

# 19<sup>TH</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION UNITED STATES ARMY



**SHIELD:** The shield of the coat of arms is used to indicate the descent of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the 36<sup>th</sup> Engineer Regiment.

**COLORS:** The colors red and white are used for Engineers. The wavy partition line and the Seahorse symbolize participation in Marine Transportation and Amphibious Landings by the 36<sup>th</sup> Engineer Regiment.

**MOTTO:** ACUTUS ACUMEN (1952-1976)  
ACUTUM ACUMEN (1976-Present)  
Translation - "SHARP INGENUITY"

**DEDICATION:** This documentation is a history of the soldiers and key events of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. The men who served and even gave their lives for the preservation of American ideals are remembered within these pages. Were it not for the soldiers of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, the victories chronicled herein could not have taken place. Therefore, in remembrance of the soldiers, let this document be proudly dedicated to the men of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion.

**INTRODUCTION:** The heritage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion is a long and proud one. Its parent unit, the 36<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Regiment was named by the Nazi's as "The Little Seahorse Division". During WORLD WAR II, the men of the Regiment gave their energy, hearts and lives for America from 1941 to 1945. They participated in the African campaign, and through the muddy and bloody Italian and French campaigns, across Germany and into Austria by the end of the war. While stationed in the States during the COLD WAR the Battalion participated in disaster relief from hurricanes and floods, trained, and were always ready for missions assigned. The VIETNAM WAR from 1965 to 1970 found the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion in Combat for five continuous years including 13 service campaigns. Desert Storm in IRAQ in 1991 was another proud chapter of service for the Battalion. The GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR has required the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion to serve abroad and have outstanding tours of duty in IRAQ in 2006-2007 and AFGHANISTAN 2008-2009 and 2009-2010. The Battalion had a nine month deployment to KUWAIT during 2013 and 2014. The Battalion is currently stationed at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. This proud legacy of service is chronicled in this history.

COMPILED BY:

JOHN T. FALLON  
3<sup>rd</sup> BN. 36<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER REGIMENT  
“H” COMPANY COMMANDER  
1944

COL NOLAN C. RHODES (ret)  
19<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION COMMANDER  
1966-1967

COL. ANDREW C. REMSON (ret)  
19<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION COMMANDER  
1967 - 1968

FREDERICK J. SMITH  
C COMPANY CO, S -3, 19<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION  
1968 – 1969

1LT SCOTT A. ROMESBURG  
2002

1LT SCOTT T. WILLIAMS  
19<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION HISTORIAN  
2009

1LT ROSS JACKSON FENWICK  
19<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION S-2 and HISTORIAN  
2010

COL David G. Ray  
19<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION COMMANDER  
2010-2012

LTC JOHN P. LLOYD  
19<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION COMMANDER  
2012-2014

CPT LAWRENCE F. GRIFFITH  
19<sup>th</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION ADJ

HEADQUARTERS  
19<sup>TH</sup> ENGINEER BATTALION (COMBAT) (ARMY)  
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND

THE HISTORY OF THE BIT AND REINS

On display in Battalion Headquarters is a bit and reins that legend says came from a seahorse. How this legend began is as follows: It seems that on 22 January 1944, LTC Larson, the Battalion Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 36<sup>th</sup> Regiment, from which the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion is descended, was in a landing craft headed toward the port of Anzio. It was predawn on that fateful D - Day and LTC Larson's instructions were to land a Ranger Task Force and clear the port of Anzio, so that the rest of the regiment with equipment could land there. Although unprepared for the invasion, the Germans did manage to get a few rounds of artillery off at the approaching small landing craft. One round was so close that it threw LTC Larson's boat into the air and dumped LTC Larson into the sea. Weighted down by all of his equipment, LTC Larson immediately started to go under. In his semiconscious state, LTC Larson reached out and grabbed at what he thought to be a piece of rope, as a drowning man clutches at a straw. Still in a semiconscious state, he swears that what he thought was a rope was actually the reins of a bridle worn by, of all things, a seahorse.

When LTC Larson recovered consciousness he was lying on the dock with an old man kneeling beside him. He started to tell the old man of the experience when he stopped himself. He figured the story was too unbelievable. As he started to get up he looked in his hand and he still had the reins with bit. Forgetting about it temporarily he got up, placed the reins and bit in his pack and took command of the battalion again. So thoroughly did his battalion clear the port that the rest of the regiment was able to land at the port rather than hit the beach as anticipated.

During a rest period, he mentioned the incident to the Regimental Commander who passed it off as a good story but hardly true. The Regimental Commander concluded that LTC Larson picked up the bit and reins at the dock where one of the many horses around the port may have lost them in the confusion of battle. However, as LTC Larson retold the story to some Italian workers, they said that they had never seen such a bit before and that certainly none of the horses around Anzio ever had one like it, and also there were no teeth marks on the bit, as the horse frequently took the bit in their teeth as they went along. Being unable to fully resolve the story, LTC Larson gave the bit and reins to one of the workers around the dock.

The story, however, did not die and was told and retold so much that the story was still around at the end of the war when the 2828<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, formerly the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, was renamed the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. When the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion was activated in 1952 the legend was still around, but by this time it was just a vague memory. It remained this way until August of 1961. At this time LTC Regn, assigned the Battalion Executive Officer, was given the task of finding more information about the legend or contacting someone who had served with the old 36<sup>th</sup> or knew of its exploits. One of the letters he wrote went to the mayor of Anzio. The mayor sent us the name of Antonio Batelli, the worker who claimed to be the one to whom LTC Larson gave the bit and reins. Further correspondence with Mr. Batelli revealed that he had kept the bit and reins as a souvenir and had never used it since it was different than any he had used. During September 1961 the bit and reins were returned to this battalion and is used as a symbol of command. The old Battalion Commander presents it to the new Commander to signify that he now holds the reins to the "Little Seahorse Battalion", the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion.

Phillip U. Bondi  
2LT, CE  
Assistant Adjutant- 26 March 1962

# 19th Engineer Battalion

## World War II

The 36<sup>th</sup> Engineers was constituted 1 October 1933 in the Regular Army and was activated at Plattsburg Barracks New York in June 1941 as a Combat Regiment. It was one of several Engineer Regiments being organized to be a part of the Engineer Amphibian Command which the Army planned for the invasion of the European mainland. When the Navy insisted on controlling the landings the Regiment continued emphasizing landing operations as a regular Engineer Combat Regiment. There were originally two battalions in the Regiment but when the 2nd Battalion was sent to England to train for separate operations a battalion of the 5401 Engineers became the 3rd Battalion of the 36th.

After training at Fort Bragg and Norfolk Virginia as a part of the Western Task Force the Regiment landed with the 3rd Infantry Division (ID) near Casablanca, Morocco on 8 November 1942. The Regiment operated the port of Fedala until the main port of Casablanca was opened. In the meantime the 2nd Battalion landed in Algiers with a mostly British Eastern Task Force. The 2nd Battalion went on to Tunis until the end of that campaign and then the 3 battalions were joined for training for the proposed landing in Sicily. Each battalion had three lettered companies and a very small staff.

The Regiment again was with the 3rd ID in the landing near Licata, Sicily under the command of General George Patton and the 7th Army. The landing in July 1943 was met with artillery and air raids and as the invasion progressed the Regiment operated the beach until the port of Syracuse was opened when they were returned to Bizerte for training for another amphibious operation.

The Regiment's 3rd amphibious landing was made with the 36th ID near Salerno, Italy on 10 September 1943. The British landed at a separate beach north of the American beach and both landings were met with a furious defense because a German Panzer Division had been refitting right near the landing beach. The 36th Engineer Regiment was immediately thrown into the fight as Infantry under heavy Armor and Infantry attacks. The Rangers had landed on a small separate beach at Amalfi to the north to interdict the German supply line but they came under very heavy attack and H Company (later B Company 19th Engineers) was sent to reinforce them. All three battalions were committed as Infantry, first with the 36th ID and later with the 45th ID. The Regiments casualties were heavy and at one time the 2nd Battalion was surrounded for a day but fought their way out. Most remarkable was the fact that the Regiment succeeded in knocking out two Panther tanks, one with a 37MM Antitank gun and the other with a bazooka. Both of course were lucky hits that knocked out the treads immobilizing the tanks.

Elements of the 1st Armored Division landed and the 5th Army broke through the beachhead on September 19th and headed north to Naples. The road north was very strongly defended by the Germans who knocked out every bridge and culvert and mined every road. The Regiment restored the railroad line from Battapaglia to Eboli and built a road over a mountain pass that had been destroyed. There was a shortage of Bailey Bridge units and it was a scramble to replace them with fixed bridges as quickly as possible.

Naples was reached on October 1, 1943. The Germans had destroyed much of the port and

completely mined all public areas of the City. The 3rd Battalion was tasked with removing the mines in the city and suffered many casualties from time delayed mines. Just in removing mines H Company suffered 23 KIA and 12 WIA most of which were in the explosion of the General Post Office. All three battalions headed north to tackle the Voltumo River which was in flood stage. In fact the Germans had blown up several dams to flood the entire plain and the river itself was over 200 feet wide. While attached to the 34th ID the Regiment constructed foot bridges and cable crossings and had to build several bridges several times because the German artillery zeroed in on the pontoon bridges and the very muddy ground made it very difficult to get the pontoons to the bridge site. All types of pontoons were used here, the 6 and 12 ton heavy and the pneumatic. They finally got a triple single and a double double Bailey Bridges both built under heavy accurate artillery fire.

By October 15th after crossing the Voltumo the 5th Army headed north and ran into the German main defense line anchored at Cassino. The country was all mud and roads were very difficult to maintain. The attack stalled and on January 5, 1944 H Company was ordered to report to the Rangers to train for another landing. On 12 January the balance of the Regiment was ordered to train with the 3rd ID and several practice landing were made at Gaeta during which lives and equipment were lost. The date was set for January 22nd and the destination, Anzio.

The British 1st ID was scheduled to land north of the harbor and the 3rd ID was to land just south of the harbor on January 22nd. H Company landed with the Rangers in the port. There was very little resistance and after the mines were cleared from the port all the landing shifted to the harbor and the beaches were closed. On January 27th the 3rd Battalion was ordered to take positions on the Moletta River where they wired and mined their positions under the control of the 1st British Infantry division. Also on the 27th the 45th ID landed and replaced the 36th Engineers. For several days the main job was improving roads, building storage dumps and digging in artillery.

On February 10th the British 56th ID landed and the 36th Engineers were again attached as an Infantry Regiment back on the line of the Moletta River with the 3rd Battalion on the extreme left flank covering down to the beach. The Regimental front was 7 Kilometers and a British Artillery Battalion and a British Tank Battalion supported them. The Regiment held this position for 45 days without relief enduring constant artillery barrages, aircraft raids and Infantry attacks. The Regiment learned the hard way how to patrol and fight as well as any Infantry Regiment.

Finally the British 5th ID landed and replaced the Regiment in the line. The 36th retired to houses on the outskirts of Anzio out of small arms fire but still under daily artillery attacks and air raids. Some welcome replacements were received at this time, 321 EM and 10 Officers. Our losses had been very high and the replacements were quickly trained in Infantry tactics. During one of the many air raids LTC Thomas Gibbons, the Commander of the 3rd Battalion, was killed and was succeeded by MAJ Joseph Lombard. While back for rest and retraining the Regiment sandbagged the Hospital area which had been shelled and several nurses and patients were killed.

A directive from GEN Truscott, the Corps Commander, ordered that each combat company select one platoon for patrolling and reconnaissance. The new men were to be placed on the line with the other two platoons until they were hardened to the constant shelling. An officer from each company who had British Commando training was to command the Patrol Platoons. On April 20th an officer

from each company who had the special patrolling training and two of his sergeants were ordered to report to the Canadian-American First Special Force holding the line at the extreme right, southern end of the beachhead. They were to go on patrols with the FSSF to learn the territory, especially the

many drainage ditches that cross the area. They patrolled every night and on May 5th the Regiment relieved the FSSF and controlled the front line along the Mussolini Canal all the way to the sea.

The 3rd Battalion was at the extreme left of the Regiment next to the FSSF on the front line. The aggressive patrolling continued and the German lines were hit every night. Finally on May 23rd the entire beachhead erupted and all units moved forward. A patrol from the Regiment made contact with a patrol from the 5th Army heading north from the Cassino line and the beachhead was complete. The Regiment was next attached to the 36th ID and attacked northwest in the direction of Velletri, a strongly fortified town on a very high hill. The Infantry of the 36th ID by-passed the town, while the 36th Engineers captured it with numerous casualties.

The Regiment then resumed engineer work on roads and bridges with the 6th Corps as it headed north. The Commander, COL Thomas Stanley, was killed in a jeep accident and was succeeded by COL Mark Boatner. On July 19, 1944 the Regiment was ordered to join the 3<sup>rd</sup> ID in Pozzuoli for training for another amphibious landing. Several practice landings were made in the vicinity of Gaeta. Some of these were costly in accidents and lives and materiel. The landing was scheduled for August 15 at Cap Cavalaire on the Riviera in France.

The convoy stopped on the way to the beaches with a very short delay in Corsica so that seasickness would be minimized. It was a smooth crossing and landing with very few casualties. The troops defending the beaches were almost entirely Eastern European conscripts and they surrendered quickly. The 3rd Battalion was on the extreme left of the beachhead. The other battalions were scheduled to help clear the port of Marseilles when the French captured it. Eventually Toulon was cleared first. The 3rd Battalion had to continue working the beach until the ports were open so they stayed at the beach until 12 September when they rejoined the 6th Corps and were attached to the 36th ID. The Germans withdrew quickly and the Regiment built bridges and maintained roads but within days the enemy straightened their lines and the fighting became more difficult. The Regiment was committed as Infantry about the middle of September and during the slow moving forward saw considerable combat throughout the month of October 1944 in Epinal, Rambervillers, Remiremont, Docelles and others.

Several new Infantry Divisions had been added and things slowed down while the 6th Corps prepared to cross the Meurth River on November 21, 1944. The Regiment was assigned 7 bridges to build after the area had been cleared by Infantry. Most of the bridges were put in with very little trouble but H Company was assigned the bridge at LaFosse, a very small town where the river was about 100 feet wide. When the company arrived at the scene they were met by a concentrated small arms fire assisted by several machine guns and a quad 20 AA gun. Several attempts were made to find boats to force a crossing above or below the site to no avail. The G3 of the 14th Armored Division, for whom the bridge was intended, arrived at the site and called in air support. Within minutes two fighter planes knocked out all resistance and the bridge went in quickly.

Immediately following the crossing of the Meurth the Regiment replaced the French 1st Armored Division on the front in Baccarat. In the beginning of December the 3rd Battalion was attached to the 103rd ID and built bridges and maintained roads leading to the crossing of the Mietesheim River at Mertzwiller on December 10th. H Company built a double single under heavy artillery and mortar fire and the Division crossed and as the enemy withdrew the 3rd Battalion built bridges and roads until the 25th. On the 30<sup>th</sup> a heavy enemy air raid caused several KIA and WIA. Because of the German counter attack, Infantry Divisions of the 6th Corps were thinned out to aid the northern sector. The 36th Engineers went into infantry combat again in the Siegfried Line replacing the 179th Infantry on the 1st of January 1945.

The Regiment was covering 7 Kilometers of front lines and was ordered to withdraw even though

there were only small patrols encountered. Intelligence reported a large German counterattack soon in that sector. The 3rd Battalion was ordered to cover the withdrawal and blow the bridges as they crossed them. The Regiment then replaced the 275th Infantry on the Maginot line but not in the old fortifications. Patrolling became more aggressive and after 11 days the order came to withdraw to a strong position in the Vosges replacing the 274th Infantry, because the attack from the Germans was imminent. In the mountains of the Vosges the 36th was hit hard by the German 6th SS Mountain Division, a fresh division recalled from Norway. The fighting was fierce and the Germans attacked almost every day and our patrols were aggressive capturing several of the enemy. Finally the Regiment was relieved by the 157th Infantry and went back to Engineer duties.

On the 15th of February The Regiment was converted to a Group with the Battalions being numbered 2826, 2827, and the 3rd Battalion was now 2828. LTC Joseph Lombard was still in Command and he now had Headquarters, A, B, and C, Companies. At this time the Germans were pulling back but it became necessary to serve as Infantry for five days while our Infantry Divisions were getting aligned to cross the Rhine. When the river was crossed at several places the Group crossed on the bridge of another Engineer unit at Mannheim.

The Group was attached to the 103rd ID for the push south and for the next several weeks the Germans blew bridges and created many obstacles for the advance. There were fewer land mines and the artillery seemed to be aimed more at troop movements and road intersections. The 3rd Battalion uncovered an underground ball bearing factory in good operating condition and the Group also found an underground aircraft assembly factory. Until the last week of April, 1945 the movement was cautious but suddenly the Germans resistance began to collapse.

The pursuit of the Germans was now a race with the object of getting to a bridge before they could blow it. Sometimes it was just in time and sometimes it was just too late. One problem was the increasing number of Germans wanting to surrender. They came in convoys, some still carrying their rifles. They were waved to the rear to surrender. The 3rd Battalion reached a German concentration camp just north of Mittenwald and the Battalion surgeon suggested that the emaciated victims should stay there until relief was coming. Unfortunately, several of the inmates had gone out of the camp looking for food and died in the streets. Mittenwald is the last town in Germany on the road to the Brenner Pass.

The 2828th Battalion went right through and entered Austria at Seefeld. At the bottom of the mountain was Innsbruck but before they got there the order was to stop in place. The war was over. The battalion stayed in Seefeld for about a week when the order came to return to Mittenwald, because Austria was not an enemy country. In Mittenwald the Battalion HQ was right in the center of town on the main road south. A and C Companies were billeted in tourist hotels in town while B Company occupied the Caserne above the town. Group HQ was in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. Orders were received to maintain roads and bridges in the vicinity. There were no big jobs because the Group had a captured German Engineer Regiment which was put to work. Gradually the men were replaced by recent inductees as their points allowed them to go home.

Records are available up to the change to the Group designation in February. After that the different Battalions maintained their own systems. The 3rd Battalion had some casualties but not a great many after that time. Records show the Regiment lost 267 KIA and 998 WIA to February 1945. The 36th received outstanding commendations from GEN Truscott of the 6 Corps and from the GEN Gregson-Ellis, commanding the British 5th ID. Also H Company (later B Company) received the Presidential Unit Citation for fighting with the Rangers at Salerno.

The 36th Engineer Combat Regiment received 10 campaign battle stars and 5 Combat Landing Arrowheads for service during World War II.

Algeria-French Morocco...with Arrowhead

Tunisia

Sicily...with Arrowhead

Naples-Foggia...with Arrowhead

Anzio...with Arrowhead

Rome-Arno

Southern France...with Arrowhead

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

## THE COLD WAR-STATESIDE 1947-1965

On 29 April 1947, the 2828<sup>th</sup> was redesignated as the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion and on 9 July 1952 the battalion was activated at Fort Meade, Maryland. LTC Edward M. Goodbread assumed command of 19<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion. LTC Goodbread started with nothing and molded a well organized Engineer Battalion. Intensive engineer training was set into motion and the battalion achieved and maintained functional readiness to accomplish and perform security missions.

On 19 November 1953, MAJ Charles T. Denton arrived and the traditional Change of Command ceremonies were held. MAJ Denton accepted the “Bit & Reins”, and with it all challenges, traditions, and responsibilities. The battalion maintained a high state of readiness and continued with assigned missions.

On 13 August 1954, LTC Howard A. McCord received the “Bit & Reins” taking command of the 19<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion. The battalion was kept busy with providing disaster relief from the devastation created on the Eastern Coast. They contributed to the cleanup and rescue efforts after hurricane Hazel in October 1954. They cleared rubble and helped rebuild the area around

Cambridge and Wingate, Maryland. They also put a total of 70 fishing boats back into operation. Their mission complete, they returned to Fort Meade, Maryland, only to return again to build an 18 hole golf course. The men cleared and grubbed 500,000 square yards of land and installed 22,000 feet of pipe. The quality of the golf course was commendable and a letter of commendation was awarded by the Second Army Commander, LTG Floyd L. Parks. During "Exercise Hightide" the men were called to a mission as engineers at Little Creek, Virginia. They were to constitute the main shore party in the operation. They kept the roads open and trained in clearing mines.

In August 1955, Hurricane Diane left the northern Pennsylvania ravaged by floods. The men cleared debris and helped put Pennsylvania back on its feet. The job was so efficient that letters of commendation were awarded for their relief work by GEN Maxwell Taylor, Chief of Staff, GEN John E. Dahlquist, Commander of the Continental Army, and MG A.J. Drexel Biddle Jr. Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

On 13 July 1957, LTC Frank J. Vassalutti assumed command. Under his guidance the men of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion came to the rescue of Baltimore, Maryland who suffered from a snow emergency. The men with their equipment cleared snow and kept assigned roads clear. MG Rinaldo Van Brunt, Chief of Staff commended their efficient work and the battalion received a letter of commendation.

Under the command of LTC William J. Phillips, the men of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion prevented what might have been the second disastrous flood in Meadville, Pennsylvania. French Creek had frozen and waters were beginning to rise. The men blasted heavy ice from two gorges out of French Creek just in time to prevent spillage over the banks. They cleared 4.7 miles, using 12 tons of explosives. Company B's men successfully completed 15 missions on a training exercise at Fort Monroe, Virginia. This training exercise was so effective that GEN Bruce C. Clarke, USA Commanding, sent a letter stating that the training exercise reflected credibility on the men of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, as to the state of discipline and training.

During the next few years, the following Battalion Commanders lead the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers in continued service upholding the strength, unity, and traditions of the Battalion: LTC Roger L. Young, from 25 October 1959 thru 12 August 1960, LTC Charles T. Mewshaw, from 13 August 1960 thru 14 July 1961, LTC Elmer M. Regn, from 15 July 1961 thru 6 April 1962, and LTC Wayne L. Savio.

In 1963, the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion upheld a rating of excellence. The men entered a STRAC Mobility Test, completely loading all personnel and equipment for simulated deployment. The unit proved its versatility and flexibility by earning a superior rating. The men also drained Kelly Lake, an area of 11 acres. They excavated and removed a quarter of a million yards of mud, and built roads and sedimentation basins. The men supported the Second U.S. Army Commander's matches at Fort Meade, Maryland in which 600 shooters participated. Throughout 1963, the men participated in fighting forest fires, dredging and reclamation of Soldier's Lake. They also trained and became proficient in counter guerilla and counterinsurgency operations. They drove to Camp Perry, Ohio, and supported the National Rifle and Pistol Matches.

The "Bridle" of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, which signifies the symbol of command of the "Little Seahorse Battalion", was presented to LTC Thomas C. Jones, the new commander. LTC Jones intensified training as the men followed him to Camp A.P. Hill, Virginia. They trained hard to become consistent and proficient at diversified engineer tasks.

## VIETNAM 1965-1970

Early in 1965, the battalion was alerted to be ready to depart for Vietnam. Under the leadership of LTC Amos C. Matthews, (30 June 1965 to 16 July 1966) they deployed to Vietnam in September 1965, and made a quiet amphibious landing on the beaches of Qui Nhon. From the beginning the men were heavily engaged in engineer tasks with projects consisting of constructing ten large warehouses with adjacent hardstands and loading areas. The men met the call as they worked double shifts to complete the project because the 1<sup>st</sup> Logistical Command began moving in as the first three warehouses were completed. The 19<sup>th</sup> was also given the mission of supporting the Republic of Korea Tiger Division. Road and bridge construction was necessary in this effort. The monsoon season flooded the entire area of operations in the fall of 1965, which made any and all construction extremely difficult. Other base construction projects included a 50,000 barrel fueling facility, an ammo supply depot, heliport and airfield construction, pipeline construction and many other base support projects. The 509<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (PB) and two platoons of the 553<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Company (FB) participated in these projects. After the depot was completed, company B was called upon to construct an 80 foot long timber trestle span, eight miles south of Duc Pho. Many long and arduous hours went into the project and it gave the men a feeling of great accomplishment.

LTC Nolan C. Rhodes (16 July 1966 to 23 July 1967) received the Bridle and Reins during July 1966, in ceremonies at the 937<sup>th</sup> Group Headquarters in Qui Nhon. Over the next few months the 19<sup>th</sup> including elements of the 554<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (FB) and was tasked with performing major construction of the Qui Nhon area infrastructure, but also with a combat support role. The 19<sup>th</sup> participated in Combat Operations Thayer, Tiger Hound, Irving, Meng Ho 8, and Operation Duke. The primary mission of the 19<sup>th</sup> was to upgrade highway QL-1 from virtually a dirt trail, to a class 31 all-weather road, from Qui Nhon north to Bong Son. Prior to being destroyed by the Viet Cong, QL-1 had been a paved major route connecting Saigon to Hanoi. It is also known as the "Street

without Joy". The battalion was soon to find out why this name was appropriate. In July 1967, the 19<sup>th</sup> moved from the Qui Nhon area to an area north of the Bong Son River. The battalion headquarters and two companies were located near the village of Tam Quan, and other companies were located in separate firebases along Highway QL-1 to the north.

Under the command of LTC Andrew C. Remson Jr. (23 July 1967 to 2 March 1968), the battalion was assigned the mission of first opening and then upgrading QL-1 from Bong Son to Duc Pho. The task was difficult. Many of the bridges had been destroyed and the road was known to be mined. In addition, strong North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces were operating in the area. Consequently, more mines could be expected, in addition to sniper attacks, ambushes, and mortar attacks on base camps. From August to October 1967 nine men lost their lives and 21 were wounded. In spite of this resistance, the battalion completed Phase 1 of QL-1 upgrading, opening the road to one way all weather traffic, on 8 September 1967. The first phase of construction consisted of 7 Bailey Bridges, the decking of 3 existing rail road bridges, and building 6 timber trestle bridges.

The battalion immediately moved into the second phase of the operation, upgrading the highway to MACV standards, which required Class 60 timber pile bridges instead of the temporary Bailey Bridges. In addition to this mission, the men of the 19<sup>th</sup> also provided engineer support to the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, the Americal Division, a brigade of the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and the 199<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade. They completed the repair of the Sa Huynh Port, and repaired the 1st Cavalry's LZ English airfield. During December 1967 and January 1968, they constructed artillery firing platforms, an ammunition supply point at Duc Pho, and took on an additional 10 miles of QL-1 north of Mo Duc. The battalion provided direct support to the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division in the "Battle of Tam Quan". In this engagement the American forces surrounded and virtually destroyed the 22<sup>nd</sup> North Vietnamese Regiment. The men of the 19<sup>th</sup> found that they were in a continuous battle. Each day brought enemy contact, mining and destruction of QL-1. They would rebuild a bridge and at night the NVA would destroy it. The TET Offensive brought increased enemy action. The battalion's primary mission of upgrading QL-1 seemed never ending what with all the lack of cooperation of our enemy. A new quarry was opened at LZ Lowboy in January 1968. The quarry and asphalt plant were operated by the 73<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Company (CS). Road construction capability was augmented by the attachment of the 70<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (DT), and the continued support of the 137<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (LE).

LTC James L. Sutton, (2 March 1968 to 7 September 1968), received the assignment of Battalion Commander of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. The mission of upgrading QL-1 continued, as did heavy harassment by the NVA. Although the NVA would mine the highway nightly and frequently ambushed the engineers, QL-1 stayed open and the men upgraded QL-1 south to Phu Cat. The daily mine sweep always started at daybreak and had to be completed before the road was opened for traffic and our road construction could start. The mine sweep was an exciting and tension filled way to start the day. The TET offensive brought increased action. In the three month period ending 30 April 1968 there were 94 enemy contacts, five bridges destroyed, 13 well-planned ambushes, 69 mines or booby traps, 89 obstacles and barriers, 37 culverts destroyed and on and on it went. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers worst day in Vietnam was 22 July 1968 when the heavy equipment platoon of the 137<sup>th</sup> Light Equipment Company was ambushed on the outskirts of Tam Quan. 12 of our brothers were killed that day. QL-1 was a dangerous and deadly road.

LTC Donald L. Wisdom, (7 September 1968 to 7 February 1969), received orders of a high priority mission to upgrade LZ English Airfield to an asphalt surface capable of handling C-130 Aircraft. The project was completed ahead of schedule, despite enemy and harassment. The 19<sup>th</sup> also supported the Americal Division, the 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade and the US Navy detachment at Sa

Huynh. Rains caused by Typhoon Hester caused serious flooding and damage of QL-1. Thirty inches of rain fell in seven days and keeping QL-1 open was a major effort. At various times in I/II Corps the battalion companies were located at LZ North English, LZ Lowboy, LZ Thunder, LZ Debbie, and LZ Max. Usually each of these firebases was home for one or two companies. The typical home was a sandbagged bunker, hot, wet, and moldy, with close quarters for each squad. After a long day on the road each engineer pulled a 4 hour shift of guard duty. We had to provide our own security at night, since enemy activity was frequent causing many sleepless nights.

LTC Gilbert L Burns, (7 February 1969 to 10 July 1969), was Battalion Commander during the final push to complete work on QL-1 between Bong Son and Mo Duc. Almost 700 enemy incidents occurred. Mines, booby traps, ambushes, sniping, barriers, obstacles, propaganda, bridge burning, destruction of culverts were continuous. Enemy activity was so continuous that two of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer line companies were organized and used as infantry to protect our crews on the road.

Under the guidance of LTC Wilson P. Andrews, (11 July 1969 to 15 February 1970), the 19<sup>th</sup> was able to complete the mission of improving and upgrading 70 kilometers of QL-1 from Bong Son to Mo Duc. The 19<sup>th</sup> was able to repair or construct a timber trestle or Bailey bridge in the minimum time while repulsing the enemy. 11 Bailey bridges and 34 timber pile bridges were built, some more than once. Upon departure from I Corps the engineer group commander described the period from May to October 1969 in part by writing: "Despite heavy enemy resistance, the men of the 19<sup>th</sup> extended National Highway 1 from the II Corps border well into I Corps (46 kilometers of base course, and 30 kilometers of asphalt paving). These accomplishments are even more outstanding considering that a combat engineer battalion performed work normally tasked to a construction battalion while simultaneously acting as infantry as required by the tactical situation. Twenty engineers fell in action and another 82 suffered wounds. Despite these losses the determination and dedication of the 19<sup>th</sup> never faltered. Congratulations on a singularly outstanding performance".

Daily mine sweep, bridge building, culvert installation, road widening, grading, paving, providing security and engaging in firefights were all in a day's work. Any engineer who spent time on QL-1 was a "COMBAT ENGINEER". Ninety engineers died in support of operations in I/II Corps, mostly on QL-1 conducting mine sweeps and road construction activities.

In August thru October 1969, the battalion was transferred from I/II Corps to III Corps near Bao Loc. The battalion relocated to Camp Smith, Camp Brown, and LZ Betty. The primary mission was to upgrade 81 Kilometers of QL-20 from Di Linh to II/III Corps boundary. The 572<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Company (LE) and the 547<sup>th</sup> Engineer Platoon (Asphalt) joined the battalion in support of this mission. In addition to this primary mission various elements of the 19<sup>th</sup> completed vertical structures, concrete work, ARVN training, community support, and other projects. Enemy activity continued to be a fact of life.

Under command of LTC Morris L. Gardner, (15 February 1970 to 10 June 1970), work continued on QL-20. Other projects included maintenance of the Boa Loc Airfield, construction of a Special Forces camp, quarrying by the 572<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Company (LE) and land clearing by the 687<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Land Clearing). The drawdown of US forces began to slowdown operations. Battalion headquarters was relocated to near Ban Me Thuot.

There were two Battalion Commanders during this period, LTC Pleasant West (10 June to 4 November 1970), and LTC Robert Carpenter (4 November to 16 December 1970). In November 1970 the 19<sup>th</sup> spent time transferring jobs, personnel, and equipment to a relieving task force. The rest of the battalion moved to Dong Ba Thien for turnover and relocation. November 1970 saw the

end of the Vietnam War for the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. A little over five years after landing at Qui Nhon the service of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers in Vietnam was over. During the period from September 1965 to November 1970, 105 members of the 19<sup>th</sup> lost their lives and over were wounded.

The unit was submitted for the Valorous Unit Citation for the time period July 16, 1967 through December 31, 1968. The citation reads in part: "EXCEPTIONALLY VALOROUS SERVICE ... The achievements of the unit portray a record of outstanding courage, performance, ingenuity, initiative, quality and responsiveness. Despite continued enemy harassment, mining, and sniping, the roadway from Bong Son to Duc Pho was rebuilt. Enemy action has not been able to hinder completion of work, but instead brought out a resolve to finish and a desire to excel".

The men of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers in Vietnam were smart, hard working, well trained, and brave. They were and are proud of their accomplishments under most difficult conditions.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion was transferred to Fort Lewis Washington on 14 October 1970 and inactivated on December 15, 1970.

#### VIETNAM SERVICE CAMPAIGNS

5 March - 24 December 1965	Defense
25 December - 30 June 1966	Counteroffensive
1 July 1966 - 31 May 1967	Counteroffensive Phase II
1 June 1967 - 29 January 1968	Counteroffensive Phase III
30 January 1968 - 1 April 1968	TET Counteroffensive
2 April 1968 - 30 June 1968	Counteroffensive Phase IV
1 July 1968 - 1 November 1968	Counteroffensive Phase V
2 November 1968 - 22 February 1969	Counteroffensive Phase VI
23 February 1969 - 8 June 1969	TET Counteroffensive
9 June 1969 - 31 October 1969	Summer - Fall 1969
1 November 1969 - 30 April 1970	Winter - Spring 1970
1 May 1970 - 30 June 1970	Sanctuary - Counteroffensive
1 July 1970 - 30 June 1971	Counteroffensive Phase VII

#### DECORATIONS

##### VALOROUS UNIT AWARD

HHC COMPANY, COMPANY A, COMPANY B, 137<sup>TH</sup> ENGINEER COMPANY (LE)

16 JULY 1967 TO 31 DECEMBER 1968

COMPANY C - 22 SEPTEMBER 1967 TO 31 DECEMBER 1968

COMPANY D - 20 AUGUST 1967 TO 31 DECEMBER 1968

70<sup>TH</sup> ENGINEER CO. (DUMP TRUCK) - 1 JULY 1968 TO 31 DECEMBER 1968

73<sup>RD</sup> ENGINEER CO. (CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT) 16 JUNE 1967 TO 31 DECEMBER 1968

VIETNAMESE CIVIL ACTION HONOR MEDAL, FIRST CLASS STREAMER EMBROIDERED:

VIETNAM 1970

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

# THE COLD WAR, STATESIDE

## 1975-1985

On 21 December 1975 the 19<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineer Battalion was activated again, this time at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The formation of the 19<sup>th</sup> consisted of 300 enlisted members, 3 NCOs', and as acting commander, Captain Botts. The battalion was originally assigned to the 75<sup>th</sup> Support and shortly after became attached to the 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade.

LTC Jim Tritz assumed command of the battalion on 1 May 1976. The battalion consisted of A company, B Company, and a Headquarters and Headquarters company. Later, in May, the 522<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Company, 13<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company, and C Company of the 46<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, became attached units. This brought all Engineer units at Fort Knox, Kentucky, under one command. In June 1976, C/46<sup>th</sup>, less men and equipment, was relocated to Fort Rucker, Alabama. The men and equipment then became C/19. The mission of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion was to provide engineer support to the U.S. Army Armor and Engineer Board and to accomplish engineer troop construction projects, as well as increase the combat effectiveness of the corps and perform infantry combat missions.

Company A constructed 5 different types of tank obstacles as static displays for R.O.T.C. summer camp students. Company C completed construction of a mini tank range at Wilson Range. The men of 522<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Company maintained an M4T6 Float Bridge across the Salt River. In 1976 they were able to renovate area 10, improve St Vith Range, and they completed Lower Douglas Dam, which created a 60 acre lake. The men put in over 36,000 man hours moving earth day and night to finish the dam by October. Company C completed the Army travel camp at Camp Carlson. Latrines, offices, laundry, and a game room went up and the camp was dedicated in September. The men conducted their first FTX in December.

1977 started with severe weather requiring a clean up effort utilizing the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion on post and surrounding communities. The men completed a 10 day FTX in March. The unit completed the Post Ammunition Dump. Finney Range Berm, construction of 5 tank ranges and construction of a tank driving course which included land obstacle construction. Company A supported project "Green Belt" consisting of construction of a park and playground for public use in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Company B provided construction support to upgrade the covered bridge and Rough River Boy Scout Camps consisting of an Olympic size pool, upgrading roads and repairing plumbing.

At the end of 1977, LTC Robert R. Hardiman assumed command of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. LTC Hardiman and intense training programs were initiated. The men were trained to build bridges, bunkers, obstacles, and employ infantry tactics. In April 1978, the men of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion deployed to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. There they performed a 10 day ARTEP with a high completion rate. Upon their return, the men set upon the task of repairing their equipment in a timely manner. They also completed several projects including construction of Wolf Bridge and construction of Freeman Lake Park in Elizabethtown, Kentucky. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion assisted in the grim mission body removal from the tragedy at Jonestown, Guyana. They prepared

and completed a 1,700 mile road march to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, and back. The men performed

daily maintenance and the battalion returned with over 80% of the equipment functioning. The men even found time to capture the first post soccer title over the Officer Advanced Course with a score of 4 - 1. The soldiers gave willing of themselves, and donated over 318 pints of blood to become the post "big-bleeders". In April the entire battalion traveled to Fort McCoy once again and conducted a successful Army Training Evaluation Program.

LTC Kenneth W. McCollister assumed command May 1979, and continued to maintain combat effectiveness. In June and July, men from all the companies went to Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois, and supported the 13<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company in paving, earthmoving, and building demolition projects. Upon return the battalion traveled to Fort Campbell, Kentucky and conducted a field training exercise which included the construction of two assault helicopter landing strips for use by the Blackhawk helicopter. The men assisted in the summer camp of R.O.T.C. by giving classes of instruction. In September the 13<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company constructed McFarland - Oliver Tank Range, the primary test range for the new XM-1 tank.

LTC Clovis O. Lafond was received as 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion Commander in November 1980. He stressed physical fitness, individual proficiency and squad readiness. The standard of running 5 miles in 45 minutes was achieved by 80% of the battalion by May 1982. The men continued to train as engineers by repairing the buildings in the 500 area and upgrading the security of St. Johns Motor Park. Other missions included the paving the Air force Base, training in Operation "Castle Bear" at Camp Grayling, Michigan and Operation "Desert Warrior" at Gowen Field, Idaho. Between training missions the men supported the post by constructing numerous sidewalks and roads and constructing the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade P.T. track.

LTC Timothy E. Daly assumed command of the 19<sup>th</sup> engineer Battalion in May 1983. He stressed staff management and leadership as well as combat efficient engineering. The staff and NCOs' were trained diligently in their leadership skills. CTT was developed into a recon patrol as the men tested their combat skills. The men gave hands-on instruction in rappelling, survival, stream crossing techniques to over 4,000 cadets each summer. The unit supported the 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade at Gowen Field, Idaho and at NTC. The men completed a million dollar TAC Fire project for the 5/41<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Battalion. Construction of sidewalks and renovation of various other projects enabled the men to improve their electrical, carpentry, and plumbing skills. The 13<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company refined their skills as the well-drilling section operated in "Big Pine II", in Central America, Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia and at White Sands, New Mexico. The men also conducted a flawless EDRE as the 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade executed a brigade wide EDRE, supported the 194<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade at Fort Drum, completed firing positions at Cedar Creek, and maintained a high state of maintenance at Keyes Park, Nininger Park, and the 9<sup>th</sup> and Wilson Wash Rack.

In the beginning of 1985, the men supported the NTC successfully. Two weeks later the men and every piece of equipment deployed to Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. The men were motivated with the thought of employing Infantry tactics and offensive engineer tactics. The men dug bunkers, built and destroyed obstacles, and aggressed company against company. They also completed a live fire mission. These achievements attest to the capability of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. On 10 May 1985, LTC James Gnace assumed command of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion.

# OPERATION DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM-1991

In January and February 1991 the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion provided support to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division to their Forward Assembly area in Saudi Arabia. Alpha and Bravo Companies each constructed two crossing routes over the Trans-Arabian Pipeline in support of this movement.

On 24 February 1991, the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division moved into Iraq ahead of schedule. B Company punched over 200 six meter wide lanes through the berm on the Iraq/Saudi Arabia Border. A company worked on the Main Supply Route constructing more than 220 kilometers of road. They also constructed forward arming and refueling points for APACHE helicopters of the 4<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade. This included four helipads and earthwork.

In the next six days after the invasion of Iraq the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers provided mobility support to the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division by recovering vehicles out of the wet sand. This help continues until the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division reached and attacked their objective, The Republican Guard.

Allied forces began taking huge numbers of prisoners of war. C Company built a 1000 man holding area. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers built ammo dump berms and fuel points. C Company did site preparation work for a MASH unit. A Company relocated a Main Supply Route to facilitate the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division's rapid movement. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers also did road reconnaissance, supported Artillery and prepared to destroy arms caches in the city of All Bussaya.

President Bush declared a Cease Fire on March 1, 1991. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers mission was to destroy abandoned Iraqi equipment and facilities. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers destroyed 2,370 fighting positions, 38,800 meters of berms, 211 enemy weapons systems, 11,200 meters of airstrips, and other equipment.

During this short war the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers built 245 kilometers of road, maintained 475 kilometers of road, built 15 helipads, built four pipeline crossings, built three prisoner holding areas, 241 points of entry for the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division. In addition to these missions the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers reacted to support the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division to keep their rapid movement rapid.

CAMPAIGNS  
Defense of Saudi Arabia  
Liberation and Defense of Kuwait  
Southwest Asia Cease - Fire Campaign

Inactivated 15 September 1997 at Fort Knox, Kentucky

# GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

## 2005 - Present

### REACTIVATION

On 16 October 2005, the 19th Engineer Battalion was reactivated at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The Battalion was organized as the first modular Engineer Battalion in the history of the United States Army as a result of army-wide force modularization. The new structure gave the 19th the capability of commanding any type of Engineer organization from sappers to construction to topographic units. Along with the organic Headquarters Support Company and Forward Support Company, the 15th Engineer Company (Horizontal), the 60th and 76th Engineer Companies (Vertical), and the 72nd Survey and Design Detachment were activated and assigned to the 19th Engineer Battalion.

LTC Courtney Paul took command of the 19th Engineer Battalion in October 2005 as the unit gradually received personnel to stand up. Two field exercises were executed in the spring of 2006 at Fort Knox in order to build teamwork and cohesion through Situational Training Exercises. The Battalion then conducted its Mission Readiness Exercise in July 2006 at Fort Knox and was validated to deploy in support of the Global War on Terror.

## OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

### August 2006 – November 2007

Operation Snake Hunter; Operation Black Widow (Kirkuk); Operation Oakland; Operation Sea Blazer (Tikrit); Operation Northern Security (Tikrit); Operation Arrowhead Ripper (Baqubah); Operation Turki Bowl II (Baqubah). The Battalion included the Headquarters Support Company, Forward Support Company, 15th Engineer Company (Horizontal), 60th Engineer Company (Vertical), and 72nd Survey and Design Detachment.

With the modular nature of the 19th Engineer Battalion, different companies received different mission sets for their deployment. In August 2006, Headquarters Support Company, Forward Support Company, 15th Engineer Company, and 72nd Survey and Design Detachment deployed to Iraq. The 60th Engineer Company arrived in Iraq in October 2006. Upon Transition of Authority (TOA), the 19th Engineers assumed the mission of assured mobility, partnership with Iraqi Army Engineer Units, and providing General Engineering Support within Task Force Lightning's (25th Infantry Division) Area of Operations (AO) in order to facilitate the transfer of U.S. military sectors to Iraqi Security Forces.

In order to accomplish the mission, the Battalion organized so that the 19th Engineer Battalion Headquarters moved to COB Speicher in Tikrit with the Headquarters and Forward Support Companies, as well as 72nd Survey and Design Detachment. The Forward Support Company moved half the company to LSA Anaconda in Balad in July 2007 to support maintenance operations with the Battalion's support of Brigade combat operations in clearing the Baqubah of Anti-Iraqi

Forces (AIF). The 60th Engineer Company was based at FOB Warrior in Kirkuk and later moved half the company to FOB Marez in Mosul. The 15th Engineer Company was based out of LSA Anaconda from August 2006 until July 2007 when the whole company moved to FOB Warhorse in Baqubah in support of brigade operations during the clearing of the city of Baqubah. They stayed there for the remainder of the deployment.

Throughout this time, the 19th Engineer Battalion had left the 76th Engineer Company at Fort Knox to continue training for a separate Afghanistan deployment. However, the Battalion was augmented by the attachment of 618th Engineer Company, also from 20th Engineer Brigade, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The 618th based out of FOB Marez in Mosul until July 2007 when the company relocated to COB Speicher in Tikrit. The 618th conducted a similar mission as 15th Engineers by using engineer equipment to conduct crater repairs on roads and force protection construction at coalition outposts.

The strategic location of the Soldiers of 19th allowed the accomplishment of four key tasks: road repair, route sanitation, training Iraqi Army Engineers, and constructing protective structures:

Road repair of craters and culverts to assure mobility was necessary because Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) used Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to inhibit movement of coalition forces throughout Iraq. After an IED explosion, the road posed a risk to coalition forces for driving safety as well as a risk for another IED emplacement site because the crater could conceal a new IED. Roads were additionally damaged through the enemy's use of explosives to destroy culverts. With the enemy continually attempting to cut off coalition routes for combat operations and supplies, the combat engineering skills of the Battalion were put to use. The 19th Engineer Battalion completed 2,664 crater repairs through numerous missions led by HSC, 15th, and 60th Engineer Companies, enabling routes to remain clear for combat operations. Additionally, 40 blown culverts were repaired with the horizontal engineers of the 15th Engineer Company. The majority of the missions took place under the cover of darkness and many repair missions coordinated to support major combat operations.

Route sanitation to assure safe mobility quickly became a regular focus of the 19th Engineer Battalion upon arrival in Iraq. AIF often used any vegetation or trash on the side of the roads to conceal IEDs. The mission of route sanitation was to mitigate the risk of IEDs by clearing, or sanitizing, routes for coalition forces and the local Iraqi populace. The task included placing barriers around culverts to prevent IED placement under the road. The horizontal platoons of 15th Engineer Company used earth-moving equipment like graders to conduct 736 kilometers of route sanitation over the 15 month deployment.

Training Iraqi Army Engineers to develop self-sufficiency proved to be one of the most rewarding missions for the Soldiers of the 19th Engineer Battalion. The Battalion worked continuously with four different Iraqi Army Engineer companies across the Task Force Lightning battlespace. Horizontal Soldiers from the 15th Engineer Company trained Iraqi soldiers on earth-moving equipment like bulldozers and dump trucks. Close to half of missions were conducted with Iraqi Army engineers on tasks like crater repair, construction missions, and maintenance operations.

Constructing protective structures was accomplished by working with the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police. The 19th Engineers identified key installation and facilities in need of additional force protection. Force protection around Iraqi outposts and checkpoints was often nonexistent. The 19th emplaced HESCO bastions and concrete barriers in addition to structural repairs to increase confidence in the military and police workplaces. Upgrades indirectly improved the security of

Baghdad and Iraq because Iraqi military and police were present at these more secure workplaces with greater frequency. Additionally, the 19th constructed at U.S military outposts and protected 214 culverts to inhibit AIF from using them as locations for deep-buried IEDs.

## OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

### December 2006 – March 2008

Winterization Operations in RC-East (Afghanistan)  
76th Engineer Company (Vertical)

The modularity and independent deployability of the 19th Engineer Battalion enabled the 76th Engineer Company to go to Afghanistan with a different mission than the 19th – to support a brigade expansion. The 76th Engineer Company was called upon to deploy in two separate detachments, one to Bagram Airfield in December 2006, and one to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Salerno, Afghanistan in February 2007. Each detachment contained an augmented vertical engineer platoon and a headquarters section. The first detachment began construction missions of expansion at Bagram Airfield. In February 2007, the first detachment moved to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Fenty to rapidly expand housing and infrastructure prior to 3rd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division's relocation to FOB Fenty. Meanwhile, the second detachment supported base operations at FOB Salerno until the company was reconsolidated at FOB Fenty in June 2007.

As the Afghanistan Theater expanded to include two Brigade Combat Teams, the population tripled and drastically needed basic engineering support on new and existing but overcrowded FOBs. The 76th Engineer Company was attached to the 864th Engineer Combat Battalion, Task Force Pacemaker, from Fort Lewis, Washington in March 2007. This consolidated the engineer efforts in the American-controlled eastern portion of Afghanistan. Two additional platoons and a horizontal engineering section were attached to the 76th for the remainder of the deployment.

The 76th Engineer Company continued to work closely with the infantry units as the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team (ABCT) took control of the battlespace and pushed further into the villages of the mountainous eastern portion of Afghanistan. As a result of the addition of new outposts and expanded FOBs, the 76th Engineer Company constructed over 185 B-huts (wooden structures to house eight Soldiers), four SEA-Huts (wooden structures to house operations centers and offices), and six brick-and-mortar barracks in support of five battalion-sized task forces at 14 forward operating bases.

The largest operation for the Company's deployment occurred prior to the brutal Afghan winter. During "winterization," squads in the 76th were responsible for assessing, and constructing or upgrading infrastructure simultaneously at 16 FOBs to allow the infantry to stay in the mountains throughout the winter. Continuing to live and build where the infantry fought, the Soldiers proved themselves in over 40 direct fire engagements.

The horizontal section attached to the 76th Engineer Company was 3rd Platoon, HSC, 864th Engineer Battalion. The section greatly augmented the vertical capability of the 76th which, on two occasions, followed the bulldozers to construct two combat outposts from the ground-up. The horizontal engineers additionally supported the goals of local governors and the 173rd ABCT to link district centers, Afghan National Army checkpoints, and centers of commerce with approximately 30 kilometers of road over mountainous terrain.

Throughout the deployment, the 76th Engineer Company provided support for the expansion along the border from the Tora Bora Mountains to the Hindu Kush Mountains of Afghanistan to support the doubling of U.S. combat forces in the region. After constructing at 28 forward operating bases and outposts throughout northeastern Afghanistan, the unit redeployed to rejoin the 19th Engineer Battalion at Fort Knox in March 2008.

## STATESIDE NOVEMBER 2007-MAY 2009 FT. KNOX, KENTUCKY

After the 15 month tour, the Soldiers of the 19th returned to Fort Knox from Iraq in November 2007 and Afghanistan in March 2008. On February 12, 2008, LTC Heath C. Roscoe took command of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers from LTC Courtney Paul. Quickly refocusing the soldiers and new leadership began preparations for their next overseas assignment.

After completing redeployment and reintegration, the 19th conducted a two-week field exercise in both July and September 2008 at Fort Knox. The Battalion tested its engineering and combat skills during a National Training Center (NTC) Rotation in October and November 2008 alongside 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Airborne) at Fort Irwin, California. While at NTC, the Battalion built wood frame structures at 14 different outposts throughout the training area, constructed a 2 km improved surface road, improved 8 km on another primary route, and trained on a variety of combat situations.

The 19th Engineer Battalion continued to adapt its engineering capabilities to the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The 60th Engineer Company moved to Fort Benning, Georgia in June 30, 2008 to assist in the formation of the 11th Engineer Battalion, a new construction effects battalion. The 502nd Multi-Role Bridge Company (MRBC) joined the 19th when reorganized at Fort Knox on July 16, 2008 from Hanau, Germany. The bridge company added an additional engineering capability to an already diversely capable battalion. In February 2009, the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion received orders to deploy to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

## OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM April 2009 – April 2010

On April 28<sup>th</sup> 2009 the battalion deployed to Afghanistan under the leadership of LTC Heath C. Roscoe. They were met by the 655<sup>th</sup>, 1227<sup>th</sup>, and 269<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachments. The 502<sup>nd</sup> MRBC joined the battalion in late August 2009, completing the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion's construction capabilities. Initially, the battalion focused on establishing an operations center in Kandahar Air Field and pushed companies to Forward Operating Bases (FOB) Wolverine, Frontenac, and Spin Buldak to perform critical construction and force protection missions in preparation for the arrival of international security forces in the summer of 2009.

The Battalion headquarters would remain at Kandahar Air Field for the duration of the deployment,

and from this location the battalion's Physical Security Detachment (PSD) conducted over 40 combat patrols to escort vital personnel and materials throughout Regional Command-South. The PSD accomplished their mission on one of the most dangerous highways in the world without suffering a single casualty. The battalion's Forward Support Company also remained stationed at Kandahar Air Field and established a permanent equipment staging area while managing the relocation of supplies from Kandahar Air Field to the outlying FOBs.

At FOB Wolverine the 15<sup>th</sup> Engineer Headquarters, along with attached platoons, expanded the living and support areas for future use by the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), completing over \$6 million worth of projects. Initially the company concerned itself with force protection, expanding berms and providing security patrols until the arrival of Infantry assets. Projects completed included the main FOB entry control point, the basic ammunition holding area, two helicopter landing zones, a convoy staging area, a forward arming and refueling point, and a temporary artillery firing point. The company also constructed field-expedient buildings to be used as operations centers for the incoming Infantry units as well as several guard towers on the FOB Wolverine perimeter, control of which was given over to the local Afghan security forces upon completion of the project.

At other locations the 15<sup>th</sup> completed projects at other combat outposts (COP), including COP's Sangar, Sweeney, and Mescal. At COP Sangar, the 15<sup>th</sup> constructed tent floors, a fuel storage point, HESCO modular barriers, and a small command post, preparing the site for use in forward operations. At COP Sweeney, the 15<sup>th</sup> expanded upon preexisting life support facilities and cleared the way for future construction, allowing Stryker elements to more easily secure the eastern half of Zabul Province. At COP Mescal, located on Highway 1, the 15<sup>th</sup> conducted assured mobility operations to allow the outpost to be resupplied and reinforced by ground rather than air elements. Most significantly, the 15<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company utilized their horizontal construction platoon to reopen Dab Pass, located in the center of Zabul Province. This allowed Stryker elements the freedom of mobility that they required in order to secure the province during the August 2009 presidential elections.

At FOB Frontenac, the 60<sup>th</sup> Engineer headquarters and attached platoons provided construction support to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team). Like the 15<sup>th</sup>, the 60<sup>th</sup> focused on increasing force protection and operational capability at the base, completing nearly \$9 million worth of projects on site for the Stryker battalion which would soon arrive. One platoon deployed to the north of FOB Frontenac to FOB Tarin Kowt in order to construct helicopter landing zones and taxiways. Upon completion of their mission, the platoon rejoined the 60<sup>th</sup> at FOB Frontenac. Prior to the arrival of additional troops in the form of a platoon detached from the 15<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company, the 60<sup>th</sup> completed construction of several tactical operations centers for the Stryker battalion and built a counter-IED center which served as an operational base for elements conducting missions in the Arghandab river valley. Upon the arrival of the detached platoon, the 60<sup>th</sup> was able to construct locations for containerized housing, a solid waste disposal facility, an ammunition holding area, a helicopter landing zone, and a gun battery firing point. The firing point proved especially influential to the conflict, as artillery elements were then able to conduct combat operations which resulted in more shots fired and confirmed enemy kills than anywhere else in the area of operations. The horizontal construction element from the 15<sup>th</sup> Engineers continued to prove useful by expanding outposts located in Arghandab and Jelewar which were then used as forward bases for the upcoming troop surge and by constructing an unmanned aerial surveillance vehicle landing strip which increased United States and allied intelligence-gathering capabilities in the area of operations.

At FOB Spin Buldak, the 76<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company focused on expanding and securing the area in order to provide a base of operations for missions aimed at controlling the critical intersection between Pakistan and Afghanistan. They remained at Spin Buldak for the duration of the deployment, completing nearly \$8 million worth of projects and transforming FOB Spin Buldak into a fully operational battalion headquarters. Projects included the reconstruction of the FOB entry control point, a waste water disposal facility, motor pools, convoy staging areas, ammunition storage areas, and a temporary gun battery position. The company also redesigned a fuel and ammunition resupply area, the use of which had previously caused dangerous brown-out conditions that threatened critical air assets and endangered troops in the area. This mission was undertaken and completed without interrupting the battle rhythm of operations around FOB Spin Buldak, an impressive feat in and of itself. Additionally, the 76<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company constructed several tactical operations centers, a counter-IED center, and morale-enhancing facilities such as a Post Exchange and barber shop.

When the 502<sup>nd</sup> Multi Role Bridge Company joined the Battalion in August, its mission was to conduct both fixed and float bridge operations throughout the Afghanistan Theater. The company based its headquarters and two platoons at Camp Leatherneck to support operations in the Helmand river valley while one of its platoons remained at Kandahar Air Field to provide support to the area. The company's first mission was to establish accountability of all bridging assets in theater. A team of Soldiers was sent throughout Afghanistan to inventory stock while the rest of the company provided bridge site reconnaissance and support to maneuver elements in their respective areas of operations. Locations included the Saracha Bridge along Highway 1, the Regak Bridge in Uruzgan province and two additional unnamed sites on the Helmand River. In December, the company provided subject matter experts to assist in the construction of a Mabey Johnson Bridge across a gap at the Andar Bridge site. Around this time, the company also completed construction of the Saracha Bridge on Highway 1, which bridged a gap of over 160 meters.

With operations at FOB Wolverine winding down in December, the Battalion began redistributing elements to various locations along Highway 1. First, the 15<sup>th</sup> Engineers sent elements to FOB Delaram to expand force protection and life support capabilities on site, after which the battalion's focus shifted to additional sites, including FOBs Wilson, Leatherneck, and Ramrod in preparation for the U.S. military's projected spring troop surge. Operational tempo began to decrease for the winter months, with the exception of the 502<sup>nd</sup> MRBC which sent elements to Marjeh in Helmand province in support of Operation Moshtarak. The 502<sup>nd</sup> provided bridging assets for U.S. Marine forces for the duration of the heaviest fighting of the operation, allowing combined international assets to secure one of the most widely-recognized hot beds of enemy activity in southern Afghanistan.

With the arrival of spring, the battalion prepared to conduct relief in place operations with the incoming 864<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion from Fort Lewis, Washington. Companies began to recall outlying elements and readied the equipment of theirs which would not be staying behind for transport to Kandahar Air Field. Support elements on Kandahar Air Field also worked round-the-clock to ensure that necessary transportation was in place to allow the battalion to meet its timeline for redeployment. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, despite a revolution in Kyrgyzstan, in which the Manas Air Base is located, and a volcanic eruption in Iceland which shut down air traffic across Western Europe, the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers returned home to Fort Knox. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers suffered no casualties during the deployment and for its efforts was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation. An excerpt from this award follows:

"During the period 29 April 2009 to 23 April 2010, Headquarters and Headquarters

Company, 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion and its subordinate units displayed exceptionally meritorious service in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.... Through its Unrelenting perseverance, consummate knowledge of engineering concepts, and Singular determination, the unit contributed immeasurably to the mission success of United States Forces- Afghanistan. ... The 19th Engineer Battalion's outstanding Performance of duty is in keeping with the finest traditions of military service And reflects distinct credit upon the unit and the United States Army."

## RESET AND STATESIDE SUPPORT 2010- 2013 Ft. KNOX, KENTUCKY

On June 24, 2010, LTC Heath C. Roscoe turned over command of the 19th Engineer Battalion to LTC David. C. Ray in ceremonies at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. Over the next two years LTC Ray, along with the Officers, NCOs and Soldiers of the battalion engaged in a variety of stateside missions and training exercises. These activities focused on sustaining the Battalion's readiness and preparation to perform a wide range of missions in support of the Global War on Terror and Homeland Defense. From July through December 2010, the Battalion completed all required reset and reintegration activities for all assigned units. Actions during this time period included reestablishing all Battalion administrative and logistical support systems on Ft. Knox, drawing and issuing the battalion's vehicle fleet from equipment stocks located at Ft. Knox and across the Army, and initiating training programs focused on building proficiency in basic Soldier Tasks and Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) skills for the over 600 personnel assigned to the Battalion. Two important events occurred during this period. The first event was the redeployment of the 502d Multi-Role Bridge Company (MRBC) from a 9-month tour in Afghanistan. This event began the first extended period that all companies assigned to the Battalion would be focused on the same mission set since being activated at Ft. Knox. The second event was the battalion's assumption of the mission to serve as the Force Protection force for Ft. Knox. This requirement impacted all companies in the battalion as they had to be trained and ready to implement increased force protection missions in support of the installation or the U.S. Bullion Depository. The requirement to have units and Soldiers ready to assume this short notice mission would remain with the Battalion over the next 2-years.

From January through December 2011, the battalion engaged in a wide array of exercises and missions that supported the battalion, Ft. Knox, the 20th Engineer Brigade, and Homeland Defense. In efforts to improve Soldier and unit-level skills, all companies in the battalion conducted platoon and company-level ranges and field training exercises. These efforts concluded with the entire battalion conducting a 2-week field exercise on Ft. Knox in June 2011 that enabled every Soldier to practice their wartime tasks. In support of Ft. Knox, the battalion provided Soldiers every day at each gate to augment the installations security force. The battalion also trained and maintained the installations Quick Reaction Force (QRF) platoon. This specially selected and trained platoon stood ready to assist the Garrison Commander in securing any facility on post within 4-hours of notification. In September, 2011 a team of 30 leaders from across the battalion deployed to the National Training Center (NTC) to assist the 307th Engineer Battalion in its preparations for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan. The personnel served as Observer/Controllers, filling positions on the Puma Team, an organization that provides feedback to the training unit and controls activities during exercises at the NTC. These efforts ensured the 20th Engineer Brigade prepared its battalion for deployment, and provided valuable experience in training and training

management for the Seahorse Leaders that participated in the mission. Throughout the year, the battalion provided construction support and trained forces in support of Army North (ARNORTH) Homeland Defense missions. In 2011, the 15th Engineer Company and 76th Engineer Company deployed platoons along the U.S.-Mexico border in support of Joint Task Force (JTF) – Bravo. The 15th Engineers participated in the construction of a road along the border near Nogales, Arizona. This project improved mobility for the U.S. Border Patrol in that area. The 76th Engineers deployed to Laredo, Texas, where they constructed a boat landing along the Rio Grande River. This project improved the border patrol’s ability to patrol the river in that area. In the second half of 2011, the 15th Engineer Company participated in the Vibrant Response Exercise at Camp Atterbury, Indiana and assumed the mission as the Defense CBRN Response Force (DCRF) Engineer equipment company. This mission required the battalion to ensure the 15th Engineer Company was ready to deploy anywhere in the U.S. within 24-hours in support of JTF-Civil Support (CS). In order to meet this requirement, the battalion conducted a Deployment Exercise (DEPEX), ensuring all units and personnel were trained to support deployment of the battalion by rail, truck, or air assets.

From January through June 2012, the battalion continued to improve in its efforts to ensure all units and personnel assigned to the battalion were trained and ready to conduct any missions it may be called upon to complete. Under the direction of CSM Christopher Walton, the battalion conducted its third Seahorse Challenge Training event. This culminated a year-long effort to ensure leaders across the battalion could plan and execute challenging training that focused on basic Soldier and Squad-tasks. The battalion conducted a Command Post Exercise (CPX) that combined live and virtual training activities along with integrating external evaluators from the 20th Engineer Brigade. The battalion culminated its core mission training program in May 2012 with a Battalion-level field exercise that included platoon-live fire exercises and tactical lane training that was supported by MEDEVAC helicopters from the Army Reserve Aviation Group on Fort Knox. By June 2012, all the Soldiers and units assigned to the 19th Engineer Battalion were trained and ready to take on, and accomplish, any mission the Army may ask them to complete.

Between 2010 and 2012, the leadership of the Seahorse Battalion also found time to support Ft. Knox and the local community, along with reestablishing many of the military customs lost during the years of multiple deployments. The officers, NCOs and Soldiers distinguished themselves by excelling whenever called upon to render military honors at funerals for military veterans in the states around Ft. Knox. The companies and battalion conducted a wide array of formal and informal social events, to include dining-ins, military balls, and a formal New Year’s reception. These efforts ensured the Soldiers and Families of the battalion gained an appreciation that military life consists of more than combat deployments and training exercises. The Soldiers excelled in their efforts both on and off duty. Sports teams from the companies found time to compete in athletic competitions, enabling the battalion to win the 2011 Ft. Knox Commander’s Cup Trophy. Throughout this period, Seahorse leaders and Soldiers also found ways to become engaged in the local area and make their communities a little better each and every day. By volunteering their free time with a wide variety of organizations, the Battalion gained a reputation as the “go to” organization whenever the local community needed disciplined and professional Citizen-Soldiers to make things happen.



# OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM TRANSITION TO DECISIVE ACTION POSTURE 2013-2015

The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer command team from June 2012 to August 2014 was LTC John P. Lloyd and CSM Ethan Dunbar. The mission of the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers during this time period was to deploy engineer forces to provide mission command and general engineer support for decisive action in support of unified land operations worldwide which included preparing the battalion for deployment to Kuwait. There were also various emergency and contingency missions.

One of these missions was to be a Severe Weather Response Force for North America. That severe weather response requirement presented itself in the form of Hurricane Sandy which turned out to be the deadliest and most destructive hurricane of the 2012 season and the second costliest hurricane in US history. Damage to New Jersey and New York.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion received orders to partially deploy on 1 November 2012. This order required deployment of the 76<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Vertical) and Battalion Command to join Joint Task Force Sandy (JTF). Reconnaissance was conducted in New York City and accommodations for follow-on forces were established. The 76<sup>th</sup> continued preparations and convoyed 980 miles to Ft. Dix, New Jersey and later movement into New York City.

The mission command relationship for this operation was unique. JTF Sandy was a Dual Status Command led by BG Michael Swezey, 53d Troop Commander, NY Army National Guard. JTF Pump, led by LTC John Lloyd, 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion Commander consisted of over 600 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines. Pumping water and debris removal operations were conducted throughout New York City, Long Island and New Jersey. Major storm surge water was pumped from public housing projects, Freedom Tower, the Long Beach wastewater treatment plant and the Breezy Point community in Queens. The 19<sup>th</sup> elements arrived back to Ft. Knox on November 19, 2012 knowing that they had contributed critical, timely support.

In November 2013 the battalion deployed four companies to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in support of Operation Spartan Shield. The four companies were HHC, Forward Support Company, 15<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Horizontal) and 76 Engineer Company (Vertical). Upon arrival in Kuwait the 19<sup>th</sup> conducted a Relief in Place of the 205<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion of the Louisiana National Guard. The 19<sup>th</sup> assumed command of the 844<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Horizontal) and the 1021<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Vertical) from the 205<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion. These units would later be replaced by the 304<sup>th</sup> Engineer Company (Vertical) and the 961<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company (Horizontal) from the Ohio Army Reserve. Throughout the nine month deployment, the unit focused on providing construction support to the US Army Command, maintaining tactical soldier skills, partnering with Kuwaiti Land Force's Engineers and responding to Over-the-Horizon Engineer Support requirements.

Key projects during this deployment included several associated with a severe flood that occurred in November 2013. This flood had a major impact on personnel, equipment and operations. Projects included the repair of the Mubarak Road, Camp Arifjan drainage effectiveness and retention pond,

as well as foundation work for housing construction. Another major task was the Risable Village Project. This was a requirement to house a battalion's worth of soldiers in support of Over-the-Horizon missions. It included 60 containerized housing units, eleven re-locatable buildings, and twelve laundry, latrine and shower trailers. Disassembly, transportation, damage and difficulty in obtaining replacement components as well as the flooding impact on the sand foundations resulted in obstacles to be successfully overcome.

Partnership between the 19<sup>th</sup> and Kuwaiti Engineers was a major initiative. Joint projects and operations included road construction and repairs, base security construction, firing range use and support, and medical and engineering skills training. Maintaining tactical skills was a necessary continuing effort. As a modular engineering battalion the need to be ready for many missions with short notice was a requirement. Warrior Stakes competition was conducted to train and evaluate soldiers on warrior tasks and battle drills. Included were broad scenario based lanes to each squad's ability to shoot, move and communicate as a team.

Over-the-horizon missions ranged from two soldiers to multiple companies assignments. As CENTCOM's only engineer asset in Kuwait the 19<sup>th</sup> was prepared to and did deploy soldiers and equipment to adjacent theaters within days of receiving orders. Route clearance tactics, techniques and procedures were shared with Tajikistan engineers. Other support to Tajikistan included school site and structural evaluations and upgrades. Two interior electricians were sent to Jordan to conduct safety inspections and some significant repairs to eliminate serious electrical deficiencies at CENTCOM facilities. A vertical engineer platoon was dispatched to Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan to support the base on a variety of projects many of which involved the drawdown of US forces, consolidation and deconstruction.

In August 2014 best practices and lessons learned were passed on to the 528<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion in Kuwait and the 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers returned to Ft. Knox, Kentucky. The Battalion executed reset activities from its deployment, assumed a severe weather response mission, assumed defense support to civil authority's mission, and conducted a multitude of construction missions at sites across the continental US. In August 2014 the battalion moved to a new complex on Fort Knox. The \$91 million dollar complex includes a new BN headquarters, company operation facilities and a barracks complex. The transition concluded movement into the Mansfield motor pool complex in January 2015. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineers supports the garrison by providing troops to support the Fort Knox Directorate of Emergency Services. This includes severe weather response support during fierce winter conditions by opening roadways, and providing the installation with a Quick Reaction Force able to deploy across the post to any of its many key facilities. The 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion also supports the future of the United States Army by providing officers to sit on United States Army Cadet Command leadership panels and providing manpower and equipment support to the cadet summer training that occurs at FKKY.

LTC James J. Handura took command from LTC John P. Lloyd on 5 September 2014. CSM Patrickson Toussaint assumed also responsibility from CSM Dunbar at that time. Together LTC Handura and CSM Toussaint oversaw reset operations and an intensive training cycle to prepare the 19<sup>th</sup> for multiple contingency operations and the decisive action environment. The 19<sup>th</sup> stands ready to deploy in support of Global response Force (GRF) missions, Defense Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear Response Force (DCRF) missions, severe weather response missions and in support of Special Operations Command (SOCOM) operations.

National Training Center (NTC) / Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) Rotations

42<sup>nd</sup> Clearance Company deployed to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California to support 3<sup>rd</sup> BDE, 1<sup>st</sup> AD. They immediately began conducting Mission Command and route clearance operations. The Soldiers continued this OPTEMPO for the next 30 days, officially wrapping up training in October 2014.

541<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineering Company deployed to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California to support 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, a heavy brigade combat team (HBCT) in April 2015. They immediately began conducting mobility support and engineering support to force on force training environments. The highlight of the rotation was a mine clearing line charge (MICLIC) live fire. The Soldiers continued this OPTEMPO through 14 May 2015 when training was officially concluded.

15<sup>th</sup> Horizontal Construction Company deployed to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California to support 3-2SBCT's force on force rotation. The 15<sup>th</sup> immediately began executing the task of repairing a Forward Landing Strip. Throughout the rest of the rotation the 15<sup>th</sup> Engineers provided mobility, counter mobility, and survivability operation to 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Division, a Stryker brigade combat team (SBCT) in support of their decisive action rotation and force on force training. The Soldiers pushed hard throughout the rotation and maintained OPTEMPO through August 2015 when training was officially concluded.

#### Off Installation Missions and Field Training Exercises

19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion deployed over 400 Soldiers from the battalion to Camp Atterbury for readiness training from August to September 2013. Numerous construction projects and mission essential MOS training was conducted for three weeks.

The battalion staff conducted three STAFFEX/CPX in preparation for a rotation to NTC. The first CPX conducted 11-15 May focused on familiarizing all staff members with the MDMP process, battle tracking, and identifying short comings in SOPs. CPX 2 focused on the mechanics of deploying the command post and establishing the command post. In CPX 3 the staff utilized the mission command training center (MCTC) on FKKY in conjunction with organic tents to replicate a deployed expeditionary environment. While there the MCTC provided a scenario and events for the staff to practice battle tracking against.

Platoon Certification Exercise (May 2013-June 2013). The Battalion Certification Exercise (BN CERTEX) immediately followed the Battalion Warrior Stakes beginning on 18 May 2013 and spanning to 22 May 2013. This training emphasized the certifications required for success during the pre-deployment exercise. Training included: combat patrol, convoy live fire, construction reconnaissance and security, tactical movement to a new AO, and QRF response. In addition to the Company and Platoon level training, the Battalion's staff sections trained in areas of battlefield and resource management. The Battalion's FSC trained on sustainability by providing Class I, III, and V distribution to each of the operating Companies and FOBs. The CERTEX was conducted in three phases.

502<sup>nd</sup> Multi Role Bridge Company conducted a river assault exercise with the 411<sup>th</sup> Engineer BDE (US Army Reserves) at FT Chaffee, Arkansas from July 25<sup>th</sup> thru August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The exercise is part of 19<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalions Army Total Force Partnership program which stresses increased training events with active component, reserve component and National Guard units. Over two weeks the 502<sup>nd</sup> conducted various rehearsals leading up to the full scale assault crossing rehearsal. The culminating event was the construction of a 47 bay improved ribbon bridge spanning 300m across the Arkansas River.

15<sup>th</sup> Horizontal Construction Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon deployed to Nogales, Arizona with the 72<sup>nd</sup> Survey and Design Detachment in support the U.S. Border Patrol in from March through May of 2015. There they constructed a 0.5 mile road along the United States / Mexico border. The platoon built the road over mountainous terrain and cut through several feet of rock in order to meet the required elevation for the project. The road supports the U.S. Border Patrol mission to protect and patrol our borders.

72<sup>nd</sup> Survey and Design Detachment and 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, 15<sup>th</sup> Engineers supported the US Border Patrol by surveying a new road along the border in Nogales, Arizona. The road supports the U.S. Border Patrol mission by significantly increasing agent's response times to border threats in the area.

76<sup>th</sup> Vertical Construction Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon deployed to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California in May of 2015. While there the platoon constructed an air traffic control tower on the field landing strip. The air traffic control tower allows rotational training units to exercise their tactical air control party (TAC-P) operations.

Social Events are important for the soldiers and their families at Ft. Knox

In 2013 a SANTA RUCK was conducted by the Battalion's Rear Detachment, 502<sup>nd</sup> MRBC, and newly welcomed 541<sup>st</sup> Sapper Company which included a 5.4 mile road march to the installation's toy drop off -point in December. Within each ruck, Soldiers carried a toy for donation to support those less fortunate and develop unity within the formation by supporting a greater cause. After receiving the battalion OPORD in November 2013, companies disseminated the information to Soldiers as well as families and began preparations. The execution was well received and highly promoted by Soldiers, as many added festive décor to their equipment or donned holiday attire. The march proved a success and aided the installation in their overall collection of toys.

A SANTA RUCK was held upon redeployment from Kuwait in November 2014. Over 1,000 Soldiers and family members donated toys once again continuing the tradition of the Seahorse Battalion's support of the Fort Knox and surrounding communities.

ALL RANKS BALLS were held in August of 2013, 2014 and 2015. Great attendance of 700-1,000 Soldiers, Spouses and Significant others attended the events. Key points at these events always included the traditional receiving line, Presentation of Colors, formal dinner, the Grog Ceremony and dancing.