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The Battle

Issue 4, Fall/Winter 2010

News from the Engineer Command

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As the July sun sets over the Mojave Desert, Soldiers of the 647th Regional Support Group, from El Paso, Texas bring in supplies to set up a forward operating base in preparation of Operation Sand Castle 2009, one of the largest military engineer training exercises conducted at the National Training Center.

Photo by Pfc. Ryan Gilbertson, 204th Public Affairs Detachment

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Inside the Castle

Fall/Winter 2010

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Maj. Gen. Paul F. Hamm

Deputy Commander
Big. Gen. Jimmy E. Fowler

Command Sergeant Major
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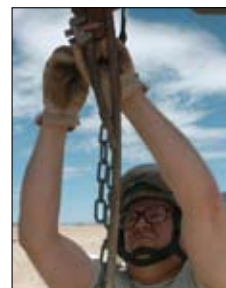


Photo by Sgt. Brent C. Powell, 204th Public Affairs Detachment

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Spc. Randy Lemke, combat engineer from the 492nd Combat Engineer Company, attaches cables to a crane before lifting metal sheeting into place at Forward Operating Base Miami, National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif. During Operation Sand Castle 2009.

A word from the Commander

Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Flubacher and I had the opportunity in October to visit some of our Soldiers and units from the 412th TEC serving in Iraq. We were enormously proud to visit such a great group of Soldiers who had positive attitudes, great motivation, and a huge desire to accomplish the mission, and do an outstanding job. We were honored by their presence and thanked them all for their service to our country. Flubacher and I were energized as we interacted with our Soldiers. We acknowledged the huge sacrifices that they and their families are making on behalf of the United States.

Our plans were to visit all the 412th TEC units in Iraq, but there were limitations on time and travel. So we visited the 844th Engineer Battalion in Camp Victory, the 314th Public Affairs Operations Center in the International Zone, and the 375th Engineer Company in Tallil.

We hope that our visit reassured them with the message that we care about them and their well-being at all times. We also visited other Army Reserve units. Our purpose for visiting the Army Reserve units and Soldiers was to thank them for their service and to identify any issues that we might be able to resolve for them or future Soldiers deploying in harm's way.

A great event occurred a few weeks ago in Afghanistan which brought pride to the 412th

TEC. The Joint Forces Engineer Command (JFEC) was activated to serve as the theater-level engineer headquarters in a ceremony held in Afghanistan. The JFEC mission is to manage the construction effects throughout the country, provide engineer and construction advice to the U.S. Forces-Afghanistan Commanding General. The JFEC also provides command and control to all engineer forces at echelons above brigade to include Army Engineers, Navy Seabees, and Air Force Red Horse and Prime Beef units. In addition, the commander JFEC-A serves as the Director, International Security Assistance Force.

The JFEC comprised of 70 Soldiers from the Deployable Command Post (DCP). Most of these Soldiers came from the 412th headquarters. However, some were augmentees from our downtrace units.

The stand-up of the JFEC is historic for the 412th TEC as well as the U.S. Army Reserve and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This arrangement has never been used in a theater of operations before, thus is a first for an Army Reserve unit to be tasked with such a mission.

My Deputy Commander, Brig. Gen. Bill Buckler and Command

Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Guy Taylor, are leading the JFEC in this endeavor. I am very proud of the unit that has been assembled to meet the mission requirements and make history. Let's take pride in our Army Reserve engineer unit for this undertaking.

Thanks to Lt. Gen. Robert Van

Antwerp for the journey over the past year which has enabled the DCP to morph into the JFEC. He is the Chief of Engineers and the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It was through his vision, coordination, interaction, faith, and trust in us that allowed the DCP to take on this important role. He is a huge supporter

of both TEC's (412th and 416th) and a firm believer in the abilities and experience that we bring to the theater.

We wish the newly-formed JFEC the very best. Godspeed for their safety and well-being as they support the theater commander to meet the strategic goals of the United States in Afghanistan.

I want to thank everyone for their service, whether they are deployed or not, and appreciate the fact that everyone within the TEC has volunteered to be an Army Reserve Soldier. I challenge everyone to perform their duties to best of their abilities; and improve their skills, knowledge, and physical fitness every day. Many thanks for what you do for the U.S. Army!



Maj. Gen. Paul F. Hamm

Command Sergeant Major's Corner

I would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year. We just completed 2009, which was the "Year of the Noncommissioned Officer". The formality of the "Year of the NCO" has ended, but not the spirit. The NCO is vitally important in preparing our Soldiers and units to deploy in support of the combatant commander during these times of persistent conflict.

With a new year many of us set goals for ourselves. I challenge all the NCOs within this command to set one goal this year.

Get to know your Soldiers. Let's re-establish Leader books. Maintaining a Leader book will help you to know your Soldiers. There's a section for Soldiers' personal data to include addresses, phone numbers, strip maps to their homes, spouses and kids' names and birthdates. The section also has uniform sizes, weapons qualification, Army Physical Fitness Test information, last Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report through date, counseling dates and date of rank. Then there's a section on training to track Noncommissioned Officer Education System courses and Army Warrior Tasks and Drills. Properly maintained Leader Books will positively affect our metrics.

I strongly believe that if a Soldier knows that his or her needs are being addressed then that Soldier will attend Battle Assemblies, thus



Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Flubacker

reducing our Non-Participants.

Knowing ahead of time that a Soldier needs to attend a NCOES course and then subsequently getting the Soldier enrolled in that course will reduce the number of NCOs not enrolled. This type of attention to detail will pave the way for more of our NCOs to get promoted.

Knowing the through date of the Soldier's last NCOER will reduce our late evaluations. Having the date of the

Soldiers last weapons qualification, APFT and Height Weight will improve the metrics as well.

It is the NCO's job to provide trained, Soldiers to meet global requirements across the full

"I strongly believe that if a Soldier knows that his or her needs are being addressed then that Soldier will attend Battle Assemblies"

--Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Flubacker

spectrum of operations. The Army Reserve is America's main source of shared military and civilian skills and capabilities. By taking care of Soldiers we'll be able to tap into this valuable resource to support and defend the Nation.

The best way to lead is by example. If we're not proficient at the most basic of Soldier tasks then

the next generation of NCOs will also be incapable of performing those tasks.

Take care of the Soldiers you currently have because they are the NCOs of tomorrow. The enlisted ranks are made up of NCOs and future NCOs. This means that we are the trainers and future trainers of today's Army.

The secretary of the Army established 2009 as the year of the NCO, because the Army's Noncommissioned Officer Corps has distinguished itself as the worlds most accomplished group of military professionals. Let's continue this tradition into 2010 and beyond within this command.

Finally, let's incorporate safety into everything we do. Employ the risk management process during mission planning, and remind your Soldiers that vehicle accidents remain the number one killer of Soldiers. No Soldier should die due to carelessness.

Live the NCO Creed and the spirit of the "Year of the NCO" will live on forever.



photo illustration

Mayor Arthur J. Ward, Bristol, Conn., reads Proclamation recognizing 368th Engineer Battalion Soldiers who saved a car accident victim.

Mayor honors Soldiers for saving woman

Story and Photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Mayra O'Neill-Dalton,
362nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Eight Soldiers assigned to the 368th Engineer Battalion have been honored by the city of Bristol, Conn. for saving the life of a woman who was involved in an auto accident, Memorial Day weekend.

The Soldiers responded to the crash while preparing for Memorial Day activities at an American Legion post on May 24, 2009.

Another vehicle cut the woman off while she was driving her automobile near the post during slick road conditions. The car flipped several times and hit a telephone pole.

Spc. Natasha Cunningham, a firefighter with the 468th Engineer Company, said she saw smoke coming out of the flipped car so she quickly alerted her fellow Soldiers. Sgt. James McLaughlin, a team chief with the 339th Engineer Detachment and a Boston area firefighter was among the Soldiers who responded.

"I first needed to make sure the woman was not severely injured, so I screamed 'nobody touches

her,' just in case she had suffered any spinal injuries," said McLaughlin.

The Soldiers needed to act quickly because electrical wires from the telephone pole had landed on the car.

Once he was sure that the woman could be moved, McLaughlin and the other Soldiers pried the car doors open and lifted her out of it.

1st Lt. Peter Torromeo, 368th Forward Support Company executive officer, directed traffic and performed crowd control until the police arrived.

"Their military training took over, and there was not one ounce of hesitation; they took charge of the situation and there is no doubt in my mind they saved that young lady from further injury," said Bristol Mayor Arthur J. Ward.

Ward was with the Soldiers at the American Legion post at the time of the accident, and he witnessed the rescue.

Ward gave each Soldier a key to the city and in a proclamation during a ceremony in Connecticut on Nov., 4, 2009; he said the city of Bristol and the accident victim were greatly indebted to the Soldiers for their quick action and compassionate character.

The 368th which is based in Londonderry, N.H. has supported the City of Bristol's Memorial Day events since 2006.

"The Soldiers of the 368th are now Bristol residents from afar; you are family," Ward Said.

The following Soldiers and the ones mentioned earlier received keys to the city and were included in the proclamation for helping to save the woman: Spc. James Dixon, Spc. Kurtis Haberman, Spc. Christine Bashor, Spc. Christopher Elliott and Spc. Brett Haynes.



Mayor Arthur J. Ward, Bristol, Conn. presents Spc. Brett Haynes, 368th Engineer Battalion with a Proclamation and a key to the city for his efforts in helping to save a car accident victim.



Soldiers of the 401st Multi-Role Bridge Company construct a bridge across the Tigris River near Hammam Al Alil, Iraq. The bridge saves coalition patrols 4 hours of travel time.

Taming the Tigris

844th Engineer Battalion Soldiers conquered one of their biggest challenges in Iraq

Story by Sgt. Amber M. Latham, Public Affairs, Task Force 844, and Staff Sgt. Connie Cavaunagh, 401st MRBC

River currents of 6 to 7 feet per second, and the constant flow of debris into their boat's hydro jets, were some of the challenges that Soldiers of the 401st Multi-Role Bridge Company faced when they constructed a bridge across the Tigris River in Iraq.

The quick thinking and diligent work of the maintenance crew enabled the boats to function well enough for the unit to complete the mission in two hours and 45 minutes.

"It was just another bridge. We put bridges in. That's what we do," said Sgt. Brandon Weston, of Charleston, S.C.

The bridge which runs across the gap near Hammam

Al Alil saves coalition patrols 4 hours of travel time.

The engineers traveled 300 miles north from the Victory Base Complex to take on what amounted to be their biggest effort since they arrived in Iraq.

The 523rd Engineer Company constructed a road leading to the water's edge which allowed for the placement of vehicles. The 523rd also dug holes for the anchorage system, and placed gravel along the shoreline to increase the stability of the slip.

"It's a proud feeling when the bridge is complete and you see all the cars waiting to use our 401st bridge," said Pfc. Christopher Allen of River Falls, Wis.



Soldiers of the 401st Multi-Role Bridge Company launch an interior bay into the Tigris River during a bridging project in Iraq.



A Soldier from the 401st Multi-Role Bridge Company cleans debris from of his boat's hydro jets during a bridging project across the Tigris River in Iraq.

“It's a proud feeling when the bridge is complete and you see all the cars waiting to use our 401st bridge,”

-- Pfc. Christopher Allen

Soldiers re-enlist at Fenway Park on Sept. 11

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Melissa N. Christmas, Army Reserve Career Counselor

The day started like any other in the United States. Children ate breakfast as parents prepared them for school then kissed them goodbye before they got on their school buses. No one would have thought that Sept. 11, 2001 would become as historic as the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor Dec., 7, 1941, but it did that fateful day.

When the second World Trade Center tower collapsed, the horrific screams and cries spoke volumes to the world that the country would never again be



Sgt. Zachary Bolcome, 342nd MP Det, renders salute during the playing of the National Anthem in a reenlistment ceremony held at Boston's Fenway Park on Sept. 11, 2009.

the same.

Fast forward eight years to Sept., 11, 2009. Much has changed, but on this overcast day in Boston, a group of Army Reserve Soldiers reminded us that there are still people who have not forgotten. As the group of more than 20 Soldiers marched onto historic Fenway Park, families and friends looked on. The Soldiers stood at attention as Brig. Gen. Oscar DePriest, Commander, 804th Medical Brigade, Devens, Mass., administered the Oath of re-enlistment, and the Soldiers swore to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic".

"If I could've reenlisted indefinitely, I would have," said Spc. Matthew Mele, B Company, 533rd Maintenance, Devens, Mass.

Some family members expressed their support and admiration based on how their Soldiers have grown and changed.

"What Brendan has learned from the Army, and taught my kids and their friends, is amazing. I'm very proud of him," said Patrick McClellan, five-year friend of Spc. Brendan Quinn, 302nd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

Leslie Leblanc, sister of Sgt. Joseph Leblanc, HHC, 368th Engineer Battalion, said she is proud of her brother.

"It's a great thing; Joe puts people ahead of himself. He has a lot to give," Leslie Leblanc said.

A representative of The Red Sox Corporation told the crowd how grateful the organization is for the sacrifice that the military members are making.

"When one member serves, the family serves. We (the Red Sox) are hitting them out of the park for you," said Meg Vaillancourt, Senior Vice President and Corporate Relations and Executive Director of the Red Sox Foundation.

Near the end of ceremony, some spectators found it hard to hold back tears as Taps echoed throughout the historic ball park in remembrance of those who made the ultimate sacrifice, a poignant reminder of that solemn day eight years ago.



Pvt. Joseph Dascoli, 716th Engineer Company, raises his right hand while reciting his Oath of commitment to support and defend the Constitution of the United States during a group reenlistment at Boston's Fenway Park on Sept. 11.



New England Army Reserve Soldiers, march in formation at Boston's Fenway Park in preparation of a group reenlistment ceremony. The ceremony was held on Sept. 11 to memorialize the victims and to show the Soldiers' commitment to continue serving their country.

Combat Engineers take advantage of technical and tactical training at NTC during...

Operation Sand Castle 2009

Story by Sgt. Brent C. Powell, 204th PAD

Drills drilled, saws sawed and hammers hammered during Operation Sand Castle 2009 as more than 40 combat engineers constructed metal buildings at Forward Operating Base Miami deep in the heart of the National Training Center.

The Army Reservists from the 492nd Combat Engineer Company, 367th Engineer Battalion left Forward Operating Base Santa Fe early that day in a 12-vehicle convoy bound for FOB Miami. They were tasked to repair one Quonset Hut, and construct two more from the ground up.

Early into the mission, the convoy encountered a simulated enemy ambush that included a road side bomb. The Soldiers neutralized the enemy with no casualties, and then cleared the area of additional threats before continuing on.



Engineers from the 492nd Combat Engineer Company, Mankato, Minn. use a crane to lift metal sheeting into place as they construct Quonset Huts at Forward Operating Base Miami on July 14th during Operation Sand Castle 2009.



Sgt. Andrew Stang, a carpenter from the 492nd Combat Engineer Company uses a cordless drill to tighten bolts on top of a Quonset hut at FOB Miami during Operation Sand Castle 2009.

“I’m very proud of how these guys performed,” said Sgt. 1st Class Dan Toleno, a platoon sergeant with the 492nd Eng. Co. “All of my NCOs have been deployed to combat areas, and to see them take the lessons learned from their combat experience and apply those to a very realistic battlefield here is fantastic.”

“The convoy today was the first convoy I’ve ever been on,” said Pvt. Shaun D. Timmers, a masonry specialist from Belle Plaine, Minn. “It was fun, exciting and I learned a lot about how a convoy is conducted.”

The Soldiers conducted a brief after action review once the convoy got to the jobsite, then they began making repairs to the wind damaged metal Quonset Hut. They used a large crane to navigate the building’s metal panels into place. Once the panels were aligned the engineers used hundreds

of nuts and bolts to make the structure safe and sturdy.

“These metal buildings pose a special challenge,” said Toleno. “There are so many bolts and holes in each of the panels that just getting them lined up perfectly is difficult.”

Despite the challenges and temperatures that exceeded 100 degrees, the engineers were able to repair the building to a point where Soldiers can once again train in it.

“The job here has definitely been different than what I’m used to,” said Pfc. Dillon J. Nelson, interior electrician, 492nd Engineer Company, “I’ve never worked on a metal building before, so I’ve learned a lot

from the experience.”

OSC brings together reserve combat engineer units from around the United States and gives them the opportunity to hone their tactical and engineering skills in a desert environment.

“*I’ve never worked on a metal building before, so I’ve learned a lot from the experience*”

— Pfc. Dillon J. Nelson,



Photo by Maj. Jesse Stalder 412th TEC Public Affairs

The Vicksburg Fire Department holds up an American Flag while the DCP One bus headed for Camp Shelby passes below with a police escort.

*Vicksburg, Miss.
and the 412th TEC
gave DCP One...*

A warriors' send off

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Eugene, 412th TEC

The 412th Theater Engineer Command's Mobilization Farewell Ceremony in Vicksburg was much like days of old when the Spartans sent their warriors off to fight, according to Col. David Hollands the 412th's chief of staff.

The Vicksburg community came together on Aug. 21, 2009 at the George A. Morris Army Reserve Center, and on Indiana Ave., to honor more than 60 U.S. Army Reservists departing for Afghanistan.

"My motivation level for this deployment went up after seeing that," said Staff Sgt. Lance Felton. "I felt appreciated."

The Vicksburg police escorted the vehicles transporting the Soldiers down Indiana Ave. through an arch formed with two fire truck ladders and a giant American flag, courtesy of the Vicksburg Fire Department.

Students from Agape Montessori Christian Academy, who recently adopted the departing Soldiers, took a day off from school to say goodbye.

Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets from Vicksburg Warren Central High School presented their colors as the DCP left the 412th headquarters.

Vicksburg High cadets rendered the same courtesy on Indiana Avenue.

"I feel a level of comfort, like they're going to be alright," said Donna Hennson after her son and husband boarded the bus.

The Soldiers are part of a 412th element known as the Deployable Command Post led by 412th Deputy Commander Brig. Gen. William M. Buckler Jr.

This is the first fielding of a DCP by the 412th since the organization converted from an Engineer Command to a Theater Engineer Command as part of the Army's new modular force structure.

The DCP's new motto is building history, Buckler told the reserve center crowd.

"As we go over and do something that has never been done in the Corps of Engineer formation before, I truly believe...this is an integral part of our national security," Buckler said.

In a light hearted moment during his remarks, Buckler referenced the fortune from a cookie he got after a recent visit to a Chinese restaurant.

"You will take a pleasant journey to a place far away," Buckler read from the tiny slip of paper he



Photo by Pfc. Devin Wood, 412th TEC Public Affairs

Spc. Jermaine Washington comforts his girlfriend, Jasmine Williams during DCP One's departure ceremony at the George A. Morris Army Reserve Center in Vicksburg, Miss., on Aug. 21, 2009.

pulled from his wallet.

He then told the Soldiers that the deployment would be pleasant only if they diligently communicated with their loved ones back here in the states.

Maj. Gen. Paul F. Hamm, the 412th TEC Commander, said he was proud of the Soldiers, their families and the community for their commitment to the nation.

"Without this support we would not be able to fight and win our nation's wars," Hamm said. "The communities and families are the bond between our Soldiers, the Army and our great nation."

Other dignitaries in attendance included Mississippi U.S. senator Roger Wicker and Vicksburg mayor, Paul E. Winfield. Wicker said the U.S. has no desire to control Afghanistan, but that a troop presence was necessary to prevent another attack like Sept., 11. Winfield expressed his gratitude to the departing Soldiers for the sacrifices they've made while serving the country.

The reservists headed to Camp Shelby where they spent 37 days conducting specialized Soldier survival skills training in preparation for the overseas mission. They left Camp Shelby Sept., 27 and arrived in Afghanistan in early October.

DCP One became the Joint Force Engineer Command-Afghanistan during an activation ceremony on Oct. 15. The command coordinates all engineer operations in Afghanistan.



Photo by Maj. Jesse Stalder, 412th TEC Public Affairs

Sgt. Roger Ashley says goodbye to his son Jacob prior to leaving for Camp Shelby as part of DCP One.

Soldier proud of Army's work in Afghanistan

Story by Roger Brown, Bristol Herald Courier, Bristol, Va.

Shortly before heading to Afghanistan for his second military deployment in several years, U.S. Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Juston Davis of Bristol, Va., told the Bristol Herald Courier he would go with pride in his service – and longing, for his newlywed wife and loving stepdaughter, who celebrated Thanksgiving on Thursday without him.

Now weeks into his tour inside Afghanistan, Davis said he has even more pride in his mission – even as he misses his wife, Melissa, and stepdaughter Kayla more with each passing day.

“I do find my mind wandering now and then,” Davis said by phone from eastern Afghanistan, a time zone nine-and-a-half hours ahead of Bristol.

“This would have been our first Thanksgiving and our first Christmas together as a family,” he said. “And it’s especially tough because Thanksgiving has always been my favorite time of year.”



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Roger Ashley
Staff Sgt. Juston Davis in Afghanistan

“But even in the short time I’ve been deployed here,” Davis said, “I’m proud to say we are making a difference here, slowly but surely. The work we’re doing building an infrastructure and organization is going to make a big difference in Afghanistan as a country.”

“So, it’s nice to know I’m a part of that. And that I’ve been a part of that,” Davis said. “I’m very proud of that.”

His mixture of resolute pride

and deep longing is one Melissa Davis shares at home in Bristol, some 7,195 miles away from her newly wed husband.

They married May 30 but have yet to have a honeymoon, because of Juston’s training commitments leading up to his Afghan deployment.

“It is especially hard right now, because Juston’s right, this is always the time of year that he really loves sharing with me, Kayla and everyone he loves,” Melissa said.

Then, with a laugh, she said: “He doesn’t even mind shopping with me on Black Fridays. In fact, he loves that, too.”

But, Melissa said, “we’re hanging in there back here, as best we can, because we know what Juston is doing is good for our country. And we know he’s doing good things over in that country, too. He’s handling things there with bravery and pride and we’re going to do the same here for him, too.”

Davis’ tour in Afghanistan, scheduled to end next summer, comes five years after he served with the Reserve in Iraq, shortly after U.S. forces successfully



Staff Sgt. Juston Davis and his wife, Melissa.

photo illustration

invaded that country. While politely declining to talk much about his current roles (other than noting that he provides assistance to Army engineering crews), Davis said he’s had little time to compare the two tours.

“We’ve been so busy and tied up since we’ve gotten here, it’s

been hard for me to do a lot of [comparing],” Davis said.

“It’s been hectic. But, in some ways, this has been better than my last deployment. With the regular e-mail and calls I’ve been able to make, I’ve been able to have better communications back home.”

ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN 2009

Story and photo by Pfc. David Thompson, 326th MPAD



Maj Gen. Paul F. Hamm, 412th TEC Commander, during a meeting at The Republic of Korea Army Headquarters in South Korea on Aug 17, 2009.

The South Korean military took the lead for the first time in the thirty-four year history of exercise Ulchi Freedom Guardian while U.S. Army Soldiers played a supporting role.

Maj. Gen. Paul F. Hamm, Commander of the 412th Theater Engineer Command, visited South Korea during the August 2009 exercise to meet with U.S. and Korean military officials.

“It is vital to keep the dialogue and relations with everyone over here intact,” said Hamm. “And it is important to make sure that everybody

Davis said thoughts of returning to Bristol – along with his fierce desire to honorably serve his country every day – constantly accompany him in Afghanistan.

“The support I’ve gotten from my family and friends back there, the letters and care packages, they’ve meant a lot to me,” Davis said.

“So I really look forward to seeing them when I get back home. After I do all I can here.”

It is a day Melissa Davis awaits anxiously as she spends this holiday season putting together a videotape for Juston, containing footage of his family’s holiday celebrations and personal messages from loved ones.

“We’re going to hang his Christmas stocking up for him this year, as always, so he can see it on video,” Melissa said. “Because it’ll mean even more to us this time next year. When Juston can hang his own stocking with us.

here is on the same page.”

An exercise like UFG shows the significance of the U.S. presence in South Korea, according to Col. Derek Sentinella, Chief of the 412th TEC’s Korea Forward. “If you take today’s situation across the world, we have contingency operations in Iraq, we have contingency operations in Afghanistan and your third possible contingency as of today is Korea,” said Sentinella. “So part of my mission over here is to set conditions to give the soldiers of the TEC good training opportunities as well as prepare them to go to war in the KTO and beyond.”



Soldiers from the 459th Engineer Company transport vehicles across a river at Fort Chaffee Ark., with a raft they constructed utilizing Improved Ribbon Bridge Sections.

The 459th Engineer Company perfects... The time honored art of river crossing

Story and Photo by Spc. Sam Conrad 326th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

When George Washington crossed the Delaware, he sure could've used the 459th Engineer Company out of West Virginia.

The 459th specializes in putting troops and equipment across rivers, a dangerous but important mission throughout military history.

River crossing is a capability that's vital to maneuver commanders who encounter water obstacles when planning

missions, according to Staff Sgt. Timothy Wilfong, a section sergeant in the company's bridge platoon.

The unit received a mission to transport vehicles and equipment using a six float ribbon raft in 20 minutes or less across the Arkansas river at Fort Chaffee, Ark., on July, 15, 2009.

"We can haul anything in the Army's inventory," said Wilfong. "From a tank retriever down to a HUMVEE."

To accomplish the task, the Sol-

diers built a raft using a metal bridge sections which they dropped into the river from trucks, then they loaded the vehicles and equipment onto the raft and ferried their cargo to the other side of the river within the required 20 minutes.

"We make it look easy but we've been drilling, and drilling and drilling. It takes leadership and good motivated Soldiers to get it done," said Wilfong.

The Soldiers can quickly recover the bridge and move to a new point as needed.



Mary Ellen Hadelman (center), Chairperson, Connecticut Automotive Retailer Association, signs the Employer Partnership Agreement prior to James T. Fleming (left), President, Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association, and Maj. Gen. James R. Sholar (right), Deputy Commander, USARC.

Army Reserve and Connecticut Auto Retailers Association sign Employers Partnership Initiative

Story and Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mayra O'Neill-Dalton, 362nd MPAD

The Army Reserve and the 270 members of the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association signed the Army Reserve Employer Partnership Initiative agreement during a ceremony at the Hartford Convention Center, on Nov., 5, 2009.

The agreement gives qualified Soldiers interview opportunities and possible

employment considerations.

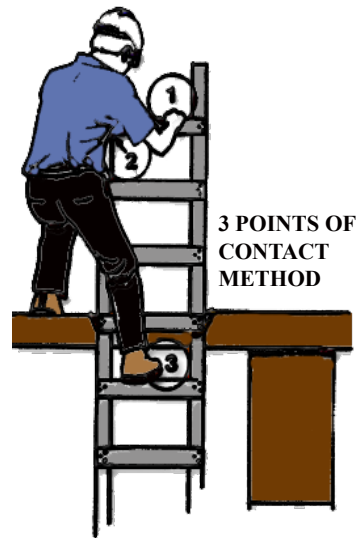
"The Connecticut auto dealers will benefit greatly from connecting with this pool of skilled military veterans," said James Fleming, president of the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association. "The interview is just the first step to employment; however, veterans will still have to secure the job on their own merit."

Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, chief of the Army Reserve launched the Initiative in spring of 2008 to facilitate

relationships between the Army Reserve and civilian employers.

More than 300 employers are currently participating in the initiative.

Maj. Gen. James R. Sholar, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Reserve Command, signed the EPI agreement with Fleming and Ms. Mary Ellen Hadelman, chairwoman of the Connecticut Automotive Retailers Association.



Source: Construction Safety Association of Ontario

During Operation Sand Castle 2009, Sgt. Maj. Benny Hubbard was the...

Safety on the job

Story by Staff Sgt. Rael Tirado 204th PAD

Sgt. Maj. Benny Hubbard made an unannounced visit to a construction site during Operation Sand Castle 2009, and he noticed Soldiers from the 492nd Engineer Company using a safety technique that minimizes a worker's chance of slipping, or losing their balance while moving on structures such as scaffolds or ladders.

The technique, known as the "3 points of contact method," requires the worker to have both feet and one hand on the structure when moving, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Hubbard gave one Soldier a safety token for practicing good safety on the job, and he commended the additional duty

safety officer for keeping the site safe.

As the 412th Theater Engineer Command's safety officer during the exercise, Hubbard traveled to different sites looking for safety violations, and to recognize Soldiers who practice safety.

"The first thing I look for is that Soldiers are wearing proper equipment such as Kevlar, gloves and eye protection while working with equipment," said Hubbard.

"Next, I make sure they are working on the mission, and I speak with first line supervisors on ensuring safety measures are in place."

Richard Cunningham, the U.S. Army Reserve Command's safety officer accompanied Hubbard on the surprise visits.

"I've been generally impressed with what I've seen," said Cunningham. "The last unit we visited, the Soldiers had on the proper equipment, and the Additional Duty Safety Officer for the unit

was out there with the Soldiers wearing a safety vest and ensuring safety measures were in place."

More than 1,800 Soldiers assigned to the 411th Engineer Brigade took part in the exercise which was overseen by the 412th TEC at Fort Irwin's National Training Center in California, a desert environment similar to Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Many of the Soldiers here are soon deploying overseas," said Hubbard. "Safety and risk management is the key to mitigating injuries and casualties."

The chances of heat casualties increased with daily temperatures averaging more than 100 degrees.

"Hydrate, hydrate and hydrate," said Hubbard. "I can't stress enough on hydrating, and first line leaders are responsible for ensuring that they are mitigating risk."

The exercise was considered a safety success since there were no accidents involving lose of limbs or fatalities, according to Maj. Chester Price the 412th TEC's safety officer.

A reason to run



Thirty thousand runners prepare to run the 26th Annual Army Ten-Miler race in Washington, D.C., Oct., 6, 2009.

Photo by Spc. David Thompson

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Eugene, 412th TEC, PA

After Staff Sgt. Timothy Lovato crossed the 8 mile marker during the Army Ten-Miler in Washington, D.C., he knew he was in new territory. This was the first time that Lovato had run more than eight miles.

Prior to the race on Oct. 6, 2009, he told his five teammates from the 412th TEC that he was concerned about his ability to complete the entire event without walking part of the way.

"Eight miles is the wall I'm going to run into, but I'm not going to stop," said Lovato. "I don't care if I have to do the

airborne shuffle the entire way, I'm not stopping."

Lovato found a source of motivation when he was less than two miles from the finish line. He said he looked to his right and saw a double amputee running on artificial legs. The look on the man's face was a picture of pain and willpower, according to Lovato.

"I knew I couldn't stop now, that guy was running for something," said Lovato. "It seemed like everyone there had a cause they were running for."

Lovato said he competed in the event because he always wanted to, but on race day he noticed that many of the 30,000 participants were competing for reasons that seemed more meaningful than his.

"Some were running for fallen

comrades, others for Cancer, you name the cause and there was someone there wearing a t-shirt supporting it," said Lovato.

As he got closer to the finish line Lovato got another dose of motivation.

"I heard a voice saying to me 'come on, we're almost there,' I looked up and saw a woman, maybe 25 years old. She had on a t-shirt that said, 'I'm running for my deceased brother,'" said Lovato.

The 412th TEC's team finished fifth in the Army Reserve men's category, approximately 32 minutes behind the first place team. Lovato's time was 01:42:45.

"I'd like to beat that time if I get the opportunity to run again," said Lovato. "...and yes if I run again I'd definitely pick a cause to run for."

In support of

Patriot Warrior

Story and photo by Spc. Timothy R. Koster 362nd MPAD

Soldiers from the 368th Engineer Battalion conducted their annual Extended Combat Training Exercise in support of Patriot Warrior at Fort McCoy, Wis., Aug. 7, through Aug., 29, 2009. While the ECT allows Reserve Soldiers to refine their military operational specialty skills, the Patriot Warrior Exercise tested the battalion's deployment readiness.

For 22 days, the engineers conducted different exercises based on their MOS while living on a contingency operations location. They lived like they were deployed overseas. The battalion made the experience as real as possible by implementing real world procedures such as body armor and kevlar at all times and mandatory convoy manifests.

The 368th consists of four companies: the 424th Vertical Engineer Company out of Rutland, Vt., Headquarters and Headquarters Company out of Londonderry, N.H., the 338th out of Attleboro, Mass., and the 716th out of Somersworth, N.H.

The different training consisted of demolition, construction of roads and a retention pond, building a mock village along a convoy route, and to wrap it all up there was a three day field training exercise for all the Soldiers to test their deployment



The explosion that rocked the fort. This giant smoke cloud was created when the engineers of the 424th and HHC detonated several pounds of explosives at one of Fort McCoy's demolition ranges. Over the course of the day the engineers detonated five explosives at the range.

readiness.

Also, for the first time at the battalion level, all three firefighter units came together and conducted live burn training.

Command Sgt. Maj. Karen Speckman, senior enlisted leader of the 368th Engineer Battalion, was pleased with the overall quality of the training. Speckman said that that at the reserve center the Soldiers do a lot of administration work and none

of the hands on MOS training they would like to do.

"Here they are able to get back to the basics," said Speckman.

Lt. Col. Steven Grady, Commander of the 368th agrees with Speckman. He believes that everything that was expected from the battalion level and below operated as expected or better than expected. Especially, as many of the Soldiers in the battalion are new Soldiers who joined in the middle of a war knowing quite well that they will be deployed into a combat situation.

While ECTs are nothing new for Reserve Soldiers, the training the 368th Engineer Battalion received from this year's exercise will surely be remembered as the battalion prepares for deployment to Afghanistan in 2010. For several veteran Soldiers in the battalion, this was some of the most realistic training they have ever gone through.



Maj Gen. Paul F. Hamm, 412th TEC Commander, flying over South Korea during exercise Ulchi Freedom Guardian 2009. Hamm spent two weeks in Korea meeting with U.S. and South Korean military officials.

Photo by Pfc. David Thompson, 326th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment.

