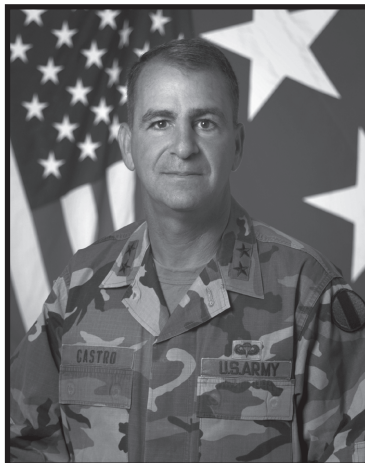


# Clear The Way

By Major General Randal R. Castro  
Commandant, United States Army Engineer School



**W**elcome to our Spring issue of *Engineer*. The focus is *One Engineer Regiment—Transforming and Assuring Mobility While at War*, the same theme planned for ENFORCE from 1-5 May 2006. If you make no other plans this year, you need to take advantage of this opportunity for a week filled with dynamic speakers who will share their recent experiences on what engineers are accomplishing in the AOR, at USACE, and in industry. The week will begin in St. Louis and culminate at Fort Leonard Wood with the Regimental Review and Ball. In addition, we will celebrate the successes of engineers throughout the year, to include honoring participants in the Best Sapper Competition.



Our priority remains supporting the Global War on Terrorism and developing innovative solutions to capability gaps, especially with respect to IED defeat. Although there is no silver bullet for eliminating the IED threat, I believe there is a “Silver Path.” This path consists of multiple solution sets that, when integrated, can enable our forces to successfully predict, detect, exploit, and neutralize IEDs, while mitigating IED effects and protecting our forces. The IED-defeat ICDT, located at Fort Leonard Wood, is prepared to assist deploying BCTs and sappers with the requisite **skills** and **tools** to conduct mission-focused training in preparation for OIF/OEF.

In March, the 3/2 SBCT completed its mission rehearsal exercise at NTC, integrating the available **skills** and **tools** currently on the Silver Path. Prior to the rotation, 3/2 SBCT received contingency training, including IED-defeat T3, advanced search, route reconnaissance and clearance, robotics, UAV operations, counter-RCIED (remote-controlled improvised explosive device) electronic warfare (CREW), and battle command. Many of the **tools** used for training that accompanied 3/2 SBCT to NTC will follow into theater...including advanced search kits, explosive detection kits, and robotics platforms. As continued materiel capabilities and TTP develop, our team is working to better enable BCTs and deploying units to “train as you fight” prior to deployment.

A key to our success in theater has been our Counter Explosive Hazards Center (CEHC)—our Regiment’s “Center of Excellence” for countering explosive hazards—which is fully engaged in the effort to defeat IEDs. CEHC is your resource for lessons learned, countermeasures, intelligence, materiel solutions, and training. When a new training requirement is identified, CEHC can rapidly develop contingency training to close the gap and prepare sappers for combat. In the past few months, CEHC has trained many Army and Marine units in IED-defeat awareness, route

reconnaissance and clearance, advanced search, area clearance, equipment maintenance, and integration of the latest lessons learned from the CENTCOM AOR.

CEHC led several initiatives to increase the capabilities of route reconnaissance and clearance teams, including operational testing of the GYROCAM, prototype integration and testing for the CROWS, and prototype testing for the Buffalo RPG cage. We are working to provide route clearance teams and sapper companies with an enhanced capability to investigate potential IEDs using cameras and a mechanical arm to sort through roadside debris. All this has helped reduce engineer casualties in theater. We will continue our efforts!

No one is surprised when I say that the Regiment is multitasking as we deploy, transform, and restation units throughout the force. Our young company commanders and first sergeants are making things happen at the lower level, while battalion commanders and command sergeants major work the higher-level challenges. A success story is the recent activations of the 19th and 20th Engineer Battalions, at Fort Knox and Fort Hood respectively. With the help of DA, FORSCOM, USACE, and the Engineer School, these units have overcome many challenges and are slowly building combat power in preparation for future operations. Great job! In October, we will stand up four more engineer battalions...yes, *four more!*

I want to thank our Regiment’s leaders for submitting their Itchner, Van Autreve, Sturgis, and Grizzly award nominations. The books are being reviewed, and the winners will be announced at the Regimental Ball. The books this year were all exceptional and represented the *Essayons* spirit across our Regiment.

I appreciate our commanders and command sergeants major who supported this year’s Best Sapper Competition. It is a tremendous opportunity for our junior leaders to represent their units and the force. We will recognize all these Soldiers and present the Lieutenant General Robert B. Flowers bust to the winners.

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to extend a special thanks to all the great engineer officers, NCOs, and Soldiers across the force. Remember that your contribution to the war is not measured by your proximity to direct fire but by what you provide to the success of our Soldiers, our Army, and our Nation in this time of war. Whether you are the Buffalo operator on a route clearance mission in theater, or the instructor teaching clearance operations to deploying Soldiers at Fort Leonard Wood, you are all contributing to the fight, and we are indebted to you for all you do. Be safe, and see you next issue!

Carry On!