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SUSTAINER

Minute

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 3RD CORPS SUPPORT COMMAND



Photo by Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux

Sgt. Anthony Nichols, a generator mechanic with HHC, 3rd Corps Support Command, gives a humvee engine its weekly maintenance check.

HHC motor pool takes Tuesdays seriously

By Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux, 207th MPAD

The motor pool of 3rd Corps Support Command's Headquarters and Headquarters Company is running on all cylinders on Tuesdays, the unit's designated command maintenance day, when operators and vehicles pay a visit to the mechanics

and prescribed load list clerks.

HHC takes this task so seriously that the first sergeant checks over and dispatches his own vehicle, and on Tuesdays, the company executive officer spends his whole day in the motor pool.

The 15 Soldiers who work in the motor

pool provide maintenance for nearly 100 vehicles, and the numbers are still growing, said Staff Sgt. Samuel J. Lee, an HHC light-wheel vehicle mechanic. The motor pool oversees vehicle dispatching and maintenance for HHC and six other units.

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- HHC motorpool cont.

Sgt. Anthony Nichols works on as many as five vehicles a day. "I know the job of the 62B [light-wheel vehicle mechanic], just as well as my primary MOS, which is generator mechanic," Nichols said proudly.

He cross-trained himself and claims to know everything there is to know about humvees. He is also in charge of three Soldiers, teaching and mentoring them every step of the way, as they gain more experience and become better mechanics.

The crew spends long hours in the motor pool. Although their official hours for customer service are 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., they stay as long as they needed to assist other Soldiers to accomplish their mission. On Tuesdays they open at 8 a.m. for command maintenance.

Lee said that his Soldiers are "motivated and want to learn."

Sgt. 1st Class Keith L. Godley, the G-4 logistics management noncommissioned officer is a regular customer in the motor pool. He worked with the same people back home in Germany; they deployed together.

"I think we have a very good working relationship. They have a lot of technically proficient Soldiers and they are willing to help," he said.

Nichols normally spends 15 to 16 hours a day in the motor pool, running around in his grease-stained mechanic's coveralls.

"If we have a lot of work, we stay until we have the mission completed," he said.

Vehicles that go off post take priority and are finished as soon as possible. "Everything is taken care of 100 percent. I don't want them breaking down outside the wire," Lee said.

The key for vehicles running smoothly is proper preventive maintenance checks and services, the mechanics said.

When operators come in for command maintenance, they should first pick up their DA Form 5988-Es with their own vehicle's bumper number, so they are able to conduct the PMCS and write down the faults.

"They should not neglect PMCS. When it is command maintenance, come on over and do it properly. It does not take longer than an hour to do a good PMCS," Nichols said.

When conducting the PMCS, Soldiers should follow the technical manuals step by step. All faults should be annotated on the 5988 with the corresponding item number from the technical manual.

Once an operator is done, he or she should walk a mechanic through the faults found. The mechanic checks everything over, and signs the form unless the vehicle is 'deadlined,' non-operational.

The operator then sees a clerk to dispatch the vehicle.

Operators must make sure that they have a current license, with the proper code authorizing them to operate the particular vehicle they are trying to dispatch, said Spc. Norman Black, an automated

supply specialist, who dispatches vehicles and orders parts for the motor pool.

If a vehicle must remain in the motor pool because a fault makes it too dangerous to operate, it may take some time to get the proper parts in and install them. Once a mechanic gets his hands on a vehicle, he doesn't only look at things that are annotated on the 5988.

"Understand that when you bring a vehicle down for one problem, and we find other things that are wrong with it, we fix those other things. Sometimes you may not get it back the same day ... but you will be better off in the long run," Lee said.

"Everything is taken care of 100 percent. I don't want them [vehicles] breaking down outside the wire."

*Staff Sgt. Samuel J. Lee
HHC, 3rd Corps Support Command*



Photo by Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux

Pfc. Derek C. Shelton, HHC, 3rd COSCOM motor pool, wrestles with the undercarriage of a humvee during his unit's Tuesday maintenance day.

Skunkwerks' sparks save lives

The 181st Trans. Bn. shop amends vehicles with anti-IED modifications

By Spc. Andrew B. Orillion

Countless people are indebted to a small group of Soldiers here at Logistical Support Area Anaconda, but you will not see them in a hospital or riding in the back of an ambulance. They don't perform surgery or conduct daring rescue missions. They are the Soldiers of Skunkwerks, and the under armor work they do on vehicles saves lives.

"Skunkwerks is basically an under armor shop. We provide additional protection for humvee crew's; the drivers, the passengers, the gunners, by providing under armor," said Sgt. Matthew Mullen, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Skunkwerks. Mullen is from the 890th Transportation Company and is supporting the 181st Transportation Battalion while deployed.

Under armoring is a process in which armor is welded to the bottom of a vehicle to provide protection from improvised explosive devices.

"We do all the under armor for the humvee. We put plating underneath the humvee, the wheel wells, the whole under-carriage," said Mullen.

Since Operation Iraqi Freedom 1, the Skunkwerks team has under armored humvees in their shop located at the 181st Transportation Battalion, here.

"Skunkwerks started here with the 181st [Trans. Bn.] back in OIF 1. Then it went to 7th Trans [Transportation Battalion] during OIF 2, then the 457th Trans [Transportation Battalion] for OIF 3 and now it's back to the 181st [Transportation Battalion]," said Mullen.

"I don't have an exact count, but we've done the whole battalion, all of our trucks. It started out that way in March, when I started here," said Mullen. "Then we started expanding to just LSA Anaconda. Word got out and we started covering the whole theater."

Although the need for under armoring is high, Skunkwerks is one of only a handful of under armor shops in theater.

"They'll [vehicles] come in here, we'll look them over. We'll make a few suggestions about what we can modify," said Mullen.



Photo by Spc. Andrew B. Orillion

Sgt. Kevin Hembre, a Skunkwerks Soldier, welds pieces for a new anti-IED Rhino system.

The work begins by cutting the sheets of armor that will go under the humvee. Once cut, the armor is bolted and then welded into place.

"The entire process takes roughly ten hours, so our turn around time is about one day, sometimes two if there are a lot of modifications that need to be done," said Mullen.

While under armor is the main defense against IED attacks, it is not the only life saving system that Skunkwerks installs.

"In addition to armor we also make double bumpers, hood scopes for air induction, side mounts for small arms and turret boxes with ballistic glass," said Mullen.

A double bumper is a second bumper installed underneath a regular bumper, making it easier for a five-ton truck to push through roadblocks, and hood scopes allow for greater engine cooling, lowering engine temperature by as much as 20

degrees, said Mullen.

The Skunkwerks team also installs the Warlock system, an IED counter measure, and the new Rhino system.

"The Rhino is a new anti-IED system. We attach a retractable pole to the front of a vehicles bumper that swings out about six feet. Wires run up to glow plugs that heat up a box on the end of the pole," said Mullen. "The idea is that box will trip an infra-red sensor so an IED will go off in front of the vehicle instead of under it. Right now we just have them for humvees, but we're eventually going to put them on supply vehicles as well."

In order to meet the demand for under armoring and modifications, the 181st Trans. Bn. brings in expert welders from all over.

When the 181st Trans. Bn. completes its rotation next year, a new team will assume the Skunkwerks name, but their life-saving mission will remain the same.



Photo by Sgt. Judith D. DaCosta

The 4th Inf. Div. Sustainment Bde. Soldiers who work in Taji's new clinic pause from their mission of helping others to pose for a photo in front of the building they now call home.

Soldiers create TMC from scratch

By Sgt. Judith D. DaCosta

Physicians from the 4th Infantry Division Sustainment Brigade's Higher Headquarters, Special Troops Battalion Support Brigade, who initially lacked a medical facility to complete their forward mission, can now call The Warrior Support Center in Taji, Iraq home.

"They [the physicians] started from scratch," said Maj. Mark L. Higdon, a 4th Inf. Div. Sustainment Bde. surgeon who volunteers his free time in the clinic.

When they first arrived in Taji in early-October, not only were there no supplies, but there was no building for them to use, said Capt. Jay R. Bucci, surgeon at the clinic, from the 4th Inf. Div. Sustainment Bde.'s Special Troops Bn.

"All the clinics were spoken for, for the next few months as 3rd ID moved out," said Bucci. The incoming physicians toured that facility and looked at other clinics to see where they could fit in for the interim, he said.

In return, those clinics provided a temporary facility where the battalion was able to tend to the medical needs of their Soldiers and patients from other units as well, said Bucci.

"The permanent facility would not be available until December and it was about

two miles away from the battalion area," said Bucci. "It just wasn't practical for our Soldiers who were on sick call."

Moreover, treating Soldiers in several facilities at once is difficult to keep track of, said Bucci.

"Then ... the unit that was here received orders to move while we were in the midst of searching for a place to call home," said Bucci. "They picked up and left within four or five days and took everything with them – even Internet cables."

"This left us with an opportunity in the sense that we had an open building in the middle of our battalion area. It was perfect for sick call," said Bucci.

With the physicians and volunteers working 18 hour shifts, the unit

moved into the new clinic Oct. 23.

"Within three days of moving in we had a fully functional TMC [troops' medical center]," said Bucci. "We averaged over 40 patients a day for sick call and within our first week of operation we evacuated three critically ill patients."

"We took this from an empty building that couldn't communicate with the outside world to a facility seeing 250 patients a week, serving all the medical needs of our battalion, including evacuation," said Bucci.



Photo by Sgt. Judith D. DaCosta

Maj. Mark L. Higdon examines a Soldier at the new medical clinic.

101st SB Soldiers support convoy operations center

By Sgt. Ashly Rice

101st Sustainment Brigade

In the hustle and bustle of the convoy operations center located within the mountainous landscape of northern Iraq, Soldiers with various missions move about during the day and night.

In order for the Habur Gate Convoy Operations Center to be successful, 101st Sustainment Brigade units send Soldiers to support the center with communications, medical services and food service expertise.

Company A, 101st Brigade Troops Battalion, supplies four Soldiers to provide Secure Internet Protocol Routing communications and radio assistance to the personnel who work at the center.

Company B, 101st BTB, supplies two combat medics who offer around-the-clock medical services.

Sgt. Shannon Moss and Pfc. Ross Wortman handle level one medical support, from minor cuts and scrapes to medical evacuations.

Moss and Wortman also have missions planned to assist the surrounding towns with medical instruction in hygiene and infection prevention.

Master Sgt. Robert Carribou heads the food service section of the Convoy Operations Center. His team of three Soldiers prepares the food in a mobile kitchen trailer with 12 local nationals. Carribou is attached to the 142nd Corps Support Battalion.

Spc. Michael Greenwald, Spc. Katrina Oster and Spc. Christopher Galvin are also assigned to the 142nd Corps Support Battalion and rotate with other food service Soldiers every thirty days to help assist at the convoy operations center.

Future goals are to set up another mobile kitchen trailer and to train locals on sanitation procedures.

"[The convoy operations center] is doing an excellent job," is a statement often heard from missions passing through, Carribou said.

Medics teach life-saving techniques

By Sgt. Rachel Brune, 101st Sustainment Brigade

Combat medics from Company B, 101st Brigade Troops Battalion, brought the 101st Airborne Division's combat lifesaver course, the Eagle First Responder class, to troops and firefighters at Q-West Base Complex Nov. 29 through Dec. 1.

This class was the second Co. B taught in theater, but the first time instructors Pvt.(2) Benjamin Burdick and Spc. Amber Powell, Co. B combat medic, have taught the "battle-stressed" first responder course to civilians.

The four firefighters in the class provide fire protection capabilities on Q-West through Wackenhut Services, Inc., which stations firefighters all over Iraq.

"Being able to work with the Soldiers is a plus," said Wes "Cookie" Cook, WSI firefighter from Lima, Ohio.

"I would say they gave us new ways to treat wounds and injuries quickly, as well as a really swift patient assessment," said Cook.

That patient assessment, also known as a primary survey, consists of checking for circulation, or bleeding, breathing and an open airway in a wounded patient.

Tactical combat casualty care, the focus of the second day of training, consists of three phases: care under fire, tactical field care and casualty evacuation.



Photo by Sgt. Rachel Brune
Cory Bouldin pulls Justin Alvarez during the obstacle part of the combat lifesaver course.

The medics taught techniques for assessing and treating additional wounds during tactical field care. This phase of treatment comes when Soldiers performing a mission have suppressed or eliminated hostile fire and before they can evacuate the casualties.

One important thing for EFR students to take away from the course is using creativity to assess a patient, said Powell. "You won't always know what [the injury] is, but you need to find out."

The course is normally four days long, but instructors taught an abbreviated three-day version due to mission requirements, Burdick said.

"We're still teaching everything we

taught in the rear," said Burdick. The difference between taking the EFR course at the 101st Sustainment Brigade's home station at Fort Campbell, Ky., versus on deployment is the facilities available for teaching.

At Q-West, the students assembled at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation football field, next to a front line ambulance, a modified humvee with a patient compartment and large, red cross on the side. At the field, Burdick and Powell showed the students how to use two types of litters.

One by one, Soldiers in full battle gear began the course by low-crawling to a "casualty," picking the casualty up and running to a SKEDCO litter, a flexible plastic sledge with straps to secure a patient. The Soldier then strapped his or her patient to the litter and dragged him or her to the waiting FLA.

"This was an excellent refresher as far as first responder training," said Cory Bouldin, WSI firefighter, from Piedmont, S.C.

The medics try to teach the course each month. Due to mission requirements, the next EFR class is scheduled to be conducted in January.

Soldiers in the 71st CSB and 101st BTB can obtain a slot in the class through their training noncommissioned officers.

29th BCT doctors, nurses help local Iraqis

By Sgt. Mitch Armbruster, 207th MPAD

Despite limited resources, doctors and registered nurses working with the 29th Brigade Combat Team are finding ways to serve the medical needs of everyone, including Iraqis, in the area of Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

"We have taken care of Soldiers, civilians, Iraqi army and Iraqi civilians," said Capt. Shirley Haynes, an RN at the Lava Clinic. Haynes was a cross-leveled Soldier from the Oregon National Guard.

"We take for granted what we have. These people have poor health care and they appreciate any little thing that you can do for them," Haynes said.

Medics have dealt with burns, breaks, malnutrition and skin diseases while helping the civilians and the Iraqi army, Haynes explained. The group helps the Soldiers of the Iraqi army but they are also trying to help get the Iraqi army used to going to the local hospitals for

care.

"We give medical support to the safer villages," said Capt. Roy Ouano. "The people are grateful for the treatment. We provide them 'tailgate' medicine."

The Soldiers helping civilians outside of the forward operating bases are limited to the equipment and supplies that they can carry with them. In extreme cases, some of the civilians get treatment at military hospitals. Some civilians come to the gates with medical needs and medics are assigned to help those people.

"They are thankful for anything you can do for them," said Lt. Col. C. Tucker Joustra, a doctor attached to the unit from Lamar, Mo.

The 29th Brigade Combat Team's devotion to helping people has crossed boundaries and assisted those with medical problems. They have been able to create a link to the people in the surrounding communities offering support and care to as many people as the possibly can.

"These people [Iraqis] have poor health care and they appreciate any little thing that you can do for them."

Capt. Shirley Haynes,
29th Brigade Combat Team

Soldiers move, rescue massive trees



Photo by Spc. Andrew B. Orillion

Sgt. Maj. Jeff Edwards prepares a massive tree to be loaded on to a truck for movement.

By Spc. Andrew B. Orillion

The mayor cell on Logistical Support Area Anaconda received a special delivery just in time for Christmas, two massive palm trees. Soldiers from the 35th Area Support Group and the 505th Engineering Company moved the trees from an administration building along Pennsylvania Ave. to the new mayor cell Dec. 7.

“We’re moving the trees in order to clear room for a new major theater hospital,” said Sgt. Maj. Jeff Edwards, post engineer noncommissioned officer in charge, who headed the project.

The tree moving project began Dec. 4 with the digging of two holes on the west side of the new mayor cell. Once dug, the holes were saturated with water to aide in hydrating the incoming trees. After letting the water soak for three days, the time came to actually move the trees.

Work began shortly before 8 a.m. with Staff Sgt. Michael A. James, 505th Engineer Co., using a back hoe to dig a trench around both trees.

“The ground here is very dry and hard, so the digging is going to be slow and dusty,” said Edwards.

The digging was later aided by Tayfun Baykus, a local contractor working with

Kulak Construction, a Turkish firm. As the holes were dug, Edwards wrapped the bottom of the trees with canvas to protect the roots during transport.

Using a cargo strap wrapped around the tree and secured to the bucket of the back hoe, James attempted to lift the tree out of the hole. The strap quickly broke.

More dirt was cleared from the tree and the workers made a second attempt, this time using a chain instead of a cargo strap proved successful.

After the first tree was secured to a flatbed truck, the second tree was extracted and placed on the same truck.

Shortly before 5 p.m. the flatbed arrived at the new mayor cell. Putting the trees back into the ground was a much easier task as both trees were replanted within the hour.

The reason for moving the trees was not simply to beautify the mayor cell or provide shade.

“Palm trees are very important to the Iraqi people. They are not only a source of food, dates, but also a source of pride,” said Edwards.

“We’ve destroyed too many as it is, so we figured it was best to try and save these two.”

A gift of communication

By Spc. Andrew B. Orillion

Soldiers on Logistical Support Area Anaconda received an early Christmas present this year, 16,000 120-minute phone cards. The cards were part of the Military Assistance Communications Kit, which also included a note pad and Christmas cards.

“We received the first shipment of 8,100 phones cards on Dec. 7,” said Sgt. Major Daniel Torres, G-1 Sgt. Major. “The second shipment of 8,050 arrived on Dec 15.”

“The Mack Packs were donated by Wal-Mart, Sam’s Club and the VFW,” he added.

The Soldiers received the phone cards through their companies’ first sergeants, who received them from their battalions’ S1s, through Chaplains, and at dining facilities, said Torres.

“100 boxes, with 50 cards per box, were mailed to 3rd COSCOM Soldiers who are stationed at other bases or forward operating bases,” said Spc. Narda Joyce, HHC, 3rd COSCOM.

During the holiday season, the need to stay in touch with family is more important than ever, which makes the gift of phone cards very special, said Torres.

“I think it’s great that these organizations sent this stuff to the Soldiers. A lot of heart went into this and it’s great to get these things out before Christmas,” said Torres.



Photo by Spc. Mary E. Ferguson

Tree trimming in Iraq

1st Lt. Janet Buchanan decorates a tree during the HHC, 3rd Corps Support Command’s Dec. 10 tree trimming party on LSA Anaconda. Members of the unit’s Family Readiness Group sent three trees from Germany to their forward troops.



Photo by Spc. David Chapman

Tammy Kelly's Hainerberg Elementary fifth-grade class in Wiesbaden show off holiday greetings written for loved ones deployed to Iraq.

Holiday Greetings from the COSCOM warriors back home



Students from Tammy Kelly's Hainerberg Elementary fifth-grade class spent the days before their holiday break writing letters of encouragement to loved ones and other servicemembers serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Their letters will join those of other Hainerberg students in a show of support to Soldiers during this season of giving.

About two-thirds of the school's more than 820 students have a parent or other loved one deployed to Iraq.

Tammy Kelly's husband, HHC, 3rd COSCOM first sergeant, Thomas Kelly, is among those deployed loved ones.

These young COSCOM warriors may be separated from their loved ones during the holidays, but through their letters they will be together in their hearts.



Photo by Spc. David Chapman

Ty Dobbs composes a holiday greeting for his step-father, Maj. Kevin Diermeien, who is currently deployed to Iraq.



Photo by Spc. David Chapman

Robert Sirleaf and fifth-grade teacher Tammy Kelly review his letter to his father, Master Sgt. Abraham Sinyoko.

Combat that internal enemy; Stress

By Sgt. Jason Mikeworth, 207th MPAD

Some battlefield wounds don't leave visible scars, but cut deeper than any bullet could.

The mission of the 883rd Medical Company Combat Stress Control team is to help treat wounds that are not measured in liters of blood or broken bones. They work to heal the minds of Soldiers exposed to the stresses of modern armed conflict.

"We're broken down into two teams, a restoration team and prevention team, and both of them have a little bit different focus," said Maj. Ed Moschella, a psychiatric nurse with the 883rd Medical Co. Stress Control Team at Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

"The restoration team is based in the clinic. We teach classes, see patients on a regular basis, handle command referrals and consultations," he said.

The Patriot Clinic at LSA Anaconda offers psycho-education, redeployment education and screenings, and a residential program. Handling command referrals is a

major part of the work they do.

"The first step in the process is to determine what the command's intent is. Are they looking to do a formal mental status evaluation to determine the Soldier's rehabilitative potential versus seeing if they're competent to participate in administrative actions?" Moschella said.

"Then we spend time talking to the Soldiers and find out what the Soldiers'

"Take care of yourself. Make sure you're eating, getting plenty of fluids. Make sure you're getting four to six hours of rest a night."

*Maj. Ed Moschella
883rd Medical Company Combat
Stress Control Team*

interests and needs are," she explained.

Moschella said the two groups of Soldiers using the clinic the most are new arrivals and those who are going home.

"People early on in their deployment will find they're having adjustment diffi-

culties for a variety of reasons." Moschella said. "Maybe they're new in country, or have been cross-leveled into a unit that they have no working relationship with prior to the deployment."

"Learn to develop healthy coping skills. The folks we usually see early on are the folks who for whatever reason have a hard time adapting," Moschella said.

"Take care of yourself. Make sure you're eating, getting plenty of fluids. Make sure you're getting four to six hours of rest a night," Moschella said.

Soldiers preparing to redeploy have a different set of reasons for seeking help.

"As the operational tempo slows down for people who are redeploying, they begin to realize they've just been through whatever type of experience it's been for them,"

Moschella said.

Soldiers on their way out of theater may seek care from military providers because talking about their experiences in Iraq with friends or family may be more difficult than they expect, she said.



Photo by Spc. Mary E. Ferguson

Soldiers from the 3rd Corps Support Command and Jesse James, star of the Monster Garage TV show, prepare themselves for the mission of transforming a battle-beaten humvee into a Monster Garage creation, in just five days, with cameras filming over their shoulders the whole time. The Monster Garage episode marks the end of the TV series. See the upcoming Winter Sustainer magazine for more.

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