



Seahorse Soldiering



The Legacy of 2^D Engineer Brigade

By Captain Richard Packer
 2^D Engineer Brigade Public Affairs Officer
 November 2013 - May 2015



Col. Pete Andrysiak and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston, the final command team of 2^D Engineer Brigade, case the unit colors while Maj. Gen. Mike Shields, commander of U.S. Army Alaska, observes during the brigade's inactivation ceremony held on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson's Pershing Field outside the U.S. Army Alaska headquarters May 15, 2015. (Photo by Justin Connahey, JBER Public Affairs)

The 2^D Engineer Brigade inactivated for the third time since World War II on May 15, 2015 and the Soldiers who composed it have moved on to serve elsewhere in our Army. After nearly four years of rowing hard and supporting Army missions our organization's final priority was to inactivate the brigade in accordance with Army Structure (ARSTRUC) requirements.

Meeting ARSTRUC requirements has been a long process. In 2014 we inactivated the 793rd Military Police Battalion and the engineer companies under what was then the 6th Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Airborne), and is now the 6th Brigade Engineer Battalion serving with the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division.

In the brigade's last weeks we inactivated the 23rd Engineer Company (Sapper) (Airborne) and the headquarters of 532^D Engineer Battalion (Provisional), then culminated with the inactivation ceremony of the

brigade headquarters. During these weeks we also transferred Mission Command of our only enduring subordinate unit, the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, to U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK).

Inactivating a unit is a melancholy experience. Unlike a normal change in assignments, inactivation has a sentiment of finality. The trophy cases are emptied, memorabilia is taken down from the walls, boxes of unit artifacts are mailed to Army Heraldry and the U.S. Army Engineer Museum, and each week there are more and more empty offices. The culture of the organization ceases to exist outside of the memories of those who experienced it.

This article is an effort to capture some small piece of the history, camaraderie and accomplishments of the Arctic Trailblazers. I begin at the inception of what would become the 2^D Engineer Brigade.

The 2^D Engineer Special Brigade beach landing and port operations on the island of Leyte in the Philippines during World War II.

World War II Era of Service

After the attacks on Pearl Harbor which led to America's entering World War II, the Engineer Amphibian Command was organized and quickly acquired the men and equipment to man six amphibious engineer brigades. Having witnessed the swift progress the Japanese made taking islands in the South Pacific, America's leaders recognized that the road to Tokyo would be won through amphibious beach landings.

To find men with the technical expertise and seamanship necessary to develop this new capability the Army recruited heavily in East Coast yacht clubs, marinas and ship yards.



The 2^D Engineer Amphibian Brigade was activated June 20, 1942, at Camp Edwards in Cape Cod, Mass. There were no ceremonies or parades; the mission and capabilities of the amphibious units was to be kept secret.

Not knowing anything about the Soldiers storming their beaches both day and night with fleets of landing craft, the locals began referring to them as the Cape Cod Commandos. The 2^D Engineer Amphibian Brigade embraced this nickname but Soldiers were always ready to point out that "Commandos hit and run. We hit, but we don't run." The Soldiers knew that unlike the Marines and their British Commando counterparts, the mission of the amphibian engineers was to not only take beaches through amphibious assaults, but also to offload equipment and run port operations once the enemy was defeated.



Blood for transfusions being delivered by 2^D Engineer Special Brigade landing craft to natives on the island of New Guinea during World War II.

2ND ENGINEER SPECIAL BRIGADE



532 EBSR 592 EBSR
 542 EBSR 562 EBM BN
 262 MED BN 287 SIG CO
 416 ASF BAND HQ CO 2 ESB QM HQ & HQ CO
 SUPPORT BTRY MED DET 2 ESB 162 ORD MAINT CO
 189 QM GAS CO 5204 AMPH TRK CO 695 QM TRK CO 3498 ORD MM CO

NEW GUINEA

SALAMAUA
 NASSAU BAY
 TAMBU BAY
 SALAMAUA

FINSCHHAFFEN
 * FINSCHHAFFEN
 SID

HOLLANDIA
 * HOLLANDIA
 TANAMERAH
 DENTA
 WARI

SCHOUTEN ISLANDS
 * BIAK (BOSNEK)
 KORIM BAY
 WARDO
 SOEPHORI ISLAND

LAE
 * LAE
 TAMI ISLANDS

SAIDOR
 SAIDOR
 YALEAU

SARMI - WAKDE
 TOEM
 * WAKDE ISLAND

NOEMFOOR
 KAMIRI
 NAMBER

BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO



ARAWA
 ARAWA
 CAPE GLOUCESTER
 CAPE GLOUCESTER
 TUALI
 LONG ISLAND
 TALASEA

ADMIRALTY ISLANDS
 * LOS NEGROS ISLAND
 PAPITALAI
 LOMBRUM POINT
 LORENGAU
 HAUWEI ISLAND
 PITILU ISLAND



PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

LEYTE
 TACLOBAN
 LILUAN
 PINAMOPOAM
 * ORMOG
 PALOMPON

SAMAR
 CATBALOGAN
 LLORENTE
 ALLEN

CAMOTES
 PORO
 PONSON

SAN BERNARDINO
 STRAIT
 CAPUL ISLAND
 MAGARITE ISLAND
 BIRI ISLAND

MINDORO
 SAN JOSE
 APO ISLAND
 BONGABONG
 MARINDUQUE
 BUENA VISTA

CENTRAL VISAYAS
 BURIAS
 TICAO
 ROMBLON
 SIMARA
 MASSATE
 LIPATA POINT

PALAWAN
 PUERTO PRINCESA
 BUSUANGA ISLAND

LUZON
 SAN MARCELINO
 SUBIC BAY
 NASUGBU
 BATAAN
 * CORREGIDOR
 LEMERY
 CABALLO ISLAND
 LEGASPI
 BACON
 LUCENA
 BATAN ISLAND
 RAPURAPU ISLAND
 CARABAO ISLAND
 FORT DRUM
 PASAGAO
 MAUBAN
 REAL
 INFANTA
 DINGALEN BAY

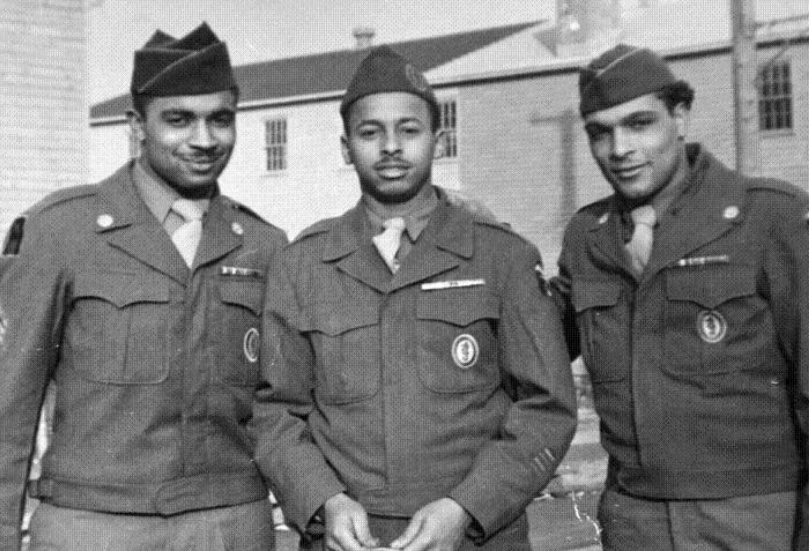
CEBU
 TALISAY - CEBU CITY
 DANAO
 CATMON POINT
 SOGOD
 PANAY
 TIGBAUAN - ILOILO
 GUIMARAS ISLAND
 INAMPULUGAN ISLAND
 NEGROS
 PULUPANDAN
 OUMAQUETE
 BOHOL
 TAGBILARAN
 MINDANAO
 MACAJALAR BAY

JAPAN - 2 SEPT. 1945

KOREA - 8 SEPT. 1945

* PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION WAS AWARDED FOR THIS LANDING

A WWII-era illustration showing the units and combat operations of 2ND Engineer Special Brigade in the Pacific.



WWII-era Amphibian Engineer Soldiers wearing the Combined Operations, Mountbatten patch on their left shoulders and the Engineer Amphibian Command seahorse patch on their left breast pockets.

Originally every Soldier in these brigades wore a patch with a red seahorse surrounded by a blue oval on the left shoulder. This was soon replaced by the eagle, tommy gun and anchor patch of Combined Operations, Mountbatten instead. 1st Engineer Brigade still wears this patch today. The seahorse patch then moved to the left breast pocket of the Army amphibian engineers.

In an effort to disguise the amphibious nature of the amphibian brigades, in May 1943 they were redesignated as Engineer Special Brigades (ESB). At this time the newly redesignated 2^D ESB was in Australia training before the first of their nearly 400 officers and over 7,000 enlisted men entered combat.

2^D ESB's long fight in the Pacific Theater started in New Guinea, the second largest island in the world. From then onward the unit was never pulled out of combat during World War II. There could be no progress on General Douglas MacArthur's road to Tokyo without the ESBs delivering America's forces always forward to the next island, the next beachhead and the next battle.

2^D Engineer Special Brigade Soldiers delivering equipment to a Marianas island beach in the Pacific during World War II.

2^D ESB was commended by the Pacific Theater's top brass for participating in more combat operations than any other unit in theater. In just under two years 2^D ESB's amphibian Soldiers made 82 combat landings across 25 islands and archipelagos before culminating with landings in both Japan and Korea.

Private Junior Van Noy, a member of Headquarters Company, Shore Battalion, 532nd Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions near Finschafen, New Guinea, Oct. 17, 1943. He was the first Engineer Regiment Soldier to receive America's most prestigious military award during World War II.

The brigade was awarded campaign participation credit for New Guinea and Leyte (with arrowhead). Additionally, 2^D ESB earned the Philippine Campaign Presidential Unit Citation and streamer embroidered "17 OCTOBER 1944 TO 4 JULY 1945". They had met with determination their charge to solve all problems, overcome all difficulties and to always "PUT 'EM ACROSS" on time and at the right place.



A 2^D Engineer Special Brigade Landing Ship-Tank (LST) delivering Marines with the 1st Marine Division to the beach at Inchon during the Korean War.

Korean War Era of Service

After World War II, 2^D ESB participated in the occupation of Japan before returning to America and their new home in Fort Worden, Washington. There they trained until August 1950 at the outset of the Korean War. Again faced with the prospect of needing combat landing and port operation capabilities, 2^D ESB was among the first units the Army ordered to Pusan, Korea, to reinforce the Far East Command against invasion from the communist forces in the north of the peninsula.

On Sept. 15, 1950, 2^D ESB again served under General Douglas MacArthur in the Pacific by carrying the 1st Marine Division into battle during the invasion of Inchon, Korea. The Navy was critical of using Inchon for a landing due to an extremely high tidal plain which causes the daily tides to vary by as much as 33 feet. Regardless, military leaders decided Inchon was the best site for America's assault. The day after taking the port at Inchon, 2^D ESB was running port operations and providing emergency construction.

Almost immediately upon landing the commander of 2^D ESB, BG Joseph Twitty, was told he'd not be receiving promised support units and that he was still responsible for moving over 1,000 tons of cargo through the port every day. This required more materiel than available so the men of 2^D ESB received a new moniker. No matter the assigned mission "General Twitty and his Thousand Thieves" found and acquired the resources necessary for success.



In December 1950 during the United Nations evacuation of Hungnam 2^D ESB was augmented by 5,000 Korean laborers and 1,500 Japanese stevedores to help in loading operations and port management. The brigade ran the port, mastered traffic control of both people and equipment, managed facilities and even operated a prisoner of war camp. They successfully managed shore operations during the greatest evacuation by sea in U.S. military history. There would be no second chances. 2^D Engineer Special Brigade moved X Corps and 50,000 refugees out of North Korea.

For service during the Korean War 2^D ESB earned the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy), with a streamer embroidered "INCHON", the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation with a streamer embroidered "INCHON-HUNGNAM" and the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation with a streamer embroidered "KOREA 1950-1952". The unit also earned campaign participation credit for the U.N. Defensive, the U.N. Offensive, the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) Intervention, the First U.N. Counteroffensive, the CCF Spring Offensive and the U.N. Summer-Fall Offensive.



The 2^D Engineer Special Brigade-operated port at Hungnam in North Korea. The evacuation from Hungnam during the Korean War is the largest evacuation by sea in U.S. military history. 2^D ESB moved X Corps and 50,000 Korean refugees out of North Korea ahead of advancing enemy forces.





Information available about the brigade after the Korean War is sparse. I've found that 2^D ESB inactivated June 1955 while in Japan. In October 1956 the unit was redesignated as the 2^D Engineer Amphibious Support Command and in November 1956 activated at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. In less than a decade the unit was again inactivated during August 1965 at Fort Story, Virginia. The 2^D would not serve our Army again for the next 46 years.

Modern Army vessels include landing craft, barges and tug boats. The Army vessels and Soldiers shown here are at Third Port on the James River in Fort Eustis, Virginia and belong to the Transportation Corps under 7th Sustainment Brigade.

The modern functional descendants of the 2^D Engineer Amphibious Support Command are now part of the Transportation Corps and operate Army landing craft and logistics vessels in places like Virginia, Hawaii, Washington State, Kuwait and Italy. My initial service in the Army was as a "Waterborne" 88K deckhand on the Large Tug LT-806 at Fort Eustis, Va. Now 15 years later I've had the honor of serving in the unit from which the Army's modern boat field originated.





Col. Thomas Roth and Command Sgt. Maj. James Dickens, the first command team of 2^D Engineer Brigade in the 21st century, unfurl the newly activated brigade's colors as U.S. Army Alaska Commander Maj. Gen. Raymond Palumbo holds the colors Sept. 21, 2011, on Pershing Field at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. (U.S. Army photo)

Modern Era of Service: Alaska, the Arctic and the Pacific

During the 21st century the 2^D Amphibious Support Command was redesignated as the 2^D Engineer Brigade in August 2009 and activated two years later in Alaska on Sept. 16, 2011. Soldiers marched onto the parade field belonging to 3rd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade and marched off wearing the seahorse of 2^D Engineer Brigade.

Though no longer amphibian engineers the Arctic Trailblazers have honored and paid tribute to the artifacts, history and accomplishments of our amphibian forbearers. We've taken PUT 'EM ACROSS as our motto, studied World War II amphibian warfare during professional leadership development sessions and named our operations after events and places significant to 2^D Engineer Brigade's history.

In this decade we have served as technical *solutioneering* experts charged with managing the readiness and deployments of diverse modular units across a wide spectrum of functions, specialties and technical skills.



2^D Engineer Brigade Soldiers assigned to 6th Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Airborne) performing an Airborne jump above the Arctic Circle during Operation Arctic Pegasus 2014.(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Mylinda DuRousseau, 1-25th Stryker Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs)



Col. Thomas Roth, commander of 2^D Engineer Brigade, presents a gift to his Republic of Korea Army counterpart after observing the deployment of a ROK Army standard ribbon bridge across a river during 2d Infantry Division's Operation Warpath 2012. (U.S. Army photo)

In 2012, sixty years after the Korean War, Soldiers of the 2^D Engineer Brigade returned to Korea as part of 2d Infantry Division's Operation Warpath where we observed a Republic of Korea Army river crossing, participated in subject matter expert exchanges, surveyed tunnels and participated in lectures and ceremonies.

Brigade representatives also travelled to India to participate in Yudh Abyhas 2012 with our Indian Army allies. While there our Soldiers participated in cultural events, religious festivals, ceremonies and athletic competitions. We were even offered the opportunity to participate in a traditional Holi celebration.

We've earned the Arctic Trailblazer name through our participation in real-world missions, exercises and operations in every corner of Alaska. Our 6th Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Airborne) paratroopers jumped into the northernmost reaches of America during OPERATION ARCTIC PEGASUS 2014. They also conducted ice bridging operations in the interior of Alaska and completed infrastructure construction projects in the far flung outposts of Barrow and Shemya Island.

Logisticians with our 17th CSSB have logged hundreds of thousands of miles con-

voying on Alaska highways while transporting gear, equipment and ordnance. This real-world training supported the Army's restructuring efforts and facilitated Army live-fire exercises by delivering ammunition to our bases from the semi-annual ammo barge deliveries to Valdez, Alaska.

17th CSSB was the largest battalion in USARAK and had 14 deployable companies and detachments with a variety of unit specialties that include finance, transportation and the Arctic Warrior Band. Each of these units has their own readiness and deployment cycles making for a complex training management challenge for battalion and brigade leadership.

True to our heritage, 2^D Engineer Brigade's Arctic Trailblazers have been repeatedly tasked with missions taking them to lands across the Pacific. Military police companies from the 793rd MP Battalion have protected missile sites in Guam and our 6th Engineer Battalion (Combat)(Airborne) Soldiers have participated in humanitarian support missions in Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia. We've sent Soldiers to the Philippines, Japan, Laos, Honduras and Thailand. Just as in decades past chapters of our modern history are written in the Pacific.

2^D Engineer Brigade Soldiers meeting an Indian Army officer in India during Yudh Abyas 2012.



A 2^D Engineer Brigade Soldier with 793rd Military Police Battalion saying goodbye to his daughter before deploying to Guam. (Photo by Justin Connaheer, JBER Public Affairs)



A 2^D Engineer Brigade Soldier paratrooper on the drop zone after jumping into Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. (Photo by Capt. Richard Packer)

Modern Era of Service: CENTCOM Deployments

The 2^D Engineer Brigade's contributions to serving our nation in the 21st century have been proven by 25 modular deployments around the world of company and detachment-sized elements. Seahorse Soldiers have been battlefield force multipliers. We've deployed to Afghanistan, Kuwait and Qatar supporting CENTCOM operations and fighting our nation's wars in that region of the world.

Our company, battalion and brigade headquarters were each capable of modular deployments resulting in 29 separate and overlapping Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) schedules. In a short three years the Arctic Trailblazers have learned well the ARFORGEN cycle. As the brigade inactivated there were 133 Soldiers of the 17th CSSB's 98th Support Maintenance Company (SMC) deployed to Kuwait providing critical force support capabilities. They returned home safely in late 2015. Even in the last month before inactivation 2^D Engineer Brigade was managing the preparations of multiple enduring companies scheduled for deployment.



Lt. Col. Bryan Formy-Duval, commander of 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, places a seahorse combat patch on the right shoulder of 1st Lt. Amy Briggs July 12, 2014, during a ceremony in the Rose Garden on Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. (Photo by Capt. Richard Packer)

We've deployed chemical, military police, transportation, finance and EOD Soldiers to support war fighters in combat. Our engineers have cleared routes of IEDs in Afghanistan. The 793rd MP Battalion headquarters deployed to Afghanistan to train their Afghan Uniformed Police counterparts and to provide mission command for six modular military police companies. Our MPs have also provided military working dog teams to personal security detachments charged with protecting our nation's senior leaders and deployed companies who operated their own combat outposts in the hills of Afghanistan.



The 2^D Engineer Brigade command team, Col. Pete Andrysiak and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston, placing seahorse patches on the right shoulders of Capt. Uriah Watkins and 1st Sgt. Orlando Horton, the command team of 23rd Engineer Company (Sapper)(Airborne), July 1, 2014 in Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Drew Baughman)



The Army and Navy command teams and senior leaders of 2^D Engineer Brigade's Task Force Trailblazer gathered from three Regional Commands for a Commanders Conference in the Rose Garden of Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. (Photo by Capt. Richard Packer)

Our Soldiers served in that troubled region as International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) completed OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and began the NATO-led follow-on mission of OPERATION RESOLUTE SUPPORT. The 23rd Engineer Company (Sapper)(Airborne) and the headquarters of both 2^D Engineer Brigade and 17th CSSB returned from Afghanistan in late 2014 making them among U.S. Army Alaska's last contributions to America's longest war.

During the 2^D Engineer Brigade's deployment to Afghanistan we served as the headquarters of Joint Task Force Trailblazer, the final ISAF Theater Engineer Brigade (TEB). The JTF Trailblazer headquarters was enhanced by the Connecticut National Guard's 242nd Construction Management Team and a brigade augmentation team which varied in total strength from 9 to 13 technical expert officers and NCOs from the Army, Navy and Air Force.

We provided Mission Command for the Sailors of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 25, forward elements from the 19th and 528th Engineer Battalions, a Special Capabilities Flight from an Air Force Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers (REDHORSE) and various modular companies, detachments and

teams. Our decisive effort was the training and development of our Afghan National Army counterparts in Afghanistan's only National Engineer Brigade.

We also provided *solutioneering* services across three interrelated Engineer Disciplines (combat, general and geospatial engineering,) and the four Lines of Engineer Support.



2^D Engineer Brigade Task Force Trailblazer Soldiers disassembling a Tension Fabric Structure in Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo)

We ***Enabled Force Projection and Logistics*** through construction, deconstruction and master planning efforts. JTF Trailblazer as the TEB was headquartered at ISAF's largest base, Bagram Air Field (BAF), where we made the most significant contributions in this line of support. Working in partnership with the BAF Garrison team we provided the technical *solutioneering* expertise necessary to evaluate assets and challenges, conceptualize and develop a two-year plan of execution, and implemented the plan throughout our deployment.

Our expert contributions in this line of support weren't limited to BAF. We performed construction and deconstruction work across Afghanistan. To responsibly meet personnel manning limitations set by President Obama early in 2014 required our engineers to prepare bases for the next phase of America's commitment to the region.

We demolished and deconstructed thousands of temporary structures and massive Tension Fabric Structures (TFS) at bases across Afghanistan. This deconstruction work was necessary to leave safe, secure and sustainable installations for follow-on allied and/or Afghan partners.

The TFS mission required specially-trained teams of Soldiers and Airmen to



Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, the 53rd Chief of Engineers and commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, speaking to Task Force Trailblazer Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen after touring 2^D Engineer Brigade's headquarters on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan Sept. 27, 2014. (Photo by Capt. Richard Packer)

swiftly and efficiently erect or deconstruct and package building-sized tents for use at other bases or to be retrograded out of theater.

The reduction of base footprints frequently required new construction to enable consolidation of personnel, equipment and workspaces. Our engineers erected structures and fortifications necessary to ensure the life, health and safety of our service members and allies on bases across Afghanistan.



2^D Engineer Brigade Task Force Trailblazer Soldiers building a HESCO barrier in Afghanistan. As base footprints collapsed to "right-size" for Resolute Support it was often necessary to construct new force protection measures to ensure the safety of American forces and our allies. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Drew Baughman)

Afghan National Army Soldiers practicing welding techniques at Camp Gazi near Kabul. Afghanistan Aug. 28, 2014. 2^D Engineer Brigade 's decisive effort while deployed was training our counterparts in the ANA's only National Engineer Brigade. Task Force Trailblazer's Soldiers and Airmen worked with ANA Soldiers on a daily basis throughout the deployment. (Photo by Capt. Richard Packer)



We ***Enhanced Protection*** by managing the placement of thousands of concrete barriers on Bagram Air Field and bases across the regional commands, supporting the hardening of bases and critical infrastructure to protect our Afghan partners and facilitate their national elections, and managing the clearance of High Explosive Training Ranges (HETR) located across Afghanistan.

The HETR clearance mission involved 290 million square meters located on 57 bases across Afghanistan. The end result was 50 ranges surveyed, 93 transferred to the Afghans and 14 cleared of explosive remnants of war (ERW). This effort culminated in over 6,500 pieces of ERW being destroyed, any of which could potentially have been a risk to the local civilian population.

We ***Assured Mobility*** by emplacing, inspecting and maintaining bridges while si-

multaneously retrograding theater bridge stocks back into the Army Supply System so they would be available for use elsewhere in the world.

We ***Built Partner Capacity and Developed Infrastructure*** by training Afghans with the Ministry of Public Works to maintain the 24 ISAF emplaced bridges throughout Afghanistan already providing critical movement capabilities to military forces and the civilian population. We also gifted the materiel for five complete bridges to the Afghans for training and future emplacement.

For an in-depth description of what the headquarters of 2^D Engineer Brigade accomplished in Afghanistan please see the nine article feature series covering JTF Trailblazer in the November/December 2014 issue of Army Engineer Magazine.

2^D Engineer Brigade's Sgt. James Boker surveys the Afghan National Army's Camp Gazi near Kabul, Afghanistan Aug. 28, 2014. Surveys were conducted as part of the mentoring partnership between Task Force Trailblazer and the ANA's National Engineer Brigade. (Photo by Capt. Richard Packer)



Col. Pete Andrysiak and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston, the command team of 2^D Engineer Brigade, unfurling the brigade colors during the brigade headquarters uncasing ceremony on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska April 28, 2015. Just a few weeks later on May 15, 2015 the colors would be cased again at the brigade's inactivation ceremony. (Photo by Dave Bedard, JBER Public Affairs)

Maj. Gen. Mike Shields, commander of U.S. Army Alaska, and the command team of 2^D Engineer Brigade, Col. Pete Andrysiak and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston, attached the first new campaign streamer since the end of the Korean War nearly 50 years ago to the brigade's colors during the unit's inactivation ceremony on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska May 15, 2015. (Photo by Justin Conna-her, JBER Public Affairs)



For service during Operation Enduring Freedom 2^D Engineer Brigade earned a Meritorious Unit Citation and a streamer embroidered "AFGHANISTAN".

Though 2^D Engineer Brigade has inactivated its digital footprint endures. For pictures, videos, presentations and other digital media about the brigade and its history please visit:

www.facebook.com/2DEngineerBrigade

www.facebook.com/TheaterEngineerBrigade

www.2ESB.org

www.flickr.com/photos/Arctic_Trailblazers

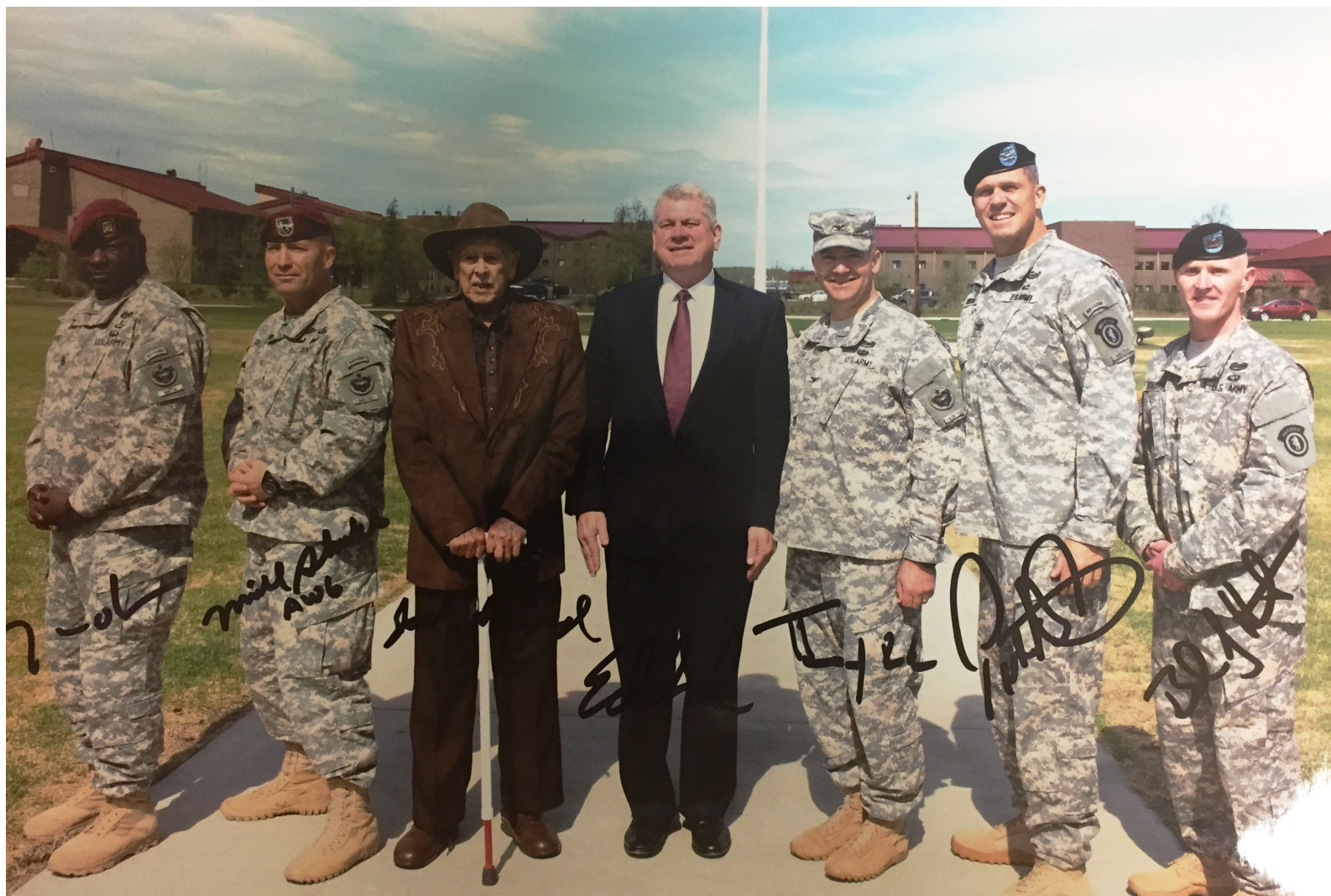
www.dvidshub.net/unit/2ENG

www.slideshare.net/2DEngineerBrigade

Our history shows that when America needs *solutioneering* engineers to deliver the right assets with the right skills, the 2^D Engineer Brigade will be called up to once again PUT 'EM ACROSS. Until that time the brigade will live on in the memories of those who had the honor of serving with a seahorse on their shoulder.



Capt. Richard Packer enlisted in the Army in 1999. He commissioned in 2006 as a Signal Officer and transferred to Public Affairs in 2011. He has deployed to Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq. He is currently serving as the U.S. Army Alaska Deputy Public Affairs Officer. (Photo by John Pennell, USARAK Public Affairs)



From Left: Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Gardner and Maj. Gen. Mike Shields, command team of U.S. Army Alaska, Jack Reed, Ed Leard III, Col. Thomas Roth, USARAK Chief of Staff and former 2^D Engineer Brigade Commander, Col. Pete Andrysiak and Command Sgt. Maj. Brad Houston, command team of 2^D Engineer Brigade after the brigade's inactivation ceremony at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska May 15, 2015. (Photo by Capt. Richard Packer, USARAK Public Affairs)

Jack Reed served in 2^D Engineer Special Brigade during World War II. He is an original Seahorse Soldier. Ed Leard III carries the name of his grandfather, also Ed Leard, who served, fought and died in WWII while assigned to 2^D Engineer Brigade. Jack and Ed met at a 2ESB reunion where Ed Leard III was exploring his grandfather's unit and service. Ed has taken Jack on as a surrogate grandfather and the two love each other like family. They flew to Alaska from California to attend the brigade's activation in 2011 at the invitation of Col. Tom Roth. They are pictured here during their second trip to Alaska at the brigade's inactivation in 2015.

My family had the distinct honor and pleasure to entertain Jack and Ed for a day as we explored Alaska. We loaded up in the motorhome and drove down the Seward Highway. We visited the Alaska Animal Conservation Center near Portage Glacier, then went out to Whittier for a freshly-caught fish dinner. Both men were perfect gentlemen and very patient with all my kiddos asking them for stories and wanting to cuddle with grandpas. Spending the day with these gentlemen is among the best experiences the Army has ever given me.

- Richard Packer