

The Castle

July 2025

1st Lt. Jesse Efymow and
Capt. Dylan Tracey from
the 382nd Engineer Compa-
ny in action at the 2025
Best Sapper Competition at
Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.,
April 25, 2025.

The U.S. Army and the
Engineer Regiment
celebrate 250 years of
service to our nation.



412th Theater Engineer Command (Vicksburg, Miss.)





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Spc. Nikolas Janikowski (center), from the 465th Engineer Company holds the Sergeant Major of the Army Leon Van Autreve Award that recognizes engineer junior enlisted leaders during the 2025 Engineer Regimental Ball at the Nutter Field House on Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. May 2, 2025. Senior leaders from across the 412th Theater Engineer Command attended events that recognized personnel their excellence. (Courtesy Photo)

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Command Team's Corner

By Command Sgt. Major Ryan Bodmer

Warriors of the 412th,

As your Command Sergeant Major, I want to take a moment to express my deepest pride and unwavering confidence in each and every one of you.

Whether you're stateside or forward deployed, your dedication to mission success, engineering excellence, and steadfast discipline sets the standard across the Army Reserve and beyond.

Our Command is built on the legacy of **integrity**, **hard work**, and **unity**. It is your professionalism,

innovation, and ability to adapt and lead under pressure that continue to move this organization forward. Every formation, every Soldier, plays a vital role in building our operational readiness and supporting the total Army mission.

We operate in a complex and evolving environment, and we must remain informed and proactive in addressing the critical challenges facing the regiment.

The **top 10 pressing issues within the Engineer Regiment** (opposite page) are not just command-level talking points; they are challenges that directly affect your training, missions, and leadership development. However, with every challenge comes the opportunity to lead, adapt, and rise above.

I challenge each of you to continue leading with purpose, training with urgency, and taking care of yourselves and one another. Stay engaged. Stay mission-focused. And above all, never forget that you represent the strength and spirit of the 412th wherever you go.

Thank you for what you do. Keep building, keep pushing, and let's stay combat ready!

ONE TEAM – Build to Serve!

Here are the **Top 10 Pressing Issues within the Engineer Regiment** presented by Lt. Gen. Beck and Command Sgt. Maj. Plummer that require our collective attention and action:

1. **Force Readiness and Training Gaps** – Maintaining technical and tactical proficiency across all formations, especially bridging Active, Reserve, and National Guard capabilities.
2. **Modernization of Equipment** – Outdated platforms hinder operational effectiveness. We must advocate for and train on modern engineer systems and platforms.
3. **Engineer MOS Shortages** – The recruitment and retention of skilled Soldiers in key engineer MOSs, such as 12B, 12C, and 12N, remain a significant challenge.
4. **Integration with Multi-Domain Operations (MDO)** – Engineers must evolve in tandem with doctrine to operate effectively across cyber, space, and traditional domains.
5. **Combat Engineer Relevancy** – Ensuring combat engineers maintain relevance in near-peer conflict scenarios through realistic training and force design updates.
6. **Leader Development** – We must deliberately build leaders at every echelon who can think critically, operate independently, and inspire others.
7. **NCO and Officer PME Alignment** – Ensuring professional military education matches the future fight and prepares engineers for joint and coalition operations.
8. **Sustainment of Expeditionary Capabilities** – Engineer units must be capable of projecting combat power rapidly in austere, contested environments.
9. **Integration with Joint and Allied Forces** – Increasing interoperability through joint training and mission planning with sister services and NATO partners.
10. **Mental Health and Resilience** – Operational tempo, stress, and family demands require sustained investment in behavioral health, peer support, and leadership engagement.



(Opposite page) Command Sgt. Maj. Ryan Bodmer addresses the 712th Engineer Support Company after a success mission do dig trenches to support new cabling at Fort Irwin, Calif. (Courtesy photo)





Team 23, consisting of 1LT Jesse Efymow and Capt. Dylan Tracey, competes at the 18th Lt. Gen. Robert B. Flowers Best Sapper Competition at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. April 25—28, 2025. (Courtesy Photo)

Sappers from the 382nd Engineer Company represent the U.S Army Reserve at the Best Sapper Competition

By Staff Reports

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. — “Sappers, ready, set, go!” was announced in front of the formation of 70 Best Sapper competitors by Col. Stephen Kolouch, commandant of the U.S. Army Engineer School. Kolouch surprised the competitors with the start as he finished his opening remarks to the competitors. This triggered a rush for all 35 teams to grab their gear and hustle to the first event.

U.S. Army Reserve's only team, consisting of 1st Lt. Jesse Efymow and Capt. Dylan Tracey from the 382nd Engineer Company, 365th Engineer Battalion, 302nd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, 412th Theater Engineer Command were part of this group to kick off the start of the 2025 Best Sapper Competition at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., April 25, 2025.



Their combat training kicked in as the doors to Nutter Field House were almost breached open and they rapidly deployed to their first physical event, a ruck race across Fort Leonard Wood's hilly terrain.

“The energy and atmosphere before, during, and after the competition was outstanding,” said 1st Lt. Jesse Efymow, a platoon leader from the Mechanicsburg, Pa. 382nd Engineer Company. “It was a great experience among the best in the Engineer Regiment. We were the only team from the U.S. Army Reserve and we wanted to show we could compete and be successful in this competition.”

Efymow and his partner Capt. Dylan Tracey both graduated from the Sapper Leader Course within a few months of each other and got the idea to submit a packet for the competition. Once approved, they began doing their train up.

Unlike their active duty competitors, Efymow and Tracey had to make time to balance competition training with their civilian careers and military duties. To add to this difficulty, Efymow lives in Hawaii and Tracey in Virginia. The pair made use of their time during battle assemblies and worked separately on their personal fitness.

All competitors arrived just days before the competition to conduct event orientation training and to get familiarized with some of the tasks involved.

The competition had events open to family, friends, and the public so they could watch the training and cheer on their teams. The second day of the event included a CH-47 Chinook landing at Waynesville's Roubidoux Park that featured instructors rappelling out of them. Then the competitors charged the helicopters once they landed.

Competitors spent more than 70 hours traversing, on foot, land, air and water — being tested mentally and physically with written tests, obstacle courses, land navigation, underwater tasks, weapons qualifications and several combat engineer specific challenges.

The next morning, competitors and several Sapper Leader Course instructors made a grand entrance to in a CH-47 Chinook. Instructors rappelled from the helicopter before it landed to let competitors charge toward the course's starting line.

The final day ended with an unknown distance run with some legacy Sapper tasks throughout the course. Finishers of the event were welcomed by a large crowd that also include a Basic Training company.

“I am proud of what we did as a team and all the support we received from our unit,” said Efymow.

“Finishing 16 out of 35 teams, competing against the best the Engineer Regiment has to offer, is nothing to be upset about. But it has only left me hungrier to push harder and do better next year.”

To compete, at least one team member must have earned a Sapper tab from the U.S. Army Engineer School's 28-day Sapper Leader Course.



The 926th Engineer Brigade introduces its Castle Strong 2025 Safety Campaign

By Col. Jeffrey Dulgarian, Commander, 926th Engineer Brigade

The 926th Engineer Brigade will be conducting several annual training missions throughout the summer months of 2025. Soldiers at the brigade, battalion, and company levels will be conducting training and exercises in seven different states with a variety of missions from staff exercises, construction, bridging, and combat effects.

Our job as members in the Profession of Arms is inherently dangerous regardless of whether we are forward deployed in a theater of operation, participating in collective training exercises, or executing individual training requirements at home station. There are times when the need to accomplish the mission competes with the incorporation of meaningful safety controls. Missions may have non-negotiable time hacks that may cause Soldiers to skip risk mitigation and overlook safety measures. Integrating safety in operations and building muscle memory makes us more prepared for potential combat operations.

Safety considerations are paramount in everything we do as U.S. Army Engineers. Due to some recent preventable incidents, the 926th Engineer Brigade implemented the Castle Strong 2025 Annual Training Safety Campaign that stresses building safety awareness into our three mission focus areas—**driver's training**, **tactical operations**, and **construction operations**. This approach started with a deliberate analysis from the bottom up. My safety team engaged with company level leadership to determine where our blind spots are. During the engagements, each focus area underwent an assessment of their current operating procedures, understanding of regulatory and compliance requirements, and how safety is included in planning and then executed. What we discovered was a mixed level of followership and awareness throughout our ranks, signaling a need for improvement.

Additionally, the 926th has executed two Safety and Occupational Health Advisory Council (SOHAC) meetings with leadership teams at all levels. Throughout the year, the Brigade has held numerous in-progress reviews and additional safety council meetings with our leaders to share information, assess, and initiate actions. The safety team recommended how the program will determine progress and measure success.

Our short-term goal for this safety campaign is to reintroduce a deliberate, proactive planning methodology that incorporates a safety focus. The long-term goal is to build safety measures and controls into all phases of the Operations Process that will create a long-standing approach towards increased capability, compliance, and confidence.



Soldiers from the 388th Route Clearance Company conduct an After Action Review following a tactical convoy mission at Fort Benning, Ga. AARs are just one activity that the Castle Strong 2025 Safety Campaign has stressed for all units to conduct upon completion of a training event. (Courtesy Photo)

The Castle Strong 2025 Annual Training Safety Campaign goals:

- Promote Awareness:** The campaign aims to raise awareness about critical safety practices across different environment, such as road safety, construction site protocols, and tactical operations, ensuring individuals recognize the importance of adhering to safety measures.
- Reduce Accidents and Injuries:** By providing targeted training, the campaign seeks to reduce the frequency and severity of accidents, whether on the road, in construction environments, or during tactical situations, thereby protecting lives.
- Empower Individuals:** Participants are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions, respond effectively to emergencies, and minimize risks in their respective roles or daily lives.
- Encourage Compliance:** The program emphasizes the importance of following regulations, guidelines, and best practices in all three areas—driver safety, construction safety, and tactical safety—promoting a culture of accountability and responsibility.
- Foster a Safe Community:** Ultimately, the campaign intends to create a ripple effect, where safer individuals contribute to safer training areas, worksites, and environments, enhancing the well-being of the entire army community.

Safety is incorporated in all we do and is everyone's responsibility. All Soldiers within the 926th are empowered and encouraged to ask for clarification if they are not sure of the requirement or task. We want them to say something if they see an action that doesn't look safe or could be executed differently.

As we execute annual training throughout the Brigade, there is an opportunity to analyze the effects of this campaign. Areas of improvement and areas of sustainment will present themselves through this training cycle. We will look for ways for improvement.



412th TEC Best Squad Competition 2025: Forging Elite Teams Through Strength and Unity

By Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Green, 412th Theater Engineer Command Public Affairs

FORT DEVENS, Mass. - The 412th Theater Engineer Command proudly hosted its annual Best Squad Competition at Fort Devens, Massachusetts, April 22 - 26, 2025. The competition brought together top-performing Soldiers from across the command to showcase their grit, skill, and team cohesion. This highly anticipated event aimed to identify and select both primary and alternate squad members to represent the 412th TEC at the U.S. Army Reserve Best Squad Competition.



The 926th Engineer Brigade, self-proclaimed “Hammer Head 22,” was represented by Staff Sgt. Hunter Adkins, Sgt. Benjamin Taylor, Spc. Trey Funderburk, Spc. Cole Schmidt, and Pfc. Blake Shippers. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Ryan Green)

The Best Squad Competition is far more than a series of challenges; it's a comprehensive test of operational readiness, leadership under pressure, and unwavering unity. Throughout 72 hours, Soldiers faced grueling evaluations designed to push them to their physical, mental, and tactical limits. Each event tested their mastery in areas critical to mission success, including weapons qualification, land navigation, combat medical response, and agility-based obstacle courses.

This annual competition highlights the 412th TEC's unwavering dedication to cultivating cohesive, disciplined, and highly capable teams ready to perform in complex and high-pressure environments.

Beyond physical prowess, the event emphasizes holistic Soldier development, sharpening leadership, technical expertise, and decision-making under duress.

By bringing squads together in a challenging yet spirited atmosphere, the competition also strengthens camaraderie and mutual trust among participants. It's through these trials that Soldiers forge bonds rooted in respect, resilience, and a shared commitment to excellence.

“This isn't just about strength, it's about trust, skill, and leadership,” said Sgt. 1st Class Dominic Brenner, the Best Squad Competition noncommissioned officer in charge.

Three elite squads emerged from across the 412th TEC footprint to compete for the coveted title of “Best Squad.” Each unit brought its own distinct identity and pride.

Each of these squads demonstrated extraordinary dedication, resilience, and tactical expertise as they navigated the intense competition. Their participation not only highlighted the strength of their individual units, but also served as a testament to the overall excellence and readiness of the 412th TEC.



From the 411th Engineer Brigade, proudly nicknamed the “Misfits,” the squad included Sgt. 1st Class Lee Sweeney, Sgt. Quinton Blankenship, Sgt. Brandon Deal, Sgt. Grayson Hines, and Spc. Robert Marsh. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Ryan Green)



Representing the 206th Regional Support Group, known as “War Child,” were Staff Sgt. Jeremy McPherson, Sgt. Joseph Ramos, Sgt. Izaac French Jones, Spc. Benjamin Kelley, and Spc. Riley Harper. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. 1st. Class Ryan Green)

After 72 relentless hours of physically demanding and mentally grueling challenges, the “Misfits” of the 411th Engineer Brigade rose to the top and emerged as the winning squad. They had the honor of advancing to represent the 412th TEC at the U.S. Army Reserve Best Squad Competition. This prestigious opportunity placed them among the Army Reserve's most elite, where they showcased their strength, unity, and tactical excellence honed through their rigorous preparation.

While only one team moved forward, the 412th Theater Engineer Command extends its deep pride and respect to all

three competing squads. Their dedication, grit, and teamwork reflect the highest standards of Soldiering.

Sweeney leads the 412th TEC team at 2025 USAR Best Squad Competition; Earns Top Marksmanship Award

By Staff Reports

FORT MCCOY, Wis. — Winners of the 412th TEC Best Squad Competition had little less than three weeks to prepare for the U.S. Army Reserve’s Best Squad Competition at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, May 9 –16, 2025.

The “Misfits,” lead by Sgt. 1st Class Lee Sweeney, competed against 14 other squads in the grueling, six-day competition. Although the 200th Military Police Command emerged victorious, the “Misfits” gave their all through academic, mental, and physical challenges. Sweeney was recognized by earning Top Marksmanship honors among all the competitors.

Each day of the event provided unique challenges that kept teams on their toes. Identical to previous years, each squad consisted of a squad leader, a team leader, and three squad members. This year, the challenges the squads had to navigate consisted of individual and group fitness tests, weapons qualification, day and night land navigation, multiple weapons ranges, obstacle course, rappel tower, water survival assessment, patrol lanes, ruck marches, water insertion, professional board, and a written exam.

Day one started at 4 a.m. with an individually graded Army Combat Fitness Test.



Next, Soldiers qualified on different weapons systems, helping them prepare for upcoming marksmanship and range events. Moving off the range, the squads prepared and executed their day and night land navigation requirements.

The second day consisted of various weapon ranges. The competitors qualified on multiple weapons, including the M17, M320, and the M240 Bravo. Additionally, competitors had a chance to compete for a marksmanship badge. After the weapon ranges, the Soldiers completed a base defense range—a realistic training area where they practiced protecting a mock base under simulated threats—and returned to their barracks tired and sweaty.

On day three, the squads actively rotated between the obstacle course and the rappel tower. The obstacle course tested the squads’ problem-solving



skills, physical endurance, and their ability to maneuver efficiently under pressure. Meanwhile, squads also climbed up the 55-foot rappel tower requiring three perfect jumps down to pass.

On day four, the squads went through more weapons ranges to include the sniper rifle and M67 hand grenade ranges. By late afternoon, the squads were inserted in a heavily forested area of Fort McCoy to set up a patrol base.

Day five events consisted of a series of patrol lanes designed to test their tactical proficiency. Throughout these exercises, squads engaged in simulated military operations, including reconnaissance missions, offensive maneuvers, and tactical responses to enemy fire.

Day six began at 3 a.m. to march 12 miles to Big Sandy Lake for the helocast challenge. The helocast challenge is a combat water insertion via a CH-57 Chinook helicopter into the battlefield. Soldiers dived into the water wearing their usual Operational Camouflage Pattern uniform, boots and black life jackets, swam up to the surface gasping for air, and were picked up by cadre-filled Zodiac boats.

On the last day of the competition, each individual Soldier went through a board, a formal evaluation process where the Soldier's knowledge of army regulations and procedures are tested by multiple command sergeants major. Prior to arriving at the building where the boards were being conducted, the Soldiers changed into either the Army Service Uniform or the Army Green Service Uniform which made the competitors look extra sharp and professional.

Finally, the competitors left the board and went on to the final event: a written exam. The exam consisted of 50 questions based on the U.S. Army Reserve Study guide.





The U.S. Army and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers celebrate 250 years

The U.S. Army

America's First National Institution

Since its official establishment, June 14, 1775 — more than a year before the Declaration of Independence — the U.S. Army has played a vital role in the growth and development of the American nation. Drawing on both long-standing militia traditions and recently introduced professional standards, it won the new republic's independence in an arduous eight-year struggle against Great Britain. At times, the Army provided the lone symbol of nationhood around which patriots rallied.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

From the appointment of the first uniformed Army engineers by the Continental Congress on June 16, 1775, over the last 250 years U.S. Army Engineers have evolved to encompass the twin pillars of modern engineer operations, providing engineering expertise to the Army, and responding to the nation's toughest engineering and environmental challenges. Today, under the Chief of Engineers, more than 84,000 Army Engineer Soldiers serve in active duty, reserve, and National Guard troop units and around 40,000 largely civilian members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers serve the nation.



412th TEC Soldiers support Army Birthday events

As the a small detachment of **375th Engineer Vertical Construction Company** finished setting up their equipment display at Redstone Arsenal's Army Birthday celebration June 7, 2025, a "micro-burst" of straight line winds and heavy rain ran through the assembled vendors' tents. It overturned nearly all of them, destroying most. Without hesitation, Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Carrillo, requested support from the rest of the company. Within minutes, 35 Soldiers arrived to clean up broken tents and trash for haul-off via dump truck. The Soldiers then aided the vendors with re-setting up all of their tents and merchandise. A few Soldiers stayed to the very end to watch fireworks and assist with any additional work. During the event's opening comments, Garrison Commander, COL Erin Eike said the celebration would not have been able to continue without the quick reaction of the 375th soldiers.



(Courtesy Photo)



(Courtesy Photo)



(Courtesy Photo)

Engineers from the **346th Engineer Company (Clearance)** and the **299th Engineer Company (MRB)** set up equipment displays at the Army Birthday Twilight Tattoo at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, June 11, 2025. The 346th provided a demonstration of their Man Transportable Robotic System Increment II (left) that provides a standoff capability to detect and confirm presence, identify disposition, and counter hazards. The 299th provided a Bridge Erection Boat and a High Mobility Engineer Excavator for visitors.



Personnel across the 412th TEC recognized for excellence at the U.S. Army Regimental Ball

By Lt. Col. Matthew Nowak, 412th Theater Engineer Command Public Affairs

In 2025, the U.S. Army the U.S. Army Engineers celebrated 250th years of service to our nation. Leaders and Soldiers of the 412th Theater Engineer Command attended the 2025 Engineer Regimental Ball at Nutter Field House at Fort Leonard, Mo. May 2, 2025 to celebrate.

As part of the festivities, personnel from the 412th Theater Engineer Command were recognized for their outstanding performance throughout the year.

Maj. Gen. Matthew Warne, commander of the 412th, with Brig, Gen, Sandra Martin, Deputy Commanding General—Support, Command Sgt. Maj. Ryan Bodmer, senior enlisted leader, Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Brian Bergeron, and many other senior staff recognized a junior officer, a junior Soldier, a warrant officer, and a civilian for their hard work and dedication to the Command.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 John McKechnie from the 368th Forward Engineer Support Team-Main, received the **Outstanding Engineer Warrant Officer Award**. This award recognizes exceptional leadership, technical expertise, and dedication to mission success. He led complex engineering projects, including Operation Ulchi Freedom Shield and Kwajalein Atoll assessments. His proficiency in construction and engineering has streamlined processes and strengthened overall effectiveness.



(Courtesy Photo)



James Taft, a budget analyst from Fort Thomas' 478th Engineer Battalion received the **Outstanding Civilian Award**. He exemplified exceptional leadership, professionalism, and innovation in his contributions to the United States Army Reserve and the Engineer Regiment. He provided expertise in creative resource management and superior civilian administration for his unit. His efforts have significantly enhanced unit readiness and the execution of training. The battalion's ambitious mission success is directly strengthened by his steadfast support in planning and coordination.



(Courtesy Photo)

The 465th Engineer Company congratulated **Spc. Nikolas Janikowski** on being awarded the **Sergeant Major of the Army Leon L. Van Autreve Award** as the top engineer junior enlisted Soldier. He consistently surpassed expectations in every task assigned. In preparation for Operation Trans-Atlantic Castle in Hohenfels, Germany, he was hand-selected to train 23 Soldiers, officers, and NCOs on masonry techniques using European measurements and materials. Once in Germany, he expanded his impact, instructing 57 Soldiers from eight different companies. His dedication and expertise earned recognition from leadership at multiple echelons, underscoring his exceptional contributions to the mission.



(Courtesy Photo)

Pittsburgh native **1st. Lt. Jonathan Geisler** received the 1st **Lt. William O. Munson Award** for Outstanding Platoon Leader. Geisler is a platoon leader with the 459th Multi-Role Bridge Company (MRBC) Detachment. During the training year, he fostered a culture of accountability, innovation, and adaptability, empowering his Soldiers to excel. His ability to command complex operations was clearly demonstrated during the successful wet gap crossing at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Throughout the training, he coordinating with the 502nd MRBC to facilitate the safe passage of two M113s while seamlessly integrating elements from three companies in the bridging operation. This mission is just one example of his remarkable leadership, showcasing his skill in managing intricate operations while instilling confidence and resilience in those under his command.





A team of U.S. Army Reserve and U.S. Army Engineers and Quartermaster Soldiers completed a section of a petroleum pipeline April 5-19, 2025, at Fort Pickett Virginia. (Courtesy Photo)

The 368th Engineer Battalion leads pipeline construction at Fort Pickett

By Lt. Col. Matthew Nowak, 412th Theater Engineer Command Public Affairs

FORT PICKETT, Va. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers motto is “Essayons”, a French phrase that means “let us try.” This spirit was embodied by U.S. Army Active and Reserve Soldiers led by the New Hampshire based 368th Engineer Battalion, 302nd Combat Support Brigade, 412th Theater Engineer Command as they assembled a petroleum pipeline April 5-19, 2025, at Fort Pickett, Virginia.

“There is no specific military job to execute this mission,” said Commander of the 368th Engineer Battalion, Lt. Col. Trevor Hopper. “We were assigned to this mission as part of a rotating set of units under the 412th (Theater Engineer Command). We approached this mission as a challenge to show our adaptability for any mission, as Army engineers typically do.”

The training is conducted annually at Fort Pickett as part of the FORSCOM Petroleum Training Module. The Inland Petroleum Distribution System is a deployable bulk fuel storage and pipeline system. It is made up of tactical petroleum terminals (fuel units and pipeline connection assemblies), pipeline pump stations, pipeline sets, and special-purpose equipment. The system is modular in design and can be tailored for specific locations and operations.

The 368th provided command and control for its organic Rutland, Vermont based 424th Engineer Construction Company and for active-duty surveyors from Fort Knox’s 19th Engineer Battalion, active-duty Soldiers from Fort Hood’s, 53rd Quartermaster Company, and U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers from the Fremont, Nebraska based 728th Quartermaster Company.

In total, the team constructed almost 20 miles of pipe with four pump stations and one refinery through the tough woodland terrain that includes streams and draws at Fort Pickett.



Soldiers gathering coupling before connecting two sections of pipe. (Courtesy Photo)



Engineers from the 368th Engineer Battalion line up two sections of pipe and connect them with a coupler. (Courtesy Photo)

“The training is intense, but necessary for today’s operational environment,” said Sgt. Dennis Kay, a human resource specialist from the 368th. “The knowledge and experience we gained from this training is invaluable for our core mission. It has taught us to work efficiently and tested our ability to adapt to changes and work as one team with unfamiliar units.”





Engineers begin to lock in two sections of pipeline with a coupler. (Courtesy Photo)

The construction process involves drawing the pipe and equipment from the depot, transporting the parts to its general location. From there, crews will align the pipe and connect them using collars. Once assembly is completed, water (in place of petroleum) flows through the pipeline and tests are conducted by the installation team to confirm the integrity of the system.

“It went well. We came together quickly as a team and integrated seamlessly,” said Hopper. “The size of the force was scaled back due to some last-minute changes, but the units that made it here, more than made-up for time it typically takes for a full force to assemble a pipeline of this size.”

In preparation for this training, the 368th conducted several training meetings and coordinated logistics with FORSCOM personnel to prepare themselves and to understand exactly what they would be doing.

Once the pipeline is completed multiple rotational units will travel to Fort Barfoot to perform maintenance and be tested on pipeline contingencies as part of their regular training cycle.

The system will be recovered by another engineer unit from the 412th later in the training year.

The IPDS was deployed to support U.S. and Coalition Forces in the liberation of Kuwait during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, where more than 200 miles of IPDS were laid out. More than 220 miles of pipeline and 20 pump stations were in operation in 2003 during the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. By the end of the operation, mostly in southern Iraq, more than 80 million gallons of JP-8 fuel was delivered by pipeline. This also helped to take fuel trucks off main support routes, allowing other classes of supply to move forward.

Fort Pickett has been the Army’s home for oversight and execution of the Petroleum Operations Sustainment Training program since 1989. It is located near Blackstone, Virginia and features almost 41,000 acres of training area.

The 412th Theater Engineer Command is headquartered in Vicksburg, Mississippi. It provides command and control over approximately 10,000 U.S. Army Reserve Engineers from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean, ensuring our nation is ready to meet challenges at home and abroad.

A Cup of Coffee

With the Command Chief Warrant Officer

We will host a Warrant Officer Recruiting and Ascension Workshop August 7th, 2025, at Camp Shelby, MS. It is open to all E4 to E7s and O1 to O3s, who want information on how to become a warrant officer. Planned discussions include feeder MOSs, warrant officer critical fills, and the bonus program .

Last month we welcomed a new 120A—Construction Engineer Technician to our ranks. I am proud to share that she is well on her way to being an outstanding warrant officer for the TEC. I helped her in a transition from medic to warrant officer with civilian acquired skills. She did not have the correct feeder MOS for the warrant officer specialty desired. She reached out to the engineer school house at Fort Leonard Wood, MO and was put in contact with me. I was able to verify her civilian skills as a project manager for a construction firm. We worked together on her packet, and I worked with the Engineer Regiment for the exception. She is a very motivated individual and is actively working to ensure she strengthens her weaker skill sets for the Warrant Officer Basic Course.



Always available to assist.

“Build to Serve” from the “Keeper of the Key” and “Quiet Professionals”

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The 463rd Engineer Battalion Powers Emergency Response at Fort Hunter Liggett

By Lt. Col. Matthew Nowak, 412th Theater Engineer Command Public Affairs

FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, Calif - Before Staff Sgt. Jack Kuhn even settled in with the Wheeling, West Virginia based 463rd Engineer Battalion, his unique skillset became his immediate ticket to California. An urgent call from Fort Hunter Liggett needed his expertise, and his new leadership knew he was the right person for the mission.



Pvt. Brandon Pearce performs wiring repairs to electrical infrastructure support vehicles. (Courtesy Photo)

The installation’s enduring electrical issues in January 2025, originating from the outside distribution network, led to power surges and blackouts. With critical systems at risk, the Fort Hunter Liggett Directorate of Public Works (DPW) initiated a request through U.S. Army channels for electrical and generator support.

The Vicksburg, Mississippi based 412th Theater Engineer Command knew it had the capability to support this request. It put out a notice across its subordinate units asking for electricians and power generation mechanics to volunteer to support these efforts. The New Windsor, New York based 411th Engineer Brigade reached out to subordinate 463rd Engineer Battalion, who answered without hesitation and found the right Soldiers to perform this highly technical mission.

Kuhn became the non-commissioned officer in charge of a small team made up of an electrician, Private First Class Tyler Sipes and power generation mechanic Private Brandon Pearce, bringing a powerful combination of skills to help provide solutions.

Within a week of receiving the request, the three Soldiers were put on annual training orders and boarded an airplane to California to join the mission. They linked up with the DPW team and a team of electricians and generator mechanics from Joint Base Lewis-McCord.



Pfc. Tyler Sipes works with electricians from Fort Hunter Liggett to repair a generator. (Courtesy Photo)



Pvt. Brandon Pearce from the 463rd Engineer Battalion performs wiring repairs to a generator at Fort Hunter Liggett. (Courtesy Photo)

“From the moment we arrived, we were immediately welcomed like we part of the full-time staff,” said Kuhn. “They (DPW) gave us our left and right limits and sent us out there to work on as many generators and electrical systems as we could.”

Kuhn’s arrival to the 463rd could not have been any better timing. Along with his military training, he works as an apprentice generator mechanic as a civilian. This is an example of where civilian skillsets on top of military training provide tremendous value to this mission and the Army.”

“When they first arrived, we sat them down and talked with each Soldier to find out what their skills were and what their interests were and then let them run like a bat out of hell,” said the installation Energy Manager, Roberto

Morelli, “Private Sipes said he was interested in learning to do lineman work. So, I sent him out with my team to do that just that. Their presence allowed me to focus on other areas and they became a huge force multiplier.”

Over the course of seven days, the team repaired dozens of generators, tracked down electrical faults, and completed several long-delayed projects — including rewiring the entire first floor of a barracks building.

“Their efforts not only caught us up with the immediate issues, but they also put us ahead a few months. Their presence allowed me to focus on other tasks needed across Hunter Liggett,” said Morelli. “They did a fantastic job.”

Located about three hours south of San Francisco, Fort Hunter Liggett is the Army Reserve’s largest training installation. Its scale demands constant maintenance and a deep bench of skilled personnel — making the 463rd Engineer Battalion’s rapid support all the more critical.

The 412th Theater Engineer Command is headquartered in Vicksburg, Mississippi. It provides command and control over approximately 10,000 U.S. Army Reserve Engineers from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean, ensuring our nation is ready to meet challenges at home and abroad.



Pfc. Tyler Sipes performs checks on a generator at Fort Hunter Liggett as part of an urgent response to the installation’s electrical issues. (Courtesy Photo)



Teamwork

Soldiers from "Hammer Head 22" of the 926th Engineer Brigade navigate through the leadership reaction course as part of events at the 412th Best Squad Competition at Fort Devans, Mass. April 24, 2025. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Green)



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