

Lead The Way

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A great deal of change has occurred since the last issue of *Engineer*. We bid farewell to Brigadier General (BG) William H. McCoy and welcomed Colonel (COL) Todd T. Semonite as the Assistant Commandant of the Engineer School. I'd like to express my appreciation to the McCoy's for the positive impact they made on the Army, our great Engineer Regiment, and the Fort Leonard Wood community. We sincerely look forward to serving with COL Semonite and his family and feel blessed to have another extraordinary team in our midst!



I had the opportunity to visit the Soldiers, commanders, and command sergeants major (CSMs) in Iraq and Afghanistan and was able to capture events as they happened. Our Soldiers are performing at levels the enemy never would have expected, defeating them and winning the War on Terrorism. I would like to thank BG Bostick and CSM Gutierrez, command team for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers® Gulf Region District, for the enormous amount of reconstruction the Corps has done; it is nothing short of a miracle. While the threats to America have changed, the need for victory has not. The entrenched enemies are using tools of terror and guerrilla warfare—yet we are finding new tactics and new weapons to attack and defeat them. Advanced technological development by itself is clearly not sufficient to ensure a successful military transformation. Leaders in our Regiment must ensure that we provide our Soldiers with the most advanced equipment and training possible. Proper training of our officers, noncommissioned officers (NCOs), and Soldiers remains the Army's top priority. I will highlight that and a few other priorities.

Training. The 1st Engineer Brigade continues to work on producing Soldiers who are prepared to arrive at their first duty assignment ready to immediately add value to the team and, in most cases, to deploy with their new unit. One key initiative in this process is the incorporation of a culminating exercise for both military occupational specialty (MOS) 21B/C One-Station Unit Training (OSUT) and Engineer Advanced Individual Training (AIT). These Soldiers participate in a scenario-based, squad Army Training Evaluation Program (ARTEP)-style exercise that tests their ability to perform Skill Level 1 tasks they have learned while performing engineer squad or platoon collective tasks in urban and complex terrain.

The 35th Engineer Battalion has completed several iterations of this exercise with positive results. Drill sergeants and leaders report that Soldiers come away with a greater understanding and appreciation of their ability to master engineer

tasks. Similarly, the 169th and 577th Engineer Battalions now conduct Battle-Focused Training (BFT) as a culminating 5-day exercise for engineer AIT MOSs. BFT is a 5-day exercise at Fort Leonard Wood for engineer AIT MOSs from Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas; and Gulfport, Mississippi. Replicating an intermediate staging base (ISB), Soldiers are issued equipment, assigned to squads, tested on their warrior tasks and drills, and led on missions that exercise their newly learned vertical and horizontal engineer tasks in a mission scenario. All engineer AIT graduates participate in military operations on urban terrain (MOUT), a convoy live fire,

and a second weapons qualification before shipping to their first duty assignment. The brigade continues to incorporate lessons learned and increase the rigor of training to provide the best engineer Soldiers possible to your units.

The 169th Engineer Battalion developed a new program called Soldier Trained and Ready (STAR). In the first 30 days of the program, the absent-without-leave (AWOL) rate has dropped, the number of Soldiers chaptered for discipline issues reduced, and the number of Soldiers chaptered for failing the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) has declined. The results of the 90-day pilot will be available for analysis at the August Initial-Entry Training (IET) Commanders Conference.

Transformation. The Counter Explosive Hazards Center (CEHC) here is conducting a Unit Searcher and Unit Search Advisor Course that is helping units learn to perform searches of occupied and unoccupied homes with skills incorporating search dogs in the mission. CEHC will be training the T-3 Counter Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Training Level 1, which will be combined with the Explosive Hazard Awareness Training and the Soldier Awareness Briefing. The second mine dog detachment is standing up with the Special Search Dog Course currently being conducted at Fort Leonard Wood, as well as having Soldiers at the mine dog training facility at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. The detachment currently has dog teams deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan who are conducting clearing and search missions.

4-Tier Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES). The transformed system now facilitates lifelong learning with guided self-development; reduces course length across the NCOES without degrading learning; supports Modular Force/ARFOEGEN; and expands experiential learning with increased situational awareness (agile leaders, common operating environment [COE], cultural awareness, lessons learned,

and conceptual learning). We are looking at giving our NCOs more skills and tools to operate on a joint staff at the senior NCO level. We are working both courses in concert with our training developers, and the schedule should be released in the next issue of *Engineer*.

With all the Army transforming, engineers will have an increase in the E-9 population. Before modularity, we had 59 E-9 positions that were directly related to combat structure divisional and echelon-above-division units. Additionally, we have about 43 E-9 authorizations in various other organizations. With our new design, we will have 77 E-9 positions, in addition to the other 43 authorizations. Also keep in mind that we are currently filling several BTB CSM positions. It is the Regiment's intent to get the approval for the following E-9 population in our new unit designs. In the future, four brigade headquarters are expected to have 5 E-9 positions (4 are CSM), 27 battalion headquarters x 2 E-9s = 54 (27 are CSM), 5 unit of employment-operational (Uey) x 1 E-9 and 13 in unit of employment-tactical (UEX) x 1 E-9.

We have top-notch CSMs who get nominated and selected to positions that are not reflected against our authorizations. We are also looking at making the maneuver enhancement brigade operations SGM an engineer. Bottom line: Our future as a Regiment is a great news story. Senior NCO leaders now need to project this to our young Soldiers. The E-9 increases also apply to our National Guard and Reserve brethren though the number of their units varies. The expected growth also applies to the E-8 and E-7 population. With all that said, I would like to congratulate all the sergeants major (SGM) and master sergeants of Class 55 who completed the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA). Well done!

We completed the first Best Sapper Competition among 22 different sapper teams from around the World, Congratulations to Best Sappers CPT Anthony Barbina and CPT William Boyd from the 65th Engineer Battalion. I would like to thank the leadership from the various units for supporting their Soldiers.

On my recent trip to Florida, I had the great pleasure of attending the dedication ceremony for Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant First Class (SFC) Paul Ray Smith (Sapper). The ceremony was attended by the Smith family, Florida Governor Jeb Bush, University of Central Florida President John C. Hitt, Lieutenant General Carl A. Strock, and other dignitaries. In honor of SFC Smith, the Simulation and Training Technology Center (STTC), Orlando, Florida, was renamed the SFC Paul Ray Smith Simulation and Training Technology Center to recognize his extraordinary heroism and uncommon valor.

Finally, continue to focus on the Global War on Terrorism, maintaining high standards and leading the way as engineers do. May God bless the fallen comrades and keep watch over our sons and daughters as we continue to fight the fight. Essayons!