

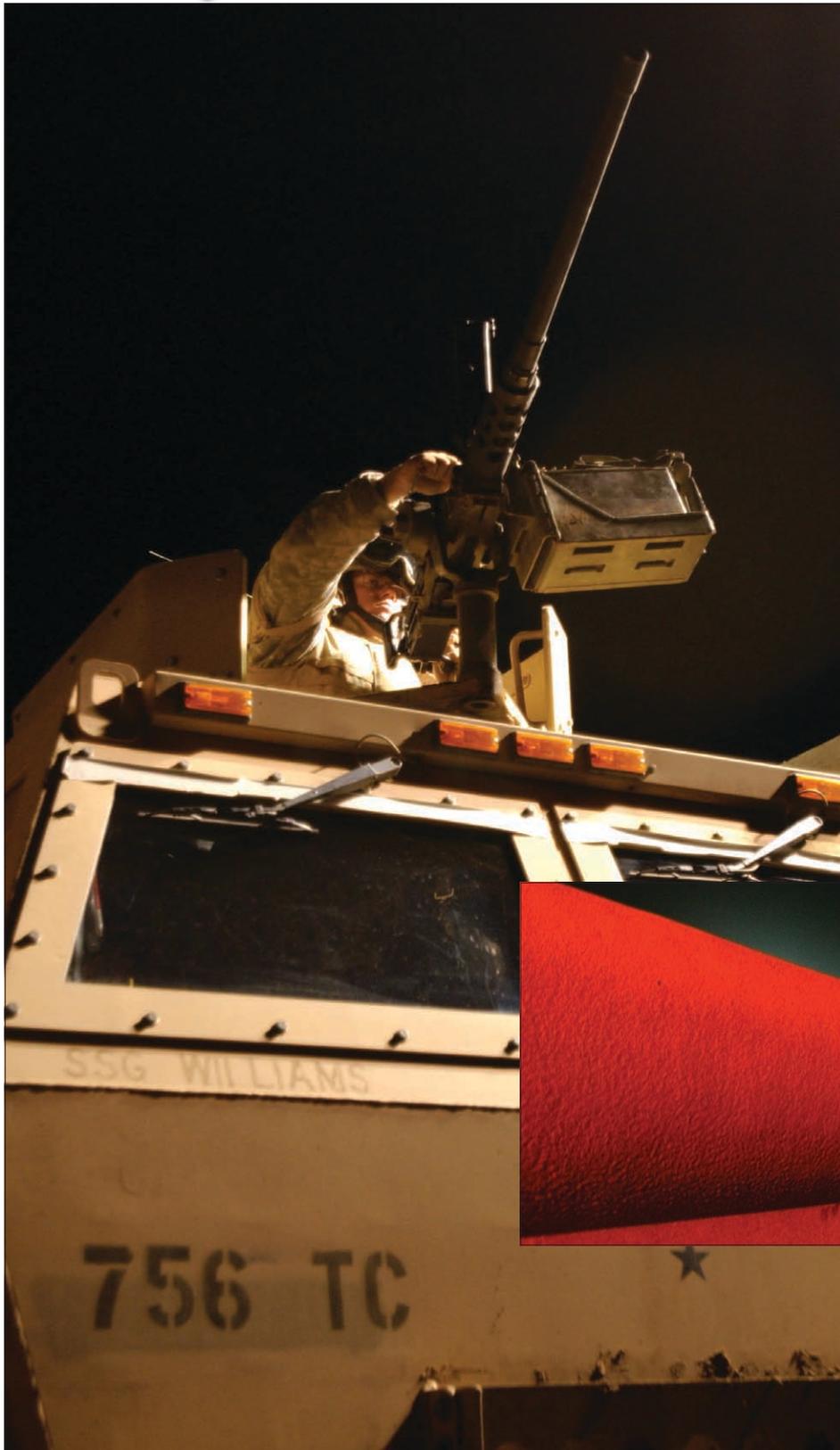


The WRANGLER

Volume 1 Issue 4

Serving the 4th Sustainment Brigade during Operation Iraqi Freedom IV

February 17, 2006



Fill 'er up!

Guard fuelers show there's more to California mettle than surf & sand

By Sgt. Joshua Salmons
4TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

One hundred accident-free days is a milestone many units in theater aspire to; but achieve the feat as a pieced-together Guard and Reserve unit with minimal time to train together before arriving, and it becomes particularly noteworthy.

The California Army National Guard's 756th Transportation Company has 152 Soldiers assigned from 72 units and represents 125 cities across California and five other states.

The Van Nuys, Calif., based unit has operated on the roads of Iraq since its arrival Oct. 23, and has accumulated 50,000 miles

SEE **FUELERS** • Page 2



(Left) Sgt. Stephen Knoedler checks the head space and timing on his .50 caliber machine gun before leaving Camp Taji on a fuel-delivery mission Jan 29. (Above) Spc. Eric Langlois keeps watch as his truck takes on additional fuel. Knoedler is a truck commander and Langlois a truck driver with the California National Guard's 756th Transportation Company.

Photos by Sgt. Joshua Salmons



Capt. Cheun Yoo prays with the 756th personnel about to leave on a fuel-delivery convoy from Camp Taji. Yoo is the 189th Corps Support Battalion Chaplain. The 756th is an Army Reserve unit based out of Van Nuys, Calif. **Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons**

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of individual operator miles to deliver over 2 million gallons of product.

With Camp Taji and Logistical Base Seitz as their base, the 756th personnel deliver JP8, DF2 and MOGAS to coalition forces throughout the 4th Sustainment Brigade area of operation.

All that, and they provide their own gun trucks for security.

"People think of Californians and they think we're all a bunch of laid-back surfer dudes," said Sgt. James Shepard, truck driver. "A lot of people don't think we can actually do anything."

"[Being from California] has been a sort of rallying cry," said Spc. Eric Langlois, truck driver. "Our record is bragging rights since we put it all together pretty quick."

Meeting in camps throughout California, New Mexico and Texas, the 756th began to form in July, and saw a trickle of additional personnel up until the unit's departure.

"We didn't all meet at one time," Shepard said. "There were continuously people showing up. Our commander got to us just three

weeks before we left."

Training was abbreviated for the new drivers, Shepard said, with the normal six-week driving course pushed down to three weeks.

"I'm a truck driver, but a lot of these guys aren't," he explained. "With all these young kids driving these tractors, I wasn't sure how they'd do. But I'm impressed, I really am."

While the official training may have been cut short, the 756th conducted extra exercises at night, put together by the unit themselves.

"We'd go out all day, then go right back out at night to do some more," Langlois said.

Through the day before a mission, the 756th is a buzz with briefings and get-togethers to ensure even the junior Soldiers know routes, roles and escalation of force

procedures.

A thorough quality assurance quality control inspection with both drivers and mechanics is done in the early morning, giving the unit ample time to correct any vehicle faults.

By 1 p.m. the afternoon before the mission's start point, all participating personnel are required to rest.

All this to ensure, above all else, safety.

"Mission success is 90 percent preparation and 10 percent execution," said Maj. Julian Bond, 756th commander. "Preparation constitutes successful execution and leads to synchronized combat logistic patrols."

While the Soldiers go through the normal routine of missing family and friends, there's comfort in the fact that things for the 756th are as safe as they can make it.

"With this company we figured out that we have to change and adapt," Shepard said.

"I think we're doing a great job, even by active-duty standards," he added, laughing.

The WRANGLER

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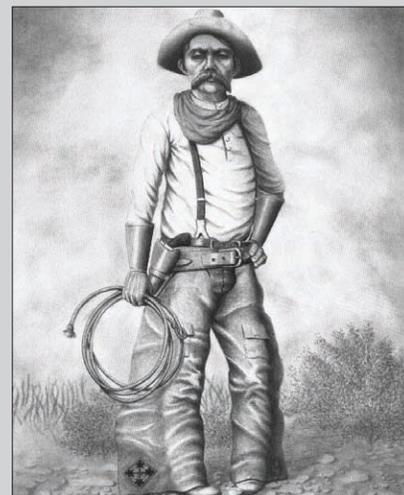
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A Chaplain's Prayer

Good attitude best for finding purpose

I can imagine many places I would rather be right now. However, a few years ago, a dream of mine came true and I had the opportunity to become an Army chaplain. So here I am. So it follows that where the Army goes, I will go.

The question for me is, "What will be my attitude toward this deployment?" I suppose I could dread the separation and the "every day's the same" routine. That would be easy.

However, I do not find that attitude to be very edifying. That attitude brings me down instead of lifting me up. Since I would rather spend my days being happy instead of down in the dumps, I must find a different attitude.

I choose a positive attitude that enables me to do a better job, and, by the way, makes

the days more enjoyable.

A nation is free and becoming even more free because of our work here. Lives are filled with less fear and more hope for the future than ever before.

Your work is making that possible. Do not underestimate the importance of what you do!

Whatever task lies before you, perform that task to the best of your ability.

Scriptures teach us to do everything as unto the Lord. This should be our attitude at all

times.

So let's get this job done and get it done right. Ask yourself this question: "If every Soldier in Iraq worked as hard as I do, how soon would we be finished?" Go to work each day with that attitude and see how fast the

days go by.

While I am not a poker player, I read the following quote and I believe it makes the point well:

"The measure of our future success and happiness will not be the quality of the cards we are dealt by unseen hands, but the poise and wisdom with which we play them. Choose to play each hand to the best of your ability without wasting the time or energy it takes to complain about either the cards or the dealer or the often unfair rules of the game. Play both the winning and the losing hands as best you can, then fold the cards and ante up for the next deal!"

I mentioned that becoming an Army Chaplain was a dream-come-true for me. I love my God, I love my family and I love my Country. This job enables me to serve all of them every day. When I think about it, there is no place I would rather be.



Capt. Daniel Husak
STB CHAPLAIN



Quarterly earnings

Personnel walk by and congratulate the Brigade Soldier and NCO of the Quarter following the board on Camp Taji, Iraq, Jan. 30. Sgt. Travis Washington (center), a gunner with Battery C, 2-44nd Air Defense Artillery, won top NCO honors while Spc. Amanda Fleury, an automated logistics specialist with the 428th Quartermaster Company, won the Soldier portion. Both Soldiers are assigned to the 189th Corps Support Battalion. **Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons**



A family meeting

Sgt. Claude Chappelle talks to his family in Texas via a video tele-conference session at the Freedom Call Center here Saturday. Chappelle is the training NCO with HHC, Special Troops Battalion. **Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Guadalupe Stratman**

First-generation Soldier answers call to serve

By Sgt. Joshua Salmons
4TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

BAGHDAD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, Iraq – Back. Now forward. A nudge left. Little more. Tilt forward. Down. Down. Now lock it in and lift.

So goes the slow, careful dance between rough terrain cargo handler and container. At the controls is Spc. Moises Mari, a cargo specialist with the 155th Cargo Transfer Company, based out of Fort Eustis, Va.

The 155th personnel assigned to the airfield conduct what's referred to as Arrival Departure Airfield Control Group operations – acting like a large-scale postal office, sorting and organizing pallets and containers for delivery throughout theater.

"I'm an operator over all our equipment," he said, referring not only to the large, crane-like machine, but also the series of light and heavy forklifts used to move cargo pallets.

The 20-year-old Garfield, N.J., native is a first-generation Soldier and proud to serve.

"I have no family history in the military," Mari said. "It was something I just wanted to do, honestly. I've always wanted to be in the Army."

Echoing a familiar sentiment to many

modern Soldiers, Mari felt the need to do something for his country, and enlisted after high school to lend his hand to the service – in his case, by guiding the controls of heavy equipment movers.

Some of his other duties involve the assembling and disassembling of cargo pallets and measuring and distributing the weight of the load to ensure air-worthiness.

Through it all, it's Mari's attitude that stands out.

"He's very knowledgeable on the equipment and is very motivated to get in there and operate," said 1st Lt. Michael Hallinan, ADACG platoon leader.

"Mari has been an outstanding Soldier this whole [deployment].

"He'll always get out there and do what we ask him to do," he added.

While he may not pursue a career in the military, while he's in he wants to do his best, Mari said.

"We'll see," Mari said of the possibility of re-enlisting. "I wanted to go to school afterwards. I want to keep my options open."

Mari hopes to pursue a bachelor's and master's in business administration in the hopes of owning his own company.



Spc. Moises Mari stands next to his rough terrain cargo handler at the Baghdad International Airport. Mari is a cargo handler assigned to 4th Platoon, 155th Cargo Transfer Company, currently conducting Arrival Departure Airfield Control Group operations at BIAP. **Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons**

Personal Finance Planning

Credit woes plague troops

Soldiers must take care not to overextend financial means when dealing with cards

As we are making additional money and paying off old bills, this is a good time to think about a budget.

If you haven't already done so, you may want to sit down and look at your debt-to-income ratio.

You may ask yourself, "Why be concerned about my finances?" An answer to this question may be (1) to keep money in your pocket, (2) to stay financially afloat or (3) because you need money to live.

You need to live within your income, maintain a good credit history, get more for your money and reduce financial stress and arguments.

Financial issues are the number one cause of arguments within American households.

Debt-To-Income Ratio

- <15% OK to add credit (with caution)
- 15 - 20% Fully extended
- 21-30% Overextended
- >30% Seek help immediately

Formula: $(\text{Monthly debt payments} / \text{monthly income}) \times 100$



Master Sgt. Robin Krieger
BRIGADE FINANCE NCOIC

The website provided has a budget calculator that once you put in your information, will show you what your debt-to-income ratio:
http://www.cccsatl.org/index.asp?pg=tools_debratio

Credit Card Facts

- Cards cause a 32 percent increase in spending
- Average family has 11 credit cards (debit, credit)
- Average total Balance is \$10,000
- 43 percent make only minimum monthly payments
- Debt payments consume 19 percent of income

Warning Signs That Your Debt is Getting Out of Control

- Not paying off most of your cards every month
- You have higher and higher percentages of pay go toward debts
- When you fall behind on payments, and/or need loans or cash advances for daily living expenses
- You should have at least one month's pay in a savings
- At or near limit on credit cards
- Relying on a second job or spouse's income to make ends meet
- Appropriate uses of credit: To Purchase Assets, Big Ticket Items, For Convenience (you pay the bill completely when it comes in).

Inappropriate Uses of Credit

- Furniture, Clothing, Sports Equipment, Entertainment and daily living Expenses.

Learn to live within your budget!

**Don't shoot ...
call EOD.**



STAY ALIVE

Combat Nutrition Care

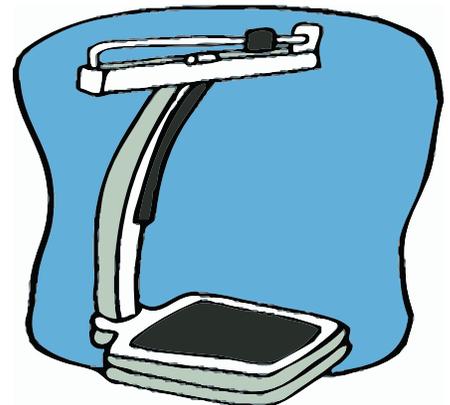
Have you been working out, wearing all this extra gear for months, but do not seem to be losing the pounds or inches?

Are you tired of being taped and would like to avoid that embarrassment?

Are you on the unit's weight control program and would like to get off of it while deployed?

An on-line nutrition program is now available for you. The course will take about five hours (5 x 1 hour sessions).

To sign up, email me at:
dawn.orta@taji.sig54.army.mil or report to the
Wrangler Clinic from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.





Firefighter Jett Webb shows Spcs. Alfonso Medina and Steve Saloeun the proper way to put out a fire at the fire-fighting training area here Jan. 27. Medina is a gunner and Saloeun is a gun-truck driver with the California-based 756th Transportation Company. *Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Guadalupe Stratman*

Learning to fight fire with foam?

By Sgt. 1st Class Guadalupe Stratman
4TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

Several 4th Sustainment Brigade Soldiers completed training on a newly implemented fire-fighting system Tuesday.

Firefighters in conjunction with brigade personnel developed the Combat Convoy Fire Fighting System. The system will be used to save Soldiers lives and keep more equipment in the fight.

Since the brigade's arrival in Iraq, two vehicles were lost due to fire.

"We've encountered two vehicular fires that destroyed the systems completely," said Maj. Monte Montes, brigade S2.

"IEDs (improvised explosive devices) caused the fires," explained Montes. "The IED had a direct hit to the vehicle's fuel cell. The fire quickly spread to the areas that were hot and engulfed the vehicle.

"Fortunately no one was hurt, but I am convinced if those fire-fighting systems were on those convoys we would not have lost the

equipment," he added.

The system can hold up to 500 gallons of water and is mixed with three percent A-FFF foam, which is used for fuel-based fires.

The system releases five to 10 gallons of water per minute, resulting in an average of eight minutes of use. When water is mixed with the A-FFF foam it increases the use by 20 times.

The class consisted of two hours of college-level fire science. Then eight hours of hands-on that included mixing the foam, angles to engage a fire and putting out fires.

Soldiers put out fuel fires several times during the training with one 500 gallon tank.

"[The system] is something that we really need," said Spc. Nathan Jackson, system

hose supporter and truck driver Battery B, 1st Battalion of the 117th Field Artillery Regiment. Jackson drives on fuel truck throughout Baghdad.

"I feel safer having this system on our convoys," added Jackson. "If an IED hits our vehicles it will go up in flames."

The 4th Sustainment Brigade's primary use for the fire-fighting system will be on convoys; however by placing the systems on a convoy does not add more vehicles and personnel on Iraqi roads.

"We built the system to be in an LMTV (light medium tactical vehicle) or trailer," said Montes. "We already had a gun truck on the road. Now the gun truck team also becomes the fire fighting unit for the convoy."

I am convinced if those fire-fighting systems were on those convoys we would have not lost the equipment

Maj. Monte Montes
S2, 4TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

A Soldier's Opinion

On call ♦ *Soldier medic describes life on front-line base caring for troops amid combat challenges*

By Sgt. Ashley Voss
2ND BCT, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – At the blink of an eye, I became the mom.

It is a role that was intrinsic, though I have no children of my own.

I heard myself reminding them to wear ear plugs, and to drink enough water. I laughed inside as I asked if they had packed enough socks or instructed them on what dosage of medication to take for their illness.

I listened to their frustrations and fears and attempted to remain strong. My heart hurt as their hearts hurt.

The most surprising of emotions was worry. Each time a Soldier left the gate, I worried. I slept less there than I have ever in my life. Every bump in the night jolted my heart to a state of awareness that took an hour to recover from. It was an emotion that seemed ridiculous as those Soldiers are some of the most capable, and bravest men I have ever known. They are a fantastically trained force, unbelievable in their ability to endure, sustain and overcome.

They are the Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, and for one month I had the privilege of being one of their medics.

I was the lone female at Forward Operation Base Yusufiyah, Iraq – a situation

that made some unnecessarily concerned as I can assure you that I was treated with the utmost respect.

Upon arrival in Yusufiyah, I was given the tour, including a walk around the facility that was once allegedly a potato factory. The entire camp spanned the area of two football fields. One half of the area is occupied by Iraqi army Soldiers while the other is occupied by Bravo Company. The Soldiers of Bravo rotate between guarding check points, patrolling and securing the gates.

The aide station that was my home is nothing short of a miracle. Since their arrival in October, the physician's assistants and medics who run the aid station had seen 94 trauma

Based on the number of personnel and equipment available, it is amazing that this medical team has had the success that they have. They are a truly gifted group of people and it was an honor to work with them. There are memories that I never want to forget and those that I can't forget, regardless of my effort to try. There are images that become a part of a person's eyelids – traumatic injuries of Soldiers, 15-year-old detainees found with equipment to build explosives, child victims of improvised explosive devices set up by their neighbors, intended for Soldiers.

The men of Bravo Company have seen more tragedy than a person should have to see in a lifetime. They have lost fellow Soldiers.

The most surprising of emotions was worry.
Each time a Soldier left the gate, I worried.
I slept less there than I have ever in my life.

patients by the time of my departure in mid-January. These patients included U.S. Soldiers as well as Iraqi army soldiers and Iraqi civilians.

Their injuries were generally due to shrapnel from mortars or IED explosions, with most casualties evacuated to obtain surgical treatment once stabilized.

They have risked their lives to save others and each day they continue. They will attend a memorial, wipe their tears, and the next day they head out on patrol or to pull guard at another check point. They are the epitome of the American Soldier. They are the source of my pride in the Army. They are heroes.

Iraqi family survives IED thanks to Seitz docs

Special to The Wrangler
602ND AREA SUPPORT MEDICAL COMPANY

LOGISTICAL BASE SEITZ, Iraq – On the morning of Dec. 29 the residents of Log Base Seitz were alerted to the sound of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) detonating in the nearby town of Abu Ghraib.

Most of these attacks are focused on the Coalition-force Soldiers and the Iraqi army, but that day was different. The deadly bomb struck a local Iraqi civilian and his young son. Critically injured and struggling for their lives, both would have died if not for medical personnel that run

the Log Base Seitz Aid Station.

"The two Iraqi civilians were brought into Log Base Seitz by the 2-22nd Infantry Battalion in terrible shape," said 2nd Lt. Michael Forslund, the Log Base Seitz Aid Station OIC. "The father was barely conscious and going into shock from shrapnel wounds to his back. His young son was unconscious from both an open abdominal wound and an open skull fracture."

Once at the aid station their injuries were assessed and treated. After stabilizing the patients, the medics prepared them both for air-



Staff Sgt. James Brown runs checks on a heart-rate monitor at the Log Base Seitz Aid Station Feb. 8. Brown is a medic assigned to the 602nd ASMC and is one of the Soldiers who helped the father and son.

Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons

SURVIVAL FROM Page 7

medical evacuation.

Due to the nature of the child's injuries, Maj. Eric Elgin, the 2-22nd Infantry Battalion Surgeon and Capt. Robert Howes, the aid station's chief medical provider, did not believe the son would survive.

The father was flown to the 10th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad, was treated for his wounds and brought to a stable condition.

The child, who was flown to separate portion of the 10th Combat Support Hospital at LSA Anaconda, had to go into intensive surgery.

"We didn't think he'd make it going in, and they said he died after the surgery" said Staff Sgt. James Brown, one of the medics who first treated the child.

"Everyone at the aid station was heartbroken by the news and how the child had become another innocent victim of the violent insurgency," Forslund said.

But all the news wasn't bad. A month after the incident, Elgin was performing medical services when he saw the father he had aided.

"It was then that he learned that the child had actually survived after the surgery," Forslund said.

Even though the child now suffers some motor disability in his left arm, he had survived and lived against all odds.

"We were really glad when we heard the news," Brown said.

"We were all very proud that we were able to make a difference and provide that initial life saving and sustaining treatment to both the father and child," Forslund commented.

A Few Legal Pointers

Earned income credit can save on taxes

The earned income credit (EIC) is a tax credit for individuals who have less than \$37,263 of earned income. Tax credits, like the EIC, typically reduce the amount of taxes owed and possibly result in a refund.

The taxpayer must have an adjusted gross income (AGI) that is less than: 1) \$35,263 (\$37,263 for married filing jointly) if he / she has more than one qualifying child; 2) \$31,030 (\$33,030 for married filing jointly) if he / she has one qualifying child; or 3) \$11,750 (\$13,750 for married filing jointly) if he / she does not have a qualifying child. The AGI can be found on line 38 of Form 1040, line 22 of Form 1040A, and line 4 of Form 1040EZ.

If the taxpayer has a qualifying child, the child must meet certain criteria: a relationship, age, and residency test. This test is outlined in greater detail in Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Publication 17 and 596. Once the requisite elements of these tests are met, the child can only be claimed once by only one person for this credit. The taxpayer cannot be a qualifying child of another individual.

If the taxpayer does not have a qualifying child, he / she must be at least age 25, but under age 65. He / she cannot be the dependent and qualifying child of another person. The taxpayer must also have lived in the United States for more than half of the year.

There are some limitations in claiming the EIC. Investment income cannot be greater than \$2,700. The taxpayer's filing status cannot be "married filing separately," and he / she cannot file Form 2555 or Form 2555-EZ. These forms are used to exclude income earned in foreign countries from their gross income. The taxpayer, spouse, and qualifying child must also have a valid social security number. An individual taxpayer identification number will not be accepted.

As a tip, the nontaxable combat pay can be included as earned income. Choosing to include the nontaxable pay may increase or decrease the EIC. The amount of your nontaxable combat pay is shown on Form W-2, in box 12, with code "Q." Figure the EIC with or without the nontaxable combat pay, and choose the one that will be the most advantageous.

For the 2005 tax year, the maximum credit amounts are: 1) \$4,400 for two or more children; 2) \$2,662 for one child; and 3) \$399 for no children.



Capt. Eric Lee
JUDGE ADVOCATE



Staff Sgt. Kerry Peay begins the wash cycle on a Laundry Advanced System on Log Base Seitz, Feb. 10. Peay is a Shower / Laundry and clothing repair specialist with the 590th Field Service Company, assigned to the 18th Corps Support Battalion. **Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons**

Drum Soldiers help air unit's dirty laundry

Troops take on cleaning and clothing repair services to keep Log Base Seitz fresh

By Spc. Jake Judge
363RD MPAD, 4TH INF. DIV.

LOGISTICAL BASE SEITZ, Iraq – Soldiers deployed to Iraq must deal with a harsh desert climate that takes a toll on every aspect of their lives. Thanks to the support of fellow Soldiers in the 590th Field Service Company, one issue they do not have to worry about is clean clothing.

The 590th FSC at Log Base Seitz provides both laundry service and clothing repair.

“A happy Soldier is a fighting Soldier,” said Staff Sgt. Kerry Peay, laundry noncommissioned-officer-in-charge for Log base Seitz.

“We are in the business of making sure Soldiers are taken care of ... [and that] the

Soldiers are satisfied,” said Peay, who has been a quartermaster for 14 years.

The 590th FSC provides on-going support through two platoons consisting of three “slicker” teams per platoon. Each slicker team can independently handle laundry services and clothing repair and can also provide showers in locations where there are no facilities. The teams are mobile and travel anywhere that troops need these essentials services.

Machines used for the laundry on LBS are immense and require constant care to ensure smooth running. They approximate the dimensions of two full-size semi-truck trailers joined together. Each contains two drums for washing and drying laundry and each drum holds up to 25 bags of laundry, although 15

bags is the normal load to ensure maximum cleanliness.

The primary wash cycle takes 73 minutes and since the machines are run constantly, every day the 590th FSC Soldiers perform a full PMCS check.

After clothes are washed and dried they are then folded and ready for pick-up. The whole process is a one-day turn around. Peay said he is proud that the Soldiers of the 590th FSC are dedicated to what is often a thankless and forgotten job.

“All [of our] Soldiers are ready to accomplish the mission that is placed before them,” he said. “Our feedback from the Soldiers [who use the laundry] is that our service is great.

“Mission accomplished!”