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Commending the 1140th

In Iraq and New Orleans- the 1140th Engineer Battalion Made Us Proud

Southeast Missouri is home to the 1140th Engineer Battalion of the National Guard. The nearly 500 men and women in the Battalion actively serve this country, and when they are called upon, they answer. Sometimes the line of duty is across seas, sometimes it is on American soil, but regardless of where they are sent, they go together and while they are gone, we feel their absence.

On February 22, 2004 the 1140th was sent to the Middle East as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. During the year they were stationed in the war-torn country, the men and women were busy—and brave. The heaviest fighting during Operation Iraqi Freedom took place in the City of Fallujah. As fate would have it, the 1140th was right there when the fighting broke out and they were quickly utilized to work the front line, clearing debris and road blocks as they worked closely with coalition forces. The 1140th was also instrumental in maintaining the theatre's main supply route that ran from the southern tip of Iraq to the Northern most border. The Combat Engineers- fuel handlers, heavy equipment operators, medics, supply personnel, administrative personnel, intelligence officers, mechanics and cooks spent their days and nights patrolling this critical artery of the nation's infrastructure, as they worked to improve the surface from dirt to asphalt. Whatever obstacles they encountered, the 1140th was prepared to do their job as they worked to repair bridges and overpasses, as well as make alternative routes in areas where insurgents had blown up sections of the road. Part of the patrolling included searching for and destroying roadside bombs and reporting insurgent activity to aid other units if they came under fire. The environment in which they worked in was undoubtedly hostile; nonetheless the 1140th performed with honor.



On February 23, 2005, every soldier in the 1140th returned home. Some of them were newly decorated with Bronze Stars, Purple Hearts, and other service medals; all of them had earned the pride and respect of their nation.

The strength of those feelings did not fade with time, rather they recently intensified when tragedy struck close to home. In the devastating wake of Hurricane Katrina, our 500 men and women packed up and

headed 800 miles to the Gulf Coast to offer their services. The 1140th cleared 2,500 city blocks in New Orleans, removed debris from schools, hospitals and other public facilities. They also helped raise the city's levee.



(Members of the 1140th receive their assignments in Lake Charles, LA)

When their mission was accomplished in New Orleans, it had only just begun in Lake Charles, La., as Hurricane Rita added to the need for rescue and recovery efforts. There, they cleared 760 miles of roadway and removed 182 loads of debris from the Lake Charles area. They returned to Missouri 18 days after they had left met with honks, hugs and heartfelt “Welcome Homes”.

The 1140th Engineer Battalion, which is commanded by Brigadier General Michael Pace, trains year round to prepare for any mission given to them by the Governor or President. The guard members can be called on for riots, natural disasters and war. They share the goal of sustaining the fight and ensuring they support other units to complete missions outlined in the overall objective. They play a critical role in what is recognized worldwide as the best performing and strongest military.

To the Alpha Company of Farmington and Fredericktown, the Bravo Company out of Perryville and Jackson, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of Cape Girardeau and the Charlie Company of Sikeston and Portageville: Thank You. The men and women of the 1140th are heroes and just as they will never forget their experiences from their missions, we will always remember their service to us.

Contact Me

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: jcrowell@senate.mo.gov or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com> and <http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>.

*Senator Jason Crowell proudly represents the people of Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison,
Mississippi, Perry and Scott counties in the Missouri Senate.*