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SUSTAINER

Minute

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 3RD CORPS SUPPORT COMMAND



Photo by Spc. Mary E. Ferguson

The Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker reenlists Staff Sgt. Jason Hildenbrand of the 101st Aviation Regiment's 4th Battalion Forward Support Company during a 181st Transportation Battalion-hosted ceremony Dec. 25 on Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

Army COS visits Soldiers on Christmas Day

By Spc. Mary E. Ferguson

Dozens of Soldiers from Logistical Support Area Anaconda walked away from Dec. 25, 2005 with a unique Christmas gift – a handshake and coin from the Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker.

Schoomaker began his holiday visit to LSA Anaconda early Christmas morning.

After greeting Schoomaker, Brig. Gen. Rebecca S. Halstead, 3rd Corps Sup-

port Command's commanding general, escorted him to the 29th Brigade Combat Team headquarters where a formation of eager Soldiers awaited his arrival.

Brig. Gen. Joseph Chaves, the 29th BCT's commanding general, proudly introduced the Chief of Staff of the Army to the unit's troops, who then listened attentively to his words of support and encouragement.

Following the formation, Schoomaker

posed for a number of group photos, and presented one of his coins to each Soldier. He specifically requested a photo with the 29th BCT Soldiers who recently became U.S. citizens during a Dec. 17 swearing-in ceremony at the Sustainer Theater on LSA Anaconda.

He then entered the 29th BCT headquarters building where he met more mission-focused Soldiers and observed

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- Army COS visit cont.

various parts of the unit's operations.

A 181st Transportation Battalion-hosted ceremony was the next stop on Schoomaker's Christmas gift list.

Eyes and ears clung to the leader's words as he addressed bleachers full of Soldiers, recognizing their sacrifices and extending his gratitude for their service.

Halstead then joined Schoomaker in presenting Combat Action Badges to Sgt. 1st Class Richard M. Murphy, Spc. Shane T. Ferraro and Spc. Nicholas E. Weiser, all from the 465th Transportation Company, based out of Pennsylvania.

The general officers also promoted Staff Sgt. William Fisher to the rank of sergeant first class. Fisher is with Battery B, 1-17 Field Artillery Battalion, based out of Oklahoma.

Schoomaker then faced Staff Sgt. Jason Hildenbrand from 101st Aviation Regiment's 4th Battalion Forward Support Company.

With their right hands raised, Schoomaker led Hildenbrand through the oath of reenlistment.

The reenlistment, Schoomaker joined the audience as Staff Sgt. Kevin Davis of Btry. B, 1-17 Field Artillery Bn., narrated a combat logistics patrol rehearsal.

Soldiers from the 181st Trans. Bn. demonstrated the "snatch and grab" method of recovering a damaged vehicle and its personnel during a combat logistics



Photo by Spc. Mary E. Ferguson

Soldiers attentively listen to the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter J. Schoomaker as he delivers a message of support and encouragement during his visit to LSA Anaconda.

patrol.

Staff Sgt. Curtis Boulden of the 41st Transportation Company out of Grafenwoehre, Germany concluded the ceremony with an explanation of the Hunter Box, a style of truck-bed walls, which provides protection for troops, while allowing them to return fire.

As the audience dispersed, Schoomaker offered handshakes and coins to lines and lines of Soldiers who participated in and attended the ceremony.

Halstead presented the Chief of Staff of the Army with a framed flag and plaque.

Flashes came from every direction as Schoomaker humbly posed for photos with countless Soldiers.

Less than four hours after his arrival at LSA Anaconda, Schoomaker loaded an aircraft and departed for his Christmas afternoon of visiting thousands of deployed troops residing in other areas of Iraq.

However brief his handshakes with the Soldiers here may have been, Schoomaker's holiday visit may undoubtedly be among the most uplifting moments many of them will experience during their deployment, possibly during their time in uniform.

The coins he presented are small pieces of evidence of an unforgettable holiday experience for the many Soldiers who were away from their loved ones this Christmas.



Photo by Spc. Mary E. Ferguson

The Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker poses for a photo with Soldiers just moments after receiving a framed flag and plaque from Brig. Gen. Rebecca S. Halstead, the 3rd Corps Support Command commanding general during his Dec. 25 visit.

Servicemembers become U.S. citizens

Troops take the final step of the long journey to citizenship during ceremony

By Sgt. Jason Mikeworth, 207th MPAD

Members of the United States military completed the final step in their journey to U.S. citizenship at a ceremony Dec. 17 on Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

About 90 servicemembers received their certificates of citizenship and a U.S. flag from Brig. Gen. Rebecca Halstead, commander of the 3rd Corps Support Command and Brig. Gen. Joseph Chaves, commander of the 29th Brigade Combat Team.

"It's a great opportunity to be a citizen of this nation I serve," said Sgt. Ataata Atualevao from the 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment.

Atualevao, originally from American Samoa, said he is looking forward to using the education benefits enjoyed by some U.S. citizens.

"When I get back stateside and I'm enrolling in school, some of the programs require you to be a citizen, and now I'm able to qualify for those benefits," Atualevao said.

He added that he feels he has a better understanding of the freedom enjoyed in America after deploying to Iraq and helping liberate the people here.

"It's a great feeling to help the Iraqi citizens get their freedom and be able to vote, and now to get my citizenship and be able to vote for my president," Atualevao said.

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Roberto Medrano, a corpsman originally from Nicaragua, now assigned to the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, was equally optimistic about the future opportunities his citizenship will provide.

"I feel very happy. I believe there are more opportunities that are coming for me now," Medrano said. "Now, I can become a police officer if I want to, or get a federal job. It really changes my career and my life."

"My family is very supportive. They have also told me to take the chance while I'm in the military to get my citizenship. It's a big step for me," Medrano said. "I also got a lot of support from my chief and my officer."

Medrano said his unit took an active role in helping him get from Fallujah to LSA Anaconda for the ceremony.

"It was a little hard to come from Fallujah to here because of transportation, but I kept talking to my boss every time and updating him on the process," Medrano said. "He helped me out a lot."

John M. Bulger, district director of the Rome, Italy district for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, part of the Department of Homeland Security, said he felt honored to swear in so many men and women of the military who are serving in a combat zone.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Mikeworth

Servicemembers swear in as U.S. citizens during a Dec. 17 ceremony at the Sustainer Theater on Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

"This is the opportunity of a career for someone like me. We've been working with the military to prepare these young folks for naturalization," Bulger said. "To come here and see first-hand the conditions under which they labor to protect the United States and to free the people of Iraq is something that's absolutely awe inspiring for us."

Bulger said that legislation went into effect on Oct. 1, 2004 that allows Soldiers to swear in while they're located outside of the United States. Prior to that, he said, they had to ship back home in order to be sworn in.

"It's a unique opportunity for us to be able to come to them, and swear them in in front of their brothers and sisters in arms,"

Bulger said. "Today, to be able to make them American citizens, is an honor and a privilege for us."

Bulger also pointed to what he described as the proud history of immigrants serving in the U.S. military.

"Immigrants have served this country in every conflict that we've been involved in, and it's a proud tradition they carry on," Bulger said. "These people have chosen to serve the United States in a very special way. Their commitment is

unmistakable and something that is incredibly strong."

Medrano, who said he has enjoyed being a part of the military going back to his days in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps in high school, was appreciative of how quickly the military was able to guide him through the citizenship application process.

"The big difference is that being in the military speeds up the process," Medrano said. "You still have to do the same things as a normal permanent resident, but the process would be longer."

"I just want to say to those who are not U.S. citizens yet to get it," Medrano said. "It's a big step in your life and can really change your career."

"It's a great feeling to help the Iraqi citizens get their freedom and be able to vote, and now to get my citizenship and be able to vote for my president."

*Sgt. Ataata Atualevao
100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment*



Photo by Spc. Andrew Orillion

Chief of Army Chaplains, Maj. Gen. David D. Hicks joins 3rd COSCOM Chaplain, Col. Larry Robinson, during the Christmas Eve candle-light service at LSA Anaconda's Provider Chapel.

Chief Chaplain's Christmas message

By Spc. Andrew Orillion

Chief of Army Chaplains, Maj. Gen. David D. Hicks made a Christmas Eve visit to Logistical Support Area Anaconda. Arriving by helicopter, Hicks came to LSA Anaconda to meet with Soldiers and spread a warm holiday message.

After sharing dinner with Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Barbara Sherer, 3rd Corps Support Command's Deputy Chaplain, and other guests, Hicks delivered the Christmas message at the 7 p.m. Christmas Eve service at the Provider Chapel.

"We are here tonight to honor not only those who have sacrificed in this war, but also to honor He who sacrificed for all of us," Hicks said.

He spoke at length about his military career, both before and after becoming a Chaplain.

"As a new private many years ago, I was brought to the ministry by my own Chaplain," Hicks said. "I came back in 1974 after going to the seminary and it has been a great journey and an honor to carry the mantle of service as an Army Chaplain."

Hicks also spoke of the difficulties deployed Soldiers may face this time of year.

"You are separated from your loved

ones, celebrating across different time zones. When away from our families it is important to stop and think about Jesus," he explained.

He concluded his Christmas message with a question for those in attendance.

"This Christmas it is important to remember that God has come to you, the question is, what will you do with Him?" Hicks asked.

After the service, Hicks and Sherer visited Soldiers who spent Christmas Eve in the guard towers, offering words of support and encouragement.

The visits to the guard towers were the highlight of Sherer's Christmas Eve.

"To stand in the dark and look out at the place where shepherds watched over their flocks by night so long ago really connected me with Christmas," Sherer said.

For Sherer, and for the many other Soldiers who Hicks spoke with on Christmas Eve, the visit was more than just a morale boost.

"His visit meant a lot to me and to the other Soldiers. It says a lot about the character of Maj. Gen. Hicks that he would take time away from his family to visit the Soldiers on Christmas Eve," Sherer said.

4th SB Co. maintains Camp Taji security

By Sgt. Joshua Salmons
4th Sustainment Brigade

The Soldiers who fill the guard towers and patrol the roads of Camp Taji may often go unnoticed, but their mission is irreplaceable.

Company G of the Special Troops Battalion, 4th Sustainment Brigade, is responsible for providing Soldiers to watch over the fenced cantonment area of Camp Taji, and maintain the camp's Quick Reaction Force.

Constantly gaining and losing Soldiers as tours end and units redeploy back to home stations, the makeup of Co. G changes regularly, but leadership positions are locked in for one year to ensure continuity.

Units from across the camp contribute personnel to serve as guards for 90-day-long duty positions.

While the short duration of the position is meant to keep Soldiers from burning out, many choose to stay on with Co. G.

"Most Soldiers ask to stay longer," said 1st Sgt. James Rose, the company's first sergeant.

A big challenge the unit faces in addition to the fluctuating roster is incorporating National Guard and Army Reserve units into the 'active-duty fold.'

"It's pretty smooth operating with different components," said 1st Lt. Landon Mills, the company's executive officer. "The National Guard and Reserve Soldiers fit right in."

"We work together as a team," said Spc. Annette Mack, an administrative clerk with Co. G.

The unit's Soldiers are constantly reminded of the importance of their mission.

Their work is essential to camp operation.

"These guys are on the front lines in these towers," said Mills. "If these guys aren't well trained or are not on their game, then someone could get through and then we're in a world of hurt."

Leave the logistics to 16th CSG

The 3rd Corps Support Command hits the ground running in southern Iraq

By Staff Sgt. Engels Tejada, 207th MPAD

The 16th Corps Support Group has taken over logistical support operations in southern Iraq, conducting a diverse number of missions within its first months on the ground.

“Our mission is to provide logistics support to all Coalition Forces in our sector,” said Col. Victor Maccagnan, the 16th CSG commander. “That includes transportation, ammunition, water, fuel and maintenance. We also escort convoys and provide security.”

The 16th CSG area of operation extends from the Kuwaiti border to Logistical Support Area Anaconda near Balad, about 40 miles north of Baghdad. Virtually every member of the Coalition has troops in this region, with Britain, Italy, Poland and El Salvador providing security operations for sizeable areas within the mostly Shiite south.

Other countries with troops in the area include Latvia, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Mongolia, Australia and Japan. The 16th CSG works closely with each country.

The unit even shares its headquarters base, Camp Adder, with the Italian contingent. The fact that the unit resides in Germany, Maccagnan said, gives the unit an advantage in working with the international forces.

“When you are stationed in Germany you develop the necessary skills to partner with America’s allies,” Maccagnan said.

The 16th CSG conducts routine exercises with foreign troops, said the unit’s Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Driskell.

While providing logistical support, the unit has accomplished an impressive number of missions so far. The 16th CSG has transported more than 10 million gallons of fuel, including JP 8, MOGAS, and DF2 gas. Additionally, the unit does three to four

combat logistics patrols weekly, carrying food and water throughout its area of operation.

As of early December, units under the 16th have traveled over 320,000 miles.

In addition to conducting logistical support, the 16th CSG also provides base command for Camp Adder, Camp Cedar II, and Camp Scania, the three largest Coalition logistical centers in the south.

The command consists of approximately 40 units and about 3,000 Soldiers.

Perhaps one of the command’s most significant missions is mentoring the Iraqi army’s 2nd Motorized Transportation Regiment.

“They’ve performed as well as some of my superior units in some areas. They are a model of how well this partnership can work,” Maccagnan said of the 2nd MTR.

The unit also has an active civil affairs mission, seeking out Iraqi citizens within the area of operations and developing a network of projects designed to rebuild the nation and foster lasting relationships.

ships.

“Collectively, we have a very good relationship with the locals,” said Maj. Brian Burchette, the unit’s operations officer.

One of the most important ingredients for the unit’s success is the support they have had from their families, Maccagnan said.

“They are constantly in our thoughts and they provide us with a sense of strength and purpose to complete the mission down here,” he added. “On behalf of the whole 16th CSG, we want to wish all the families of the deployed Soldiers all the very best. We hope that you have a safe and prosperous holiday season, and we hope to see you soon.”

“When you are stationed in Germany you develop the necessary skills to partner with America’s allies.”

*Col. Victor Maccagnan
16th Corps Support Group commander*

Several 3rd COSCOM Soldiers recite the Soldier’s Creed for the Sergeant Major of the Army, Kenneth Preston, during his Dec. 23 visit to LSA Anaconda.

Photo by Spc. Mary E. Ferguson



Optimism fills the air at FOB Trebil

Despite unfavorable living conditions, troops face mission fueled by camaraderie

By Spc. David Chapman

Though Iraq is not a place most Soldiers think of as ideal, there are few bases here that lack the simple necessities of life, things like running water and electricity. Until recently, Forward Operating Base Trebil was one of these places.

A tour at FOB Trebil lasts one year, much like any other tour in Iraq for Soldiers, but for Marines who are stationed here it is only a seven month stay.

“Trebil is a hardship tour, but it’s not something that can’t be overcome,” said Sgt. 1st Class Judy Armancesidwell, a FOB resident.

Located near the Jordanian border, the 150-square-meter FOB is home to more than 130 Soldiers, Marines, and airmen. The FOB receives approximately 1,000 gallons of non-potable water a week, which must be shared by all its residents.

“We only shower once, maybe twice a week,” said Capt. Gary Whittacre, the 27th Movement Control Battalion’s 635th Movement Control Team commander. “And laundry can only be done maybe every two weeks.”

The 635th MCT manifests the vehicles entering Iraq from Jordan, makes sure that the vehicles are safe to travel the harsh local roads, and ensures that drivers are heading toward their specific delivery points.

“We check all the vehicles to make sure that they don’t have any bombs or anything like that,” said Spc. Edson Alexandre, a movement control coordinator for the 635th MCT.

“It has been an experience,” said Lance Cpl. Alan Alexander, a Marine and cook at the FOB. “There aren’t any rivalries or anything here between the Marines and Army.”

The Marines stationed at the FOB are there in a protective status, operating security for the border and trucks entering and leaving the country, while also



Photo by Spc. David Chapman

635th MCT commander, Capt. Gary Whittacre, welcomes Maj. David Clevenger, Col. Sharon Duffy and Maj. Mark Evans to FOB Trebil.

helping with the cooking and cleaning details.

There are some promising changes in the works for the personnel who will follow behind the current residents.

The camp now has internet connections, electricity to the tents, more living space for contractors and a new gym.

“The gym used to be only a few machines in the back of a truck,” Armancesidwell explained.

We took a gazebo, constructed walls and added machines given to us by the Marines, and made the new gym, she said.

“Going outside the wire is probably the scariest part of being at Trebil,” said Alexandre. “We don’t get the mortars or rocket attacks like at Balad, but we have to worry about the IEDs [improvised explosive device] when we leave here.”

The common feeling expressed by the FOB Trebil’s residents is a sense of family and closeness between each other.

“The living conditions are rough, but the people around you make it easier,” Alexandre said. “Once you are here you realize that you only have each other to rely on, your bond with each other.”

A recent visit from Col. Sharon Duffy, the 3rd COSCOM Deputy Commanding Officer, and other 3rd COSCOM Soldiers, proves there are efforts being made to improve the quality of life for residents at FOB Trebil.



Photo by Spc. David Chapman

Maj. Mark Evans, 27th MCB's executive officer, takes a Dec. 23 tour of FOB Trebil.

101st BTB inducts newly promoted Soldiers into NCO Corps

By Sgt. Rachel Brune, 101st Sustainment Brigade

The 101st Brigade Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, inducted noncommissioned officers from each of its subordinate units into the Noncommissioned Officer Corps Dec. 16 at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Theater at Forward Operating Base Q-West.

The ceremony featured skits illustrating the “Warrior Ethos” and the “NCO Charge.”

“Never compromise your integrity and always be the standard bearer,” said keynote speaker Command Sgt. Maj. James Spencer, 71st Corps Support Battalion, to the NCOs.

Although NCO Induction Ceremonies consist of different elements, each includes a moment when the NCOs must step across a line to take their places in the Corps, said Spencer.

Later in the ceremony, Spencer helped

present plaques and leadership books to the inductees who crossed that line.

Sgt. Cynthia Taylor, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st BTB mechanic, attained the rank of sergeant Dec. 1.

“I feel honored and privileged to be inducted,” Taylor said.

When asked if she had anything to say to her fellow inductees, Taylor said: “Now get back to work!”

Photo by Spc. Andrew Orillion



Photo by Spc. Andrew Orillion
A group of derby cars explode down the track.

Pinewood Derby

races through Anaconda



Photo by Spc. Andrew Orillion
Troops observe as the miniature cars rev their engines.

Deployed Soldiers and airmen put their handcrafted cars to the test during the LSA Anaconda Pinewood Derby Dec. 30.

The racing lanes hosted a variety of miniature vehicles, ranging from a simple rolling block of wood, to a detailed scaled-down humvee with working headlights.

Several participating troops have children involved in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts back home who are entering their local Pinewood Derby races. The Anaconda derby gave its racers a chance to share an activity with their children despite their current separation.

Arm yourself with a healthy lifestyle

By Spc. Andrew B. Orillion

“Eat smart, live healthy” is a mantra that is heard by Soldiers throughout the Army. For Maj. Polly Graham, the 3rd Corps Support Command Chief Dietician, this is more than just a hollow slogan; it is life-altering advice.

“Eating healthy is not just something you do once in a while,” Graham said. “It is part of a lifestyle that involves exercise and healthy eating choices.”

Graham is a reservist who works for a medical center in Davenport, Iowa. She is a registered dietician with 25 years experience, and is the only dietician on Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

As part of the 3rd COSCOM surgeon section and as a dietician, it is Graham’s job to help keep Soldiers healthy.

“We look at things like menus that are served in the dining facility. We’re looking at a healthy lifestyle for Soldiers and how it can be improved,” said Graham.

“I sit on boards and attend meetings where menus are looked at and reviewed,” she explained.

“Many soldiers gain weight while deployed, anywhere from 12 to 18 pounds

on average,” Graham said. “It’s very similar to the weight gained by freshmen in college, called the freshmen 15.”

But Graham explained that eating healthy is not as difficult as some Soldiers may think. It’s a matter of making good choices.

“Eating healthy is not just something you do once in a while ... It is part of a lifestyle that involves exercise and healthy eating choices.”

*Maj. Polly Graham
3rd COSCOM Chief Dietician*

“For eating healthy, the dining facilities offer more choices than we probably have at home,” Graham said. “It’s a matter of learning what the healthier choices are. You can go through the line and choose the baked chicken instead of the corn dog. Choose the baked potato or the plain rice or pasta, and there is always fresh fruit and vegetables.”

Does that mean no more trips to the ice cream bar? And what about the cake served in dining facility three? Are these treats totally off limits?

“As a dietician we don’t look at things you need to avoid totally, because when you take things out of your body it can be hard for your body to maintain a good balance,” Graham said.

“Beverages are one of the first places I look when I analyze someone’s diet, because when you start drinking pop you are getting several hundred calories, which are just empty calories,” Graham said.

But it is not just sodas; excessive calories can hide in seemingly healthy drinks too.

“There is still no substitute for plain old fashioned water,” she said.

Healthy eating is an important part of staying fit and ready for the challenges of a deployment.

“This is a perfect time to make some lifestyle changes. You have a perfect chance to make some changes here at LSA Anaconda,” she said. “The gyms are available, as are health food choices at the DFAC. Why not take advantage?”



Photo by Spc. Mary E. Ferguson

Soldiers and civilians from the 3rd COSCOM and 29th BCT Civil Affairs sections pose with Ma’rwa Ahteemi and her father. Ma’rwa has been receiving medical treatment on LSA Anaconda for several years. Read her optimistic story in the upcoming Sustainer magazine.

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