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Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith
Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs

9/11 Remembered

Staff Sgt. David Shatas, chaplain's assistant, 411th Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Empire, passes beneath the banner at the midway point of the of the Stephen Siller Foundation Tunnel to Tower Run at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Sept. 11. Shatas is a Waterbury, Conn firefighter and organized the event to mirror the run held annually in New York City.

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engineers forge new
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General Knowledge

From the desk of the Commanding General, JTF Empire

As we look ahead to the coming months, we have multiple units coming into and leaving theater. At the same time, JTF EMPIRE has personnel and equipment moving in and around the entire theater. We must stay focused on the mission at hand and prohibit complacency within our ranks. It all starts and ends with the right seat left seat ride of the RIP/TOA process.

Many of you may have deployed here once or maybe even twice before, never the less, I need everyone to be a sponge. We need to soak up all the information that we can gather from the outgoing team. Things change from deployment to deployment. The ROE changes over time and our adversary changes to take as much advantage of these new situations as possible, always adapting and evolving their TTPs to grasp an opportunity. Fight complacency and stay vigilant. Strive to become an expert in your area. Don't be ashamed to ask relevant questions. Take notes on what you learn (write them down for those who follow you). Make sure you train to standard until everyone understands. This is one of the most critical parts in the success of the overall mission. Those of you that are conducting the training, think back to your RIP/TOA, what you wish that you had learned; use that knowledge to train your counterpart. Don't leave them uninformed or unaware. Your mission is not complete until you have passed your knowledge and set your counterparts up for success otherwise we have failed our mission.

Soldiers going home, hold your head high for you have accomplished great things. But do not yield,

there are still many things that need to be done. Regardless of your component status Active/Reserve/Guard, or your service Army/Navy/Air Force, the last 90 days are as dangerous as your first 90 days in theater. Fully complete your redeployment process and make sure every question is answered before moving out. Watch out for your battle buddy, assist each other with the transition and make sure you are always doing the right thing. Make safety your first thought. There is no need for someone to get hurt or in trouble for silly things. Remember you are not home till you are sleeping in your own bed. Thank your families for their support. Without their efforts, we could not do what we do! Family is very important and the support they provide is essential. Please pass along my deepest appreciation. Take a knee, think about all the great accomplishments you have helped achieve, ask for any assistance you need, regroup and get back to your mission.

“Brigade of Choice”

Essayons!

DAVID L. WEEKS

Brigadier General, USA

Commander

Joint Task Force EMPIRE and
411TH Engineer Brigade

Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan



The Empire Report

Joint Task Force Empire - 411th Engineer Brigade
Public Affairs Office



Commanding General
Brig. Gen. David L. Weeks



Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew C. Krom

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These are not the droids we're looking for . . .

Contributing Units

841st Engineer Battalion, Task Force Hurricane
7th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Red Devils
578th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Mad Dog
223rd Engineer Battalion, Task Force Knight
507th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Warhammer
980th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Lone Star
11th Naval Mobile Construction Battalion
49th Mine Dog Detachment

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Task Force Hurricane dedicates Camp Pratt

By U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Brittany N. Ramos
Task Force Hurricane Public Affairs

BALKH PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN- Months of work takes shape as an 880-acre area in Regional Command-North, Afghanistan is officially dedicated and named Camp John Pratt, after fallen U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 5 John C. Pratt, formerly of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, Aug. 14. The camp has been allocated to serve as an alternative egress staging area as the stream of troops and equipment being removed from the country increases.

The \$27 million project, currently managed by a conglomeration of engineer units called Task Force Hurricane, is the number one priority and largest troop-based construction initiative underway in the region.

“In the past five months, we have moved and emplaced over 450,000 cubic yards of earth, which would fill the empire state building approximately four and a half times,” explained U.S. Army Maj. Albert Lehmann, Task Force Hurricane construction effects officer who manages the project.

Even as the naming ceremony began, heavy equipment roared in the distance, preparing other areas to be inhabited as forward operating bases across Regional Command-North continue to close. Still, the weight

Brig. Gen. Eric P. Wendt, Regional Command-North International Security Assistance Force deputy commander, and Col. Van J. Voorhees, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade commander, unveil a plaque officially dedicating Camp John Pratt, Aug. 14.




Photos by U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Brittany N. Ramos
Task Force Hurricane Public Affairs

of the dedication ceremony was not lost on those soldiers coated in dust and sweat, working nearby.

“We are honored to be working on a project that will be named after someone we served alongside,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Tony Collins, the onsite noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

After a prayer by U.S. Army Chaplain (Maj.) Mark A. Levine, 12th CAB chaplain, the crowd was seated to listen to heartfelt anecdotes and eulogies from U.S. Army Col. Van J. Voorhees, 12th CAB commander, and Brig. Gen. Eric P. Wendt, Regional Command-North International Security Assistance Force Deputy Commander. The gentlemen Pratt’s life of character, family, and selfless service, and chuckled as Voorhees mentioned, “Chief Pratt avoided formations at all costs. This ceremony, with shade and no formations, is very much in John’s style.”

History weighed heavily in the air as the pristine white dedication plaque was unveiled and the American flag was raised above the camp for the first time.



Soldiers from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade raise the U.S. colors over Camp John Pratt Aug. 14.

To see more photos of Camp Pratt, go to pg. 16

GRUFFLY SPEAKING

Straight Talk from the Command Sergeant Major, JTF Empire

Greetings,

First, I would like to welcome all of the newly assigned Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen that have joined the JTF Empire team within the past 30 days and say thanks to all that have completed their mission and are returning home.

SPC Abbott, and myself have visited the following locations to check on our Soldiers' progress across the AOR. We have traveled to the west, stopping in Herat,

and Camp Stone.

After a week there, we headed back east, bound for Ghazni, Shahrana and a stop in Rushmore to see the ANA. We then headed North to Mez for a farewell

to TF Hurricane, and then South to KAF. We logged many miles this month conducting Battle Field Circulation.

By now, some of you should have been told that you were wearing your patch wrong. This stems from a conversation between MAJ Coppola and myself. He has always insisted that our SSI was worn incorrectly. So I, being who I am, told MAJ Coppola to show me in writing and we will change it. As you can see from the original drawing of our SSI from 1973, MAJ Coppola was correct. So, with the blessing of the CG, we have changed the way we wear the SSI for the 411th Engineer Brigade. That being said, don't fight it when someone corrects the way you are wearing the 411th SSI.

Thanks to everyone for what you are doing. Keep up the good work.

Thank you all for what you do.

CSM Andrew Krom



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Service members run to honor Sept. 11 fallen and 1st responders

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith
Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs

Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith

Staff Sgt. David Shatas leads the formation from the starting point of the Stephen Siller Foundation Tunnel to Tower Run at Bagram Air Field.

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Service members paid homage to first responders and fallen heroes by taking part in the Stephen Siller Foundation Tunnel to Towers 5K shadow run at Bagram Air Field, Sept. 11, 2012.

The run was sponsored by the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers foundation, which is dedicated to the legacy of New York firefighter Stephen Siller who laid down his life on Sept. 11. The foundation has established “In the Line of Duty” for firefighters, first responders and military members, as well as “Legacy of Love” programs to assist children who have lost both parents. It is the organization’s goal “to follow in Siller’s footsteps of selflessness and love by ‘doing good’ in his memory.”

The FDNY firefighter was caught in traffic in the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel on the tragic day. The husband and father of 5 children strapped on his gear and ran from the tunnel to the World Trade Center to help

victims of the attack. Siller entered the towers, never to return.

Half a world away and 11 years later, service members gathered under another clear morning sky under a banner which bore the image of a hero who none there had met. Similarly, at various locations and dates around Afghanistan, more service members would do the same with their own shadow runs of the actual run held in New York City Sept. 30.

Staff Sgt. David Shatas, 411th Engineer Brigade chaplain’s assistant, Joint Task Force Empire, the driving force behind the event, coordinated with foundation organizers in New York. The 411th En. Bde. is based out of New Windsor, N.Y. and named the task force after “The Empire State.” Shatas, a Terryville, Conn. native, said as a firefighter with the Waterbury, Conn. Fire Department, this event held special meaning.

“It means a lot to me to be with my brothers out here,”

said Shatas. "To (hold this event) in Afghanistan is huge. It felt great. It's good to see everybody get together and have a good time."

Shatas recalled how sitting in his station on that fateful morning 11 years ago, and being at Ground Zero shortly after for the rescue and clean-up effort shortly thereafter, solidified his desire to serve. The Army Reserve Soldier and civilian first responder encourages everyone to "get involved."

"To do something like this is a really good feeling," explained Shatas. "It's a great thing to do ... helping with (the foundation's) charities."

Shatas' brethren in the Bagram Air Field Fire Dept. came out in force to support the event. Fire trucks led the procession out of the starting line, down the streets of the post. Bagram firefighters ran in their gear

in further tribute to Stephen Siller.

That day of tragedy forged a new spirit in many Americans. This event mirrored this spirit in a variety of ways. Sombreness was tempered by laughter. Silence was contrasted by music and cheers. Smiles were framed in tears. Participants shared in an ideal that this was about more than a run. It was a tribute to service and sacrifice.

For one Soldier in particular, the event held more significance than his easy-going demeanor and quick wit would imply.

Staff Sgt. Michael Murphy, movement noncommissioned officer-in-charge, reflected on events after the run. Murphy serves as a New York Police Department detective and was on duty the morning of Sept. 11. He served that day, and for weeks after in the rescue and clear-

ance efforts. His accounts of the aftermath are beyond comprehension for most Americans who did not witness the events firsthand. Murphy said this event was important, as it reminded service members of why they serve.

"(Remembrance) is important to the families and the people that were lost that day," said the Slate Hill, N.Y. resident. "I thought this was a great depiction of that. They're not forgotten 11 years later. They can see after all that time we still remember."

Murphy's tale is one of devastation, of tragedy and sadness, of eerie scenes and of a feeling of helplessness. It is a tale of first responders trying to desperately to help, but fighting circumstances none had expected. It is also a story of unrelenting will.

"Your natural response as a first responder is to run into the mess," Murphy explained. "When stuff goes down, you don't run for the bunker; you run the opposite way while everyone else is running for the bunker."

Murphy remained at Ground Zero in the exhausting search for survi-



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith

(Top) Staff Sgt. Michael Murphy, movement noncommissioned officer-in-charge, 411th Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Empire, stands in a sea of blue prior to the start of the Stephen Siller Foundation Tunnel to Tower Run at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Sept. 11. Murphy is a New York Police Department detective who responded to the World Trade Center attacks on 9/11 and remained for the search operations in the following weeks. (Right) Service members pass the midway point of the run.





Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith

Bagram Fire Department firefighters run with service members in the Stephen Siller Foundation Tunnel to Tower Run at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Sept. 11. Some of the firefighters ran in their gear in homage to New York Firefighter Stephen Siller who fell in the line of duty on 9/11.


vors. His sense of duty and dedication to friends and co-workers carried him through the effort and stay with him to this day. He recalls finding his buddy's truck and that buddy's spouse waiting for days to get closure on her husband's fate - story mirrored by his recollection of the thousands of people waiting to receive word of their loved ones lost.

"When I think of 9/11, I think of the families ... the thousands and thousands of people lining up on the west side highway waiting to see if their loved ones got caught in the rubble."

Murphy proudly donned the blue event t-shirt adorned with the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Tower logo as he stood beside fellow service members to honor service and sacrifice. The service members formed a sea of blue to match the morning sky of this September morning – and one 11 years ago.

Why did these men and women take part in the event?

"Just to tell the families that we didn't forget," answered Murphy. "Every year and every chance we get, remind them we will not forget ...because they will never forget."

For more information on the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Tower Foundation, go to: www.tunneltotowersrun.org 

For more photos of the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Tower Foundation 5K Run in at Bagram Air Field, see page 15.



On September 11th, firefighter **Stephen Siller**, 34, had just gotten off the late shift at Squad 1, Park Slope, Brooklyn. He was on his way home to Staten Island to play golf with his brothers when his scanner told of the first plane hitting the Twin Towers. He called his wife Sally to say he would be late because he had to help.

He returned to Squad 1 to get his gear. When Stephen drove his truck to the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel, it was already closed to traffic. He strapped on his gear, then took his final heroic steps to the World Trade Center.

With sixty pounds of gear strapped to his back, he ran nearly two miles through the tunnel, hoping to meet up with his company at the WTC. Siller was lost in the towers' collapse.

The Siller family had hoped that Stephen, the youngest of seven, found an air pocket or some other safe place. Siller is believed to have died inside the south tower. His remains were never found.

Although his childhood was marked by struggle with the loss of both parents at an early age, the love of his siblings and the values instilled in him by his parents helped him to grow up to be an extraordinary individual.

Stephen was first and foremost a loving husband and father to five children. He was also a dedicated fireman, devoted brother and loyal friend. His life brought great light to those around him.

These days, Siller's six siblings meet regularly to discuss the affairs of the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation, established to honor his legacy. A 5k race that retraces his final footsteps is held on the last Sunday of each September. The event attracts thousands of participants come from all over the world.

Stephen's life and his heroic death serve as reminder to us all to live life to the fullest and to spend our time here on earth doing good - this is his legacy.

~Courtesy of The Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation  www.tunneltotowersrun.org

Female officer excels in male dominated territory



By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jessica Jackson
Task Force Knight Public Affairs

Photo by U.S. Army Spc. John Posey
Task Force Knight Public Affairs

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Rarely are women seen in the front lines of war. They are more often in the roles not considered to be combat arms. However, U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brittany Hine of the 584th Mobility Augmentation Company is making her mark by being only one of two female combat engineer platoon leaders in Afghanistan.

Pushing through the odds to embark on a frontier journey, Hine was ready to take on the challenge.

“I wanted to go on the combat side and engineer was one of the forefronts of letting females do that,” said Hine. “So, I knew I wanted combat and I knew engineer would be my best bet. I took over in August and I jumped in almost immediately. A lot of my transition was

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brittany Hine speaks with local nationals while out on patrol with her platoon in the Kandahar Province recently.

learning and absorbing everything I could.”

In a predominately male unit, being a female leader can be an uneasy transition.

“You would think there would be all these problems and differences but there are literally none,” Hine said. “I think the thing that helped me is that I can hang and even beat some of the guys at (physical training), so PT was my bonding point. I love my guys.”

Female platoon leaders have to work hard and train harder to not only be a part of the team, but to stand out. However, there are still several differences between male and female that they have to overcome in order to be an effective

leader.

“As a female you have to hold yourself to a much higher standard. So that’s something I always try to stress to my female friends,” Hine explained. “Always keep yourself at that next level and don’t slip, because you are like on thin ice when it comes to it because we’re the testers on whether this can work or not.”

Hine said she believes this gives her a unique view on leading her platoon.

“I feel like I have the best of both worlds, I’m around guys so much I can see their perspective of things but can also insert my perspectives.”

Hine, has not only made an im-

pression on her platoon but on her leadership as well. U.S. Army Capt. Joseph Frederick, commander of the 584th Mobility Augmentation Company is pleased with the progress she has made throughout the deployment.

"First Lt. Hine is a charismatic leader who embraced the challenge of leading Soldiers in combat and excelled while creating a cohesive team that Soldiers desire to be a part of," said Frederick. "She is an outstanding example of what we expect in our junior officers and possesses a very bright future."

When it comes to going out daily on dangerous route clearance missions, Hine expressed other fears.

"Most people are nervous about going out, but I was more nervous about the paperwork. I was so stoked to go out because I really trust my guys. It's a really good feeling to go out there. I trust them completely."

There are still certain issues with females being a part of a predominantly male unit, such as separate living quarters, but these are things

that cannot easily be changed. Even though they work and train together, there are still boundaries that have to be placed.

"I was really worried they wouldn't be receptive to me and I'd have problems because the culture said they wouldn't interact with me, but it's been the complete opposite," said Hine. "They've been incredibly receptive and almost intrigued. At times it's even helped because the leaders have come out and engaged me more than if I was a male. It's been really great."

One of the greatest benefits of being a leader is seeing the impact being made throughout the work being done. Hine has the opportunity to see her impact daily as she interacts with the local nationals.


"I love seeing the little girls light up when they realize I'm a female, they're ecstatic!" Hine exclaimed. "It's rewarding when you see the positive effects of being a female out here and show them there are other things out there, there are other possibilities." 



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jessica Jackson
Task Force Knight Public Affairs

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Brittany Hine of the 584th Mobility Augmentation Company, speaks with local children from a nearby village during a recent mission. Hine is one of two female engineer platoon leaders deployed to Afghanistan. The 584th MAC clears routes around the Kandahar Province.

It was announced in Feb 2012 in USCYBERCOM FRAGO 2012-001, that all CACs using RSA cryptography have to be replaced by 1 October 2012.

The effort to replace these 64k and 72k Common Access Cards (CACs) before 1 October 2012 continues. For those that have cards that expire beyond 1 October 2012, card holders have been notified via email to visit a local RAPIDS site for replacement. ID card facilities are instructed to service any person presenting a 64K/72K and replace their card. CACs that fall into this category MUST be replaced regardless of the expiration

date on the card.. Exceptions to this effort will NOT be granted.

THIS IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

If you do not see either "Oberthur ID One 128 v5.5 Dual" OR "Gemalto

TOPDLGX4 144" on the back of your CAC above the magnetic strip, your card MUST be replaced. Your card will be rendered inoperable as of 1 October 2012 and you will no longer be able to gain access to physical and logical systems you will need in order to do your job.





Bagram school graduates first class of Afghan children

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith
Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Forty-three Afghan children became the first class to graduate from the Cat in the Hat Language Arts Center at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Aug. 26.

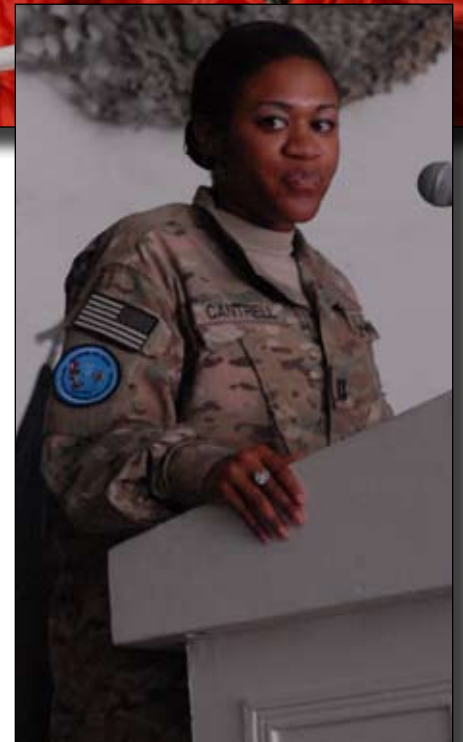
Organizers founded the center in October, 2011 with the mission "to empower the children of the Bagram and Parwan Provinces of Afghanistan by providing a nurturing, safe learning environment in which they are not only educated but inspired to bring change to the country as the pioneers and stakeholders of its prosperity."

School-aged children from the community are taught subjects such as conversational English, the alphabet, numbers and animals.

The students attend gender-specific classes in the sheltered environment of BAF twice a week.

The well-received program was established upon the request from local elders to help teach their children English. The school operates solely on volunteers and donations to the program.

"The Cat in the Hat Language Arts Center started as a vision in October 2011 to help educate Afghan children with the assistance of civilians and American Soldiers," explained U.S. Army Capt. Elizabeth Cantrell, battalion adjutant for the 122nd Aviation Support Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, and military program director for the center. "It has blossomed to so



Photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt.
Derek M. Smith
Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs

(Top) Afghan children gather after a ceremony in which they became the first class to graduate from the Cat in the Hat Language Arts Center at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Aug. 26. (Above) U.S. Army Capt. Elizabeth Cantrell, battalion adjutant for the 122nd Aviation Support Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, and military program director, addresses students and guests during the ceremony.

much more than just a vision. We have structured reading, interactive time, professional educators that volunteer, and most of all, a lot of fun.”

“Education is the light of knowledge; a light that no darkness of war can defeat or overcome,” Cantrell continued. “(The students) have proven that under the right guidance and environment, that they too can learn and apply these tools to their everyday life.”

The all-volunteer staff is a true coalition of service members from varying positions on post who contribute in whatever form they can. Volunteers act as educators, perform maintenance, painting, supply and a variety of other roles.

“It’s a great experience,” said Royal New Zealand Air Force Sgt. Terraine Hollis, an administrator


for the New Zealand National Support Element. “We still have much to do.” Hollis spent countless hours painting rooms in the center, including murals with various Dr. Seuss characters in theme with the center’s motif.

A common profession from volunteers was the desire to help the children and provide a brighter future, starting with education.

“I wanted to help out doing something more than what I was doing with my job,” explained Spc. Taylor A. Daniel, logistics coordinator for the 411th Engineer Brigade, Joint Task Force Empire. “(The center) provides them a sense of partnership and caring. Those kids haven’t developed (a preconceived) opinion; they’re living. If we can

help have a progressive future for Afghanistan, we should do that.”

Daniel, an Athens, Ga. native, said he sees the center as one way to build the country up from a children’s perspective. As the children concluded the activities of their graduation day, their smiles and beaming excitement contrasted the volunteers’ solemn happiness. The bittersweet day closed one chapter of the center, but the educators, like the students, looked toward what tomorrow would bring.

The center’s mission will continue, as the resolve of the volunteers was reaffirmed by the accomplishments displayed this day. 

(Below from Left to Right) U.S. Army Capt. Elizabeth Cantrell, battalion adjutant for the 122nd Aviation Support Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, and military program director, U.S. Army Col. Gary G.K. Kamauoha, garrison commander, and U.K. Brig. Felix G. Gedney, Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, present a student of the Cat in the Hat Language Arts Center with her diploma during the first graduation ceremony of the center at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Aug. 26. (Right) Female students depart the ceremony, diplomas in hand, as they became the first graduating class.

Photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith
Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs



EMPIRE**THUNDER
BUDDIES**

All of us can feel badly at times. If you see a fellow Soldier who is upset, fuming or brooding alone you can help him or her through a painful and sometimes risky time.

Emotionally distracted Soldiers can endanger the mission, the unit and themselves. Often, just talking to a friend (or leader) who listens, tries to understand, and praises their strengths, is all people need to find their own answers. The following can be useful ways for a Soldier to help a battle buddy:

1. Be a good friend. For example, say, "Something seems to be bothering you. How can I help?"
2. Listen attentively and encourage him or her to continue telling you what's wrong. Stay calm and objective.
3. Acknowledge the Soldier's grievances against others, but don't amplify

them by agreeing with them too strongly.

4. Ask questions to help you understand the problem and the feelings.

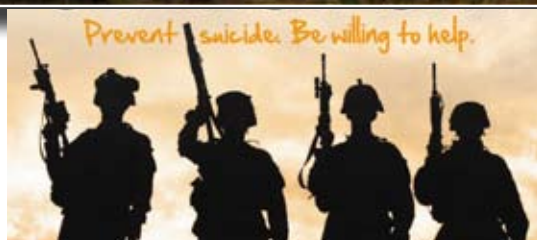
5. Delay offering different perspectives or advice until you believe your Soldier knows you really know the situation and understand why he/she is upset.

6. Plant the seeds of new ideas.

7. Praise the soldier for the work he/she has been doing and for talking with you.

Sometimes the problems are too big to resolve Soldiers with such problems. Help for Soldiers, beyond yourself and other military leaders includes:

- Unit Ministry Teams, brigade HQs, hospitals, and area support in Corps.
- The primary medical providers should know where these helpers are and how to contact them.
- Mental Health officers and enlisted in Combat Stress Control teams.

**NO SOLDIER
STANDS ALONE**



EMPIRE MEDICAL

Preserving Joint Task Force Empire's greatest weapon

What is influenza?

Influenza is a serious and potentially deadly viral infection that spreads easily. Anyone can get influenza, but rates of infection are highest among children, and those in high epidemic areas such as Afghanistan.

Influenza (flu) Flu symptoms are usually worse than a cold and last longer. Most flu outbreaks happen in late fall and winter.

What causes the flu?

The flu is caused by influenza viruses A and B. There are different strains of the flu virus every year.

What are the symptoms?

The flu causes fever, body aches, headaches, dry cough and a sore or dry throat. You will probably feel tired and less hungry than usual. The symptoms usually are the worst for the first 3 or 4 days. But it can take 1 to 2 weeks to get completely better.

It usually takes 1 to 4 days to get symptoms of the flu after you have been around someone who has the virus.

Most people get better without problems. But sometimes the flu can lead to a bacterial infection, such as an ear infection, a sinus infection or bronchitis. In rare cases, the flu may cause a more serious problem, such as pneumonia.

Certain people are at higher risk of from the flu, including young children, pregnant women, older adults and people with long-term illnesses or impaired immune systems.

Why Influenza Immunization Is Important?

Influenza vaccination is safe, effective and the best way to prevent contracting the virus.

Influenza can worsen chronic medical conditions or cause serious complications in people with a chronic illnesses. Vaccination can be especially beneficial to both children and adults with chronic conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease and compromised immune systems.

When Should People Receive Immunization?

In the United States, the influenza season may begin as early as September and end as late as May, usually peaking around February. Getting immunized throughout the fall and winter is beneficial.

One vaccination a year is all that is needed to protect against influenza, except for children younger than 9 years of age who need two doses at least one month apart the first year they are being vaccinated.

A new vaccine is made each year to protect against the viruses most likely to be in the community.

Who Should Receive Influenza Vaccination?

Anyone wishing to reduce his or her risk for influenza should ask a health care professional about receiving an annual vaccination.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends annual influenza vaccination for the following groups:

- Everyone 6 months and older
- Pregnant women
- People who live with, care for, or come into close contact with persons at risk, including children younger than 6 months of age and individuals with chronic medical conditions or compromised immunity
- People 50 years of age and older
- Health care professionals
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities

Who Should Avoid Influenza Vaccination?

Individuals who have had a severe reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) to eggs or egg proteins or an influenza vaccine-associated allergic reaction should avoid immunization.

People who have developed Guillain-Barré syndrome within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine should avoid immunization.

People with acute febrile illnesses (high fever) should usually wait until their symptoms subside. However, vaccination can proceed during minor illnesses, with or without fever.

Safety of the Influenza Vaccine?

The injectable vaccine is made from an inactivated, or killed, virus and cannot transmit infection. This vaccine is licensed for use in all persons 6 months of age and older. The nasal-spray vaccine is made from live, attenuated (weakened) virus.

The most frequent side effect of the injectable influenza vaccine is soreness at the injection site for one to two days. Occasionally, some people experience a period of mild fever and fatigue for a day or two following immunization.

The most common side effect of the nasal vaccine is runny nose. Other side effects include cold-like symptoms, such as headache, cough, sore throat, tiredness or weakness, irritability and muscle aches.

SAFETY STOP

JOINT TASK FORCE
EMPIRE SAFETY OFFICE



This Month:

“Pinch Points”

By Mr. Marcus M. Heard
Joint Task Force Empire Safety Officer



Joint Task Force Empire had a Soldier slam two fingers on the right hand in an Army combat vehicle door. The accident resulted in the Soldier severing his distal phalanges (tips) of both fingers, which could not be re-attached. We also had a Soldier partially amputate one of his fingers changing a tire on a SPARK (Self-Protection Adaptive Roller Kit) II Mine Roller. The roller assembly was propped up with a pry bar and fell on the Soldier's hand. We do not have an increasing trend of these type injuries, but the severity and probability of pinch point hand injuries occurring again is high.

Pinch point hand injuries can be life-altering and affect your Army career. These injuries are difficult to rehabilitate and challenging to regain full functionality of the hand. Your hands are one of the most anatomically intricate and complex parts of the body. Contrarily, the hand is the most basic and the most commonly used tool available to aid in any task. This tool is free and will never become obsolete. Soldiers need this tool to perform gentle and precise tasks such as calibrating equipment to physically demanding tasks as in operating a jackhammer.

Researchers at the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety, in collaboration with the Harvard School of Public Health, conducted a study of occupational acute hand injuries. The majority of pinch point hand injuries are the result of:

- Carelessness
- Lack of awareness
- Disregard for safety procedures (ex: lockout/tagout equipment)
- Distractions

- Fatigue/heat stress/dehydration

The risk of a hand injury is significantly elevated when working with equipment, tools, or parts not performing as expected. Additionally the risk is raised when using a different work method, doing an unusual task and when in a hurry. Can you do simple tasks with the limited motion, dexterity and grip in your hands? Try the practical exercise below.

Practical Exercise: How important are your hands?

1. Tuck your thumbs into the palms of your hands

2. Tie your boots

Can you do it?

Email me at marcus.m.heard@afghan.swa.army.mil. The first 20 will get a safety item engraved with the unit patch and JTF Empire Safety. (See below)



Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Run at Bagram Air Field



Photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Derek M. Smith
Joint Task Force Empire Public Affairs
Service members run the Stephen Siller Foundation Tunnel to Tower Run at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Sept. 11. The foundation is named after New York Firefighter Stephen Siller who fell in the line of duty on 9/11.

Camp John Pratt takes form

Photos courtesy of Steven W. Kelly
Joint Task Force Empire



This page shows some action photos of Airmen and Soldiers of the Air Force 577th Engineer Prime Beef Squadron, 289th Engineer Company and the 411th En. Brigade pouring concrete, constructing buildings, laying groundwork and conducting site surveys during ongoing operations to prepare Camp John Pratt.



Operations at a glance:

Images from around JTF Empire



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Marvin Neimi
1433rd Route Clearance Company

(Above) U.S. Army Sgt. Joshua Rose, of the 1433rd Route Clearance Company checks tourniquets applied by Afghan National Army Soldiers of the 3rd RCC, 205th Brigade, during training recently. The 1433rd conducts weekly training with the ANA to ensure they are properly prepared to take the lead in engineer missions. (Right) Members of the 883rd RCC pack their tough boxes for customs inspection at Forward Operating Base Lagman, Aug. 17. The unit transferred authority of operations in Zabul Province to the 151st and the 870th Engineer Companies in a ceremony at FOB Lagman Aug. 24.

Photo by U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Jason Zike
Task Force Knight



Photo courtesy of Steven W. Kelly
Joint Task Force Empire

(Above) U.S. Army Spc. Andrew N. Ghazaii, Joint Task Force Empire surveyor, conducts a site survey at Camp John Pratt, Afghanistan, recently

Legal Matters

JTF EMPIRE COMMAND JUDGE ADVOCATE

“A pat on the back – applied at the proper moment in the circumstances – can have a dramatic influence in developing a leader.” - SMA William G. Bainbridge

Developmental counseling is a crucial component of effective leadership development. Although counseling frequently carries a stigma of derogatory action, counseling should be a positive and continuous process, providing a constructive, two-way conversation regarding a service member's past performance and future potential.

In the Army, leaders should use DA Form 4856 (AUG 2010) to record a counseling statement's purpose, key points, and plan of action. Developmental counseling can be event-based, performance-oriented, or aimed at professional growth. Field Manual 6-22, Army Leadership, Appendix B, provides recommended counseling approaches and techniques, and specific counseling requirements are set forth in Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, Army Command Policy; AR 623-3, Evaluation Reporting System; AR 600-8-24, Officer Transfers and Discharges; AR 635-200, Active Duty Enlisted Administrative Separations; AR 135-175, Separation of Officers; and AR 135-178, Enlisted Administrative Separation.

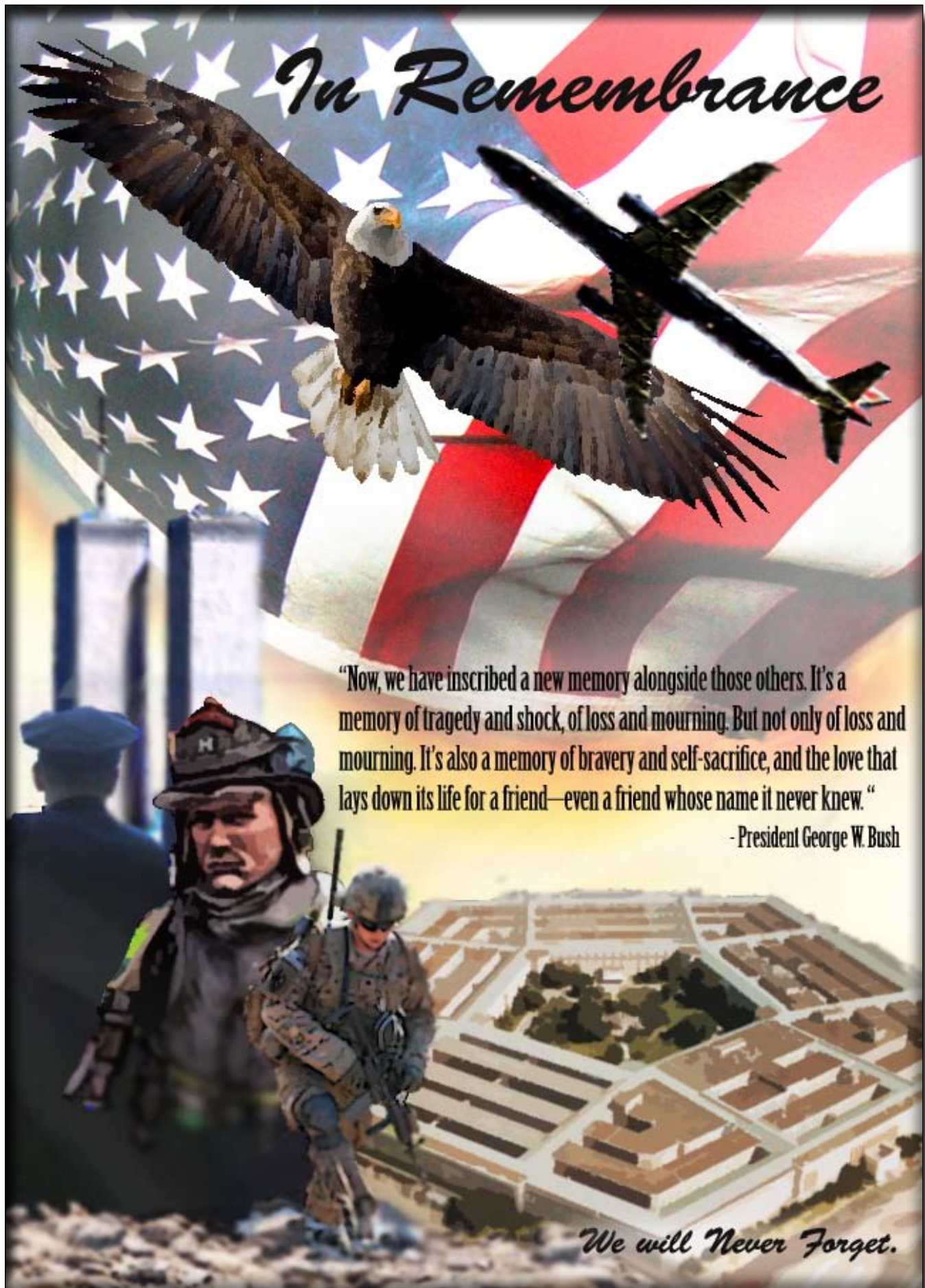
Whether positive or negative, counseling statements are destroyed upon reassignment, expiration of service, or retirement. While Soldiers cannot be ordered to sign a counseling statement, a better option

than refusal is for the Soldier to check “Disagree,” and use the session closing box to note, “See rebuttal.” Leaders should allow Soldiers a reasonable period of time to provide a rebuttal statement and use the session closing box to note, “Soldier is aware of plan of action.”

Rather than limit developmental counseling to negative actions, leaders should take time to formally address the expectations of their service members, identify their future potential, and recognize exceptional duty performance. Only when service members start to receive positive developmental counseling will the unnecessary stigma fade.

SMA William A. Connelly once asked, “When I ask NCOs if they have counseled their Soldiers, I usually get a positive answer. But I bet that if I looked at the counseling statements, most – if not all – of them would be negative, indicating that the bad Soldier is getting most of the attention. What is wrong with a positive counseling for the good Soldier?” Effective leaders should not focus on problem Soldiers at the expense of good Soldiers. Congratulate those Soldiers who exceed the Army standards and set the example for their peers. Put those “atta-boys” and “atta-girls” in writing.



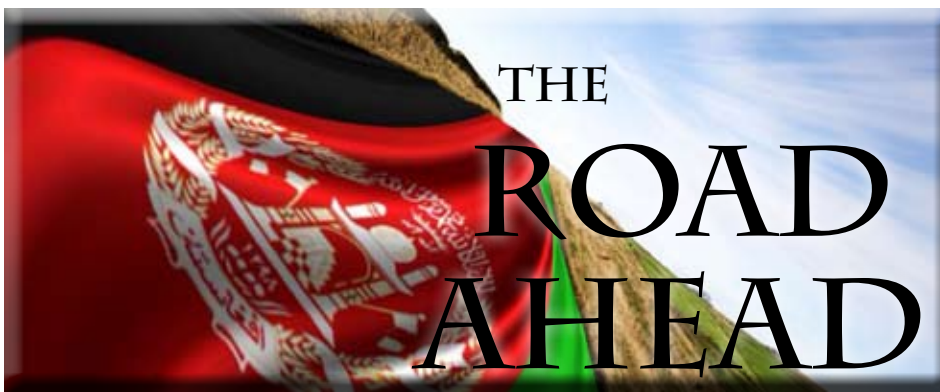


In Remembrance

"Now, we have inscribed a new memory alongside those others. It's a memory of tragedy and shock, of loss and mourning. But not only of loss and mourning. It's also a memory of bravery and self-sacrifice, and the love that lays down its life for a friend—even a friend whose name it never knew."

- President George W. Bush

We will Never Forget.



ANA and U.S. engineers enter a new partnership

By U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jessica Jackson
Task Force Knight Public Affairs

ZABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Members of the 870th Engineer Company settle into their new job of partnering with members of the Afghan National Army 2nd Route Clearance Company, 205th Brigade, Aug. 23.

With the 883rd Route Clearance Company's departure from theater, the 2nd RCC now looks to members from the 870th for guidance and training to ensure they are ready to take the lead in route clearance operations in the future.

"We are very eager to go on partnership missions with the 870th," said Lt. Basir, 2nd RCC executive

officer. "We went with the previous team (883rd) and it was very successful."

Although the 870th En. Co. has only met with the ANA for a few days, Basir is pleased with the support his company has received.

"Even though they are new and don't have as many supplies to help us," started Basir. "They are trying their best so we are very happy."

"From what we've seen of the 2/205th Route Clearance Company, they are experienced and battle-tested," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Austin McNichols, ANA partnership officer, 870th En. Co. "They are educated in engineer tasks and have learned to do their jobs with

the equipment they have."

In observance of Ramadan, operations with the ANA came to a halt. However, with the holiday now past, members begin to perform preventative maintenance checks and services on their vehicles, in preparation for an upcoming mission.

"In one week (that the 2/205th has worked with the 870th partners), they did a lot with us and we're pleased," said Basir. "We lost a week of training from the holidays."

Eager to learn and perform their duties, the ANA's most difficult task is the maintenance of their vehicles and receiving equipment. The 870th partnership officers are working to help alleviate this issue.

"The ANA RCC will need to become better at keeping track of their supply requests and also get their Soldiers trained in how to maintain their specialized equipment," said McNichols. "Vehicles cannot be repaired if the parts are not available. We plan to assist them by providing training at the company level on better ways to maintain their paperwork when dealing with maintenance issues."

Although the two units are still in the process of getting to know each other and work capabilities, there are high hopes for the future.

"We have faith that they can complete their missions," said McNichols. "We only hope that we can continue to fine-tune their tactics and improve their success rates as their equipment and supplies improve."


"I hope that things will continue to improve especially with the training modules," said Basir. "It is very important for us so we can do our jobs better in the future." 



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jessica Jackson, Task Force Knight Public Affairs

Members of the Afghan National Army 2nd Route Clearance Company, 205th Brigade, speak with U.S. Army Sgt. Nicholas Ciliberti about vehicle repairs prior to an upcoming mission.