



416th Engineer Command (ENCOM)

Association Newsletter

THE "CASTLE"

Volume 20, Number 2, Winter

15 December 2020

Merry Christmas

Happy Hanukkah

Eid Mubarak

The Association wishes

All, Holiday Greetings

And Well Wishes

In this Covid 2020 Season



The 416th ENCOM Association Christmas Season Message from our President and Board of Directors

Christmas 2020: A Time for Contemplation and Growth

Association President Scotty Shrader and the Board of Directors wish all members and families a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays during this usually festive season. Due to Covid-19, this season is unusually subdued and celebrations are somewhat restricted. In the interest of safety and viral containment, personal contacts and gatherings of people are requested to be minimalized. The Season is and has been almost solemn with limited shopping, driving, and all with a partyless atmosphere.

With this emphasis, it is important to ensure the positive aspects of protecting life and safe guarding procedures in our everyday activities. It is a time to look within ourselves and evaluate our surroundings and family settings. Some cannot cope with the new changes very well. Work at maintaining a positive attitude even with the new obstacles to the “normal.”

We can look forward to the New Year with a sense of growth and climbing up from the lows of 2020. 2021 promises to be a year of positive changes and renewed life in our work, economics, and future activities. Review the words of our Association Chaplain and our Financial Officer. Consider the Association’s new growth into a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. See if it is possible to support the association goals. Review your time lines for free time. Can you support the Association with a role in one of the Committees? Let us use this Christmas season to review our options to make 2021 the best year of this decade. Using our past training as military engineers, let us plan around seen and unforeseen obstacles to make 2021 an outstanding year for all around us.





Year 2020 Association Activities Summary: A Year of Changes,

Robert Stanek

Due to President Scott Shrader's medical restrictions, his ability to publish a column for the quarterly newsletter is limited, so I will fill in until he fully recovers, including his quarterly column.

When this is published, December will be half over, thereby putting an end cap soon to what many consider to have been a completely disastrous 2020 calendar year. Without doubt, the year will go down as one of the most unique years in modern history. Things like the Covid-19 virus, the Antifa riots, the BLM racial wars, the remaking of the US history, the continued political turmoil within our national, a world depression on the economic front, international conflicts over land and sea domains and oh finally, who could ever forget about the November 3rd US Presidential election that is still occupying the daily news cycle. The summarization of all these events only makes the world dream of a simpler time.

But that is not what this column is about... it's time now to talk about some of the good things that are happening in the ENCOM Association's little portion of the world.

Given the new pandemic world we live in, adaption has become the new norm for most participants and this includes us at the ENCOM Association. One of the first things we did was convert our monthly Board meeting from a strictly verbal telephone conference call to the new standard by using ZOOM calls, which most of you know runs both audio and video interaction.

Once the Board decided to make the jump to Zoom and utilize the experience offered by Board Members like Lee Pryor, Edgar Montalvo and Shaun Murphy, we managed to work out a lot of the rough edges in the first few meetings. With all that, it didn't take long for the monthly meetings to start flowing somewhat smoother. From there it was a small jump to approve our Annual Dinner meeting to use the Zoom format too. The problem was just a question on how many people could/would attend the meeting versus the dinner format we normally hold in Darien, IL.

So Board decided to move into the 21st century (truly by accident) by using the October Board meeting as a large scale Zoom conference call. We did this by allowing for any ENCOM Association member to call in if they wanted. So in advance, we pushed out the board meeting information to ALL ENCOM ASSOCIATION members to see what kind of turn-out we would get.

Surprisingly, we managed to get about 25 people on that October call at 9 o'clock in the morning. This meeting also showed us that we had the capability to conduct a larger scale meeting without too much of an issue. This call also allowed us to get a better handle on how to use the software and what our capacity was. Our major concern was getting the necessary active interaction we needed, but without having members talk over one another when questions were asked. Plus, we had to maintain a strict controls on the time for those members who would be talking and how to maintain a smooth flow between elements of the meeting itself.

Our goal was to conduct a quick 15-minute board meeting in the half hour before the actual annual meeting, followed by a ONE HOUR Annual Meeting with a couple quick Q&A sessions, and then a 30-minute break-out session for members to voluntary interact with one another after the actual board meeting.



Year 2020 Association

Activities Summary:

A Year of Changes, (Continued)

Robert Stanek

Plus we had a simple goal to conduct a couple quick interaction question polls to get some input from the participants on a couple key topics brought up before hand.

So moving forward, a group of eight hardy board members conducted at least seven weekly Tuesday night Zoom meetings in the months before the November 7th Annual Meeting to work out all the details

and script the meeting down to the last minute. Many THANKS need to go out to Robert Chevas, Michele Marsden, Gerry Meyer, Bob Mittelstaedt, Edgar Montalvo, Shaun Murphy, Lee Pryor, and Scott Shrader for the numerous hours they put in behind the scenes to help pull off what was a full-scale production for the Annual Meeting. Also special thanks go to Edgar, Lee and Shaun for their willingness to act as Technical Advisors as well to take phone calls from participant before and during the meeting to answer any Zoon related questions. Without all of their tireless efforts, the Annual meeting would have been nothing more than a quick HI, HELLO and GOODBYE!

Here is a quick summary of events for the Annual meeting:

Edgar Montalvo, while serving as the Moderator, provided the ground rules for conducting the Zoom meeting for all participants. Also explained about the poll questions to be asked and how to direct any questions toward the speakers via the chat line capability within Zoom itself. He also briefly talked about the add-on breakout session at the end of the meeting.

Chaplain Robert Carter provided the Invocation

President Scott Shrader offered up a two minute Welcome to all those who called into the Zoom Meeting and did a quick introduction of Past President Bob Stanek

Past President Bob Stanek conducted a quick 10-minute discussion by briefly introducing all of the 2019-2021 Board Members. He followed with a single slide talking about the status of the transition to the public charity. This included changes to the Constitution (*see note below*), the By-Laws, Vision & Mission Statements, and a couple questions/answer session on the transition. Finally he ended with a brief explanation of the site accepting donations and the location of the “Donation Accepted” on the Association website.

The Guest Speaker - MG Matt Baker, the new commander for the 416th Theater Engineer Command, talked for 20-minutes on the “State of The TEC” with focus on five specific areas:

- Current State of the TEC (Mission and Organization)
- Higher Vision Guidance (USARC/FORSOM)
- Impact of COVID-19 to the organization
- Challenges ahead for the TEC
- MG Baker’s Vision for the next three years



Year 2020 Association

Activities Summary:

A Year of Changes, (Continued)

Robert Stanek

Chaplain Robert Carter conducted the Benediction

Breakout session (East Coast conducted by Lee Pryor, Central Region conducted by Edgar Montalvo and the Rocky Mountain/West Coast conducted by Bob Stanek)

Q&A with MG Baker for 10 minutes

Moderator Edgar offered up the results of the polls conducted, as well as a request for member participation in the new committees to be developed in the upcoming year, with a final explanation of the three 30-minute Breakout Sessions

Overall, in my opinion, the Zoom Annual Meeting went off as planned with only a few minor production errors and a couple time hacks missed. The unofficial total head count was thirty-eight participants in the meeting (including all 15 board members if I remember right) with at least six general officers participating in the call. The board had not specified a goal of how many people would participate, so any results was considered acceptable given the quick turn-over of this event from an actual Annual Dinner Meal/Meeting. Plus the breakout sessions turned out to be a huge success as many individuals noted the ability to talk with old friends. So the Board has agreed to do open up all monthly board meeting with a 15-30 minute breakout session after ever board meeting in the future if time permits.

Finally, my last two topics I need to discuss...

1) First topic deals with the two approved changes to the ENCOM Association constitution as noted previously above. These changes are noted in ARTICLE II (shown in italicized wording) and in ARTICLE V, Section 6 (also shown in italicized wording). You can download the documents from the Association website located here: .

2) The second topic relates to President Scott Shrader medical status. Scott's medical condition restricts his ability to communicate for long periods of time as well as his energy level. If you would like to contact Scotty in person, please contact Shaun Murphy at slyan132@gmail.com and he will assist in providing more specifics on when and how to contact Scotty. Scott would greatly appreciate the conversation as he loves to hear what's going on in the world.

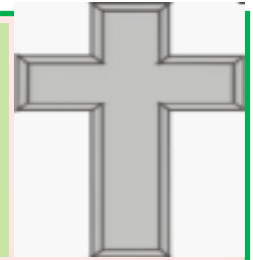
That's enough for now. With the Christmas Holiday Season just around the corner, please remember to take some time off and enjoy the season for all it represents. And please have a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY and GLORIOUS NEW YEAR. With Deep Respect. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

Bob Stanek

Past Board President

Chaplain's 2020 Christmas Message

Chaplain Rob Carter



Serving as a Soldier gives us an expectation that there are those in Command, those in Charge who will look forward, plan, be prepared for what is to come, the situation that is before us. In our roles we have that responsibility for our Families, and may also at different levels where we work, and still participate in Military Service. Living our lives now if you listen to the news, it may be hard to maintain a sense that leaders are looking out for those around them, are preparing for the challenges to come. It can be a real challenge to “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5, ESV). There are those who speak about the current crisis that make noise, share conflicting options about what we can hope for a

vaccine or cure, and certainly what is most pressing where you are can be something that touches your health, health of a loved one or a local issue with more immediate impact on your Daily life.

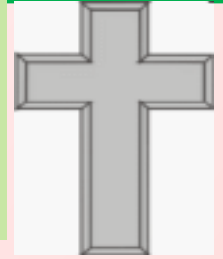
Where I am in NY, besides Physical and Social Distancing, uptick in angry and troubled people, our water supply in the local reservoir is down to 40% capacity. The everyday World I live in with notices of where we cannot park on the street from the town, where a Bear has been sited, and the encouragement from local groups to get out and vote easily fills the bandwidth at the front of my thoughts. Those little issues, multiple distractions are all pulling at the attention that could be spent showing care for Family (parents, spouse, siblings, and children) and effort given to where it is that I work. I imagine you also have those challenges.

In our journey it is too easy to find our hearts and minds focused on the troubles, and rumors of troubles that we can be pulled into over the radio, TV, print and social media sources on our phones and computers. It turns us away from appreciating the spectrum of Good that is painted across our world before us. To many times we can be drawn to the problems and working to fix them, find a solution, and not just be able to appreciate the Health, Blessings, and Joy that we have. We miss seeing the picture of the Blessing that are present with those we have in our immediate area, and what is just before us because we were able to roll out of bed this morning and live another Day on the Oxygen side of the Earth.

As we move into the close of the year, December, and roll into the New Year in January there is a wide spectrum of religious groups who will celebrate holidays and mark out observances that are important in their Faith Traditions. Observances where they are going to pause just as we do when we halt during a patrol, stay still for a short time, and take a knee to pause and observe, appreciating some facet of the belief system which gives them meaning. How can you cultivate that pause where you are, appreciate what is happening around you, with those you care about. Not work to solve problems as we do when given a mathematical challenge, instead to sit and watch as we do the beauty of sunrise or sunset.

Chaplain's 2020 Christmas Message

Chaplain Rob Carter



As a Christian Chaplain I will be looking forward to the work we do leading to celebrating the birth of our Savior over Mid-Week Services, and Soup Suppers that will look different from what we have done in the past, a Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Service that will be in a new format because of the new requirements, which may be even more restrictive than they are now. Looking to bridge that gap, between what will feed people's Faith we are planning now to see what different will look like knowing that this will continue through the Winter and into the Spring, and the months and year(s) ahead because our World had changed. Not waiting for this to pass or end and to see us able to just go back to the old normal. As current and former leaders of Soldiers that is a challenge we are called to meet, to plan for the best COA's to meet the future before us, not the one we hope will be, the one that is colored by what is happening in our world now, and will impact and influence things for the foreseeable future.

We are looking at new ways to communicate as a norm, we are learning how to appreciate how we can get together now over technology, when we cannot travel to be in person. Our Annual Association meeting was Virtual as may also have been the Thanksgiving Dinner's and Hanukah and Christmas Celebrations to come. How we get through this in the coming months and year (s) will have a lot to do with the plans that we make, expectations that we set, and how we continue to work through the issues that come from emails, texts, and messages that do not allow for the same level of clarity for understanding we can receive from a brief back. We will be challenged to pause more often, ask more questions to ensure our intent and meaning are understood. To encourage more questions, and trust so that as the passage continues according to your Faith tradition, "and he will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:6. So that we can continue to grow in Faith and Love with one another, be present to listen and help build a better ENCOM Association for those who follow us in Service to the Soldiers, DoD Civilians, and their Families who serve in the 416th TEC.

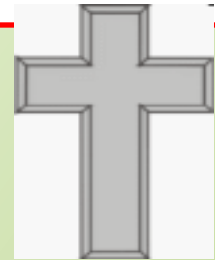


**I wish you and your families a
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND THE REST OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON
celebrating COVID 19 free, with care and safety.**

**May God watch over ALL throughout the Holidays
and
in the next year, 2021.**

Chaplain's 2020 Christmas Message

Chaplain Rob Carter



During Christmas and the Holiday Season many people are under stress and pressure. All this is heightened during this time of the COVID 19 virus, made worse by the forced isolation and restrictions on life and activities. Most can cope with life's challenges, but some need assistance.

These phone numbers and other information may change over time. You are invited to send in changes and updates, as well as any new useful support services you may find. Additional local services are likely available, so be aware of this and look for local support, as response times might be faster.

National Personal Assistance Hotlines

Military One Source: 1.800.342.9647 www.militaryonesource.mil

VA Hospital Locator: www.va.gov/health/

Find Local Resources Dial 211

Specific Support Hotlines:

Suicide: 1.800.273.8255, or Text **HELLO** to 741741

Self Harm: 1.800.366..8288, or text **Connect** 741741

Abortion: 1.866.439.4253, or text **Helpline** 313131

Eating Disorders: 1.800.931.2237, or text **NEDA** to 741741

Pregnancy, Infant and Child Loss, 1 1-.800.944.4773

Domestic Violence: 1.800.799.7233, or text **SUPPORT** to 741741

Mental Health: 1.800.950.6264, to text **NAMI** to 741741

Grief: 1.800.445.4808, or text **CARE** to 839869

Sexual Assault: 1.800.656.4673, or text **Home** to 741741



Year End Tax Information and Association Goals Edgar Montalvo and Ken Yoshitani

DONATIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION ARE NOW TAX DEDUCTABLE

As many of you are aware, the 416th ENCOM Association, having amended our Constitution this past spring, has applied for recognition as a tax-exempt public charity by the IRS. Consequently, donations made to the Association are now, within limits established by the IRS, eligible for treatment as a tax deduction.

What you may not be aware of is that COL (Ret.) Dewayne Nelson has made, in addition to a \$500 donation, a pledge to match the next \$500 donated before the end of the year. So, if you were considering donating to the association, now (before the end of the year) would be a great opportunity to take advantage of these matching funds and effectively double your gift. Donations can be made directly online at our website, or by sending a check postmarked on or before December 31, 2020, which are considered made in 2020, to:

**416th ENCOM Association
c/o LTC(Ret.) Edgar Montalvo, Treasurer
8719 Timbers Pointe Drive
Tinley Park, IL 60487**

CHARITABLE GIVING AND THE CARES ACT

On March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was enacted. The largest economic stimulus package in U.S. history, the CARES Act allocates more than \$2 trillion to assist health care providers, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals who have been affected by the pandemic. I have listed here some provisions affecting charitable giving that you should know about as the end of the calendar year approaches:

Higher Charitable Deduction Limits: In 2020 only, the annual limit on charitable deductions for cash gifts has been increased from 60 percent to 100 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI). This increases benefits donors and charities during a time of increased need for immediate cash giving. This may be of particular interest to donors who would like to make large gifts from retirement plans or who are looking to offset higher income or liquidity events in 2020.

Additional \$300 Charitable Deduction: For taxpayers who do not itemize, but instead take a standard deduction, the Act provides for an “above-the-line” charitable deduction of up to \$300 for cash gifts. This provides a tax benefit for donors making smaller cash gifts that would not otherwise receive a tax benefit.

RMDS Waived: Individuals must begin taking required minimum distributions from retirement plans beginning at age 72. That requirement has been waived for 2020. This allows retirees to keep those funds invested this year if they want. Note that donors may still make qualified charitable distributions (QCDs), which remain an easy way to make gifts directly to charity without realizing any income tax.

Naturally, the above is furnished to you as open source publicly available information and you are advised to seek personalized professional advice from your tax and/or legal adviser should you have any specific questions about the provisions of the CARES Act and how it might apply to your individual circumstances, or before taking any actions regarding this information.



Association Announcements

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2021

All 2021 events are on hold pending resolution of COVID 19 restrictions. All meetings or events of the association will be held in a Virtual status until further notice.

ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Committee Vacancies

There are position vacancies for five Committees that are to be set up in 2021. Positions include the Committee heads and Committee Members. The Committees are:

- a. The Development Committee
- b. The Communications Committee
- c. The Disbursement Committee
- d. The Future Planning Committee
- e. The Membership Committee

Submit your request to fill a position, to include a short biographic summary (1 Page) and a resume. Job descriptions are still being written and this notice is to alert the membership to needed support from the membership and opportunities to be developed in 2021.

Newsletter Column Writer Needed:

Writer needed to interview directors and write an historical accounting of the transition of the Association into a Non-profit organization supporting military and veterans with needs. What is needed is a 3 stage process. Initially a survey of the Association board meeting minutes to look for indications of when, who and why the discussions of converting the Association to a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.. Then conducting video-phone interviews following leads to complete the picture of this unfolding process. Eventually writing these notes and documenting the process in a series of 4 articles for the quarterly newsletters in 2021. As we all are older it is essential to recover these details as soon as possible as the COVID-19 experience has taught us. What is needed is one or two volunteer writers to take up this mission and run with it. This is a project that will continue forward in time.



The “Castle”

Publication Information

The 416th Engineer Command (ENCOM) Association Newsletter, the “Castle” is a digital publication distributed to Association membership and selected organizations or individuals, quarterly. The purpose is to inform members and interested parties of the activities of the Association and the 416th ENCOM/TEC and other articles of interest. It offers unofficial information. Information on other organizations and logos are used, with permissions. Replies concerning the information included, as well as critiques, comments, suggestions, and letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor, Robert Mittelstaedt. The publisher reserves the right to publish or not, in whole or in part, all letters received. Specific comments to co-editors (Board of Directors) can be addressed them as well, as this publication summarizes concerns and activities that they are

416th ENCOM Association Board Members

Tenure Years—November 2019 thru October 2021

President: Scott Shrader	srs.shrader@gmail.com
President (Elect): Robert Chevas	robertas1@juno.com
VP Membership: Knute Weick	kwikair69@hotmail.com
VP Membership (Assistant): Edward Evans	eevans3747@aol.com
Treasurer: Edgar Montalvo	edgar.montalvo@comcast.net
Treasurer (Assistant): Ken Yoshitani	kenyoshitani@gmail.com
Secretary: Jon Casillas	pavlovasdad@cs.com
Newsletter/Historian: Robert Mittelstaedt	bmitt75@yahoo.com
Chaplain: Rob Carter	robert.t.carter.jr@gmail.com
Past President: Robert Stanek	robert.stanek@comcast.net
Director at Large (Senior): Robert Heine	bobheine@sbcglobal.com
Director at Large VP Programs-Activities: John Gessner	japgessner@charter.net
Director at Large: Gerald Meyer	gmeyer3131@yahoo.com
Director at Large (Eastern Chapter) Lee Pryor	leejprior@me.com
Director at Large: Michele Marsden	michele.marsden@hotmail.com
Web Master (Non-Voting): Shaun Murphy	slyan132@gmail.com