

# The Castle



News and Information for the 412th Theater Engineer Command

**412<sup>th</sup> TEC engineers enhance  
OEF warfight effort**

see story page 8

**Echelons above Brigade Redesign:  
Setting Conditions for the Army of 2020**

see story page 10

# MOBILE DISTRACTION

## TEXTING



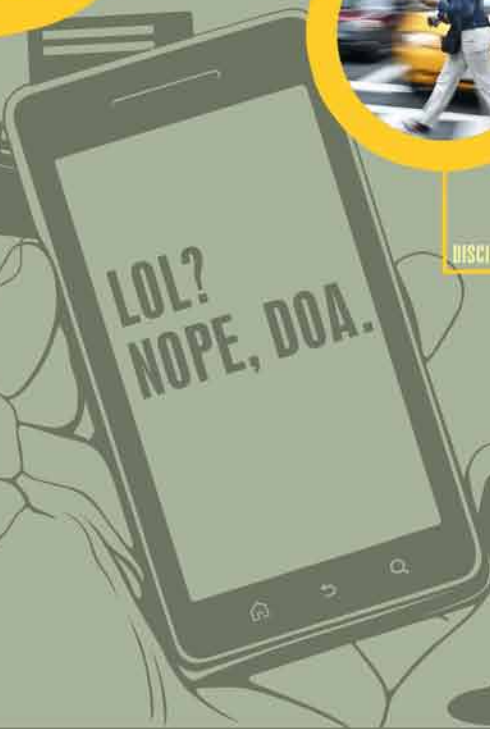
You know not to text and drive, but does your battle buddy?



STANDARDS

TRAINING

DISCIPLINE



KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT

know the

# signs

DO WHAT'S RIGHT

### Training, Discipline and Standards

Training, discipline and standards are the bedrock of our Army, and as Soldiers, you've been taught what right looks like. As leaders, you have a duty and a responsibility to maintain standards in your formations. You also have an obligation to your Soldiers and their Families to manage risk and take action to correct problems. In our fight against accidental injuries and fatalities, knowledge is the weapon of choice.



# The Castle

Spring 2013



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## 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command 'Build To Serve'

About the Cover: Combat engineers with the 459<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company from Bridgeport, W.Va. prepare to maneuver sections of an Improved Ribbon Bridge in a Bridge Erection Boat on the Arkansas River July 26 at Fort Chaffee, Ark. The floating bridge, which took three hours to complete, was the culmination event during River Assault 2012.

About the Back Cover: Photo of The Quarter-Cpl. Schmidt of D-249<sup>th</sup> Prime Power, 368<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, 302<sup>nd</sup> Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, competes in the annual International Lineman's Rodeo competition. The 249<sup>th</sup> team captured first place, the Best Lineman title for the second year in a row!

# A Word from the Commander

To all the 412<sup>th</sup> Family,

I am happy to be able to once again write a letter for our “CASTLE” magazine. I am also pleased to see great improvements across the board in our efforts to reach out and touch not only our own Soldiers and Families, but also many others in the Army Reserve and in local communities. We need to get our story out there. It is with tremendous pride that I serve with you. We should all feel enough pride in what we do to want to show our neighbors and friends.

I had the opportunity to be on a VTC with Lieutenant General Talley, Chief of Army Reserve. In that VTC we discussed four major areas. They were 1) suicides of our Soldiers, 2) the manning level of the Army Reserve, 3) Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF), and 4) the impact of sequestration and the fiscal concerns facing us.

As I looked at my notes from my last article, I see that I discussed suicides then. While I am sad that it is a recurring theme, we have to continue to do all we can to prevent one of our own from ending his or her life. This is a real problem in every formation. We have already had two suicides in the 412<sup>th</sup> this year. If **ANYONE** who reads this has an idea of how to make us all stronger and / or how to reach out to each other better, please call someone immediately and let us know. If you don't think you are being heard, use my open door policy and call or see me. There is nothing else more important to me!

While there are a number of complexities in the personnel business, to me it comes down to something very simple. Keep our good Soldiers in by providing the best possible training and opportunities. Each of you should ensure you are MOSQ and have the appropriate military schooling level. We need to retain quality Soldiers. This is the first step **ALL** of us need to take.

RAF, while a relatively new term in the Army Reserve lexicon, is one that has gotten a lot of press. Check out our web page to see some. General Odierno, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, has established the Army's support to the United States Commands with geographic responsibility as a key to the future of the Army. We in the Army Reserve and the TECs are putting a substantial amount of thought and effort to see how we help the rest

of the Army become successful in this while also improving our readiness. RAF has exciting possibilities for us all. As an immediate support method, the Army Reserve will be stationing a number of AGR Soldiers at the different Army Service Component Commands (ASCC) to help them get the best use of Army Reserve Soldiers. You will hear the terms AREC (Army Reserve Engagement Cell) and ARET (Army Reserve Engagement Team) often in the near future. These teams and cells are the U.S. Army Reserve way to provide support to RAF.

In the next issue of the “CASTLE”, I will try and discuss more the fiscal concerns in front of us. While we know we are going to be impacted negatively, we just don't know how far, yet. As I write this we are planning on furloughs and looking at what other measures we will have to take. I continue to hope, as I believe all of you do, that this will get worked out at the national level so we can focus on our important mission. Right now we just have to be prepared to do what is asked of us and yet maintain the most critical tasks. We have to ensure our deploying Soldiers and units are the best trained and equipped as we can make them.



A big change coming on the horizon is the departure of Command Sergeant Major Hatchell. He has stepped up and been dual hatted as the TEC CSM during Command Sergeant Major Flubacher's deployment. A great opportunity has come his way as he was recently selected to become the Command Sergeant Major for the 11<sup>th</sup> Theater Aviation Command in Ft. Knox, Kentucky. It just so happens that is where his wife and family are living and he is getting to go home. So the Army Reserve gets to keep benefiting from his great service and he gets to be stationed with his Family. Now that is a true “win-win” situation. We all wish him well as he moves on.

Always act Safely!  
HOOAH!!  
Essays!  
BUILD TO SERVE!!

MG William Buckler, Jr.

# The Command Sergeant Major's Corner

First and foremost, I want to say hello, and thanks to the Soldiers, Civilians and Families of the 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command. Hello, because I will have moved on to another command by the time this article is published, and thanks to all of you for the opportunity to serve as the interim command sergeant major for the best engineer command in the Army Reserve. CSM Ron Flubacher sends his greetings from Afghanistan where he and others are making a difference in the fight, and we wish them all a safe return. CSM Flubacher will be back later in the year and will reassume duties as command sergeant major of the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC.

Over the last 12 years of conflict we've learned a lot about our Army and how we fight. In October 2011, the Army published ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations, which combines previous operational doctrine with recent combat experience and defines our Army's basic warfighting doctrine and contributions to unified actions. In a nutshell, we must be prepared to go anywhere in the world and conduct the full range of military operations. This could be a full-blown forced entry kinetic fight to humanitarian assistance, stability operations, or defense support of civil authorities.

Senior Noncommissioned Officers need to read and know Army and Joint Doctrine and how it affects training. It changes the conditions for leader training all the way to individual training. What do I mean by that? We have trained and equipped our Soldiers for desert and mountain warfare for 12 years. A whole generation of Leaders and Soldiers know only the FOB desert fight. I want leaders to think how they can shift conditions and aggressively train tasks to produce a more resilient Soldier who can confidently adapt to any situation across the range of military operations.

Bringing it down a level or two, I want to thank those NCOs and First Line Leaders who have taken ownership of their section, squad or team and are tracking the readiness of their Soldiers through Leader Books and other mechanisms. It's reflected by an increase in medical readiness; more timely evaluations; and Soldiers who are better prepared to attend DMOSQ and NCOES courses. We still have work to do with Structured Self Development, APFT pass rates, individual weapon qualification and keeping Soldiers deployable.

Resources are constrained, so get your Soldiers to every training event to keep readiness up. Take every chance you can to be with your Soldiers, to know them and their Families. Let them know they can come to you with any issue; build that trust and never violate it. Contact them between battle assemblies, keep them informed and show that you care and want to keep them on your team. Promote your best, and coach and counsel the rest for success. If Soldiers cannot meet standard, then remove them. It is a two way street and Soldiers have a moral contract with our nation to meet their obligation.



We have great Citizen Soldiers in the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC, and I'm extremely thankful of the sacrifices you and your Families make daily for our Country and our freedom.

I wish you all the best, and have a safe and productive summer.

Soldiers First—Soldier for Life!  
“BUILD TO SERVE”  
CSM Steve Hatchell

**Soldiers First—Soldier for Life!**

**“BUILD TO SERVE”**

# Learn to Build Strong Bonds at a Retreat

*from the Command Chaplain*

An Army Strong Bonds weekend retreat is the biggest no-brainer since God! Soldiers are paid to attend, stay at a very nice resort and receive top notch instruction on communication skills, intimacy and conflict resolution without any out of pocket expenses.

Strong Bonds is a Chaplain led program that trains thousands of couples, single soldiers and family members on relationship enhancement skills each year. Attendees report significant improvement in their key relationships and, in the end, improve the Army's overall readiness rate.

A typical married couple, for example, has the opportunity to focus on each other and forget about their everyday life challenges, at least for a weekend. Our children were very young when my wife and I attended our first Couples Retreat and we marveled at actually having time to hold each other's hands and learn together.

A single soldier's retreat helps establish relationship goals and teaches skills needed to help make better choices

when picking a life partner. Attendees report a sense of inclusion that the Army now includes single soldier's in the Strong Bonds Program.



Soldiers looking to attend a Strong Bonds retreat should consult their unit Chaplain as well as the Strong Bonds website at [www.strongbonds.org](http://www.strongbonds.org). In general, Soldiers may attend one event per year that's located within 350 miles of their home of record. They must be up on DTS and family members planning on attending must be profiled. Because training seats are limited, early registration is always helpful.

So what about you? Ready to take the Strong Bonds plunge?

God bless you all richly!  
CH (COL) Timothy M. Samorajski

## FY13 Strong Bonds Events

ATTENTION CITIZEN SOLDIERS!

Living or assigned to a unit in the 81st Regional Support Command's AOR  
(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee). You can attend one event per fiscal year. The types of events are Singles (S), Married (M) and Family (F). Must live less than 450 miles from events. The only mileage exception is for Family Events.

DATE	CMD	TYPE	LOCATION	DATE	CMD	TYPE	LOCATION
11-13 JAN	81 RSC	M	NASHVILLE, TN	17-19 MAY	81 RSC	S	SAVANNAH, GA
08-10 FEB	81 RSC	M	ORLANDO, FL	20-23 JUN	81 RSC	F	ORLANDO, FL
22-24 FEB	81 RSC	S	ATLANTA, GA	18-21 JUL	81 RSC	F	CHARLESTON, SC
21-24 MAR	81 RSC	F	ORLANDO, FL	09-11 AUG	81 RSC	M,S	MOBILE, AL
19-21 APR	81 RSC	M	ASHEVILLE, NC	23-25 AUG	81 RSC	S	LOUISVILLE, KY

Visit <http://www.strongbonds.org> for more information and to register.

Questions? Contact us at [RSC081\\_Strongbonds@usar.army.mil](mailto:RSC081_Strongbonds@usar.army.mil) or call 803-751-3230/9621.

As of 25OCT12

# Thoughts from the Command Inspector General

The mission of the Office of the Inspector General is to inquire into and periodically report on the discipline, efficiency, economy, morale, training, and readiness of the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC to the Commander; perform other duties as required by regulation, law, or as directed by the Commander to enhance the command's war-fighting and readiness capability.

Each inspector general (IG) in the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC contributes to mission accomplishment through the conduct of the four inspector general functions: inspection, assistance, investigation, and teaching and training. Army Regulation 20-1 is the standard IGs follow and it is supplemented by various IG Guides published by the U.S. Army Inspector General School.

IG Inspections is the primary IG function and the one that allows IGs to have the greatest impact on readiness and war-fighting capability. The primary purpose of all IG inspections is to resolve systemic issues and, in doing so, to evaluate the effectiveness of Army policies, determine the root causes of noncompliance, and recommend changes to policy proponents. IG inspections support the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) by providing commanders with a unique capability to address malfunctioning systems within the command during the reset, train/ready, and available phases of ARFORGEN. Look for IG inspections to begin late 2013 or early 2014, as part of the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC's Organizational Inspection Program commonly referred to as OIP.

IG Assistance provides Soldiers, Family members, DA civilians, retirees, and contract employees the ability to seek help from the IG on matters affecting their health, welfare, and personal readiness. Anyone may submit a complaint, allegation, or request for information or assistance to any Army IG concern-

ing a matter of Army interest. The IG's role, as the commander's representative, is to resolve these issues within the limits of the IG system.

IG Investigations provide the commander another means through which to resolve allegations of impropriety, preserve confidence in the chain of command; and, if allegations are not substantiated, to protect the good name of the subject. IGs may investigate violations of policy, regulation, or law; mismanagement; unethical behavior; fraud; or misconduct.

IG Teaching and Training helps promulgate knowledge of the Army's systems, policies, and procedures to commanders, Soldiers, and civilians at all levels. Although it is often embedded in the other three IG Functions, it is also independent. This article for example, is a form of IG Teaching and Training on the IG system, independent of the other IG Functions.

Feel free to contact the IG for advice and assistance but ensure you have exhausted your command's opportunity to resolve the problem. You may contact an IG at 601-631-6175 / 6159 / 6173 / 6180 and 601-629-3456.

Sincerely,  
LTC James B. Franklin, Command IG



Feel free to contact the IG for advice and assistance but ensure you have exhausted your command's opportunity to resolve the problem. You may contact an IG at 601-631-6175 / 6159 / 6173 / 6180 and 601-629-3456.

# 412th TEC engineers enhance OEF warfight effort

Story by Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lyndon Miller, 412<sup>th</sup> TEC Public Affairs

VICKSBURG, Miss. – Since the time when the 412<sup>th</sup> Engineer Command was re-designated as the 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command in 2009, the Vicksburg, Miss., based headquarters and its down-trace units scattered throughout the eastern United States have contributed greatly to the engineer capabilities for Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 412<sup>th</sup> TEC provided a number of individual fillers, many Soldiers who either volunteered to go or were chosen to go. A current example is the command's own

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**“Fundamentally, the war could not be fought without us, as engineers supporting the effort.”**

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– Maj. Gen. William M. Buckler, Jr.

Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Flubacher, who is deployed as an individual fill to the U. S. Corps of Engineers as the command sergeant major for one of the Afghan Engineer Districts.

Maj. Gen. William M. Buckler, Jr., commanding general of 412<sup>th</sup> TEC, gets a weekly report on

how many individuals are deployed. As of February 9, 2013, the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC has 19 soldiers deployed as individuals. “I’ve seen as many as up to 100 Soldiers deployed as individuals,” Buckler said.

Such individual Soldiers may be selected when, say, a surveyor is

Engineers of Joint Task Force (JTF) Empire construct a bridge in southern Afghanistan. Bridging operations were a major concern for the JTF partnered with IJC assets throughout the country to maintain bridge crossings open for coalition and Afghan traffic. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Jason Armano, Joint Task Force Empire)



needed to fill a vacancy in another unit.

At the company level, the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC supported OEF with route clearance, both horizontal and vertical construction and with headquarters personnel. From a larger, operational perspective, Soldiers of the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC provided several major pieces of support to the engineer effort overall.

Foremost, in 2009, a deployable command post was sent to Afghanistan and established a joint force engineer command, which was responsible for command and control of engineers above the division and regional command level. It also was dual-hatted, being responsible for manning the United States Forces–Afghanistan staff. 412<sup>th</sup> TEC soldiers also supplied unofficial individual fillers to the engineer staff of the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command.

The joint force engineer command did not have responsibility for all engineers and engineer work in Afghanistan. That task was given to Brig. Gen. David L. Weeks, commander of the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade. Weeks and his staff in Joint Task Force Empire had command and control of all the engineers in the country, a major contribution of 412<sup>th</sup> TEC Soldiers to the OEF effort.

At times, 412<sup>th</sup> TEC soldiers have paid the ultimate price in service to their country.

“I was privileged but saddened in November, when I attended three funerals of Soldiers who lost their lives during a route clearance mission,” Buckler said. “I also visited,

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**“I was privileged but saddened in November, when I attended three funerals of Soldiers who lost their lives during a route clearance mission,” Buckler said. “I also visited, just recently, another soldier in the hospital from that same incident.”**

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– Maj. Gen. William M. Buckler, Jr.

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just recently, another soldier in the hospital from that same incident.”

In addition to the establishment of the joint force engineer command and sustained engineer staff support for USFOR-A and the ISAF Joint Command, the deployable command post was tasked with an infrastructure training advisory team mission.

The teams are actually out training the Afghan National Security Forces, whether police or army, so they will be able to maintain their own facilities and infrastructure, which is critical when the U.S. turns over the country to the Afghans.

“We have to train them up, and we have people doing that also,” Buckler said.

As the U.S draws down in Afghanistan, there will always be that need for engineers to reposition and ensure facilities are ready as the configuration of U.S forces changes on the battlefield.

“We also have to close the facilities properly, take the buildings down and return the land to some usable form to ensure there are no environmental issues,” Buckler said. “We need to work that piece with the local populace in order

to leave them with either facilities that are functional or land that will be used in other ways.”

The 412<sup>th</sup> TEC still has forces projected to go to Afghanistan until the last of the troops are there at the end of 2014.

“Approximately 10 companies are scheduled for deployment to Afghanistan in 2014,” said Master Sgt. Bradley M. Haley, G3 Readiness MOB NCO for personnel at the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC. “Out of the 10 companies, four are route clearance units,” he said. “As long as we have troops over there, we’ll have route clearance until things get wrapped up.”

“I see us as an integral part of supporting the effort until the last of the boots come off the ground,” Buckler said. “I am surprised at the number of units we have online to deploy. We have a substantial amount,” he said.

According to Haley, approximately 2,318 Soldiers within the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC were or will be deployed to Afghanistan from 2009 to 2014.

“Fundamentally, the war could not be fought without us, as engineers supporting the effort,” Buckler said.

# Echelons Above Brigade Redesign: Setting Conditions for the Army of 2020

Story by Colonel Adam S. Roth

At the conclusion of ENFORCE 2012, the Commandant of the U.S. Army Engineer School ordered that the Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate at the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, examine engineer forces in echelons above brigade (EAB). With the establishment of the brigade engineer battalion (BEB) a near certainty, the challenge was to look at what formations and capabilities remained to support the developing concept of the Army of 2020. The Army of 2020, which will be predominantly based in the continental United States, requires us to look holistically at the Engineer Regiment. We need to consider the capabilities that we may need and those we may have lost in more than 10 years of stability operations using well-established key terrain in the form of aerial ports of debarkation and seaports of debarkation. That key terrain fueled the mountains of steel that have become the American way of war. We need to look at what the “new” way of war will be and how engineers will set conditions for its success. The engineers of the Army of 2020 must—

- Enable the seizure, establishment, and expansion of lodgments in an immature theater.
- Be technically and tactically capable.
- Serve as the “Swiss Army knife” of the Army.

Everything we do in the Engineer Regiment emanates from the four lines of engineer support:

- Assure mobility.
- Enhance protection.
- Enable expeditionary force projection and logistics.
- Develop partner capacity and infrastructure.

This article highlights the role of two major formations. The BEB addresses only the first two lines of engineer support. The EAB redesign must produce formations that support all four lines of engineer support.

## **BEB**

When the BEB is finally implemented, it will provide critical mobility, countermobility, and survivability capabilities at the point of need in support of the maneuver commander. While there will be very little vertical construction capability in the BEB modified table of organization and equipment, there are many opportunities for developing that capability:

- The BEB will serve as a mission command structure capable of assuming numerous EAB units, including construction forces.
- Echoing the Engineer School Commandant’s desire to have no “single-purpose engineer forces,” the combat engineers who make up the majority of the BEB may be required to develop basic construction skills above the level of erecting a HESCO® bastion.
- The BEB will include an engineer construction technician who can provide in-house training for BEB personnel and provide design capability, quality control, and electrical power management.
- The BEB may also cross-train with other construction forces with which it habitually associates.

Now that the BEB is becoming a reality, we look toward the types of units and capabilities that are required to provide the maneuver commander with solutions to problems at the point of need that span the combat, construction, and geospatial engineering disciplines.

## **EAB Redesign Community of Practice**

The members of the EAB redesign initiative formed a community of practice across all three components: Regular Army, Army National Guard, and U.S. Army Reserve. It included representatives from the Joint Staff and the staffs of Department of the Army, U.S. Army Forces Command, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, all Army service component

commands (ASCCs), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Guard Bureau, U.S. Army Reserve Command, and anyone who wanted to share in the stewardship of the Engineer Regiment. The community of practice is informed by the concepts of gaining and maintaining access and sea basing and by the results of the Unified Quest series of exercises such as AirSea Battle, sponsored by U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's Army Capabilities Integration Center. It also considers the emerging lessons learned and insights that fuel new Army trends such as the Army capstone operating concepts. The community of practice has met regularly via teleconference and in person since ENFORCE, has been studying the broad requirements of the maneuver commander in the Army of 2020, and has been ensuring that the Engineer Regimental Campaign Plan and all EAB redesign concepts are fully nested within those Army and joint concepts.

## Community of Practice Goals and Initiative

The goal of the community of practice is to inform the Total Army Analysis process that addresses fiscal year (FY) 2016–2020 by gathering views from the field about what will be needed to support the expeditionary Army of 2020. The Army has set benchmarks which will lead to restructuring objectives by FY20. The community of practice is closely following those timelines to provide real-time inputs to the process. Membership in the community is very simple; interested stewards of the Engineer Regiment should contact the author at <[adam.roth@us.army.mil](mailto:adam.roth@us.army.mil)> to materially contribute.

The major initiatives that the EAB redesign community of practice is now working on to inform the FY15–FY19 Total Army Analysis are as follows:

- **Engineer Construction Company.** A seminar in July evaluated numerous courses of action to get a more versatile company that combined vertical and horizontal capabilities. One potential solution, with a mixture of light and heavy, vertical and horizontal platoons, would allow predominantly horizontal engineer support for the lodgment and vertical support for later phases. The results of a survey conducted earlier this year will fuel the next force design update (FDU), coming in FY13.

**“With the pending reduction in U.S. Navy construction battalions and the loss of overseas contingency operations funds, the community of practice and the special operations forces community are developing a concept unit that would be employed in ways similar to the 249<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion (Prime Power).”**

- **Special Operations Forces Engineer Support Squadron.** The Engineer School Commandant said during ENFORCE that special operation forces will remain as the “11th Army division” in contact for the next generation. With the pending reduction in U.S. Navy construction battalions and the loss of overseas contingency operations funds, the community of practice and the special operations forces community are developing a concept unit that would be employed in ways similar to the 249th Engineer Battalion (Prime Power). It would have linkages at the ASCC level for tailored force packages of highly skilled, cross-trained, and credentialed engineer Soldiers who are able to engage in the full range of military operations. The Capability Development and Integration Directorate at the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence is cooperating in the unit's development, and the concept of the interdependence of special operations and conventional forces remains a driving force for this emerging capability.
- **Geospatial Planning Cell (GPC) Redesign.** There are currently not enough GPCs for every ASCC element, and the community of practice is finishing what will become an FDU to provide geospatial capability at every ASCC and ensure that key geospatial engineer and geospatial engineering technician leadership is available to mission command nodes. It will also ensure career progression within the GPCs. The contribution of geospatial intelligence to the joint force commander remains a critical capability that sets conditions for all phases of operations by special operations and conventional forces. The community of practice is studying ways to provide that critical capability at the point of need.

- **Early Entry and Setting the Theater.** A key area for discussion and development by the community of practice is determining early-entry and forcible-entry capabilities that support amphibious (littoral) and vertical (airborne/air assault) maneuver to secure a lodgment and support the expeditionary Army of 2020. A strategic partnership with the U.S. Army Transportation School is being formed to support this initiative, and Engineer School leaders recently attended a joint logistics over-the-shore exercise at Fort Story, Virginia, in late August 2012. Key lessons learned from that training event, coupled with numerous video teleconferences, will drive the true requirements and capabilities determination process, which will affect the complexion of EAB and BEB forces. Few have had the opportunity to conduct training or real operations in these areas since the start of the War on Terrorism. The Engineer Regiment needs to recoup institutional knowledge, including historical studies. This is where readers can make their most significant contributions.



Soldiers of D-249<sup>th</sup> Prime Power, 368<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, 302<sup>nd</sup> Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, took first place in this year's International Lineman's Rodeo. It is the second year in a row that the 249<sup>th</sup> walked away with the Best Lineman title.

- **Regular Army/Reserve Component Roles and Integration.** By FY 2018, the Engineer Regiment will be composed of 19 percent Regular Army and 81 percent Reserve Component Soldiers. The first order of business for the community of practice will be to answer the questions: What must be done? and Who will do it? The term *operational reserve* takes on significance when speaking of the EAB engineer force. The community of practice will examine how to keep the Reserve Component operational and relevant to these plans and concepts and will do so against the backdrop of declining fiscal resources. The Army Reserve Engineer General Officer Steering Committee, the Army National Guard

Engineer Advisory Team, and the combined Chief of Engineers Reserve Component Engineer Council are partners in determining how the Reserve Component will remain relevant and ready to sustain Engineer Regimental requirements supporting the Army of 2020.

Starting in FY13, the community of practice will continue with additional initiatives, all in support of the FY16–20 Total Army Analysis:

**Combat Company FDU.** The key determinant of this update will be what items are actually approved in the BEB modified table of organization and equipment. Realizing that the strengths of the BEB lie in

mobility, countermobility, and survivability, a definitive gap analysis can determine what reinforcement may be required. That analysis will consider capability and capacity by the addition of EAB engineer units for the tactical fight and for requirements that potentially set the theater as well.

- **EAB Engineer Battalion FDU.** Critical to this discussion will be whether the Army of 2020 requires sole-purpose battalions (combat or construction) or multifunctional battalions at EAB. An additional concern is whether the reversal of modularization (the return of A, B, and C companies) might also serve to habituate engineer support and provide a more stable platform for mentoring. Working hand in hand with logistics and joint partners, these EAB battalions will probably be critical in future plans for setting the theater and for early-entry operations. The other question that must be considered is “How this battalion will be effective across the entire range of military operations, such as supporting theater security cooperation in Phase Zero, supporting the initial fight in Phases 2 and 3, and also supporting the transition to stability operations in Phase 4 and beyond?”
- **Urban Search-and-Rescue Concept Plan.** The Engineer School has assumed proponency for this unique capability. Units such as the 911th Engineer Company and numerous formations under Defense Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosive Response Force and the Homeland Response Force rely on this capability. The Engineer School and the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence continue to define requirements and conduct experiments across the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities domain, moving this capability toward institutionalization.
- **Concept Plan for Contingency Basing Management and Operations.** This will serve as the focus for many evolving concepts that include operational energy; base camp development, expansion, and closure; and the Contingency Basing Integration Technology Evaluation Center. Lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom and Army level forums are fueling the discussion about integrating

and institutionalizing these concepts. The more that these concepts are integrated, the less need there will be for a logistics-intensive tail for the expeditionary Army of 2020, which will be forced to operate efficiently in austere environments.

- **Theater Engineer Command (TEC) Redesign.** The TEC, currently the highest echelon of mission command in the Engineer Regiment, requires re-evaluation. The TECs (including their subordinate, deployable command posts) have not been used as intended since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Also, the TEC structure has focused more on mission command and less on technical competence, which had been an engineer strength. The TEC redesign will examine ways to restore technical competence, incorporate all Army components into this unique and critical asset, and look at including joint equities, perhaps by creating a joint TEC. Most importantly, it will seek to create a unit that will be deployed and employed.

## Summary

The EAB redesign and the community of practice are initiatives that have been well supported by the field. This article is meant to provide a status report on how far the initiatives have progressed and to solicit support from anyone who has not yet had the opportunity to contribute. We are bound only by the passion of the Engineer Regiment members to create the most responsive formations to support the maneuver commander at the point of need. As always, the author welcomes vociferous debate.

*Colonel Roth serves as the Deputy Assistant Commandant (Army Reserve) at the U.S. Army Engineer School. Before graduating from the U.S. Army War College, he served as the commander of the 844<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion and deployed to Iraq as part of Task Force Sky. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and holds a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Boston University.*

*Article was originally published in the September-December 2012 edition of The Engineer magazine, the professional bulletin of Army engineers.*

# Soldiers to Battle

## for 412<sup>th</sup> TEC 'Best Warrior' Title

*Story by Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lyndon Miller,  
412<sup>th</sup> TEC Public Affairs*

VICKSBURG, Miss. – “The Best Warrior Competition is a development program as well as a recognition program,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Steven M. Hatchell, interim command sergeant major of 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command.

“First, it develops junior leaders and NCOs, because they have to prepare for this thing a year out. For those Soldiers who are truly interested, it gets them outside their comfort zone,” he said.

To be recognized a winner, “it’ll take someone with dedication, initiative, with the ability to learn, adapt, and to think critically in various situations,” Hatchell said.

“The byproducts, the second, third, fourth order effects of the BWC, is that develops the future leadership,” Hatchell said. “It helps the NCOs themselves who are participating, and it develops the NCOs who are helping the juniors Soldiers get ready. It just makes an all-around better Soldier,” he said.

The 302 Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, located in Chicopee, Mass., 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, will conduct the TEC-wide 2013 Best Warrior Competition from April 20-27, at Fort Devens, Mass.

The BWC is designed to test the mental and physical stamina and tactical and technical skills of the participants.

The week-long event will ensure that the best NCOs and Soldiers in the command are selected and prepared to represent the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC during the United States Army Reserve Command BWC in June at Fort McCoy, Wis.

All 412<sup>th</sup> TEC brigades, direct reporting units and the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC Headquarters and Headquarters Company will send Soldiers to the competition.

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**“My intent is to have the competitors go back to their units and talk about the experience in the BWC.”**

– Command Sgt. Maj. Cedric Green

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The 302 MEB’s Command Sgt. Maj. Cedric Green is designated as the Senior NCO responsible for the overall planning, coordination, and execution of the event.

“It’s an honor to be a part of the TEC’s best warrior competition,” Green said.

“I want a safe and fun event,” he said, but “we are putting together a competition that will challenge the soldiers” too.

A “fun twist” to the BWC will be the Green Course, named after Command Sgt. Maj. Green himself.

Part of the Green Course will consist of a reflexive fire event, where Soldiers will shoot their M4 rifles, move to cover, then transition to the M9 pistol and shoot from behind a humvee.

As well as producing the best Soldiers to represent the 412<sup>th</sup> TEC at the USARC BWC this summer, Green said that it is not just about preparing for all that one-time event. It is about affecting change back in the units.

“My intent is to have the competitors go back to their units and talk about the experience in the BWC,” Green said.

We will be looking at everything at the BWC, Green said. “Is your name tag perfect on your dress uniform, are your ribbons placed perfectly.” The Soldiers are going to take that back, to maybe a dining-out event, and they will be checking each other’s uniforms for correctness, he said.



Command Sgt. Maj. Cedric Green, senior enlisted leader 302<sup>nd</sup> Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, directs a Soldier running from a firing point during the reflexive fire qualification at last year's 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command's 2012 Best Warrior Competition at Fort Rucker, Ala., in April. (Photo by William J. Taylor, 314<sup>th</sup> PAOC)

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**“Soldiers are required to carry a 35-pound ruck sack and will wear full body armor. You’re not going anywhere in Afghanistan without that body armor.”**

– Command Sgt. Maj. Cedric Green

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All participants are required to meet Army height and weight standards and must have passed the Army physical fitness test with a minimum score of 270 within six months before the BWC starts. Other qualifications to compete include combatives skill level 1 certification, familiarity with the operation of the Defense Advanced GPS Receiver, and know how to safely maintain and operate the M9 pistol, the M4 rifle and the M249 and M240B machine guns.

The Soldiers will also need to have completed the combat lifesaver course or recertification course. They will also be assessed in various military topics such as, day and night land navigation and orienteering,

day and night M4 rifle qualification, a written exam and essay, 10 warrior tasks, battle drills and a foot march, all relevant to today's operating environment.

“Soldiers are required to carry a 35-pound ruck sack and will wear full body armor,” Green said, underscoring the combat relevance of the event. “You’re not going anywhere in Afghanistan without that body armor.”

Most of the things tested for in the competition, the skills, knowledge and abilities needed, “are required by the Soldiers in combat,” Green said.

# 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade

## leaves legacy in Afghanistan

Story by Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith, 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade

**B**AGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – History is written, not in ink, but in accomplishment. It is the legacy left to those who come after. Generations to come will judge the accomplishments of today in context to its effect on tomorrow.

With the completion of its mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, home stationed in New Windsor, N.Y., stamps its legacy into the annals of not only Afghanistan’s history, but in the military tomes of engineering doctrine.

As Joint Task Force Empire, the members of the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, headquartered at Bagram Air Field, with technical representative staffs throughout Afghanistan, executed sustained, multifunctional engineer operations as the lead engineer force assigned to U.S. Forces – Afghanistan. JTF Empire planned and executed multiple lines of operations, including combat and construction engineering in addition to extensive partnership with Afghan National Army engineers. During its nine-month deployment, JTF Empire continually consolidated military engineer assets in line with force drawdown, ultimately transitioning engineer effects to a single brigade engineer command for the entire Combined Joint Operations Area – Afghanistan, becoming the fourth largest NATO command element in theater.

### Each step is part of the journey

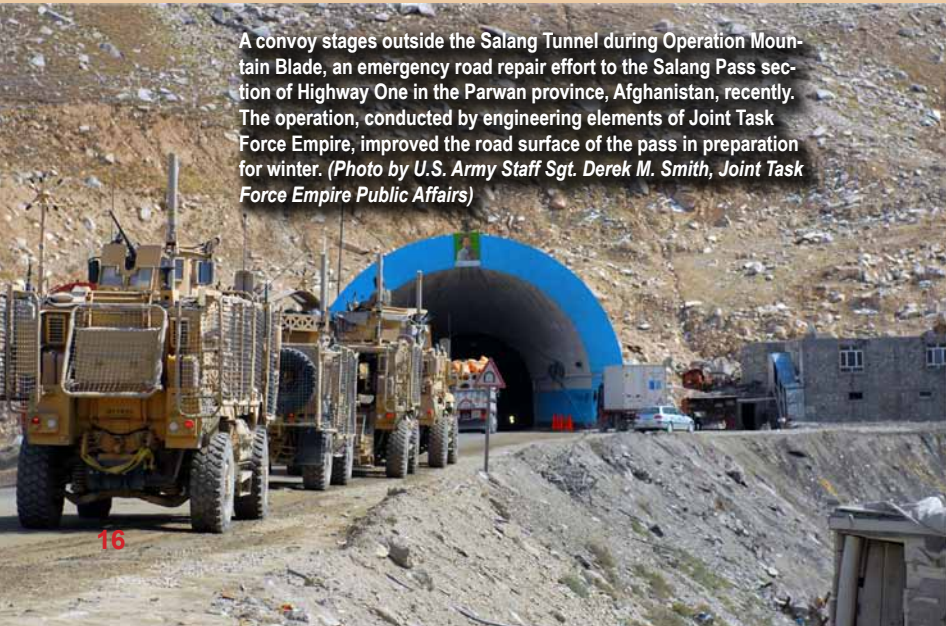
JTF Empire began its mission May 17, 2012, arriving in Afghanistan and establishing its operations as part of NATO’s International Security Assistance Force. It assumed responsibility of engineer operations in Regional Commands – East, Capital and North, relieving the 18<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade June 4. The brigade managed engineering oversight, planning, and conducted combat, construction and partnership operations throughout the northern and eastern engineer regions of Afghanistan. The members of the brigade focused operations with a single-minded purpose: The key to their success was the partnership with Afghans to enable them to operate independently.

The 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade assumed mission command of all units previously assigned to 22<sup>nd</sup> Naval Construction Regiment, July 31. This transition required 411<sup>th</sup> to absorb two additional engineer battalions. These battalions, NMCB 11 and the U.S. Army 980<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, were located in RC-Southwest and South, respectively.

JTF Empire effectively expanded from four construction companies to eight, included the addition of a multi-role bridge company, and increased the size of the JTF by 1,098 soldiers and sailors. This set the conditions for JTF Empire to be the single, theater engineer brigade for all of Afghanistan.

“The biggest part of putting this together was realizing the magnitude of the mission and putting soldiers in the mindset of the complexity of it,” explained Brig. Gen. David L. Weeks, commanding general of the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade. “The mission is huge, but it’s something we have trained for.”

JTF Empire assumed control of all engineer task forces in the entire CJOA-A by the end of October. The JTF consisted of 46 distinct units and more than 5,300 soldiers, sailors and airmen.



A convoy stages outside the Salang Tunnel during Operation Mountain Blade, an emergency road repair effort to the Salang Pass section of Highway One in the Parwan province, Afghanistan, recently. The operation, conducted by engineering elements of Joint Task Force Empire, improved the road surface of the pass in preparation for winter. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith, Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs)

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**“The biggest part of putting this together was realizing the magnitude of the mission and putting soldiers in the mindset of the complexity of it.”**

– Brig. Gen. David L. Weeks

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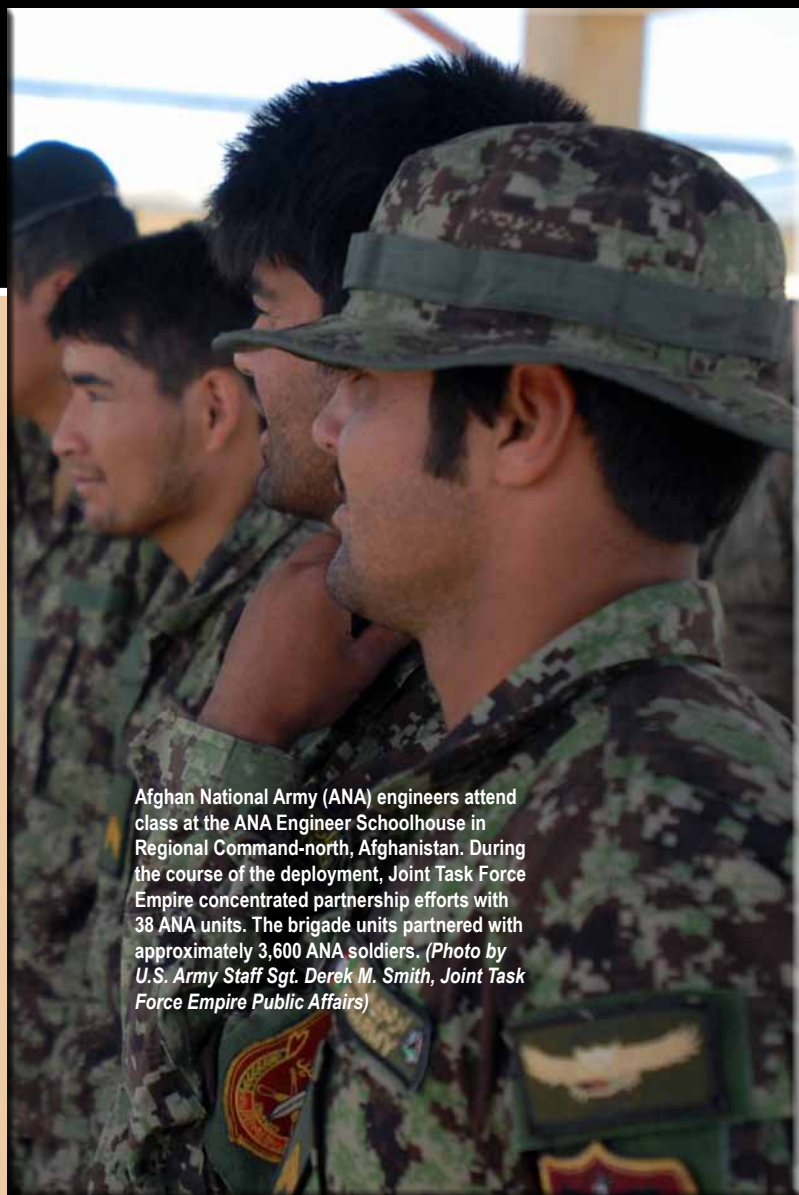
The brigade consisted of the 841<sup>st</sup>, 507<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 120<sup>th</sup> and 178<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalions; NMCBs 11 and 133; and the 577<sup>th</sup> and 777<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Prime BEEF Squadron (EPBS) Air Force engineers. The JTF also provide tactical command over 200 supplemental engineers conducting construction projects in various areas of the country. JTF Empire’s mission was to provide synchronized combat and construction engineer effects through combined actions in support of ISAF Joint Command operations to improve security, development, and governance of the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. With 55 route clearance packages under its command and control, JTF Empire’s combat engineer assets cleared roads of explosive hazards daily.

“The 411<sup>th</sup> has always been delegated as a theater engineer brigade, and that’s the exact role we are serving in right now,” said Weeks. “Essentially, we are the only engineer brigade – one of 17 in the Army Engineer Regiment – in combat. We became the only engineer command element within the whole theater.”

## **Working toward Afghan success**

During the course of the deployment, JTF Empire concentrated partnership efforts with 38 ANA units. The brigade units partnered with approximately 3,600 ANA soldiers in route clearance companies, engineer companies, the ANA Engineer Schoolhouse, the Combined Fielding Center and other organizations to effectively train Afghan soldiers in independent engineer operations. Members of JTF Empire developed its professionalism campaign to standardize training tasks, specific required tasks, as well as forming the first quantitative method of evaluating ANA engineer units.

“We crafted a professionalism campaign that is geared toward individual level proficiency. We’re talking sustainment, administrative, [tactical operation center] operations, leadership, and also [military occupational specialty]-specific technical proficiency,”



Afghan National Army (ANA) engineers attend class at the ANA Engineer Schoolhouse in Regional Command-north, Afghanistan. During the course of the deployment, Joint Task Force Empire concentrated partnership efforts with 38 ANA units. The brigade units partnered with approximately 3,600 ANA soldiers. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith, Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs)

explained Lt. Col. Jon Brierton, JTF Empire chief of operations and ANA development officer.

A mere three months after initiating the professionalism campaign, task and process effectiveness were markedly increased and 67 percent of the ANA units were postured for independent operations, nearly four months ahead of the IJC deadline. JTF Empire conducted 1,064 training events and 1,120 combined operations across all six RCs. JTF Empire fielded, deployed, and trained the first-ever 403-man ANA engineer battalion, providing the only organic vertical construction capability in Afghanistan. The JTF set the groundwork for future ANA engineer success by setting conditions for five more ANA engineer battalions, seven mobile strike forces, and the Afghan National Engineer Brigade, as well as assisting with field testing of alternate counter-IED equipment that



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**Ultimately, we provided a lasting foundation for the ANA engineers to continue to support their army and the people of Afghanistan. That will help provide the construction effects and develop and support their infrastructure, and enable them to continue to grow not only as an army, but as a society.”**

– Lt. Col. Matthew S. Warne

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will equip approximately 200 ANA units across the country.

“We have had an aggressive training program that, to date, has resulted in seven out of the 24 units being validated. They have achieved an independent operation status,” Brierton continued. “More than 90 percent of the remaining RCCs [route clearance companies] and engineer coys are at an ‘effective with advisor’ status. They can conduct operations with limited advisement and are on the glide path to achieve independence by the end of March.”

Brierton pointed out that this success was not without its challenges. The ANA’s supply system is a hurdle being addressed, but remains a concern to its engineers’ effectiveness. Additionally, the rise of green on blue incidents spiked during the height of partnership missions and training. This concern required careful planning in operations under stricter security measures.

“We’ve changed the scope of the landscape in terms of building ANA engineer capability,” echoed Lt. Col. Matthew S. Warne, JTF Empire operations officer. “When you look at how the elements come together, that allows the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] to be successful. That’s why we were here. During this time of transition, the ANSF was being placed in the lead through ISAF and IJC. We provided a huge role in that from an engineer standpoint; that being our primary line of effort. The 411<sup>th</sup> changed that landscape and changed history by allowing them to

advance within their system. That will be long lasting and I think overall, that gives the sense of pride for all of our soldiers that we took on that difficult mission.”

“Ultimately, we provided a lasting foundation for the ANA engineers to continue to support their army and the people of Afghanistan,” Warne added. “That will help provide the construction effects and develop and support their infrastructure, and enable them to continue to grow not only as an army, but as a society.”

“They’re definitely prepared,” Brierton asserted. “Conditions have been set to accelerate the ANSF into the lead in terms of their ability to operate independently.”

### **Challenge was the norm**

The 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, unlike its predecessor, reported directly to IJC as a theater asset. This change allowed the JTF greater authority in prioritizing efforts and capabilities throughout Afghanistan. During the month of July, JTF Empire brigade staff established their systems and produced a common operating picture.

“I don’t think we ever looked at this as overwhelming,” Weeks reflected. “We had a very concise site picture of what the mission looked like. We looked at our predecessor’s mission and asked ‘will we ever be at the level?’ Ultimately, we surpassed that level.”

Similar engineer command force structures had been attempted in the past with arguably limited

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**“I would not say the staff or the down trace was overwhelmed or hesitant about the scope. We all went into this deployment with eyes wide open, knowing what we were about to encounter and potentially achieve. As our efforts increased, so did our situational awareness and understanding. We became more experienced, more efficient with the processes that we developed and improved upon.”**

– Lt. Col. Jon Brierton

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success; most recently with the formation of the Joint Force Engineer Command – Afghanistan from 2009 through 2010. Ultimately, all U.S. engineer assets transitioned to ISAF in March, 2010 and the JFEC-A was absorbed and relegated to the USFOR-A Joint Engineer section, supporting only those engineer operations that supported U.S. forces.

“This type of arrangement was attempted a couple years ago by deploying elements of the theater engineer commands called deployable command posts [DCPs],” elaborated Weeks. “However, the DCP arrangement as intended, I do not believe worked. The DCPs from that point forward never served in a capacity of a theater element. What’s happened is the DCPs have been fragmented out to different staff elements on an individual soldier basis rather than a key mission command element.”

It may be said that necessity is the muse to success. As the troop drawdown continued, it became necessary to effectively consolidate engineer efforts throughout the CJOA-A. The specter of unsuccessful singular engineer commands of the past did not sway the command of the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade as it meticulously structured operations. This involved standard operations, as well as many staff members stepping outside their typical realms.

Upon assuming command and control in June, JTF Empire published the Engineer Campaign Support

Plan. This plan serves as a baseline for conducting engineer operations in support of IJC. As JTF Empire’s responsibility increased, the ECSP was continually expanded to meet mission requirements and improve cooperation between the engineers and the battle space owners.

“I would not say the staff or the down trace was overwhelmed or hesitant about the scope,” recalled Brierton. “We all went into this deployment with eyes wide open, knowing what we were about to encounter and potentially achieve. As our efforts increased, so did our situational awareness and understanding. We became more experienced, more efficient with the processes that we developed and improved upon.”

“We had developed our systems coming out of our validation exercises and synchronized and integrated as a staff,” added Warne. “The exercises only get you to a certain level, but that foundation is there; we could build on it and expand our ability to control engineer forces.”

“You have to have that ability to project that mission command,” Warne continued in regard to a singular engineer theater command. “We did that through setting up three cells and that enable us to develop the future operations picture plus have a connection to the current operations that provided that vision. What made it more difficult was that we had some very strategic and large missions on top of just

running normal operations. Managing that work load is a difficult task that we do every day.”

“Transitioning that southern part of the theater was difficult in that we replaced the whole brigade with a smaller cell,” Warne recalled. “Then we built a cell in the southwest so we had the right command and control ability for the task forces. Though the task forces were running current operations we had to develop systems that were much more streamlined in order to conduct those brigade operations while still conducting the ones to the north and east. It took quite a bit of effort to integrate and synchronize the battle rhythm [of various organizations] and maintain our continuity across the theater.”

“We had to prioritize and synchronize the construction effects which were not a part of our predecessor’s skill set,” explained Warne. “We basically [exceeded] their operational requirements. We picked up more Army construction and a whole Naval construction battalion and then we had to look across the whole Afghan theater of operations to ensure we were working on the right priorities for IJC and the regional commanders based on what resources we had.”

Throughout the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade’s deployment, there was constant change in its force flow. JTF Empire saw six battalions, 22 companies and four detachments redeploy. The following month of each transitioned unit was predominantly spent training, mentoring, and validating the new battalions while setting them up for success.

Contributing to that success, JTF Empire Intelligence set historical precedent as the first non-battle space owner in the OEF’s 11 years to have a seat representing its TFs at the IJC level for intelligence,

surveillance and reconnaissance collection requirements previously afforded only to regional commands and higher entities.

As part of JTF Empire, the 558<sup>th</sup> Explosive Hazards Coordination Cell oversaw multiple facets of route clearance support to include a mobile observation team, intelligence reports and explosive hazards tracking, and oversight of the Blow-in-Place Theater-Specific Training Course. The MOTs studied route clearance patrol data and distributed more than 75 weekly and monthly analysis products showing the IED trends and emerging tactics, techniques, and procedures. The BIP-TST course certified over 404 engineers, better enabling them to clear routes of IEDs.

In response to the drawdown, JTF Empire Logistics, beginning in August, saw the need to organize and reconsolidate the multiple Bill of Material yards throughout the CJOA-A. The brigade sent teams to operational BOM yards throughout the country and organized over \$87 million of BOM, increasing material availability and preventing loss.


## Diverse operations on a kinetic battlefield

The operations under JTF Empire were as diverse as the engineers conducting them. Ongoing base expansions and retrograde kept task force elements busy throughout the country. Route clearance vigilantly worked to keep routes clear for coalition and Afghan traffic. In addition to ANA development, JTF Empire engineers exhibited their own skill sets daily.

During Operation Shrimp Net in July, JTF Empire staff identified the operational need of RCPs being moved from one regional area of operation to another. This coordination better addressed regional requirements as well as overall theater

operations through the realignment of eight RCPs. JTF Empire’s vision of the whole theater allowed for better assessment and allocation of engineer resources throughout Afghanistan.

Engineers of the 841<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion worked continuously on Camp John Pratt, a primary



Joint Task Force Empire engineers survey their designed and built ford site at Ghormach in Regional Command-North, Afghanistan. The crossing provides freedom of movement in the western portion of RC-North and, ensures effectiveness of military operations and Afghan economic conditions in the area would not be hindered through improving strategic mobility and commerce traffic. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. James Evans, Joint Task Force Empire)



Army Staff Sgt. Michael Cush, technical engineer noncommissioned officer, 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Empire, conducts a site survey in southern Afghanistan. (Photo by courtesy of Joint Task Force Empire Regional Command-Southwest/West Coordination Cell)

piece of ISAF's retrograde plan. The camp will serve as an alternative egress staging area as the stream of troops and equipment being removed from the country increases. This project consists of over 23 separate construction efforts and is the largest troop-based construction initiative underway in the region. Approximately 300 JTF Empire engineers from numerous units conducted more than 200 acres of cutting and levelling operations moving more than 687,000 cubic meters of material, and constructed more than 500 structures.

Bridging operations were a major concern in the CJOA-A. JTF partnered with IJC assets throughout the country to maintain bridge crossings open for coalition and Afghan traffic. A signature example of

these was Operation Golden Gate. OGG was a RC-Southwest combined-joint engineering mission to construct a bridge complex spanning the Helmand River in southwest Afghanistan. The operation design was to improve mobility at the Sabit Qadam Flood Plain, a strategic crossing linking the Sangin, Musa Qa'lah and Now Zad districts. It was the largest bridging operation of the JTF's command.

In September, JTF Empire partnered with the Afghan Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) to conduct Operation Mountain Blade.

Engineers and partners completed emergency repairs for the Salang Tunnel and provided technical training to ensure traffic ability between Kabul and northern

Afghanistan through the winter. This operation was one of the most prominent and impacting construction projects undertaken by the brigade during the deployment. JTF Empire worked closely with the MoPW to coordinate road closures, improving force protection measures and provided technical assistance and training to MoPW. JTF Empire assisted the MoPW emplacing a stronger road surface along the route and ensured the Afghans are postured to maintain the Salang Tunnel after the departure of coalition forces. This 2.4 km tunnel enables approximately 9,000 trucks per day that travel unhindered with cargo valued at \$104 million per month.

JTF Empire engineers designed and built a ford site at Ghormach during October to provide freedom of movement in the western portion of RC-North. The old ford site used by both civilian and military traffic was susceptible to impassability during the March to May snowmelt and rainy seasons. In the course of construction, the ford was elevated and armored to provide continuous mobility. The Ghormach ford site, ensured effectiveness of military operations and Afghan economic conditions in the area would not be hindered through improving strategic mobility and commerce traffic.

Members of Joint Task Force Empire officially dedicated the Staff Sgt. Dain Venne Engineer Center at Bagram Air Field, Nov. 19. The Venne Center centrally directs engineer combat and construction operations throughout Afghanistan maintaining the primary focus on management of the training and development of ANA Engineers.

## Overlooking the bottom line

During its deployment, the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade tracked and synchronized more than 4,081 combat route clearance patrols, resulting in approximately 700 IEDs found and cleared, making the roads safer for coalition forces and the Afghan populace.

The brigade maintained and tracked the status of culvert denial and crater repair operations in addition to route sanitation and the status of critical bridges. Additionally, the brigade planned, coordinated, and tracked force protection construction, base expansion and closure, and quality of life improvements, all while maintaining meticulous attention to minimum

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**“The 411<sup>th</sup> is the premier Reserve engineer brigade and we demonstrated that while in Afghanistan. Our ability to command the full spectrum of engineers in a very difficult and challenging theater is showcased through the professionalism of our soldiers every day. That’s an overall accomplishment we take a lot of pride in.”**

– Lt. Col. Matthew S. Warne

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military requirements to ensure proper utilization of soldiers and materials. The brigade supported 107 named operations and conducted training for more than 900 soldiers in theater for critical requirements on new equipment used for route clearance. The brigade also completed more than 120 construction missions, building 350 kilometers of road, and constructing more than 840 structures. JTF Empire sustained 14 KIA and 209 WIA during this deployment.

“The 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Empire has done during this deployment what has never been done before; that is a single engineer brigade conducting mission command for the entire theater,” said Weeks. “We have replaced multiple brigades and regiments. It’s proven that fact that we can do it with a capable staff and I couldn’t be more proud of the team. We are the only engineer brigade in combat in all the armed forces. They should be very proud of what they’ve done and their accomplishments. We actually made history.”

The 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade cases its colors at Bagram Air Field and formally transfers authority to the 555<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade from Joint Base Lewis McChord, Wash., Feb. 3, 2013. During nine months of sustained, multifunctional engineering operations, the engineers and leaders of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade served in an ever-increasing mission scope that will leave an enduring impact on the history of Afghanistan. Serving as an IJC asset and the theater engineer brigade, the brigade established a solid tradition of aggressively exceeding mission requirements, developing capable Afghan engineer forces, protecting the population, and constructing critical infrastructure.



The sun sets behind the mountains in eastern Afghanistan. During its nine-month deployment, Joint Task Force Empire continually consolidated military engineer assets in line with force drawdown, ultimately transitioning engineer effects to a single brigade engineer command for the entire Combined Joint Operations Area–Afghanistan, becoming the fifth largest NATO command element in theater. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith, Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs)

**“We did make history here. What sets us apart from anybody else is that we had mission command over combat effects, construction effects and ANA engineer development. We are in the process right now of establishing a mobility cell that will prioritize and ensure the success of the retrograde. There will be a single source for route clearance and that’s going to be the theater engineer brigade. In the 11-plus years of operations in Afghanistan, not one other command has been able to do this... and that’s history making.”**

– Lt. Col. Jon Brierton

# Invisible Wounds of War

Story by ISAF RC-South Public Affairs

**K**ANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Two Marines and seven soldiers injured during combat operations traveled to several locations in Afghanistan, including Kandahar Airfield and Camp Nathan Smith, to see the progress being made in the country that changed many of their lives forever.

Prosthetics and scars are physical reminders of the sacrifices services members make nearly every day in the ongoing War on Terror. What can't be seen, are the mental and emotional scars endured by the brutal lessons of combat that can be as debilitating as a missing limb.

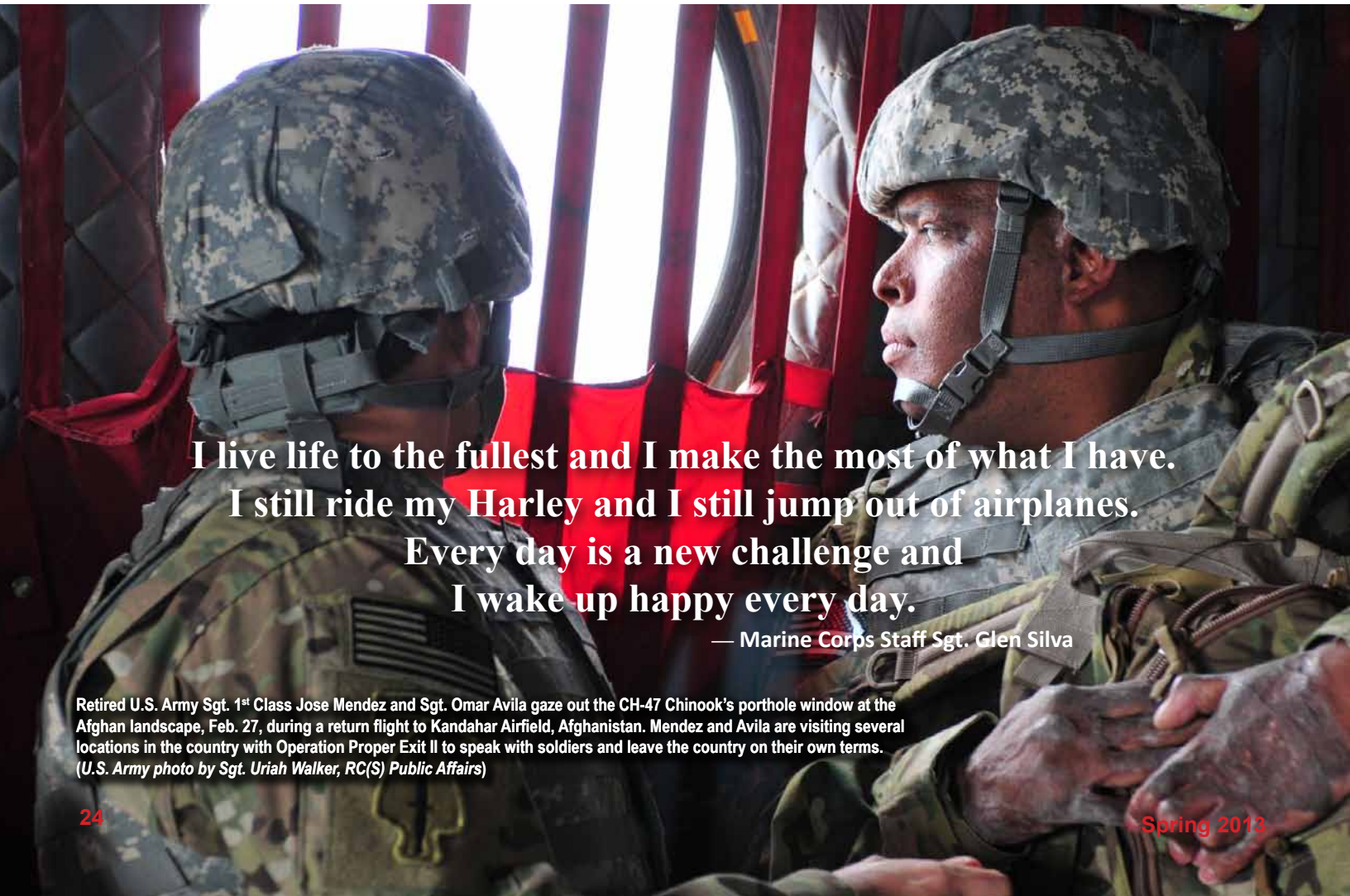
Through Operation Proper Exit, an initiative of Feherty's Troops First Foundation which provides support for wounded warriors injured and medically evacuated out of theater, service members who are capable of returning are afforded the opportunity to see the progress first hand and exit the country again on their own terms.

Of the nine service members visiting with OPE II, Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Glen Silva is the only one on his second trip with the organization. Silva suffered an above-knee amputation of his left leg, along with several other injuries, Oct. 12, 2010, when he stepped on an improvised explosive device in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

Silva describes the event as frustrating, "I started yelling at my men to set up a perimeter as I tried to get up. I remember getting mad at myself because I couldn't get to my feet and I didn't know why."

That's when one of his Marines jumped on top of him to keep him from moving, and the reality of the event started to set in.

"I started to assess myself and as I looked around I could see my leg about 20 feet away," he said. "I closed my eyes for a moment and told myself to remain calm. I opened my eyes and calmly told my Marine to start applying tourniquets."



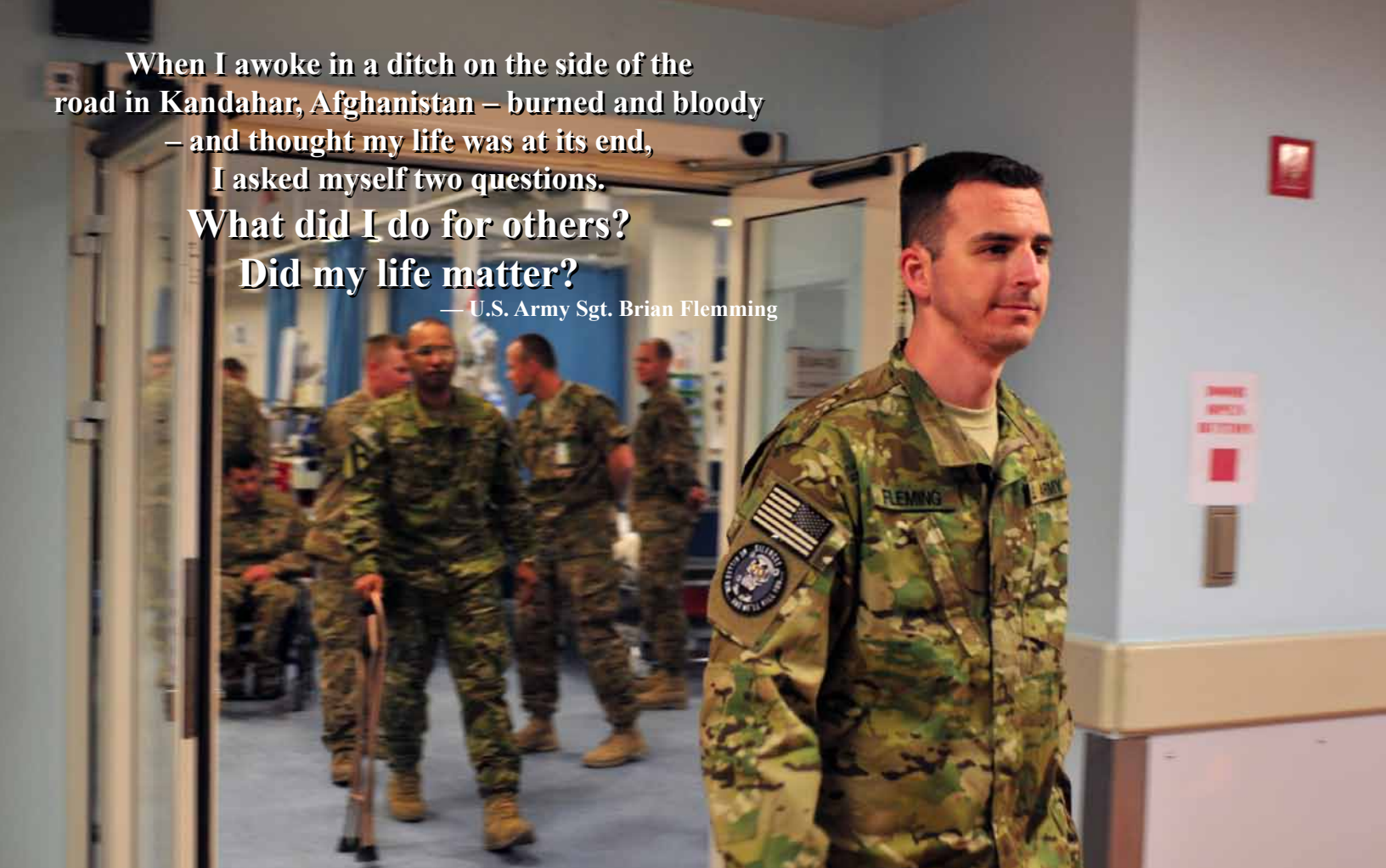
**I live life to the fullest and I make the most of what I have.  
I still ride my Harley and I still jump out of airplanes.  
Every day is a new challenge and  
I wake up happy every day.**

— Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Glen Silva

Retired U.S. Army Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jose Mendez and Sgt. Omar Avila gaze out the CH-47 Chinook's porthole window at the Afghan landscape, Feb. 27, during a return flight to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Mendez and Avila are visiting several locations in the country with Operation Proper Exit II to speak with soldiers and leave the country on their own terms. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Uriah Walker, RC(S) Public Affairs)

When I awoke in a ditch on the side of the road in Kandahar, Afghanistan – burned and bloody – and thought my life was at its end, I asked myself two questions. What did I do for others? Did my life matter?

— U.S. Army Sgt. Brian Flemming



Retired U.S. Army Sgt. Brian Flemming crosses the hall, Feb. 27, between the intensive care unit and ward at Kandahar Airfield's Role 3 Hospital. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Uriah Walker, RC(S) Public Affairs)

Silva's recovery at Bethesda National Military Medical Center wasn't certain at first. His heart stopped on one occasion, and he recounts the episode by saying, "Kill me or let me live, I don't want to put my daughter through this."

The faded silhouette of his daughter at his bedside set his mind to live.

After numerous surgeries, physical therapy and being fitted for a prosthetic leg, Silva is doing everything he can to get the most out of life.

"I live life to the fullest and I make the most of what I have," he said. "I still ride my Harley and I still jump out of airplanes. Every day is a new challenge and I wake up happy every day."

For retired U.S. Army Sgt. Brian Flemming, Kandahar Airfield is a mere 7 km from where a vehicle borne improvised explosive device detonated three feet from him.

"When I awoke in a ditch on the side of the road in Kandahar, Afghanistan – burned and bloody – and thought my life was at its end, I asked myself two

questions," Flemming says on his website. "What did I do for others? Did my life matter?"

"That suicide bomber was the best thing to happen to me," he continued.

The blast left Flemming with 2nd and 3rd degree burns to his hands, neck and face. He spent 14 months at Brooke Army Medical Center recovering from his physical, emotional and mental wounds. What he discovered while there is that there is no such thing as a mass produced solution.

What he has concluded is that, "Post-traumatic stress is an individual event, everyone deals with it differently. Familiarity breeds contentment. Help someone get to a place where they can discover their own answers."

This statement is what drives Flemming to help other injured service members every day. He reaches out through his website and public speaking. According to his website, to date, he has personally mentored over 1,000 combat veterans from the War on Terror in the areas of business, marriage and family, how to effectively battle post-traumatic stress, faith and resiliency.

## Don't be afraid to approach a wounded warrior, that's how they learn (to deal with their injury) and don't treat me like a patient.

Resiliency was a common theme among all nine wounded warriors on this trip. Regardless of the severity of their physical injuries, each one repeatedly echoed how important it was to stay connected and remain positive always moving forward.

Medal of Honor recipient U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Petry spoke about his injuries; physical, emotional and mental.

“Everyone sees my prosthetic hand, but most don't know that I was also shot in the leg,” said Petry. “My leg gives me more problems than my arm.

Coming back here has really helped me. It's two-fold – It helps me and I can take what I've seen and experienced back and share.”

During a discussion with Silva about the mental recovery of injured service members, he stated that

staying connected and not losing a sense of who you are remain the two largest factors to successfully move forward with recovery.

He went on to explain the hardest thing about the process is not having a sense of being.

“Your place at the dinner table is taken away,” said Silva. “You're treated as a patient instead of a Marine, soldier or service member. The doctors would call me ‘Mr. Silva.’ One day I looked at one of them and told them ‘My name is Staff Sgt. Silva.’”

He also offered two pieces of advice when working with wounded warriors.

“Support from the unit is vital, they are your family. Don't be afraid to approach a wounded warrior, that's how they learn (to deal with their injury) and don't treat me like a patient.”

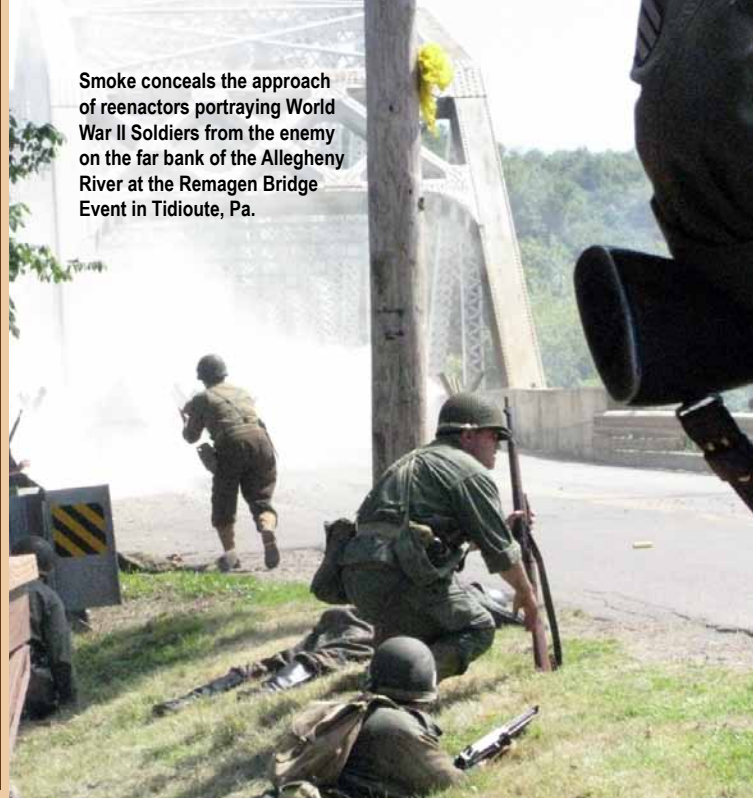


**Support from the unit is vital, they are your family.**

Medal of Honor recipient U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Petry returns the salute of a Ready First soldier, Feb. 27, at Camp Nathan Smith, Afghanistan. Petry returned to Afghanistan with eight other wounded warriors to speak with service members and leave the country on his own terms under Operation Proper Exit II. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Uriah Walker, RC(S) Public Affairs)

# Meisner's legacy comes alive in WWII reenactment

Story by Spc. Richard Fullam, 302<sup>nd</sup> Maneuver Enhancement Brigade



Smoke conceals the approach of reenactors portraying World War II Soldiers from the enemy on the far bank of the Allegheny River at the Remagen Bridge Event in Tidioute, Pa.

Chester Meisner probably wasn't thinking much about the draft in March of 1944. He was a 37-year old married father of three children. Also, he was missing part of his ring finger following a run-in with a feed machine when he was four. What would Uncle Sam possibly want from him?

Plenty, apparently.

It's a family joke that someone at the post office had it in for him and changed his draft status. His number came up, and although he could have contested it, he went into the Army anyway.

Nine months later, he was assigned to the 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Europe, defending Elsenborn Ridge against a massive German attack in the Battle of the Bulge and earning a Bronze Star. He turned 38 during the fighting, and to celebrate he got to move a thousand yards behind the lines to take a bath.

Once the Bulge had been reduced a month later, Meisner saw plenty

of action as the 99<sup>th</sup> crossed the Rhine over the bridge at Remagen to expand the Allied bridgehead, helped in the reduction of the Ruhr Pocket and ended the war driving across southern Germany, liberating some minor concentration camps.

Fast forward almost seven decades.

The steel truss bridge over the river is enveloped in smoke and flame as the valley reverberates from the sound of the explosion. American GIs hunker down, watch the display and wait to see the aftermath. The echo from the blasts fade and the smoke clears to reveal the bridge still standing. A sergeant jumps to his feet and waves his men forward.

"Let's get across before they try it again!" he bellows, and a surge of infantrymen follow him toward the bridge. On the far bank, the Germans open fire with machine guns and mortars on the advancing Yanks. Several fall, but the rest advance into the smoke, trying to capture this vital crossing.

The Ludendorf Bridge over the Rhine at Remagen?

No. This is Tidioute, Pennsylvania, and the river is the Allegheny.

The public is watching behind the German forces on one river bank and behind the American forces on the other. Earlier that day, the townspeople of Tidioute had abandoned their homes and moved behind safety tape to watch World War Two play out in their own yards as German refugees fled advancing American forces. Temporary bleachers filled with veterans from the war watch as gunfire rattles.

"Better than Hollywood," one remarked after the bridge was in American hands. High praise indeed from someone that was there. You mention "reenacting" to most people and they think of the Revolutionary War or Civil War. But ever since "Saving Private Ryan" came out in 1998, World War II reenacting has exploded in popularity.

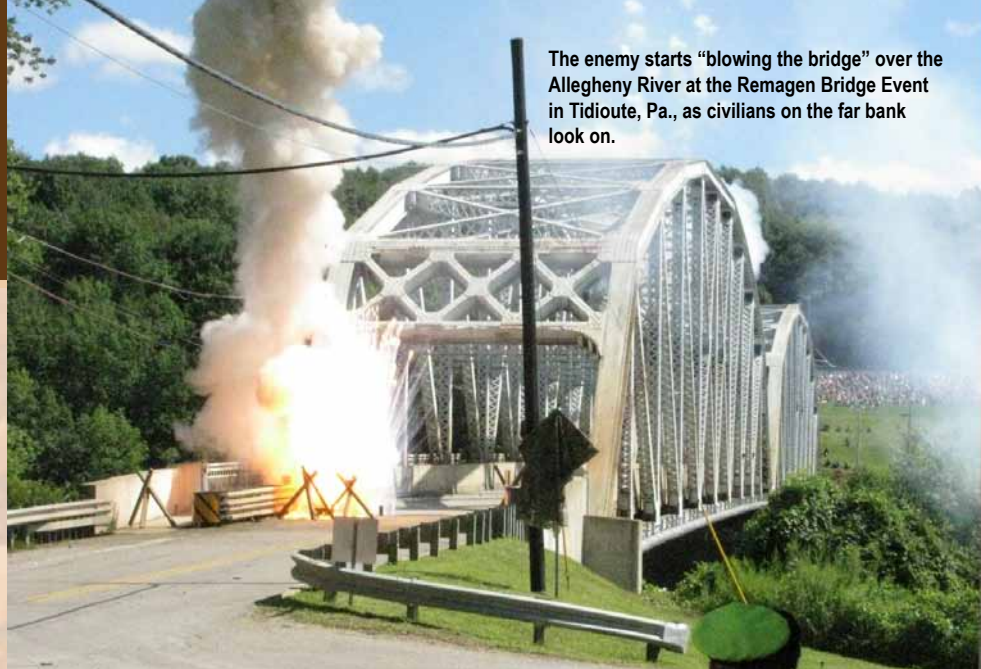
## It was the last good war, one everyone got behind.

Joe Meisner was unable to follow in his father's military footsteps, so he did the next best thing. In 2005 he founded a WWII reenactment group near Albany, New York, based on his father's unit: Love Company, 393<sup>rd</sup> IR, 99th ID. They drove almost eight hours to attend this event.

“My father didn't have to fight across the bridge, but he had to fight to hold it on the far bank against frantic German counter-attacks. The Rhine was the last natural barrier defending Germany from the west. They threw everything they had at the bridge to either knock it down or recapture it. By the time the bridge collapsed, the Allies had constructed enough pontoon bridges to maintain the bridgehead.”

“The problem with reenacting from any time period is that most people want to be in famous units. In World War II, that would be the Big Red One, Rangers, Screaming Eagles... British want to be Black Watch, Germans want to be SS, etc. But that's not fair to the countless GIs that fought just as bravely in the lesser known units. Although a green unit, fresh to the line, the 99th withdrew in order under heavy pressure from the Germans during the Bulge. It was the units fighting alongside them on Elsenborn Ridge that were taking the German's heaviest attacks.”

“It was the last good war, one everyone got behind. The veterans are now dying at the rate of well



The enemy starts “blowing the bridge” over the Allegheny River at the Remagen Bridge Event in Tidioute, Pa., as civilians on the far bank look on.

over a thousand a day. It's important to teach the public the scope of what our guys went through. We lost over 4,000 soldiers during the course of the entire Iraq War. At the Battle of the Bulge alone, the United States lost over 19,000 men. Close to 300,000 Americans died during that war.”

Most of the uniforms are reproduction, but a lot of the field gear comes from that time period. Add to it firing your semi-automatic M-1 Garand rifle from behind a privately-owned halftrack, as Sherman tanks duke it out with German panzers in public battles, and it's easy to see the attraction.

It's not just Americans. There are reenacting units from all combatant nations from the war – German, British, Soviet and Polish just to name a few. Put on period civilian clothes and get an enemy weapon and you can even be Resistance forces. Many reenactors do more than one impression. And although many of these ‘living historians’, as they're also called, have prior military service themselves, most don't. There are two servicemen in Meisner's group.

After the HBO mini-series *Band of Brothers* aired, there was a surge in the creation of Airborne reenacting units. However, this was not the case for Marine units after the follow-up HBO mini-series “*The Pacific*” aired. Although they do exist, Japanese units are harder to find. Also, German and Soviet units are quick to state that the views of the governments of the nations they represent are not their own. Racist remarks are not tolerated.

Sometimes reenactments take place in public battles like at Tidioute, where history has already decided the winner. Other times, at private events, tactics are more important and referees decide the winner at the end of the day. Often, there's no fighting at all and the public visits an encampment to view the equipment of a time gone by.

“Nothing gets a vet talking than seeing all this stuff all over again,” says Matt Hernigle, another 99<sup>th</sup> reenactor. “It's great to hear their stories, and they love seeing the appreciation for what they did. I've met Medal of Honor recipients,

## It's not just Americans.

There are reenacting units from all combatant nations from the war – German, British, Soviet and Polish just to name a few. Put on period civilian clothes and get an enemy weapon and you can even be Resistance forces.

guys that are actually wearing it, at events like this. It's an honor to shake their hand and thank them. Over sixty million people died in that war, and one of the reasons I do this is to pay homage to the Greatest Generation.”

Events take place throughout the country on any given weekend. Ft Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania does a Battle of the Bulge immersion that lasts the better part of a week in late January. Conneaut in Ohio does D-Day on the shores of Lake Erie in August. Often they take place on the grounds of places with World War II ties, like Franklin

Delano Roosevelt's House in Hyde Park, New York, or Eisenhower Farm in Gettysburg PA. Airshows often have a WWII encampment set up close to the warbirds of the era. The participants sleep in tents, eat out of mess kits, read literature from the era and try to keep things that weren't around in the 1940's, like cell phones, out of public view.

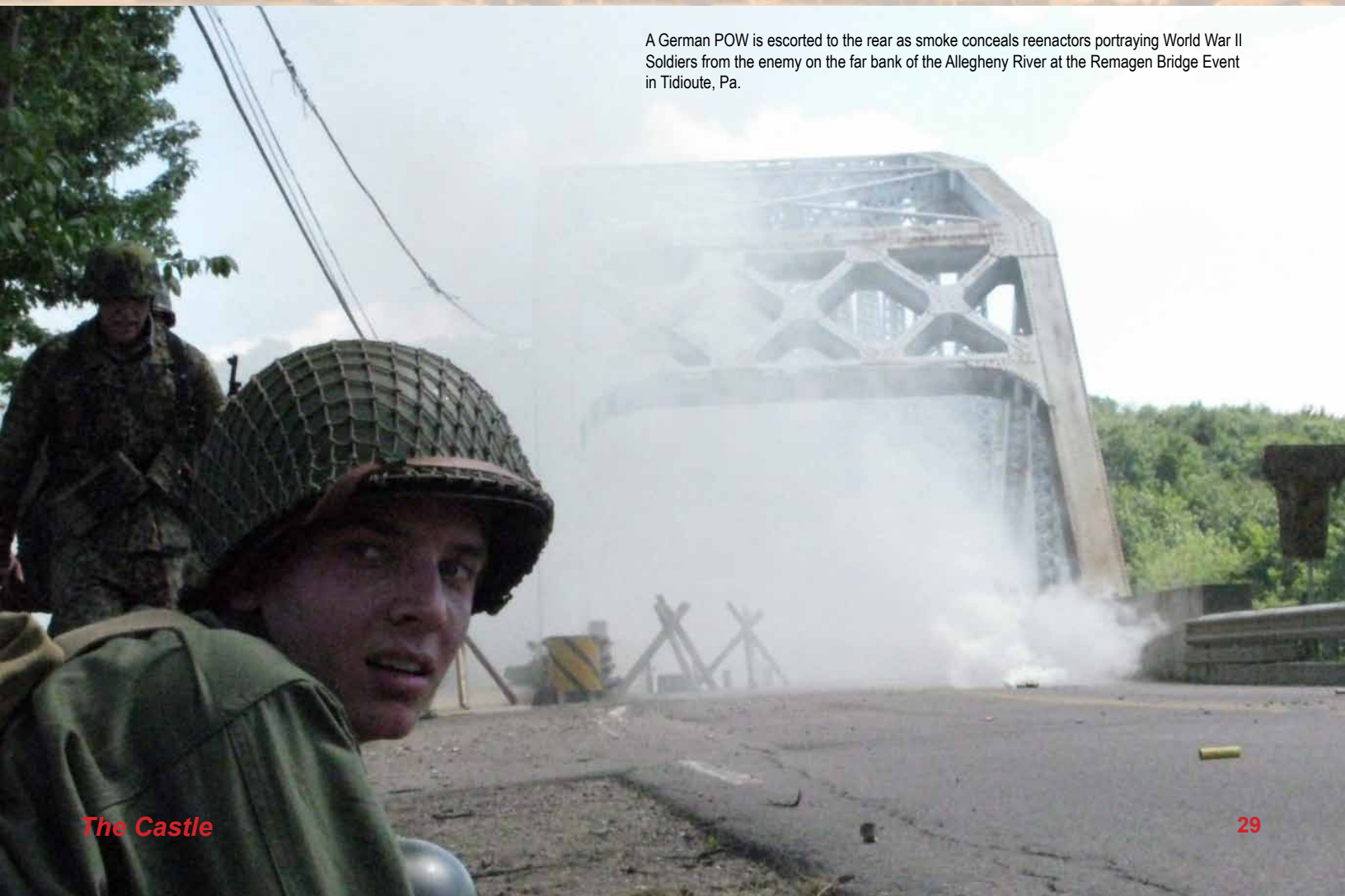
“Talking to kids is fun,” Hernigle continued. “I was shaving out of my helmet one day and this dad and two kids were all excited about it!”

The 99<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division's heritage lives on today as the 99<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command.

And Chester Meisner?

Because he was married with dependents, he had sufficient points to be rotated home in September of 1945 and was discharged a Private First Class after 18 months in the Army. From there, he picked up his life where he left off like so many other veterans did and raised a son, Joe.

A German POW is escorted to the rear as smoke conceals reenactors portraying World War II Soldiers from the enemy on the far bank of the Allegheny River at the Remagen Bridge Event in Tidioute, Pa.



# 26.2

## Reasons to Run

*Story by Staff Sgt. Kevin McSwain,  
314<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Operations  
Center*



Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth B. Hamilton, operations noncommissioned officer for the 314th Public Affairs Operations Center, shows off his awards for completing the full Mercedes Marathon and team relay event. Hamilton ran the marathon that took him through downtown Birmingham, Ala. (Photo by Spc. Virginia Hutchins.)

**B**IRMINGHAM, Ala. – Legend tells the marathon originated as a dedication to the run of a Greek soldier, Pheidippides (fy-dippi-duhs). He ran from a battlefield in the town of Marathon, Greece, to Athens in 490 B.C. The tale goes on to say that he delivered the message, “victory,” before he collapsed at his commander’s feet.

During the Mercedes-Benz Marathon Feb. 17, 2013, soldiers of the 314<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Operations Center proclaimed a message of victory as they competed in the full, half and relay portions of the marathon.

Each soldier wore a uniform. Not a digital-patterned camouflage uniform and tan boots; but running gear that ranged from basic pants and sweatshirts to pink professional racing shirts and purple skull caps. Each soldier was still focused on the same goal; completing their part of the competition in the best time possible.

“This gave our soldiers a goal to achieve outside of our bi-annual Army Physical Fitness Test,” said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kenneth

Hamilton, operations noncommissioned officer for the 314<sup>th</sup> PAOC. “We wanted to motivate our Soldiers to improve their physical fitness.”

Hamilton competed in the full marathon with a time of 3:25:39, which was good enough to place him within the top 100 males and 16<sup>th</sup> in his age division. Hamilton’s time was approximately 10 minutes shy of the qualifying time for the 2014 Boston Marathon, which is 3:15:00.

Hamilton achieved this feat during his first ever entrance into the 26.2-mile race.

His competitive nature and strong sense of the Warrior Ethos will not let him stop with this accomplishment.

“I will be competing in the Savannah Rock’n’Roll Marathon in November,” he said. “I want to qualify for the 2014 Boston Marathon.”

Hamilton’s dedication to competition is as unique as the pink shirt, yellow shorts and purple skullcap that he wore during the race.

“My runs are dedicated to my cousin, Sherri Bostock,” he said. “She had a double mastectomy and is currently going through chemotherapy to treat breast cancer.”

Hamilton wore the same shirt during his completion of the Army Ten-miler in 2012.

Three soldiers competed in the half marathon. Sgt. Steven Reeves, public affairs noncommissioned officer for the 314<sup>th</sup> PAOC, finished in a time of 1:40:47; for a pace of 7:42 per mile. Sgt. Lisa Simunaci, broadcast journalist with the 314<sup>th</sup> PAOC, completed the race in 2:08:08. Spc. William Taylor, public affairs specialist with the unit, crossed the finish line in 2:22:23.

The remaining competitors from the unit competed in the five-man relay marathon. The twelve remaining soldiers were split into three teams with a marathon runner or half marathon runner as their first leg runner of the race.

The 314<sup>th</sup> PAOC 1, the first team from the unit to finish the

race, recorded a time of 3:38:56. This time was good enough for a top 10 finish in the mixed team division. Team members consisted of Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kenneth Hamilton, Cpt. Christopher Parker, Staff Sgt. Sheila Holifield, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Jeremiah Glassford and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Carolyn Nielsen.

Runners of 314<sup>th</sup> PAOC 3 finished next with a time of 3:44:11. Team members were Lt. Col. Timothy Smith, Maj. Jesse Stalder, Sgt. Steven Reeves, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Lewis Kyle and Staff Sgt. Bryan Tull.

314<sup>th</sup> PAOC 2 finished in a time of 3:58:54. Members of this team were Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Luchsinger, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Sara Morris, Spc. William Taylor, Spc. James Clifton and Kimberly Hamilton.



Spc. William Taylor, public affairs specialist for the 314<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Operations Center in Birmingham, Ala., passes a relay checkpoint during his completion of the half marathon. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin McSwain.)



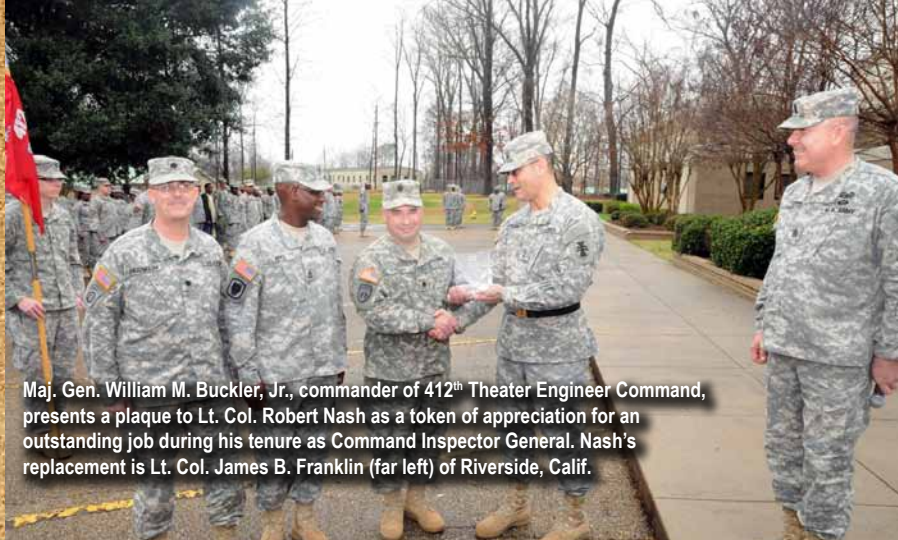
Lt. Col. Timothy Smith, commander of the 314<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Operations Center in Birmingham, Ala., enters a relay checkpoint during his completion of the relay marathon. The 314<sup>th</sup> Public Affairs Operation Center participated in the Mercedes Marathon weekend with soldiers competing in the full, half and relay portions of the race. The event was used as a motivational tool for soldiers of the unit to improve their physical fitness abilities and to bring the unit together as they prepare for extended combat training. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin McSwain.)

**“Victory”**  
was proclaimed by all the soldiers of the 314<sup>th</sup> PAOC. Each soldier held up their part of the mission and lived up to the Army Values. This accomplishment places them in the company of a long line of athletes with a badge of honor that dates back almost 2,000 years.

# Deployments/Recognition/Homecoming



Soldiers of D-249<sup>th</sup> Prime Power, 368<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, 302<sup>nd</sup> Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, proudly display their first place trophies from the annual International Lineman's Rodeo competition. Brig. Gen. James T. Williams, commander of 302<sup>nd</sup> MEB, was on hand to congratulate the Soldiers for winning the Best Lineman title for the second year in a row.



Maj. Gen. William M. Buckler, Jr., commander of 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, presents a plaque to Lt. Col. Robert Nash as a token of appreciation for an outstanding job during his tenure as Command Inspector General. Nash's replacement is Lt. Col. James B. Franklin (far left) of Riverside, Calif.



Staff Sgt. Cedric Douglas and Master Sgt. Lanyard Armstrong received USARC recognition for their outstanding contribution in the success of the Phillip A. Connelly Awards Program. Douglas and Armstrong were instrumental in coordinating the TEC-level competition for the subordinate units. Pictured here with Douglas and Armstrong are Maj. Gen. William M. Buckler, Jr., commander of the 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. Steve Hatchell, TEC command sergeant major.



Soldiers of 444<sup>th</sup> Eng. Co., 479<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bn., 411<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bde., 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, happy to return home after an 11-month deployment in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

**444th Engineer Company  
United States Army Reserve  
Fort Bliss, TX 26 January 2013**



Soldiers of 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Command, shortly after returning home from Afghanistan through Fort Bliss, Texas. 'Brigade of Choice' served as the lead engineering force while in theater, with mission command of nearly 5,000 service members.

**411th Engineer Brigade  
US Army Reserves - NY  
Fort Bliss, TX  
7 Feb. 2013**



Soldiers of 420<sup>th</sup> Eng. Co., 458<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bn., 411<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bde., 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, returned home Friday morning from Afghanistan. Pictured with the redeployed troops are Maj. Gen. William M. Buckler, Jr., commanding general of 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Hatchell, interim CSM for 412<sup>th</sup> TEC and CSM for 926<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bde., Col. John Seeley, provision commander of 411<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bde., and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Oddo, interim CSM for 411<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bde. and CSM for 365<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bn. (Photo: Claudia Kennedy, DOMAD Public Affairs, Fort Bliss)



Soldiers of 'Brigade of Choice', 411<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bde., 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Brigade, reunite with families after during the unit's Welcome Home Warriors Ceremony in New Windsor, N.Y. The 411<sup>th</sup> deployed for nine months in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

**Spring 2013**



Members of the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade Color Guard exiting the building, following the posting of the colors at the brigade's welcome home ceremony.



Brig. Gen. James T. Williams, commander of 302<sup>nd</sup> Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, congratulates the Soldiers of D-249<sup>th</sup> Prime Power during a Welcome Home Warriors Ceremony held to honor them for their service. The 249<sup>th</sup> deployed in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Soldiers of 841<sup>st</sup> Engineer Battalion, 926<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, returning home from Afghanistan, were recognized for their service and sacrifice during halftime of the Miami-Jaguars football game in Miami, Fla.



Brig. Gen. Douglas R. Satterfield, deputy commander of 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, joined the Army Reserve community in welcoming home the Soldiers of 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade in a ceremony held in New Windsor, N.Y. The 'Brigade of Choice' deployed to Afghanistan for nine months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick (Left), Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, assisted by Brig. Gen. David L. Weeks, commander of 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, presents the De Fleury Medal to 411<sup>th</sup> Soldier for his significant contributions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, at a Welcome Home Warriors Ceremony, Feb. 9, 2013. The 411<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bde., deployed for nine months in Afghanistan, had mission command of all engineering operations throughout the country.



Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Talley, Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Lambert welcome home Staff Sgt. Njie and the Soldiers of 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, after a successful mission in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick (Left), Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, assisted by Brig. Gen. David L. Weeks, commander of 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Brigade, presents the De Fleury Medal to a 411<sup>th</sup> Soldier for his significant contributions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, at a Welcome Home Warriors Ceremony, Feb. 9, 2013. The 411<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bde., deployed for nine months in Afghanistan, had mission command of all engineering operations throughout the country.



Spc. Nathan Rowland's family awaits his return from Afghanistan at the Jackson-Evers International Airport in Jackson, Miss. A member of the 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, Rowland deployed for nine months with the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade out of New Windsor, N.Y., in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Patricia Evans)

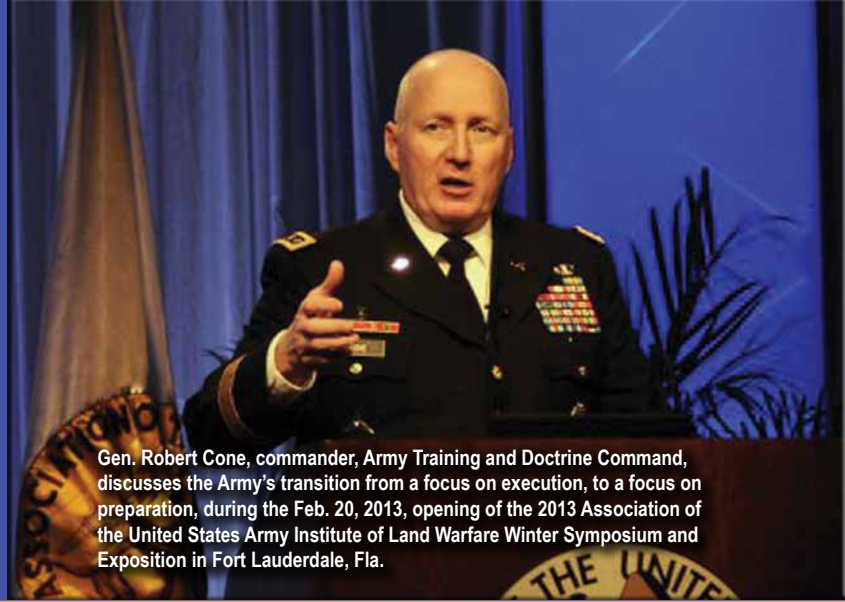


Master Sgt. Daphney Cole-Smith is greeted by her husband, Joseph, and daughter, Jelisa, at the Jackson-Evers International Airport when she returned home from Afghanistan. Cole-Smith, a member of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, deployed for nine months with the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

# Army

## must shift focus from execution to preparation

Story by C. Todd Lopez



Gen. Robert Cone, commander, Army Training and Doctrine Command, discusses the Army's transition from a focus on execution, to a focus on preparation, during the Feb. 20, 2013, opening of the 2013 Association of the United States Army Institute of Land Warfare Winter Symposium and Exposition in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The Army must transition now from a force of execution to one of preparation, said the commander of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command.

As the opening speaker at the 2013 Association of the United States Army Institute of Land Warfare Symposium and Exposition in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Gen. Robert W. Cone discussed how the Army must change as it transitions out of Afghanistan during a time of fiscal drawdown for the military.

Cone said one thing the Army must do is "invest in the process" of acquisition. He said over the last 12 years, the Army has gotten away from traditional processes for acquisition, and turned instead to rapid acquisition to provide for the needs of Soldiers in theater. Rapid acquisition bypasses the traditional acquisition processes the Army would normally use, and in some cases doesn't pay attention to cost.

"The reality of it is, with money being much harder to come by, we are going to have to make fewer, but bigger decisions, and they will have to be informed by process," Cone said.

The general also said the Army must start planning for the future. For a dozen years now it has been responding to immediate problems in theater. Now, he said, "the intellectual has to get back out in front of the physical."

With the drawdown in Iraq complete, and the drawdown in Afghanistan coming, the Army must shift toward looking at the larger problems it may face in the future, and take an intellectual approach to solving those problems and how to apply resources against them.

Finally, Cone said, the Army must be looking for long-term innovations.

"An order of magnitude of change and generational capability change," he said.

While the Army has enjoyed a "high degree of success" for more than a decade now in theater, Cone said "Big Army" must now shift its focus to the future. So while the Army has become very good at adjusting quickly to changes in both the tactical and operational environment in theater, that's no longer enough.

"Strategically, we have been fighting the same fight now for about 12 years," he said. "And I think that as we look to the future we have got to be prepared for both strategic and operational adaptation."

Cone acknowledged that the Army has proven its ability over 12 years for conducting counter-insurgency and stability operations from static bases and with a robust support infrastructure in place.

"But let's be clear, that is not the full range of military operations," he said. "And again, with a young generation of warfighters, who I think so highly of, I think they would be the first to point out that their experience beyond this COIN/stability operations set is limited."

Improving on the experience level of those Soldiers and the Army, and preparing for the future, he said, requires an approach that pays special attention to doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities.

The strategic environment continues to be as dangerous now as it was when the Army started in Afghanistan, Cone said.

“The world as we know it today is as dangerous and complex as at any time in our past,” he said, saying that the effects that can be delivered by non-state actors through the use of technology is “absolutely staggering.”

Cone said that what the enemy has used against the Army in the past, they will continue to use, and will tie into that even better technology, including unmanned aerial vehicles and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The general also touched on how the enemy knows to use anti-access and area denial to stymie Army efforts to win. He said war games that have been hosted by TRADOC, as part of its Unified Quest series of events, have illustrated that the enemy recognizes that once the Army is set in a lodgement area, it can project the combat power it needs to win.

“The trick from their perspective is to prevent us from ever establishing that sort of lodgement within a theater of operations,” he said.

Cone said the enemy understands U.S. military strength, it’s Navy and Air Force, for instance, and it’s intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capability as well as its ability to deliver precision strike.

“They will avoid our strengths at all costs,” he said. “They will prolong conflict, attacking our national will, and then they will use strategic levers, events on the ground, that will cause us to fight in ways we do not want to fight, and thereby prolonging that conflict into the future. It is dangerous, in my opinion, to undertake combat operations without a fully developed set of capabilities, reflecting air, land and sea.”

The Army’s chief of staff, Gen. Raymond Odierno, has characterized the Army as being in an era of “prevent, shape and win,” Cone said.

Demonstrating a full range of capabilities is a key component to prevention of conflict, Cone said. When America shows what it is capable of doing, it lets others more accurately assess their desire to engage in conflict.

The Army also shapes the strategic environment by working with, training and creating interoperability

with coalition partners and indigenous forces. Additionally, Cone said, the Army can currently win the conflicts it engages in, and must maintain that capability in order to be effective with the other two elements.

“The reality of our business is that no one stands in line behind us to answer the call of this nation,” he said. “The Army will do what others cannot. And we have to maintain that capability. And we are doing that right now under an assumed 490,000 cap, with a capability of 32 combat brigades, 10 divisions, and four corps.

“When we lose the ability to win, I’m not so sure our ‘prevent’ and ‘shape’ is going to be quite so effective,” Cone said.

## Shifting Gears

The general said the Army must shift its activities now from one of resourcing the fight in Afghanistan to one of being prepared for future conflict. But making that shift must be done carefully, in order to prevent Soldiers from losing interest in the Army and leaving.

Young Soldiers, Cone said, know an Army where “the world is defined by having everything you need to do all the training that you want. If there is a problem it’s somebody’s job to get it for [you] in terms of making things happen. We are about to cross into an environment where that will change.”

Soldiers have high expectations of the Army, and Cone said he is concerned that severe cutbacks to things like home-station training, or the ability to conduct exercises, will have a “very serious negative impact on retention in these generations.”

A challenge for the Army, he said, will be getting the balance between near-term readiness, and the investment in readiness for the future.

“Cutting the near-term readiness too greatly is going to create an exodus for us, and a great deal of dissatisfaction,” he said.

An Army of “preparation” is one that has shifted the focus to long-term readiness, and to do that the Army must invest in leader development and institutional training programs, Cone said.

# Virtual training puts the

*Story by Amanda Glenn, 1st Army Division East*

CAMP ATTERBURY JOINT MANEUVER TRAINING CENTER, Ind. — In a warehouse looking much like a laser tag game room, nine Soldiers gear up with flip down goggle mounts, sensors strapped to their arms and legs, and each carries a computer-enhanced weapon system. Just five years ago, this scenario may have only been seen in a video game. Today, virtual training environments are a reality.

The Dismounted Soldier Training System, or DSTS, and Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 are two virtual training tools that are quickly becoming the norm for Soldiers of the 157<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, First Army Division East, in training deploying units at Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center, Ind.

“One of the best parts of the DSTS is that we can create any operational environment, for our training in a virtual environment. It does not replace training, but it can add to it. We can bring the terrain of Afghanistan to the Soldier. It’s hard to imagine a mountainous terrain in Indiana, but the DSTS can create it,” said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Aaron Hammond, Operations, 157<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, First Army Division East.

Hammond and his team recently participated in a DSTS session to learn the capabilities offered at the Camp Atterbury Joint Maneuver Training Center virtual simulation centers. Geared up and ready to

engage in a building entry exercise, the nine-man squad immediately encountered and reacted to enemy fire. With one member quickly disabled, the team had to quickly adjust tactics, techniques, and procedures, and continue their mission.

“Providing the most realistic and relevant training is the benchmark for success in First Army Division East when training Soldiers for worldwide deployments. Our job is to replicate situations in which the Soldier will face and to create an environment to rehearse repetitively at the squad or team level,” said Capt. Marcus Long, 157<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade training officer.

Each Soldier stands on a four-foot diameter rubber pad. This pad is the center of a 10-foot by 10-foot training area for each squad member, and the pad ensures Soldiers remain in a specific area within the training suite. Soldiers can see and hear the virtual environment and also communicate with members of the squad using a helmet-mounted display with headphone/microphone set.

“A Soldier uses his body to perform maneuvers, such as walking or throwing a hand grenade, by physically making those actions. The sensors capture the Soldier’s movements, and those movements are translated to control the Soldier’s avatar within the simulation,” explained Matthew Roell, DSTS operator.

With a few computer commands, operators reset the virtual environment. This time the squad encounters enemy fire and a mortar attack. The squad calls for and receives close air support and successfully negotiates the building entry task.

“Each unit that comes through Camp Atterbury cannot receive close air support or call for artillery fire in live training, but we can create any simulated operational environment, desert or jungle, with any weapons system and any number of enemy forces with a few key strokes,” said Brandon Roell, DSTS technician.

“This simulating training is the future of training. The DSTS allows a Soldier to wear the simulation instead of sitting inside of a simulator,” said Matthew Roell, DSTS operator.

As with any exercise, the after-action review, or AAR, is a critical step in helping units identify strengths and weaknesses. The DSTS provides a complete digital playback of a scenario from several vantage points. The operator can switch the playback from a third person view or worldview. During the AAR, First Army Division East trainer/mentors use the different views to illustrate specific actions.

“Looking at each type of view, leaders can evaluate individual movement and actions, as well as the group as a whole. We cannot get this in-depth and multifaceted view during an actual live training

# ‘real’ in realistic environment

exercise. We can even have the operator bookmark or tag a specific time so we can take a closer look during the AAR,” said Long.

First Army Division East trainers also incorporate the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, or EST 2000, into mobilization training.

During individual and sustainment marksmanship training, Soldiers fire weapons multiple times while the computer tracks their progress and provides multiple statistics. Soldier wanting to improve accuracy find this especially helpful. This simulation system allows Soldiers to gain familiarity with several types of weapons with minimal resources and no expenditure of ammunition.

“Nuances that cannot be seen by the eye affecting accuracy, such as the minute direction of pull on the trigger, are collected and analyzed by the trainer,” said Hammond.

“It feels like firing a real M4. When firing on the zero range, the target is brought up on the screen to show the results. If the shot group is tight, the computer makes the adjustment to zero the weapon. If the shot group is not tight, it give us mentor/trainers the opportunity to observe the Soldier to make sure they are practicing good, basic marksmanship techniques,” said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert P. Braun, with the Operations Section, 157<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade.

Soldiers can progress to Squad/Fire Team Collective Tasks and

Judgmental Use of Force scenarios to hone basic marksmanship skills. These two scenarios allow Soldiers to engage targets while working as a team. Once Soldiers gain proficiency, they progress to the actual live fire range.

Each unit must understand the different simulation capabilities and limitations before scheduling. For example, the DSTS cannot help with basic marksmanship techniques; it is designed to enhance squad and team tactics, while the EST 2000 can specifically aid in improving marksmanship.

“It’s our job to train Soldiers at the lowest level. The DSTS and EST 2000 gives leaders and squads a chance to really look at their tactics, techniques and procedures in a safe, but realistic environment. Really, the number of scenarios the operators can create are unlimited,” said Hammond.

Entering the realm of the virtual environment is no longer a futurist vision. With the many different simulations ranging from vehicle familiarization to fully immersive combat training scenarios, First Army Division East trainers ensure Soldiers are responsive and prepared for combatant commanders.

“Here at Camp Atterbury, we’ve only just scratched the surface of incorporating simulation trainers for deploying units. As we familiarize more with these systems, our training capabilities also improve,” said Long.



Capt. Marcus Long, 157<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade operations officer, First Army Division East, takes advantage of the Dismounted Soldier Training System. The helmet-mounted display provides a realistic virtual training platform programmable for any theater of operations while sensors on the body harness capture the Soldiers movements. The natural movements are then translated to control the Soldier’s avatar within the simulation.



Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Hammond, 157<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade operations sergeant, First Army Division East, views a combat scenario through a helmet-mounted. The sensors on the harness that Soldiers wear can mirror actual motions such as kneeling, kicking open doors and throwing grenades.



A visitor to the Dismounted Soldier Training System can observe what individual Soldiers are viewing, through the helmet-mounted display, on large flat screen television monitors.



Soldiers of the 157<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, First Army Division East, take advantage of the Dismounted Soldier Training System. The DSTS provides a realistic virtual training platform programmable for any theater of operations while mitigating risk to Soldiers.

# Serving with Success on Two Sides of a Career

Story by *Kari Hawkins, USAG Redstone*

REDSTONE ARSENAL, Ala. – For 27 years and counting, Stephen Strand has served the nation in a dual-hatted career.

And throughout that career, Strand has had to rely on the flexibility of his civilian employer — and the support of his family — to fulfill his dream to lead Soldiers as a Reserve officer.

Combining a rewarding civilian career with military service has been challenging. But working for the Department of Defense as both a government employee and a contractor has made it easier when duty has called this Reserve officer away from his civilian mission.

**“As you progress in your civilian career, sometimes the Reserves can become too demanding and you have to make a choice,” Strand said. “My ambitions on the civilian side do conflict with my ambitions on the Reserve side, and I have had at times to prioritize one over the other.”**

“I really haven’t pursued further leadership positions at work because my Reserve duty does require a lot of my time and energy. It’s important to me to do quality work, but right now my commitment to the Reserves keeps me from taking on even more responsibility.”

During the work week, Strand is the lead engineer for Platform Integration and Launchers for the Army’s Small Guided Munitions program, which is part of the Joint Attack Munition Systems Project Office, Program Executive Office for Missiles and Space. On the weekends and during deployments and various missions, he serves as the deputy commander of the 926<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade based in Montgomery.

“The 926<sup>th</sup> is the largest engineer brigade in the Army,” Strand said. “We have six battalions with 5,300 Soldiers, 39 facilities in eight states throughout



During the week, Steve Strand is a Department of the Army civilian working in missile development for the Program Executive Office for Missiles and Space. On the weekends, he serves as a Reserve colonel who is currently deputy commander of the 926<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade based in Montgomery, which is the largest engineer brigade in the Army. (Photo Credit: Kari Hawkins, USAG Redstone)

the Southeast and 47 deployable elements. We’ve always got somebody deploying, somebody about to come back and somebody getting ready to go.

**“My role as the deputy commander is to get out among the units. So, I spend a lot of weekends visiting our companies and mentoring their command teams. I spend time with Soldiers, review their facilities and do informal command inspections. I make sure each company is making progress in the area of readiness and I make sure they have everything they need to deploy.”**

In May, he will be promoted to commander of the 368<sup>th</sup> Forward Engineer Support Team, a unit of 36 Soldiers based in Decatur, Ga., that works closely with the Corps of Engineers and that oversees the work of eight engineering units along the East Coast.

An Auburn University graduate, Strand chose the Reserves over active Army duty because he wasn't particularly keen on all the moves required by a full-time Soldier's career. At the time, he didn't realize Operation Desert Storm, two wars and military missions throughout the world would call him away from home.

"As it turned out, I ended up moving fairly often and I ended up with quite a bit of active duty time," Strand said.

**"My career has included all levels of leadership, from enlisting and then going to college as an ROTC cadet. In the '80s and '90s, I did a lot of trips to Central America, Germany, the Bahamas, Egypt and other places in support of various engineering missions."**

He was a lieutenant when he met and began dating the woman who would be his future wife. She got an inkling of what military life would be like from the beginning of their relationship.

"At the time I asked Claire out, the next day I deployed to Costa Rica for two weeks. So, we had to wait two weeks to go out on that first date," he recalled.

"From the beginning, Claire has been really supportive. The pace has gotten higher and higher over my career, particularly because the world has changed, and she has been there for me the entire time."

Strand was working at the Anniston Army Depot when he deployed as an Army civilian to Operation Desert Storm, where he oversaw all the processing of tanks shipped from Germany to theater and then issued to combat units. He was the only production engineer involved in the effort, and he was charged with tracking tanks through a process that involved new paint schemes and modifications that enhanced performance in a desert climate.

After returning from Operation Desert Storm, Strand moved to Redstone Arsenal in 1991 to work for the Program Executive Office for Missiles and Space.

"That's when my Reserve duty started involving more assistance missions predominantly for the State Department to help smaller countries," he said. "We were becoming far more integrated in what the active duty units were doing."

He left his government civilian career in 2003 to work for a newly formed small business, where he wrote software for Adtran. Unfortunately, a deployment to support the initial efforts in Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 926th Engineer Group later that same year ended his entrepreneurial career.

"We worked under the 101<sup>st</sup>, which was Gen. (David) Petraeus' unit. We did reconstructive projects in Mosul," Strand said of the Montgomery-based Reserve unit. "I really enjoyed the opportunity to be an entrepreneur with a new company. But while I was deployed the small business collapsed."

When he returned, Strand rejoined the Army civilian work force, returning to the PEO for Missiles and Space. But soon in 2007, he deployed again as the battalion commander of the 478<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion based at Fort Thomas, Ky.

"We deployed to the Al-Anbar Province in Iraq at the height of the conflict there," Strand said.

**"We were there for the Anbar Awakening, which was the transition from the Sunnis fighting against U.S. forces to Sunnis realizing we were trying to help. Everything really changed dramatically when that happened, and we eventually moved on to the Kirkuk Province."**

During the Anbar Awakening of 2007, Sunni Arab tribes in the western province turned on al-Qaida in their midst, joined forces with U.S. troops and dealt a blow that many credit with turning the tide of that conflict.

The engineering battalion commanded by Strand, which included about 1,000 Soldiers, was responsible mainly for route clearance. It also included a construction company and a bridge company.

**“The construction we did was not so much in support of Iraqis, but for the forward operating bases,” Strand said. “Most of the unit was involved in route clearance, and I was right out there with them because a leader needs to be where the unit’s main effort is.”**

“The battalion received a meritorious unit award. We were engaged with the enemy many times and we located well over 200 IEDs (improvised explosive devices). Most of those we disposed of in the safe way, but we did have a few that detonated.”

Nearly 30 Soldiers in the battalion received the Purple Heart for injuries they sustained in theater.

“All of our Soldiers came home. Most everybody was completely whole. We had a lot of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, and even after all this time those injuries are still a concern for those Soldiers,” Strand said.

**“But the important thing is they came home. The battalion ahead of us lost six Soldiers and the one after us lost three. We were fairly fortunate. We trained hard and had some luck, too.”**

The Reserves has changed significantly since Strand first entered service.

“We are now in a rotation of deployments that keeps the pace very high,” he said. “In the mid-’80s, the Reserve component was set up in tiered readiness levels, so some units had more than others depending on where they fell in the war plan.

“In the ‘90s, slightly before Desert Storm, the Reserves became far more centered around combat service support. The theory was that active duty units would not go to war without Reserve units in support of that effort. It elevated the Reserves to the strategic level, and we became operational forces.”

As units that are rotated for deployments every five years, “every Reserve unit now has its turn to be ready for a deployment,” Strand said. “The integration between the Reserves and the active component

is much tighter, and every Reserve unit gets full attention at the training level. The changes of the ‘90s provided for a lot more depth of talent in the Reserves.”

Now, as active duty components reduce their numbers, the Reserves are gaining an even larger responsibility in support of the Army mission. And that also means the Reserve leadership is busier than ever, with Strand spending three weekends a month and six to seven weeks a year among Reserve units.

“My wife is as much an Army wife as an active duty wife. My family is a military family. Our children — 17-year-old William, 15-year-old Katrina and 12-year-old Michelle — are military children. They all know what it is like for their Soldier to be gone on the weekends and deployed to theater,” Strand said.

“They have grown up with me deploying often. Many of the deployments for the smaller missions have been three or four weeks long. But I also spend a month away in the summer at training. And last year, when I was participating in the War College distance learning program, the kids had a dad who worked during the day and then spent his evenings on the computer in school.”

Yet, Strand’s family does find time to do things together. He is especially proud of his son recently becoming the fourth-generation Eagle Scout in the family. And he is both proud and surprised that his two oldest children are considering military careers.

He is also proud of the Soldiers he has led and who are now under his current command.

**“Our Reserve Soldiers are well-trained and very dedicated to serving the nation,” he said. “They are highly motivated Soldiers and I think part of the reason for that is the rotation cycle. Motivation is higher when you are training for a deployment.”**

“When I first joined the Reserves, most reservists were Vietnam veterans. Today, most of our reservists joined after we started going to war in Iraq. And nearly all are either Iraq or Afghanistan war veterans.”

Strand often encourages others to consider a Reserve career.

**“If you want to serve the nation in a military role where you can still keep your civilian life, then this is the way to go,” he said.**

“The Reserves offer plenty of opportunity. Reserve units are seeing more and more theater support and cooperation missions that the active duty Army just can’t get to. These are missions that combatant commanders need done to help a region’s infrastructure or to help with training or to help with medical aid. They are humanitarian missions in nature and the Reserves are well-suited for that role.”

The Reserve component (including the National Guard) provide the Army with 80 percent of its engineering units. In addition, the Reserve component provides much of the Army’s military police and medical units as well as most of its logistics elements.

But to continue in such important roles, the Reserve component must have the cooperation of its Soldiers’ employers.

“Most Reserve Soldiers will migrate to employers that are supportive of their service,” Strand said.



*Story and photos by Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lyndon Miller, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command*

412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command Soldiers Capt. William G. Irwin and Master Sgt. Duane M. Emerson participate as judges during the annual Vicksburg–Warren School District science fair held at the Vicksburg Auditorium Feb. 25-26, 2013.

VICKSBURG, Miss. – Four Soldiers from the 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command served as volunteer judges for local elementary school students at the annual Vicksburg–Warren School District science fair held at the Vicksburg Auditorium Feb. 25-26, 2013.

Capt. Aaron B. House and Master Sgt. Bradley M. Haley judged fourth through sixth grade students the first day. Capt. William G. Irwin and Master Sgt. Duane M. Emerson judged first through third grade students the second day.



Master Sgt. Duane M. Emerson presents the 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command-sponsored trophy to Karys Creel, the third grader winner from Beachwood Elementary School on the second day of the annual Vicksburg–Warren School District science fair held at the Vicksburg Auditorium Feb. 25-26, 2013.

What impressed Irwin about the fair was that some of the displays were educational for himself.

“I learned something at the fair, even as a college graduate,” Irwin said. “Never understand estimate the power of a child to teach a grown up.”

Before Emerson jumped into the role of an evaluator, his first approach to a student was personal.

“It wasn’t just about their project,” he said, “I dealt with them as a person. I asked them what they wanted to be in life, hoping to break the ice.”

Emerson could see the nervousness on some of the faces.

“I wanted to put myself in their shoes,” he said, “and show consideration for their feelings and try to make them comfortable.”

The 412<sup>th</sup> TEC sponsored the top award given to the winner of the second day’s competition.

Emerson presented the trophy to Karys Creel, a third grader from Beachwood Elementary School.

Creel’s science project was titled *Open Wide My Little Puppy*. She set out to determine which mouth was cleaner, a dog’s mouth, or a human’s. The dog’s mouth won. The evidence produced from her research led to the conclusion that a dog’s mouth has fewer germs.

In keeping with the spirit of the saying, “it takes a village to raise a child,” Emerson said regarding the students present at the fair, “it’s not just biological, they are my kids, at least, while I’m there.”

“The more we pour into them now, the better our future will be,” he said.



Capt. William G. Irwin, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, judges a student’s project during the annual Vicksburg–Warren School District science fair held at the Vicksburg Auditorium Feb. 25-26, 2013.

# Vicksburg Soldier awarded Purple Heart

Story by Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Lyndon Miller, 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command

VICKSBURG, Miss. – Retired Army Reserve Sgt. Maj. Shirley D. Warner-Preacely was awarded the Purple Heart by Maj. Gen. William M. Buckler, Jr., commanding general of 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, during a ceremony held here Saturday, Feb. 9, at the George A. Morris Army Reserve Center.

Warner-Preacely, a native of Vicksburg, received the Purple Heart for wounds received in action as a result of hostile fire in Iraq on March 25, 2008.

During her remarks in front of her peers and family members, she acknowledged and thanked another Soldier for the courage and concern he showed her during the rocket attack. She called Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Brandon Bailey to the front of the formation and praised him for his selfless service and heroic actions that day.

“Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Bailey could have stayed where he was, but he took the risk to come out and look for me, to help me and see if I was okay. His actions speak greatly to his character and to our belief to never leave a Soldier behind,” she said.

She recalled Bailey, realizing that she was working in the area of impact, exposed himself to possibly more incoming rockets, grabbed his first aid bag and ran to where she was. He found her alive but disoriented from the extreme heat and pressure of the rocket blast and falling debris.

She also acknowledged Staff Sgt. Ameshia S. Gross wounded by the same rocket blast. “After the rocket hit, I could hear Staff Sgt. Gross screaming for me, screaming to see if I was okay, even though she was wounded, too.”

Warner-Preacely was eventually treated at a combat support hospital in Baghdad but served out her tour of duty of Iraq. She underwent two years of therapy in the Wounded Warrior Program when she completed her deployment.

Today, Warner-Preacely looks and is doing fine. No one would think that she ever had suffered a rocket attack in a war zone. But appearances can be misleading as she still suffers from unseen injuries.



VICKSBURG, Miss. - Maj. Gen. William M. Buckler, Jr., commanding general of 412<sup>th</sup> Theater Engineer Command, presents the Purple Heart to Retired Army Sgt. Maj. Shirley D. Warner-Preacely in a ceremony held here Saturday, Feb. 9, at the George A. Morris Army Reserve Center (Photo Credit: Staff Sgt. Roger D. Ashley, 412<sup>th</sup> TEC Public Affairs)

“I still get migraine headaches and nightmares,” she said. “But, I have to be strong for Denita’s sake, my daughter. This world is not always a nice place.”

Mentorship is one way Warner-Preacely deals with these ongoing effects. She often visits local schools and talks about her experiences to the students in order to help them in any way.

“At first, I couldn’t talk about what happened. But I find that talking with the students to be very therapeutic and healing,” she said.

Warner-Preacely’s husband, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dennis Preacely, and her mother, Ada Brown, have also been a pillar of support for her. “They both have been wonderful,” Warner-Preacely said. “They have been a great help to me during my recovery time.”

Faith is a major part of Warner-Preacely’s strength. “If it weren’t for God, I wouldn’t be here,” she said, regarding the rocket incident. She said the power of prayer is what has helped her since then and what continuously helps her now.



Photo of The Quarter