. We are continuing to assist with debris removal and stream restoration efforts in partnership with counties, towns, the State, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and are also assessing the use of land acquisition funds for flood plain buy-outs, all of which will help keep our water clean. One issue that has unfortunately persisted is the tremendous turbidity in the Ashokan Reservoir. This is not the first time that turbidity, or cloudiness, has been an issue. On one hand, it is a major threat to drinking water quality since high levels interfere with the disinfection process. On the other hand, the downstream communities want a void in the reservoir to help mitigate flooding - something we can do only through the use of the Ashokan Release Channel. Though the releases are governed by an Interim Protocol put in place by DEC, some members of the community have questioned our operational decisions. Their desire to have a lower Esopus Creek free of turbidity is understandable, but there are some serious constraints on our options if we want a reservoir able to better absorb the next rain storm. To try and elevate the conversation, Deputy Commissioner **Paul Rush** penned an op-ed that explains what our choices are and what went into making our decisions without any of the heated rhetoric. Last week, on my way back from Albany to discuss hydrofracking with DEC—something I will discuss in more detail next week—I stopped by the release channel again to view our operations firsthand.



frastructure Plan. It will mean that all new developments, public or private, will have to substantially reduce stormwater runoff from their properties, equating to onsite retention and detention systems like green roofs and recycling or subsurface storage systems. Since any new regulations will have a cost, the new rule was the product of two years of outreach with key stakeholders, and several items were incorporated into the final rule and companion guidance document based on the constructive feedback. Urban Green Council Executive Director **Russell Unger** called it “a fundamental shift in the city’s approach to stormwater management,” and Real Estate Board of New York President **Steven Spinola** said that the plan will “reap billions in savings over 20 years,” and “provide great relief to residents and businesses during economically difficult times.” A special thanks to **Julie Stein, David Ramia, Vincent Malveaux** and **Magdi Farag** for their hard work taking this concept and turning it into a workable requirement that all new developments must adhere to. This is a major win for all who value New York City’s waterways.

On a final note, **Kathryn Garcia’s** title is being converted from Deputy Commissioner for Operations to Chief Operating Officer—a step that I believe will strengthen the work of the operating bureaus (BWS, BWSO and BWT). Kathryn will now have overall responsibility for bridging any gaps between operating bureaus, development of long-range planning and asset management, and approval of capital and expense budgets. This function is critical as the agency is currently undertaking the Operational Excellence review with the international water utility experts to identify \$100 million per year in operating savings across all three operating bureaus. The COO also oversees the Office of Strategic Planning, which carries out key projects of Strategy 2011-2014 and develops and reports utility-wide metrics. Please join me in congratulating Kathryn.

At DEP, everyone is responsible for safety. If you or anyone on your team is concerned about your working conditions, it’s okay to ask your supervisor or your bureau’s EHS liaison how they can help. If you’ve still got questions, you can call the EHS Employee Concerns Hotline. It’s DEP’s responsibility to acknowledge and fix unsafe situations, procedures, and practices. With your help, we’ll not only get the job done, we’ll make it safer for ourselves, our coworkers, our families, and our city. CALL (800) 897-9677 OR SEND A MESSAGE THROUGH PIPELINE. HELP IS ON THE WAY.

Building on the momentum of the information gathering phase of the OpX program, 11 members of the Watershed Protection Program team recently jumped into the program with both feet last month, the last of a series of brainstorming sessions that took place throughout BWS. Following a brief review of the program's overall goals and objectives and a quick analysis of the current bureau structure, teams of four generated and shared their ideas about ways to reduce spending while maintaining an exemplary level of service.



Some of the group's ideas, which included taking closer looks at how the agency uses natural resources, and manages energy, real estate and engineering costs led to detailed discussions about potential cost savings and operational changes. One such initiative discussed during the workshop that has been identified as a priority and needing more detailed analysis is whether we can insure some of the stormwater management at Kensico Reservoir.

"You are here to help us explore new and more efficient ways to operate," Watershed Protection Program Special Assistant **Kimberlee Kane** told the group. "The workshops are meant to foster a team-work environment where all of you take ownership of the program and are free to make suggestions that will make us all better."

The OpX program team will review each of the ideas generated and will recommend that some move into the evaluation phase to determine feasibility and potential cost savings.

"We had an enthusiastic, engaged group participate in the OpX workshop in Kingston," said BWS Chief of Strategic Planning **Larry Beckhardt**. "That enthusiasm coupled with a sharp focus on achieving savings in the bureau and across the agency led to some interesting ideas to make us more efficient and reduce future water rate increases."

DEP's OpX teams will continue their work in the field into the New Year listening to your ideas about where and how we can gain operational efficiencies and continuing our march toward the goals outlined in Strategy 2011-2014.

It's your agency, your program and your ideas. Share them @ <http://pipeline>.

**DEP BLOOD DRIVE TOTALS:** DEP employees donated a total of 544 pints of blood during the December blood drive. Thanks to everyone for a successful drive.

DEP marks the passing of **Constantine Sidamon-Eristoff**, a former Environmental Protection Agency—Region 2 Administrator, who died on December 26. Mr. Eristoff helped shape the future of the New York City water supply with his support of the city's vision of watershed protection that would provide for at-the-source protection, rather than reliance on an expensive filtration system, as a way to protect the water supply system that serves nine million residents of New York State. His support was key to the agency receiving a filtration avoidance determination from the federal government, and New York City today remains one of only five major municipalities to have achieved this distinction.


(In World War II, BWS Police Ensured All Was Quiet... continued)

bilities included safeguarding the upstate water supply from Hillview Reservoir in Yonkers to the Ashokan Reservoir in the Catskill Mountains. This territory included the Croton system, parts of the Catskill system and the Delaware system still under construction.

Temporary patrolmen and guards were hired and trained to bolster the ranks of the BWS Police force. During the war, the number of precincts was increased from eight to nine with 123 foot patrol posts manned with 184 patrolmen (up from 101 in 1940) and 250 guards (a position exclusive to wartime protection). BWS ensured quality training for these men at the New York State Police School, with the Bomb Squad of the New York Police Department, and with the Winchester Arms Company among others. To ensure swift communication between the posts and the precincts a telephone system was installed along the line of the Catskill Aqueduct, and squad cars were maintained at each precinct to transport foot patrols to and from their posts. More men on the ground provided a reliable, potent force to oppose any enemy agent attempting to sabotage New York City's water supply. **Mayor Fiorello La Guardia** would authorize \$695,667.46 between 1942 and 1945 to cover BWS Police emergency expenses associated with protecting the upstate water supply under the auspices of the city's Civilian Defense Program.

For guidance on protection against air attack, BWS looked at how England and Germany handled water supply issues during wartime as outlined in the 1942 report *War-time Protection of Water Supply Systems*. This report suggested the protection of large dams from bombs and aerial torpedoes through the use of anti-torpedo nets, balloon barrages, anti-aircraft batteries and even camouflage. In addition to physical protection of the water supply, consideration was given to maintaining water supply service to the city if the upstate systems sustained damage by attack. One tactic was to distribute repair materials along cut-cover sections of the Catskill Aqueduct to expedite repairs. To ensure water supplies to the

city if the Catskill Aqueduct were damaged by air attack, the Delaware Aqueduct (complete except for certain operating equipment unavailable due to the war) was placed into emergency service between Kensico and Hillview reservoirs on April 8, 1942. This was accomplished by repurposing obsolete equipment from the Croton system. Additional sections of the Delaware Aqueduct would be placed into emergency service in 1943 and 1944. Fortunately, the war never came directly to New York City.

Protecting the water supply would only be one facet of BWS's contribution to the war effort. BWS employees (both men and women) also served in all the branches of the armed forces during World War II. The Delaware Water Supply News , BWS's monthly newsletter, followed its employees as they fought around the world. Sections of short letters and notices appeared in the newsletter throughout the conflict to inform colleagues of their experiences and the progress of the war. Women from BWS also joined, some serving in the US Naval Reserve (Women's Reserve), commonly known as WAVES, and at least one serving in the Marine Corps Reserve. **Loretta McDonough**, a secretary with BWS, joined the Marine Corps as private and was quickly promoted to the rank of sergeant.

By the end of the war, 277 BWS employees had served in the armed forces, with some making the ultimate sacrifice. One such person was Lieutenant Junior Grade **James A. Leussler**, who died in action on July 29, 1943 after sustaining fatal gunshot wounds. The Delaware Water Supply News, published a large photograph and obituary for Lieutenant Leussler who, before the war, was an engineering inspector for the Kensico Division. In its post-war annual report for the years 1940-1946 the BWS honored the service of its men and women who served in the armed forces and at home to protect the upstate water supply and to "eight of our men who, with high devotion and courage, made the supreme sacrifice. We will always be mindful of our loss."

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