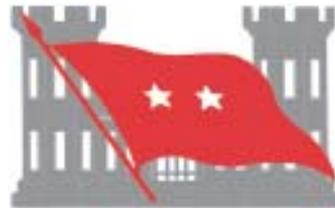


Clear The Way

By Major General Randal R. Castro
Commandant, U.S. Army Engineer School

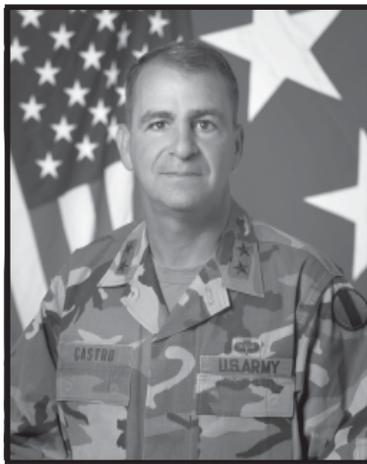


Hello again from Fort Leonard Wood, home of the Regiment. As I write this, I think of the many Soldiers in our Regiment and our Army who continue to fight this nation's war, and I want to tell you that I couldn't be prouder. Despite the difficulty of the mission, you **are** achieving success. To everyone: Thanks for your service.

Judy and I extend our thanks for a job well done and fond farewells to Jill and Brigadier General (BG) William H. McCoy. They are a great team, and we will miss them. BG McCoy has made a lasting contribution to our Regiment and has moved on to command the Gulf Region Division. The good news is that we have another great team here to carry on. Colonel (COL) Todd Semonite is now the Engineer School Assistant Commandant. We welcome him, his wife Connie, and their family to Fort Leonard Wood. Colonel Semonite comes to us from the Office of the Chief of Engineers at the Pentagon. We are glad to have him on our Team of Teams!

I want to honor the competitors of our first ever Best Sapper Competition. We had twenty-two teams compete in a grueling and technically challenging competition. Congratulations to Captains (CPTs) Anthony Barbina and William Boyd, 65th Engineer Battalion, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, the Best Sappers for 2005. I'm sure we'll have many more eager competitors next year as we intend to continue this competition as long as we have engineers in the Army.

Let me take a few moments to address some of the concerns I've been hearing from our Soldiers in this great Regiment about their opportunities for professional development in our new structure. There is no better time to be an engineer than right now, not only because of our accomplishments but our opportunities as well. I understand that it is hard to see the engineer units disappearing from the divisional structure, but those engineer Soldiers are coming back in units, companies, and battalions—above the divisional echelon. This won't happen overnight, but we will see the Regiment grow significantly in the next 2 to 4 years. Our Army is changing from the Force XXI Army to the Modular Force, and our Regiment is changing to the Future Engineer Force (FEF) to meet the needs of this Modular Army. Our companies will be structured to achieve a particular effect for the Army—sapper/combat, horizontal and vertical construction, topographic, clearing, bridging, etc.—with each company (or module) having the ability to operate independently. The good news—all battalions will have their own combat service support



capability which, for the first time in ages, is adequate for combat operations.

If you are a junior enlisted Soldier in the Engineer Regiment today, you have an amazing opportunity for continued promotion. Our sapper, bridger, and construction specialty requirements all increase in numbers from sergeant (SGT) through sergeant first class (SFC). Staff sergeants (SSGs) will serve in key leadership positions in company-size elements, to include squad leader and section sergeant, along with numerous staff positions within the Regiment. The position of platoon sergeant will still be filled with an SFC. The future is bright for

first sergeants too. FEF Modules support the standing up of additional vertical and horizontal companies, allowing Soldiers more opportunities to advance in rank. In addition, maneuver enhancement brigades, divisional staff positions, and engineer battalion staff sergeant major (SGM) positions coming back will add more positions for SGMs, affording greater opportunities for upward mobility from master sergeant to SGM. I expect to see an increase in the number of command sergeant major (CSM) positions available as we gain engineer brigades. This growth is expected due to recent changes to the span of control for the engineer brigades.

Warrant officers (WOs) will continue to be the technical officers of the Engineer Regiment. Most of this growth is within the topographic field, a six-fold increase in the next 6 years. Their assignments will develop along the full spectrum of the technical requirements to meet the needs of the FEF. WOs must also develop and maintain a tactical proficiency with the ability to lead and continue self-development education.

Over the next few years, our Regiment's need for lieutenants (LTs) will double. They will continue to serve in company-level positions to gain leadership experience, enhance technical and tactical competence and, when appropriate, complement this service with staff experience at the battalion level. Typical duty positions will still include engineer platoon leader, company executive officer (XO) or training officer in training center units, and battalion staff officer. With the addition of more engineer companies to the FEF, LTs will have more opportunities to have a first assignment as a platoon leader and gain tactical proficiency before their second assignment.

The increase in engineer companies will also increase the need for engineer CPTs to command those companies. CPTs should prepare for and seek company-level or certain types

of detachment command. The goal is to allow engineer officers to serve in company command 18 to 24 months for continued professional development. The increase in the number of sapper companies in the FEF will afford CPTs a greater opportunity for company commands. Another important thing to remember is that while some of these companies are not within the divisions, the Modular Force will find many of these companies fighting within the division's battlespace when deployed.

Majors (MAJs) will have great responsibility in the Modular Army. Their greatest challenge and opportunities will be as brigade engineers, S3s, and XO's. Lieutenant Colonels (LTCs) will continue to have the option to command engineer battalions as well as brigade troop battalions. There is an overall increased need for both MAJs and LTCs.

With this development path and the structure of the FEF, we make the engineer COL the senior executive in our Regiment. We develop technical and tactical depth and breadth across the operational, institutional, and joint/interagency/international sectors of our Army. Officers will get promoted to LTC with great assuredness, and those who wish to seek command as field grade officers will posture themselves accordingly by completing the assignments that best prepare an officer for command—a balance of skills and experience. Although recent resourcing cycles have reduced our requirement for engineer COLs, ongoing analysis has approved a reduction in the span of control for the engineer brigade, which should increase again the total number of engineer brigades in the force. The Army has realized the need for engineers beyond the capability left in the converted divisions. I encourage you all, especially the noncommissioned officers and company grade officers, to hang in through the next 2 years to reap the rewards of our growth. I say to you all: "We're coming back!"

For more detailed information, go to the Commandant's section of the Engineer School Web site at <http://www.wood.army.mil/eschool/> to view my video message and slide presentation on this subject.

I ask that you clear your calendars 24-27 October 2005 for the Army Engineer Association (AEA) Engineer Regimental Conference in Orlando, Florida. The event will combine a Council of Colonels (for a select audience) with a Warfighter Symposium for all who desire to attend. See the AEA Web site at <http://www.armyengineer.com/> for details. We look forward to seeing you there.

In closing, I want to ask your support. Our next issue of the bulletin will focus on Assured Mobility in Urban and Complex Terrain. We want to share your ideas, experiences, tactics, techniques, and procedures for what works to fill the gaps the Regiment has in this area. I look forward to reading your contributions.

Again, thanks for all you and your Team (to include spouses) are doing for our Regiment and our Army. Carry on!

Essayons!