

13th SUSTAINMENT COMMAND (EXPEDITIONARY)

OIF 09-11

SUNBURST Magazine

THE PULSE OF GLOBAL LOGISTICS

Forward VOLUME 6 ISSUE 3
Summer 2009

**13th ESC Headquarters
Deploys to Iraq**

**Many hands make light work
Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides cover up graffiti**

**Green Tab Huddle
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**Reporting to the president of the board
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Cover: Spc. Alexander Mateo, a human resources specialist with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) G3 administrative section, prepares to board a plane during the 13th ESC Headquarters deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 09-11. (U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Naveed Ali Shah)

Back Cover: Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Kohles, a force protection noncommissioned officer with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) bids farewell to his daughter during the 13th ESC Headquarters deployment ceremony.(U.S. Army Photo by Naveed Ali Shah)



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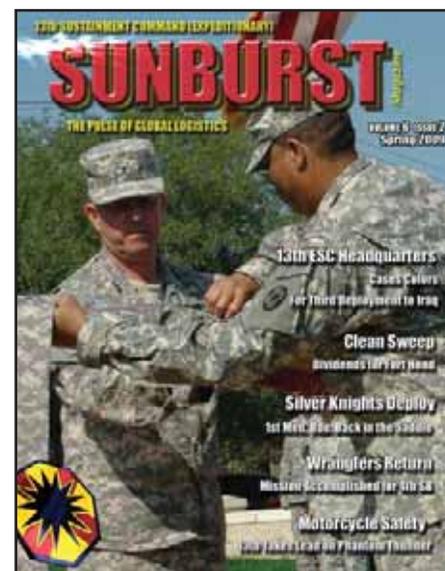


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CG'S COMMENTS

COMMANDING GENERAL

Paul L. Wentz



Greetings to all from Joint Base Balad, Iraq!

This continues to be a great and exciting period for the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) as we stand ready to spearhead the Strategic Reposture of Equipment and Personnel (SREP) in support of the reduction of forces in Iraq. In the last 90 days our team has experienced several brigade-level unit rotations in and out of theater. Specifically, we've said good-bye to five sustainment brigades and have welcomed four new sustainment brigades to the team.

I want to recognize all the Soldiers, NCOs and Officers from the 321st SB (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), the 304th SB (Riverside, California), the 287th SB (Wichita, Kansas), the 16th SB (Bamberg, Germany), and the 10th SB (Fort Drum, New York) for an outstanding job in support of our mission during their recent deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. You all represent the best America has to offer. I wish all a safe and happy return to your families and friends.

Our long months of training are behind us, we've deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 09-11, and our mission of overseeing a responsible drawdown of troops and equipment from the Iraq theater of operation is upon us.

Over the last three months all the service members and civilians working with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) have impressed me with their quiet professionalism and intense dedication to this monumental task.

If I can offer one piece of advice, it is to not let up, even for a moment. What we accomplish here will echo through history.

What separates our military from any in the history of the world is our ability to quickly set up and maintain sustainment operations half a world away from our country's borders. We've been so effective in this mission that there is a great deal of equipment accumulated in the past six years that we must now account for, remove from and redistribute within theaters of conflict.

I trust everyone in this command will do his or her best to ensure our undertaking is as successful as any mission this Army has ever seen.

With our newest team members, the 13th ESC is now comprised of two Brigade Combat Teams--155th HBCT and 41st IBCT, and 4 Sustainment Brigades. The arrival of the Soldiers from the 90th SB out of Little Rock, Arkansas, the 36th SB out of Temple, Texas, the 15th SB out of Fort Hood, Texas, and the 96th SB out of Salt Lake City, Utah means that our team is set now for the next 6 months before we begin a new round of rotations.

So, now that the team is in place, we are prepared, poised and ready for the mission at hand. This command played a vital role in the success of the implementation of the troop surge during OIF 06-08. Today, the 13th ESC is at the helm of operations to facilitate the responsible drawdown of forces. Whether it's conducting sustainment operations, training our Iraqi partners or establishing initiatives that create jobs and stimulate the local economy, our Soldiers continue to contribute to the future of a sovereign Iraq. Our Soldiers are the best at what they do and they do it with a level of professionalism that is unmatched. We are busy and each day presents new challenges, yet we continue to ensure that safety is integrated in all we plan, coordinate and execute. I would like to thank each and every Soldier in this command for your hard work, selfless service and dedication.

To our families and friends back home, I want to thank you for your unwavering support to your Soldiers. You play a vital role in the success of our mission here. Morale is high, and that's due in no small part to the things that you do to let us know how much you care about us. Whether it's the Family Readiness Group sending photos, a child sending a birthday card, or a friend sending a care package; your gestures of love and support mean so much to us all.

May God continue to bless our Soldiers, our families and our great nation.

Phantom Support!

BG Paul L. Wentz
Provider 6

I can't thank the Provider family enough for everything you do. Keep making me proud.

CSM Mark D. Joseph
Provider 7

COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

Mark D. Joseph



CSM'S CORNER

“Tips for Enriching Conversations”

Here we are in Iraq. After months of training, planning and anticipation, we are on the ground and working the mission. The bags have arrived, the transition of authority (TOA) has occurred and we are moving full speed ahead. Although our mind is fully engaged in the mission, I think it would be safe to say, our heart is still with those we love. As a result, emails, letters, care packages, phone calls and Skype are a much appreciated link that keeps us connected to home. It is great to speak to those back home and if only for a moment, we feel like we are back home.

It is amazing how far we have come in the world of technology and how easy it has become to reach out and touch those we love and miss. Yet, along with the ability to reach out and touch comes a great deal of responsibility. Service members have a responsibility to avoid sharing information that could jeopardize the mission or be used to harm other service members and DOD civilians. Equally as important, service members have a responsibility to govern what is said to our spouses and loved ones. Remember, it is hard to take back what you say or repair ill spoken words. We have a responsibility to our families and friends back home to weigh out our conversations against complaints, accusations, and petty arguments. Sure you might feel better getting an issue off your chest. However, the matter just left you and found its way to your loved ones. Those at home have the same responsibility. They too must guard their conversations against complaints, accusations, and petty arguing.

A secret for achieving this goal is to process issues prior to your conversations. Weigh out if raising the issue will be value added or another stressor over time. Also, carefully determine what issues absolutely must be addressed and which can wait until you speak face to face. And lastly, ask yourself, “How would I handle receiving such information?” When you weigh these factors, most issues are really not worth getting your partner, significant other or loved

ones upset. I remember several situations in which I employed the above criteria and I am so glad I did. So, as you communicate, remember to get the most out of your conversations. Take time and weigh what you say and make every moment count.

CH (LTC) Roy T. Walker
13TH ESC



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13th ESC takes command at JBB

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



Senior leaders of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and the 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command salute the flag of the United States of America during the playing of the National Anthem during a transfer of authority ceremony here Aug. 7.

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) took command and control of all logistics operations in the Iraqi theater from the 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) in a ceremony here August 7.

The ceremony officially marked the end of a 15 month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for the 3d ESC, based out of Fort Knox, Ky. During its deployment, the

3d ESC headquarters oversaw five sustainment brigades, which included roughly 17,000 Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen and provided

theater.

“Today we say goodbye to Iraq,” said Brig. Gen. Michael J. Lally, commanding general,

3rd ESC, during the unit’s Transfer of Authority Ceremony. “The accomplishments of this command were built on the backs and strong hands of its Soldiers. For that, you have my thanks.”

The 3d ESC headquarters is one of the last units to complete a 15-month deployment, rather than the standard 12 month

“Our entire effort of Operation Iraqi Freedom has depended on our ability to execute world-class logistics and the future of our efforts here will continue to depend on that.”

***Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby,
commanding general, MNC-I***

logistical support more than 300,000 Soldiers and civilians in

complete a 15-month deployment, rather than the standard 12 month

tour.

“This last 15 months, the 3d ESC has been historic and heroic. It has been difficult for the Soldiers,” said, Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby, commanding general, MNC-I, “But we should remember it’s the Families who shouldered the load at home and for that we are grateful.”

As dictated by its history, the Fort Hood based 13th ESC will take control during a very difficult and challenging time for US forces in Iraq.

During OIF II, the 13th ESC was in the center of the Sunni Triangle during the volatile Sunni Uprising. For OIF 06-08, the 13th ESC helped engineer the Surge implemented by then Multi-National Forces – Iraq commander, Gen. David H. Petraeus. Now, the 13th will oversee yet another overhaul in operations here.

“(MNC-I) will require from your command some remarkable planning, rapid adaptability, and herculean effort as we embark on the largest strategic reposturing of forces in 40 years,” said Jacoby.

The most recent drawdown of this scale was the US withdrawal from Vietnam during which the U.S. went from 553,000 boots on the ground in 1968 to zero by April 30, 1975.

The complete handover of security duties to Iraqi forces in late June 2009 was the first step in the long drawdown process, scheduled to be completed by 2011.

“I think sometimes you have to give up some tactical risk for strategic gain and I think this is



Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commander, 13th ESC and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark D. Joseph, 13th ESC, uncase the unit colors during a ceremony here Aug. 7.

the case,” Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander, MNF-I, said of the security handover in a July 30 CBS interview. “There might be still some little bit of tactical risk in some place but I believe it is well worth it for the strategic gain.”

As the higher headquarters for all logistics operations in Iraq, the 13th will play an integral role in the strategic draw down of forces in the upcoming months.

“As we continue to provide support to our Iraqi partners, the 13th’s focus will shift to the coordination, synchronization, and execution of (the drawdown),” said Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz,

commanding general, 13th ESC. “This is a mission that requires tactical patience and technical diligence. It will be a marathon, not a sprint.”

The next goal in the process is just more than 11 months from now, when U.S. forces in Iraq will shrink from the current 130,000 boots on ground to less than 50,000.

“Our entire effort of Operation Iraqi Freedom has depended on our ability to execute world-class logistics and the future of our efforts here will continue to depend on that,” said Jacoby. “To put it simply: We’re counting on you.”

Moving all over Iraq

96th Transportation Company shoulders the load



In the 96th Transportation Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade's motorpool, heavy equipment transporters line up prior to moving out. Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles, are moved throughout Iraq via HETs. The 96th Trans. Co. has hauled more than 2,000 MRAPS to Contingency Operating Locations in Iraq.

*Story and Photos by Chief Warrant Officer Michael Angelo
96th Trans. Co., 419th CSSB, 10SBDE*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – With every military conflict comes great demand for a logistical transportation unit, whether it is to transport heavy equipment throughout the battlefield or to move resupply packages to support troops and military operations.

Those needs are the primary focus of the Soldiers with the 96th Transportation Company, assigned to the 180th Transportation Battalion, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), who arrived in October 2008.

Originally, the 96th Trans. Co.'s focus was the movement of units and their equipment in and out of central Iraq.

Following the announcement of the drawdown of troops from Iraq, the 96th was called upon to shift gears and redirect their focus to the transportation

of equipment to the south, to assist the efforts in the drawdown.

The unit's primary piece of equipment, the heavy equipment transportation truck, commonly referred to as the HET, has long been a great asset to the military in its deployed environments. It is capable of transporting the heaviest loads of any vehicle in the military's fleet.

With a weight of roughly 231,400 pounds, the HET is the largest ground transportation vehicle, the king of the road in the transportation arena.

The 96th has traveled 387,000 miles in this, their sixth deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit typically deploys as a company, and is assigned to the 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, located

in central Iraq. The 96th provides all heavy lift and transportation support required in and around central Iraq, with convoys traveling as far north as Tikrit and as far south as Basra.

With thousands of miles remaining for the 96th, the mission to draw down forces and equipment in Iraq continues.

With all cargo delivered and each convoy completed, it is one step closer to completion of the mission and the end of a deployment.

A 4th Infantry Division Soldier prepares a UH-60 Blackhawk for transport on one of the 96th Transportation Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade's heavy equipment transporters in preparation for the 4th Inf. Div. Aviation Brigade's redeployment. Padding was used on the loading ramps of the HET to protect the air craft from damage during its ride.



Sgt. 1st Class Donald Smith, a native of Jonesville, S.C., HHC, 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, prepares to inspect a Soldier's weapon to ensure it is clear. Smith served as the small arms fire officer in charge during the training event.



Seven 13th ESC Soldiers experience Déjà Vu

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

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Most Soldiers get a new job in a new unit every few years, but seven Soldiers assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), are on their third tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, under the same unit, in the same place.

“It feels like I never left,” said Sgt. 1st Class Gloria R. Storey, class I supply noncommissioned officer in charge, about her third deployment with HHC here.

Much has changed in the four years following their first deployment with the 4th Corps Materiel Management Command, in support of OIF II, and their second deployment either with 4th CMMC or HHC during OIF 06-08,

“The accommodations are better this time,” said Omaha, Neb., native, Warrant Officer Robert B. Barta, petroleum/water technician, a sentiment echoed by the other third timers.

“The first time we lived in tents, so this is much better,” said Chief Warrant Officer Paul Orthel, supply system technician.

“Also, the security situation is a whole lot better,” said Orthel, a Titonka, Iowa, native.

The much disparaged burn pit was also a topic the third timers were passionate about.

“I’m really glad they greatly decreased the burning,” said Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Marbury, supply liaison with the distribution management center.

“Last time the smoke from the burn pit enveloped everything,” said Marbury, the Grand Prairie, Texas, native.

Other seasoned veterans focused on the brighter side, and appreciated the history and natural beauty of the land formerly known as Mesopotamia.

“I tried to learn Arabic so I could communicate with the local populace and I realized this culture goes back thousands of years,” said Lt. Col. Bob Crouch, chief of plans.

“I’ve seen this country from the air, and it’s a beautiful country,” said Crouch, the Coral Springs, Fla., native. “From the mountains to the deserts, it’s just beautiful.”

Despite various experiences the Soldiers have during the deployment, they all miss their Families more than anything else.

“Personally, I miss my Harley Road King,” joked Orthel. “But being away from home, missing Family, it’s all part of the job we have.”

“I really miss the simple things, like mowing the lawn, cooking, things that we take for granted at home, but can’t do here,” said Crouch.

For one senior NCO, the milestones and changes that occur in her family as they grow and mature are



From Left, Sgt 1st Class Thomas Marbury, supply liaison, distribution management center, Warrant Officer Robert B. Barta, petroleum/water technician, Lt. Col. Richard J. Tate, deputy support operations officer, Lt. Col. Bob Crouch, chief of plans, Chief Warrant Officer Paul Orthel, supply system technician, Master Sgt. Dorothea Goodson, support operations administrative assistant, and Sgt. 1st Class Gloria R. Storey, class I supply NCOIC. These seven Soldiers are on their third rotation here at Joint Base Balad with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

the most cherished events.

“All the special events, the monumental times, are what I’m going to miss the most,” said Copperas Cove, Texas, native, Master Sgt. Dorothea Goodson, support operations administrative assistant.

While in Iraq, most Soldiers average 14 hour workdays, seven days a week and must maintain their regular physical fitness in addition to their work schedule. These long hours can easily become overwhelming to the unprepared.

“It’s all about getting into a good battle rhythm,” said Harker Heights, Texas, native, Lt. Col. Richard J. Tate, deputy support operations officer. “You have to hit the right priorities everyday to take care of yourself.”

Every Soldier has different activities to break the monotony.

“I think getting involved with church is one of the best ways to enjoy your time here,” said Goodson.

Orthel agreed, “Church is something I look forward to every week.”

Barta said he doesn’t need to do anything out of the ordinary. “Just talking to fellow Soldiers helps me relax,” he said.

With the 13th ESC playing an integral role in the U.S. drawdown during the coming months, these Soldiers will no doubt be busy, but they give their regards to the Soldiers on the front lines.

287th Sustainers deliver medical supplies

*Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Gonzales,
C Battery, 4th Bn. 133rd FA Regt., and
Master Sgt. Carl Mar,
287th SB Public Affairs*

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq – Soldiers from the 287th Sustainment Brigade and C Battery, 4th Battalion, 133rd Field Artillery, attached to the 167th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, delivered medical supplies to Health Care of Hamuraby, a rural medical clinic located north of An Nasiriyah, in Dhi Qar province, July 26.

Lt. Col. Clint Moyer, the 287th Sust. Bde. civil affairs chief, and Maj. Sean McGann, executive officer of the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment oversaw the mission.

Moyer, a native of Clearwater, Kan., said he visited the medical clinic earlier in the summer and noticed its shelves were empty of medical supplies.

The clinic’s two doctors and two nurses, who provide care to approximately 40 patients each day, have not been able to treat their patient’s health problems for lack of bandages and other medical aids.

Enlisting support from clinics in the United States, Moyer began receiving medical supplies for distribution in July.

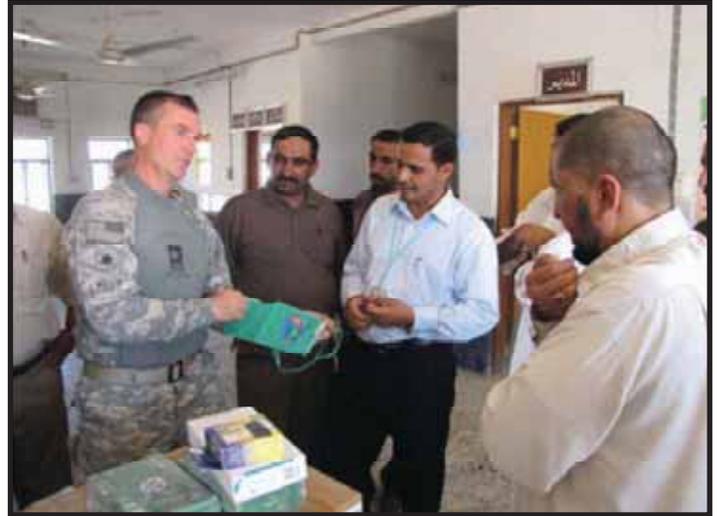
“We received 52 boxes, each the size of a small refrigerator carton,” said Moyer. “There were bandages, leg braces, prescription eye glasses, first aid kits, stethoscopes, and many other items.”

He also received hand-sewn arm slings made specifically for children.”

Seven boxes of supplies, which completely filled a trailer, were taken to the clinic on this first delivery trip.

When Moyer and McGann arrived at the clinic, they were met by Kadhim Khidhip Abbass, clinic director, and the Hamuraby medical staff. As the security escort team moved the boxes into the medical facility, the leaders discussed the needs of the facility.

Abbass expressed his thanks for the new supplies, but stressed that his facility still needed more.



Lt. Col. Clint Moyer, 287th Sustainment Brigade civil affairs chief, shows one of many home sewn arm slings donated by members of the Mount Hope Church in Webb City, Mo., to the Health Care of Hamuraby medical staff, July 26.

“People of the community rely on us to serve them through the day, but the electricity is not reliable,” said Abbass. “When we lose it, it becomes difficult to help everyone. We need power generators, back-up refrigeration and glucose meters for the clinic.”

Moyer recounted the efforts of the 287th. “We have mainly focused on schools and orphanages during our deployment,” said Moyer.

“This is the first time we have been able to bring medical supplies to a clinic, so for me it was a really special event. The clinics in Iraq are poorly stocked with supplies, and those we brought will help a lot of Iraqis.”

For McGann, a native of Springfield, Ore., the delivery trip to Health Care of Hamuraby reinforced his concepts on conducting civil military operations.

“I am impressed with the 287th SB and 167th CSSB CMO missions,” he said. “They have set up visits on a rotating basis to sustain the areas they deliver to and also keep in contact with the same people. This is similar to my own personal experience in community policing,” he said.

“You have to know the people whom you serve to understand their needs.”

PSD Soldiers perform final training in Kuwait

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

CAMP BUEHRING, KUWAIT
— An explosion halted the four-vehicle convoy of armored Humvees, as they made their way through the small village.

Thick clouds of white and green smoke enveloped the Soldiers as they poured out of the trucks onto the sandy desert road. They took cover behind their vehicles and returned fire, providing cover to a team of Soldiers clearing a nearby house.

This was not a real roadside bomb, nor were the Soldiers hardened infantrymen.

These were the 15th Sustainment Brigade

“Wagonmasters” — firefighters, cooks, mechanics, and a myriad other occupations — forming the unit’s personal security detachment.

The PSD’s four-day training exercise culminated with live-fire scenarios Sept. 18 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, testing their ability to deal with combat situations, both in vehicles and on the ground.

“We accomplish our mission so boss-man can get where he’s going,” said Staff Sgt.

special operations Soldiers.

The first day consisted of classroom training and dry rehearsals, preparing the Soldiers for live-fire exercises. The second day included live-fire exercises without vehicles.

By day three, the PSD had moved on to live-fire exercises with vehicles.

Day four was not originally

on the schedule, but leadership decided to continue training while they still had the opportunity to use Buehring’s resources.

Scenarios included getting the principal back into a vehicle after coming under

fire while on foot, moving the principal from a damaged vehicle into a working one, and clearing and using an available building as a safe house.

Clothed target dummies lined the streets of the mock village and Soldiers had to make split-second decisions as to who was friend or foe. Explosive effects, smoke grenades and moving targets were all used to make the training as realistic as possible.

“They should be proud of how far they’ve come,” said Lt. Col. Paula Lodi, the 15th Sust. Bde. STB commander.

She said these Soldiers set themselves apart with their desire to be there, even though they all came from different occupational specialties.

Gimble said they had developed well into a team.

“This is probably the best group of Soldiers I’ve ever worked with,” she said.

“We accomplish our mission so boss-man can get where he’s going.”

**Staff Sgt. Stuart Gimble,
PSD platoon sergeant**

Stuart Gimble, the PSD platoon sergeant, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade. Gimble, a Washington native, said he appreciates being pushed hard in his work.

The PSD’s mission is to safely protect key leaders, such as the brigade’s commander, called the “principal.” The platoon’s training in Kuwait was overseen by civilian contractors, many of whom are former



Staff Sgt. Stuart Gimble (left), with the 15th Sustainment Brigade, a Personal Security Detachment platoon sergeant and a Washington native, escorts Spc. Charles Caves, an Oskaloosa, Iowa, native, also with the 15th PSD, to safety during a training exercise Sept. 18 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Caves is acting as a “principal,” the name given to an individual the PSD protects.



A team of 15th Sustainment Brigade Personal Security Detachment Soldiers rush to clear a building for use as a safe house, during a training exercise Sept. 18 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Do you have cool photos you want to share?

13th ESC PAO wants them.

Send us your photos at escpao@iraq.centcom.mil



US Army Photo By Capt. Ralph D. Dempsey
90th Sustainment Brigade
Your name could be here!

Water more precious than fuel



Lt. Col. Gavin Heater, commander of the 167th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and Sgt. 1st Class Marty Waybright, a water purification specialist with the 167th CSSB, discuss with one of the facility workers ways to make the water treatment facility outside Scania Base, Iraq, more effective and efficient Aug. 19. The facility, built by Coalition forces in 2004, uses a chlorine dilution process to purify the water pumped in from the Hilla and Euphrates Rivers.

*Story and Photos by Spc. Anita VanderMolen
41st IBCT PAO*

SCANIA, Iraq – Lt. Col. Gavin Heater, commander of the 167th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and two Soldiers specializing in pumps, filters and filter separation, visited a water treatment plant Aug. 19 just outside Contingency Operating Location Scania, Iraq.

“We wanted to find the

local resources outside the base,” Heater said. “We are going to at least try to understand their process. We want to find out how they produce water and how they can produce water more efficiently.”

Two new employees showed Heater the equipment they had and how they cleaned and filtered

the water with it. They also explained the cleaning and filtration process they use.

“They showed us equipment that was more modern than they used to have and some equipment that needed some work,” said Heater.

The facility, built by Coalition forces in 2004, has three holding tanks for water

and two smaller tanks for chlorine dilution.

The water filtration process begins with water from the Hilla and Euphrates Rivers. It is then pumped into tanks and treated with diluted chlorine.

After the water settles, it is filtered through a gravel and clay media and pumped out to the six villages the facility supports.

Workers said the power running the motors is unpredictable. It is on a two hours on, two hours off schedule. When the town needs more water pressure or water production, workers turn on a generator.

With a greater need for water in the summer, the workers struggle to do the

maintenance as needed, Heater said.

“We imagine they are pushing water that isn’t quite clean when they are in a bigger production mode,” Heater said.

Heater’s three-man team discussed different ways to clean the water, including a coagulant to bind the impurities, which allows filters to extract more media from the water. They also mentioned reverse osmosis, a process used on COL Scania.

“We don’t want to change their process,” Heater said. “We need to make sure that what we teach them is something they can sustain, something that is a reasonable cost for them.

We’d like to teach them a cleaner way to handle water production, we just don’t know how long that can be supported. We would like to bring the two gentlemen onto this base to show them how reverse osmosis works.”

A barrier around the facility to reduce dust collection on the filters and in the pumps was also discussed as a short-term solution to producing cleaner water more effectively.

“Water is such a critical resource around here,” Heater said. “It’s really almost more important than gasoline. They need it for their farming; they need it for their livelihood. These guys have a critical job.”

A water treatment facility near Scania, Iraq, built in 2004 by Coalition forces, processes water from the Hilla and Euphrates Rivers. Efforts are being made to help the facility become more effective and efficient.



Many hands make light work

*Story and Photo by 1st Lt. James Lavelle
620th CSSB, 10th SB*

CAMP SLAYER, Iraq – Multi-colored handprints replaced years of graffiti at the Flintstone Palace in Baghdad, as service members worked with Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Aug. 2 to revamp the dilapidated building.

A group of roughly 40 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines at Victory Base Complex, Baghdad, joined the children in an effort to clean up and beautify the structure.

Saddam Hussein had the Flintstone Palace constructed to mirror the town of Bedrock, from Hanna-Barbera's "Flintstones" cartoons. Few children ever played here as Hussein restricted its use to his own family members and close friends.

In recent years, the Flintstone Palace has suffered neglect and vandalism.

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, service members and Iraqi children took the time to make the palace a little nicer.

Maj. Gary Farley, with the Iraqi Ground Forces Command Military Transition Team, and 1st Lt. Jessica Burton, with the 2/664 Ordnance Detachment, 620th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, led the cleanup. Farley said the project's vision was to provide the Iraqi children with an opportunity to work together on a cause bigger than them.

"Instead of just accepting an undesirable condition, we wanted to teach them you can take action and make a difference," he said.

With help from their U.S. friends, the Scouts worked together to clean and paint portions of the palace.

The project kicked off with a tour of the palace. The Scouts were surprised to find the rooms covered in graffiti, but excited to learn they could paint over it and make their own mark.

The scouts soon covered the walls, themselves and their service member friends with a fresh coat of white paint. As the children painted, Abdul Sajad, a local Iraqi artist, hand painted a mural full of colorful flowers and birds on one wall.

Once the paint dried, the scouts

put their handprints on the wall, leaving a bit of themselves behind. At first, the children were hesitant to make their mark, but after a demonstration by Burton and gentle encouragement, the wall was soon covered with handprints.

One of the goals of the project was to teach the children about service, said Burton, a Fort Hood, Texas, native.

"This was an opportunity for the kids to improve their country with their own hands," said Burton. "They are learning to take pride in their work and their community."

As the children and service members cleaned the paint off their hands and picked up tools, a small group attached a commemorative plaque to the entryway of the palace.

It read, "Restoring Iraq one place at a time. Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides worked to improve this site. Please keep this site beautiful. The future of Iraq thanks you."



First Lt. Jessica Burton, with the 2/664 Ordnance Detachment, 620th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, and a Fort Hood, Texas, native, watches as a child with the Iraqi Boy Scouts and Girl Guides places a hand print on the wall of one of the rooms in the Flintstone Palace Aug. 2 in Baghdad. The Iraqi children spent the afternoon painting over graffiti to make the local landmark beautiful once again.

Shakin' with the shaykh

Story and Photos by Spc. Anita VanderMolen
41st IBCT PAO

SCANIA, Iraq – Members of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, with the Oregon National Guard, went

outside the wire to participate in a pre-Ramadan feast hosted by a local resident Aug. 19.

Ali Jadaan, a local shaykh and contractor in Scania, invited the command staff of A Co., including Capt. Charles Ellis and Lt. Mark Major, to a feast prepared by his family.

“There was a lot of food, a lot of variety,” Ellis said. “It was definitely harvest time with all the fresh fruit there. It was very nice.”

The guests tasted meat and rice wrapped in grape leaves, soups, pickled vegetables, flat bread, dates, fresh fruits and vegetables.

“(Ali) tries to do this with every new command,” said Maj. Dale Coparanis, the 167th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion public affairs officer, who also attended the feast.

The relationship between Scania and Ali is a complimentary one. Each provides the other with a service it needs.

Ali’s contracting company built the firing range, a trash removal system and burn pit, and guard towers. The contractors take care



A Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, with the Oregon National Guard, were invited to contractor Ali Jadaan’s home in Scania, Iraq, for a pre-Ramadan feast Aug. 19.

of maintenance, repair the barriers and clean and service the motor pool areas. Ali and his workers also built the local marketplace.

Ali’s relationship with the military is beneficial to the company’s mission, Ellis said.

“Ali provides an Iraqi insight for us,” said Ellis. “He is able to locate parts and materials on the Iraqi economy that we could not otherwise find. He does on-the-spot details.”

A Co. provides quick reaction to the surrounding area for rocket or mortar attacks. They respond to incidents outside the base, often collaborating with Iraqi Army and Police, protecting the villages from possible attacks and providing security and safety to people in the area.

The means are different but the goal is the same: improving Iraq.

“I was impressed. They are very eager to help us,” Ellis said. “They want to help get their nation built and on the right track. I think in a few years you aren’t even going to recognize Iraq anymore. It will improve that much.”



Ali Jadaan, a local contractor in Scania, welcomed members of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, with the Oregon National Guard, into his home for a pre-Ramadan feast. The feast was also an invitation for the new command of A Co. to sit and have a non-business meeting.

Command shares suicide prevention experience, answers questions

Story and Photo by Spc. Lisa A. Cope,
13th ESC Public Affairs Office



Col. Knowles Atchison, deputy commanding officer of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Maj. Saul E. Cardona, chaplain for the 13th ESC, listen to Col. Thomas L. Anderson, the officer in charge of the 55th Medical Company Combat Stress Control, as he shares his professional experience with suicidal thoughts and tendencies, and depression.

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Three senior leaders shared their experiences about suicide prevention and answered questions from service members during an open-forum suicide prevention meeting at the east Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center Sept. 10 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Col. Thomas L. Anderson, the officer in charge of the 55th Medical Company Combat Stress Control, Col. Knowles Atchison, the deputy commanding officer for the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Maj. Saul E. Cardona, the chaplain for the 13th ESC, shared their thoughts

on the topic.

Individuals who have suicidal or harmful thoughts, usually exhibit behavior that signals the feelings they are experiencing, said Anderson. Giving away treasured or personal possessions and loss of interest in normal activities can be signs a person is experiencing depression or having suicidal or harmful thoughts, he said.

“Pay attention to people’s behavior,” said Anderson. “If they seem out of the ordinary, don’t be afraid to question them. The more you talk about it, the less likely it is to occur.”

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bryan L. Hudson, the officer

in charge of supply and services for the 13th ESC and a Los Angeles native, said he attended the meeting to learn more about suicide prevention and how to help his Soldiers cope with depression.

He said the open-forum style was effective, as it allowed people to open up, ask questions and express their opinions without regard to rank.

“I learned that above all we are all human beings,” said Hudson. “No matter what race, creed, color (or) background you are, we all have the same issues and we are just trying to get through life.”

VEHICLE COMPANY STEPS UP, MOVES OUT

Story and Photo by Sgt. Beau Stefka,
10SB Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – On May 25, the “Hook and Book” Soldiers of the 1161st Transportation Company, a Washington National Guard unit out of Ephrata, Wash., arrived in Iraq as part of the 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade.

The 1161st, a palletized loading system vehicle company, received a new assignment upon their arriving at the 10th Sust. Brig. The unit accepted the challenge to step away from their PLS vehicles

and transition to using the M915 tractor trailers to haul loads in theater.

The 1161st serves more than eight locations in Iraq including Victory Base Camp, Joint Base Balad, Camp Adder, Camp Kalsu and Camp Cedar.

In the 1161st’s first 60 days, it conducted more than 70 missions and traveled more than 40,000 miles, sustaining no injuries during these missions. Capt. Leslie Jines Jr., a native of Selah, Wash., and the 1161st’s

Company commander, said safety is paramount in Iraq.

“Mission completion and safety of all Soldiers is my main goal for the 1161st during this deployment,” Jines said. “One hundred percent of the unit will be combat lifesaver qualified and physically fit.”

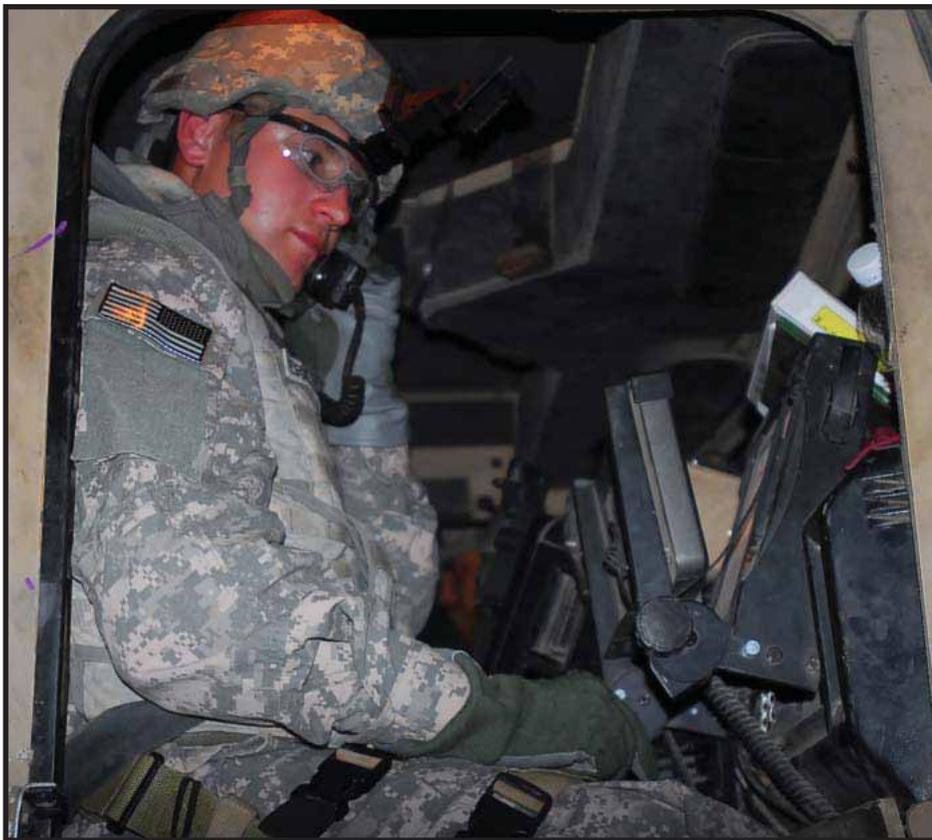
First Sgt. David Luther, a resident of West Richland, Wash., is on his second deployment with the unit in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Building the team and mission accomplishment is my personal mission statement to my Soldiers,” Luther said.

Sgt. 1st Class Mark Fisher, a native of Kirkland, Wash., is the unit’s truckmaster and on his second deployment with the 1161st. He is in charge of ensuring all loads are checked and secured for every convoy leaving the 1161st motorpool.

Fisher also aids in mission preparation, monitoring missions while on the road and ensuring all departure and arrival times are met to keep the unit running on schedule.

“Basically, anything that involves our trucks and Soldiers comes through me,” Fisher said.



First Lt. Erickson, a native of Hunters, Wash., and the second platoon leader for the 1161st Transportation Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, prepares his M915 tractor trailer for a convoy headed to Victory Base Complex, Iraq.

PHOTOS FROM THE 13



Photo by Sgt. Jason Smith

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – Pfc. John Collins, a Soldier out of Ballwin, Mo. currently assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 620th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, unloads mail from the back of a truck. Every day mail is picked up, transported, and then unloaded so the Soldiers of the 620th can get their packages and letters from home.



Photo by Capt. M.



Photo by Spc. Naveed/Ali Shah

Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), meets with Iraqi Maj. Gen. Muniem, director of electrical and mechanical engineering, Sept. 1 at Baghdad's Victory Base Complex. During his visit, Wentz and Muniem discussed the critical responsibilities they share during the drawdown of personnel and equipment from Iraq. Managing all this is a big job, and cooperation will help balance it out, said Wentz.



Soldiers f...
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OM AROUND TH ESC



Q-West residents line up to purchase newly available merchandise at the grand opening of the expanded Post Exchange at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, Aug. 25. The Q-West PX doubled in size from 3,000 to 6,000 square feet and increased its shelf stock, especially in electronics and entertainment systems.

Turray Shugars



Photo by Sgt. Edward J. Monell

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Sustainment Brigade Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade's Chief Warrant Officer Sean Pullease from Fort Pierce, Fla., uses his expertise to install a Very Small Aperture Terminal satellite system on the 419th Combat Service Support Battalion Supply Support Activity infrastructure. Pullease is the officer in charge for the Combat Service Support Automation Management Office.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Keith M. Anderson

from around Q-West come together Aug. 7 to share memories from their time together in the 123rd Support Battalion, 1st Armored Division, formerly Dexheim, Germany. The unit was deactivated in June, many of the Soldiers ended up in Iraq together in units.



Photo by Sgt. Jamie Nova

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Spc. Brandon Hubbard, a Soldier from 1st Platoon of 1161st Transportation Company performs maintenance on a vehicle at the 1161st motorpool here.

Trans Bn. conducts senior leaders meeting



Lt. Col Peter M. Haas ,49th Transportation Battalion commander, Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general 13th ESC, and Command Sgt. Major Mark D. Joseph, senior enlisted advisor, 13th ESC field questions from the participants in the Green Tab Huddle luncheon here at Joint Base Balad Aug. 12. This was the final day of the three day event.

*Story and Photo by Spc. John Stimac
13th ESC Public Affairs*

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – It was a busy three days for senior leaders of the 49th Transportation Battalion as they hosted their 20 Movement Control Team leaders during their first Green Tab Huddle Aug. 10-12 here.

During the GTH, the battalion commander and his staff imparted mission related guidance and training upon MCT’s senior leaders.

The 49th, a Fort Hood, Texas, unit, organic to the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), is responsible for providing command and control for 20 MCTs, including Air Force, Army Reserves and Regular Army, operating in 17 locations across the Multi-National Corps-Iraq battle space.

The battalion also provides movement control and highway regulation for the 13th ESC and MNC-I to ensure the effective movement of cargo, personnel and units according to command priorities.

“It had such a tremendous impact on movement control team leadership that the 49th decided to continue the program and take it to a higher, ‘team building’ level,” said Master Sgt. Joseph Sepulvado, 49th Trans. Bn., operations noncommissioned officer in charge of the program, originally started by the 330th Trans. Bn.

Sepulvado said the intent of the GTH was to provide subordinate commanders and detachment sergeants an opportunity to gain professional development as well as receive additional mission related training.

The meeting began with a message from Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph L. Bivens, 49th senior enlisted advisor, and Alabaster, Ala. native.

“Our goal is to accomplish our mission, protect our Soldiers, Airmen and civilians throughout our stay here,” he said.

Day one included battalion commander and command sergeant major’s counseling sessions with their respective commanders and detachment sergeants. Leadership staff also had the opportunity to meet the Soldiers under their command and staff supervisors from Kellogg, Brown and Root Inc.

Day two began with a prayer breakfast, led by Capt. Carlos A. Molina, the 49th Trans. chaplain, with a focus on leadership and its values.

Lt. Col. Peter M. Haas, the battalion commander, presented his list of four priorities he felt every MCT commander and detachment sergeant should know: accomplish the mission, protect service members and civilians, improve operations and conduct transfers of authority.

“Interaction with fellow detachment sergeants and commanders may be the most beneficial thing you get out of this Green Tab Huddle,” said Haas.

KBR managers and supervisors discussed their involvement and responsibilities within the battalion.

“KBR and the Army work as a team,” said Haas. “The responsibility falls on the Army, but without KBR, we could not complete our mission.”

John Worthy, KBR logistics manager, echoed the same sentiments. “We are not successful unless the Army is successful. We are working closely with the (battalion operations officer) and we aim for full integration.”

The GTH was not all business, however. A softball game pitting commanders against detachment sergeants got things going early on Aug. 12; the officers won with a final score of 12-5.

Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general, 13th ESC, dined with the GTH participants at the luncheon that marked the end of the conference and spoke about the upcoming drawdown of logistical forces throughout Iraq and the reduction of personnel here by August of 2010.

Haas ended the GTH with a reminder for the leaders to stay engaged, to know what’s going on in their Soldiers’ lives and to maintain discipline and standards in all facets of operations.

Sustainers Learn to Use MRAPs

40 hour course designed to curb rollover accidents

Story by Spc. Michael Camacho
13th ESC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The military constantly fields new equipment to better serve the Warfighter, which requires adaptability and aptitude from the Soldiers who must learn how to use it.

Provider Soldiers are learning how to operate and maintain the latest in military vehicles here at Joint Base Balad.

The Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle provides unprecedented protection from roadside bombs for the Soldiers who use them. With a consortium of new models now hitting the ground, Provider Soldiers are working hand-in-hand with civilian contractors to learn the ins and outs of their new ride.

“Through a 40-hour operator’s course, Soldiers learn how to drive and use the vehicle properly,” said Lloyd Sherouse, an instructor at the MRAP site. Drivers are familiarized with operating the MRAPs in both day and nighttime conditions, he said.

The vehicle sits approximately 36 inches off the ground, which pushes explosions out and away from the crew cabin, but makes it very top heavy which can lead to rollovers.

Almost 50 percent of all MRAP accidents are rollovers, caused by one of three things: maneuvers of the driver, road collapse and sudden impact. The MRAP operator’s course works to mitigate the chances of rollover by teaching Soldiers how to properly drive the vehicle.

“When they go out and do the road tests they drive on JBB, and if they can navigate through the streets of JBB, they can pretty much do the same out in the Iraqi community,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Colin Bergstrom, support operations officer, 80th Ordnance Battalion.

In addition to the operator’s course, there is a 40-hour maintenance course to train mechanics on the MRAPs.

The 80th Ord. Bn. has been sending Soldiers to be trained in MRAP maintenance and operations in order to provide support for units and convoys at JBB and out in the field.

At this time, roughly 35 percent of the maintenance personnel in the 80th have been trained in MRAP maintenance and operation, said Bergstrom.

Soldiers benefit from their civilian instructor’s experience and expertise.

“The civilians teach the Soldiers new things that expand their knowledge and give them confidence while working on the MRAPs,” said Bergstrom.

The MRAP repair team also addresses issues that may arise during convoys, from simply patching up a broken air conditioner to refurbishing a battle-damaged vehicle.

Convoys passing through Balad can stop and receive repairs in order to get the MRAP mission capable, said Herb Brotherwood, Balad MRAP site manager.

During training, the Soldiers get on-the-job experience and learn how to fix the MRAPs problems first hand with the assistance of their instructors.

“The (Soldiers) go out there like an augment work force and assist them in their jobs and at the same time they can put out more equipment because they have two people working on the same vehicle, rather than just one,” said Bergstrom.

The MRAP site orders, repairs and installs whatever is needed to get the vehicle mission ready.

Repair time depends on the severity of the issue, but the MRAP site pushes to have the vehicle ready within 60 days, said Brotherwood.

“We go through all the Army channels to get parts,” said Dwayne Wright, a resource production manager. “We’ll go through the Forward Resource Point and get the parts we need to get those MRAPs running again.”

Wright said, “We’re here for the Soldiers and here to support the Warfighters.”



13th ESC Soldiers attempt to join Audie Murphy Club

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

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – “Audie Leon Murphy was a legend in his own time,” begins the biography recited by the three candidates at the board for the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club Aug. 27 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

The noncommissioned officers of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) recited the biography in front of a panel of sergeants major from all over the Iraqi theater, from Camp Speicher to Camp Taji.

The club was established in 1986 at the 13th ESC’s home in Fort Hood, Texas. Carrying on the tradition, Command Sgt. Maj. Mark D. Joseph, the senior enlisted adviser for the 13th ESC, said he held the board during this deployment to challenge his Soldiers.

“The most important quality a candidate needs to have is confidence,” said Joseph. “It’s not about knowing the answer, the Soldier also needs to be able to maintain military bearing throughout the process.”

The situation-based questions required Soldiers to do more than simply memorize and quote regulations. The NCOs described theoretical courses of action for situations they could encounter as leaders.

Staff Sgt. Aileen Lynn, a platoon sergeant with the 89th Transportation Company, 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade from Fort Eustis, Va., said her entire career has been

a stepping stone leading to this board.

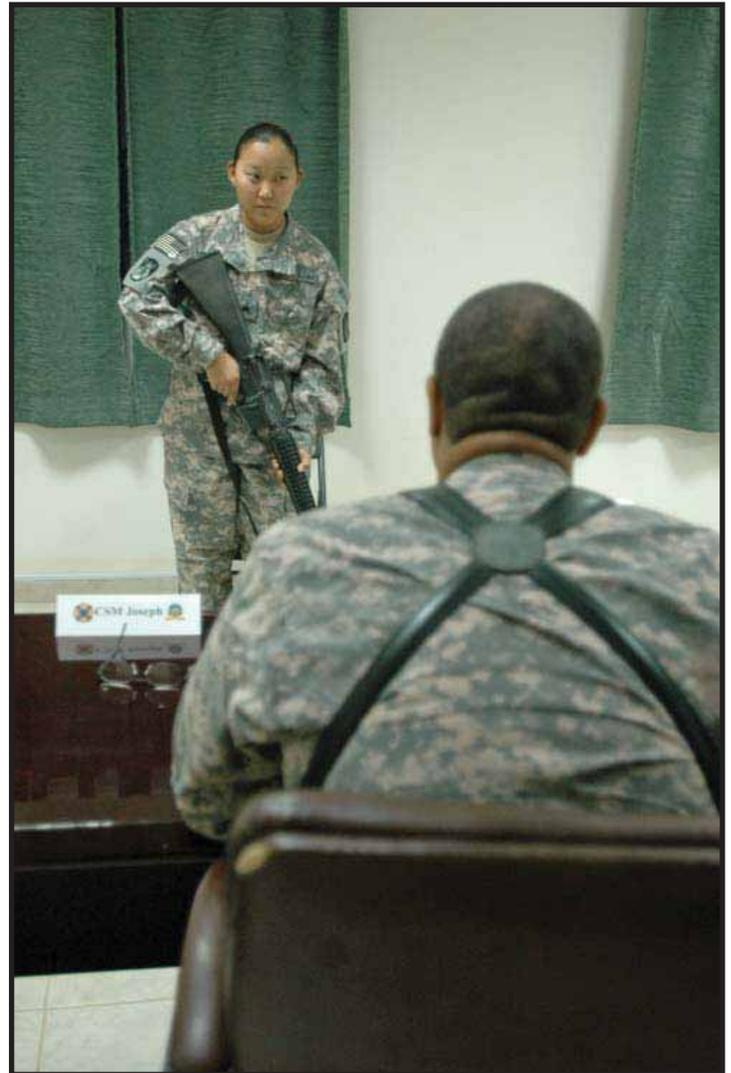
“I’ve been getting ready for this board my whole NCO career,” she said.

“The last six weeks I really buckled down. I learned regulations and just reviewed what I knew about my Soldiers.”

The difficulty of the board is increased by the rapid-fire questioning, but Lynn said the hardest part was not knowing what to expect.

Two of the three candidates, including Lynn, overcame the challenges they faced to be recommended for induction into the prestigious club.

Joseph said, “There is always room for improvement, and one



Sgt. Christine Moreno, a light-wheel vehicle mechanic from the 10th Sustainment Brigade, displays the technique to properly clear an M16A2 rifle during the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)’s Sergeant Audie Murphy Club board Aug. 27 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

NCO will have to come back when he’s better prepared, but overall the Soldiers did very well. I was impressed by their knowledge and expertise.”

Washington National Guard protects and serves 13th ESC

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

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – At the most basic level, Soldiers live, fight and sometimes die in close-knit fire teams. For one team, holding a life in their hands and protecting it is just another part of their job.

Roughly 60 percent of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) is made up of National Guard and Reserve component Soldiers. However, one platoon of Guardsmen from the United States' capitol does not just sustain the fight; they protect and serve.

The 547th Transportation Company's second platoon, Washington National Guard was tasked with providing a personal security detail for the commanding general of the 13th ESC during the unit's tour here at Joint Base Balad.

"Due to the law enforcement background of many Soldiers, during our initial train-up, our platoon was selected to provide the PSD for the CG," said 1st Lt. Connor Norris, the PSD platoon leader with the 547th Trans. Co., 49th Transportation Battalion.

During the unit's mobilization training at Camp Shelby, Miss., they were augmented by Soldiers from the 155th Armored Brigade, Mississippi National Guard. Many of the Soldiers, from both Washington and Mississippi, volunteered for this deployment.

"We're like a small family now," said Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Tarver, a platoon sergeant and augmented Soldier from the 155th, on his third deployment to the Persian Gulf region.

During their initial training, the newly formed PSD platoon focused on teamwork to accomplish their mission, said Tarver, a Poplarville, Miss. native.

"When we first met, we didn't know each other, but now we all work together pretty well," he said.

The platoon underwent training to learn how to protect individuals they refer to as the principle. They also trained on mounted and dismounted operations, reflexive fire, movement under fire and reacting under fire. These myriad training events focused primarily on the principle.

"If something happens, it's everybody's job to react and to get the principle out; that is the mission," said Tarver. "These guys know it's all about protecting the principle, they know what that means."

In today's all-volunteer force, Soldiers consistently choose to stay in the Army despite the deployments, hardships and dangers of military life. The Soldiers of the PSD are no different in their values.

"I could be at Walter Reed if something were to go wrong here," said Spc. James Curtis, a truck driver with the PSD platoon from the Washington National Guard, who is on his second deployment. "I was lucky the first time. I thought to myself, 'Curtis you may not be as lucky the next time.' I hesitated, but I decided to volunteer to go again anyway."

Curtis said he knows all too well the luck of war. He sees wounded warriors on a daily basis at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he is employed as a security officer. Every day he stands watch as Soldiers



Allan Tiffany debriefs Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, the commanding general with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Soldiers with the Personal Security Detachment from the Washington Army National Guard's 547th Transportation Company, following Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle rollover training. The PSD and their principles – the commanding general, the deputy commander, and the command sergeant major of the 13th ESC – conducted the training together to get to know each other here at Joint Base Balad Aug. 17.

who have suffered the horrors of war go through the revolving door – some with wounds clearly visible, others whose pain is below the surface, but just as profound, he said.

"Working there makes me appreciate everything I have," he said. "That's why I decided to volunteer for this deployment."

The all-volunteer force is an environment conducive to training and development of junior leaders in the PSD to be the future, senior leaders of the unit because they want to be here. The unit works as a team, so day-to-day operations are often entrusted to the junior leaders, the sergeants and staff sergeants, Tarver said.

"I am very pleased with these guys," said Tarver. "They do a little bit of everything and they're really doing a great job."

Norris said he agreed with his counterpart.

"They're truly a great group," Norris said. "They just make my job easy."

Even with such a high-visibility mission, the officers, commissioned and noncommissioned, never lose sight of the future: those junior Soldiers who look to them for leadership. Curtis said he appreciates this commitment.

"I'm pretty impressed to be surrounded by so much experience," said Curtis. "We really came together as a family and I trust these guys."

Iraqi company takes huge step forward:

Receives Iraqi Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs certification

Story and Photo by Spc. Michael Behlin
3rd ESC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Local workers from the Iraqi-owned, Miran Village Company, received certificates from officials on behalf of Iraq’s Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs during a ceremony at the container repair yard here July 27.

With the certificates, Miran Village Company workers will be able to use the skills obtained at the container repair yard anywhere in Iraq to find work, long after

U.S. troops leave.

The Miran Village Co.’s owner, Hashim Abd Al-Amir Mahdi, was proud of his worker’s accomplishments, while acknowledging his company will give them the opportunity to provide for their future.

“My workers now have certified skills that they can use outside of these gates,” said Mahdi. “I’m happy to know that we can help Iraqis have a better future now that they have the necessary skills.”

Miran Village Co. workers are paid a standard monthly salary, but their salary increases if they exceed certain performance standards.

During the ceremony, Mahdi explained the process by which his workers earn their pay, acknowledging those workers who have exceeded performance expectations.

“We have a set standard for the number of containers we expect our workers to meet monthly, but some workers manage to repair more than others,” Mahdi said. “When this happens, I pay them more for every extra container they repair and they work harder to provide for themselves and their families because of it.”

With the Miran Village Co. workers now having a marketable skill, they will be able to provide for their families and contribute to the country’s economy after the U.S. troops responsible drawdown.

Iraq’s Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is one of the oldest Iraqi ministries, which provides services and benefits to Iraq’s most needy citizens.



Lt. Col. Christopher O. Mohan, the 80th Ordnance Battalion commander and Carthage, N.C., native, presents a certificate to a Miran Village Company worker during a ceremony here July 27. Miran Village Co. workers were presented certificates from Iraq’s Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which symbolizes its ability to complement financial assistance by providing training and employment services.

Ramadan Kareem

Story and Photo by Spc. Lisa Cope
13th ESC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Aug. 22 marked the beginning of Ramadan, the most holy month for members of the Islamic faith.

Ramadan is observed during the ninth month of the Islamic, or lunar, calendar. Muslims attempt to strengthen their spirit by abstaining from food, drink, sexual activity, becoming angry, smoking or any form of insincerity from sunrise to sunset.

Ramadan can be a trying time for Muslim Soldiers trying to adhere to Islamic teachings, but some Islamic Soldiers at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, have found ways to strengthen their faith during this time.

Muslims are required to pray five times a day. Because a mosque is not available on JBB, Spc. Nazha Lakrik, an Arabic interpreter for the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, said she prays in her room or in the Air Force Theater Hospital Chapel near her office.

Spc. Linda Boyed, an Arabic interpreter for the 555th Engineer Brigade, said Ramadan is a time

for self-discipline, prayer and family.

“It is the right time to renew your relationship with God,” she said.

Fasting can be physically challenging but for many members of the Muslim faith fasting is spiritually rewarding.

God said everything you do is for you, but this month, the fasting, is for Him, said Lakrik.

In areas where Islam is the dominant religion, work days are shortened to accommodate the celebration of Ramadan. In theater, many service members perform duties that are rigorous and indispensable, which may make fasting more difficult or even impossible for them.

Lakrik, a native of Essouira, Morocco, said fasting on duty is not like fasting at home, where she sits down with her family and takes her time to eat and pray.

“During the iftar – the time for me to break my fast – I’m still working,” said Lakrik. “But God said when iftar comes you have to eat, so I have

to throw something in my mouth just to break my fast and keep up with shift change.”

Spc. Fatima Benasser, an Arabic interpreter for the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), said Ramadan is a particularly trying time for Muslim Soldiers to be away from their families.

“Ramadan gives families a chance to gather and wait for the sunset and have a meal together,” said Benasser.

The three-day celebration of Eid al-Fitr, which often includes feasting and gift-giving, begins Sept. 20, marking the end of Ramadan.



Spc. Nazha Lakrik, an Arabic interpreter for the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, says a prayer Aug. 26 in the Air Force Theater Hospital Chapel.

Maintaining more th

*Story and Photos by
Sgt. Keith VanKlompberg
13th ESC Public Affairs*

CAMP ADDER, Iraq – Soldiers with the 546th Maintenance Company’s water pump team work tirelessly to keep the water flowing at Camp Adder, Iraq, and the surrounding areas.

“It’s essential to get water out here for drinking, showers, sewage, everything,” said Staff Sgt. Jeffrey King, noncommissioned officer in charge of the pump team and an East Orange, N.J., native.

The team, out of Fort Polk, La., maintains the pumps that bring water from the Euphrates River to Camp Adder to be treated and filtered for use. Because Camp Adder sits higher above sea level than the river, it takes multiple systems to pull the water up and canal it into the base.

The team travels to pump sites, run by Iraqi civilians, every couple of days to make sure they work properly and have plenty of fuel.

“We are trying to get the water level back up, so we give them as much fuel as possible,” said Spc. Steven Paul, a power generator mechanic with the unit and a Providence, R.I., native.

The Warfighters of the 546th work just as hard to maintain friendships with the local population as they do to maintain the pumps, and they do this by taking care of the local children.

“As long as we have the kids around, it’s making the families



man water pumps



Iraqi boys from a nearby village line up as Soldiers from the 546th pump team prepare to hand out clothing, school supplies and snacks outside Camp Adder, Iraq.

happy and we feel like we're doing something positive with our mission," said King.

King said his team receives donations from charities in the U.S., as well as the families of his Soldiers, to provide the children in the villages surrounding Camp Adder with clothes, shoes, school supplies

Left: Spc. Steven Paul, a power generator mechanic with the 546th Maintenance Company and a Providence, R.I., native, walks an Iraqi child toward his team of Soldiers as they hand out clothing and snacks outside Camp Adder, Iraq.

and snacks.

These children have grown accustomed to visits from King and his team and flock to the pump sites whenever they stop by. While the fuel handlers take care of the pump generators, other Soldiers line the children up behind one of the vehicles. They wait eagerly in line for anything the service members have to offer.

"Handing out stuff to the kids, that's the best part of the mission," said Paul.

The children come from an impoverished village without

adequate healthcare, so the team also provides medical care when they can, Paul said.

"We do what we can with the supplies we have, and try to bandage the kids up if they need it," he said.

Paul said he and the rest of the team share a sense of pride in taking care of the local children, while fulfilling the water needs of Camp Adder.

"It's a good feeling at the end of the day to be doing this," said Paul. "This being my first tour, I'll remember it for a long time."

321st goes AWOL for fitness

Story by 1st Lt. Jonathan McGuire
UPAR, 89th Tra ns. Co., 10th Sust. Bde.

AL ASAD, Iraq – A noncommissioned officer from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 321st Sustainment Brigade, created a program inspired by the television series, “The Biggest Loser,” focused on Soldiers within his brigade who don’t meet Army weight control program standards.

Sgt. Michael Conroy, a Baton Rouge native, has dedicated his time and energy to this program. He has organized events, coordinated trainers, developed classes on nutrition and exercise, and created T-shirts.

“My main mission for this program was to help soldiers who were overweight lose the pounds to qualify for the awards and promotions they deserved from this deployment,” said Conroy. “I feel that these Soldiers wanted the help, they just didn’t know who to ask.”

As a result, “The Army Goes AWOL” (Army Without Overweight Leaders) program was approved.

AWOL is more than just another special physical training program; it is a weight loss competition for the participants.

The progress is measured in body fat percentage loss rather than weight, with females and males being measured and competing separately for first, second, or third place.

Regardless of ranking, the goal is to eventually achieve and maintain an ideal body fat percentage.

The program consists of four teams with trainers, and some with assistant trainers. Each team consists of three participants.

These 12 have lost a total of

120 pounds and a total of 108 percent body fat in four weeks.

“This program is more than just working out, it takes heart and dedication to fulfill all the requirements of this program,” said Conroy. “We have to ensure they are eating properly, ensure they are able to sleep at least eight hours, constantly raise the intensity of the workouts, and ensure they are burning more calories than they are eating to reach the results we are pushing for.”

The program also features weekly “challenges,” such as obstacle courses and team building exercises.

“We have weekly challenges that we organize for the participants to compete in, not only just to lose weight or work out, but also to build teamwork and leadership skills,” said Conroy.

A typical week in the AWOL program consists of a last chance workout and weigh-in on Monday mornings. Monday through Friday, the trainers lead their teams in vigorous workouts twice a day, said Conroy.

Saturday morning is the weekly “challenge,” as well as a workout in the evening. Sundays most teams focus on cardio, Conroy said.

The participants are given one day off from workouts to recover and allow their body to rest.

“This extensive routine is building some amazing results,” Conroy said, “I have watched “The Biggest Loser” many times, and pay attention to the types of workouts they perform and the details behind nutrition and sleep time.”

“I am taking a personal training course through AFTA, which is teaching me a lot about nutrition and exercise. One of our trainers is a qualified nutritionist who teaches the participants classes on diet and nutrition. He is qualified through both the Navy and Bally Fitness Center,” Conroy said.

Overall, eight of the 12 participants now meet Army height and weight standards since the beginning of the program.

Conroy and the trainers are now focused on their goal of reaching 100 percent.

The program is scheduled to end August 10, with an award ceremony August 15, at the local theater. Trainers are pushing these Soldiers to ensure they meet standards prior to this date.

The opening weight of all participants was 3,442 pounds. “As the days go by, the weight loss increases amazingly,” said Conroy, “The motivation and dedication these Soldiers have to this program is unbelievable. I knew that this program would work, but I was worried about the motivation the participants would have.”

“We have worked countless hours researching exercise routines, diets, and details from ‘The Biggest Loser.’ All we needed was the motivation and dedication from them and we got it.”

“I greatly appreciate this program, and just like the real Biggest Loser show, it has changed my life, said Master Sgt. Tracey Bacon, S-1 noncommissioned officer in charge, 321st Sust. Bde. “I will never be a couch potato again.”

JBB opens new respite for Soldiers

Story and Photo by Spc. Lisa A. Cope
13th ESC public affairs.



The 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Commanding General Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz and Air Force Brig. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, cut a ribbon to signify the opening of Red River Place Aug. 17 at Joint Base Balad. Red River Place is named in honor of the crew of a CH-47 helicopter that crashed on a mission in Iraq in Sept. 2008.

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – The 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) commanding general Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz and Air Force Brig. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, commander, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, cut a ceremonial ribbon to signify the opening of Red River Place behind Freedom Chapel, during a ceremony at 7:30 a.m. Aug. 17 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Red River Place will be open 24 hours a day to provide service members a place to congregate, recuperate from the daily stress of their missions and relax.

“We’re excited about it because it gives people another opportunity to relax and improve their quality of life while they are here on Joint Base Balad,” said Air Force Lt. Col. F. Hodges Viccellio, deputy wing chaplain, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing. “It’s a great place to be, but

it’s also a hard place to be.”

It was an engineering feat to get the trailers in and leveled, establish electricity and get everything running, said Col. Jeff Swanson, senior chaplain for JBB, also with the 332nd.

“Red River Place was named by Soldiers to honor the crew of a (Boeing) CH-47 (Chinook) helicopter that crashed and killed seven crew members on a mission here in Iraq (in September 2008),” said Swanson. “Their call-sign on that particular mission was Red River 44, and so this ministry center is named in their honor to continue their legacy of service to Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines.”

Red River Place is designed to provide a place for Soldiers to use the internet, watch a movie or gather to provide moral support for each other, said Swanson.

Red Cross workers built eight

bookshelves for Red River Place and filled them with thousands of books donated by U.S. citizens.

The Red Cross also supplied the facility with care package items for service members, including drink mix, non-perishable food and hygiene items.

A mother from New Jersey made a special donation when she founded Operation Pillow, said Swanson. Her son gave her the idea when he served in Iraq, he said. New Jersey organizations generated four truck loads of pillows and the funds to have them delivered to Iraq.

The pillows line the tops of the bookshelves in Red River Place, so any service member who needs a soft place to lay their head can have one.

Swanson said he expects roughly 2,000 service members each month with an increase as Red River Place becomes better known.

NCO creates wartime art

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Joel F. Gibson
13th ESC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Surrounding most buildings at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, are giant reinforced concrete structures known colloquially as T-walls.

These monolithic monstrosities protect Soldiers in the event of indirect fire, and more often than not, bear the insignia of whatever unit they protect.

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Soldiers have painted designs, pictures and signatures on the T-walls in front of their buildings to let everyone who passed know who resides therein.

Staff Sgt. Fernando Flores, the operations noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), took it a step further – he made the drawing three-dimensional.

“I just wanted something different, something that stood out,” said Flores.

Flores decorated the three T-walls in front of HHC to the specifications of Capt. Pilar Restrepo, the HHC commander, said 1st Sgt. Frances Halmsteiner, senior enlisted adviser for the



Staff Sgt. Fernando Flores, the operations noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), adjusts the Texas border on a protective barrier he decorated in front of the company here.

company. The designs might be traditional but, by using wood cutouts he fashioned at the self-help center here, Flores added a unique touch.

“The front T-wall depicts who we are, the one to the left of it shows the Texas flag because we deployed from Fort Hood,

and the one to the right is Longhorn Orange with a Texas outline and a 13th ESC patch showing exactly where Fort Hood is located,” said Halmsteiner.

The first sergeant said it was the first time he has seen someone use anything other than paint to decorate T-walls.

“They were a lot of work, but I enjoyed the challenge,” said Flores, a Houston native and licensed contractor in his civilian life. “I’ve always believed the saying, ‘Everything is bigger and better in Texas,’ and since Fort Hood, the Army’s largest base is in Texas, I wanted to reflect that saying.”

Flores is not done with improvements around the company area.

Referred to by many as the 13th ESC contractor, he is working on a movie room for the company headquarters building, but the velvet ropes and popcorn machine seem to be the most difficult items to find.

“I’m not an office guy,” said Flores. “I like to build things to keep busy. It reminds me of home.”



Chaplain, unit cope with loss

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

VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq - For Soldiers in combat zones it can be difficult dealing with the loss of a teammate, but one chaplain here at Victory Base in Baghdad is helping his troops through a ministry of presence.

Capt. Shane Yates, the chaplain with the 41st Special Troops Battalion, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), said being with his Soldiers is the most important aspect of being a chaplain.

Yates said he routinely prays with his Soldiers prior to convoys. However, sometimes God has other plans which no one can prepare for, he said.

Two Soldiers from the 41st STB died in Rashid, Iraq Aug. 28, when their convoy was hit by an



The 41st Special Troops Battalion, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), held a memorial ceremony Sept. 2 at Hope Chapel here at Victory Base Complex, Iraq, to honor Sgt. Mark D. Werner and Pfc. Taylor D. Marks, who died Aug. 28 in Rashid, Iraq when their convoy was hit by an explosive device.

explosive device.

A third Soldier was wounded and evacuated to Germany.

The 41st STB, part of the Oregon National Guard, held a memorial ceremony Sept. 2 at Hope Chapel here at VBC for Sgt. Mark D. Werner and Pfc. Taylor D. Marks.

“I believe that the memorial service is important for some sense of closure for the Soldiers,” said Yates. “It also allows them time to reflect on our fallen heroes and honor them appropriately.”

The convoy started like



Capt. Shane Yates, chaplain, 41st Special Troops Battalion, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), pays his respects during a Sept. 2 memorial ceremony for Sgt. Mark D. Werner and Pfc. Taylor D. Marks at Hope Chapel here in Baghdad's Victory Base Complex.

any other, and though Yates unknowingly chose to talk to Werner personally beforehand, no one knew that night would change their lives.

“I had prayed for this convoy prior to them leaving the wire, and I shook hands with Sgt. Werner and attempted to give him a sense of calm and comfort,” said Yates.

After hearing of the incident, Yates said he was able to be on the flight line as the wounded Soldier was brought in by a medical evacuation helicopter.

“I also had the blessing of being there with (the wounded Soldier) while they worked on his injuries,” Yates said. “I prayed with him and stayed by him; it was an honor.”

Though the memorial ceremony was emotional, Yates said the unit is trying to look forward.

“The next step for our unit is to drive on and fulfill our mission here in Iraq,” he said. “I will closely watch the unit most affected by this tragedy and provide ministry of presence to them as much as I can.”

Though the chaplain's duty is to provide support for his troops, his own health is important, as well.

“I believe that in order to cope with this, I will spend some alone time with God,” said Yates.

“It is such a privilege to be a chaplain and spend time with these warriors,” he said. “They humble me.”



The Official Association of the 13th Support Brigade, the 13th Corps Support Command and the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)

"The Lucky 13th"

Mission

The 13th COSCOM Association serves as your direct link to the Community while honoring those who serve. We do that by supporting Soldiers and their Families through our Scholarship Program, honoring the sacrifice of our heroes who gave their lives while serving with any of the 13th ESC organizations, and interfacing with organizations that support 13th ESC current events.

Purpose

The purpose of the 13th COSCOM Association is to represent past, present, and future members of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) (13SCE), 13th Corps Support Command (13COSCOM), 13th Support Command (13SUPCOM) and the 13th Support Brigade, and its distinguished friends of the aforesaid and build the esprit de corps of all members. The names 13th COSCOM Association and 13CCA will encompass all the aforementioned unit designations.

Goals

To achieve its purpose, the Association adopts the following objectives:

- o To encourage communication between individual members to maintain and enhance the 13th COSCOM's lineage and history.
- o To promote the community's general awareness of the 13th COSCOM and their service.

- o To honor current and former 13th COSCOM Soldiers who have distinguished themselves in service to the nation.
- o To provide selective financial support to Families of troops killed in training or combat.
- o To provide an institution for managing funds and activities which achieve these goals.



Memorial Design Concept Completed

FORT HOOD, Texas –CCA Memorial Committee announces the completion of the design of the Memorial concept. To be built on the existing land nearest the Headquarters building and on the Guidon Parade Field. The memorial will honor those who sacrificed, as indicated by the inscription on the reverse side of the memorial. Cost and timelines will soon be made available and your support is needed.

The goal of the Memorial Committee of the 13th COSCOM Association is to create a lasting tribute to the fallen heroes and those who sacrificed in support of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and its predecessor organizations. The memorial is to be located at Fort Hood Texas and will serve as a long lasting tribute to the 13th ESC during the Global War on Terrorism.

Army, Air Force Save \$50 million for Taxpayers

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

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – As most U.S. forces in Iraq prepare for the largest strategic reposturing of forces in 40 years, Task Force 586 has already started the process.

The Airmen of Task Force 586, 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), have been traveling throughout the Iraqi theater of operations, identifying, collecting and redistributing excess supply items since 2006.

“Our main task is to retrieve excess equipment from Army and Marine locations in Iraq,” said Capt. Rachel Ramos, officer in charge, Mobile Redistribution Team 4, TF 586.

Once excess is identified, the teams determine whether or not the material is in working condition. After the equipment is established as serviceable, it is issued to units in theater.

Reusing equipment which is already here on the ground is a cost effective measure as opposed to units ordering more and more material which will further clog up the supply system.

“Redistributing supply items and materials that are already in theater is much cheaper for everybody,” said Tech. Sgt. Vick Williams, the noncommissioned officer in charge of MRT 4. “It gets stuff that’s just sitting around into the hands of Soldiers who can use it.”

The Airmen of the MRTs endured austere living conditions in order to accomplish their mission.

“It was a rough mission, with the sandstorms and heat and bare-bones living conditions; it was tough,” said Ramos, a Texas City, Texas, native. “On top of the weather, some of these places didn’t even have female latrines.”

She said she tried to focus on the mission because she knew she faced even more daunting challenges.

While the Airmen were stationed at Joint Base Balad, the MRTs

would often pull back to back missions, leaving them little time to recover before heading outside the wire again.

“We were basically living out of a suitcase,” said Williams, a Melbourne, Fla., native.

“After two weeks on mission, sometimes we’d be back less than three days before we’d go out again.”

Despite the harsh conditions, the unforgiving desert environment and magnitude of the mission, Task Force 586 identified, collected and redistributed more than \$50 million in excess supply items since February, said Ramos.

In Multi-National Division – Baghdad’s Victory Base Complex alone, \$23 million of excess has been identified in less than three months, said Lt. Col. Kenneth Morey, the refit and redistribution chief with the 13th ESC.

The MRTs escalated their efforts to retrograde material out of the Iraqi theater, in anticipation of the gradual drawdown.

“Through the next 12 months, the MRTs are going to try to move as much equipment out of theater as possible,” said Morey.

While the date for complete U.S. withdrawal from Iraq draws near, more troops and materials are being sent to their home stations, congesting the transportation network.

As troops are redeployed out of Iraq for good, equipment which



Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), addresses the officers, noncommissioned officers and Airmen of Task Force 586 before presenting them with certificates of appreciation in recognition of their accomplishments during their six-month tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. TF 586 identified, collected and redistributed \$50 million in excess supplies since February.

would previously have been inherited by their replacements is instead rerouted into the supply system. It is then either given to units which can use it, or retrograded back to units in the United States, said Morey, a Buschwell, Ill., native.

The retrograde of substantial amounts of equipment now will free up transportation assets for troops and their assigned equipment later, he said.

“We want to mitigate the effects of a sudden pull-out as much as possible,” he said. “At the same time we don’t want to leave our footprint in theater.”

As U.S. forces shrink from 130,000 personnel in theater to the August 2010 goal of 50,000 personnel, the MRTs will play an integral role in prioritizing equipment to send home.

“Everybody else is planning for the drawdown,” said Morey. “We’re already doing it. It’s an inglorious job, but they love doing it and they’re good at it.”

Soldiers provide repair support

Story by Spc. Amanda Tucker
3rd ESC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – A mobile container repair team consisting of several Soldiers from the 699th Maintenance Company travel to bases in Iraq ensuring containers are capable of transporting equipment overseas during the responsible drawdown of forces.

Before MCRTs were formed, bases across Iraq lacked container repair capabilities, so damaged containers were usually sent to the container repair yard on Joint Base Balad. The 699th Maint. Co. MCRT and others save time and money by traveling to other bases to conduct basic repairs on site.

“With the drawdown, the importance of the (repair) of containers is getting a lot of high visibility because all military units are going to need these containers to effectively ship their equipment,” said Warrant Officer Jeremy C. Allen, an allied trades technician from the Fort Irwin, Calif., 699th Maint. Co. MCRT and Trezevant, Tenn., native.

The 699th Maint. Co. MCRT had only 10 days to get their equipment together and train their personnel before scheduled to arrive at their first base. The nine team members from the 699th Maint. Co. MCRT went through a convention

for safe containers inspection course, allowing them to certify containers are ready to be shipped. They also toured the JBB container repair yard to get a general idea on the process.

MCRTs begin working on containers with an initial inspection to identify the level of repair needed. Level one repairs, such as indentions, minor welding or forklift damage are simple. Level two repairs have parts that need to be cut off of the container and replaced. Level two containers are sent to the JBB container repair yard. Level three containers are containers with deficiencies that label them almost unusable.

When the 699th Maint. Co. MCRT first started doing repairs at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in May, there wasn’t a contract to repair triple containers, a container for military transportation. The MCRT went above their usual level of repair and beyond their scope of duties by repairing level two and level three containers. During their time at FOB Warhorse, they repaired 20 containers.

Working out of two 20 foot containers and a welding trailer, the MCRT uses equipment like grinders, sledgehammers and plasma cutters safely to finish the job.

“We haven’t had any accidents so far,” said Spc. Marlon S. Ubungen, a metal worker for the 699th Maint. Co. MCRT, and Sacramento, Calif., native. “We have been working safely (and) all the noncommissioned officers do a safety briefing every day.”

The MCRT repaired approximately 20 containers, or roughly one a day, while working alongside Marines at Camp Taqqadum from June 28 to July 16.

“We showed them a couple of tricks,” said Sgt. Samuel B. Irones, a metal worker for the 699th Maint. Co. MCRT and Nixa, Mo., native. “We have more experience and we know how to get the job done.”

“We have a very good environment,” Ubungen said. “Everybody works together and it is like a family. This is a nice bunch.”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Francis

Spc. Marlon Ubungen a metal worker for the 699th Maintenance Company, from Fort Irwin, Calif., repairs a conex gasket seal at Camp Taqqadum July 18.

Soldier deals with deployment with pen and ink

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Keith M. Anderson
16th SB Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq — One Soldier at Contingency Operating Location Q-West has used his art degree and training to fulfill a unique personal goal during his 15-month deployment: to create a graphic novel.

Spc. James L. Griffin, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, authored a pen-and-ink graphic novel “The Warbling Cartel,” for stress relief and artistic growth, he said.

“Part of my impetus for starting the book was because I knew I was going to be out here for a while and didn’t want to let my artistic skills languish,” said Griffin, a native of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, on his first deployment.

The graphic novel focuses on Clive Corvax, a character without a conscience. Corvax gets a conscience implanted in his right hand, but becomes weak and hindered by it. Then gets an aggressive and violent artificial intelligence implanted into his left hand.

“And hi-jinks ensue,” said Griffin.

Griffin graduated in 2005 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Columbus College of Art and Design, a private college in Columbus, Ohio. He joined the Army in March 2006.

“I had student loans and no real job

experience,” said Griffin. “Also, I wanted to see the world.”

Griffin said, to him deploying is about keeping a rhythm and stretching one’s self.

“I started running cross-country more regularly since I’ve joined the Army,” said

Griffin. “I’ve done 10 km runs and the 5 km fun runs, and I’d compare this deployment to running. It’s a challenge to keep your rhythm and it’s a test of endurance, and I’m sure it’ll feel great when we’re finished.”

He has accomplished more than he thought he could, Griffin said.

“I’d compare the emotional experience of this deployment to running farther than I’d previously thought possible,” said Griffin. “This comic itself was more pages than any illustrated narrative work I’d ever done.”

Griffin said he plans to publish the novel, but not without further input and blessing from co-writer and co-creator Jess Hogfoss, a former comrade who is now in the private sector.

“I met (then Spc.) Hogfoss back when we were both in the 1st Armored Division,” said Griffin. “We hit it off almost immediately and bonded over new wave and post-punk music as well as speculative fiction – all of which worked their way into the themes and aesthetics of the comic as we imagined it.”



49th Trans Bn. hosts NCO induction

Story and Photo by Sgt. Crystal Reidy
13th ESC Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – A Fort Hood transportation unit hosted a noncommissioned officer induction ceremony to recognize the accomplishments, courage and dedication of new NCOs in units stationed here July 15.

The 49th Transportation Battalion welcomed 53 new sergeants and corporals into the NCO Corps in a traditional ceremony emphasizing the pride of and service of NCOs.

“What a wonderful day in today’s Army when we get 53 new inductees into the NCO Corps,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Willie C. Tennant Sr., the senior NCO for the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary). “It is an honor and privilege to welcome new NCOs from across JBB into the Corps.”

Tennant described sergeants as the ultimate weapon here because the Iraq war is primarily executed by sergeants and staff sergeants on the ground. The war is being fought at the squad, platoon and company level, he said.

because it instilled a lot of pride in the inductees. He said to be an NCO means a lot to him because he can follow in the footsteps of his leaders.

“My mentors taught me respect and motivation, they were always motivated, no

matter what,” Fuller, a native of Saginaw Mich., said. “To be an NCO means to motivate Soldiers every day, to love the Army and treat Soldiers with respect.”

Tennant told the new NCOs that to be good Soldiers; they have to first be a good people.

“Are you going to improve the lives of Soldiers? Make them better people to make them better Soldiers,” he asked the crowd, “because it’s your duty and responsibility now to take care of your Soldiers.”

“To be an NCO means to motivate Soldiers every day, to love the Army and treat Soldiers with respect.”

*Sgt. Blair R. Fuller
266th Military Police Company*

“Sergeants are the difference between success and failure on the battlefield,” Tennant said.

Sgt. Blair R. Fuller, a communications NCO with the 266th Military Police Company said he liked the ceremony



Fifty-three newly promoted sergeants were inducted into the NCO Corps during a ceremony for Army tenant units at Joint Base Balad, Iraq July 15.

Combined arms battalion convoys throughout Iraq

Story and Photo by Sgt. Ryan Twist
13th ESC Public Affairs



Spc. Randy J. Ladner, a gunner with B Company, 1st Battalion, 155th Brigade Combat Team, out of Poplarville, Miss., puts on his harness in preparation for a convoy mission Sept. 5 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The unit performs convoy security missions throughout Iraq.

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – A Soldier stands in the gunner’s seat of a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle and scans the area in search of enemies or improvised explosive devices.

He is one of many stationed at Joint Base Balad with B Company, 1st Battalion, 155th Brigade Combat Team, out of Poplarville, Miss., conducting convoy security for vehicles and supplies moving throughout Iraq.

“The overall mission is to provide combat logistics patrols going to and from different bases around Iraq,” said Spc. Steven C. Smith, a gunner with the unit and a Jackson, Miss., native.

“Basically, it’s a convoy escort, making sure trucks and supplies get where they’re going and back

safely.”

Staff Sgt. Michael W. Slaybaugh, assistant convoy commander for third platoon, and a Walla Walla, Wash. native, said the unit is there to protect Kellogg, Brown and Root, Inc. employees and keep supplies moving. “We conduct pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections and make sure our vehicle is ready all the time,” said Slaybaugh.

Smith said he keeps his truck maintained, makes sure his fellow Soldiers have everything they need and stays fit and mentally strong to prepare himself for success.

“I prepare for a mission by keeping my truck cleaned,” said Smith. “I like everything

organized. I talk to people back home and just sit down and clear my head to get my mind right.”

He said on convoys he tries to be mindful of the potential for danger. “I just make sure I find the bombs before they find us,” said Smith.

Slaybaugh, who deployed with the 81st Brigade Combat Team out of Washington, but extended his deployment an additional six months to work with the 155th CAB, said he keeps focused on the mission, studying it every day. He said he reviews the mission with his troops every time they go outside the wire.

“These guys all have similar problems back home but you have to keep

focused,” said Smith. “You got to remind yourself complacency kills, and every time you go outside the wire you have to remind yourself that just because you were safe last time doesn’t mean you are safe this time.

Every mission is different; every street is different; every turn is different; you try to keep that in your head.”

Slaybaugh, who has been in Iraq for 11 months, said combat readiness

ensures successful missions. To ensure this readiness, Soldiers check all equipment, weapons, vehicles and gear before they leave.

Slaybaugh said these Soldiers have adapted to their mission, a mission they take great pride in.

“You always want to do your best,” said Smith. “The better we do things, hopefully it will make it easier on the unit coming behind us.”

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