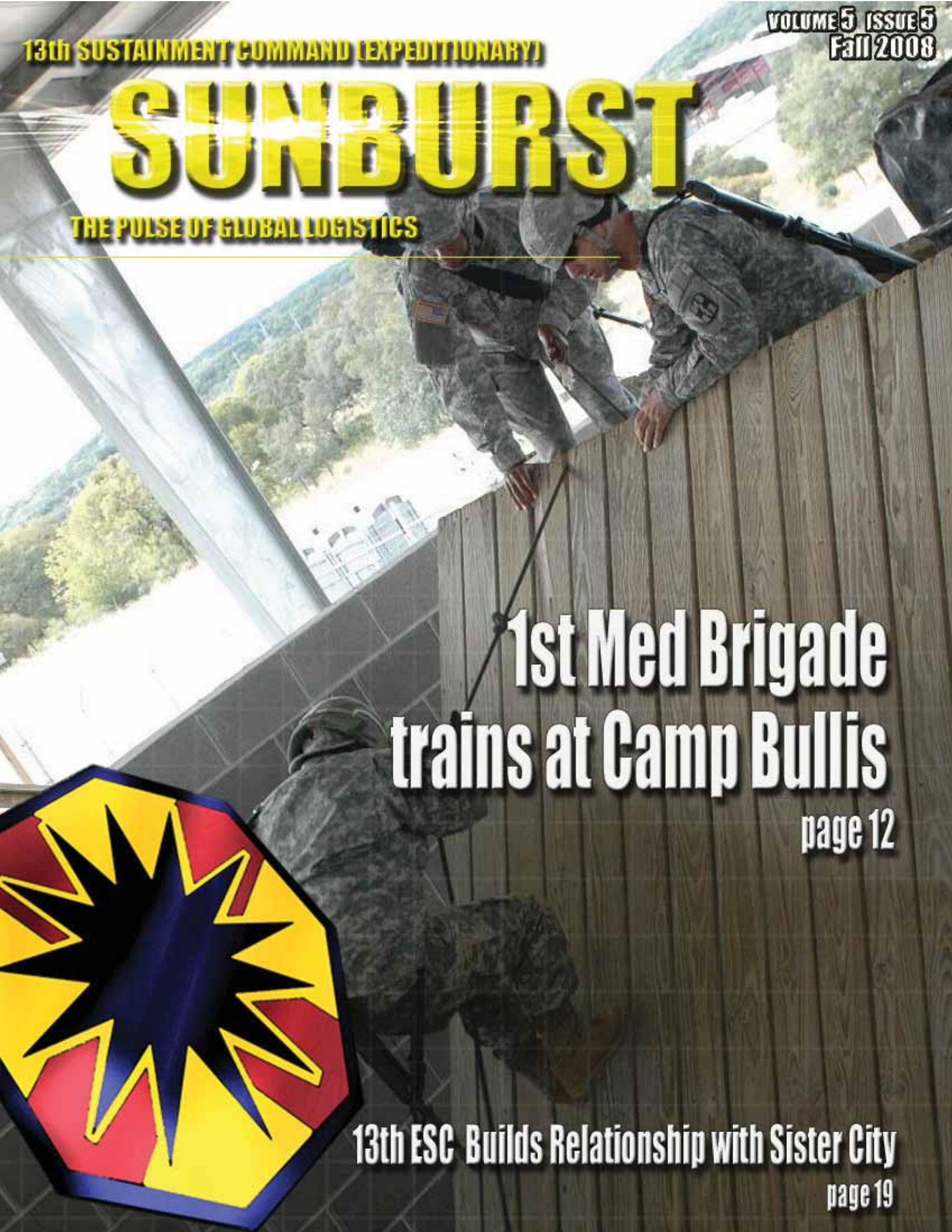
VOLUME 5 ISSUE 5
Fall 2008

13th SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (EXPEDITIONARY)

SUNBURST

THE PULSE OF GLOBAL LOGISTICS



1st Med Brigade trains at Camp Bullis

page 12

13th ESC Builds Relationship with Sister City

page 19

CONTENTS

Cover: Soldiers from the 61st Multifunctional Medical Battalion attempt to maneuver an obstacle at Camp Bullis's Leadership Reaction Course during the battalion's field training exercise October 20 -28. o. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah, 13th ESC Public Affairs)

Back Cover: Sgt. Jeff O'Millian, with the 96th Transportation Company, 180th Transportation Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), gives his daughter Makenzie a hug before deploying on a 12-month tour to Iraq Oct. 7. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain, 15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs)

13th SUSTAINMENT SUNBURST

The SUNBURST is a quarterly magazine distributed in electronic and print format. It is authorized for publication by the 13th ESC Public Affairs Office.
The contents of the SUNBURST are unofficial and are not to be considered the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, including the Department of Defense.
The SUNBURST is a command information publication in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1.
The Public Affairs Office is on Fort Hood's Support Ave. in building 39048, DSN telephone: 288-7342. Website at www.hood.army.mil/13sce.
Contact Staff Sgt. Joel F. Gibson via e-mail at joel.f.gibson@conus.army.mil

13th ESC Commanding General
Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz

13th ESC CSM
Command Sgt. Maj. Mark D. Joseph

13th ESC Chief of Public Affairs
Maj. Raul Marquez

13th ESC
Public Affairs NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Joel F. Gibson

Editor
Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah

Staff Sections

p. 3 CG's Comments
p. 3 CSM's Corner
p. 4 Chaplain's Corner
p. 5 Retention

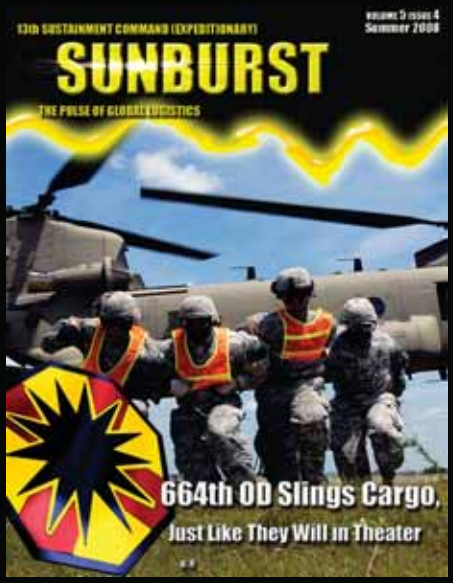
Proudly representing

Cover Stories

1st Med Brigade Trains at Camp Bullis.....p. 12
13th ESC Builds Relationship with Sister City.....p. 19

Other Stories

p. 6 Temple Honors 13th in Christmas Parade
p. 7 4th SB Spends Xmas with Nolan Middle School
p. 8 Santa Claus visits 15th SB at BLORA Open House
p. 15 Wagonmasters Learn to Save Lives
p. 18 Wrangler Wellness Program Keeps Soldiers Fit
p. 23 4th SB Soldier Keeps Others in Mind
p. 26 15th SB schools Soldiers on sling load
p. 29 Wrangler Soldiers Learn a Hard Lesson the Fun Way
p. 33 1st Med Test MRAP Ambulance
p. 36 13th ESC, Wagonmasters change enlisted leaders



Last Published Issue
Vol. 5 Issue 4
Summer 2008

CG'S COMMENTS

COMMANDING GENERAL

Paul L. Wentz

First and foremost, I would like to wish Happy New Year to all 13th ESC Soldiers and families, and thank you for your hard work and dedication during the past year.

2008 has been an outstanding year for the Phantom Support team. It has been filled with numerous accomplishments such as the 15th Sustainment Brigade's first Low Cost, Low Altitude drop on Fort Hood, 1st Medical Brigade's CCMRF support and winning the III Corps NCO of the Year, and 4th Sustainment Brigade's deployment and outstanding support of all logistical operations between Kuwait and Iraq.

As we reflect on all the great accomplishments of the Phantom Support team during 2008, we must look forward into 2009 and beyond. This next year we will continue the constant transition between deployments and providing mission support to Fort Hood as we continue our legacy of world class, seamless logistical support around the world. The year ahead will prove to be challenging with the deployment and relocation of 15th Sustainment Brigade Headquarters to Fort Bliss, the redeployment of 4th Sustainment Brigade and their assumption of all Fort Hood support missions, and the deployment of the 13th ESC Headquarters. I am extremely confident in the professionalism and abilities of our soldiers, NCOs and officers within this command to overcome all these challenges and excel during this period of transition.

Finally, as many of our Soldiers spend time with their families as they prepare to deploy, we must not forget to recognize the sacrifices of the Families and Soldiers who are currently deployed. Behind every soldier is a great family that provides invaluable contributions and the strength and support that allows our soldiers to complete their mission on a daily basis. I would like to personally thank all the soldiers and families of the 13th ESC for their unwavering dedication in defense of our nation.

Phantom Support!

BG Paul L. Wentz
Provider 6

CSM'S CORNER

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

Mark D. Joseph

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all the Soldiers and Family members of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary). From my previous assignment as the Command Sergeant Major of the 15th Sustainment Brigade, I know this is going to be an excellent team to work with as we prepare for what lies ahead.

The holiday season is all about Family. We as Soldiers in an Army at war should take full advantage of every opportunity we have to spend with our Families and friends. With units in a constant state of deployment, redeployment and training, those of us at home for the holidays should make the most of our time.

Looking forward to 2009 and the impending deployment of this headquarters and many of our subordinate units, I believe the announcement of 2009, by the Army's senior leadership, as the "Year of the NCO" is appropriate.

We have a busy year ahead of us, with many goals to accomplish. Without highly competent and motivated Noncommissioned Officers, we will not be able to achieve that which we set out to do.

Some of the various responsibilities of our NCOs are training, preparing for deployment, accountability of personnel and equipment, as well as motivating our Soldiers to complete their missions here and in theater.

Every NCO must define ad develop their individual leadership style, from the Corporal to the Command Sergeant Major, we, the 13th ESC, needs each and every NCO to do his or her part to ensure success.

CSM Mark D. Joseph
Provider 7

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

A Holiday Message

It is hard to believe the Holidays are here already. The 13th ESC has remained busy in preparing to deploy, deploying and returning from deployments. We have seen the 13th NCO leadership change responsibility, saying "goodbye" to CSM Fountain and welcoming CSM Joseph. Personally, in our families, many of us have watched our children leave elementary to middle school or from middle school to high school and high school to college. Others may have welcomed a new member into their family through birth, marriage or enduring friendship. Yes, much has occurred in all our lives this year. So, as the Holidays approach, I encourage you to use this season as a time to slow down from the frenetic pace and remember the blessings that have befallen us this past year.

On behalf of our Commanding General, BG Wentz, I want to say "thank you" to our entire "Phantom Support" team. You and your families have worked tirelessly with great diligence and commitment to respond to our nations call. To our families that support us; we are reminded that our success is birthed in your support, love and sacrifices. So, I encourage everyone to make this holiday season a time of gratitude, and let us not forget to say "Thank you." Thank you to our Families who have stood by our side, loving and encouraging us daily. Thank you for our nation, our community, our good fortune and good health.

History reminds us that as Americans, we are members of a time honored group of individuals on the cutting edge of changing for the better, the course of human history. This mission, with all its challenges, is one of nobility and honor. It is a mission that is accomplished, not alone but in community, with each of us bringing our special gifts and talents to the table.

This holiday season, celebration is a reminder that when individuals work together, especially with undaunted courage, success is inevitable. And with that success blessings are bestowed on us and our posterity. For that we can be thankful--thankful for our blessings, good fortune and for the opportunity to make a difference not only for all Americans, but for all humanity.

In the fall of 1621, the Plymouth colonists at the direction Governor William Bradford gathered with their neighbors and friends the Wampanoag Indians to share a three-day harvest festival that came to be known as the first Thanksgiving.

On November 1st, 1782, the United States Continental Congress proclaimed a general Thanksgiving to be observed on the 28th of that month in view of "the many instances of divine goodness to these States, in the course of the important conflict in which they have been so long engaged; the present happy and promising state of public affairs; and the events of the war in the year now drawing to a close...."

In November 1863, as the War Between the States had turned a corner, President Lincoln proclaimed a National Day of Thanksgiving that's become a regular landmark on our historical landscape for well over a century.

Today we're deeply engaged in a long struggle, as we continue to fight this fight together over the coming years, whether in or out of uniform, it's good and fitting that this struggle be punctuated with regular days of national Thanksgiving. Let these festive seasons of gratitude remind us not only of the dark days of famines, plagues, and warfare's past, but the bright future toward which we all aspire and for which we spill blood, sweat, and tears as an Army, and as a nation, every single day. Continue to remember our brothers and sisters in arms that are away from their homes and Families this holiday season. And remember their Families as well. May Lord bless and keep you this and every day! So, inclosing I wish you a "Happy Thanksgiving" and a joyous holiday season!

CH (LTC) Roy T. Walker
13th ESC Chaplain

STAY ARMY STRONG!

RE-UP WITH 13TH ESC

USEFUL NUMBERS

13TH ESC CHAPLAINS

BLDG 39048

phone 287-1391

or dial 287-CHAP

KIESCHNICK GYM

BLDG 39008

phone 287-5493

ABRAMS GYM

BLDG 23001

phone 287-2016

EOC

BLDG 39048

phone 287-8800

NOT SURE WHAT TO DO? SEE YOUR CAREER COUNSELOR TODAY.

13TH ESC COMMAND CAREER COUNSELOR

Master Sgt. Harvey	BLDG 39048	287-0993

13TH ESC SENIOR RC CAREER COUNSELOR

Master Sgt. Bergman	BLDG 39048	287-0994

4TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

Sgt. 1st Class Williams	BLDG 14024	288-7798

15th SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

Master Sgt. Ross	BLDG 2804	287-5002
Staff Sgt. Culotta	BLDG 2804	287-1730
Staff Sgt. Moore	BLDG 2804	287-3961

1ST MEDICAL BRIGADE

Sgt. 1st Class Sondgeroth	BLDG 33020	286-5102
Staff Sgt. Green	BLDG 33020	286-5102

RESERVE TRANSITION CAREER COUNSELOR

Sgt. 1st Class Longorua	BLDG 39048	287-0142
Mr. Mings	BLDG 39048	287-5971

OFFICER TRANSITION

Capt. Bocanagra	BLDG 18010	287-7724

U.S. ARMY

SOLDIERS • FAMILIES • ARMY CIVILIANS

ARMY STRONG

Temple Honors 13th ESC in Christmas Parade

Story and Photos by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah
13th ESC Public Affairs

The crowd cheered loudly as a jolly old man in a red suit went by in his sleigh, guided by 12 reindeer, followed by a group of young carolers from the Temple College Academy of Music.

Soldiers from the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) were honored in the city of Temple's annual Christmas parade Dec. 1 on Main Street in Temple.

The Grand Marshall of the parade, Mary Alice, kicked off the night's festivities by lighting the city's Christmas tree. Alice, who was also celebrating her 100th birthday, is one of the eldest Temple residents. Mayor Bill Jones announced December 2008 as honorary Mary Alice month in the city of Temple.

The Soldiers of the 13th ESC rode in classic cars as well as new Corvettes and they were preceded by the 13th ESC Honor Guard. The 13th ESC deputy commander was the guest of honor for the parade.

"It's a great honor," said Col. Knowles Atchison, deputy commander, 13th ESC, "The city of Temple does a great job of supporting Fort Hood so I'm glad to be participating and supporting them."

This year's theme was Christmas Bells and Bows and the parade also featured a 30 foot snow slide as part of the festivities. Temple hosted Christmas performances and activities throughout the week.

The 13th ESC Honor Guard leads the military procession in the city of Temple's annual Christmas Parade December 1 on Main St.

Col. Knowles Atchison, deputy commander, 13th ESC, rides in a classic car as the guest of honor in the city of Temple's annual Christmas Parade December 1.

4th SB Spends Xmas with Nolan Middle School

Sgt. Diamante Barnett, medic, Rear Det., 4th SB, 13th ESC, discusses safety issues with the student's of Nolan Middle School prior to the commencement of Killeen's 46th Annual Christmas Parade December 13.

Story and Photo by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah
13th ESC Public Affairs

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the town, the children lined the streets, jumping up and down.

They shouted with glee, "Santa's coming soon, he's on his way! I hope he brought sweets and candy today!"

Jolly old Santa Claus threw sugary treats, from atop a sleigh, no…wait a ladder truck from the Killeen Fire Department, and the children dove as it landed at their feet.

Soldiers from the Rear Detachment, 4th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), marched with students from Nolan Middle School during Killeen's annual Christmas Parade in downtown Killeen Dec. 13.

The 4th SB Soldiers also helped the middle school students decorate the float prior to the parade.

The parade featured more than 140 different entries, made up of floats, riding clubs, marching bands, and other organizations including the 1st Cavalry Division Band, Horse Detachment, and Honor Guard.

Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander, III Corps and Fort Hood, and Texas State Rep. Jimmie D. Aycock were the grand marshals for the parade.

The 4th SB Soldiers often volunteer their time with their adopted school, decorating the float and marching in the parade was just a small part of everything they do.

"We volunteer in the classroom, read with the students, help them with lawn care and maintenance, and go on field trips with them," said Spc. Kyle Walker, human resource information system management specialist, Rear Det., 4th SB.

The Soldiers do not view volunteering as a card they have to punch for time served though.

"I love kids, interacting with them and teaching them," said Walker, who has been volunteering at Fort Hood since 2001, "Especially if their parents are deployed, I like to give them something to smile about."

This holiday season, we should all follow the example set by these outstanding Soldiers. Remember the old adage: "T'is better to give, then to receive."

Walker said, "I like to see kid's smile. It warms your heart, and it boosts the kid's spirits, I love volunteering my time for them."

The Killeen annual Christmas parade is in it's 46th year. The city of Killeen will continue its Holiday festivities throughout the month.

Santa Claus visits 15th SB at BLORA Open House

Story and Photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Lea Heald, 3, asks Santa Claus, played by Pfc. Rob Floyd, signal support systems specialist, A Co., 15th STB, 15th SB, for a video game for Christmas at a 15th STB Family Readiness Group Christmas open house event at BLORA Dec. 4.

"Ho, ho, ho. What do you want for Christmas little boy?" the bearded figure in the red suit asked the smiling child in his lap.

The jolly man was surrounded by the trappings of the season. A lit Christmas tree and stockings adorned the area while Soldiers wearing elf hats directed excited jumping children to a buffet of assorted cookies. Merry music played in the background as Soldiers and family members laughed and joked with each other.

The 15th Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)'s Family Readiness Group hosted a holiday open house event at BLORA Dec. 4.

The free event, open to all Wagonmaster Soldiers and family members, included door prizes, cookies, beverages, holiday music, gift stockings for the children, and a visit by Santa Claus.

"I like kids. That's one of the reasons I agreed to do it," said Pfc. Rob Floyd, Santa Claus and signal support systems specialist A Company, 15th STB, 15th SB.

As Santa, Floyd and his Soldier-elf helpers gave stockings full of goodies such as children's coloring books, stickers, crazy straws, crayons, candy, and other toys to the children.

All who came were invited to enter a raffle drawing for a lunch box containing a key chain, two mugs, a gift card, and pen all with the 15th SB emblem on them.

Soldiers and family members in attendance weren't the only ones who enjoyed the party, some of the volunteers said they did as well.

"I usually volunteer for stuff like this, I like helping out," Spc. Justin Cleveland, signal support systems specialist, A Company, 15th STB said.

Due to impending deployments and a heavy operational tempo, Soldier's and their families cherish these type of opportunities.

"It's good for the family because some of these guys won't see each other all year," said Cleveland.

Julie Grant, 15th STB Family Readiness Support Assistant and chief coordinator of the event agreed.

"It's important to share down time while we're here because last year we weren't here," she said, referring to the unit's last Christmas in Iraq.

"Families need to bond with each other to support each other while their Soldiers are deployed in Iraq. FRG is the way to do that," Grant explained.

Col. Larry Phelps, commander, 15th SB, announced some of the raffle winners and joked with the Soldiers and family members.

"Just calm down," he told the crowd just before the last prize drawing, "We haven't got to the Mercedes just yet,"

Phelps closed the event with a few words about those deployed.

Phelps said, "Keep those Soldiers who aren't with us, and their families, in your prayers."

Wagonmaster's Junior FRG lights Christmas Tree

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

"Five…Four…Three … two … "

With the help of dozens of children, Col. Larry Phelps, commander, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), threw the giant switch lighting the brigade's Christmas tree during a junior Family Readiness Group event Dec. 5 at the brigade's headquarters.

The brigade hosted the holiday event in order to officially kick off the holiday season with an event that has become a tradition for units he leads, Phelps said.

"To me and my family, the holidays are all about family traditions," he said.

The event got under way with the time-honored military tradition of Retreat, after which, the tree was lit and an appearance was made by Santa and Mrs. Claus.

But Santa didn't arrive in the traditional sleigh pulled by eight reindeer, this Santa arrived by Humvee, which was decorated to become a sleigh needing no reindeer.

Phelps said this was a very special period of time for many Soldiers in the brigade, because they may not be home with their families to celebrate the holidays next year.

"We'll be celebrating it in places with names like Taji, Rustamiyah, Jalabad," Phelps said. "A whole bunch of places spread out all over the maps of Iraq and Afghanistan."

Tim Cowles, a ventriloquist, and his puppet parrot entertain kids and Soldiers at the 15th SB, 13th ESC, junior Family Readiness Group event Dec. 5. The puppet show encouraged kids to be respectful and reach out to help one another.

In light of that fact, Phelps told the families the command will do everything it can to ensure they get to spend as much time with their Soldiers as possible this year.

Phelps took a few minutes to recognize the efforts of the brigade's Soldiers, who have accomplished more than 40,000 discrete missions on Fort Hood since Feb., and told those present to keep the Soldiers already deployed, and their families, in their thoughts and prayers this holiday season. He also thanked all the members of the Central Texas community that worked to make the event possible.

Col. Larry Phelps, commander, 15th SB, 13th ESC, gets a little bit of help throwing the switch to light the brigade's Christmas tree Dec. 5 at the unit's junior family readiness group tree lighting holiday event. After the tree was lit, Santa arrived in a nontraditional Humvee and the kids were given the opportunity for photos

According to Phelps, events like this are important to families and the communities because they give an opportunity to say "thank you."

"It's important to give back a little bit to the families that work so hard to support us," he said.

According to Charles Lyons, the brigade's family readiness support assistant, these events are important because units must acknowledge and take care of their families.

"We have to show them that we care," Lyons said. "It's a team – the Soldier, family, kids and the community."

Following Santa's arrival, everyone was given an opportunity for photos with Santa, and all the kids were given a copy of their photo and a gift bag containing small gifts.

The evening closed with a puppet show which aimed to teach the younger children life lessons such as respect and comraderie between one another.

Kosan Sin, 11 said, "I thought it was amazing,"

61st MMB Trains its Troops

Story and Photos by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah
13th ESC Public Affairs

CAMP BULLIS, Texas – The Soldiers quickly reacted to the enemy contact, maneuvering their vehicle so both sides had a chance to engage the enemy before dismounting to evacuate casualties off the battlefield to the waiting Blackhawk.

While this may sound like an actual combat mission, it's only a part of the multi-faceted training conducted by Fort Hood's 61st Multi-functional Medical Battalion, 1st Medical Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), during their field training exercise at Camp Bullis, San Antonio October 20 – 28.

The exercise covered a wide variety of warrior tasks as well as many tasks specific to the medical logistics specialties of the units participating.

"This was a mission rehearsal exercise for 582nd Medical Logistics Company, which will deploy in support of [Operation Iraqi Freedom] in December, as well as a validation for the 583rd Medical Logistics Company and the 932nd Blood Support Detachment, after their redeployment from Afghanistan," said Lt. Col. Ronald Krogh, commander, 61st MMB.

"We are also the severe weather and [Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive] response team for NorthCom, so this exercise prepares us for our Homeland Security mission, as well," Krogh, a Tacoma, Wash. native, added.

Due to the nature of the battalion, their mission focus was much more intense because units are constantly rotating in and out of theater operations.

"We have to focus on reintegration of returning units as well as preparing the headquarters for deployment," said Krogh, "Preparing for deployments really never stops."

Normally the battalion would spend it's time in the garrison environment where conducting realistic training is difficult at best, so this opportunity gave them a chance to gain valuable experience.

"This was a chance for us to use the equipment we use when we deploy rather than sit in the garrison," said Maj. Dennis Walker, executive officer, 61st MMB. "Somehow, some way all the training links to our mission assignment."

The battalion had several blood services detachments sharpening their skills, as well as several medical logistics companies participating to enhance field expedience.

The blood services detachments rehearsed their collection procedures just as they would conduct operations in theater. Each step in the process was thorough so as to ensure a good quality donation every time, said 2nd Lt. Ken Gonzales, executive officer, 932nd Blood Support Detachment, 61st MMB.

"We set up the system just as we would in a deployed environment," said Sgt. Christopher B. LeRoy, lab sergeant, 932nd Blood Support Det., 61st MMB. "Everybody in the lab was taught well in [advance individual training], but we get familiar with our tasks and fine tune everything out here."

Everybody fulfilling their individual responsibilities is one of the biggest factors in a successful blood support detachment.

"Team work is absolutely necessary; we can't do it without it," said LeRoy, "Everybody has to know their job and execute properly."

Teamwork and cooperation didn't stop there, as they were also vital components to the success of the medical logistics companies training. The companies conducted scenario based training with a convoy live-fire, supply training, fork lift operations training, teambuilding at the leadership reaction course, aerial resupply operations, and learned to use the equipment they would operate with in theater.

The medical equipment repair teams

had the chance to actually assist a Combat Support Hospital in San Antonio while training in their specialties. The teams received broken or malfunctioning medical equipment from the CSH, triaged it in order of importance, and then each technician went to work on his assignment.

"This will be big because we don't have a chance to do this in garrison," said Sgt. 1st Class Dwight Gray, maintenance platoon sergeant, 582nd Med. Log. Co., 61st MMB, 1st Med. Bde., 13th ESC. "The new guys get to see the process and the older guys take on new responsibility in preparation for our deployment."

At the leadership reaction course the companies split into teams and attempted to maneuver through obstacles with the few tools provided. The observer/controller's frequently appointed the lowest ranking member of the team as leader and only gave him a short time to assess the situation before briefing his team and come up with a solution.

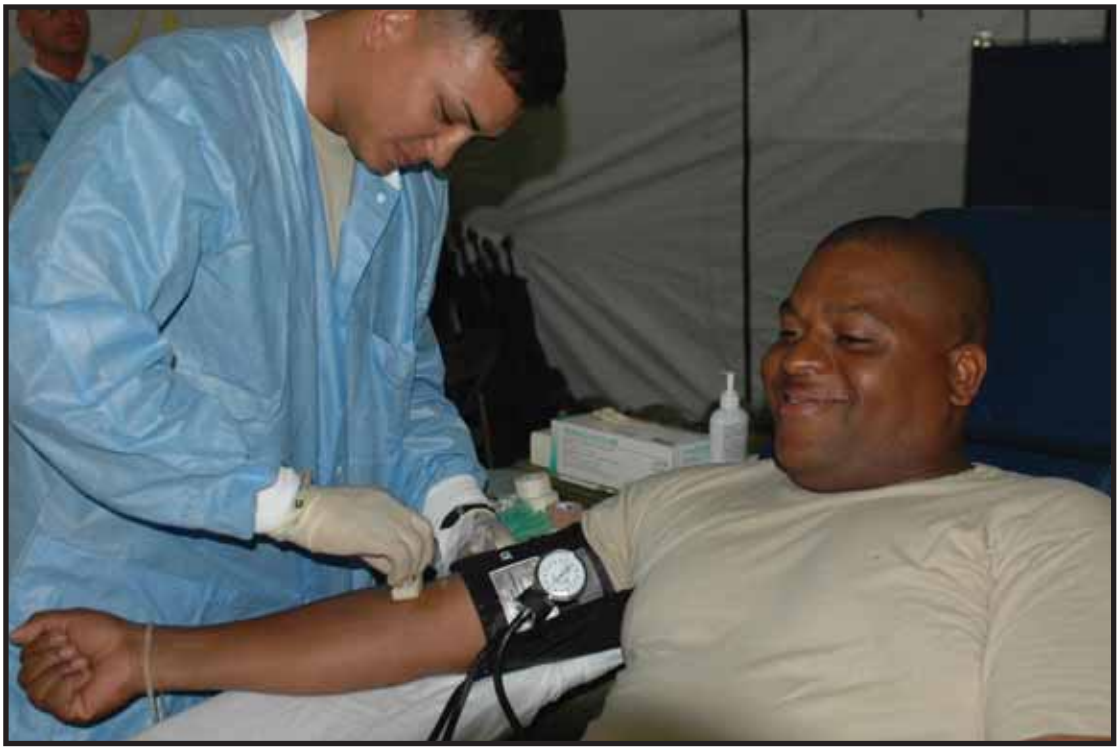
Staff Sgt. Ross Raymond, CBRNE sergeant, headquarters and headquarters detachment, 61st MMB, said "I wouldn't have thought of that," in reference to the many resolutions the teams came up with, "Some of the things they think of to overcome these obstacles are out of this world."

Another part of the training was the aerial resupply and drop, where a UH-60 Blackhawk from the Texas Army National Guard, based in San Antonio, picked up a humvee with a sling-load. The 418th Medical Logistics Company, based in Fort Sam Houston, gave briefings on the proper way to put a sling load together. Instructors from the 418th oversaw teams from each company as they rigged the humvee and hooked it up to the helicopter to familiarize them with the process.

"Logistics units need to know the procedures for receiving and sending sling-loads because it's the way we send and receive supplies for homeland security and natural disaster events," said Sgt. 1st Class Jamie L. Davison, first sergeant, 418th Medical Logistics Company, 61st MMB.

Overall, with the plethora of training the battalion undertook, there was no doubt they would be prepared for whatever mission they could be assigned.

"The troops did very well, they trained on their individual tasks, then rehearsed and executed the entire operation," said Krogh, "It had a lot of moving parts, from the med log to the headquarters as a multifunctional element, and it built confidence in everybody to run a simultaneous operation."



A Soldier from the 932nd Blood Support Detachment prepares a blood donor during the 61st Multi-functional Medical Battalion's field training exercise at Camp Bullis, San Antonio, October 20 – 28.

(Above) First Sgt. David Falk, the senior NCO and flight medic for Co. C, 2nd Bn., 227th Aviation Regt., guides Soldiers from the 154th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC, away from a medical evacuation helicopter during medevac training Oct. 2 at Fort Hood.

(Right) Soldiers from the 154th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC, wait to load simulated patients on to the helicopter. during Sergeant's Time Training Oct. 2.

Photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley

(Left) Soldiers from the 154th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC, wait to load simulated patients on to the landing medical evacuation helicopters during medevac training Oct. 2.

Wagonmasters Learn to Save Lives

1st Cav, 15th SB Engage in Joint MEDAVAC Training

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

When Soldiers are critically wounded on the battlefield, they often depend on medical evacuation, or medevac, helicopters to get them to treatment as fast as possible.

In order to ensure Soldiers know what to do when they call for a medevac, 154th Transportation Company, 180th Transportation Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) trained on the proper medevac procedures during Sergeant's Time Training Oct. 2.

The training was conducted by members of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

"We covered everything from calling for a medevac to loading and unloading patients from the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Orange, flight medic, 227th Aviation Regt.

The training first identified problems medevac crews have when they receive a call and how to best resolve those issues before they cause major delays in the response time for the medevac.

"Some of the most common mistakes people make when calling for a medevac are providing the wrong location on the map or the wrong number of patients," said Orange, a Sarasota, Fla., native.

Oftentimes, when calling for a Medevac, Soldiers will underestimate the number of critically wounded casualties they have.

"We would rather be prepared for too many casualties then not be prepared enough," said Orange.

Orange also talked to the Soldiers about the proper procedures to identify their location to the medevac crews using smoke, brightly colored panels and other techniques.

"This training is important for the 154th Soldiers because once deployed, they'll be going outside the wire daily, and it's important they know what to expect if they ever need to call for medevac," said Capt. Corinne McClellan, commander, 154th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB.

When it comes to a life or death incident like calling for a Medevac, trail by fire is not the way to learn.

"You don't want them to get this training when an event happens," McClellan said. "We're fortunate enough to have the individuals and training tools in place here to make sure they're trained for when it happens."

The training also built cohesion and trust among team members, because each Soldier knows they can count on the Soldier next to them when it counts.

"The training was a very good experience," said Sgt. Ramon Alcantara, truck driver, 154th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB. "My favorite part was having the choppers at the site and loading a casualty into the helicopter with my team."

Alcantara received similar training prior to his last deployment and it came in handy because he had to call in a medevac during one of his missions.

McClellan said, "The unit has been conducting a lot of training in order to prepare the Soldiers for deployment,"

The company is scheduled to deploy toward the end of the year.

Photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley

Soldiers from the 154th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC, carry a simulated casualty to a medical evacuation helicopter during medevac training Oct. 2. The training is in preparation for the company's upcoming deployment.

Training Puts Versatile Mechanics in the Driver's Seat

Story and Photo By 1st Lt. Jeffery Chemasko
1st Sustainment Brigade

The Army's Heavy Equipment Transport system, or HET, is capable of transporting a wide range of tactical vehicles, including the Abrams M1 Main Battle Tank, weighing nearly 70 tons.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Mechanics from the 377th Heavy Equipment Transportation Company, 165th CSSB, 1st Sustainment Brigade, a deployed 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) company out of Fort Bliss, work around the clock to keep the company's fleet of Heavy Equipment Transport systems well maintained.

However, many of these Soldiers' mission has changed from ensuring the vehicles work, to piloting the house-boat sized behemoths on all sorts of missions.

Operating this enormous transport system is no easy task. The vehicle is designed to haul heavy equipment of all types, including the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank.

Before these eager mechanics could jump behind the wheel, they had to go through an intense and thorough driver's training program headed by Staff Sgt. David Deleston, the unit master driver.

To turn the mechanics into capable operators, Deleston, a Lane, S.C., native, methodically led them through each phase of training. The training began with a familiarization of the bobtail tractor itself, and then they combined the tractor and trailer together as complete system.

They then honed their driving skills by driving through serpentine mazes in the motor pool before testing their abilities on roads within the Camp Taji walls - under the supervision of experienced drivers of course.

"These Soldiers were highly motivated and stayed focused throughout the training," said Deleston. "They are now capable of going on missions and handling the [HET] system properly."

"Driving [the HET] was fun. I loved having this opportunity; it was a great experience," said McAllen, Texas, native, Pfc. first Nancy Lopez.

"A Wise Man Once said..." - Wagonmasters Learn Lessons from a Vet

Story by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Retired Maj. Gen. Robert Shadley was a special guest speaker at the 15th Sustainment Brigade's latest Officer Professional Development class at the Community Events Center here, October 31.

Shadley, a Vietnam veteran, spoke to the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) officers on a variety of topics centering on his observations in leadership and the four points of the Tim-Tom Theory, which comes from the ideas of Minnesota governor Tim Pawlety and retired Gen. Tom Hill: competence, character, chemistry, and curiosity.

Shadley said almost everything that officers do has been done before, so they should look for those people with experience and use their ideas and existing materials.

"I haven't had an original idea in my life," he said.

Shadley explained what he meant by competence.

"Our objective in the sustainment business is not to make all the dots green," he said, referring to the green marks indicating a task's completion on briefing charts. "Red dots are green dots that aren't ripe yet."

Shadley reminded the officers that it wasn't their job to make sure tasks our merely completed, but completed correctly.

The retired general encouraged the Wagonmaster officers to write everything down in notes, ensure that they are knowledgeable on all the technical systems involved in their jobs, and that they are properly managing their time.

"I have just taken 18 minutes of your life and I can't give it back to you," he said in illustration. "Time management is critical."

"Precision, in our business, is critical don't wing it."

He explained it's better to have already worked on the situation than to be working on it.

"If you have to wait to be told or asked to do something, you're too late," he continued.

He spoke of the changing expectations that Soldiers have of their leadership.

"Uncommon valor is becoming common with our enlisted Soldiers," he said, telling a story of a young Soldier with three purple hearts after living through 22 improvised explosive device explosions.

He explained that Soldiers expect their officers to exhibit strong values and strong moral character. "You don't lose your integrity, you give it away," he said.

In closing, the Vietnam veteran suggested that everyone should live by the 1st Infantry Division's motto.

"No mission too difficult, no sacrifice too great – duty first!"

15th SB spruces up Pershing Park

Story and Photos by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Residents of Pershing Park may not recognize their Community Life Center after its remodeling, Nov. 21.

Soldiers from the 15th Sustainment Brigade worked to overhaul the facility as well as maintain the Pershing Park grounds.

The Wagonmasters sponsors the nearly 700 unit military housing area by ensuring that it is well maintained and beautiful for the residents.

Soldiers pushed to complete as much work as possible in the short time provided. They repainted walls and doors, organized storage areas, laid down mulch, picked up trash, cut grass and did many other things to improve the quality of not only the CLC, but the fence line and playgrounds in the vicinity.

Staff Sgt. Simo Ngqakayi, truck driver, 96th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a community life noncommissioned officer for the area said that the building's appearance wasn't up to standards.

Upon completion, the CLC is intended to have new TVs, a projector, a children's room, and new furniture, although some of these may not yet be present when the building first opens, Ngqakayi said.

"For me, this is easy, I like it," Pfc. Issac Juarbe, cargo specialist, 297th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC.

Duty is what drives him.

"I'm a Soldier, that's my job, [to] serve the people of the United States."

Juarbe was already a seasoned professional painter, as he started painting at age 14 in Puerto Rico for extra cash.

"[We're] trying to beautify the area to provide a better quality to the residents of Pershing Park," Sgt. 1st Class Arturo Guzman, a 263rd Ordnance Company, 49th transportation battalion, 15th SB, mechanic and community life NCO for the area, said.

The CLC can be used by any resident of Pershing Park by reservation for activities such as birthday parties, meetings, holiday activities, bingo, the neighborhood watch and parties. No alcohol is permitted.

Although the recent focus was on the CLC, the community life NCOs continually work to ensure better quality of life for everyone in the community. They inspect the area to make sure everything is up to the III Corps and Fort Hood standards on such things as safety, presentable appearance, energy conservation, housekeeping, and vehicles.

Citations are issued to residents who do not comply with the standards, and depending on the severity of the situation, may be allotted time to correct the situation before adverse actions, such as contacting the Soldier's chain-of-command, are taken.

"Even though I live in quarters, I take pride in my house," Ngqakayi said.

Ngqakayi and Guzman have also made themselves available to assist the community's mayor, Laurie Morin, and manager Todd Hess, with their fledgling neighborhood watch program.

Ngqakayi said that the neighborhood watch program still needs volunteers.

Spc. Patrick Ouzenne, food service specialist, 418th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC, touches up worn patches of a door's paint at the Community Life Center of the military housing area Pershing Park as part of the project to restore the building for the community residents here, Nov. 20.

Pfc. Issac Juarbe, cargo specialist, 297th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC, paints a small room in the Community Life Center of the on-post housing area Pershing Park as part of the project to restore the building for the community residents here, Nov. 20.

Wrangler Wellness Program Keeps Soldiers Fit

Story and Photo by Pvt. Dennis K. Blakeney
4th SB Public Affairs

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- Many of us already know while being deployed there is little time to worry about what you eat and how much you actually exercise. Whether your goal is to lose weight, gain weight or even sustain it, the Wrangler Wellness Program provides you the tools to be successful.

In the past, metabolic testing was only offered at hospitals and universities, now it is as simple as setting up an appointment with the Wrangler Wellness staff to have your metabolic test done.

"I brought the [Wellness] Team to the NCO Academy when I was Commandant of the [United States Europe NCO Academy] to assist me in building my PT program and to work with the students who were body fat failures," said the 4th Sustainment Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Erik R. R. Frey.

"The assessment and training program I developed was a huge success in terms of body fat loss and developing healthy lifestyles for my Soldiers," said Frey.

The Metabolic testing procedures are very simple to include weighing yourself, breathing into a tube known as the Metacheck unit, for approximately ten minutes, and an electrode test.

After the test is complete, your Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR) is determined by how many calories your body burns at rest, or simply sitting all day.

A diet plan is provided to you after the metabolic assessment. This plan dictates how many calories you are allowed to take in per day, along with an exchange list of healthy foods.

To accomplish weight loss under the wellness program, your RMR dictates the maximum amount of calories your body can take in and be able to lose weight at a rate of 1.5 pounds a week.

In the weight loss zone, your body should be healthy, happy, and satisfied. Learning to listen to your body and what it needs is important to be successful.

"Many people have a tendency to over report how much exercise they perform and under report how much food they eat," said Todd A. Hoover, Director of the Wellness Center in Heidelberg, Germany, who runs health promotion for the hospital and surrounding clinics.

"Service members have the opportunity to take their body to a garage to get it calibrated, so they can perform at their best," said Hoover. "This calibration can tell someone how many calories they need and how many calories to consume in order to lose weight, there is no guessing."

"We help people develop a calorie budget for the day, which leads to improving the body by adapting to the environment," he said. "We want to create an environment to allow a person to reach a goal."

Weight management is a delicate balance between how many calories you burn and how many are consumed. Gaining weight is not much of a challenge for most people.

When you eat too much your body works extra hard to speed up the metabolism to burn those extra calories. Therefore, you gain weight and possibly maintain it by eating far more than you should.

In attempt to lose weight you must reduce your calorie intake dramatically to leap from your maintenance zone to your weight loss zone. When you finally reach your goal weight it is important to sustain and keep it off.

Reaching your maintenance zone means that you have taught your body to eat at your metabolism, and are taking in the right amount of calories is the number of calories you need to consume to stay at your goal weight.

By staying true to your given diet plan or even eating something from the exchange list is a simple tool in succeeding in maintaining your weight.

Being healthy in today's Army is essential in being successful and meeting the variety of challenges the Army has to offer. After all, being a part of the Wrangler Brigade is not only an honor but a challenge.

"I feel this program is a good thing for our Army," said Frey. "We will use it to help our Wranglers develop a good fitness program."

Todd A. Hoover, Director of the Wellness Center in Heidelberg, Germany, kneels over Staff Sgt. Jesus Jimenez, as he prepares to conduct a body fat test. Hoover was invited by Command Sgt. Maj. Erik R.R. Frey to help start a Wellness Program for the 4th Sustainment Brigade.

13th ESC Builds Relationship with Sister City

Leadership Temple Students Visit Fort Hood

Story and Photo by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah
13th ESC Public Affairs

Leadership Temple students had some fun on the EST during their visit to Fort Hood's 13th ESC November 18.

The squad was patrolling the countryside when all of a sudden they found themselves in a combined arms ambush. They took cover and returned fire, the once quiet air suddenly full of explosions and gunfire.

This was not a US Army Infantry squad in Iraq; rather it was the simulation that the students of the Leadership Temple class experienced at Fort Hood's Engagement Skills Trainer during their visit with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) November 18.

The 13th ESC and its sister city, the city of Temple, have been fostering a stronger relationship through key leader engagements, the adopt-a-school program, and the Fort Hood Adopt-a-Unit program, among other things.

The Temple Chamber of Commerce sponsored a luncheon November 14 for the Soldiers of the 13th ESC during which Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general, 13th ESC, gave the keynote address. Wentz spoke of the importance of community relations and the mutual appreciation between the military and civilian population.

"From adopting our units and Soldiers during deployments, to watching over our families in our absence, to making our Soldiers feel welcomed and appreciated for their service to our country through events like this luncheon—I have to say I have never seen a more outstanding example of community support in my 28 years of service," Wentz said.

The Leadership Temple students visited Fort Hood to learn about the military with a hands-on, practical approach.

"The military is a major part of our community," said Regina Baird, curriculum chair for Leadership Temple and Director of Public Relations for the Temple Independent School District. "We want our business leaders to understand that relationship and give them tools to work with [the military] through networking."

During the Leadership Temple class visit the students, all leaders in their community and members of the Temple Chamber of Commerce, visited the 13th ESC headquarters to learn the command structure and gain insight into how the Army logistics operation is controlled.

"We're like DHL," Col. Knowles Atchison, deputy commander, 13th ESC, broke it down in terms the civilian business people could understand. "We take deliveries and ship supplies all over the world from central hubs."

Following the briefing at the 13th ESC headquarters, the students visited the Medical Simulation Training Center where 1st Medical Brigade Soldiers demonstrated reaction to contact, evacuating a casualty, and treating casualties in combat conditions.

For lunch, the student's enjoyed a fine Army dining experience at the Freeman dining facility. The 13th ESC and 15th Sustainment Brigade command teams were on hand to field questions from the Leadership Temple students.

"You're exposed to so many more areas, and you deal with emotional and physical strains that those of us who aren't in the military might not ever encounter," said Melissa Tyroch, a lawyer, recent graduate of Texas A&M, and Leadership Temple student.

The students then visited the 15th SB headquarters for a meeting with their command team and learn a lesson or two from a veteran field commander.

"You're affected by your environment and by your decisions," said Col. Larry Phelps, commander, 15th SB. "What you are today doesn't have to be what you are tomorrow."

To close out the visit, the students visited the EST where they trained on weapons as a US Army infantry squad would when preparing for a deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Overall the visit was a success, with both the students and their Soldier counterparts learning from each other, broadening horizons, and fostering community relations.

Tyroch, Temple native, said, "If it wasn't for Fort Hood, those of us who live and work in this community would have a very different life."

Photos Fro
The 13

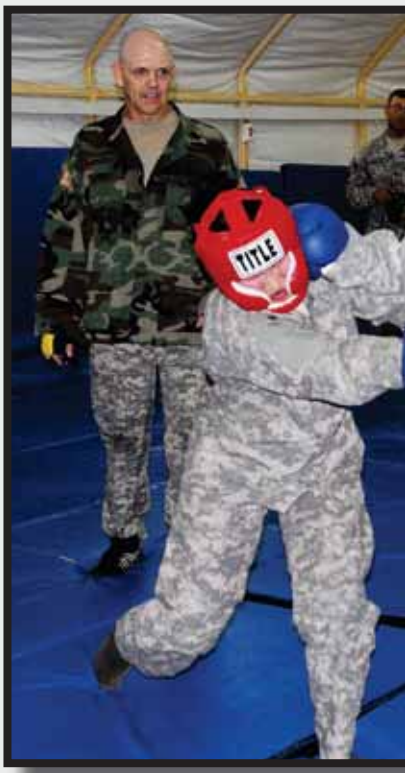
Photo by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah

Col. Larry Phelps, commander, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), reads his version of "Twas The Night Before Christmas" to Soldiers and Officers attending the 13th ESC Christmas Ball.

664th Ordnance Soldiers fire machine
live fire range here, Oct. 16.

Photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley

Staff Sgt. Teelia Gooden, 49th Transportation Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade master fitness trainer shares a celebratory high five with the brigade's commander, Col. Larry Phelps as she receives her second of four medals for placing in events at the 15th SB Commander's Cup competition at Hood Stadium, Oct. 9.



Staff Sgt. Carla Williams, p
punches Sgt. Alisha Ahren
Erik R.R. Frey looks on as
program was instituted by
to provide Wranglers the a
combat.

om Around
3th Esc

Photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley

e guns at popup targets on a convoy

Photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain

Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch, commanding general, III Corps and Fort Hood, talks to Capt. Amanda Camarano, commander, 157th Quartermaster Company, Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), Nov. 27 at the Freeman Café dining facility on Fort Hood. Camarano dressed up as a part of the brigade's theme, "Sustainers throughout History."

Photo courtesy of 4th SB PAO

roperty book NCO, 4th SB,
s, as Command Sgt. Maj.
a referee. The combatives
Command Sgt. Maj. Frey
bility to learn hand-to-hand

Photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain

Lt. Col. Pete Haas, the commander of the 49th Transportation Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Knox, the battalion's senior noncommissioned officer, present a $500 check to Wanda Reynolds, the principal of Meredith Dunbar Elementary School, Oct. 27 at the school in Temple. The money was raised by the battalion as a part of Make A Difference Day, the national day of helping others, and presented to the school to help fund field trips.

Wagonmaster's new CSM Hosts Open Forum

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain
13th ESC Public Affairs

The noncommissioned officers of the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), started the morning of Nov. 21 off right – with a four-mile run.

"[Physical Training] is what gets us started in the morning," said Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Bartee Sr., the brigade's senior noncommissioned officer. "PT is what gets us through the day."

He explained that often times, without doing physical training, or PT, Soldiers tend to feel lethargic throughout the rest of the day.

According to Bartee, the run was meant to build esprit de corps and encourage team building within the brigade.

He also told the gathered NCOs that a good three, four or even five mile run is what their Soldiers should be getting in order to get a good workout.

Bartee took the opportunity to talk to the leaders about taking care of Soldiers and refining the leadership skills of junior leaders in the formation.

"We are charged to give them the knowledge they are missing over at the [Noncommissioned Officer Education System] school," Bartee said. "NCOES does great things for our Soldiers, but it cannot do it all."

He explained it is the job of the senior NCOs to lead, train and mentor the junior leaders in order to take care of Soldiers.

Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Bartee Sr., senior enlisted advisor, 15th SB, 13th ESC, leads the brigade's NCOs on a brisk four-mile run Nov. 21 to build esprit de corps and get their day started right.

"As leaders, the day that you stop dealing with your Soldiers' issues, or your Soldiers' problems, is the day you stop leading," Bartee said.

Later, Bartee met with privates through sergeants at the Kieschnick Physical Fitness Center to discuss his leadership philosophy and give them an opportunity to voice their issues during a new program called "Let's Talk."

He explained to the Soldiers although they might not like some of the answers he gives them, he will always give them the truth.

Soldiers brought up a number of issues, from personal pay issues that weren't being taken care of promptly to requesting stoves for the barracks.

Bartee said he wants to make Let's Talk a monthly event, where Soldiers have the opportunity to voice their concerns and take an active role in the organization.

"Don't feel that your opinion doesn't matter," Bartee said.

The Soldiers worked with their CSM to come up with solutions to many of their problems.

Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Bartee Sr., senior enlisted advisor, 15th SB, 13th ESC, talks to the brigade's sergeants and junior enlisted Soldiers at the Kieschnick Physical Fitness Center on Fort Hood Nov. 21. Bartee used the opportunity to speak directly with the Soldiers, asking them to tell him how to make the brigade better.

4th SB Soldier Keeps Others in Mind

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Reginald Wright
4th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait-- When you come right down to it, no one looks forward to the Holidays more than kids do, and the joy in their eyes melts even the most jaded of hearts. This is the season for giving of your heart, your time and energy to someone in need. From toys to clothing, here are a few ways you can help Santa pack his sleigh.

Every year the Hunter family finds new and creative ways to volunteer and give back to the community during the holiday season.

"You'd be surprised how much you gain from giving your time and energy to others … by giving you also receive," said Diana Hunter, wife of Warrant Officer Robert K. Hunter, Signals System Support Technician, 4th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Warrant Officer Robert K. Hunter, Signals System Support Technician, 4th SB, 13th ESC, hands out clothing and toys to third country nationals who work on the post.

Robert, who started his second deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March, 2008, usually spent the holidays with his family, donating time and goods to families in need.

"We weren't going to let our separation from each other be an excuse not to volunteer this holiday season," Robert said.

During his 16 month deployment to Iraq in 2006, Robert wasn't able to spend the holidays with his family.

"Last time he was deployed he missed our seasonal volunteering," Diana said. "I really think it's an important family tradition for all of us."

While on his second deployment to Kuwait, Robert identified local workers in need of assistance. These employees came to Kuwait on work visas, and often stay for many years living under meager conditions.

"When I talked to some of these workers I found out they had families with small children just like me, but couldn't provide some of the basic necessities for their families back in their home countries," Robert said

He said these workers come from various parts of the world: the Philippines, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Egypt, among others.

They moved to Kuwait searching for employment to benefit their families in their home country. In most cases these workers send their money home to support their families, while others travel to Kuwait with their family.

"This is where I saw a need and a way I could help during this season of giving," Robert said. "I talked with my wife, and we agreed when I came home to Texas on [leave], I would bring back bags of clothing and toys for local workers."

They made it a family event; all of the children donated clothing and toys. Robert packed his duffel bags to full capacity and traveled back to Kuwait.

"Some times in the hustle and bustle of our lives we don't realize how lucky we are," Robert said. "These deployments have made me realize how fortunate we are to be Americans."

"I realize we are blessed and should be a blessing to others. I encourage all Soldiers to find ways to help someone during this holiday season."

4th SB Conducts Casualty Notification Drill

Story and Photos by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah
13th ESC Public Affairs

Two Soldiers walk solemnly up to the front door, dressed in polished black shoes and crisp green uniforms, medals adorning their chests, shiny brass gleaming in the sun, they barely tap on the door before it swings open.

One of them speaks up, "Ma'am, we regret to inform you…" Uttering the words that no spouse ever wants to hear when a loved one is deployed to combat.

This is the scenario upon which the 4th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), based their Casualty Notification training November 20 at the Killeen Convention Center.

The training consisted of classes and panel discussions for both Soldiers and Family Readiness Group volunteers on how to handle casualty notification, how to conduct a memorial ceremony, and care team operations, followed by a Rehearsal of Operations Concept so that the Soldiers and civilians could implement what they learned.

"We wanted to walk away from here with a brigade plan on how handle casualty notification and take care of the family" said Maj. Alaana Cook, commander, 4th SB Rear Detachment, 13th ESC. "We've been lucky because we haven't had to do this, but it's something we need to be prepared for."

The 4th SB has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for several months, so the FRG volunteers and rear detachment Soldiers took this training very seriously.

"It's important to be prepared because we're going to have a lot deployments and, unfortunately we're going to have casualties," Corinne Hermans, 4th SB Senior FRG Spouse, wife of 4th SB commander, Col. Terry Hermans. "I want the spouses to feel comfortable in their volunteering roles, so we can help the families."

Corrine Hermans, senior spouse, 4th SB, 13th ESC, Sandy Frey, senior spouse, HHC, 4th SB, and MAJ Alanna Cook, commander, Rear Detachment, 4th SB, conduct casualty notification training November 20 at the Killeen Convention Center.

Becky Townsend, Senior Spouse, BTB, 4th SB, 13th ESC, Julia Duncan, FRG Leader, HHC, 4th SB, Sgt. 1st Class James Yuras, senior NCO, BTB Rear Det. and Capt. Kristin Doneth, commanding officer, BTB Rear Det., conduct casualty notification training Nov. 20 at the Killeen Convention Center.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of the training was finding the time to gather all those who would be involved and pooling resources to make the training practical.

"Rear [Detachment] rarely has time for training so it was a challenge to set aside time, but finding people to help out was not hard at all, we had so many people willing to help out," Cook said. "We got so much support from our sister units at the 3rd [Armored Cavalry Regiment], 3rd Brigade – 1st Infantry Division, the 1st Cavalry Division, 13th ESC, Army Community Service, and the Casualty Assistance Center."

Family separation is the toughest part of any deployment for the spouses and families of deployed Soldiers, said Julia Duncan, wife of a 4th SB Transportation Officer.

However, a strong support network of relatives and friends helps the families of deployed Soldiers cope with their absence.

Both the FRG volunteers and rear detachment Soldiers learned more about the process of casualty notification and established their own guidelines to follow in the event of a loss.

Cook said, "This is an area where we cannot accept failure and we cannot make any mistakes."

Motorcycle ride focuses on Safety for 15th SB

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain
15th SB Public Affairs

About 60 motorcycle riders from the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), gathered Oct. 17 at the brigade's headquarters on Fort Hood for a day focused on motorcycle safety.

The day started with a safety inspection of the riders' motorcycles, conducted by their supervisors, some of whom had never before conducted such an in-depth inspection.

Dave Sullivan, the brigade's safety officer, explained that one of the day's goals was for non-riders to know what to look for when conducting a safety inspection of a motorcycle.

The riders walked through the inspection process, showing their supervisor exactly what to look for at each step of the inspection, and how things are different on different types of bikes.

"I can actually go and put my hands on somebody else's bike and know what to look for," said Staff Sgt. Blane Davis, a West Palm Beach, Fla., native, 53rd Quartermaster Company, 180th Transportation Battalion. "See if it is really safe or not - to be on the road."

Sullivan said it was important that the leaders are actually learning what to look for on their Soldiers' motorcycles because they need to ensure the Soldiers' bikes are actually safe.

"Don't just check the block," Sullivan said to the leaders, referring to the inspection checklist.

Col. Larry Phelps, the brigade's commander and native of Greenville, Ala., said situational awareness is an important skill riders need to have at all times.

"Riding a motorcycle by itself is not only not a bad thing, it's not an inherently dangerous thing," Phelps said. "It's how you ride, where you ride, who you ride with, and it's also being very aware of your surroundings at all times."

He explained that often times, it is other drivers on the road not paying attention that can cause accidents involving motorcycles.

"My primary concern for your safety is not what you all do," said Phelps, who, even though he currently does not own a bike, has been a motorcycle rider for a number of years. "The most dangerous thing about riding a bike is not what I was doing - it was what everybody else was doing."

The safety ride was about a 20 mile course to Belton, where the Soldiers had the opportunity for lunch and a discussion on some of the issues that riders of different types of motorcycles face.

In their two discussion groups, which were broken down into cruiser riders and sport bike riders, the Soldiers talked about things like maintenance, protective equipment types and styles, and even where they could go to get their fix for speed safely, on a race track.

Phelps also talked to the riders about the associations they make with motorcycle clubs, explaining that there are many good ones out there, but there are also many that encourage reckless behavior – such as riding on one wheel through traffic at a high rate of speed.

"People truly are judged by the company they keep," Phelps said. "There are some groups of folks that ride motorcycles that give all of us a really black eye."

He went on to say that the day was about sitting down with other riders that care about what "right" looks like, not about initiation into any clubs, except the club of common sense.

Phelps told the Soldiers that if they happen to find themselves in a situation where they are with people doing dangerous things with their motorcycles, they need to get away from it as fast as possible. He also encouraged the them to be mentors to fellow riders.

There have been six motorcycle accidents in the brigade this year, but none of them fatal, said Sullivan.

Motorcycle riders from the 15th SB, 13th ESC, approach the finish of the brigade's Motorcycle Safety Ride Oct. 17 near Belton Dam.

15th SB schools Soldiers on sling load

Story and Photos by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

They eagerly awaited the UH-60 Blackhawk's approach. This was the big moment they had all been waiting for.

"I hear a bird!"

The group of Soldiers turned to face the sound's direction, shielding their eyes with their hands from the morning sun.

The 15th Sustainment Brigade concluded a week long Sling Load Certification Course for 53 Soldiers from various units and posts with a live sling load exercise at Hammer Landing Zone Nov. 21.

Soldiers from different units of 1st Cavalry Division, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Fort Polk, La., learned how to hook sling load packages like humvees, fuel containers, and cargo nets to the bottom of helicopters for quick and easy transport.

Three Soldiers made the six hour drive from Fort Polk to attend the class.

"It's a class I've always wanted to be in," said Spc. Brandon Treaster, parachute rigger, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

Soldiers hook a HMMWV to a UH-60 Blackhawk during a Sling Load Certification Course conducted by 15th SB Nov. 21.

Soldiers review hand and arm signals used to guide helicopters during a Sling Load Certification Course conducted by 15th Sustainment Brigade Nov. 21.

The 40 hour class was primarily instructed by a five member mobile training team from Fort Lee, Va. which travels the world to certify servicemembers in sling loading.

The team's four civilians all had prior Army experience or were retired Army, and were led by one noncommissioned officer.

"I just wanted to come back, train Soldiers, and be with Soldiers. I kind of missed it," said David Hughes, a sling load instructor-writer on the MTT and retired Army parachute rigger.

This was the sling load MMT's third class at Hood this year, all organized by 15th Sustainment Brigade.

The class taught Soldiers how to rig and inspect a sling load, how to designate and set-up a landing zone, and how much weight various choppers can handle, Hughes said.

"Just about anything in the Army inventory can be sling loaded," Hughes explained.

Only Soldiers who took the Sling Load Certification Course, Pathfinder, or Air Assault schools are qualified to inspect and prepare loads.

Each of the Soldiers took turns on a cold Friday morning standing in the back of a humvee, bracing themselves as the low flying Blackhawk's rotor wash buffeted against their bodies and the vehicle. With the help of an MTT instructor, they attached a looped rigging from the humvee to a hook on the bottom of the aircraft and then quickly moved to safety.

"It was a big adrenaline rush with that big helicopter right above you," said Spc. Alex Christ, helicopter hydraulic mechanic, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

"I hope it fired you up a little bit," Col. Larry Phelps, commander, 15th SB told the class at their graduation.

Phelps also praised the MTT for their excellent safety record.

The Wagonmasters regularly schedule SLCC classes and Soldiers from any unit are invited. To attend the course, a Soldier must be in the grade of E-4 or above.

(Above) Spc. Robert Langdale, aircraft power plant mechanic, 615th Aviation Support Bn., directs the movements of a UH-60 Blackhawk as it sets down a HMMWV during a Sling Load Certification Course conducted by 15th Sustainment Brigade Nov. 21.

(Right) Sling Load Certification Course students watch as a UH-60 Blackhawk gently lifts a HMMWV into the air during a SLCC conducted by 15th Sustainment Brigade Nov. 21.

(Left) Spc. Maria Vidales, Blackhawk mechanic, 615th Aviation Support Bn., and Spc. Miguel Balladares, 227th Aviation Bn. hook a HMMWV to a Blackhawk with the help of an instructor while a Blackhawk crewmember watches from above during a Sling Load Certification course conducted by 15th SB Nov. 21. "It's a quick rush, everything went by pretty fast," Balladares said.

Wagonmasters stand down for safety

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain
13th ESC Public Affairs

Soldiers and civilians of the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), took a day Nov. 20 to stand down and focus on safety issues at home and in the workplace.

The day consisted of a number of classes on various safety topics like vehicle and motorcycle safety, fire prevention, winter driving, and cold weather safety.

While the day's activities and classes focused on specific topics, safety training is something that should be constantly happening, said Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Bartee Sr., the brigade's senior noncommissioned officer.

"Training doesn't start today for safety," Bartee said. "Training is everyday."

He explained safety training happens with the first-line leaders, the squad leaders, by checking on Soldiers in the barracks and in the motor pools, making sure they are doing the right thing.

"What is so important about stand-down for safety?" Bartee asked the Soldiers in formation at the start of the day's activities.

"When we're doing this, and we do it right - we can save Soldiers' lives, we can minimize the risk of damage to equipment," Bartee said.

Bartee explained the Soldiers of the 15th SB move equipment, vehicles and cargo containers, for many of the other units on Fort Hood on a daily basis, and he wanted the Soldiers to be proud of their current safety record.

"For the amount of equipment that we move, we are a safe brigade," he said.

According to Dave Sullivan, the brigade's safety officer, the primary area of focus for the day's training was on winter driving and holiday safety.

He explained many Soldiers have never driven in Texas during the winter, and it can pose challenges to new drivers. Sullivan also talked about the upcoming holidays, and how there have been problems over the last couple of years involving fires due to frying turkeys and overloading electrical circuits.

Lt. Col. Peter Haas, the commander of the 49th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC, gives his Soldiers a quick safety briefing at the brigade's headquarters before turning them over to their classes for the brigade's safety stand down day Nov. 20.

As the Soldiers of the brigade's Special Troops Battalion conducted their classes, they learned a number of tips for winter driving, including the kinds of emergency items they should keep in their car and what to do if they get stuck in snow.

Soldiers of the brigade's 49th Transportation Battalion conducted many of the same classes, including one on cold weather safety and first aid.

Sgt. Apollo Sharpe, electrical technician, 602nd Maintenance Company, said there are a number of misconceptions about what will keep people warm when it is cold outside.

"Alcohol will not warm you up," Sharpe said.

He went on to explain drinking alcohol, as well as smoking cigarettes causes the blood vessels in the body to constrict, which may give the impression of getting warmer, but in actuality, the blood just isn't flowing to the extremities.

Sharpe also discussed the importance of dressing in layers to avoid frostbite and hypothermia, as well as what to do if a Soldier needs to treat someone for a cold weather injury.

"Attempt to stabilize their temperature, and avoid further heat loss," Sharpe said.

Sharpe explained that being prepared for the cold is important, especially in Texas, because the weather here can lull people into a false sense of security.

He said that it's not the actual average temperature in Texas that can really harm people, rather it's the 40 degree difference in temperatures day and night.

Other classes included motorcycle safety and fire prevention.

Overall, the Soldiers fully utilized the stand down day to learn all they could to promote safety during this holiday season.

Wrangler Soldiers Learn a Hard Lesson the Fun Way

Story and Photo by Sgt. John D. Ortiz
4th SB Public Affairs

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- Bruises, bandaged arms, and ice packs galore; the scene repeats itself over and over in the faces, arms, and legs of Soldiers standing by to go head-to-head with instructors to clinch their level one combatives certification.

Command Sgt. Maj. Erik R.R. Frey, senior noncommissioned officer, 4th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) stated the purpose of the Modern Army Combatives Program is to train Soldiers in combative skills and develop a train-the-trainer program.

As part of the Chief of Staff of the Army's initiative to have all Soldiers trained in Level One Combatives, the senior enlisted advisor of 4th SB has taken the lead role in training Wrangler Soldiers.

"The purpose of combatives training is to instill confidence and fighting skill that can only be gained through engagement with an opponent in a combative situation," said Frey.

Instituting a combatives programs was not without its fair share of obstacles to overcome. Obtaining the right equipment to ensure safety along with finding a home for the program were paramount to the success of the training, stated Sgt. 1st Class Oran J. Spradley, the primary combatives instructor for the brigade.

"Command Sergeant Major Frey and I really wanted to make the program available to 4th Sustainment Brigade Soldiers," said Spradley. "We did what we had to do to get it up-and-running."

Spradley stated that hand-to-hand combat is the main focus of the program, but with additional equipment such as pugil equipment, to sharpen bayonet skills, to groin protectors, the combatives tent is stocked with equipment needed to conduct different types of combatives while ensuring Soldiers have the best protection money can buy.

Realistic training is a core concept of the program with a serious training atmosphere and grueling physical demands that often times leave Soldiers drenched in sweat, sore, and covered in bumps and bruises.

"Even after leaving the tent, Soldiers come back the next night with big smiles on their faces," he said. "I do not know too many places where you get you butt kicked all night, and return each night happy to be there."

"Everyone thinks a combatives course is all about getting beat-up for a week, but that's not the truth," said Spradley, adding the program is designed to produce confident instructors who will take these basic techniques back to their units, and train their Soldiers.

"Hand-to-hand combat training is a fundamental building block for preparing our Soldiers for current and future operations," said Frey. "Wrangler Combative training will provide this critical capability."

Sgt. 1st Class Oran J. Spradley, the 4th SB primary Level 1 Combatives instructor 'rocks' Sgt. Linwood Johnson as he tries to go inside to get one of three clinches during the test-out phase of the combatives course.

15th SB NCO's Get Schooled

NCO Professional Development Offers Education Opportunities

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas – Noncommissioned officers from across the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), gathered Dec. 2 at the Clear Creek Community Event Center here to learn up on education opportunities available to them and their Soldiers.

The program, called NCO professional development, is conducted monthly by the brigade on a wide range of topics.

Frances Judkins, a guidance counselor with Fort Hood's Education Services Division, said she wanted the NCOs to know what benefits are available, as well as future programs and the changes they might bring.

Frances Judkins, an guidance counselor with Fort Hood's Education Services Division, speaks to noncommissioned officers from the 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), about available education opportunities Dec. 2 during a NCO professional development session hosted by the brigade at the Clear Creek Community Events Center.

During the session, she explained the Army will pay for 100 percent of tuition for colleges in the GoArmyEd.com system, but there are some limitations.

First, the Soldier must have a current Statement of Understanding signed by their commander, and they cannot have favorable actions suspended through things like Army Physical Fitness Test failure, overweight or pending legal actions.

Judkins also said there is a limit on how much money each Soldier is entitled to for each class and fiscal year, which runs from Oct. 1 to Sep. 30.

The tuition assistance is limited to $250 per semester hour and $4,500 per fiscal year.

She also said the Army's tuition assistance can only be used to advance a Soldier's education, meaning once a Soldier earns a degree, they can only work to pursue a higher degree.

Judkins said this includes Soldiers who may have a degree when they join the Army, but it doesn't mean Soldiers have to pursue the same path.

Soldiers can make changes to their degree, and even pursue a higher degree that is completely different than one they have already earned, Judkins said.

For example, Soldiers who earn an associate degree in general studies, can pursue a bachelor's degree in computer science, and then a master's degree in criminal justice.

Judkins told the NCOs even when they deploy, they can continue to take classes since many classes from a number of colleges are offered completely online, but they may not be able to get the exact class they are looking for.

Besides college classes, Judkins talked about the Leader Skills Enhancement classes for NCOs, which are on-duty classes meant to assist in making NCOs better supervisors, managers and communicators.

Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Bartee Sr., the brigade's senior enlisted advisor, told the gathered NCOs it is their responsibility to ensure their Soldiers get educated, and he challenged every Soldier in the brigade to earn an associate degree.

Bartee told the NCOs to think about where they want to be 10 or 15 years from now, and how a college education might help them get there.

He said that Soldiers today have no reasons not to get an education while in the Army.

"Nobody is too busy," Bartee said, adding that it might take working on schoolwork late into the night every once in a while."You have to get out there and claim what's yours."

Lava Rolls in Support of Wranglers

Story and Photo by Sgt. Tracy Ellingsen
311th Sustainment Command Public Affairs Office

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- The Alpha Battery Soldiers were anxious to get on the road. They decided to forgo dinner and instead eat the midnight meal served at the next base they were going to. After all, it was their first convoy escort mission up to Iraq that they would be performing without the watchful eye of their predecessors.

Not only was this the first CET mission for Alpha Battery, but it was the first for the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat team in support of the 4th Sustainment Brigade based at Fort Hood, Texas, since arriving in theater.

"I'm very proud right now," said Capt. Timothy Spencer, their company commander. "It was a long process coming here and I'm glad to be doing the mission we trained to do."

A gunner with Alpha Battery, 29th Inf. BCT, a National Guard unit out of Hawaii, conducts his final checks on his crew-served weapon before departing on their first convoy escort mission with the 4th Sustainment Brigade.

The Hawaii based National Guard unit is now poised to conduct convoy escort missions, as well as other security operations, throughout Iraq and Kuwait, in support of the Wrangler Brigade. In a few months leaving for another mission may feel a little routine for the teams, but departing for the brigade's first mission was anything but.

Before heading out the Soldiers posed for pictures while standing in front of and on top of one of their Humvees. At 5 p.m. sharp the familiar bugle sounds of retreat began to play. There, in the sunset, the Soldiers saluted the flag – a tradition that is performed at U.S. military bases throughout the world – not knowing where they might be watching the flag go down over the next week.

This wouldn't be the first trip to Iraq for the Alpha Battery Soldiers; the previously traveled on a training mission with Wrangler security force battalions,

With only a short amount of overlap time between the two units, there was only enough time for one of these training missions, but the Alpha Battery Soldiers got some unexpected training while traversing the roads of Iraq.

"They got hit on their first convoy," said Spencer, referring to a small arms attack the unit encountered. "First time out and they already saw action.

For this mission both the company commander and first sergeant were on hand to check and double check the equipment and safety measures the Soldiers take each and every time before heading out on the road.

The commander of the convoy escort team, 2nd Lt. Bingham Tuisamatalele, gathered the Soldiers in a huddle for a prayer, and then they packed their gear in the vehicles and headed down the road.

Spencer looked on with an obvious sense of pride.

"I have a lot of confidence in them," he said, "They trained hard."

Chicago native Maj. Ken Carlson, chaplain, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), talks to Soldiers Dec. 9 at the Freeman Café Dining Facility during a prayer breakfast hosted by the brigade. Carlson told the Soldiers there was a time for everything, and now was their opportunity to be strengthened together spiritually as an Army family. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain, 15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs)

ACS Gathers Donations to Feed Army Families

Story and Photo by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah
13th ESC Public Affairs

Army Community Service and Soldiers from the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), gathered donations November 21 at the Clear Creek and Warrior Way Commissaries to help feed needy Army families during this holiday season.

Dozens of volunteers here on Fort Hood, and hundreds more at locations off-post, helped solicit donations from customers. Some customers donated food in the form of canned goods or other groceries, while others offered cash donations.

"This is the first year that ACS is taking part in the food drive," said an ACS representative. "We're able to feed hundreds of families here on Fort Hood thanks to these donations."

There's no doubt that the foods drive would not be a success if it were not for the volunteers who donated their time to this noble cause.

A retired Soldier, hands a donation to Sgt. 1st Class Olivia Brown, command financial specialist, 15th SB, 13th ESC, in support of the ACS Food Drive November 20 at the Clear Creek Commissary.

"I get a lot of clients who need assistance or just food and we refer them to ACS," said Sgt. 1st Class Olivia Brown, command financial specialist, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th ESC, "We refer so many Soldiers and their families to ACS that it feels good to give back."

It is not always easy for a CFS to aid Soldiers and families because their problems may be too complex to deal with at their level.

"The hardest thing is when we can't help a Soldier," said Brown. "But I encourage all Soldiers to talk to their command, come talk to a CFS, they'll lead you in the right direction."

This holiday season donating time, money, or simply a can of food could go a long way, not just for those who will receive the aid, but also for those who give a piece of themselves to help others.

Brown said, "It's a wonderful feeling to volunteer and just having everybody come out and help."

Do you have photos of Soldiers in your unit?

13th ESC PAO wants those photos.

Send us your photos at hood.army.mil/13sce

US Army Photo By 2nd Lt. Y. Daniel Hosaka

Your name could be here!

1st MED Tests MRAP Ambulance

Because the Army's lifesavers need a lifesaver

Photo by Spc. Angel Martinez

Story by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah
13th ESC Public Affairs

As the 38,000 pound behemoth thundered down the road, the ground shook and trembled beneath its massive tires. It came to halt and six troops dismounted from within its cavernous core, unloading two litter patients with them.

The vehicle wasn't an Abrams tank or even a Stryker. It is a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle being used as an ambulance by the Soldiers from the 1st Medical Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), who have been testing the vehicles here at Fort Hood from October 6 to November 6.

The MRAP is designed to withstand attacks from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) better then a Humvee while also carrying troops and allowing them to function while riding in it.

There were two types of MRAPs being tested, the RG33L and the smaller MaxProPlus. While both have already been deployed for use by troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, the testing done here allows for retrofitting and adjustments based on feedback from the Soldiers.

"A simple comment from a Soldier can cause major changes to the vehicle," said Charlie Eisenhart, data management, Forward Test Center.

The Soldiers ran a range of scenarios with the vehicles to experience every possible problem they may encounter in combat.

"After we got familiarized with the vehicles we ran tactical based scenarios, such as picking up casualties and convoy operations," said Staff Sgt. Adam Peterson, medic, headquarters and headquarters detachment, 61st Multi-Functional Medical Battalion, 1st Med. Bde., 13th ESC. "

The troops typically ran two to four missions a day, each mission lasting about four hours.

"The main mission is to evaluate the medic's capabilities in the back of the MRAP with a variety of scenarios so that we can give the researchers good feedback," said Peterson.

The testing conducted has already caused on a few changes to future MRAPs, such as more space for equipment storage and a weapon's rack.

"For an initial design the vehicle is very capable, but retrofitting is necessary for it to be usable," said Peterson.

Since it's deployment to combat, the MRAP has been credited for saving the lives of hundreds of servicemembers in IED attacks.

Peterson said, "If I had this when I deployed I would feel safe and comfortable in an MRAP because I know I could survive an IED attack."

47th Trans. Prepares for NTC, OIF Deployment

Story by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

FORT BLISS, Texas – The 47th Transportation Company, 180th Transportation Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, conducted convoy training Nov. 4 – 14 in preparation for an upcoming rotation to the National Training Center in California as well as a deployment to Iraq.

"The training is meant to prepare the Soldiers for their mission delivering bulk fuel and other supplies to areas throughout Iraq by ensuring they are prepared for anything that may happen along the way, with a focus on their reaction to improvised explosive devices, calling for helicopter medical evacuations, and conducting casualty evacuations," said Capt. Jennifer McIntyre, commander, 47th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., 15th SB, 13th ESC.

Staff Sgt. John Jenerou, platoon sergeant, 3rd Platoon, 47th Trans. Co., 180th Trans Bn., said, "The training was tough because the unit was working with limited resources and borrowed vehicles, but it gave some of the younger, less experienced drivers a chance to actually get some wheel time in a convoy situation."

Many of the unit's drivers are on their first assignment after graduation from advanced individual training and haven't had any practical experience yet.

"It gives them real life experience – dealing with traffic and driving on secondary roads," said Jenerou, a Mt. Pleasant, Mich., native.

The training helped build confidence in the unit's young truck drivers while allowing the unit to train for a deployment in support of the War on Terror.

"I learned a lot over the course of the training," said Pvt. Addison Maurice, truck driver, 47th Trans. Co., 180th Trans. Bn., "I have a better idea of what to do in case a situation arises while I'm behind the wheel."

The company's more seasoned NCOs let out a sigh of relief and expressed their faith in the Soldiers behind the wheel.

"The only thing they could bring at us that we might not know how to deal with is a UFO," Jenerou said, referring to the opposition forces that they might encounter on their mission.

The unit will continue training in preparation for deployment by sending the Soldiers to training courses, including a course for fuel handlers and a school on the Army's tactical command and control system before they deploy to NTC.

Photo by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah

(Left) The 1st Med. Bde.'s newest non-commissioned officers recite the NCO's creed during the NCO induction ceremony Dec. 12 at Howze Theater at Fort Hood. The event featured Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola, senior enlisted advisor, III Corps and Fort Hood, as the key note speaker.

Photo by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah

(Above) Sgt. Charles Canady, medic, 21st CSH, 1st Med. Bde., marches under the crossed sabers representing his entrance into the Corps of the Non-commissioned Officers.

49th Trans. Bn. CSM Passes the Saber

Story and photo by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Peter Haas, commander, 49th Trans. Bn., passes the Noncommissioned Officer Saber to the incoming Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Bivens, a gesture representing the passing of responsibility from Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Knox to Bivens Nov. 26.

Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Bivens replaced Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Knox as the senior noncommissioned officer for the 49th Transportation Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) at a ceremony Nov. 25.

Special Troops Battalion, 15th SB Soldiers lined the back of the 49th's formations with all the state flags as Knox passed the traditional NCO Saber to Lt. Col. Peter Haas, commander 49th Trans, who passed it to Bivens.The passing of the NCO saber represents the passing of authority from the outgoing sergeant major to the incoming one.

Haas highly praised Knox, a Frankford, Del., native with 29 years of Soldiering experience. He also

"Jimmy Carter was the president, the space shuttle had not made its maiden voyage, all phones were plugged into the wall, and typing was done on a typewriter," Haas said.

Haas also attributed the 49th's achievements directly to Knox's efforts and explained Knox's outlook on things with a story about two majors. Haas said the two were debating about whether or not a glass was half empty or half full near to Knox's office, which irritated him. Knox came out and explained his view to the officers.

"Gentlemen, it doesn't matter … you're both wrong. All it means is the glass is twice as big as it needs to be," Knox said, according to Haas.

Knox continuously shared his experience with both officers and enlisted, Haas said.

"He always had time for Soldiers, no matter how much was put on his plate," Haas explained.

"There are hundreds of Soldiers who will never forget what he did for them … that's what I would call a meaningful legacy."

"I would do it all again if I had to," Knox said. "Because I got to serve with the best Army in the world."

Knox told Bivens to be prepared as the position was a different experience.

Bivens an Alabaster, Ala., native served as first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment 561st Corps Support Battalion, and 372nd Transportation Company, 106th Transportation Battalion, Fort Campbell, Ky. He also served as NCO in charge of Operations 129th Corps Support Battalion, Fort Campbell. He was an observer controller trainer for 402nd Field Artillery Brigade, Los Alamitos, Calif., and a first sergeant instructor at the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.

Bivens' education includes Air Assault School, USASMA, Equal Opportunity Leader Course, Basic Instructor Course and a Bachelor of Liberal Arts.

His awards and decorations include Bronze Star with oak leaf cluster, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with five oak leave clusters, and the Army Achievement Medal with four oak leaf clusters.

He is married to Tanya Bivens and has three children.

13th ESC and Wagonmasters change enlisted leaders

Story and Photos By:
Staff Sgt. Joel F. Gibson, 13th ESC PAO
Staff Sgt. Rob Strain, 15th SB PAO

The 15th Sustainment Brigade and the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), changed senior enlisted leaders during ceremonies Oct. 15 at Abrams Physical Fitness Center and Oct. 17 at the 13th ESC Headquarters on Fort Hood.

Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Joseph, who served as the brigade's senior noncommissioned officer since 2005, officially handed the reins of responsibility of the 15th SB to Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Bartee Sr. in the Oct. 15 ceremony.

Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Fountain, who has been with the 13th ESC since 1999, serving as the senior noncommissioned officer since 2005, handed responsibility of the 13th ESC to Joseph in the Oct. 17 ceremony.

Col. Larry Phelps, the wagonmaster brigade's commander, took a few minutes during the brigade ceremony to reflect on Joseph's time as the brigade's senior enlisted advisor.

"Under [Joseph's] leadership, the Wagonmasters have undergone the greatest period of change and productivity in the brigade's history," Phelps said.

During Joseph's tenure, the brigade changed from the Division Support Command to the 15th Support Brigade under the 1st Cavalry Division before it became the 15th Sustainment Brigade under the 13th ESC, Phelps explained.

Once the unit returned from Iraq, Joseph set the conditions to transition the brigade to the 13th ESC, deactivating two battalions and inheriting two new battalions, all while ensuring the Soldiers were taken care of during the transition, he said.

"Under lesser leadership, this could have been painful," Phelps said. "But CSM Joseph made it look almost effortless."

Joseph thanked many of the people that made it possible for him to be where he is today, but reserved the most gratitude for his family.

"They are our true supporters in what we do, and are always there during the good times as well as the bad," Joseph said.

"They put up with us and our attitudes, so thank you to all the families and family members."

Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), hands the traditional noncommissioned officer's saber to Command Sgt. Maj. Mark D. Joseph, the incoming senior enlisted advisor for the ESC, entrusting him with responsibility for the Soldiers of the ESC during a ceremony Oct. 17 at the 13th ESC Headquarters.

Joseph described the day as bittersweet, since his time with the Wagonmasters has come to an end, but he looks forward to the next chapter in his life as he moves on to become the senior noncommissioned officer for the 13th ESC.

Bartee, a 23-year Army veteran, previously served as the 180th Transportation Battalion's senior enlisted advisor, a position he's held since May 2007.

During the 13th ESC ceremony, Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz remarked about serving with Fountain as a battalion commander, when the command sergeant major was still a first sergeant.

Fountain's time with the 13th started in 1999 when he served as the G3 senior noncommissioned officer.

His time as a command sergeant major began when he took that position within the 2nd chemical battalion, which at the time was part of the 13th ESC.

After deploying with 2nd chemical battalion, Fountain became the 13th ESC rear detachment command sergeant major, but only briefly because the Corps Distribution Command needed a command sergeant major to deploy with them.

Upon redeployment, Fountain became the senior enlisted advisor for the 13th ESC.

Under Fountain's leadership, the 13th Corps Support Command redesignated to the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), deployed in support of Joint Task Force-Katrina to provide humanitarian support, and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08.

Fountain joined the Army in 1978 as a signal Soldier, and reclassified to the chemical branch in 1980.

Fountain said, "People talk about combat arms as the pointy end of the spear. I like to think of logistics as the arm that provides the force for that spear."

Transportation company deploys for sixth rotation

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

About 250 Soldiers from the 96th Transportation Company, 180th Transportation Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), departed for a 12-month tour in Iraq during a ceremony Oct. 7 at the Kieschnick Physical Fitness Center on Fort Hood.

It is the company's sixth deployment since 2003 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, with each deployment ranging from six to 12 months in length, said Capt. Nelson Duckson, the company's commander and Columbia, S.C., native.

Staff Sgt. Thomas Wardale, truck driver and 17-year Army veteran, has been with the 96th since 2002, and has deployed on all six rotations.

Wardale, a Hallandale, Miss., native, said one of the challenges of multiple deployments was constantly being away from his family.

He explained this past Thanksgiving and Christmas were the first ones he has spent at home since the deployments started.

Wardale said one of the biggest things Soldiers need to watch out for during the deployment is complacency, and the best way to keep from getting complacent is by treating every mission as if it were different.

"Every time you actually go, it's totally different," he said, explaining that the situation on the ground has changed each time he has deployed, and Soldiers cannot treat it the same as the last deployment. "Everything is brand new," Wardale said.

Before the Soldiers boarded the buses that would take them to the airfield, Brig. Gen. Mark McDonald, the deputy commanding general for III Corps had a few words of advice for the Soldiers.

He said they needed to trust in both their training and their leaders, and that Soldiers need not worry about the families they are leaving behind. Instead they should stay focused on accomplishing the mission, their families will be taken care of by the leaders and services here at Fort Hood.

Sgt. George Doss, with the 96th Transportation Company, 180th Transportation Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), says goodbye to his wife Marylou at deployment ceremony at Fort Hood's Kieschnick Physical Fitness Center. About 250 Soldiers from the 96th deployed to Iraq Oct. 7.

Postal Soldiers deploy to Iraq

Lt. Col. Jason Kuroiwa, director of the 81st Adjutant General (Postal), Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Sgt. Maj. Jerry Hernandez, the senior noncommissioned officer for the 81st, roll up the unit's guidon during a short ceremony Oct. 12 at the Kieschnick Physical Fitness Center on Fort Hood. The unit departed for a 12-month tour to Iraq following the casing ceremony.

1st MED Comes Together for Halloween

Story and Photos by Pfc. Naveed Ali Shah
13th ESC Public Affairs

The 1st Medical Brigade's headquarters company held a Halloween Retreat at Tyson's Corners Retreat Center in Lampasas October 31.

The event included music by D.J. Rodney Byrd, horseback riding for kids, a fishing pond, a moon-bounce, pumpkin patch, pumpkin decorating table, a game of witch hunt, hayrides, a haunted trail, catered Texas bar-b-que, and raffles and prizes.

The Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company brought their families to enjoy the festivities with kids, both young and old, dressed for the occasion. The event was attended by such VIPs as Ironman, Batman, Supergirl, Wonderwoman, as well as lions and tigers, several princesses, and the customary witches and vampires. The families all got to enjoy the festivities together.

The headquarters is scheduled to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the next six months, so the Family Readiness Group has been working to get the unit's families together in extracurricular activity. For Soldiers, meeting outside the work environment allows an opportunity to build stronger bonds with one another, and their families get to become closer friends with those they would depend on most during the upcoming deployment.

Soldiers and Family members of 1st Medical Brigade's headquarters company decorate pumpkins during their Halloween Retreat at Tyson's Corners Retreat Center in Lampasas.

The Headquarters and Headquarter's Company, 1st Medical Brigade's held a Halloween Retreat at Tyson's Corners Retreat Center in Lampasas October 31.

"It's really good that we have the opportunity to get to know one another and (will be able to) rely on each other during our deployment," said Capt. John Kiraly, commander, HHC, 1st Med. Bde, 13th ESC.

The Retreat Center had several horses out for the children to ride, a pumpkin patch where children could pick a pumpkin and then decorate with their parents and a moon-bounce where the kids could literally bounce off the walls.

In addition, the retreat center provided a full Texas style barbeque dinner for the families.

"It's a pleasure and an honor to work with Soldiers once again," said Gene Tyson, retired Army Chaplain, and retreat director, Tyson's Corners. "As a chaplain, I worked with Soldiers for 20 years and I wanted to continue doing that."

Tyson, who has been running the retreat center for about eight years, says he got the inspiration from his two years as the Retreat Director in Berchtesgaden, Germany.

"I thought this would be a good deal to do for Soldiers at home," said Tyson, "It motivated me to buy this property near Fort Hood, near the Soldiers."

Soldiers dressed in Halloween costumes run down Battalion Ave. during the early morning hours of Oct. 30 as a part of a Halloween fun run for the members of the 15th Financial Management Co., STB, 15th SB, 13th ESC. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain, 15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs)

15th SB Haunts Fort Hood For Halloween

Story and photos by Sgt. Matthew C. Cooley
15th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Children and parents smiled, somewhat nervously, at the sound of screams coming from within the darkened building. Couples held each other a little tighter as families ran out of the exits, shrieking and giggling at the same time. Even seasoned Soldiers admitted the scenes within were frighteningly fun.

The 49th Transportation Battalion and the 15th Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), each ran separate haunted houses open to Soldiers and family members for Halloween

The 263rd Maintenance Company and the 565th Quartermaster Company created and operated their annual haunted house in their motor pool where they also sold sweets to raise money for their Family Readiness Groups Oct. 29 – Nov. 1.

"We started planning 45 days out," said 1st Lt. Evelyn Ogwu, 263rd Maint. Co., 49th Trans. Bn., 15th SB. "We let the Soldier's creativity run wild."

A speaker outside the door was attached to a microphone inside, so newcomers heard the reactions of the group going through as they passed through pitch black rooms filled with fake blood, monsters, and strobe lights.

"Scaring people is always fun," said Pfc. Nobel Manguel, Avenger systems technician, 263rd Maint. Co., one of the many Soldiers involved in creating and maintaining the haunted house. "I got scared all the time working in there!"

Soldiers from 15th STB, 15th SB, try to scare a young family member as he passes through the butcher's room in a haunted house ran by 263rd Maintenance Company and 565th Quartermaster Company in their motor pool Oct. 30.

If the Haunted House scared Soldiers, then young Family members didn't stand a chance.

"I went [through] just half of it because I got scared," said Nodia Parras, 7, hugging her father, First Sgt. Evaristl Parras, senior noncommissioned officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, who also had quite a fright.

The 263rd and 565th had some ghoulish competition within the brigade, however.

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 49th Transportation Battalion had their share of ghosts and goblins as well with their haunted house Oct. 30 – 31.

"Do you want to go through?" Spc. Tracy Riles, chaplain's assistant and one of the main coordinators asked in a low, eerie voice to a group of children with their parents as she prepared to open the haunted house's front door.

They muttered and mumbled nervously and, finally, nodded cautiously. The younger children clutch their parents while the older ones clung to each other, their anticipation building as they held their breath.

"Is that your final answer?" Riles asked in a sinister tone as she opened the door and the group rushed in.

Within moments of the door closing behind them, their screams echoed outside, sending chills through the line of those waiting their turn to enter the eerie estate.

"I went through twice and it scared me both times!" exclaimed Lakesha Jackson a 49th Trans. Bn. Family member.

It wasn't just about scaring people though, as Jana Pearson mother of two young children and 49th Trans Bn. Family member explained.

"They got to do all kinds of crafts and got all kinds of free sugar," she said.

This was 49th HHD's first time to run a haunted house, and everyone agreed that it was a frightening success.

The 263rd Maint. Co.'s haunted house gets gruesome as Spc. William Oliver pretends to butcher the body of Sgt. Robin Reed.

13th Sustainment Command
(Expeditionary)
Public Affairs Office
BLDG 39048 Support Ave
Fort Hood, TX 76544