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15TH ENGINEER BATTALION UNCASES COLORS DURING ACTIVATION CEREMONY IN SCHWEINFURT

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SCHWEINFURT, Germany -- The colors of the 15th Engineer Battalion were unfurled for the first time in 17 years during an activation ceremony on Conn Barracks here July 16.



LINDSEY COLE

Lt. Col. David Hurley, commander of the 15th Engineer Battalion (left), and battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Houston (second from right) place a streamer on the battalion colors during an activation ceremony on Conn Barracks in Schweinfurt, Germany, July 16.

Linking the engineers' past and present, Lt. Col. David E. Hurley Jr. and Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley J. Houston uncased the colors of their battalion with a little help from the 15th's last acting command sergeant major, 1st Sgt. (Ret.) Charles M. Twardzicki.

Army transformation has mandated many changes to the face of the Army in Europe. With bases closing and brigades moving out of the Germany and to new

posts within it, an activation ceremony is a reminder that not all changes are directed at down-sizing.

"It's really a breath of fresh air to see the battalion come to life here in Schweinfurt," said

Lt. Gen. Kenneth Hunzeker, V Corps commander, noting that many of the ceremonies he's attended lately have been to case the colors of units that are moving, inactivating or deploying.

Hurley, who now commands the battalion, said he is faced with a flock of new Soldiers, many fresh out of basic training.

"It's a challenge for them to come to a unit with no experience," he noted. However, he added, the battalion is reorganizing internally to ensure that its leadership assets are used effectively.

One Soldier in the battalion, Pfc. Harrison Jones, said he feels that leadership is ready for the challenge.

"My chain of command is top-notch. As we activate this new unit, I expect new opportunities, new adventures," he said.

And although adventure may not be forthcoming, it is likely the combat engineer battalion will soon deploy.

"We ... will once again bring (the battalion) back to life in order to get the unit and Soldiers ready for combat. Make no mistake about it," Hunzeker said.

Hurley agreed, citing his battalion's combat history.

"The 15th Engineer battalion has been called on to fight for its principles time and again. I believe that somewhere in the Pentagon there's an instruction that reads: 'Face a war. Activate the 15th Engineer Battalion'," he said.



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