



321st Engineer Battalion, Idaho

RESPECT, EMPOWER THE INDIVIDUAL

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Clark Griswold's infamous boss in "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" said it best, "It's people that make the difference, little people like you..." While a derogatory spin was included in the end of that line, the point rings true that people are the most important asset. Likewise, a key to the culture of the 321st Engineer Battalion is that we value - our people. Distinguishing and rewarding performance through awards, passes or gestures such as bringing dollar-menu breakfast burritos for the whole team on Sunday morning of Battle Assembly are examples of appreciation. These actions build motivation, increase productivity and put smiles on faces.

In the same vein, a key to success for the 321st has been empowerment of the individual and the payoff of the resulting personal growth. A TTP (tactics, techniques, and procedures) that has proven effective is to appoint Soldiers as project managers in efforts to give them ownership of the mission. Not only does this improve efficiency, it also grows and strengthens that individual. One of the pillars of the Battalion command philosophy is to NOT expect success. However, hard work and effort is expected. Success will come, but the only way to learn and get better is to try, giving maximum effort while doing so. This mindset fosters an environment that is free of the fear of failure and encourages Leaders and Soldiers to take on responsibility.



Yakima Strike '21 provides a great example of the results of this empowerment effort. In the absence of an S4, the entire logistics plan for Yakima Strike was planned by three staff sergeants. Performing as the S4 committee, they planned, coordinated and led during the execution of the exercise. They could have easily waited to be told what to do, but given the responsibility, they took the reins and all emerged as better leaders and planners. Likewise, an exercise was orchestrated by a single captain in the S3 section. He was given the project and allowed to run with it from cradle to grave, with minimal oversight. This forced him to think about areas outside the Engineer wheel house, expanding his knowledge base and making him a more rounded officer. Empowerment does not always equal success as in these examples, but it does breed growth, mental agility and adaptability which are key ingredients for effective leaders.