



844th Engineer Battalion

Family Programs Newsletter

"One Army, One Family, One Team"



Battalion Commander's Message

Since July 2010, I have enjoyed the distinct honor and privilege of commanding the Army's premier engineer unit, the 844th Engineer Battalion. I am truly appreciative for the dedication, commitment, and patriotic spirit exhibited by all seven-hundred Soldiers assigned to this Battalion. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a personal note of thanks to the Family members of our warriors for the support that you provide each of them which proves so critical to our mission accomplishment and successes. We truly thank & appreciate you!

During July 2011, I executed my first enhanced combat training period with this unit. I must tell you that I was extremely impressed with the military readiness and tactical proficiency of our Soldiers and this battalion. The headquarters element and all companies flawlessly executed engineering operations in the field during our two week annual training periods. July marked the first large scale training exercise/deployment conducted since the battalion's return from the country of Iraq. We engaged in some phenomenal training and were able to capitalize on experience gained by those who recently deployed to Iraq and share that wisdom with personnel who have not yet spent time in the middle eastern theatre of operations.

I would like to thank all Soldiers for the outstanding work & training accomplishments that took place this year during annual training. Most of the battalion deployed in support of "Castle Installation Related Construction", a two week training exercise conducted aboard Joint Base McGuire-Dix in Lakehurst, New Jersey. We focused on multiple projects to include pouring concrete for tent pads, improving a simulated Afghan village & constructing a climbing wall. This gave our warriors the opportunity not only to hone their construction skills, but to exercise small unit leadership as well command & control at the company & battalion level. The 702d Engineer Company received accolades for their participation in an innovative readiness training project at Cosby High School, where they constructed athletic fields, at no cost to Cocke County taxpayers.

In closing, I want to stress the importance of remaining vigilant in maintaining a high state of Soldier & Family readiness. It has been eighteen months since our Soldiers returned from Iraq. Several of our warriors were recently selected as individual augmentees and identified to transfer to Army Reserve Battalions that are returning to theatre in support of the war effort in Afghanistan. Soldiers and Families must "stay deployment ready" as it is unknown when Soldier's may get called to fill critical manpower shortages with other Army units that are deploying abroad. Utilize the varied resources available to make sure you & your Family have executed pre-deployment initiatives to lessen the stress of deployments. Thanks again for all that you do for the Army Reserve and our great country!

LTC John D. Wolfe, Commander, 844th Engineer Battalion



LTC John D. Wolfe II



CSM Brian P. Hart

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Pfc. Ken W. Moss (left) and Sgt. Joshua S. Wallin (right) from the 390th Engineer Company out of Chattanooga, Tenn., secure scaffolding during Castle IRC at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst July 23, 2011.



Spc. Matthew M. Schoenrock, engineer with the 733rd Engineer Company from Greeneville, Tenn., edges a concrete slab during annual training at Castle IRC.



Spc. Verrek E. Green & Cpl. Christopher T. Tibbs from the 390th Engineer Company, unhook a crane from the roof while constructing the 100-person classroom.

Links to photos and stories covering enhanced combat training conducted by the 844th Engineer Battalion

Engineers use Singing to Beat the Heat (733rd) <http://www.dvidshub.net/news/74788/engineers-use-singing-beat-heat>

Building Ball Fields for Cosby (702d) <http://www.wate.com/story/15132942/army-reservists-build-ball-fields-for-cosby?clienttype=printable>



Salute to the Troops!

Enjoy Free Admission to the Circus

Date: Friday October 21, 2011 at 7:00 pm

Location: *Thompson Bowling Arena on the UT Campus*



This event is being sponsored by the Kербela Shriners, who have seats reserved for up to 300 military personnel and their Families. Attendees will be given special tickets to show to ushers granting them free admission. Planners hope that military personnel will wear their uniforms and participate in the Grand Opening Parade at 6:45 pm, kicking off that evening's circus performance. Parade line up will begin at 6:00 pm on the ground floor of the east side of Thompson Bowling Arena. This is a huge undertaking so Soldiers and Family members are requested to be at their seats by 6:00 pm to eliminate confusion and prepare for the Grand Opening Ceremony.

The Shriners are most honored and excited to be able to salute East Tennessee military heroes and their Family members, patriotic Americans who have given so much in defense of our great nation.

They look forward to honoring you as "their special guests" on this evening!



Please contact Mr. Dennis Mcvey, FRSA, 844th Engineer Battalion at (865)-558-4027 for tickets. There are a limited number of tickets available so don't wait to place your call.

VA wants to speak with women Vets! The Veterans Administration began placing calls to women veterans during June of this year to gauge their satisfaction with VA Health care and inform them of available services. Representatives at the VA'S Health Resource Center are making the calls to women vets nationwide, who they say represent 6% of total veterans using VA health care. The organization wants the women to talk candidly about why they are not using the VA health care system, whether they are aware of the gender-specific services offered and what additional services they would like to see offered. VA Reps will connect women vets to appropriate departments if they are interested in specific services or to patient advocates if they have complaints. Complaints or suggestions should be directed to Women Veteran Program Manager's serving on local VA Medical Center staffs. For additional info regarding women's health programs visit www.womenshealth.va.gov/WOMENSHEALTH/healthcare.asp.

Is there Pride in Serving in our Military? Are you Proud of Your Country?

These are the themes for this year's Voice of Democracy & Patriot's Pen essay and scholarship program sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The ***Voice of Democracy*** is the VFW'S Premier Scholarship Program. Entrants will compete for scholarships at the local, district and state levels. The program is open to students in grades 9-12. The top scholarship is worth \$30,000. All entries competing at the VFW Post level must be at the post by midnight 1 November 2011. The ***Patriots Pen*** is open to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students enrolled in public, private or parochial schools in the United States. The top 46 national winners all receive at least a \$1000.00 savings bond. The first place award is currently a \$10,000 savings bond plus an all expense paid trip to Washington D.C. for the winner and a parent or guardian. For detailed information about the contests you may contact Dennis Mcvey at dennis.mcvey@usar.army.mil to receive a brochure giving the specifics on each program. You may also get in touch with VFW Post Reps in your local area. Visit www.vfw.org to find a local post.



Julia Funk, a 7th grade student in Spartanburg, S.C., was named the 2011 Patriot's Pen 1st place winner. Her essay *"Does Patriotism Still Matter?"* won her a \$10,000 savings bond. Julia was sponsored by Post 9539 in Roebuck, S.C.



Military OneSource offers three kinds of short-term, non-medical counseling options to active-duty, Guard, & reserve members & their families. Counseling services are designed to provide service help with short-term issues such as adjustment to situational stressors, stress management, decision making, communication, grief, blended-Family and parenting-skills issues. Each eligible service member or Family member may receive up to 12 sessions, per issue, per counselor, at no cost. Listed in the table below are different ways to communicate with professional counselors via Military OneSource. Staffers available 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

Face to Face

Telephone

Online

	Face to Face	Telephone	Online
Description	Military OneSource arranges for you to meet face-to-face with a professional counselor in your community.	For those unable to attend face-to-face counseling (because of their location) or those who prefer communicating by phone, Military OneSource arranges telephone consultations.	For those who prefer communicating online, this option uses instant-messaging, with the consultant and participant communicating online in real time.
Availability	Available to those in the continental U.S., Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.	Available to those located anywhere.	Available to those located anywhere. You must have a computer to access the session.
Get Started!	Access this option by calling a Military OneSource consultant at 1-800-342-9647.	Access this option by calling a Military OneSource consultant at 1-800-342-9647.	Visit http://www.militaryonesource.com/tabid/106/default.aspx

Battle Assembly Dates!

Unit	Oct	Nov	Dec
HHC	22/23	4/5/6	10
FSC	22/23	4/5/6	10
321st Survey	22/23	5/6	10
316TH MAC	22/23	11/12/13	3/4
390TH Eng Co	22/23	5/6	10
702d Eng Co	15/16	5/6	10
733rd Eng Co	15/16	5/6	10/11

Awards!



Congratulations to Colonel Martha Clinton & MSG Brenda Patterson. Your dedicated service to the 844th Engineer Battalion and the United States Army Reserve is to be commended. Best of luck to you as you enjoy retirement. We will miss you!

Federal Holidays

Columbus Day: Monday / October 10th

Veterans Day: Friday / November 11th

Thanksgiving: Thursday / November 24th

Christmas Day: Monday / December 26th

Yellow Ribbon dates for those still required to attend!

18-20 November 2011 in Orlando, Florida

9-11 December, 2011 in Orlando, Florida

<https://www.arfp.org/skins/ARFP/home.aspx>



Captain Michael Beach pictured with his lovely wife Melissa following receipt of the De Flurry award.



Mr. John Dyess, President, East TN Military Affairs Council was presented an award on behalf of the council for its outstanding support of the 844th & all Soldiers & Military Families in the greater East Tennessee area.



Congratulations to Mr. Joshua Richardson (pictured 3rd from left) for his selection as the 2010 Outstanding Civilian Engineer Award Recipient for the U.S. Army Reserve. Thanks for your leadership, dedication and contributions to mission success during 2010. Great Job Mr. Richardson!



Ms. Janice Campbell & Ms. Kristi Dennis received an award on behalf of the American Red Cross, Service to Armed Forces Branch for the departments tremendous support provided Soldiers and Family members of the 844th Engineer Battalion!



Family Day Families of Knoxville based Soldiers (HHC/FSC/321 Survey) are cordially invited to attend the “**Family Day**” that ***will be conducted on 10 December, 2011*** at the Reserve Center. Commanders are authorized annually to dedicate eight hours during unit battle assemblies to conduct Family oriented training activities. Family Day is an opportunity for the command to provide training which enhances soldier and Family readiness and strengthens resiliency within military Families. Company Leadership and the Family Readiness Group are currently arranging speakers and planning events for our Family Day. Additional details regarding our upcoming Family Day will be provided in the near future.

If there are particular topics that interest you, please contact our Family Readiness Support Assistant, Mr. Dennis McVey at (865)-558-4027 no later than 14 October, 2011. If we cannot arrange speakers in December 2011, we will maintain that topic on file and attempt to incorporate the subject in our next Family Day event.

Please call or email Mr. Mcvey, dennis.mcvey@usar.army.mil no later than 14 Oct. 2011 with the age of all Family members that plan to attend. Anticipated meal costs for Family members attending the event is \$8.00 per plate. Soldiers dine free during battle assembly. *Event flyers are forthcoming, please mark your calendar!*

2011 Veterans Day Parades!



Many cities in East Tennessee will honor America’s past and present heroes by hosting Veterans Day Parades on 11 November, 2011. This is a great opportunity to get out and show your support for the dedicated men and women and their Family members who have served so honorably in the United States Armed Forces. Battalion based units in Knoxville will March in the parade that will begin at the Knoxville Civic Coliseum and move down Gay Street, downtown Knoxville. Equipment assets that were used to accomplish the Battalions mission in Iraq during 2009 & 2010 will participate in this years parade. If you are interested in getting detailed information regarding dates, time and parade routes, please visit the cities website or the Chamber of Commerce.



86th Veterans Day Parade, Knoxville, Tennessee 11 November, 2011 from 9 am—10:15 am (Gay Street)

<http://legionknox.org/index.php?id=91>

How to Roast a Turkey!

To prepare the turkey for roasting, first remove the giblets (save for gravy or stuffing). Next, rinse the bird inside & out & pat dry with paper towels.

1. If you are stuffing the bird, stuff it loosely, allowing about ½ to ¾ cup stuffing per pound of turkey.
2. Brush the skin with melted butter or oil. Tie drumsticks together with string (for stuffed birds only).
3. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh. The thermometer should point towards the body, & should not touch the bone.
4. Place the bird on a rack in a roasting pan, and into a preheated 350 degree F (175 C) oven. Use chart to estimate time required for baking.
5. Bake until the skin is a light golden color, and then cover loosely with a foil tent. During the last 45 minutes of baking, remove the foil tent to brown the skin. Basting is not necessary, but helps promote even browning. The turkey is done when the internal temperature reaches 165 degrees F (75 degrees C) at the thigh.

One of the most commonly asked questions of Military OneSource the day before Thanksgiving is; Can you give me instructions on preparing a Turkey for my Family? They even advise on preparing Holiday Meals!



Weight of Bird	Roasting Time (Unstuffed)	Roasting Time (Stuffed)
10-18 lbs	3-3.5 hours	3.75-4.5 hours
18-22 lbs	3.5-4 hours	4.5-5 hours
22-24 lbs	4-4.5 hours	5-5.5 hours
24-29 lbs	4.5-5 hours	5.5-6.25 hours

Family Day Photos

HHC, Forward Support Company and 321st Survey enjoyed lunch at the The Cove, Concord Park in Knoxville, Tennessee on 13 August 2011 during the units Battalion Family Day. Special thanks to reps with the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Veterans Administration, East Tennessee Military Affairs Council, Employer Support of Guard & Reserve, American Red Cross, American Legion & the Family Readiness Group for providing briefs at the USARC that educated our Soldiers & Families on resources available based on their status as Army Reservists & military Families. We salute Ms. Carrera Romanini, Mr. Justin Crowe and all volunteers of TN Operation Military Kids and the 4H Club for being present, hosting activities for the kids, and sharing valuable resources available to our youth. Special thanks to SSG Kyle, SSG Saylor & all Soldiers who set up the area & prepared lunch for the event. You all did an awesome job & were vital to making this an enjoyable time for all!



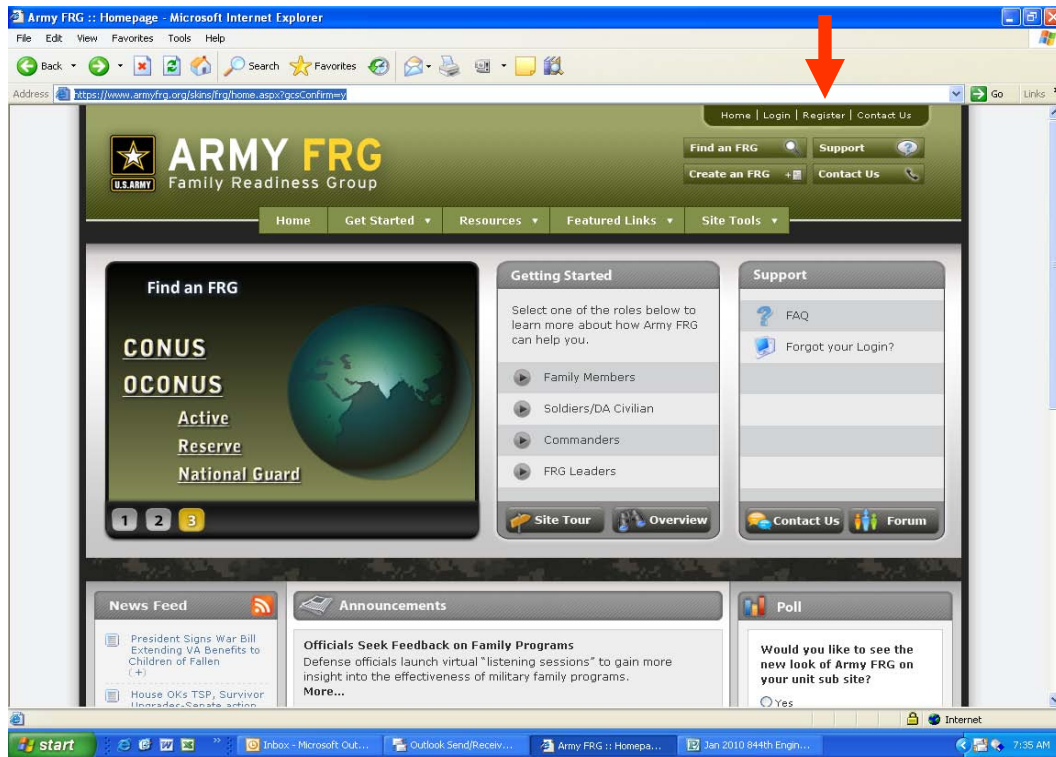
Family Day Photos from Chattanooga!



FRG WEB MATTERS

Have you visited the 844th Engineer Battalion Virtual Family Readiness Website lately!

We are working to add material to our website that is important to Families and Soldiers. Our goal is to use this delivery mechanism to improve communication between the Unit, Soldiers and their Family members. Listed below is the process for registering at the website. If you encounter any problems during registration please use the "contact us" feature on the site or call Mr. Dennis R. McVey, Family Readiness Support Assistant, at (865)-558-4027 or e-mail: dennis.mcvey@usar.army.mil for assistance.



Visit the following web site: <http://www.armyfrg.org/skins/frg/home.aspx> in order to complete the registration process and gain access to the 844th Engineer Battalions FRG website. The registration link is located at the very top of the web page. Family members should attempt to get their Soldiers to register prior to registering themselves. If those attempts fail administrators will add the Soldier information at the Battalion Headquarters allowing Family members access to the site. Please call Mr. Dennis McVey if assistance is needed.

Listed to the right is a screenshot of the 844th Engineer Battalions web page. Once you have completed the registration process at the web site above, you will see a dialogue box labeled go to your FRG website. Click on 844th Engineer Battalion to gain access to our Family Readiness Group website. If at any time during this process you encounter any problems with registration please use the contact us feature to get assistance from program administrators or call Mr. Dennis R. McVey at (865)-558-4027.





Halloween Safety Tips for Kids

- Observe hours designated for trick or treating. Wear brightly colored costumes or clothes and use safety lights as darkness approaches.
- Make sure that shoes fit well and that costumes are short enough to prevent tripping, entanglement or contact with flame.
- Never go into a strangers house or even ring their door bell for treats unless your parents are with you and say it is okay.
- Be careful when you cross the street. Be sure to look in both directions and make sure there are no cars approaching. If you have a little brother or sister look after them. Hold their hand and only cross the street when it is safe to do so.
- If you are an older kid or young teen be certain that your parents know where you are going and what time they should expect you home. Maintain your cell phone with you at all times and use it as an emergency means of communication.

Remember that vandalism is never cool. Throwing eggs at cars and houses can create serious damage to property or cost someone their life. Although teens may consider practical jokes like rolling a friends yard or home as fun, please be aware that pranks like these can create an unsafe environment for homeowners and cause significant damage to property dwellings. Rolls of toilet paper or paper towels on homes can clog gutters causing water damage to walls and the homes foundation. Scaling ladders to remove debris creates an unsafe environment for homeowners who may have to climb in excess of twenty five feet to access roofs and water carrying systems to clear the debris. Kids and grown ups alike should enjoy Halloween. It's a chance to dress up in your favorite costume and get free candy. The spirit of giving is alive and well as many so graciously treat the children to candy and kind words. Remember to have clean fun on Halloween and keep it safe. Your display of responsibility will give you a feeling of pride and show your parents what an adult you truly are!

Christmas Safety

- When buying a live pre-cut tree, make sure the tree is still alive and healthy. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from the branches, and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. Pull on the needles. If the needles come off easily, it is probably not in great condition. The trunk should be sticky and the limbs should be very flexible. When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant".
- Check each set of tree lights for frayed wires, broken bulbs, and loose connections. Turn off lights before you go to bed or leave the house.
- Never run electrical cords under carpets or rugs, over nails, in traffic areas, or where there is a chance of water.
- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.

Employment Assistance Training

Sponsored by TN Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve & The Department of Labor

Date: 14-16 Oct., 2011 (**Open to Reservists & their Spouses**)

Location: Armed Forces Reserve Ctr., 253 Don May Drive, Johnson City, TN

Purpose: To provide professional training that will assist you in developing a thirty minute commercial to sell yourself to prospective employers, resume development, convert military skills to terminology understood by civilian employers, interview skill preparation, networking opportunities, access Federal, State & Defense Department Job Databanks. A career fair is often conducted by companies with job vacancies.

Training in: **Cookeville, TN** 5 & 6 November 2011 / **Smyrna, TN** 13-15 December 2011 / **Knoxville, TN** January 2012

If you would like additional information or to attend one of these events please contact Mr. Dennis McVey, FRSA at (865)-558-4027.

Learn more about the purpose of these events by visiting:

<http://www.esgr.org/site/News/tabid/73/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/653/Default.aspx>