



THE

BRIDGE

Volume 1, Issue 2

Produced for the 416th Theater Engineer Command

Spring 2008



420th ENGINEER BRIGADE

GETS READY FOR IRAQ

Leader's Notes

“EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION”

Effective communication is the lifeblood of a successful organization. Among its many benefits is the ability to reinforce the organization's vision among unit members, to foster process improvement, and to facilitate positive changes and results by changing Soldier behavior.

No matter how you look at it, communication is a vital part of the organizational landscape and should never be taken for granted.

Among the key findings of a recent study was a significant correlation between communication effectiveness, organizational turnover and overall unit performance. **The study found evidence that:**

- Communication effectiveness is a leading indicator of financial performance.
- A significant improvement in communication effectiveness is associated with an increase in market value.
- Companies with the highest levels of effective communications experienced a higher total return to shareholders when compared to firms that communicate least effectively.

The fact is that organizations that communicate effectively dramatically outpace organizations that don't.

However, also among the survey findings was that two-thirds of the firms with high levels of communication effectiveness asked their managers to take on a greater share of the communication responsibility, but few were giving them the tools and training to be successful.

So how is effective communication a key driver of superior performance, and how does a leader communicate effectively?

It comes down to connections: Soldiers who feel connected to the organization better understand how their actions can support it. Therefore, leaders should:

- Foster solid connections to the Army culture among new Soldiers, and to your unit starting from their first day in the unit.
- Communicate essential information on transformation and changing operational challenges, allowing Soldiers to quickly adjust to new procedures and policies.

-Build a strong foundation of formal communication structure and processes within your organization, which uses currently available technology to connect with Soldiers effectively, and offer opportunities for feedback.



Maj. Gen. Michael R. Eyre

-Deal directly with issues of change, continuous improvement and organiza-

THE FOUR C'S

- ◆Communication
- ◆Coordination
- ◆Cooperation
- ◆Compassion

tional integration and alignment.

-Creating positive behavioral change by enhancing capabilities and by developing a connection between Soldiers and the unit's mission.

It is essential that leaders know how to communicate effectively, which involves knowing themselves, their unit's mission, and how to foster an open, two-way exchange of information between themselves, their subordinates, and supervisors. Understanding your leaders' intent makes it easier to meet or exceed requirements and expectations – by making it easier to plan and prioritize resources

Sharing information also reinforces team values and signals to others that constructive input is valued and appreciated.

For all these reasons, leaders at every level are encouraged to make effective communications an essential part of their organizational objectives – and to develop and execute a comprehensive communications plan.

Bottom line: Effective communications drives unit performance and is a key contributor to organizational success!

THE BRIDGE

Produced for Personnel of 416th Theater Engineer Command

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The Bridge is an official publication of 416th Theater Engineer Command produced to provide command information to service members. The Bridge is produced by the 318th Public Affairs Operations Center, Army Reserve. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the command's Public Affairs Office, under the provisions of AR 360-1. Contents of the Bridge are not necessarily official views, nor endorsed by the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army or the 416th Engineer Command. The Bridge is published quarterly using offset press by the 416th TEC, ATTN: Public Affairs Office, 10 S. 100 South Frontage Road, Darien, Illinois 60561.

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Photo by 2nd Lt. Olivia Cobiskey



Photo courtesy of Pvt. Kristi Jo Newland



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Spc. Tony Hernandez, a Combat Medic with the 420th Engineer Brigade, prepares an IV during mobilization training at Fort McCoy, Wis. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Duran)

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Photos from the 2008 Chicago Auto Show
(Photo collage by Sgt. Edwin J. Rodriguez)

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Stay Informed About Your Benefits

by Sgt. Edwin J. Rodriguez
318th Press Camp Headquarters

Whether you enlisted in the Army Reserve for an experience or an education, do not forget to read the fine print. An enlistment bonus can be great to pay the bills, but do you get a bonus with your specific Military Occupational Specialty? Applying for the Student Loan Repayment Program could benefit you as a student but what if I want a private loan? These are some of the questions you might be asking yourself.

There is a bonus amount up to \$7,500 for three years and \$15,000 for six; however, it is more specific for critical MOS's. As a note critical MOS's change quite often, said Staff Sgt. Dennis Holmes, Jr., an Army Reserve Career Counselor in the 88th Regional Readiness Command working at the Forest Park Reserve Center in Illinois.

Under the Student Loan Repayment Program, according to Goarmy.com, most Army Reserve Soldiers qualify for \$10,000, but again, only critical MOS's can get up to \$20,000 in qualified educational loans. Whichever is greater, each year 15% of the loan balance or \$500, will be repaid by SLRP. There may also be annual and cumulative caps on the amount repaid. Participants must score 50 or higher on the Armed Forces Qualifications Test (AFQT). SLRP must be requested at the time of enlistment or re-enlistment. Qualified education loans include federal education loans such as the Perkins, Stafford, or Consolidation loans, but not private alternative loans. Defaulted loans are not eligible.

Payments made under the SLRP are considered taxable


income. Your loans must be in good standing as described at Goarmy.com

The Montgomery GI Bill covers up to 36 months (four regular school years) of education benefits to eligible veterans for college, business, technical or vocational courses, correspondence courses, apprenticeships, job training and flight training. To qualify for benefits you must have a six year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve.

For selected Reserve personnel, you can receive up to \$317 per month for full-time institutional education (as of Oct. 1, 2007). Generally, your benefits end 14 years from the date you become eligible for the program, according to Goarmy.com

Another is the Tuition Assistance which will pay up to \$250 per semester hour, or equivalent quarter not to exceed \$4500 per fiscal year, as said by Web-Enabled Education Benefit System.

Army Reserve Soldiers and Officers are eligible to receive TA. However, this assistance is based on a first come first serve basis, due to the fact that all funds coming from the Department of the Army are limited, according to WEBS

There are advantages for re-enlisting with the Army Reserve. The key is to understand the fine print. Each program may seem cut and dry but to maximize your benefits, ask questions. The next step is for Soldiers to take the initiative for themselves. The MGIB, SLRP and TA benefits are all available to Army Reserve Soldiers but talk to your Veterans Affairs representative at your school. Do not forget your Retention NCO's and Career Counselors; they have tools to help you receive a beneficial and healthy educational Army Career. 

TRICARE: Definitely yours to keep


Family Readiness Group

TRICARE Management Activity wants to reassure its beneficiaries that none of them are at risk of losing their TRICARE coverage, regardless of the cost of their care or other conditions that might affect commercial insurance policies. "I want to remind our beneficiaries that TRICARE is an entitlement earned by Military service," said Army Major General Elder Granger, Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity. "They shouldn't worry as their entitlement to care is statutory. No contractor can simply drop the health care coverage of our beneficiaries."

Beneficiaries may have seen recent news reports alleging that health insurance company Health Net Inc., rewarded its senior analyst in charge of cancellations for exceeding annual targets for revoking policies. Because Health Net Federal Services is one of

TRICARE's managed care contractors, TRICARE beneficiaries might think they are also at risk of cancellation or revocation of their TRICARE coverage. TRICARE leaders say that is simply not true. Health Net Inc., has many divisions. The issue in the news report involves the civilian commercial health insurance portion of Health Net Inc., and is not related to the Federal Services part of the company.

Unlike some commercial insurance policies, TRICARE benefits are not limited by such things as pre-existing conditions or failure to report health information. If a person is entitled to care under the laws established by Congress, then they receive that care.

"In addition to the best available medical care, we want TRICARE to offer one other benefit," Major General Granger said. "Peace of mind." 

Command Notes

My travels to various locations and events over the past several months have led to discussions of mentorship. Mentorship. We've heard the word but what is it? What does it mean? Why is it important?

Mentorship comes from the Greek word "Mentor". Those who are graduates of the Army Reserve Senior Leader Training Program may have learned that Mentor was a friend of Odysseus entrusted with the education of Odysseus' son Telemachus. Today we use the word to refer to a trusted counselor or guide; a tutor or coach. FM 7-22.7 defines mentorship as the "developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience."

Why is mentorship important?

Leaders have a responsibility to train and develop their Soldiers. While good leadership should accomplish these goals, mentorship most definitely increases the rate and level of development for Soldiers and junior leaders. Senior leaders have an obligation to provide mentorship, to share the knowledge and wisdom they have gained by years of experience, to develop junior Soldiers and future leaders.

What does it take to be a mentor?

Effective mentors possess knowledge and wisdom they have gained over years of experience. Good mentors must be willing to freely share their experience in a positive and encouraging manner. But most of all, a good mentor must care. Mentorship isn't easy. It takes additional time and effort. But mentoring is a valuable investment in that future leader and in our Army.

Who is a mentor?

An individual may have a single mentor or several based upon assignment and career progression. A mentor may have several mentees. A mentor often is not in the direct leadership chain.

One of my most valued mentors was and is Chaplain (COL) (ret) Tom Gamblin. Apparently he saw a young (or not so young) Sergeant Major who he felt had potential. If it wasn't for Chaplain Gamblin I wouldn't be where I am today. What set Tom Gamblin apart from others? He had experience, knowledge, wisdom, and he cared. As you can see a mentoring relationship can last through a career and even into retirement.



Command Sgt. Maj.
LeRoy Haugland

I was recently invited by the Society of American Military Engineers Rock Island Post to their annual dinner. They recognized the post's junior members who had been mentored over the previous twelve or more months by senior members. Just a few years ago they instituted a formal mentorship program. It demanded additional time and resources from the volunteer mentor as well as the mentee. They see the value in developing professional engineers to serve our military for years to come.

As we find ourselves in an era of persistent conflict we must prepare the next greatest generation of Soldiers to serve the United States and keep our nation secure.

Mentorship is a vital part of developing our junior Soldiers and young leaders today for the challenges they will face tomorrow. Whether it be mentoring a Soldier in their duty MOS, NCOES, Army Warrior Tasks, leadership, or taking care of Soldiers and Families, we as leaders at all levels owe it to our peers and subordinates to provide the mentorship which will make the difference between good and great.

ESSAYONS!

389th Engineer Battalion has top Army Reserve - Recruiting Assistance Program Statistics in the 416th TEC

by Lt. Col. Edgar Montalvo
318th Press Camp Headquarters

The 389th Engineer Battalion (Combat) (Heavy), headquartered in Dubuque, Iowa, currently has the best AR-RAP stats in the command. The battalion had 16 accessions through the first week in May, or approximately 52% of their mission total, with another 32 prospects, all potential future Soldiers.

According to Master Sgt. Jack Gehrts, the acting Command Sergeant Major, the key to this success is the 200 recruiting assistants, which represents almost 35% of the entire battalion's strength. The battalion consists of seven units in Iowa, Nebraska and Wisconsin, and is commanded by Lt. Col. James McCarthy.

The United States Army Reserve launched the Army Reserve Recruiting Assistance Program (AR-RAP) earlier this fiscal year to help increase the number of MOS-qualified Soldiers by allowing most Soldiers to serve as part-time Recruiting Assistants (RA) during their off-duty time, and earn up to \$2,000 for each recruit that contracts and ships to Basic Combat Training or Basic Officer Leader Course, or for each prior service Soldier that completes 120 days of unit affiliation and has attended a battle assembly in the last 60 days. To learn more about the program or to apply to become a RA, go to: www.ARRAP.com or call 866-837-2541.

Spring into Safety

PRIVATELY OWNED MOTORCYCLE SAFETY



Time to knock the rust off your motorcycle and enroll in a Motorcycle Safety Foundation Basic Rider Course. Contact your unit Additional Duty Safety Officer (ADSO) for enrollment info or download the enrollment form off the 416th TEC Safety webpage:

<https://xtranet/Organization/MSCs/EAC-EAD/416TEC/416staff/416safety/>

PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLE (POV) SAFETY

POV inspections should be conducted at section level at least twice a year; best recommendation is in the SPRING and late FALL. Leaders are responsible for ensuring their Soldiers vehicles are functional and within standards for safe operation.

TRAVEL RISK PLANNING SYSTEM (TRiPS)

Going on leave, pass or TDY? Login to: https://crcapps2.crc.army.mil/ako_auth/trips (AKO only) to complete your POV Risk Assessment. Unless you've been living in a cave for the last few years, you'll know that TRiPS is an online automated risk assessment tool specifically designed for personnel using their POV's or POM's during pass, leave or TDY. In fact, personnel using TRiPS were 2.5 times less likely to be involved in a fatal vehicle accident. TRiPS is not intended to replace the supervisor's role in approving leaves, nor should it become a check-the block system to provide a paper trail after an accident. The intent of TRiPS is to involve leaders in their Soldier's travel plans and give them an effective tool to protect the Army's most valuable asset - it's people!

SPRING CLEANING SAFETY

Yardwork

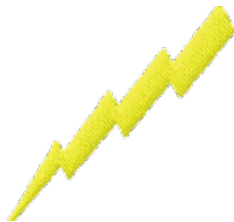
- Personal Protective Equipment – As the situation dictates, consider the use of protective eyewear, gloves, hearing protection, long sleeve shirts and pants. Hey, this is as good a time as any to use those newly issued ESS glasses!
- Ensure all cutting blades are sharpened, properly tightened and/or secured on mowers, edgers, trimmers, power tools, etc.



- Perform pre-operational checks on all power tools and equipment. Poorly maintained tools and equipment are hazardous to operate.
- Weekend projects – Always call your local county, city or municipal office before you do any digging in or around your yard.
- Ensure footing on ladders is fully stabilized on the ground prior to climbing. Also, check the weight restrictions and never exceed the capabilities as noted on the ladder's operating instructions

Electricity

May is National Electrical Safety Month. Check extension cords for wear and fraying, utilize Ground Fault Circuit Interrupt (GFCI) outlets when possible, keep cords away from water sources and avoid overloading the cords listed capacity.



RECREATIONAL SAFETY

Cooking

Check your barbecue grill for leaks and

cracks, and be sure to store any propane tanks away from your house and garage.

Swimming Pools

Ensure the pool is clean and properly treated with the right mixture of chemicals. Never leave young children unattended around swimming pools, **even for a minute!** Don't leave plugged-in appliances where they might contact water. If a plugged-in appliance falls into water, don't reach in to pull it out even if it's turned off. First, turn off the power source at the panel board and then unplug the appliance. If you have an



appliance that has gotten wet, don't use it until a qualified repair professional has checked it.

SAFETY SHARE

During the January 2008 416th TEC Safety Advisory Council, Major General Eyre discussed the concept and implementation of "Safety Share" in all activities, briefings, meetings, etc. as part of the culture within the 416th TEC. In brief, "Safety Share" is a simple, yet effective, safety awareness program that opens and/or closes an event with a personal story relating to safety, situational awareness and lessons learned. Share your personal experiences, close-calls and messages with other Soldiers and co-workers at your next company training meeting – **you never know, you just may save someone's life!**

**Your Command Safety Office
is here for you!**

**Contact the Command Safety Team
at the numbers below 24/7:**

**Major Jon Johnson 630.729.4109
Mr. Richard Flanagan 630.729.4076**

Chaplain's Corner

by CH (Col.)

Timothy M. Samorajski

Some time ago, the Army developed seven core values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage. Not surprisingly, each of these values are found in the Bible. This article will take a brief look at "loyalty."

In a military setting, a loyal person is considered someone who consistently performs their duties in an exceptional manner when no one is watching, when it's inconvenient and when taking care of the troops means putting personal matters on hold.

In John 13:1 we read, "Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." Now this is loyalty! Despite the fact that Jesus would soon die for the sins of the world, His mind was on His disciples - on their needs and not His own.

In John 20: 19 it says, "Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." The 11 remaining disciples were a pathetic group immediately following the crucifixion of Jesus. In this passage, they are found cowering behind locked doors, unsure of what to do next. Could anyone have blamed the Lord if He had simply thrown up His arms in disgust and proclaimed, "What's the use, this bunch will never get it!" Even though the disciples at that moment were completely unlovable, Jesus remained a friend.

To be loyal in the same manner as Christ requires divine assistance. We can't do it on our own. What to do? In Revelations 3:20, we find the answer. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice an opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

To share Christ's attribute of loyalty requires us to invite Christ Himself into our lives. Today, I invite you to accept our Lord's gracious invitation to dinner!



An entrant of the U.S. Army's push up contest at the 2008 Chicago Auto Show lets this Drill Sergeant know what he's made of. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Scott D. Turner)

The Push-up Demystified

by Spc. Darius R. Kirkwood
318th Press Camp Headquarters

The Army Physical Fitness Test is administered to assess Soldiers' muscular endurance and cardiorespiratory fitness. There is generally little or no contention related to Soldiers' performance during the sit-up and running events, but very often, the push-up is executed in a manner that deviates from what is deemed acceptable.

Guidance for Army physical fitness training is provided in FM 21-20, which includes detailed instructions and illustrations for a wide range of exercises, including the push-up.

According to chapter 14, which discusses APFT standards, the Soldier's upper arms must be parallel to the ground when the body is lowered, and the entire arm fully straightened on the way up.

So when did anything else become ok? Countless numbers of Soldiers get away with doing a sort of half push-up, where the arms are bent just enough to lower the body a bit. This is noticeably easier to perform than a correct push-up, and often results in an inflated, undeserved number of scored repetitions.

Unfortunately, bad habits like these are inevitable when performance on the

APFT becomes more of a priority than true physical fitness – the ability to perform mission-essential tasks and maintain overall combat readiness.

So what do we do about it?

Well, to start, those entrusted to grade APFT-takers should, as all Soldiers, keep the seven Army core values at the forefront of their minds. Each of them – Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage – illustrates aspects of our character that should govern our decision-making process. To "help out" a buddy by pencil whipping their scorecard is not helping him, or anyone else out. Instead, that person has compromised their moral fiber (if they are lucky enough to not be found out); endangered their career (if not so lucky after all); prolonged the apparent lack of proper physical conditioning of the Soldier in question; and perhaps most importantly, diminished that unit's ability to fight as a disciplined, conditioned team.

It is our duty as Soldiers to strive for excellence and improvement in all that we do. Taking shortcuts, however convenient, will not help. Though our military careers stand to present us with some of the greatest challenges of our lives, we can lighten this load, at least a little bit, by simply doing our push-ups right! 🇺🇸

Army Reserve Turns 100, is Honored by NASCAR Driver



The U.S. Army #8 car, driven by Mark Martin, displayed the 100th Army Reserve Anniversary logo for the first time on a NASCAR Sprint Series cup car. Martin finished in 5th place, Saturday, April 12, 2008, at Phoenix International Raceway, Phoenix Ariz. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Edwin Rodriguez)



Maj. Gen. Mock presents a gift to Mark Martin, driver of the U.S. Army #8 car, before Martin's start in the Fresh Fit 500 at Phoenix International Raceway, Phoenix Ariz. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Edwin Rodriguez)

*by Sgt. Anshu Pandeya
318th Press Camp Headquarters*

AVONDALE, Ariz. – The U.S. Army Accessions Command sponsored festivities in anticipation of the Army Reserve's 100th Anniversary as Dale Earnhardt, Inc. driver Mark Martin took fifth place at the NASCAR Subway Fresh Fit 500 on April 12th.

Martin displayed an emblem honoring the Army Reserve's 100th Anniversary on the hood of his #8 U.S. Army Chevy Impala.

Events occurring before the race included rock wall climbing, as well as TOW anti-tank guided missile and Javelin surface-to-air missile simulators. There was also an Army Reserve recruiting booth.

A catered lunch was provided for members invited to the function, along with remarks from guest speaker Maj. Gen. Paul Mock, commander of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command.

Mock also conducted an Oath of Enlistment Ceremony for several current and new Soldiers.

Harmony in Motion, a chorus of Army Reserve Soldiers from Fort Carson, Colo., sang "America the Beautiful," while the U.S. Army Parachute Team, commonly known as the Golden Knights, performed an aerial demonstration with an Army Reserve 100th anniversary flag.

Martin's strong finish added to the excitement as the veteran driver led 68 laps of the race. He was leading with 10 laps to go when he took his final pit stop to refuel, costing him the race. 📺

416th Soldiers Reenlist in Nation's Capitol

Story and photos by
Sgt 1st Class Scott D. Turner
318th Press Camp Headquarters

WASHINGTON - On April 23rd, 1908, 160 dedicated medical professionals stepped forward when their nation called.

Since that moment in history, the United States Army Reserve has evolved, and today numbers nearly 200,000 technically proficient and professional Warrior/Citizens who are willing to put their everyday lives on hold to defend the freedoms that all Americans enjoy.

Reenlistment is an important decision that nearly all Soldiers have to make at some point during their military career.

Several Soldiers from the 416th Theater Engineer Command upheld that distinguished tradition, and raised their right hand for the Oath of Reenlistment on the Army's 100th birthday in Washington, D.C.

Over 800 servicemembers, civilians and members of Congress attended the ceremony.

Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, Chief of the Army Reserve, administered the oath.

With the Army Reserve meeting today's challenges of constant transformation, recruiting and training, the next 100 years will bring great success in its mission as the best reserve force in the world! 🇺🇸



Sgt. Bryan E. Denman, 301st CSB, and Sgt. Eric Dwelle, 420th Eng. Bde., (with family members) pose with Maj. Gen. Eyre and Command Sgt. Maj. Haugland



Reenlistee Staff Sgt. Anthony McDowell, 301st CSB, and Mrs. McDowell pose with Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre and Command Sgt. Maj. LeRoy Haugland, Commander and CSM of the 416th TEC



Pictured are (top row, l-r) Brig. Gen. Charles Martin and Command Sgt. Maj. John Werner, 372nd Engineer Brigade; Command Sgt. Maj. (Ret.) Douglas Gibbons; Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Jack Kotter; Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre and Command Sgt. Maj. LeRoy Haugland, Commander and CSM of the 416th TEC; Staff Sgt. Timothy Dorris, 420th Eng. Bde. Bottom row (l-r) Staff Sgt. Christopher Hilson, HHC, 416th TEC; Sgt. Louis Goldstein, 372nd Eng. Bde.; Sgt. Alisha Miller, 364th Public Affairs Det.; Spc. Scott Rogers, 372nd Eng. Bde.; Spc. Bryan Casey, 372nd Eng. Bde.

Around the Command

The Director of Family Programs and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations for the 416th Theater Engineer Command sponsored a cake-cutting ceremony on April 23rd in honor of the Army Reserve's 100th birthday at the Parkhurst Army Reserve Center in Darien, Ill. Lt. Col. Robert Allen, Deputy G3, assists Pfc. Leticia Roman and Mr. (Col.) Robert Chevas, the most junior and most senior full-time support personnel at the TEC, who were selected to cut the cake. (US Army photo by Spc. Darius R. Kirkwood)



Soldiers from the 416th TEC participated in a parade in observation of St. Patrick's day in Chicago, Ill. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James Patchett)

Command Sgt. Maj. LeRoy Haugland is presented an American flag flown over the Afghan Engineer District by Maj. Mark E. Gregris, Assistant Operations Officer in the 416th TEC's G3. (U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Robert Allen)



Enjoy taking pictures? The 416th TEC Public Affairs Office is always looking for Unit Public Affairs Representatives (UPAR) to submit photos for future editions of *Around the Command*. Please forward all submissions to Sgt. 1st Class Scott D. Turner, Assignment Editor, at scott.d.turner@us.army.mil, with "Around the Command" in the subject line.

SEE THE SUMMER EDITION OF THE BRIDGE FOR THE COMPLETE STORY OF THE 420TH ENGINEER BRIGADE'S PREPARATION FOR MOBILIZATION TO IRAQ



Soldiers from the Bryan, Texas-based 420th Engineer Bde. simulate evacuating a casualty while training in preparation for mobilization to Iraq. The unit will deploy in June 2008. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Duran)



Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre, Commander of the 416th TEC, and Mrs. Kimberly Franklin, Family Programs Director, present certificates of appreciation to attendees of the Senior Spouse Seminar, which was conducted during the 416th's Senior Leadership Conference in Oakbrook, Ill. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Anshu Pandeya)

INJURED VETERANS CELEBRATE LIFE IN HBO DOCUMENTARY

Story & photos by 2nd Lt. Olivia Cobiskey
318th Press Camp Headquarters

Sgt. Bryan Anderson didn't hear the explosion that ripped his vehicle apart in southeast Baghdad. "I didn't hear it. I saw the light and the flash," he said of the roadside bomb that changed his life. The first thing he noticed afterward was his fingertip ... gone. Then he noticed his entire hand and his legs - also gone.

That was Oct. 23, 2005 - Sgt. Anderson's "alive day."

"Everybody makes a big deal about your 'alive day,' especially at Walter Reed," Sgt. Anderson said during the premiere of HBO's "Alive Day Memories: Home From Iraq" at The Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago.

The documentary surveys the physical and emotional cost of war through the memories of wounded Soldiers' "Alive day," the day they narrowly escaped death in Iraq. James Gandolfini, executive producer, interviewed ten Soldiers and Marines about their feelings on their future, their severe disabilities and their devotion to America.

This is HBO Documentary Films' third production focusing on the war in Iraq, following "Baghdad ER" and "Last Letters Home: Voices of American Troops from the Battlefields of Iraq."

"These men and women show us what true courage and heroism is," said Jon Alpert, who photographed and produced the documentary. "The film promises to tell you about the horror and heroism of war."

Mr. Alpert told the crowd of nearly 500 people gathered to view the documentary that for the first time in American history, 90 percent of those wounded are surviving their injuries. However, a greater percentage of these men and women are returning with amputations, traumatic brain injuries and severe post-traumatic stress. Although many of the servicemembers would prefer to return to their units, more than half of these injuries are too severe for servicemembers to return to active military service.

Spc. Crystal Davis stayed on active duty after recovering from her injuries. The 23-year-old from Camden, S.C., is training to become a military physical therapist technician.

"... who better to help those in need than someone who has been there herself?" asked Spc. Davis, who was injured in Ar Ramadi Jan. 21, 2006, causing her right leg to be amputated below the knee. Every bone below her left knee, including her knee, was also broken.

"For me to be a female below-knee amputee and still be active duty in the U.S. Army will be plenty of motivation for them to strive to succeed," she said.

The six Soldiers and four Marines who spoke with Mr. Gandolfini range from ages 21 to 41, and their injuries range from triple-limb amputations to severe traumatic



Sgt. Bryan Anderson, former Military Police Soldier, and his new pair of legs attends the premiere of the HBO documentary "Alive Day Memories: Home from Iraq."



brain injury and blindness.

"The fight doesn't stop when you get home. In our cases, it's just begun," Marine Cpl. Jake Schick told Mr. Gandolfini during the documentary.

Cpl. Schick, who was wounded Sept. 20, 2004, near Baghdad, lost his right leg and has severe wounds to his left arm and leg.

At one moment in the film, 1st Lt. Dawn Halfaker, whose right arm and shoulder were amputated, is overwhelmed.

The 27-year-old from San Diego, Ca., stares off into space and tears well up in her eyes. When Mr. Gandolfini asked her what she was thinking she said, "I won't be able to pick up my son or daughter with two arms."

For others, just being alive is enough.

"If I can lose my legs and still be alive and be with my kids and wife then that's the way it's got to be," said Marine Staff Sgt. John Jones, 29, San Antonio, Texas. "God's given me a second chance."

Sgt. Anderson, 26, lost his right leg at the hip, his left leg six inches below the hip and his left arm below the elbow. His right hand was also shattered. He became the fourth U.S. servicemember to lose three limbs in Iraq and survive. He stabilized enough to get to Water Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., where his

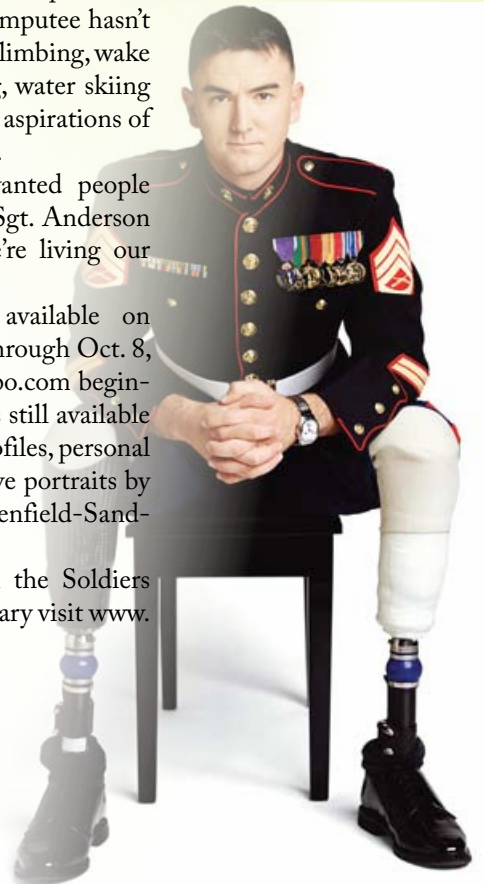
rehab began.

While there, he received 40 operations in 13 months. But being an amputee hasn't stopped him. He's tried rock climbing, wake boarding, white water rafting, water skiing and snow skiing. He even has aspirations of being a Hollywood stuntman.

When asked what he wanted people to take away from the film, Sgt. Anderson answered, "We're all ok. We're living our lives and doing ok."

The documentary was available on HBO on Demand Sept. 10 through Oct. 8, 2007 and was streamed on hbo.com beginning Sept. 10. The web site is still available which still includes Soldier profiles, personal videos and blogs, and exclusive portraits by photographer Timothy Greenfield-Sanders.

For more information on the Soldiers and Marines in the documentary visit www.hbo.com.



Part of the celebration at the Palmer House in Chicago with the premiere was buffet before the viewing as shown here.



Never Too Late to Dream



by Maj. Dan Benson
461st Engineer Co.

FARGO, N.D. — For many Soldiers, reaching 40 years old means it's time to look forward to retirement.

For Pvt. Kristi Jo Newland, a Combat Medic with 461st Engineer Company (Vertical Construction), which is based in Fargo, N.D., it meant it was time to get started on a lifelong dream of a military career. Recently increased age limits allowed Newland to enlist in the Army Reserve in May 2007 at the age of 41.

Newland, a resident of Grand Forks, N.D., graduated from Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, S.C., in September 2007. From there, Newland, a mother of four, headed to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, where she completed 16 weeks of Advanced Individual Training. Newland excelled during her initial entry training, graduating in the top 10 percent of her BCT class. She also far exceeded physical fitness standards, scoring 343 points on the 300-point scale.

So why did Newland join the military at the age of 41?

"Aside from the patriotism and the adventure, it was really motivation that was derived from a notion to go back to school and obtain further education," she said.

Newland works as a certified nursing assistant in her civilian job, and she plans to use the Army Reserve educational benefits she received to complete her nursing degree in the fall of 2009 at the University of North Dakota.

Getting in the military was not easy for Newland, she explained. She attempted to join the North Dakota Army

National Guard six years ago, but a medical condition prevented her from enlisting.

Not to be denied, Newland spent four months and \$1,500 out of her own pocket to get additional medical opinions. Finally, with the help of Sgt. 1st Class Carol Zeitvogel, an Army recruiter in Grand Forks, Newland was cleared to enlist in the Army Reserve.

Newland said she plans to spend 20 years in the Army Reserve.

"Now that I've gotten my teeth in the military, I'm loving it," Newland said. "I love the lifestyle."

Newland's story and success has not gone unnoticed.

Several of Newland's co-workers at her civilian job have either joined or are planning to join the Army Reserve. One of her three daughters, Terra, leaves for Basic Training this summer. Newland also mentioned that a cardiovascular surgeon from Grand Forks read her story in the newspaper and decided to join the military.

When listening to Newland describe what her decision to enlist in the Army Reserve has done for her, it's easy to see how her story inspires others.

"I explain that it's offered me a tremendous amount of pride and educational opportunities, but aside from that, it has allowed me an opportunity to be a part of the biggest family that I've ever had," Newland said.

"I'm waiting for my kids to grow (up) and then I'm going full-time in the Army," she said. "I'm going to give back what the Army is giving to me." ❏

372nd Soldiers Design New Patch

*by Sgt. 1st Class L. Maurice Miller
364th Press Camp Headquarters*



372nd Engineer Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. John Werner presents the Brigade's new unit patch he assisted in creating to 1st Sgt. Robert A. Holtz of the 461st Engineer Co. at a ceremony in Fargo, N.D. on March 9th. (U.S. Army Photo by Maj. Eric J. Larsen)

FORT SNELLING, Minn. — A new unit patch was presented by Col. Charles D. Martin and Command Sgt. Maj. John Werner to members of the 372nd Engineer Brigade here on February 23.

As part of Army Reserve Transformation, engineer units were reorganized, and on Sept. 16, 2007, the 372nd Engineer Group became the 372nd Engineer Brigade. As an engineer group, which is commanded by a colonel, the 372nd was not authorized a unit patch. As an engineer brigade commanded by a general officer, it is.

In anticipation of this, Werner tasked subordinate units of the 372nd Group roughly a year ago to submit their creative input for the design of the new patch reflecting the change to brigade status.

The design packets were sent to Des Moines, Iowa, where leaders of the 372nd Engineer Group anonymously and unanimously chose the same design.

The patch design chosen was a collaborative effort between Werner, his son Sgt. Andy Werner, and his son's wife Sgt. Candy Werner.

"I just started sketching things out," said Sgt. Andy Werner, as he began toying with several design ideas. Later Sgt. Candy Werner turned his paper sketches into a digital image using a computer.

Command Sgt. Maj. Werner contributed to the process by suggesting the bayonet and the polestar. The bayonet reflects the Brigade's combat mission and the polestar symbolizes the North Star and the location of the headquarters in Minnesota.

Members of the 461st Engineer Co. of Fargo, N.D., received the patch on March 9 and other units will have the patch presented to them mid-April. 📷

Winners of 2008 Best Warrior Competition Announced at 416th Engineer Ball

by Sgt. Anshu Pandeya
318th Press Camp Headquarters


The 416th Theater Engineer Command presented the winners of its 2008 Best Warrior Competition on May 3rd during the TEC's 2008 Engineer Ball at the Hyatt Lodge in Oakbrook, Ill.

Spc. David R. Obray, a Heavy Equipment Operator with the 492nd Engineer Co. in Mancotta, Minn., earned the honor for Best Soldier, while Sgt. Brian J. Touchstone, a Combat Engineer with the 391st Engineer Co. (MAC) of Boise, Idaho, won the award for Best Noncommissioned Officer. Obray and Touchstone competed against five other Soldiers in a range of activities, including the Army Physical Fitness Test, weapons qualification, land navigation, and drill and ceremony. Soldiers also had to write an essay and appear before a board of NCOs.

Obray was assured in his abilities from the start, and remained confident throughout the contest.

"I felt like I was going to win this," he said.

Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Cummings, the event's guest speaker commented, "I'm honored to be here and to be able to participate in the 416th ball and certainly the fact that I was able to focus on Noncommissioned Officers."

Obray and Touchstone will travel to Fort McCoy, Wis., for the 88th Regional Readiness Command's Best Warrior Competition. The competition is scheduled to take place May 18th through May 22nd, and has up to 30 slots available for competitors. 

Stay tuned for the complete 2008 Best Warrior Competition story in the next issue of The Bridge



Sgt. Brian J. Touchstone is presented a certificate for Best NCO by Command Sgt. Maj. LeRoy Haugland (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Melvin Navarro)



Spc. David R. Obray accepts his certificate for Best Soldier in the 2008 Best Warrior Competition from Command Sgt. Maj. Haugland. Obray plans to compete in the 88th RRC's BWC beginning on May 18th. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Melvin Navarro)

322ND HELPS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY BUILD HOMES, GETS REAL-WORLD TRAINING

Story and photos by
Sgt. Dawn Burrett
322nd Engineer Company

DECORAH, IOWA – The Soldiers of the 322nd Engineer Company sustain their construction skills during battle assemblies while helping their community by working on various projects that might not otherwise be done without their assistance.

One such project this past year provided assistance to a local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity during the construction of two homes.

“I think that it is awesome that we get to work with Habitat for Humanity. The work is good training for our troops, and it is nice to be working in the community,” said Staff Sgt. Mike Kruse of the 322nd.

Sgt. Trevor Faulk, along with other members of the 322nd Engineer Company enjoy the work and look forward to many years of projects such as these where they have an opportunity to give back to their community.

“It is good to be doing projects for the community again, I like getting out there



Sgt. 1st Class Mike Kruse, Cpt. Dan Walter, and Sgt. Dawn Burrett, Soldiers from the 322nd Engineer Company, work with local contractors to place a concrete sidewalk around this Freeport, Iowa home.

and working with our new soldiers,” he said.

“There is also something to be said about looking at a finished project and knowing that you helped get that done,” Faulk added.

Since its founding in 1976, Habitat for Humanity has built and rehabilitated more

than 250,000 houses internationally for families in need, becoming a true world leader in addressing the issues of poverty housing. The results have been truly inspiring – today, Habitat for Humanity has built more than 250,000 houses, providing shelter for approximately 1,000,000 people in over 3,000 communities worldwide.



1st Sergeant Travis Fleshner and Mr. Gus Johnson, a local contractor, discuss possible future plans for the unit and the possibility of building an entire house from the ground up.



Specialists Nathan Johnson and Corey Merkel construct a deck at a home in Ridgeway, Iowa. Work there also included drywall and siding installation, as well help with landscaping.

Roger Creager Visits 420th EN BDE

story & photo by Sgt. William M. Zoeller
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BRYAN, Texas — Country singer and local legend, Roger Creager, gave a surprise visit March 5 to the Moore Memorial Reserve Center, headquarters of the 420th Engineer Brigade, in Bryan, Texas. Creager said he wanted to personally thank the Soldiers for their service.

Creager is no stranger to military life. The outgoing down-to-earth musician grew up around the military. His father retired as a 1st Sgt. in the elite U.S. Army Special Forces unit known as the “Green Berets.” During his youth, he experienced life in Korea. He also fondly recalled the dedication of his best friend from high school who deployed twice into combat areas while serving as a U.S. Navy Pilot.

While attending Texas A&M University in the Corps of Cadets Creager contemplated joining the U.S. Navy as a commissioned officer. During his time at the Corps seeking the opportunity to join the Armed Forces he received an encouraging speech from a colonel.

Creager recalls the colonel saying that he didn’t care what your beliefs were, you benefit from serving as an American citizen and you have an obligation to serve your country. Creager said he will always remember those words.

Fate had a different plan for Creager. His focus changed from the military to music. He achieved success singing Country Music and has been performing his music for the last 11 years while touring throughout the U.S. His upcoming album is expected to hit stores in September.

One of the songs Creager wrote for this album is “The Soldier.” The song debuts on his Web site in April.

“It’s not necessarily about any particular war, but it is about human nature,” he said. “It’s about a Soldier being a person.”

Creager has a lot of respect for the men and women that put on the uniform in defense of the country.

“I think it’s a sacrifice, particularly for the National Guard and Reserve Soldiers that they by far and large, don’t complain,” he said, “They just do their duty. It’s very honorable to me.”

He also praises other members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

“Thank you for your service,” he said, “I support the troops and their families, but I know that there are millions just like me.”

Creager definitely plans to join a USO tour over to either Iraq or Afghanistan. Even though there are possible hazards in performing in such a dangerous environment, he said he was not concerned. He chuckled and to lighten the topic he said it couldn’t be much more dangerous than some of the bars he has performed at in Texas, and he said seriously that he has full confidence in the U.S. Army’s ability to keep him safe.

Spc. Justin W. Mayes, a human resource specialist with the 420th Engineer Brigade, Headquarters and Headquarters Com-

pany, had the opportunity to talk with Creager and attend his performance that took place later that evening.

Mayes said that Creager told him he has always been pro-military, but he hadn’t had the opportunity to visit many military bases beyond his travels with his father. Creager told Mayes meeting and performing for Soldiers would mean a great deal to him.

Creager went on stage that evening at a local venue in College Station, Texas. He raised his guitar high and before he sung his song, “I’ve Got the Guns.” He told those present the song he was about to play was dedicated for the Soldiers of the 420th Engineer Brigade, a unit that served a few years ago and is expected to leave soon for Afghanistan. And before he finished offering his praise to what he considered his home town U.S. Army Reserve unit he said that yes, they definitely have the guns! 📷



Country singer Roger Creager and Spc. Justin W. Mayes examine M-16A2 rifles before they are put into the arms room. Mayes is slated to deploy to Afghanistan with the 420th Engineer Brigade later this year.

“They just do their duty. It’s very honorable to me ... I support the troops and their families, but I know that there are millions just like me.”

-Roger Creager

FORMER 416TH DEPUTY COMMANDER NAMED ILLINOIS VETERAN OF THE MONTH

**Department of Veteran's Affairs
confers honor to advocates for
Veterans and community**

KANKAKEE, Ill. – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich named longtime Bourbonnais resident and former Deputy Commander for the 416th Engineer Command, Brigadier General Jack H. Kotter (Ret.), as the State of Illinois' November 2007 "Veteran of the Month. The Governor's "Veteran of the Month" award is presented monthly to an Illinois Veteran who excels as a community activist and works on behalf of other Veterans.

"Our Veterans put their lives on the line to defend our freedom and they all deserve to be respected and honored. But those who continue this kind of commitment after their military service should be especially recognized — like General Jack Kotter, a man who gave our country over three decades of service to the military and now tirelessly serves his community," said Gov. Blagojevich.

On behalf of the Governor, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Director L. Tammy Duckworth, presented General Jack Kotter with the award during a special ceremony at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Kankakee.

Jack H. Kotter honorably served in the United States Army Reserve for over 36 years, retiring from service in 1999 at the rank of Brigadier General. He was on active duty during the Vietnam War and mobilized and deployed with the 416th ENCOM during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. For his years of dedicated service General Kotter received numerous decorations, medals and badges including: Legion of Merit; Bronze Star; Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters; and the Army Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters.

After retiring from service, General Kotter continues to be involved with the military community. Among his many civic and community volunteer activities, General Kotter has served as the Secretary for the 416th Engineer Command Association for the past seven years and has been the primary organizer for three Military Retiree Benefit Seminars for retirees in



Brig. Gen. Jack H. Kotter (Ret.)

his community. In 2000, General Kotter was appointed by the Chief, Army Reserve (CAR) as a US Army Reserve Ambassador for Illinois where he represents the CAR at various functions including unit battle assemblies, Welcome Home Warrior Citizens Ceremonies, military funerals, and civic luncheons, spreading the story of the US Army Reserve Soldier and our military Veterans.

Particularly noteworthy has been his service as a Board Member for the annual Pause for Patriotism event at the Shapiro Developmental Center for four years, an event which aims at nurturing patriotism among young people and draws as many as 10,000 visitors and participants, including numerous civic, political, and military leaders. General Kotter has coordinated the United States Army's participation in this event for the past six years and was the prime sponsor of the Army Reserve's 739th Engineer Company (MRB) from Granite City, IL, which conducts rafting training and operations on the Kankakee River for the event.

The "Veteran of the Month" award highlights the work of community activists who are also military Veterans. Each month, on behalf of Governor Blagojevich, the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs recognizes a different person or group that contributes to the betterment of communities across the state of Illinois. To nominate a "Veteran of the Month," please visit IDVA's website at www.state.il.us/agency/dva, or call IDVA at (217) 785-4114 to obtain a list of guidelines and a nomination form. 📧

U.S. Army Recruiting Command display steals attention at Chicago Auto Show

*by Lt. Col. Edgar Montalvo
318th Press Camp Headquarters*

CHICAGO – Since 1901, the Chicago Auto Show, the largest motor vehicle exposition in North America, has been a perennial favorite for locals and one of the exhilarating events all year for automobile enthusiasts across the globe. This popularity has brought millions each year to McCormick Place, the enormous lake front convention center that houses the affair.

However, for the past few years, the most popular exhibit at the renowned event hasn't been sponsored by an auto manufacturer – but by the United States Army.

This year, the Chicago area Army Recruiting Battalion organized the Army Strong Zone to demonstrate what the Army has to offer. Local recruiters were on hand to share first-hand knowledge and experience. Within the Army Strong Zone was a diverse display of military vehicles, a video game tent, pull-up bar, rock-climbing wall, and other activities for visitors and prospective recruits to enjoy. Tony Schumacher, a driver for the U.S. Army Drag Racing team even made an appearance on Feb. 15th.

According to Maj. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, commander of the United States Army Recruiting Command, the Chicago Auto Show "...is a great opportunity to reach out ... and [tell] the Army story to the American public, young and old." "This challenge of manning an Army is not just a challenge for my command, it's not a challenge just for the United States Army; it's a challenge for our nation, and it really requires the nation to stand up and be counted if we are to live in the freedoms that we all enjoy." 📧

(See back cover for photos from the event)



2008 CHICAGO AUTO SHOW

