



Sgt. Zebedee Brockel tightens a humvee fan belt by adjusting the alternator bracket on Seitz Annex, Iraq, June 9. Brockel is the senior mechanic for the automotive section of the 98th Maintenance Company, assigned to the 393rd Corps Support Battalion. *Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons*

98th turns up heat on Iraqi summer

Maintenance unit hits stride with increasing workload, demand for quality services

By Sgt. Joshua Salmons
4TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

SEITZ ANNEX, Iraq—For one Fort Richardson, Alaska, unit on Seitz Annex, things are heating up this summer.

The 98th Maintenance Company, attached to the 393rd Corps Support Battalion, is taking on an enormous volume of work, with completed jobs now into the thousands.

"We know we still have some breathing room, so we're expecting more," said Capt. Doris Rawls, the 98th company commander. "My

Soldiers are professionals, hoping to make a difference."

Helping to fuel the craze is the 98th's growing reputation among units outside of their normal customer base.

"A lot of the jobs we're getting is because of word of mouth from our customers," said Capt. Cedric Harris, shop officer. "We'll get guys that come in at 2 or 3 a.m. They'll come in and say a buddy told them to come here—to the 98th."

To date, the company has worked on equipment from 103 units outside of the company's

"normal" customer base.

The 98th's efforts are focused on keeping trucks used in convoys on the road, through repairs and safety enhancements, he said. Although some jobs require additional work, the 98th's mechanics have a four- to six-hour window to get trucks back on the road.

"One thing we won't do is put a truck back out on the road that is not mission capable," said Chief Warrant Officer Randy Templeton, the unit's Support Maintenance Technician. "We want

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Personal Finance Planning

Time running out for savings deposits; troops urged to act now before expiration

Saving Deposit Program (SDP)

This is a reminder that eligibility for SDP stops on the day of a unit's departure from a combat zone; however, interest will continue to accrue up to 90 days after redeployment.

Since the IRS considers SDP interest unearned income, the interest is taxable even though the service member is located in a combat zone tax exclusion (CZTE) area.

Withdrawal requests may be e-mailed to CCL-SDP, which is the SDP mailbox, or faxed to (216)522-6924 or DSN 580-6924.

They may also be mailed to the address below. Service members should include their name, Social Security number, electronic funds transfer information and date of departure from the combat zone.

If a hard-copy check is requested, the complete mailing address must also be provided. E-mail: CCL-SDP@dfas.mil

Use the following address to mail your information:

DFAS-Cleveland Center(DFAS-CL)

ATTN: Code PMMCCB

Special Claims

1240 East 9th Street

Cleveland, OH 44199-2055

Direct questions regarding SDP withdrawal requests to:

Toll free (stateside only): 1-800-624-7368

COMM: 216-522-6545

DSN: 580-6545

Fax: 216-522-6924

Helping reservists fill the pay gap

The Reserve Income Replacement Program (RIRP), part of the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act, authorizes the Secretary of Defense to pay income replacement to eligible involuntarily mobilized members of the Reserve component.

It is hoped this program will reduce the financial stress placed on the family when a reserve member is called to active duty causing a reduction in the monthly household earnings.

The program will pay eligible members an amount equal to the difference in pay between their military pay and their civilian employment pay if greater than \$50.00.

Reserve members with private-sector income that exceeds their active-duty income would be eligible for the income replacement payment for:

- 1) Any full month following the date that the member completes 18 continuous months of service on active duty;
- 2) OR 24 months on active duty during the previous 60 months;
- 3) OR for any month during a mobilization that occurs within six months of the member's last active duty tour. Payments would be limited to a minimum of \$50 each month and a maximum of \$3,000 each month. This authority will end in December 2008.



Master Sgt. Robin Krieger
BRIGADE FINANCE NCOIC

The WRANGLER

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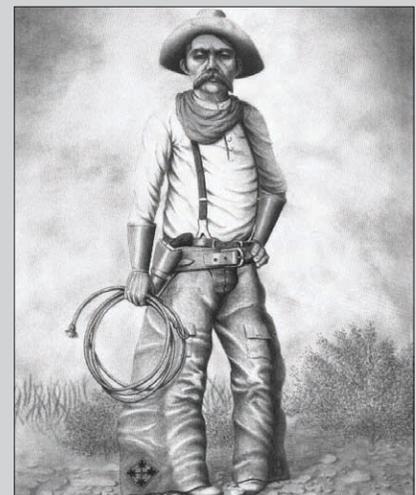
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Is there a doctor in the house?

By Sgt. Joshua Salmons
4TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

Medical personnel from eight forward operating bases gathered at the Taji Community Theater May 26 and 27 for the third annual Taji Medical Symposium.

Hosted by 4th Sustainment Brigade medical professionals, key speakers were brought in from multiple medical levels and specialties to discuss the symposium's theme: Everyday medicine in a combat zone.

"We had more than just physicians here," said Maj. Mark Higdon, brigade surgeon. "We had medics, ambulance drivers, physicians and surgeons who all came together. It was on par with any symposium back in the states."

The material covered focused on issues commonly encountered while deployed—from tactical combat care to eye problems.

"It was good to hear from the specialists," said 1st Lt. Jason Orr, a physician's assistant with the 2nd battalion of the 4th Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. "They provide up-to-date treatments for cases we don't see very often."

"The conference lets us teach how [a unit's medical staff] should begin treatment on a particular problem before they come see us," said Capt. Thomas Scholtens, a staff optometrist at the brigade's Taji optometry clinic. "[The knowledge they get] will make them more self-reliant."

When asked if the knowledge gained from the symposium was helpful, Navy Chief Petty Officer Shane Chung exclaimed, "Lord, yes!" As the leading chief for the Iraqi clinic on Taji, he interfaces with an Iraqi medical staff that is constantly asked to provide greater levels of medical care for greater numbers of troops.

"You won't find a better-equipped clinic on all of Taji [including the U.S. facilities]," he said. "But as we ramp down and they ramp up, they won't be able to do as much as we can without the [outside] medical support we have. I'll be able to pass what I learned from this symposium to my Iraqi counterparts. It will help a large amount."

The two-day symposium was a two-way street of sorts. While the specialists from higher levels of medical facilities were on hand to teach; they were also there to learn.

"Friday, I talked to them; Saturday, they talked to me," said Lt. Col. Kirby Gross, one of the symposium key speakers. Gross is the commander of the 772nd Forward Surgical Team, collocated with the 10th Combat Support Hospital.

"This is a chance to provide feedback to us. It's so we can figure out how we can better serve [units away from the hospitals,]" he said.

"The best thing about this symposium is that the information is timely," said Higdon. "It is stuff that we use every day and will help us figure out how to improve medical care from the patient's point-of-injury all the way to the combat support hospital."



Lt. Col. Kirby Gross speaks to medical professionals attending the third annual Camp Taji medical symposium May 26. Gross is the commander of the 772nd Forward Surgical Team, collocated with the 10th Combat Service Hospital in the Green Zone. The focus of the symposium was improving everyday medicine in a combat zone. **Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons**

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to do anything that helps the war fighters get a better, safer vehicle.”

The high workload is actually welcomed, said Sgt. Zebedee Brockel, senior mechanic for the company’s automotive section. Time engaged on the job leaves little opportunity for bickering or fighting. “The best way to keep the Soldiers focused is to keep them working—not too busy to burn them out, but busy enough to keep them going.”

While the number of jobs is certainly increasing with the May tally double that of April, according to Rawls, it’s the emphasis on quality that also keeps customers coming back.

“We take a lot of pride in what we do,” said Staff Sgt. Harold Bryant, the service and recovery shop foreman. “It’s not how quickly we put it out; it’s the quality of our work that saves lives.” The S&R shop handles one of the newer enhancements to humvees: the bullet-proof “Pope” (or turret) glass.

In addition to the protection of the glass itself, the mountings and welds applied by 98th personnel was crucial in saving the lives of a customer’s humvee crew in April.

A vehicle rolled over and went into a creek, Rawls explained. The mounts were strong enough that they actually supported the weight of the entire vehicle, propping up the truck and allowing the crew to evacuate safely.

“The customer came back and told us the story,” she said. “We were all amazed that the mountings held.”

Those sorts of stories help keep the 98th Soldiers focused on doing the best job possible.

“It makes you feel good that people come here just for our stuff,” Bryant said. “It makes you want to put out a good product.”



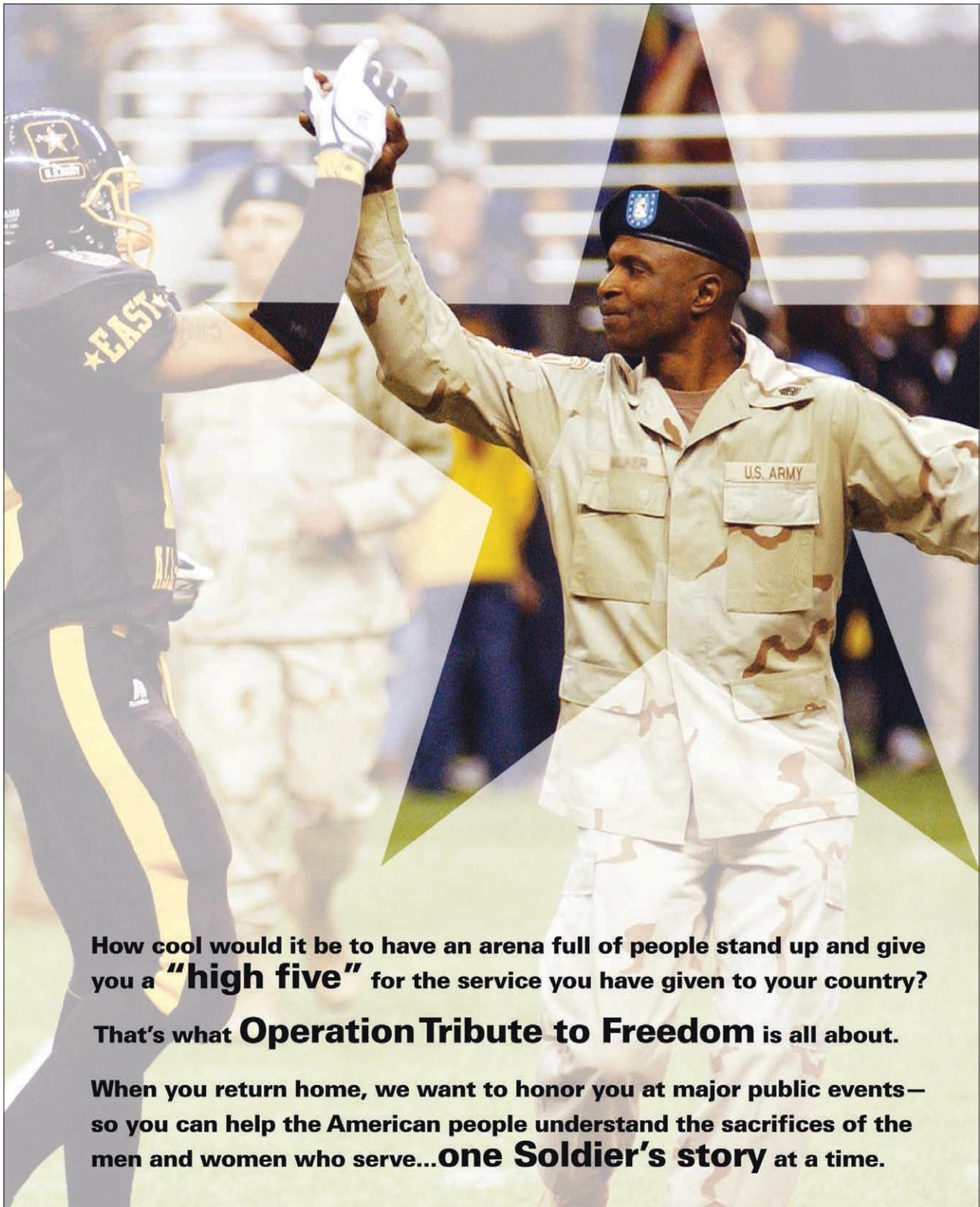
Sgt. Harold Bryant moves panels of ballistic glass to be used on a humvee turret on Seitz Annex June 9. Bryant is the Service and Recovery shop foreman for the 98th Maintenance Company, attached to the 393rd Corps Support Battalion. *Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons*

Freedom Radio Frequencies



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- 107.9 Sinjar
- 105.1 Mosul, Fallujah
- 107.3 Balad, Kirkurk,
Tallil, Ar Ramadi
- 93.3 Q-West, Tikrit,
Al Asad
- 107.1 Ridgeway
- 102.5 Camp Taji

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Spc. Donald Hubel refuels a generator at the Central Receiving and Shipping Point at Victory Base Complex, Iraq, May 15. Hubel is a network switching systems operator-maintainer with Company A, Brigade Troops Battalion, 4th Sustainment Brigade. **Photo by Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux**

Quiet is good: *When signal personnel from Command Posts 52 and 54 enjoy a moment's rest, everything is working; but things can change quickly*

By Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux
207TH MOBILE PUBLIC AFFAIRS DETACHMENT

VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq—In most cases it is good to see troops busy at work, however if Soldiers at Command Post Node (CPN) 52 and 54 of Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Sustainment Brigade, are busy at their respective locations, it means that there are issues with the communication systems.

The two three-man teams are located at the Victory Base Complex's Central Receiving and Shipping Point (CRSP) and at Logistical Base Seitz—physically separated from each other, and their company headquartered at Camp Taji.

As a company, "our mission is to support a brigade headquarters and the battalions within the brigade," said Capt. Edward Ortiz, Company A commander, whose company is located at Taji. "We knew back at Fort Hood that some of the elements from the company will be deployed to different sites. We have four teams

that can support four battalions."

Each team consists of a noncommissioned officer and two Soldiers. They man their helpdesk 24 hours a day. The \$150,000 worth of equipment each team is in charge of is essentially a satellite antenna, a generator and a switchboard.

This command post node is capable of providing approximately 20 lines of Non-secure and 20 lines of Secure Internet Protocol Router Network (NPIR and SPIR), which can be used for either phones or computers, explained Sgt. Santos Torres, a signal support systems specialist who is the NCOIC of CPN 54 at Logistical Base Seitz.

Most days the systems work fine. "I check the generators and the equipment to make sure everything is up," said Spc. Donald Hubel, a network switching systems operator-maintainer with CPN 52 at the CRSP yard. He conducts preventive maintenance checks and services and refuels the generator. The rest of the time,

he mans the desk and does a lot of "on the job training." His Advanced Individual Training has given him the basics of his Military Occupational Specialty, but he feels he can learn a lot more from his NCOIC, Sgt. Francisco Morales, he said.

"It is just like anything; you don't learn just by going to school, you learn out in the streets," Morales said. "They teach you the basics at school, but you pretty much learn [by] doing your job."

Morales is a signal support systems specialist, so not only does he provide on the job training, but he also cross-trains his Soldiers so they know more about his particular MOS.

The company commander is also all for training the troops in as many areas as possible. He rotates Soldiers at these locations, so more can get first-hand experience of running a site independently from the company.

"Our plan is to have a team in place for six

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A Few Legal Pointers

Bankruptcy not just easy out for debt

Filing for bankruptcy is a serious step in resolving financial debts and an absolute last resort. Filing for bankruptcy is not necessarily a “free ride” to dispose of debts and has consequences that can have a lasting effect on your credit. The fact that you filed for bankruptcy can appear on your credit report for 10 years and may affect your ability to obtain credit in the form of credit cards, mortgages, and car loans in the future and during those 10 years following filing. Therefore filing for bankruptcy is an absolute last resort in getting out from under debt.

There are two common types of bankruptcy: Chapters 7 and 13. A Chapter 7 is a straight bankruptcy and often referred to as “liquidation bankruptcy.”

Liquidation refers to the process of taking the debtor’s estate, reducing it to cash, and distributing the proceeds to the creditors. In a Chapter 7, the Bankruptcy Court appoints a trustee and this trustee is responsible for collecting all non-exempt property from the debtor’s estate, reducing it to cash usually by selling it, and paying off creditors in a specified manner. After this process is complete, the Court will discharge all debts resulting in the debtor being “debt-free” and given a clean slate.

Chapter 13 bankruptcy is designed for the debtor who has a regular source of income and the ability to pay all outstanding debts pursuant to a plan filed with the court. This chapter differs from a Chapter 7 in that the debtor is not asking the court to discharge all debts, but rather adopt the debtor’s plan for paying the debts. The most important aspect of a Chapter 13 is that the debtor can keep valuable property – especially one’s home – which might otherwise be lost. You should consider a Chapter 13 if you 1) own your own home and are in danger of losing it because of money problems; 2) are

behind on payments, but can catch up if given time; 3) have regular income; and 4) have filed Chapter 7 in the last 6 years.

Not all of the debtor’s property will be liquidated or sold under these Chapters. Some property is exempt. In most cases, an individual debtor does not lose all of their assets as a result of a bankruptcy, but what property is considered exempt and how much varies from state to state. For example, a debtor can still keep the following property, up to a certain maximum dollar amount: \$3,000 in household goods, \$5,000 equity in the homestead (the value of the property minus the amount owed in mortgages), \$2,500 equity in a motor vehicle, \$1,000 general exemption for any property, retirement accounts such as IRAs, pen-

sions, and life insurance. In addition the right to receive certain benefits such as social security, unemployment compensation, veteran’s benefits and most other public assistance regardless of the amount, is protected. The exemption amounts are doubled when a married couple files together.

There are eligibility requirements to file for bankruptcy. You must reside or maintain domicile in the United States to file under a Chapter 7. Under a Chapter 13, you must 1) have a regular income, 2) have unsecured debts totaling less than \$250,000, and 3) have secured debts totaling less than \$750,000. The amount of debts is determined at the time of the filing of the petition for bankruptcy.

When does a debtor become discharged of their debts? In a Chapter 7 case, the debts are discharged two to three months after the case is closed. In a Chapter 13, a discharge does not occur until the all payments under the plan proposed by the debtor have been satisfied. Once a debt is discharged, creditors are barred from attempting to collect or recover any money on a

debt that was included in the petition.

Certain debts are not dischargeable. These include money owed for child support, alimony, fines, and some taxes. In addition, debts not listed on the bankruptcy petition are not discharged and neither are loans acquired by knowingly giving false information to a creditor who relied upon the information to grant the loan or credit. Student loans will not be discharged unless the loan first became due more than 7 years before the bankruptcy was filed, or payment would be an undue hardship.

In general, an individual may file for bankruptcy once every six years. However, it may be possible to file under Chapter 7 in one year, and file for a Chapter 13 in less than six years. An individual that repeatedly files for bankruptcy may be construed as having a preconceived plan to defraud creditors, which can be criminally prosecuted.

Filing for bankruptcy will require a court appearance at what is called a “meeting of creditors.” This is conducted between 20-50 days after the order of relief is issued by the Bankruptcy Court. The purpose of this meeting is to allow creditors and the trustee an opportunity to examine the debtor under oath about issues related to the bankruptcy petition. A debtor may represent themselves in court, but is strongly discouraged. Bankruptcy law is particularly complicated and therefore anyone interested in filing should consult an attorney that specializes in bankruptcy law.

As mentioned above, filing for bankruptcy is considered a last resort and has long-term effects.

You should consider alternatives such as seeking financial counseling or emergency loans. Army Community Service (ACS) provides both financial management classes and can assist you in obtaining an emergency loan from AER if necessary. You should consult your servicing Legal Office for further information on bankruptcy.



Capt. Eric Lee
JUDGE ADVOCATE



(Top) Spc. Ebony Hogan of the 4th Sustainment Brigade joins the 5th Corps, Multi-National Corps Iraq Rhythm and Blues Funk Band during Wrangler Day celebrations at Dining Facility 2 on Camp Taji Saturday. (Above) Spc. Kollister Williams, Sgt. Benjamin Foss and Spc. Joseph Van Dine lend a brass blast during a song. (Right) Staff Sgt. Teal Warren sings while playing a bass guitar during a performance.
Photos by Sgt. Joshua Salmons

Happy Wrangler Day!

HOOAH!
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189th clears \$5 million mark in bonuses

Special to The Wrangler
189TH CORPS SUPPORT BATTALION

Recently the 189th Corps Support Battalion, an active-component headquarters from Fort Bragg, N.C., achieved a phenomenal strength management goal by reenlisting 274 Soldiers and collectively paying out more than \$5 million in retention bonuses.

The figures represent one of the highest rates within the 4th Sustainment Brigade and 3rd Corps Support Command.

The Superchargers are based at Camp Taji, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom IV. The 189th CSB consists of 10 subordinate units and three tenet units that are truly part of the team. The Supercharger formation represents the "Total Force" structure that includes eight active duty, three National Guard and two Reserve units. Although the formation consisted of various retention regulations based upon components, the one common denominator was the Soldier taking the oath to reenlist. The average reenlistment contract was five years with a bonus average of \$18,200.

Staff Sgt. Raymond Smith, 189th career counselor, ensured all Soldiers received updated reenlistment information and all paperwork was expediently processed.

The successful retention rate is attributed to the teamwork mentality and seamless interoperability of the organization.

The formation prides itself on uniformity, professionalism and mission accomplishment. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Lenny Kness and Command Sgt. Maj. Nixon were able to effectively channel the organization into a "Total Force" mentality coupled with closely coordinated integration and a positive relationship between units.

The synergy of the organization spread throughout the formation and centered around Soldier care.

Leaders at every level, both officers and NCOs, were energized to retain Soldiers. The battalion successfully integrated commanders, first sergeants, NCOs and most importantly, the enlisted Soldiers.

Kness specifically relates the success of the battalion's retention rate to the Soldier's proud sense of duty and their pride in the organization.

The lucrative retention bonuses and multitude of benefits by reenlisting in the United States Army cannot be overshadowed by the experience of serving with the Superchargers in Iraq. One of the many reasons Soldiers decided to remain in uniform was the high esprit de corps and morale of the formation.

The experience and knowledge the Soldiers obtained by being a part of the 189th CSB will serve the Army and nation in future deployments, training centers and communities. Nixon in closing had these final comments, "Superchargers excel in everything we do: Combat Logistic Patrols, equipment readiness, professionalism, training, Soldier care and most importantly Soldier retention, Superchargers for life!"

393rd eases supply woes to Aussie allies

By Capt. Joseph Lee
393RD CORPS SUPPORT BATTALION

SEITZ ANNEX, Iraq—Members of Australian Coalition Forces recognized the 393rd Corps Support Battalion (CSB) with a plaque May 19 for their concern and providing the unit with basic needs.

Australian Security Detachment 9's primary mission is to provide protection support to the Australian Embassy in Baghdad. Due to operational necessity and isolation, they operate their own dining facility.

The Australian unit receives unit group rations (UGR) once a week, to provide them staple foods such as meats, pastas, frozen vegetables, breads and drinks. However they took the initiative to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables from the local markets to supplement the

military rations.

When Lt. Col. Jaime Lugo, commander 393rd CSB, heard this information and, understanding the health and security risk, opened a direct communication between the Australian headquarters located on Camp Victory and the Support Operations of the 393rd.

Australian Sgt. Andrew Silk, logistics NCOIC for Australian Joint Task Force 633, worked directly with the 393rd's supplies and services section to remedy the issue.

Once the request for additional supplies, including fresh fruits and vegetables was complete, the staff of the 393rd Support Operations joined the combat logistic patrol with their Australian counterparts to the International Zone to ensure the quality of the delivery.

Upon arrival in the International Zone,

Maj. Louis Feliciano, 393rd SPO, and Sgt. 1st Class Francisco Perez, the supplies and services NCOIC, spoke directly with the Australian forces to validate the supplies provided were adequate to the needs of the coalition force.

"We're stunned on the level of support and effort the 393rd has taken, even though we are a small element in comparison to the other 393rd customers," said Silk.

The liaison network has not only provided the adequate levels of survival for the Australian Forces, but it also has strengthened the friendship between the Australian and the United States forces.

"They are standing right next to us in the fight against terror, and the rebuilding of Iraq," said Perez. "They deserve the same concerned effort that we provide to all our customers."

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months, and then rotate some of the Soldiers," Ortiz said. "That way they can get the experience...and they learn about the equipment. Our goal is for everybody in the company to learn different jobs and, that way, they will be better Soldiers."

Being away from the company may not always be easy, but the teams receive ample support from the units they are supporting. "We haven't had any problems since we came out here," said Torres. "The 18th Corps Support Battalion has been doing a great job helping us out with anything we need."

CPN 52 at the CRSP yard site had similar experiences. Because the Soldier on duty cannot leave his desk in case the system goes down, the

CRSP yard personnel brings that Soldier food from the dining facility every day.

The cooperation between the teams and the units they support is mutual. The CPN 54 that Torres is in charge of is co-located with the S6 section of the 18th CSB. They help each other out with anything they can. When Torres and his team arrived at Logistical Base Seitz, one of the first things they did was assist S6 in rewiring the communications lines and running them inside the buildings.

The teams know that although they sometimes fight their fight from a desk, troubleshooting equipment or refueling generators, their part in the mission is still vital.

"Without communications you really cannot do anything," said Torres.

Fire proves no match for Soldiers' teamwork

Quick thinking, reactions keep blaze from damaging FOB buildings, assets

By 2nd Lt. Timothy Culpepper
18TH CORPS SUPPORT BATTALION

LOGISTICAL BASE SEITZ, Iraq—On May 30 at 12:30 p.m. six individuals from three different units came together to extinguish a fire.

The fire originated from a leaky fuel tank on a pressure washer on the back of a Kellogg Brown & Root pick-up truck. The actions of these six individuals are a testament to all Soldiers' ability to work together, react and overcome adversity.

The KBR vehicle that caught fire was parked next to the Chapel on Logistical Base Seitz. The driver and passenger were two contractors who had stopped at Bunker Hill Cafe to each lunch.

The Victory Base Firefighters, who inspected the remnants, believe the gas from the tank on the pressure washer ignited due to the heat and vapors emitted from a leaking fuel line. They believe that the leaking fuel vapors reached its flash point. The flash point of a flammable liquid is the lowest temperature at which it can form an ignitable mixture with air.

The first individual to notice the vehicle was on fire was Spc. Jonathan Ortiz. He and Sgt. Jason Fermanis of the 590th Field Service Company (FSC) were both riding from the motor pool to the dining facility to retrieve lunch. As the two pulled up, Ortiz noticed flames in the bed of a white Ford F-250 pick-up truck.

According to Ortiz, he looked at Fermanis

who had not yet seen the fire. He asked, "That's not supposed to be on fire is it?"

Immediately after stopping, Fermanis ran to the Chapel to retrieve fire extinguishers. Ortiz dismounted in the opposite direction to retrieve extinguishers and to notify Provost Marshall (PM) personnel located at the rear loading dock of the dining facility.

Sgt. Joseph Kurschinske of the 1011th Quartermaster Company, was the PM located at the rear of the dining facility.

He stated, "Specialist Ortiz came around the corner and asked me for a fire extinguisher." Without hesitation Kurschinske assisted and in the process called up on the radio that a fire was in progress.

Simultaneously, Spc. Matthew Williams, also on Provost Marshall duty, exited the dining

facility. Williams stated, "I saw sergeant Kurschinske sprinting so I took off after him. As soon as I reached the corner I saw the fire."

Staff Sgt. Chesley Baird and Cpl. Marcello Jimenez, from Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 18th Corps Support Battalion

(CSB), were both making rounds near the area when the announcement came over the radio. Immediately they took off and arrived in time to assist in putting out the blaze.

By all accounts no one is exactly sure how long it took to extinguish the fire. Times for the incident range from fifteen to thirty minutes. What started as a small fire grew larger, fueled by oil drums and petroleum products located in the back of the truck. The fire eventually grew to extreme proportions.

These six Soldiers continued to fight the fire by running to various buildings and retrieving fire extinguishers to expel the blaze. In all, the event required more than seventeen extinguishers to quell the fire.

For their efforts each member was put in for the Army Achievement Medal. Not only

The actions of these six individuals are a testament to all Soldiers' ability to work together, react and overcome adversity

2nd Lt. Timothy Culpepper
EXECUTIVE OFFICER, BATTERY C, 2-55 FIELD ARTILLERY

did these individuals put out the fire, but they exemplified Soldiers' ability to work together during adverse situations. Regardless of what unit they were from or what occupation they possessed, their actions epitomized teamwork and dedication.