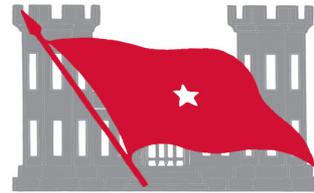


Clear The Way

Brigadier General Bryan G. Watson
Commandant, United States Army Engineer School



A Timeless Profession

From the very beginning in 1775, Army leaders recognized the critical need for a profession of military engineer experts serving commanders at every level, with formations of engineers fighting alongside every combat formation from the point of attack to the ports and airfields that sustained operations. That's why we are the oldest professional Regiment in the Army; we are a profession that traces our roots back to 16 June 1775, when Congress resolved to establish a Chief of Engineers within the Army. This Regiment has played a vital role in every military operation—during peace and war—that has ultimately shaped America and helped define our prominent role as a world leader. It is no different today! Just look at the extraordinary service of Army engineers in Iraq, Afghanistan, New Orleans, and our own Army camps and stations.

This past fall, the Chief of Staff of the Army, General George Casey, designated 2011 as the “Year of the Army Profession.” Across our Army, the Training and Doctrine Command is leading a number of forums designed to closely examine the profession of arms and ask ourselves some tough questions: After 10 years of combat, how are we doing as a profession? Are we meeting the nation's needs? What must we change to better prepare for the future?

The theme of this year's ENFORCE—*A Timeless Profession*—extends the Armywide dialogue on the profession of arms to our own Regiment's role as the Army's subprofession of military engineers. As we gather the tribe together from across our Regiment, we will dedicate much of our time toward examining a number of questions: What does it mean to be a subprofession of military engineers that serves the Army? What are the attributes of the military engineer professional the Army needs? After 10 years of war, where do we need to make changes within our profession to better serve our Army?

I'm extremely excited about the events during ENFORCE this year and how we have structured the week. First, we have moved the dates of ENFORCE (6–9 April) so it begins on Wednesday and culminates on Saturday to make it easier for members of the Reserve Component to attend the main events. We will open ENFORCE with our partners in industry displaying the latest technologies at



Nutter Field House. Go see the displays, and allow the experience to expand your horizons on the technologies we can use to enhance our effectiveness in serving commanders on tomorrow's battlefield.

Thursday we will convene the Regimental Command Council and discuss a multitude of hot topics from the Regimental Campaign Plan that are ready for senior leader debate and input. Also on Thursday, we will hold several discussion groups designed to open a broader debate on three key areas where I think we need to make some changes in order to meet our professional responsibilities. Discussion groups will look at—

- Making changes needed to improve how we educate leaders.
- Improving the way we meet the training needs of the Regiment based on Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN).
- Leveraging knowledge management to provide the Regiment with a true virtual collaborative “cloud” that provides members of our profession with the connections they need to reach back, reach forward, swap ideas, and guide regimental decisions about the future.

The discussion groups will report their recommendations to a Council of Commanders on Saturday morning.

Thursday will culminate with one of the most solemn and respectful moments of the week, as we unveil the Fallen Engineers Memorial in Sapper Grove to honor engineers who gave their lives in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. This memorial is a gift from the Regiment—through your donations to the Army Engineer Association—and we will continue the tradition of adding names each year until our mission is completed, those operations are concluded, and the team returns home. This is what a professional family does...it recognizes the selfless sacrifice of its own with honor, love, and respect.

Friday will allow us to focus on the professional attributes of the military engineer. We will conduct a panel discussion—led by engineer veterans who fought in past conflicts—and hear from unit leaders fresh out of Afghanistan and a military futurist who will help us glimpse into the future. The discussion is designed to examine the professional attributes of the military engineer that have served us well

past wars—through the eyes of our veterans—and then consider the challenges we will face on future battlefields to discern what adjustments we must make in leader development. We will end the day with our keynote addresses. First, Colonel Don Snider (Retired), who is leading the Armywide discourse on the profession of arms, will give us his perspective on military engineers as a subprofession of the Army. Then our 52d Chief of Engineers, Lieutenant General Robert Van Antwerp, will address the assembled members of the Regiment and provide his perspective on the changes he has witnessed and lived through over the course of his career, with insights on what that means for the future.

Throughout the week, spouses are encouraged to participate in the Spouse Program, which includes getting some hands-on training on automatic weapons in the Engagement Skills Trainer, observing a demonstration of fixed and float bridging, and going through a tour of “a trainee’s first day.” There will also be a number of social events for spouses during the week, including a luncheon on Thursday.

On Saturday, we start the day by cheering on the finalists of the Best Sapper Competition as they give their all to

cross the finish line first. The competition begins on Wednesday, and you can visit events during the week. If you want to see the heart and soul of our Regiment, BE THERE! We will then conduct a number of professional development seminars that are regionally focused to give our combatant command engineers a chance to showcase the complexity of engineer operations in each of the major theaters. The Army Engineer Association will hold its Awards Luncheon, where we will recognize the winners of the Itschner, Grizzly, Van Autreve, Outstanding Warrant Officer, and Outstanding Civilian awards. Of course, we will gather that night in Nutter Field House for the Engineer Regimental Ball in honor of our award recipients and will present the Gold deFleury to this year’s winners.

That’s a full agenda, I know, and I only hit the major events. So come to ENFORCE and help us celebrate our “timeless profession,” and then help us shape this Regiment’s future. See you there.

Lead to Serve!