

# Lead The Way

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**T**here are more than 74,000 enlisted engineers in the Army, and every one of them should have a voice at our yearly conference. I hope to see a large turnout of enlisted engineer leaders at ENFORCE 2010. It's a great opportunity to rekindle old friendships and create new ones. Our experiences over the past nine years have transformed a Regiment that focused on major combat operations to a Regiment that operates on a battlefield without an easily recognizable enemy. The training and preparation of our formations is just as complicated when you account for the variety of missions required of an engineer and the short amount of time we have to prepare for the next deployment. There's no better place to discuss these issues with engineer leaders from across the Regiment than at ENFORCE.



The Regiment recognizes that it's that time to institute counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) training—beginning with basic combat training and continuing to the Sergeants Major Academy—and the same goes for warrant officer and officer training. We will have started C-IED training by the time you get to ENFORCE, and I hope you'll take time to observe what we're doing for young engineers. This is a big shift in what we require of young Soldiers during basic combat training. Observing their surroundings and reporting anomalies isn't something they are used to doing, especially when they're marching from one training event to another. Then, their only concern is staying no more than 5 meters behind the Soldier in front of them. Young Soldiers tend to shut out everything when doing routine tasks like conducting a movement, where they should be treating it like a movement to contact. The attention to detail outside the wire should be at, or above, the same level of concentration they devote to playing a video game. Soldiers should be completely absorbed in the environment. Every minute outside the wire is an opportunity to gather intelligence and save lives.

We have an imbalance of C-IED proficiency in the NCO Corps. Standardizing certain individual and collective tasks as the baseline standard will give NCOs a good foundation to implement C-IED training in units. We'll tackle the tasks required of an engineer leader in support of C-IED operations—from intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) requirements to vehicle recovery. This year we'll start defining the responsibilities of first

sergeants to platoons and how they can leverage battalion support systems.

Robots are here to stay. I'd argue that light fighters need robots just as much as, if not more than, mounted Soldiers. Robots should be thought of in the same context as any breaching equipment. Ask yourself which you would choose if given a choice of investigating an active explosive device with a robot or with Sapper Wells. Sapper Wells would definitely choose the robot.

The Army's College of the American Soldier (CAS) is a great program for engineers seeking to complete their college degree. SGM William Bennett, at the Engineer School's Directorate of Training

and Leader Development, has led the Regiment's efforts to leverage a pure, online degree program with Touro University specifically tailored for engineer Soldiers fighting in full spectrum operations. The CAS program will ensure that Soldiers are not tied to a specific satellite college or university and won't PCS and find out that the school doesn't have a local office, thereby requiring that they change schools and perhaps lose some of the credits they have earned. With the CAS program, they'll be able to complete their degree anywhere—Fort Bragg, Hawaii, Korea, Jalalabad, or Mosul.

Our partners in industry will be at ENFORCE, displaying either new or prototype equipment. Attending the conference will give Soldiers the chance to make a difference in the design or construction of future engineer equipment.

It looks as if our Regiment will offer one of the strongest fields for this year's Best Sapper Competition. It's a great competition, and we hope to broadcast it for our deployed engineers to enjoy. Sappers in training should not expect exactly the same events as last year, since the competition, as well as the Sapper Leader Course, is continually updating its instruction to maintain relevancy with our formations.

Our fraternal organizations stand proudly behind our efforts in the evolution of the Army Engineer. They are part of our culture—a fraternity of past heroes of the Regiment who have nothing but the best intentions for engineers young and old. Without their support, this annual gathering of the best engineers in the world would not be possible.

The ENFORCE conference is unique in that we look at the past year's accomplishments, recognize heroic engineers, celebrate the lives of fallen engineers, and make plans for future endeavors. I hope to see you there.