



The Expeditionary Times

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Vol. 4 Issue 11

July 28, 2010

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Infantrymen bond under fire

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Samir Haddad (from left), representative for the prime minister of Iraq, and Lt. Col. Lisa Schieferstein, commander of the 389th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Yonkers, N.Y., native, sign documents July 15 officially transferring control of Convoy Support Center Scania, Iraq, to the Government of Iraq during a ceremony here.

Base transfer marks progress

STORY AND PHOTO BY
PFC. EMILY WALTER
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONVOY SUPPORT CENTER SCANIA, Iraq—The 389th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) transferred control of Convoy Support Center Scania to the Government of Iraq July 15 during a ceremony here.

Lt. Col. Lisa Schieferstein, commander of the 389th CSSB and a Yonkers, N.Y., native, and Samir Haddad, representative for the Iraqi prime minister, signed the documents that officially gave the GoI control of CSC Scania.

“The transfer from U.S. to Iraqi control is in support of the reduction of forces,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Eric Cooke, command sergeant major of the 389th CSSB and a Colchester, Conn., native. “It’s one step in that process.”

Base returns are just one part

of the larger United States Forces–Iraq effort of empowering the Iraqi people, and represent important steps in establishing a stable, sovereign and self-reliant Iraq. U.S. Forces have closed or turned over 377 bases to the GoI since January 2008. According to the current drawdown timeline, U.S. Forces will complete their mission in Iraq by Dec. 31, 2011.

CSC Scania, which was originally an Iraqi truck stop that fell under U.S. authority in 2003, was the first major refueling point for U.S. convoys in Iraq. It also served as a rest stop for Soldiers passing through, with a dining facility, Morale, Welfare and Recreation center and lodging.

Schieferstein said shutting down such a highly utilized support center—a task Soldiers in the unit did not expect—has been overwhelming.

The process of returning or closing a base contains 87 steps and can take from 95 to 365 days to complete, depending upon the size of the base. The process includes a review of any environmental

impacts of U.S. Forces, mitigation of these impacts as required, and inspections by GoI and USF-I officials. All bases are returned to the GoI through the receivership secretariat.

One challenge in transferring CSC Scania was maintaining the standards set by USF-I that dictate the condition bases must be left in prior to transfer. Before any base is transferred, the GoI and USF-I jointly conduct a thorough inventory of all facilities, areas, equipment and property to be handed over to the GoI, said Maj. Charles Valdes, executive officer with the 389th CSSB and an Islip, N.Y., native.

“We tried to give them everything we could so it could be a seamless transfer,” he said. “This included adequate power, generators and furniture that were left for the GoI.”

The 389th CSSB faced a big challenge with moving supplies out of CSC Scania and devising a fuel and water plan to support what was left, but the 224th Sust. Bde and 103rd ESC commands offered a lot of support, Schieferstein said.

Cooke said another challenge

was maintaining Soldiers’ morale throughout the shutdown process.

As the transfer date drew nearer, the Soldiers at CSC Scania began to see their resources diminish, including their living quarters, the DFAC and MWR. They switched from staying in small, air-conditioned trailers to sleeping in tents with several other Soldiers. Instead of hot meals, the Soldiers ate Meals, Ready-to-Eat during their entire last month at the base. Their communication media were removed during the final weeks, preventing them from calling home and using the Internet.

“Managing Soldiers’ expectations was one of the biggest challenges,” Cooke said. “Everybody Soldiered-up and made it happen.”

To keep the Soldiers’ morale and welfare high, they were reminded that every step was one step closer to going home, Schieferstein said.

“As resources were going away, (the Soldiers) understood we were that much closer to getting on a plane and going home,” she said.

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“The biggest part of our job is making sure the vehicles stay on the road.”

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Where do you read your

Expeditionary Times?

For distribution, contact the 13th ESC PAO at Joint Base Balad, Iraq

Joint Base Balad :
318-483-4603

COB Adder:
318-833-1002

COB Taji:
318-834-1281

Al Asad Air Base:
318-440-4103

COB Speicher:
318-849-2501

e-mail: escpao@iraq.centcom.mil

Every ending starts with a new beginning

CAPT. WANDA ACEVEDO
103RD ESC CHAPLAIN



A man and woman who had recently divorced or separated, a couple of newlyweds, a widow, a retired man, a woman who recently gave birth, a man who had a heart attack, a man that received a promotion, a Soldier going home and another coming into theater—what does this group of people have in common? They are living through endings and beginnings. All of them are experiencing a transition.

Transitions are a natural process in life. If we observe nature we will find ourselves surrounded by constant transformations. Seasons for example take us from fall to winter and back to spring and summer. Days are not always full of sunshine and blue skies but also rainy days. Since life is a series of frequent changes, we all have to somehow develop ways of dealing with it in a productive way.

Some changes are welcomed. Others range from inconvenient to catastrophic. Therefore, the first thing we have to do is to accept the fact that we cannot control changes but even though most of the time we don't have control over the external circumstances that create a change, there are ways to manage the internal and psychological transition that occurs inside us.

William Bridges, in his book, "Transitions," describes transitions as a three-step process. The first one is endings. Every transition begins with an ending. We have to let go of the old before we can pick up the new. Why is letting go so difficult? Because it is frightening to discover, even though we may be looking forward to that change, that some part of us is still holding on to what we used to be. Bridges says, "many times we take endings too seriously and confuse them with finality or never more." It will be better if we take that negative concept out of this phase.

The second phase is called the neutral zone. At this stage

we often aren't connected yet to the new, neither are we disconnected yet from the past. Therefore we may feel lost, empty or numb. The world around us appears to be in hibernation and it is a time for quiet and waiting. For many this is the hardest since an urge may be felt to do something, and there may be a belief that waiting is not part of that. People don't want to wait; they want to move fast in the transition. However waiting is a very important phase since it is not until we allow ourselves to experience our new feelings that we are ready to move to the new beginning.

And that is exactly the last phase, new beginnings. Just as the transformation of the butterfly takes it to a new and better form, transitions can take us to a better state of things. Although we have change, new beginnings do not mean you will give up the old completely; we only incorporate the resources of our past for the journey into the future. By doing so, the new beginning completes the successful transition and we can embark on a journey of new priorities and sense of a renewed future.

The eagle has the longest life-span among birds its size; it can live up to 70 years. But to reach this age the eagle must make a decision. In its 40th year, its long and flexible talons can no longer grab prey which serves as food and its long and sharp beak becomes bent. Its old age and heavy wings, due to their thick feathers, stick to its chest and make it difficult to fly. Then the eagle is left with only two options: DIE or go through a painful process of CHANGE which lasts 150 days. The process requires that the eagle fly to a mountain top and sit on its nest. There the eagle knocks its beak against a rock until the beak drops away. It will wait for a new beak to grow back and then it will pluck out its talons. When its new talons grow back, the eagle starts plucking its old age feathers. After 5 months the eagle takes its famous flight of rebirth and lives for 30 more years.

Whenever you go through a transition, see it as as rebirth. When something ends, something else begins and, who knows? That new stage may be the key to living a longer life.



LEARN THE DRAWDOWN

The 840th Transportation Battalion is hosting Integrated Booking System/Container Management Module Training every at 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. every Sunday at the battalion headquarters, 7119 Eagle Dr. (near bus stop #62) at Joint base Balad.

You will need to make reservations for the class by calling 318-483-4241.

EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

103rd ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Mark W. Corson

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Expeditionary Times is a command information newspaper in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1 and reviewed by the ESC G2 for security purposes.

Expeditionary Times is published weekly by the Stars and Stripes central office, with a circulation of 3,500 papers. The Public Affairs Office is located on New Jersey Avenue, Building 7508, DSN 318-433-2154. Expeditionary Times, HHC 103rd ESC, APO AE 09391. Web site at www.dvidshub.net.

Contact the Expeditionary Times staff at:
escpao@iraq.centcom.mil

103rd ESC G2, Security Manager
(318) 433-2155

103rd ESC PAO, Managing Editor
Maj. Angela R. Wallace
angela.wallace@iraq.centcom.mil

103rd ESC PA NCOIC
Sgt. 1st Class Raymond P. Calef
raymond.calef@iraq.centcom.mil

103rd ESC Layout and Design
Pfc. Emily A. Walter
emily.walter@iraq.centcom.mil

Cpl. Rich Barkemeyer
richmond.barkemeyer@iraq.centcom.mil

196th MPAD Commander
Capt. Marshall Jackson
marshall.jackson@iraq.centcom.mil

196th MPAD First Sergeant
1st Sgt. Steve Toth
richard.toth@iraq.centcom.mil

196th MPAD Production Editor
Sgt. 1st Class Steven Johnson
steven.r.johnson1@iraq.centcom.mil

196th MPAD Copy Editor
Staff Sgt. Randall Carey
randall.carey@iraq.centcom.mil

196th MPAD Staff Writers
Sgt. Eunice Alicea Valentin
eunice.alicea@iraq.centcom.mil

Sgt. Michael Carden
michael.carden@iraq.centcom.mil

Sgt. Kimberly Johnson
kimberly.a.johnson@iraq.centcom.mil

Sgt. Chad Menegay
chad.menegay@iraq.centcom.mil

Sgt. David A. Scott
david.a.scott@iraq.centcom.mil

Contributing public affairs offices

3rd Sustainment Brigade
224th Sustainment Brigade
256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team
278th Armored Cavalry Regiment
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

For online publication visit:
www.dvidshub.net
keyword: Expeditionary Times

Mission Statement: The Expeditionary Times Staff publishes a weekly newspaper with the primary mission of providing command information to all service members, partners, and Families of the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) team and a secondary mission of providing a means for units on Joint Base Balad to disseminate command information to their audiences.

The Weekly Standard: Every Soldier's right

MASTER SGT. ARNETT COOPER
103RD ESC INSPECTOR GENERAL



One thing that will never change in the U.S. Army is the fact that all Soldiers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Treating Soldiers with the proper respect they deserve directly influences how well they perform their duties.

Army Regulation 600-20, Army Command Policy, directs that all Soldiers will be treated with dignity and respect. Improved unit readiness, better morale, greater commitment to unit and mission, increased trust and unit cohesion, and treating others as they should be treated are essential in our Army. "Treat others better than you want to be treated."

Unfortunately, the inspector general office frequently receives complaints from Soldiers who report being mistreated or disrespected by their leadership. In many instances, these Soldiers had committed some type of offense and were about to be, or were already, punished for that offense. Regardless of their culpability for their misdeed or of the disciplinary actions planned, these Soldiers are still entitled to be treated with dignity and respect.

Consider a Soldier who tests positive on a urinalysis, receives a field-grade Article 15, and is waiting to be separated from service. During this pre-separation period, it is

inappropriate, and a violation of AR 600-20, for anyone to intentionally degrade, humiliate or disgrace this Soldier by calling him a "dirtbag," "druee," or any other derogatory word. He is still a Soldier and, until officially separated, must be addressed accordingly within Army customs and traditions by his or her rank and last name.

Also, having Soldiers do anything with the intent to publicly humiliate them, such as acknowledging their illegal drug use in front of a unit formation, is improper and in violation of AR 600-20.

The IG office also receives complaints from Soldiers who have not committed an offense, but nevertheless believe their supervisors consider them to be "bad" Soldiers. They feel singled out for menial unit details, or possibly receive negative counseling statements for no apparent reason. Often, these Soldiers complain of verbal abuse by their leadership. They are constantly harassed by unit members or leadership, and at times they may be subjected to verbal threats of physical violence.

Yelling, slander and using degrading comments, profanity, and verbal threats may in fact be a violation of regulation. Not to mention, they are not effective methods with which to correct a Soldier's behavior or improve duty performance. Profanity and other types of offensive language often may be considered indecent, prejudicial to good order and discipline, discrediting to the Army, and, therefore, punishable under

Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Abusive behavior or improper punishment may be serious enough to be considered cruelty and maltreatment. These actions could be in violation of Article 93 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, resulting in adverse action being taken.

Remember, dignity and respect for everyone.

Inspector General Contacts

Joint Base Balad (103rd ESC): DSN 433-2125

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Schneider (Command IG)
Maj. Erik Verhoef (Deputy)
Master Sgt. Arnett Cooper (NCOIC)
Maj. Chris Minor
Sgt. 1st Class Alexander Arce
Sgt. 1st Class Sam Johnson

Adder/Tallil (224 SB): DSN 833-1710

Lt. Col. Andrea Shealy

Speicher (103rd ESC): VOIP 845-6972

Sgt. Maj. Richard Faust

1908th CSC says goodbye, gives best wishes

CAPT. WILLIAM G. THOMPSON
1908TH MEDICAL DETACHMENT



The time has come to say goodbye to Joint Base Balad for the 1908th Medical Detachment. We have been honored to serve the troops here. To the troops who trusted us with their stories, we

say thank you for your trust. To the units who allowed us to enter your areas to teach classes or do unit behavioral health needs assessment or even a sensing session, we say thank you for allowing us to help. To the chaplains who allowed us to help with suicide prevention, thanks for allowing us to be a part.

We at the 1908th Med. Det. realize that coming to the Combat Stress Center is not always easy and can take a lot of courage to even enter the doors. The 1908th Med. Det. wants to recognize that courage and also to encourage the

Soldiers to continue to display it by taking advantage of the 85th Med. Det. as they replace us.

With that being said, I need to make you aware the CSC will no longer be at the Patriot clinic, where the 1908th had operated. Rather, the 85th Med. Det. is setting up shop at the Troop Medical Center near Taco Bell, just off of Pennsylvania Avenue. The 1908th Med. Det. would like to wish the 85th Med. Det. all the best as they take over the mission.

Though we are not leaving theater, the 1908th CSC will miss JBB and not just the pool (smile). Several of our team members have become devoted runners of almost all the running events. They have enjoyed the self-improvements that have taken place because of those runs. A few of the team members have enjoyed the aerobics classes and the movie theater. It is the small things that have made the difference in being located at JBB.

We are hopeful about the mission moving forward, both for the 1908th Med. Det. and the units here at JBB. We still

want to encourage Soldiers to seek help as they need it. The stronger man is the one who is willing to admit that he needs help rather than hiding behind his anger. We at the 1908th Med. Det. have been impressed with the noncommissioned officers on the base and their concerns for their Soldiers in getting them the help they needed as they needed it.

We also would like to commend the leaders (officers and NCOs) who have been mentors (even without knowing it) by role modeling a positive example by getting help as they also needed it. When a leader does this, he helps to dismiss the negative cognitions and beliefs about coming to mental health for help.

We of the 1908th Med. Det. hope the articles we have shared have been of help to you all at JBB, and that somewhere along the way you were able to pick up tidbits of information that were helpful and informative. So until we meet again, members of JBB, may the wind be at your backs, the sun in your face and your life something to celebrate!

278th ACR transfers authority to 156th Infantry Regiment

STORY BY
STAFF SGT. THOMAS GREENE
278TH ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Taji, Iraq

The two units of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment that remained deployed in Iraq officially ended their mission at Camp Taji July 21 during a transfer of authority ceremony here.

The colors of the 278th ACR, which has been operating under the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), were cased as well as the state flag of Tennessee after flying over the COB Taji garrison command center since February.

The mayor's cell had been operated by the Regimental Support Squadron with the 278th ACR.

During the ceremony, the state flag of Louisiana was raised over the mayor's cell

and the flag of 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment was unfurled and raised as the Iveyville, La., unit assumed command of the garrison and its base defense operations.

"I thank our troops for making the right decision every time and showing courtesy to every one every day that we were here," said Col. Frank McCauley II, outgoing garrison commander and deputy commander of the 278th ACR and a Kingsport, Tenn., native.

"It is time for us (278th ACR) to return home to our Families knowing we accomplished the mission set for us," he said.

Said Lt. Col. Eric Rivers, the incoming garrison commander with 2nd Bn., 156th Inf. Regt. and a Broussard, La., native: "The 2/156th looked forward to working with the 1st Armored Division here and with all U.S. Forces in Iraq."

Representatives from the General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Infantry Division; Iraqi Army Advisor Team (U.S. Air Force); and Brig. Gen. As Hel, commanding general of the Iraqi Army at COB Taji, were in atten-

dance.

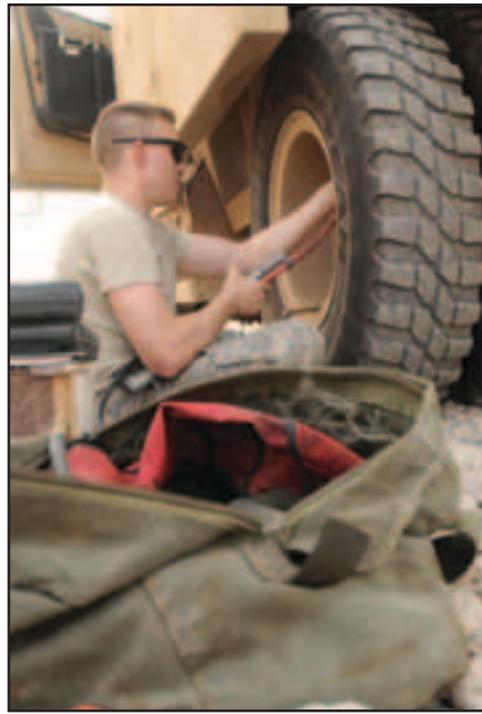
The ceremony ended with the Louisiana troops singing "The Army Song" and the

Tennessee Soldiers cheering the playing of "Rocky Top"—the adopted song of the 278th ACR.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Shannon Gregory

Col. Frank McCauley II (left), garrison commander of Contingency Operating Base Taji, Iraq, and deputy commander of the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Command Sgt. Maj. Greg Peck, command sergeant major of Regimental Support Squadron, 278th ACR, retire the Tennessee state flag July 21, which has flown over the mayor's cell at COB Taji since March.



ABOVE: Soldiers with C Company, 3rd battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) conduct a convoy briefing July 14 in preparation for a convoy out of Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

FAR LEFT: Sgt. Ryan Carlson, a gunner with C Company, 3rd battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Lakewood, Wash., native, adjusts the weapon sight atop his Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle July 14 in preparation for a convoy out of Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

LEFT: Spc. Anthony Bellard, a gunner with C Company, 3rd battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Eunice, La., native, adjusts tire pressure on his Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle July 14 in preparation for a convoy out of Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Infantry company reacts, bonds under fire

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. CHAD MENEGAY
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— Service members continue to risk their lives serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, while United States Forces-Iraq reduces its personnel and consolidates its bases to pave the road for Operation New Dawn. Insurgents continue to attack, but fail a good percentage of the time. Some might attribute this to the superb training and preparation of U.S. forces.

Convoy security teams, like Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) can give witness to those assertions.

Pfc. McKenzie Spriggins, a gunner with C Co., and a Villeplatte, La., native, credits his crew members for extracting him from one such attack the night of July 10 on Main Supply Route Tampa-North.

He said his life flashed before his eyes, as he watched what he believed to be an improvised rocket take to the air directly at his face from around five meters from the right side of the road. It came so close that it knocked the heat shield off his .50-caliber Browning machine gun and rendered him unconscious. His legs collapsed, and the medic, Spc. John Murphy, a Lake Charles, La., native, came to his aid inside their Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle, removing his vest to check for wounds.

Murphy said Spriggins, stunned from the force, suffered a slight concussion and later recovered.

Staff Sgt. Nicholas Deshotels, the convoy commander and a squad leader with C Co., described the attack as a flash that came out of his peripherals to his right.

Deshotels, a Mamou, La., native, said his Soldiers followed the unit's standard operating procedures perfectly after the projectile missed his MRAP, and Spriggins, and sailed into the distance.

"Guys were moving before I had to tell them to move, because they knew where they needed to be," he said. "My crew stayed calm."

Deshotels said going over battle drills during every briefing before every mission builds muscle memory and allows his Soldiers to better react.

Soldiers with C Co. said the failed attack enhanced their camaraderie and respect for one another.

"I respect this truck," Spriggins said July 14 on his first convoy security mission following the July 10 attack. "I'm about to get over my fears. I'm Spriggins, 'the improvised explosive device fighter.'"

Spriggins jokingly sang the chorus to R. Kelly's "U Saved Me" to Murphy in gratitude for the medical treatment Murphy performed the night of the attack.

Spriggins and Murphy said they have reevaluated their lives after the experience and see the members of their company as brothers.

The incident has strengthened their resolve to always be prepared, they said.

"Thank God it was set off too early and didn't cause any casualties," said Sgt. John Jennings, the assistant convoy commander and a team leader with C Co., and a Church Point, La., native. "It absolutely came too close for comfort, but the reaction time of our truck commanders

and gun trucks was outstanding. Everybody went into their positions right away to make sure the commodities were safe, which is our job."

The 156th protects and escorts contracted commodities, moving items including fuel, food, water, supplies and vehicles across Iraq from one base to another.

"There's no telling what will be carried from one day to the next," Deshotels said.

It's probably not the most glamorous job for our infantry unit, he said.

"It's not what we normally do, but it's definitely important," Deshotels said. "Right now in Iraq, convoy security is the prime mission. You have forward operating bases closing down. You have to get supplies from point A to point B. It's essential."

The company has overcome some unexpected obstacles, unlike those experienced during their last deployment, in '04-'05, Jennings said.

This includes such things as changes to the Security Agreement, requiring U.S. forces to share the road with Iraqi traffic, more checkpoints and reducing speeds to prevent MRAP roll-overs, he said.

Despite some challenges, the unit remains vigilant, Jennings said.

"Preparation is getting second nature to us now, because we run missions (often)," Jennings said, "But convoy security is still something to get used to. Every time you go outside the wire, you'll have the nervous feeling. 'What's going to happen?' 'Will something happen?' You know it can happen."

It does happen, and it did happen July 10, but it seems all the insurgents' failed attack accomplished was to better prepare Soldiers of the C Co., 156th Inf. Regt.

RIGHT: A forklift operator drops crates of ammo into a burn pit July 2 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq. As part of the responsible drawdown of forces and equipment from Iraq, retrograded ammunition is processed through ammunition supply points, like the one operated by the 60th Ordnance Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.



BELOW: Spc. Magaly Meza, a Las Vegas native, and Spc. Shawn Ward, a Cleburne, Texas, native, both ammunition supply specialists with the 60th Ordnance Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) inspect retrograded ammunition July 2 at the ammunition supply point at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, before it is prepared for shipment to Afghanistan.



ABOVE: Spc. Brandon Buchwitz, an ammunition supply specialist with the 60th Ordnance Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Martinsburg, W.Va., native, pulls a cargo netting strap tight around a pallet of ammunition July 2 in preparation for transport from Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, to Afghanistan.

With the drawdown, what about the ammo?

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. KIMBERLY JOHNSON
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq— As the responsible drawdown of forces and equipment in Iraq continues, the ammunition supply point at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, moves ammunition out of theater to support the war in Afghanistan.

Currently, the 60th Ordnance Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) supports more than 130 units in southern Iraq, said Warrant Officer Dorian Williams, the accountable officer with the 60th Ord. Co. and a Chicago native.

“Every unit that comes in theater has a requirement for ammunition they are authorized to have, from the smallest ammunitions like a 9mm (pistol) up to 120mm tank rounds,” Williams said.

With the drawdown under way, units are leaving theater and camps are closing. Something has to be done with all the remaining ammunition.

“Right now, the ASP here supports the War Fighter in Afghanistan,” Williams said. “Any ammunition they need to resupply, we supply them. What is happening with (the ASP) and the drawdown is they are decreasing the amount of stock we hold here in our ASP. By pushing ammo to Kuwait and Afghanistan, it frees up space in our ASP to accept ammunition coming in from closing (camps).”

As the ammunition comes in from the closing camps, the Soldiers at the ASP process the ammo and either retrograde it back to the United States or repackage it for Operation Enduring Freedom. The Soldiers work hand-in-hand with civilian counterparts to ensure only quality and serviceable ammunition is put in the hands of the fighters on the front lines.

“If a .50-caliber (M2 machine gun) round has rust around the actual bullet, for example, that ammo is deemed unserviceable,” said 1st Lt. Paul Bobich, a platoon leader with the 60th Ord. Co. and a Hibbing, Minn., native. “Each set of rounds has a lot number. That is the identification code on a specific series of rounds. If we get a bad lot, made with malpractice,

we have quality assurance inspectors, civilians, who ensure any bad ammo is identified and taken out of the fight.”

If ammunition is considered unusable, the ASP works closely with Explosive Ordnance Disposal to destroy the unfit ammo.

“With the missiles the helicopters use, if the quality control team decides it is cost-efficient to fix it, it is sent to Kuwait for repair.” Williams said.

“There is a lot of money involved in processing ammo. If it can be reused, we cannot just destroy it. It has to be tracked and accounted for,” Bobich said.

During their seven months here, the 60th Ord. Co. has overcome the challenges involved in the many moving pieces of the ASP. Soldiers have adapted to the heat, both for the safety of the Soldiers and the ammo.

Bobich said the ammo is contained and separated for safety by net explosive weight and compatibility.

“Safety measures are in place such as sandbags, (Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium) barriers and water barrels around the containers that house the ammo,” he said. “If an explosion were to occur, it would be contained to just that area and it is not a danger to us (at the ASP) or anyone else on COB Adder.”

Now, with the ammunition supply shipments to Afghanistan, they overcome the challenges of learning and meeting Air Force standards of shipment.

“Coordinating across joint military efforts with the shipments to Afghanistan have been challenging,” Bobich said. “There are a lot of logistics involved with coordinating the transport of (ammunition) from this theater to another and making sure everything is to the Air Force standard for air movements. We have to make sure we are all on the same page and working together in a timely manner to accomplish the mission.”

The bottom line is the fighters need ammunition, he said.

“You can live weeks without food, days without water, but you cannot survive one second in combat without ammo,” Bobich said. “I believe that (adage), especially with what is going on in Afghanistan, supporting the offensives there. The troops on the ground, on the front lines there, need that ammo. We play a vital role in ensuring that as well as retrograding all the ammo out (of theater) and back to the states.”

278th, contractors work together, clean Taji

STORY AND PHOTO BY
STAFF SGT. THOMAS GREENE
278TH ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE

TAJI, Iraq— Soldiers with the 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) are gearing up to leave Contingency Operating Base Taji, Iraq, but will do so only after helping to solve some of COB Taji's waste problems.

Sgt 1st Class Dennis Owens, administrative manager for quality assurance and evaluator for recycling with the Regimental Support Squadron, 278th ACR and a Tullahoma, Tenn., native, said the idea of recycling projects began in the summer of 2009 in order to limit the use of burn pits, which were previously used to dispose of waste.

"The burn pits produced a lot of smoke that would drift over Taji and the surrounding communities," Owens said.

The garrison command at COB Taji met with the staff of the base support operations office to determine what land could be allocated and gave use of the ground to the Readiness Management Support Corp. for the recycling of wood, aluminum, cardboard and plastics.

"By recycling these four waste products, we greatly reduced the amount of refuse going into the burn pits," Owens said.

"In the first 12 days of July 2010, we have crushed and bundled 422 1/2 cubic meters of plastic bottles," he said.

Owens said the bundled materials are then sold to Iraqi companies that make new products from the material.

"An additional benefit of the program is to put these recycled resources back into the Iraqi economy," he said.

Owens said incinerators were brought in to replace the burn pits. The incinerators burn materials such as dining facility refuse and general trash at a hotter temperature and also have filters that reduce the amount of pollutants that enter the atmosphere.

Other ongoing recycling projects at Taji include recycling used motor oil and used tires.

RMS Electrical Superintendent Robert Ernst is in charge of the electrical power generation for COB Taji. The power is produced by huge generators that run on diesel or kerosene-based jet fuel (JP8), with a mixture of used motor oil.

Both military and non-tactical vehicles used at and away from the camp produce a steady flow of used motor oil that must be disposed of responsibly.

During maintenance, the oil is removed from vehicles and generators and taken to the Taji hazardous materials collection point.

Ernst's company takes the used oil from HAZMAT, inspects it and runs the used oil through a centrifuge where the oil is spun to separate dirt and water called sludge.

"The centrifuge will remove about 55 gallons of sludge from 1,600 gallons of used oil," Ernst said.

After the centrifuge process is complete, the sludge is returned to HAZMAT and the remaining waste oil is mixed with clean JP8



Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Owens (left), administrative manager for quality assurance and evaluator for recycling with the Regimental Support Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Tullahoma, Tenn., native, talks with Hendrik Kruger, supervisor of tire shredding for Readiness Management Support Corp.

and burned as fuel for the power generators, he said.

Ernst said the recycling of oil results in modest fuel cost savings for RMS and it helps eliminate disposal of thousands of gallons of waste oil.

According to Hendrik Kruger, supervisor of tire shredding for RMS, the shredding complex operates year-round and has recycled

more than 98,000 tires this year alone.

Kruger said the shredded material is used on running tracks, volleyball courts and other morale, welfare and recreation projects as well as an aggregate in concrete sidewalks.

"It's good to leave here knowing your organization played a part in establishing things that can have a (positive) lasting effect on this part of the country," Owens said.

Vehicle operator uses civilian skills, saves contractor

STORY AND PHOTO BY
1ST LT. RONNIE PATRICK JR.
319TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq

American forces are working diligently to meet the president's timeline for the responsible drawdown of forces from Iraq.

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard Soldiers often face extraordinary challenges, and consistently overcome these challenges with their diverse and unique set of skills, earning them the alias "Citizen-Soldiers." These Soldiers live and work in civilian communities, while volunteering to serve their country in a time when a high rate of success and mission accomplishment are extremely vital to current theater operations.

Their unique skills acquired through civilian occupations make these Soldiers a highly valuable collective asset to today's Army.

While serving as a force protection Soldier at an entry control point, one Soldier prevented a fatal medical situation by using his civilian acquired medical training and saved a man's life July 10 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Spc. Chauncey Townsend, a heavy-wheeled vehicle operator with the 319th Transportation Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Special Troops Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Jackson, Miss., native, is an Army Reservist currently serving on his first deployment.

Townsend serves as a firefighter and paramedic in his civilian occupation.

While manning an entry control point July 10 at COB Adder, Townsend used those civilian skills to save a man's



Spc. Chauncey Townsend, heavy-wheeled vehicle operator with the 319th Transportation Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Support Troops Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Jackson, Miss., native, stands watch at an entry control point. Townsend used skills acquired in his civilian occupation as a firefighter and paramedic to save the life of a civilian contractor July 10 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

life, preventing a situation from turning fatal.

A contractor escorting several local national workers at the ECP began to display symptoms which Townsend said he immediately noticed, assessed and suspected as life-threatening.

Townsend said he overheard the contractor complaining of numbness in his right leg and observed him having difficulty staying on his feet. Within minutes the contractor's muscles seized, resulting in him losing consciousness and collapsing into a diabetic seizure. Townsend immediately took control of the situation, realizing the contractor was in severe hypoglycemic shock.

Townsend directed his fellow Soldiers to retrieve nearby

combat lifesaver supplies and notify emergency medical services.

Using his civilian paramedic training, Townsend worked quickly to administer intravenous therapy to prevent the patient from overheating in the 120-degree plus heat. Townsend quickly stabilized the patient, who regained consciousness well before EMS arrived on the scene.

"Spc. Townsend has many duties and responsibilities at the ECP, and through his diligence and personal attention to every detail in his surroundings, truly saved a life," said Timothy Borgmann, Townsend's manager and lead biometric enroller at the ECP.

Borgmann, a nationally-registered emergency medical technician-basic and a former service member, said dehydration, a glycemic index over 300, a blow to the head and unconsciousness on 140-degree asphalt would have certainly done irreparable damage to the man's brain in less than five minutes. This damage, combined with hypoglycemic shock would have, at best, caused a coma followed shortly, if unassisted, by death.

"I just did what I knew was right," Townsend said. "I knew that either his blood glucose level was too high or too low. I checked his blood glucose level and it was 306. A normal blood glucose reading should be between 70 and 150."

Borgmann said he is proud to serve with, and deeply admires the prowess of, Townsend and Spc. Jason Geske, an entry control point guard from the 632nd Maintenance Company who assisted Townsend in providing medical aid.

They are "truly lifesavers," Borgmann said.

"The recognition they deserve goes beyond what could be worn on a uniform," he said. "I hope they are formally presented before their peers as a statement of what the Army values most: courageous, determined and capable Soldiers who act with confidence and carry a true Warrior's compassion to care for those who need them."

Finance unit delivers bundles of service, cash

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. CHAD MENEGAY
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE

TAJI, Iraq— The 113th Financial Management Detachment, 15th Financial Management Detachment, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), also known as the “Tar Heel Paymasters,” an Army National Guard unit out of Siler City, N.C., deliver necessary funds to isolated battalions and units located in and around Baghdad.

The conjured image of finance specialists traveling through Iraq with bundles of cash is only part of what the 113th Fin. Management Det. does.

“We provide financial support to all of the detachments here on Camp Taji, as well as surrounding forward operating bases in isolated areas, so we do (travel) to those locations,” said Sgt. 1st Class Lucious Mceachin, detachment sergeant with the 113th Financial Management Det. and a Durham, N.C., native.

Mceachin said the Paymasters go out once or twice a month to deliver cash to Soldiers who do not have a dedicated finance company on base.

“We provide cash support to those Soldiers who can’t get money any other way, so they can send money home or pay their Internet bills, purchase movies and things of that nature,” Mceachin said. “They are extremely happy to see us when we get out

there.”

The financial management support team, which delivers the cash after coordinating with a unit’s personnel section, consists of two or three people.

The 113th is conducting a relief in place with Charlie Detachment, 15th Financial Management Company. The 15th Fin. Management Co.’s mission is expected to mirror that of the 113th Fin. Management Det.

“We do whatever services (the isolated units) need,” said 1st Lt. Aaron J. Draper, a disbursing agent with the 15th Fin. Management Co. and an Ithaca, Mich., native. “We just ask that when they request the service that it’s detailed, so we know what forms and how much money to take out there. We can do pretty much anything out there that we can do here; we just bring back all the paperwork and process it in our office here.”

At Camp Taji, Iraq, the 113th Fin. Management Det. and 15th Fin. Management Co. handle and resolve issues regarding military pay and deployment entitlements. They provide services to the Commander’s Emergency Response Program in case contractors need funding to build bridges, schools and roads. They also assist all service members and civilian contractors with banking, to include cash payments, electronic fund disbursements and the Savings Deposit Program.

“We make sure everyone is getting the entitlements they need,” Draper said. “If there is an issue, they can come in and we can fix it for them. We pay contracts either through cash payments or through electronic

funds payments. There’s the disbursing center in here, where Soldiers can come in and get cash, or we can fund their Eagle Cash card.”

Draper said finance is of great importance. “I think it really helps with a Soldier’s morale in theater, knowing that their pay is taken care of, and there’s always a way that they can get help if they need it and fix their pay,” Draper said. “It makes me happy when we can help a Soldier fix something, especially if it’s been an ongoing issue that they’re to the point where they almost think

it’s never going to get fixed, and we can finally give them an answer. Seeing a smile on their face makes me feel good about the job I do.”

Mceachin said the RIP process is going very smoothly, because the 15th Fin. Management Co. came in prepared and ready to work.

“The 15th is a high-speed active duty unit,” Mceachin said. “They have done finance on a daily basis. They seem motivated to start here. They came in and jumped right into the hot seat feet-first.”



Pfc. Walter Bia (left), a mortarman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division enters data into a computer July 16 as Spc. Ashley Green, a finance specialist with the 113th Financial Management Detachment, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) provides assistance at Camp Taji, Iraq.

Soldiers learn about CREW system capabilities

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. GAELN LOWERS
3RD SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— Eight Soldiers from Joint Base Balad and Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq trained to become counter radio-controlled electronic warfare system specialists for their respective units July 16-18, at the JBB Warlock Shop.

The purpose of CREW systems is to counter insurgents’ ability to detonate radio-controlled improvised explosive devices, said Sgt. 1st Class Tami Jones, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the electronic warfare office with 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Moultrie, Ga., native.

“When used properly, a CREW system will not allow the enemy’s radio controlled IED transmitter to communicate with the radio controlled IED receiver, and prevents it from being detonated.”

Soldiers listened to lectures and conducted hands-on training including learning how to troubleshoot the various systems, put them into operation and also verify that each system works properly.

“Every Soldier should know how to operate and understand the importance of life-saving equipment,” said Billy Townley Jr., lead instructor for the CREW systems training with 1st Battalion, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade and a Bridgeton, N.C., native. “CREW system specialists are responsible for the lives of their fellow Soldiers. Soldiers going on missions rely on others to ensure that their CREW systems have been fully checked for standard operating procedures.”

Jones said the No. 1 bullet in her class is “electronic warfare saves more lives than anything else we do on the battlefield.”

Soldiers in the class walked away with considerably more knowledge of the CREW systems and many said they would recommend the class to every Soldier that could take it, said Pfc. William Jessup, a Soldier working in the central receiving and shipping point with the 403rd Transportation Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Point, Texas, native.

“This is the most important thing we have in the Army,” he said. “It saves lives, flat out.”

Spc. Jacob Bastian, also a Soldier working with the 403rd Trans. Co. at the CRSP and a Gadsden, Ala., native, agreed with Jessup and said the CREW systems were the best equip-



Billy Townley Jr., lead instructor for the counter radio-controlled electronic warfare systems training with 1st Battalion, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade and a Bridgeton, N.C., native, teaches the hands-on portion of the CREW systems class July 18 to eight Soldiers at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

ment the Army has to offer in saving Soldiers’ lives.

“I think that the military as a whole is coming up with better and more ways to defeat the enemy,” Bastian said. “Being knowledgeable on these systems is great. I feel confident in knowing how to operate and troubleshoot these systems now.”

Jessup said the training will prepare him for his Army career.

“This is how we fight wars now,” he said, “and I’d like to be that guy that makes sure everyone makes it home alive.”

The Warlock shop at JBB offers CREW system training, installs, maintenance and repair, day or night. They are dedicated to serving the Soldiers’ CREW needs, Townley said.

298th SMC: keeps the wheels

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. DAVID A. SCOTT
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER,



Iraq— Two Army mechanics inspect the running lights and wheel bearings of a transport trailer while protected from the Iraqi sun by netting. The scene is punctuated by rock music playing on loudspeakers from a recording in the

background.

With or without accompanying music, the work of maintaining hundreds of Army trailers in the Iraqi theater of operations is a daily occurrence at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

A daily rhythm of trailers coming in for repairs and preventive maintenance checks and services, in conjunction with the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq, has kept a segment of the 298th Support Maintenance Company busy at COB Speicher, according to Staff Sgt. Joseph Hammond, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of Maintenance Support Team 1 with the 298th SMC, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and an Altoona, Pa., native.

The 298th SMC, who call themselves the “Reapers,” are part of an Army Reserve unit out of Altoona, Pa. MST 1 is a detachment of the unit and has about 250 personnel, including 14 personnel here at COB Speicher and four personnel at Contingency Operating Base Marez, he said.

The primary mission of MST 1 is to perform preventive maintenance checks and services at COB Speicher on Army trailers used in convoys throughout Iraq. The unit helps keep convoys on the road at a high readiness rate, Hammond said.

“As long as we keep them (the trailers) up and running, all the equipment, the mission will be a success,” he said.

Hammond said the trailers his unit maintains show the wear and tear of many years of constant use in support of most common maintenance repairs often involve the lowest replaceable unit.

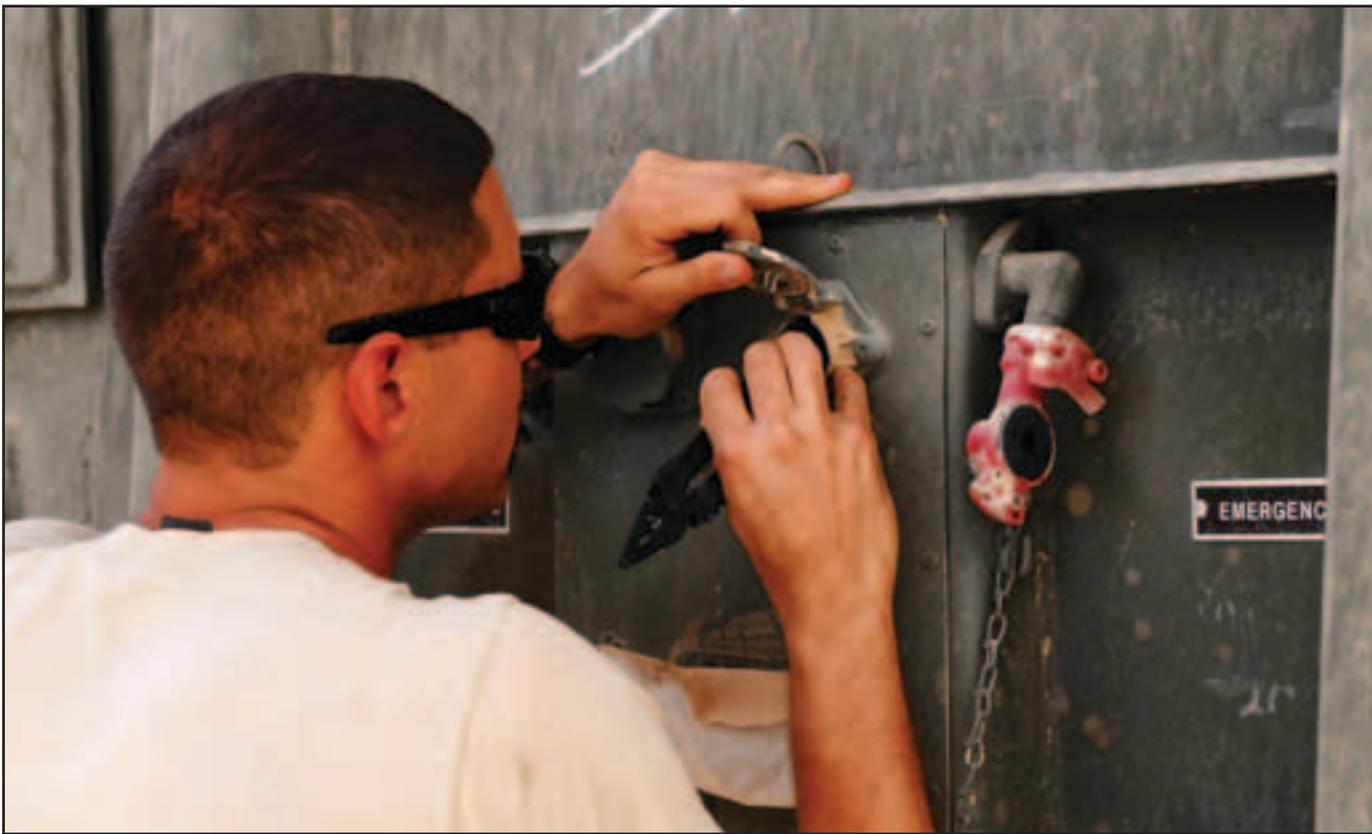
“The most common problems involve the wiring harnesses to the lights,” he said.

“When the trailers come in decorated with 20 chemical lights on them, there is a dead giveaway of the problem.”

Hammond said integrating a variety of military occupational specialties into the unit has been a challenge. MST 1 has integrated those unit members whose specialization isn’t maintenance into the unit by giving them hands-on training.

“The 14 (Soldiers) here are doing heavy-wheeled vehicle mechanical repairs,” Hammond said. “There are five or six who have other military occupational specialties who came with us... They are not falling behind. We are showing them the different ways to do repairs. They are picking it right up.”

MST 1 tracks and maintains approximately 250 trailers from its operating location at COB Speicher. The unit conducts both annual and semi-annual repairs on the



ABOVE: Spc. Jason Hairston, generator mechanic with Mobile Support Team 1, 298th Support Maintenance Company, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Martinsville, Va., native, performs a diagnostics check on the wiring harness of the lights on an Army trailer July 17 during a regularly scheduled maintenance session in the repair shop on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

BELOW: Spc. Willie Hurd, an armament repair specialist with Mobile Support Team 1, 298th Support Maintenance Company, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Lake City, S.C., native, reinstalls the lug nuts on the wheel of an Army trailer July 17 after a preventive maintenance check as part of its regularly scheduled maintenance in the repair shop at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.



s rolling

trailers under its purview, he said.

“We have a list on the board in our office,” Hammond said. “Roughly every six months to every 12 months, depending on the service rotation, we either do a full annual service or a semi-annual service where we fix what we need.”

Hammond said he was pleased with the effort and hard work of MST 1. His team of mechanics and repair specialists made him look good.

“They are up here, 13 of them, doing everything they can and more to make sure all these trailers and our missions are successful,” he said. “Without them, I wouldn’t have a job.”

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Sommer, maintenance operations officer with the 298th SMC and an Altoona, Pa., native, visited the MST 1 worksite July 20 at COB Speicher.

He said the unit’s modularity was a particular point of emphasis for his visit.

“We have the capabilities to send small teams out to many locations and bases which reduce the need for excess maintenance personnel, especially in-house or internal maintenance elements at the company level,” Sommer said. “Once you cut them (the excess personnel) out of the unit, then you will be able to draw down the unit size, and then you can reduce the troop size.”

“From the movement of parts to the movement of support elements, almost everybody needs wheels,” he said. “When the vehicles don’t run, it impacts everyone.”

Prior to mobilizing, the company’s roster of shop maintenance personnel was augmented by a small team of arms repair specialists, welders, generator mechanics and heating, ventilation and air conditioning repair specialists, drawn from units around the country.

Sommer said the biggest challenge to the unit was forming a unit from so many different military occupational specialties and from many other states.

Sgt. Bryan Hoffman, yard noncommissioned officer-in-charge with MST 1 and a DuBois, Pa., native, originally came to the unit as a small arms repair specialist and had to get on-the-job training in order to learn new skills and trades.

“On this deployment, I got tasked out to the MST to work on trailers,” Hoffman said. “I had never worked on trailers before, but I was peered with a bunch of really good mechanics who have been teaching me the right way to do things. They have been teaching me the mechanical side of things. It is not as bad as I thought it was going to be.”

“Our unit, being a Reserve unit, is unique because we deploy with people from all over,” Sommer said. “We deployed with 190 people who come from many different places such as Hawaii and Alaska. So, you have approximately 120 people who we met for the first time on the first day of this deployment. As a leader, you tend to worry about how everyone will mesh together. To see everyone acting so civil is just amazing.”

MST 1 performs intermediate level maintenance services at COB Speicher. The level of maintenance is important but the urgency of the maintenance or repair



service is even more important, Sommer said.

Sommer said he was impressed by his visit to the MST 1 shop. The unit’s sustained superior performance was commendable.

“It just amazes me with the level of efficiency and proficiency with which we are pushing vehicles and trailers in and out of the maintenance yard,” Sommer said.

During their off-hours back at their living quarters in a refurbished firehouse, members of MST 1 often join together to play video games, specifically “Rock Band.”

Hoffman said playing background music at the shop, which ranges from American rock to an occasional Irish melody, helps to maintain a positive and motivating atmosphere for the unit.

“It (the music) kind of breaks up the monotony,” he said. “It makes the day go by much faster. It kind of brings up morale when your favorite song comes on.”

Hoffman said the steady flow of trailers in and out of the MST 1 maintenance yard doesn’t seem to be ending any time soon. The unit maintains a steady pace in order to keep up with the flow.

“We normally try to complete our services on two to three trailers per day,” he said. “With 250 trailers on our board, we have to keep up a pretty good pace to get them all serviced within a particular time period.”

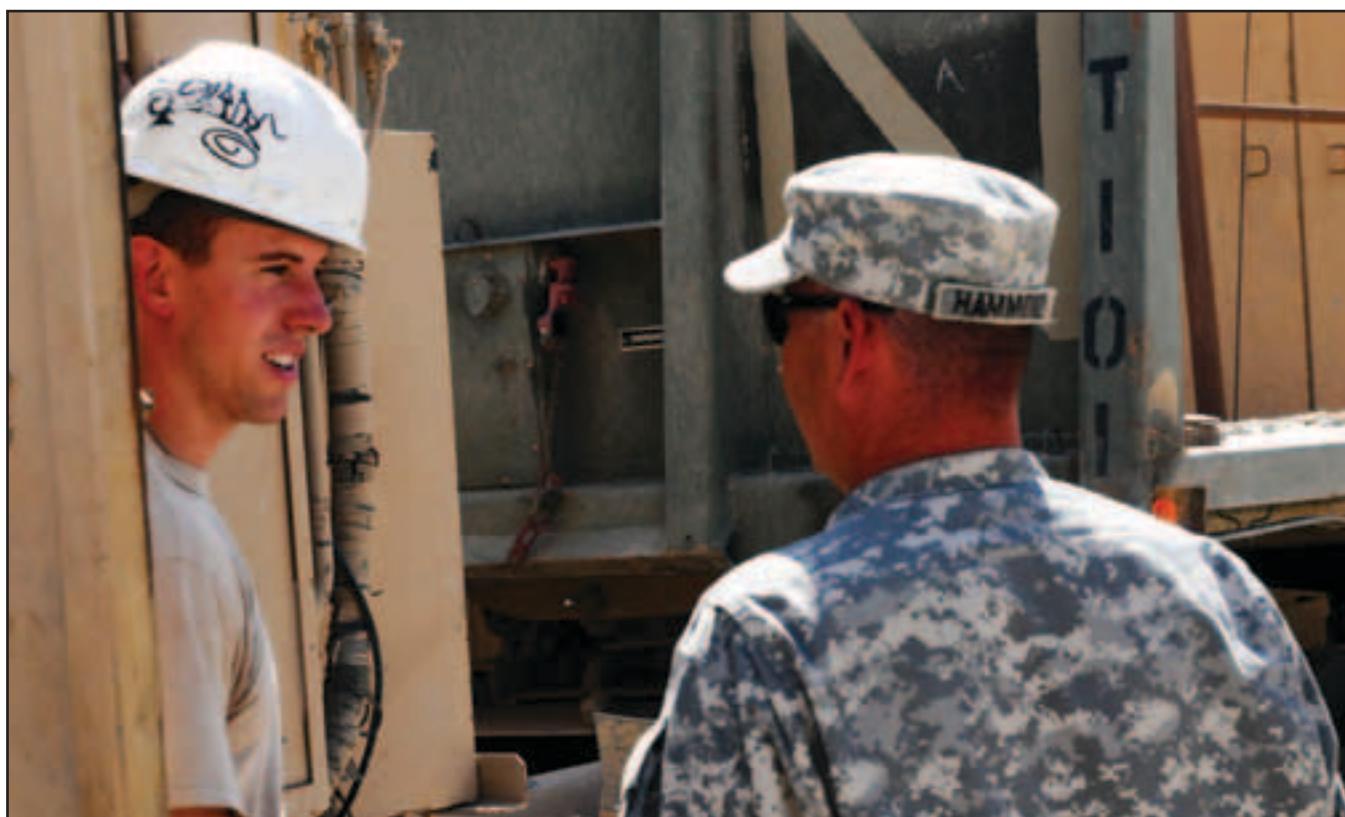
Hoffman said playing recordings of contemporary American rock in the background had perhaps the most impact on his unit’s performance in the maintenance shop.

“Especially when you get a good rock song, it gets everyone excited,” Hoffman said

ABOVE: Spc. Andrae Alvarado, an air conditioning mechanic with Mobile Support Team 1, 298th Support Maintenance Company, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Winston-Salem, N.C., native, prepares to use a ratchet wrench on a wheel hub July 17 while performing regularly scheduled maintenance on an Army trailer in the repair shop on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

Everybody needs wheels. When the vehicles don’t run, it impacts everyone.

—Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert Sommer



ABOVE: Sgt. Bryan Huffman (left) yard noncommissioned officer-in-charge with Mobile Support Team 1, 298th Support Maintenance Company, 394th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a DuBois, Pa. native, and Staff Sgt. Joseph Hammond, detachment noncommissioned officer-in-charge with MST 1 and a Altoona, Pa. native, discuss the daily intake of trailers scheduled for regular maintenance and repairs July 17 in the MST 1 repair shop at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

Waterdogs maintain water, support life

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. KIMBERLY JOHNSON
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— There is a small group of Soldiers who are responsible for sustaining life at Joint Base Balad, Iraq by providing drinkable water, also known as potable water.

Without the “Waterdogs” of the 512th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), JBB would not have water for the showers, drinking water for the bottling plant or water to run the dining facilities.

“Our mission here as water purification specialists is to provide bulk water to the entire installation,” said Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Thomas, a water purification specialist with the 512th Quartermaster Co. and a Dayton, Ohio, native. “We provide water to the bottling plant and also to the facilities such as the dining facilities and the electrical plant to aid and keep JBB running smoothly.”

Water is a source of life, so having a way to provide drinkable water is essential to survival of service members and civilians to conduct their missions.

“Without water, we would cease to exist,” Thomas said. “Soldiers cannot always rely on bottled water. Showers and the DFAC are necessities; they cannot operate on bottled water alone.”

In order to provide potable water, water purification specialists must first find a source to purify.

Sgt. Leron Nelson, a water purification specialist with the 512th Quartermaster and a New York City native, said the most common sources are the nearest river or a deep well.

“(When) we find a source for water, we then take that source and either run it through a machine known as a 3K ROWPU, which is a three thousand-gallon per hour, reverse osmosis water purification unit or other types of machines, depending on the amount of water we need to purify and make the water potable for Soldiers and civilians on this

base,” he said.

In addition to using a water purification machine, Soldiers also add chemicals to disinfect the water, ensuring it is free of harmful or fatal toxins.

“It’s critical to add chemicals to the purification process to aid the filters, pull out the particles and disinfect the water,” said Sgt. Stephen Crafton, a water purification specialist with the 82nd Water Purification Detachment, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Colonial Heights, Va., native. “When the water is through the process, it’s cleaner than what you get in bottled water. We disinfect it because any organic matter in the water, like cholera, could potentially be deadly.”

Nelson said much can go wrong quickly if a particular source is bad.

“Soldiers can go from being in the fight to literally losing the fight, because their bodies are not getting the top hydration,” he said.

In addition to the responsibility of purifying water for fellow service members and civilians, they are also responsible for maintaining the aging pumping stations around JBB.

“There are several old pumping stations here,” Thomas said. “We perform day-to-day maintenance on those machines to make sure they are up and running. We conduct preventive maintenance and do a lot of water purification operations in the evening, when it’s cooler, so we don’t run the risk of burning out the equipment.”

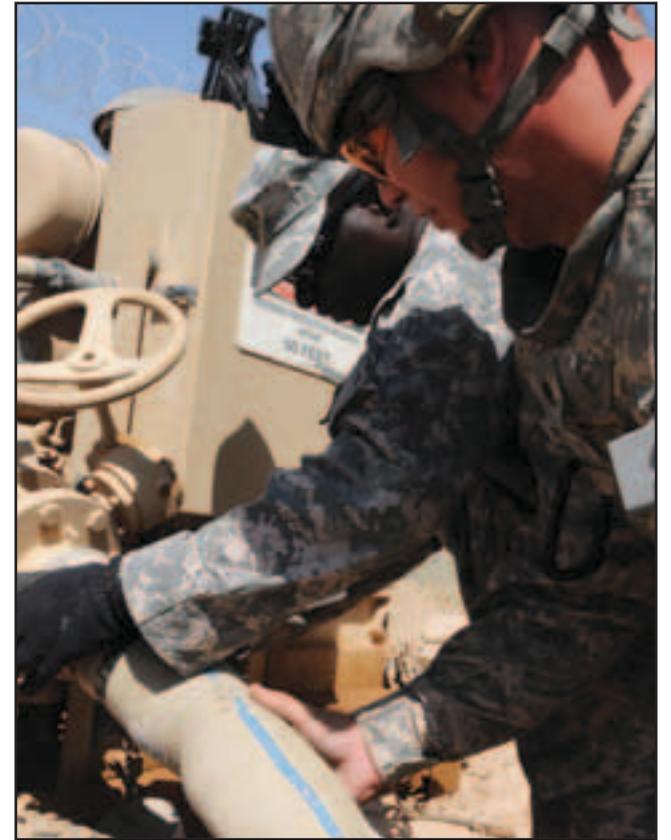
The heat of the desert poses a great challenge in the water purification process, he said.

“Our No. 1 challenge is the weather here,” Thomas said, “mainly the heat, because 90 percent of our equipment is electrical. It cannot overheat. The wires of our purification pumps tend to fry because of the extreme heat.”

The team also has a small detachment of eight Soldiers who work out of Forward Operating Base Cobra, providing clean water to the service members and civilians there.

“There are no shortcuts in water purification,” Nelson said. “It has to be done to perfection or everyone notices. Every time I turn on the shower, I know somebody is out

there doing their job right. Every time I mix my Gatorade with a bottle of water, I know somebody did their job. I don’t question whether or not it’s contaminated. I just know it’s not.”



Spc. Joshua Preston (right), a motor transport operator and an Arcanum, Ohio, native, and Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Thomas, a water purification specialist and a Dayton, Ohio, native, both with the 512th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), attach a water hose to a 3,000-gallon per hour reverse osmosis water purification machine July 16 in an effort to repair the pump at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

U.S. Army aviators fly joint mission with Iraqi partners

STORY BY
SPC. ROLAND HALE
1ST INFANTRY DIVISION

BAGHDAD— U.S. Army aviators partnered with aviators from the Iraqi Army July 19 for a joint training mission in the Baghdad area, intended to strengthen relations between their units and train the Iraqi aviators on VIP transportation.

This is one of many aviation missions that have been conducted with the Iraqi Army this year as they take a more active role in aviation operations. The U.S. aviators belong to the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, an all-in-one aviation unit that deployed in March from Fort Riley, Kan. The battalion is also involved in training Iraqi air traffic controllers, with whom they share Contingency Operating Base Taji, Iraq’s air traffic control tower.

On this mission, U.S. aviators flew a UH-60L Black Hawk while the Iraqi aviators flew a UH-1 Huey.

The Iraqi Army, which recently took control of their military’s rotary-wing assets from the Iraqi Air Force, uses the Huey primarily as a scout and reconnaissance aircraft. This mission, however, showed the Iraqis how to use the aircraft to transport VIPs around the battlefield.

A Company, 2nd GSAB is responsible for the transportation of commanders, dignitaries and other VIPs around Baghdad. Over the course of theater operations or Operation Iraqi Freedom, units like this have been busy patrolling Iraq’s highways, helping deter the placement of roadside bombs. But with fewer Black Hawks flying in Iraq, the need for Iraqi aviation to pitch in is increasing.

“One thing I’ve seen change since the war started is the Iraqis’ participation in everything,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Christian Frobenius, one of the Black Hawk pilots. “They want to do this, and we’re here to facilitate that.”

In addition to flying, U.S. aviators included their Iraqi partners in the planning and coordination phases of their mission. They spent two weeks preparing for the flight to explain its purpose and other considerations, Frobenius said.

Frobenius, who is serving his third tour in Iraq, said increased Iraqi participation in operations is an indicator of success.

Frobenius has flown about 200 missions in Iraq, but this is his first mission with the Iraqi



U.S. Army photo Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Troth

Pilots and crew chiefs of an Iraqi Army UH-1 Huey (foreground) and a U.S. Army UH-60L Black Hawk prepare to fly a training mission July 19 above Baghdad.

Army.

“It feels great and it’s an important step for them to take,” he said.

It’s not the only step, however, and Frobenius’ unit will continue to train with their aviation counterparts over the length of their deployment. The battalion belongs to the Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, which is scheduled to be the Army’s last active duty aviation unit supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

When Operation New Dawn begins this September, the brigade will become the Army’s sole aviation unit in Iraq. With just under 4,000 troops and several hundred aircraft, the brigade will be tasked with putting some of the final touches on the training of Iraqi aviators.

Iraqi Army Col. Nagem invited the U.S. pilots into an Iraqi office already filled gifts from U.S. commanders—symbols of partnership and even friendship—to discuss their future cooperation.

The lights were out in the office during their conversation—the eight hours per day of electricity available to the Iraqi camp an indicator of the work still to be done as the country emerges from a seven-year war.

Soldier provides life support in Haiti and Iraq

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SGT. KIMBERLY JOHNSON
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— “One person can make a difference. If you have the right feeling in your heart, you can make a difference. Everyone has something to offer.”

This is the mentality of Sgt. Stephen Crafton, a water purification specialist with the 82nd Water Purification Detachment, now attached in theater to the 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Colonial Heights, Va., native. Crafton deployed to Haiti this past winter to provide water to a crippled nation in the aftermath of a catastrophic earthquake.

“We were one of the initial units in Haiti, besides the 82nd Airborne Division, who were mainly there to establish security,” Crafton said. “At one point, my unit was the only unit producing water in Haiti.”

Crafton and his unit had the task of establishing the only water point available in Port Au Prince, Haiti, after the devastating earthquake there.

“We set up the water point, using a well the Haitians were already using. We set up everything else from the ground up,” Crafton said. “We built a life support area, assembled two (3,000-gallon per hour, reverse osmosis water purification units) and a distribution point to provide water for the Haitians and the American forces.”

Not only did the unit build life support areas for the Haitians, they also bonded with the natives.

“We interacted with the Haitians a lot,” Crafton said. “When we first got to Haiti, they helped us set up our site. They used their machetes to dig holes for us, because we didn’t have any shovels. We didn’t have any money to pay them for their help, so what we did was give them (Meals, Ready-to-Eat), that we would eat together.”

When it came to the living comforts, like clean clothes and fresh food, the Haitians shared their skills with the Americans.

“The Haitians would bring us coconuts, mangos and sugar cane,” Crafton said. “They taught us how to eat them, because eating MREs three times a day was horrible. The Haitian women showed us how to wash our clothes.”

The American Soldiers provided the Haitians with wood to build makeshift houses after the earthquake demolished everything in sight, Crafton said.

Crafton found his own way to thank the Haitians for their assistance in establishing life support for everyone on the island.

“I asked my Family for care packages with soccer balls, so I could hand them to the kids,” he said. “I handed out books and gave one of them the watch off my wrist. It’s just the little things to let them know the Americans were there to help and make a friendly basis to show there is still good in the world.”

Crafton said he already knew about foreign relations based on his previous deployment to Iraq, but it opened his eyes on how to make a difference with the smallest of things.

“I think we definitely helped provide a short-term relief for the people of Haiti who had been in a catastrophic event,” Crafton said. “We gave them comforts like food and water. After a catastrophe, they were desperate for those necessities and the relief we provided. Looking at it in a long-term basis, it’s going to take a lot more bags of rice and water for the Haitians to be where they need to be so they can self-sustain after such a tragedy. I’m so very grateful I could be a part of providing them with comfort during such a disastrous time.”

Crafton uses his experiences on his current deployment in Iraq.

“In Haiti, we worked with the Haitians to accomplish our water job,” Crafton said. “So, I learned how to communicate with them using mostly visual communication. I have to use the same type of communication here in Iraq with the Ugandans and the Iraqi Nationals. Being in Haiti taught me how



to have patience in dealing with the communication barrier. Learning how to break that communication barrier definitely helped me when I got here.”

Crafton said in addition to communication skills, he learned how to accomplish his mission, with or without the right tools and equipment.

“What I learned from Haiti is the ability to adapt to any kind of problem, not using traditional practices usually used by water purification specialists,” Crafton said. “In Haiti, we didn’t have the right tools and equipment to get the job done, especially the right chemicals. So we had to adapt and use different chemicals to accomplish the same goal.”

Part of the adaptation was engineering water points with the Haitians and the American Soldiers, and collaborating on the design for the tools, using what was available to them.

Crafton said he recently used those adaptation skills to anchor a Dolphin strainer, which prevents algae from entering the water purification machines. He engineered an anchor for the strainer because the original anchor did not work well.

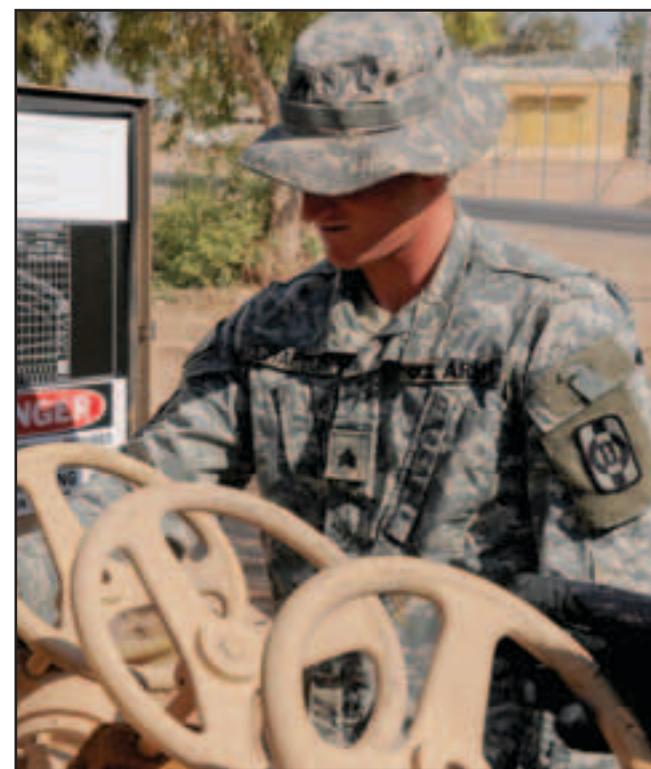
“There was not a traditional anchor on the strainer. We had to make one ... using different materials,” Crafton said. “I used the ability to think outside the box that I learned in Haiti, making something out of nothing.”

First Lt. Derek Jones, executive officer with the 512th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Dayton, Ohio, native, said Crafton is the go-to-guy because of his extensive mission knowledge.

“Sgt. Crafton is an outstanding (noncommissioned officer),” Jones said. “His Soldiers respect him and are courteous to anyone who comes into their section. Any help Sgt. Crafton needs, they are more than willing to respond to the request. That reflects his knowledge and dedication to the mission.”

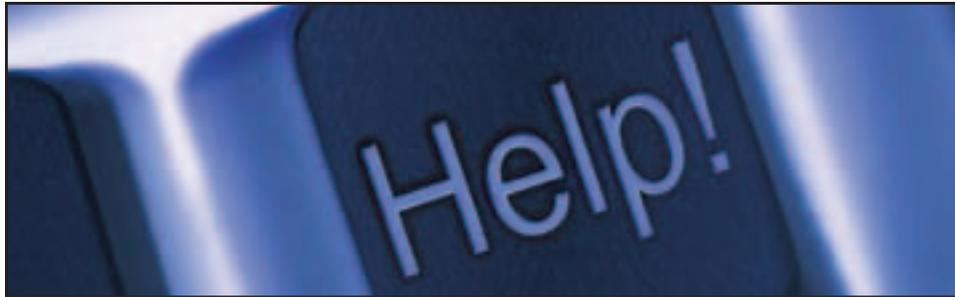
Crafton said he has matured as a person and as a Soldier since his trip to Haiti.

“I grew as a person, in a sense, by being able to deal with different stresses that come with the different situations of a deployment,” Crafton said. “Personally, when things get a little rough dealing with different challenges that usually come with a deployment, I think about the Haitians, and how they reacted to their catastrophe. No matter what came their way, they were always trying to help (make things better).”



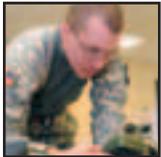
TOP: Sgt. Stephen Crafton, a water purification specialist with the 512th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Colonial Heights, Va., native, works in the water to remove algae from a Dolphin strainer July 16 to repair a water pump that supplies Joint Base Balad, Iraq, with water. Crafton came to Iraq after serving in Haiti as part of the only water purification point in the early stages of relief after the 2010 earthquake.

ABOVE: Sgt. Stephen Crafton, a water purification specialist with the 512th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Colonial Heights, Va., native, studies the gauges of a 3,000-gallon per hour reverse osmosis water purification unit July 16, to figure out how to repair the water pump that, along with other pumps, supplies Joint Base Balad, Iraq, with water. Crafton came to Iraq after serving in Haiti as part of the only water purification point in the early stages of relief after the 2010 earthquake.



Electronics: load up, move out

SGT. MICHAEL CARDEN
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



Redeployment is an exciting, yet hectic, time for a unit and its Soldiers. Mountains of paperwork, hours of inspections and piles of duffel bags barely scratch the surface of what encompasses the process of packing up and going home. While the unit's equipment must be packed with much care, Soldiers should also take that same level of consideration in packing

their own personal electronics.

Small portable items, such as MP3 players and personal gaming systems, should be packed in padded cases or wrapped in soft packing materials and secured so as not to shift around. Most Soldiers choose to hand carry these types of items, to relieve the monotony of multi-continental plane flights. Ensuring easy access to those items will make the customs inspection process smoother. Consider placing them in outside pockets of personal bags.

Larger items being sent home are traditionally either mailed or shipped home in a unit's shipping container.

When mailing items, be sure to follow all directions from the postal office. Failing to pack items correctly can invalidate whatever insurance you purchase for your package.

Items like televisions or computer monitors need adequate space with no pressure placed on the display. Even moderate weight placed on a screen can permanently damage an LCD or plasma screen. Whenever possible keep televisions or computer monitors upright, this keeps the internal components stable during the transportation process.

All items should be packed snugly, with no room for shifting. The more items can move during shipment, the greater chance of damage to your expensive electronics.

There are many custom protective cases on the market, all clamoring for your money. When deciding on a purchase, keep in mind that many of these companies insure items packed in their cases, if specific instructions are followed.

Place items back in the original packaging whenever possible. If you can, you ensure the items are at least as safe as when they are sent from the manufacturers.

Without packaging materials or other cases, securing blankets or other heavily padded material around your large electronics is the next best thing.

During the packing process, take photos of the materials and layout of items. These photos can provide evidence if items are broken during transport and senders need to seek compensation for insured items.

Items packed in shipping containers need to be properly blocked and braced. Blocking and bracing is the process of using lumber, ropes and tie-down straps to keep the contents from shifting during transportation. Covering all items in waterproof sheeting can help prevent water damage during overseas cargo movement.

Regardless of how you are getting your electronics home, keeping them protected is the key. Using adequate packaging and minimizing shifting are the two main rules to keep in mind. Your electronics made it through deployment, proper packing can help them make it home.

SCANIA cont. from page 1

"We let them know, before things closed, when they were going to close. Soldiers saw that people were actively trying to keep them as supported as possible for as long as possible."

Added Cooke: "Everybody stepped up to the challenge and it was fantastic. The transition did go smoothly. Everybody maintained the standard all the way through. Everybody made it happen."

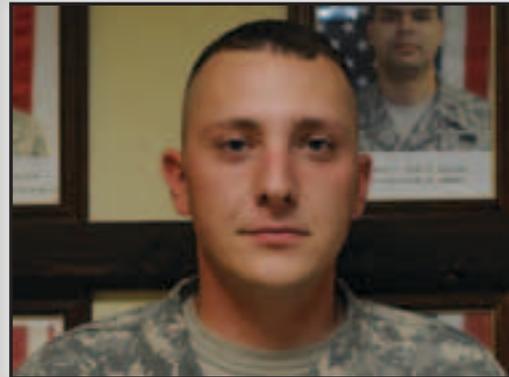
Though challenging, the transfer of CSC Scania was an important step in the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq, Valdes said.

After 4:30 p.m. on July 15, CSC Scania no longer belonged to the 389th CSSB; it was successfully transferred to Iraqi control. This is one of a number of base closures and transfers to occur throughout the Iraqi Joint Operations Area as the operational conditions and Iraqi Security Forces' capabilities permit. By Sept. 1, another 34 bases are expected to be closed or transferred to the GoI.

"Most people (deploy), wondering what the mission is going to be and how they're going to leave it," Cooke said. "We leave knowing the mission is complete."

Word on the street

If you could create a charity, what would it be and what would you name it?



"Helping our own. My charity would help people within our own country who are less fortunate."

Spc. Justin Bowins, a motor transport operator with the 14th Transportation Battalion, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Kingwood, W.V., native.



"Light in the Dark. I want to help the children who are from a violent part of the city, to become better citizens and prevent them from exposure to the criminal life."

Capt. Paul Lee, S-6 officer-in-charge with the 14th Transportation Battalion, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a New York, native.



"A Way Home. A charity to help war orphans find a home."

Sgt. Seth Bassett, the S-6 noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 14th Transportation Battalion, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Ruidoso, N.M., native.



"The Other Side of the Leaf Foundation. I would sponsor inner city kids to live on farms and see just how different life is outside the city."

Pfc. Fernando Lopez, an information management officer with the 14th Transportation Battalion, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Jersey City, N.J., native.

THEATER PERSPECTIVES

“Everything we do here, as we process these materials, is so there is no (adverse)

effect on Iraqis.

No materials are left behind. This highlights how we are not only good stewards here, but also our relations with the Iraqi people.”

Maj. Gen. Stephen Lanza, director of strategic effects for United States Forces – Iraq, on the removal of waste from U.S. bases in Iraq

“Iraq’s economy is growing, offering specific opportunities for U.S. exporters in a variety of industries.”

Bilan R. Kian, an Ex-Im Bank board member on the success and progress of the Iraqi financial infrastructure

“We are crunched for time, however... The two leaders can now sit and meet together as it requires.”

Iraqi government spokesman Ali la-Dabbagh on progress in scheduling a meeting between Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and prime minister hopeful Ayad Allawi, regarding discussions about forming a new government

“The cooperation between Iraq and Jordan, is open without any limits, especially in the investment field. The investment in Iraq has a lot of potential, a potential of wealth, and that making it a factor of stability and balance in the region.”

Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdul Mahdi on relations with Jordan and the potential for Iraq to become a developmental player in the Middle East

“This commitment first of all has been sealed in blood and treasure, both Iraqi and American.”

James Jeffrey, U.S. ambassador to Turkey, on the strength of the United States’ partnership with Iraq and its resolve in creating stability and peace

FORMING THE GOVERNMENT

The responsible drawdown is ultimately leading to a stable and successful Iraq, able to shape its own future. The U.S. and Iraqi military have made plenty of progress and, after a heated post-election debate, Iraq’s political leaders are making progress as well. Here are some facts about the government the Iraqis have been able to build with the help of security and stability operations performed by U.S. forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Type of government: Parliamentary Democracy

Head of government: Prime Minister

Head of state:

Presidency Council with PRESIDENT and two VICE PRESIDENTS

Elections: Closed-list, proportional representation

Legislature: 325-seat

unicameral parliament

Voting age: 18



Sudoku

Level: Hard

The objective is to fill the 9x9 grid so each column, each row and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

Last week's answers

3	4	7	5	8	2	1	6	9
8	9	1	4	6	3	7	2	5
6	2	5	1	7	9	4	8	3
9	3	8	7	1	5	2	4	6
4	5	6	9	2	8	3	1	7
7	1	2	6	3	4	5	9	8
5	8	3	2	9	1	6	7	4
1	6	4	8	5	7	9	3	2
2	7	9	3	4	6	8	5	1

9			5			2		3
				7	3			
4		5				9		
	2		4		8			7
	5			6			3	
6			7		2		4	
		2				6		1
			3	2				
8		1			7			5

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What percent of the Earth's water is undrinkable?
2. True or False: Water regulates the Earth's temperature.
3. What household fixture can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water per year?
4. How long can humans survive without water?
5. About how much water does a dishwasher use per load?
6. 70% of which human body part is water?

1. 97% 2. True 3. A dripping faucet 4. 5 to 7 days 5. Between 8 and 12 gallons 6. Skin

JBB Worship Services

CONTEMPORARY

Sunday 10:30 a.m. Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)
7 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West side)

Wednesday 8 p.m. Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

GENERAL

Sunday 9 a.m. Freedom Chapel
9 a.m. Provider Chapel

GOSPEL

Sunday 11 a.m. MWR East Building
12 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West side)
12:30 p.m. Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)
7 p.m. Provider Chapel

LITURGICAL (Lutheran Setting)

Sunday 5 p.m. Provider Chapel

TRADITIONAL

Sunday 10:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel (West side)
2 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Saturday 10 a.m. Provider Chapel

LATTER DAY SAINTS

Sunday 1 p.m. Provider Chapel
3:30 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West side)
7 p.m. Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

**Current as of July 28, 2010*

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday 3:30 p.m. Castle Heights (Bldg 4155)

ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS

Sunday 8:30 a.m. Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)
11 a.m. Provider Chapel
12:30 pm. Air Force Provider Chapel
Saturday 8 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West side)

Confessions: Saturday 4-4:45 p.m. Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6) or by appointment

JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday 6 p.m. Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

PAGAN/WICCAN FELLOWSHIP

Thursday 7 p.m. Provider Annex
Saturday 7 p.m. The Shack (Bldg 7556)

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL:

Gilbert Chapel 443-7703

Provider Chapel 483-4107/4115

Freedom Chapel 443-6303

JB BALAD ACTIVITIES

INDOOR POOL Swim Lessons: Mon., Wed., 6 p.m. Tue., Thu., Sat., 6:30 p.m. Aqua Training: Tue., Thu., 7:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m.	Edge Weapons & Stick Fighting Combative Training: Tue., Thur., Sat., 8-10 p.m. EAST REC- REATION CENTER 4-ball tourney: Sunday 8 p.m. 8-ball tourney: Monday 8 p.m. Open Court Volleyball: Sunday 6 p.m. Aerobics: Mon., Wed., Fri., 5:30-6:30 a.m. Yoga Class: Mon., Friday, 6-7 a.m. Step Aerobics: Mon., Wed., Fri., 5:30 p.m. Conditioning Training Class: Mon., Wed., Fri., 7:15-8 p.m. Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu: Mon., Wed., Fri., 8-9 p.m. Abs-Aerobics: Tue., Thu., 6-7 a.m., 5-6 p.m.	Caribbean Night: Friday 8 p.m. Chess & Dominoes Tourney: Friday 8 p.m. Salsa Class: Saturday 8:30 p.m. Poker: Saturday 7:30 p.m. H6 FITNESS CENTER Spin: Sunday 9 a.m. Mon., Wed., Fri., 2 a.m., 4:30 a.m., 4 p.m., 10 p.m. Midnight Soccer: Tue., Thu., 8 p.m. Yoga: Wednesday 8 p.m. MACP Level 1: Friday 8 p.m. 5 on 5 Basketball: Tue., Thu., 2 p.m. Saturday 8 p.m. H6 RECRE- ATION CENTER Bingo: Mon., Tue., Thu.,	8 p.m. Friday 9 p.m. CC Cross Fit: Mon., Saturday 10:30 p.m. Cross Fit: Mon., Wed., Fri., 5:45 a.m., 7 a.m., 3 p.m., 6 p.m. Tue., Thu., 7 a.m., 3 p.m. Sunday 5:45 a.m., 7 a.m., 3 p.m. P90x: Mon., Sat., 4:30 a.m., 4 p.m., 10 p.m. Karaoke: Tue., Thu., 8 p.m. Wednesday 8 p.m. Saturday 8:30 p.m. WEST REC- REATION CENTER Green Bean Karaoke: Sun., Wed., 7:30pm 9-ball tourney: Monday 8 p.m.	Hold'em: Mon., Fri., 2 p.m., 8:30 p.m. 8-ball tourney: Tuesday 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m. Ping-pong tourney: Tuesday 8:30 p.m. Spades: Wednesday 8 p.m. Salsa: Wednesday 8:30 p.m. 9-ball: Thursday 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m. Karaoke: Thursday 8:30 p.m. Dominos: Saturday 8:30 p.m. Darts: Saturday 8:30 p.m. WEST FIT- NESS CENTER 3 on 3 basketball tourney: Saturday 7:30 p.m. 6 on 6 volleyball tourney: Friday	Ping-pong tourney: Tuesday 8 p.m. Foosball tourney: Tuesday 8 p.m. Jam Session: Wednesday 7:30 p.m. 8-ball tourney: Thursday 8 p.m. Guitar Lessons: Thursday 7:30 p.m. Game tourney: Thursday 1 p.m., 8 p.m. Enlisted Poker: Friday 1 p.m., 8 p.m. Officer Poker: Saturday 1 p.m., 8 p.m. Squat Competition: Saturday 8 p.m. WEST FIT- NESS CENTER tourney: Saturday 7:30 p.m. 6 on 6 volleyball tourney: Friday	7 p.m. Aerobics: Mon., Wed., Friday 7 p.m. Body by Midgett Toning Class: Tue., Thu., 7 p.m. Dodge ball Game: Tuesday 7:30 p.m. Furman's Martial Arts: Mon., Wed., Sun., 1 p.m. Gaston's Self-Defense Class: Fri., Sat., 7 p.m. Open court basketball: Thursday 7 p.m. Open court soccer: Mon., Wed., 7 p.m. Zingano Brazilian Jui Jitsu: Tue., Thu., 8:30 p.m. CIRCUIT GYM Floor hockey: Mon., Wed., Fri., 8-10 p.m.
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UPCOMING SPORTS ON AFN



Wednesday 07/28/10

MLB: St. Louis Cardinals @ New York Mets, Live 2 a.m. AFN Xtra
WNBA: San Antonio Silver Stars @ New York Liberty, Live 2:30 a.m. AFN Xtra
WNBA: Phoenix Mercury @ Seattle Storm, Live 4 a.m. AFN Xtra
MLB: Atlanta Braves @ Washington Nationals, Delayed 10 a.m. AFN Sports
MLB: Chicago Cubs @ Houston Astros, Live 11 p.m. AFN Sports

Thursday 07/29/10

MLB: Los Angeles Dodgers @ San Diego Padres, Live 5 a.m. AFN Sports
MLB: Arizona Diamondbacks @ Philadelphia Phillies, Delayed 10 a.m. AFN Sports
MLB: Oakland Athletics @ Texas Rangers, Delayed 2 p.m. AFN Sports

Friday 07/30/10

MLB: Seattle Mariners @ Chicago White Sox, Live 3 a.m. AFN Sports
\$50,000 Poker Player's Championship, Delayed 1 p.m. AFN Xtra
MLB: New York Yankees @ Cleveland Indians, Delayed 3 p.m. AFN Sports

Saturday 07/31/10

X-Games 16, Live 2 a.m. AFN Xtra
MLB: Los Angeles Dodgers @ San Francisco Giants, Live 9 a.m. AFN Prime Freedom
MLB: Cleveland Indians @ Toronto Blue Jays, Live 10 p.m. AFN Sports

Sunday 08/01/10

BOXING: Juan Manuel Marquez vs. Juan Diaz, Live 4 a.m., AFN Sports
NASCAR: U.S. Cellular 250, Delayed 10 a.m. AFN Xtra
MLB: Texas Rangers @ Los Angeles Angels, Delayed 2 p.m. AFN Sports
MLB: Chicago Cubs @ Colorado Rockies, Live 10 p.m. AFN Xtra

Monday 08/02/10

MLB: Arizona Diamondbacks @ New York Mets, Delayed 7 a.m. AFN Xtra
UFC: Jones vs. Matyushenko, Delayed 10 a.m. AFN Xtra
MLB: New York Yankees @ Tampa Bay Rays, Delayed 2:30 p.m. AFN Sports

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'Inception' can't find its way out of its own maze

By STAFF SGT. RANDALL P. CAREY
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



This review is 1111 characters long. I contemplated making it 1111 question marks. Christopher Nolan's "Inception" posed several philosophical questions about reality, belief and perception. And, since I was left with 1111 questions after watching the movie, I thought that would be an appropriate response. I'll try to offer a little more substance though.

Don't get me wrong, the movie isn't bad, and it's not impossible to follow either. But if you're not looking for a Matrix-style theoretical journey, this film is not for you.

The movie begins with Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio, "Body of Lies") slipping in and out of consciousness on a beach with water washing over him. A man with a gun finds Cobb and the gun hidden on his waist. He is taken to an old man who tells him he has only the gun and a brass top with him, but that he has seen the top before.

The movie suddenly switches to an almost identical setting, but with Cobb nicely dressed in a tuxedo and the man he's talking to, Saito (Ken Watanabe, "The Last Samurai") appears much younger.

The men are discussing extraction, the process of stealing thoughts from someone's dreams. It appears that Cobb is

trying to convince Saito that he must let him into his dreams in order to teach him how to defend against it—but Saito is not so easily fooled. He realizes Cobb actually wants to extract information. Eventually Cobb and his partner, Arthur (Joseph Gordon-Levitt), are cornered in a room with Arthur held at gunpoint by a female acquaintance of Cobb's, Mal (Marion Cotillard, "Public Enemies").

Mal threatens to kill Arthur, but at this point you learn two important things: 1) this is actually a dream; and 2) being killed in a dream only wakes you up, while being wounded will make you feel pain in your dream. After Mal shoots Arthur in the leg, Cobb kills him, waking him up. A lengthy chase ensues filled with gunfire, until Arthur wakes Cobb up from outside the dream. It doesn't take long to realize that this awakened state is also a dream—and that's only the first ten minutes.

For brevity's sake, I'll try to explain the nearly 2 and a half hour film's key points of comprehension more concisely. Mal is actually Cobb's dead wife. She committed suicide, but Cobb is blamed for her death and is continually on the run. Saito, a powerful businessman offers Cobb his freedom if he can perform the opposite of extraction, inception—implanting an idea in someone's mind.

The target is Robert Fischer, Jr. (Cillian Murphy, "Batman Begins"), heir to Saito's biggest rival. The plan is to convince Fischer to dissolve his company. To accomplish the mission

Cobb and Arthur enlist several teammates including Ariadne (Ellen Paige, "Juno") and Eames (Tom Hardy, "Bronson"). The plan is to implant the idea in Fischer's mind while inside of a dream inside of a dream inside of a dream. Wow.

Along the way, you're exposed to some impressive action and superior target interdiction skills by Cobb and Eames, as well as first-rate hand-to-hand combat by Arthur.

Mal becomes the center of the plot, being the motivator of and disruption in almost every scene of the movie. You have to follow closely to realize why.

It took a lot of thought to digest exactly what happened in the movie.

I don't mind an intellectual challenge. And I'm sure the writers of "Inception" thought the film would be just that, and appreciated it for its intricacies and thought provoking rhetoric and storyline. However, sometimes a great idea in someone's own mind does not always translate so clearly in the perception of another. This movie is a textbook example.

Deeper into the movie things got a lot more interesting and made a little more sense. But if the first thing I say when I walk out of a movie is "What?" I have doubts about whether my time was well spent.

DiCaprio, Hardy and Gordon-Levitt were great. However, Paige was annoying in "Juno," annoying on "Saturday Night Live," and annoying in "Inception." Note to the creative staff: Don't try so hard next time. My verdict: C

'The Oracle': A textbook example of metal gone wrong

By CPL. RICH BARKEMEYER
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



I really can't explain why I bought "The Oracle," the latest release by Godsmack. I've never liked this band. Going all the way back to their debut in 1998, I've thought they were painfully derivative, combining the worst elements of post-"Black album" Metallica (namely the vocals) with boring, uninspired guitar work, and lyrics full of tough-guy posturing. Godsmack doesn't have an original bone in their collective bodies; even their name was taken from an Alice in Chains song.

My distaste for Godsmack is hard to quantify. On the surface, I guess I'm supposed to like them. Heavy guitar? Check. Solid drumming? Check. Vocals performed by a guy who is no way qualified to be a singer? You bet. Even though the ingredients are there, Godsmack as a whole is possibly

the worst thing to happen to metal since Cliff Burton's death in 1986.

"The Oracle" does absolutely nothing to change my opinion of Godsmack. The album starts with "Cryin' Like a B****," which is also the first single. "Cryin'" is an ode to the masculinity of lead vocalist/guitarist Sully Erna, and was reportedly written about Motley Crue bassist/AARP member Nikki Sixx, who may or may not have cried when the bands toured together in 2009. Whether or not Sixx wept is debatable; the wretchedness of this song is not.

Apparently, Sully and the boys thought they had a real winner with "Cryin'," because the remainder of the album sounds exactly like it. This is the audio equivalent of a color-by-number picture. Copy a riff from Pantera's "Far Beyond Driven" record, take out the aggression to make it suitable for radio, and add some angst-filled lyrics that sound like they were taken from an 8th-grade creative writing contest, and you have "The Oracle."

And really, why is Sully Erna so riddled with angst? He's

42 years old and he's sold a kajillion albums despite being only marginally talented. If I were him, instead of vocal tracks I would just record the sound of me tap dancing on huge piles of cash. Cheer up, big guy; life isn't all that bad.

On the other hand, this album is that bad. Listening to it from start to finish is like enduring water torture. No individual drop will hurt you, but over an extended period of time, the sheer repetitiveness will drive you to the brink of madness.

While I firmly believe that another complete listening of "The Oracle" would leave me clinically insane, it will have to remain a theory, because I am never listening to this disc again. Ever.

Maybe that was a bit harsh. "The Oracle" isn't the worst album I've ever heard, but it gives me no reason to want to listen to it again. If I want riffs, I'll turn on Crowbar; for anger and aggression, I'll play Hatebreed; for tough-guy lyrics, I'll spin Skarhead or Icepick. This record has no discernible value, and I give it 2/10.

PVT MURPHY'S LAW



<p>Wednesday July 28 6:00 p.m. Inception (PG-13) 9:00 p.m. Killers (R)</p>	Reel Movie Times
<p>Thursday July 29 6 p.m. The Sorcerer's Apprentice (PG) 9 p.m. Inception (PG-13)</p>	
<p>Friday July 30 6 p.m. Ramona and Beezus (G) 9 p.m. Salt (PG-13)</p>	Reel Movie Times
<p>Saturday July 31 2 p.m. The Karate Kid (PG) 5 p.m. Salt (PG-13) 8:30 p.m. Jonah Hex (PG-13) Midnight Salt (PG-13)</p>	Reel Movie Times
<p>Sunday August 01 2 p.m. Jonah Hex (PG-13) 5 p.m. Splice (R) 8:30 p.m. Salt (PG-13)</p>	
<p>Monday August 02 5 p.m. Karate Kid (PG) 8 p.m. Jonah Hex (PG-13)</p>	Reel Movie Times



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Hansen

ABOVE: Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Livengood (left), senior enlisted leader of Special Troops Battalion, United States Forces – Iraq, and 1st Sgt. Enrique Gomez, first sergeant of 387th Human Resource Company, prepare to disassemble a memorial for Sgt. 1st Class John Tobiason on Camp Liberty July 10. Two memorials, Tobiason’s and one for Staff Sgt. Lillian Clamens, will be given to the respective families after being hung here since 2007.

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chad Menegay



ABOVE: Spc. Anthony Bellard, a gunner with C Company, 3rd battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Eunice, La., native, adjusts tire pressure on his Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle July 14 in preparation for a convoy out of Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jeff Hansen

ABOVE: First Sgt. Enrique Gomez, first sergeant of 387th Human Resource Company, takes apart a memorial box for Staff Sgt. Lillian Clamens, a Soldier killed by a rocket attack in 2007. Clamens worked in the building Gomez now occupies, and the memorial is being removed in preparation for the building’s vacancy.

RIGHT: An Iraqi Army flight crew UH-1 Huey flies above Iraq July 19 during a training mission with the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Roland Hale