TASK FORCE Lifeliners

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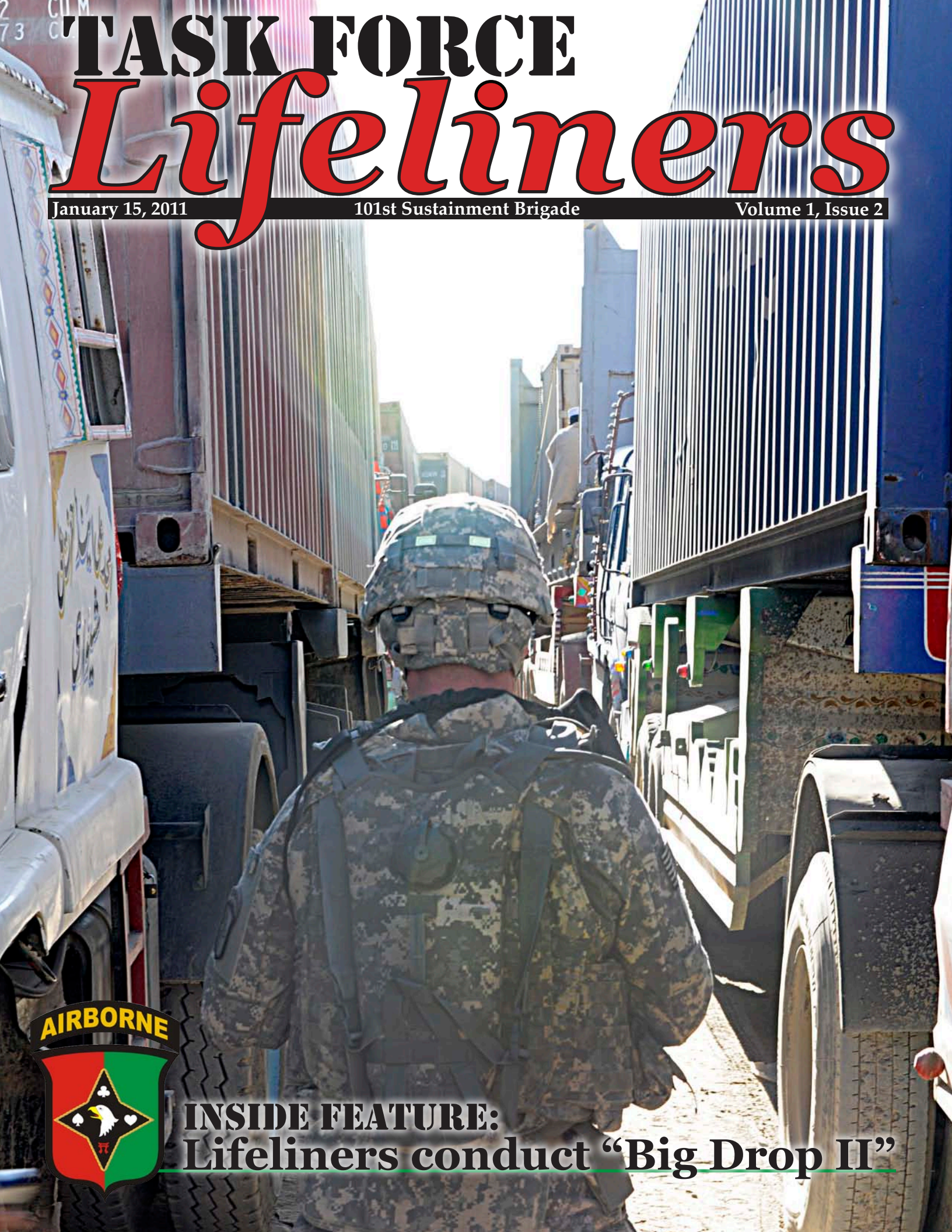

AIRBORNE

INSIDE FEATURE:
Lifeliners conduct "Big Drop II"

IN THIS ISSUE...

From the Commander
Page 3

From the CSM
Page 3

Chaplain's Corner
Page 4

Safety Message
Page 5

"Why I Serve" & "We Serve Too"
Page 6

Announcements
Page 7

"Family ties on enemy lines"
Page 8

"A purpose behind the painting"
Page 9

"The foundations of education"
Page 10

Feature Article:
"Big Drop"
Pages 12-14

"Bagram receives new fuel system"
Page 15

"Pushing the parcels"
Page 16

"A lesson for the leaders"
Page 17

Finance Flash
Page 18

Around BAF
Page 19

17th CSSB
Page 20

"Food for the soul"
Page 22

"A logistical game changer"
Page 23

A day in the Lifeliners
Page 24

Cover photo - Spc. Jason Heiney, team member of the Personal Security Detachment for the 101st Sustainment Brigade, provides security during a mission to the truck staging area outside Bagram Air Field (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Michael Vanpool)

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The Official 101st Sustainment Brigade Newsletter
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From the Commander

Col. Michael Peterman
Commander, Task Force Lifeliners

To all Lifeliners, Family, and Friends

Happy New Year!! We enter 2011 with many of our friends in combat, knowing that as the finest sustainment brigade in the Army, we are more than ready to meet the challenges head-on.

This time of the year we give pause to account for the last year. It has been nothing short of an amazing journey for the Lifeliners. The tireless work your individual sections put in, the dedication to the mission's overall objectives, and the selfless sacrifice you and your family have made to engage in this deployment is critical to our nation's efforts. We always say, "Everyday, there's a Lifeliner in the fight"; yet I am continually amazed at how your dedication to mission accomplishment continues to be key in the success of our Coalition forces' ability to get their jobs done.

The month of December was indeed another for the Lifeliner history books. Our ability to distribute a record-setting amount of mail and care packages to our Soldiers across the battlefield was nothing short of extraordinary. As leaders, we had a chance to learn first-hand how mail distribution works in a combat environment and I cannot say enough about the hard work and dedication from our Lifeliner civilian contractors. This season, we successfully delivered over 101 low-cost low-altitude bundles Dec. 23-25.

Our success as a sustainment brigade is directly linked to our leaders, at all levels, and our dedication to our friends forward. This is the fine leadership of our Officers and Noncommissioned Officers. Their ability to accept challenges, develop innovative plans, and execute effortlessly, speaks volumes to their professionalism and experience. I am grateful to have them as members of the Lifeliner team.

Finally, to our Soldiers and families, just saying "Thank you," is not enough. This Army is a people business—everyday as I look at our brigade headquarters, and around our areas of operation, I see the evidence of your work. I am grateful to you for your selfless attitude. There are some major projects on the horizon that we will play a key role in. I have the utmost confidence in our ability to successfully meet these challenges head-on, as we have in the past. Our efforts with Afghan partners will undoubtedly ensure success on this complicated battlefield.

Again, thank you for all of your efforts. Continue to take care of each other and our teammates forward. May God continue to bless each and every one of you.

Lifeliners! Air Assault!

From the CSM

Cmd. Sgt. Maj. David Thompson
Command Sergeant Major, Task Force Lifeliners

Happy New Year, Lifeliners!!

We've had an eventful holiday season, continuing to provide support to our fellow Screaming Eagles and engage our Afghan partners as they continue the process of developing the tools and resources necessary to become stabilized and self sufficient.

As LL6 has stated, 2011 promises to be an exciting chapter in our brigade's history. We will play an important role not only in ensuring our Soldiers have what they need to accomplish their mission, but also in the exit strategy from Afghanistan. I have the utmost confidence that this great team of Soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers are the right people for ensuring that the mission will be accomplished, and in a timely and effective manner.

I'm reminded of what I told the senior noncommissioned officers when I first arrived at the brigade prior to our deployment: "I surround myself with excellence, and I expect the same from you." I believe that being among the best and brightest will garner nothing less than great results. As I took over as the LL7, I knew instinctively that I had surrounded myself with the type of NCOs who believe as I do, and have the same expectations from themselves and those they lead.

I also want to remind our Soldiers and Family members that while it is difficult to be separated from your loved ones, know that our FRG, your fellow Soldiers and leadership to your left and right are there for you. There is nothing ever too big that you cannot bring to us, and we will do everything we can to ensure that you are taken care of. You are an important and vital part of our organization, and without your contribution, the mission cannot succeed.

To the families back home, please know that we continue to keep our Soldiers safe and well-protected. Your Soldiers are doing a great job and we are very proud of every team member.

Congratulations to all of our Soldiers who were promoted this past month and to those that had a new addition to their Family.

"Lifeliner 7"

Chaplain's Corner

When I lived in Germany, I enjoyed assisting at the chapel at Darmstadt because the music was so very well done. I remember one particular song that was a theme of the Gospel service: "Hold on! Change is coming!" The lady who sang the lead part on that song sang with hands uplifted from the depths of her soul as only she could do. And, everyone had the feeling that change would indeed come to their own particular situations. "Hold on! Change is coming!" is a song of oppression – of being weighed down by the burdens of life. But, it is also a hymn of intense hope that there will be a new day and a new existence. As we enter a new year, we do not know what the year holds, but we can all have hope of a better year with new hopes and dreams.

One of my favorite sermon illustrations is an illustration of hope and change: The story is told of a great storm that passed through northern Europe causing considerable damage to the rose window of the city cathedral. After the storm, the chief caretaker swept up the broken glass from the window. He was hesitant to throw away the glass, so he placed it in an obscure corner of the cathedral as local carpenters boarded up the glassless window.

Time passed. Many visitors came and left, but one particular day a visitor lingered after all the others had left. He asked the caretaker about the windowless rose window. The visitor commented that he had visited the church many years before and remembered well the beauty of the great rose window. He recalled from so long ago the dance of colors on the cathedral floor as the sun light penetrated the multi-colored glass. At the end of their conversation, the visitor asked what had happened to the broken glass. The caretaker replied that he had boxed up the glass and had placed it in a corner out of the way. The visitor asked if he could have the glass. The caretaker gladly gave the broken pieces to him, not knowing anything else to do with the glass.

More than a year passed. The caretaker had not thought about the lone visitor nor the boxes that he took away until the man returned to the cathedral once again. The visitor asked the caretaker to go with him to see an art display. So, the two men left together. They reached their destination, and the visitor escorted the caretaker into a special room. The caretaker gasped as he beheld the beauty before him. He suddenly remembered his sadness over the containers of broken glass, the only remains of the once beautiful rose window. He exclaimed, "The beauty of the stained glass work of art that you have created is far greater than that of the original window. I could have never imagined the depth of beauty and joy you have created out of broken glass that should have been thrown away."

Sometimes, our dreams and hopes are themselves broken. We don't actually want to throw those broken dreams away, so we shove them in some shadowed corner or we carry them around as baggage that affects us in ways perhaps of which we are not aware. We cannot fix the broken dreams; we cannot put the parts back together again; we cannot throw them away. And, yet hope fades that change can ever happen. Where does change come from when we have given up or when we have forgotten about change? Change/hope comes from the God who takes our brokenness and makes something more beautiful than we could have ever dreamed or imagined. God gives us life in the first place, and God gives us life as a new creation, as lives and situations changed by His divine grace.

In the words of *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, written by James and John Johnson to commerate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln in 1899, dare to sing a new song of hope:

"Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us...

We have come over a way that with tears have been watered,
We have come,treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out of the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

Remember, "Hold on! Change is coming!"

Chap. (Maj.) Tammie Crews,
TF Lifeliners Chaplain

SAFETY CHARLIE SAYS...

"Working out in Winter"

As winter set upon us, we realize it's harder for us to maintain some sort of physical activity we are accustom to. With Winter's plummeting temperatures and shorter days can compel even the most dedicated fitness enthusiast to just "skip it," many people find themselves at a loss for how to stay active during the colder months. So it's important we come up with a plan to stay active in winter. Think of opportunities to get active as much as you can. Attitude is also important. Working out in winter doesn't mean you have to go out in the cold, as each Unit has a gym. But don't use this as an excuse to hibernate. Winter activity is important if you want to stay healthy all year round.

If you look at winter exercise as inconvenient, it is. Instead, think of it as an opportunity to stay healthy. Walking is very good exercise. In winter, using a treadmill is a great substitute for walking and running outdoors. Stairs are also very useful; up and down the stairs for 10 minutes. Now, try to increase the intensity if you can. Climbing stairs is a good exercise option. Doing it three times a day at 10 minutes per session can provide you with your daily cardio requirement.

Most organizations have basic gym equipment i.e. dumbbells, jump ropes, an exercise ball, even hula hoops. Having your own equipment at your organization makes it so much easier to workout. You can't find a more convenient set up. It also promotes consistency which is very important in exercise. This will keep the boredom out of working out in winter.

Combine exercise and TV time. Do sit-ups, push-ups, jumping jacks or lunges during commercial breaks of your favorite movie or TV show. Better yet buy a yoga or aerobics DVD and follow along with the program.

If you'd rather go out and have some winter fun, go ahead. Just remember a few safety tips.

Warm up your muscles before going out. Cold weather makes your muscles stiff. Not warming up adequately can make you prone to injury.

You'd be safer if you do your outdoor exercise in daylight. If you can't avoid it, wear reflective materials. It would be much easier for motorists to see you.

Layering your clothes will effectively keep you warm. You can just take off the top layer if exercising gets you warm. Avoid sweating. Wet clothing can easily get you chilled. The cold weather may fool you into thinking you're not thirsty. Truth is, you need to hydrate even if you don't think you need it.

The excesses of the holidays make themselves evident in winter. Skipping your winter exercises can worsen your post-holiday weight gain even more. You have many winter workout options. Find one that suits you best.

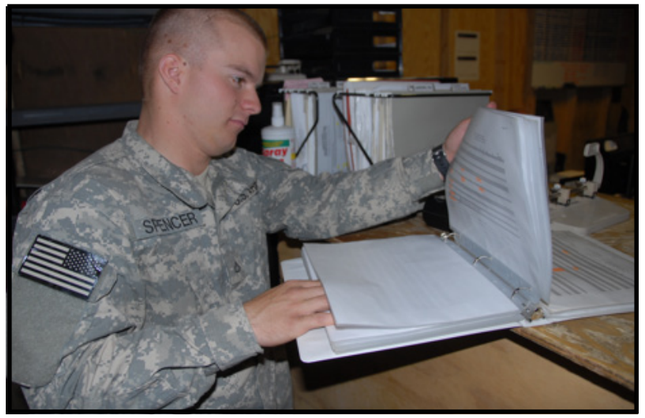
Safety Quote

"I feel, as never before, how justly, from the dawn of history to the present time, men have paid the homage of their gratitude and admiration to the memory of those who nobly sacrifice their lives, that their fellow-men may live in safety and in honor."
-Edward Everett

Safety Tips

- Use the buddy system when lifting weights.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Dress appropriate for outdoor activity.
- Stretch before and after work out.

Why I Serve...



"Growing up as the son of a service member really gave me the opportunity to see all of the advantages the military has to offer. Initially, I joined the Army to further my education, willing to make the sacrifices necessary for me to finish school while in the military. Being a full-time soldier, I view the Army from a different perspective, much differently than I did when I was a dependant. Needless to say, I enjoy what I do. I'm able to gain financial stability for serving my country, along with the support from my family and friends, you can't be that. Currently, I am contemplating whether or not to re-enlist; the best thing about that is I have plenty of time to think about my future."

PFC Andrew Spencer
Supply Clerk for HHC, 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade
Hometown: Union City, Tenn.

...We Serve Too

My name is Laura Spencer and I have been an Army Wife for 25 years. Currently my husband and I are living in Germany while serving overseas. We are the proud parents of two boys also serving our nation. Our oldest is a contractor serving in Iraq while at the same time our youngest is a PFC in the US Army serving in Afghanistan with the 101st Sustainment Brigade. As a wife and a mother, I am extremely proud of my boys for their sacrifice and service to our country during this critical time of our nation's history. Over the past 25 years my boys have seen their dad pack up and leave for many TDY's, six combat deployments, countless training exercises and schools. He has missed many of their birthdays, Christmas's, Cub Scout events, and football and baseball games all for the sacrifice that comes from being a part of this great nation. We have always been a supportive and "Army Strong" family and have always been devoted to our country. I am so proud of our boys for carrying out their duty to our country as well as to follow in their dad's footsteps in protecting the freedom for others.

Supporting our servicemen and women, family members, my husband and my boys has become a way of life for me. The Army has given my family so much over the years it is my duty and honor to give back.

Laura Spencer
Proud Army Spouse and Mom of an Army Soldier

Announcements

Birthdays

Jan. 1 SSG Isidoro Castillo
Jan. 14 SGT Anthony Mgbodille
Jan. 15 PFC Michael Vanpool
Jan. 24 SPC Heather Franke
Feb. 1 SGT Ana Hairston
Feb. 3 PV2 Keon Muldrow

Anniversaries

Jan. 3 SPC Cedrick Thomas
Feb. 8 SPC Eduardo Jones

Riggers of the 11th Quartermaster Detachment stand outside the rigger shed on Bagram Air Field after receiving Army Commendation medals for their work on the "Big Drop."

Awards

Soldiers of the 510th Human Resources Company and the riggers of the 11th Quartermaster Detachment receieved Army Commendation Medals for their work during the holiday season

Promotions

PFC Angela Kyte
PFC Ricky Brunson
SPC Donte Gordon
SSG Helder Depina

Family ties on enemy lines

By Pfc. Donte Gordon
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan December 17, 2010 – As a logistics officer assigned to the 101st Sustainment Brigade, Cpt. Timothy Oysti thought he knew most of the 'ins and outs' of a combat zone.

One thing he did not know, however, was that his younger cousin, Spc. Daniel Nowell, was already stationed at the same location he would be going. It was their first meeting in almost a decade, and neither knew the other was in the Army.

"Sitting here, right now, is the first time we've seen each other in eight years, since our grandfather passed," Oysti said, looking at Nowell, a convoy security specialist for 109th Quartermaster Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

During the past eight years, both Oysti and Nowell have received promotions, educational gain, and even began families of their own. Yet, they remained unaware of the fact that either one of them were even in the United States Army.

Cousins Cpt. Timothy Oysti and Spc. Daniel Nowell of 101st Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division sit side by side for the first time in eight years while serving their country during Operation Enduring Freedom. Oysti and Nowell are the first U.S. Army soldiers in their family. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Donte Gordon)

Oysti said he went to Michigan to attend his grandmother's funeral prior to coming to Fort Campbell and learned from one of Nowell's younger brothers that Daniel was in the Army and preparing to deploy in a few days.

"It's exciting to know that were the only two in our family serving our country, and it's even more amazing to know that we're defending our country side by side," Nowell said.

Nowell, a Virginia native, worked for his father in the plumbing business after completing high school.

The last time Nowell and Oysti were face to face, Nowell wasn't even a legal adult. Oysti was a student at Northern Michigan University, and Nowell had just graduated high school.

"I had no idea I'd join the Army. I was called to do a gig at one of the recruiting offices in town, and one of the NCO's put that 'recruiting' bug in my ear while I was working. I talked to my wife about it, and, well…here I am," Nowell said.

Oysti enlisted in the Army in 1998, and went through the Green-to-Gold program in 2000. He was commissioned an officer in 2004, and promoted to captain in 2007. "I was promoted while in flight on a UH-60 Blackhawk, above Afghanistan" Oysti said. "It was one the coolest things I've been a part of."

Nowell, currently serving overseas for the first time, said when he learned his cousin was coming to Bagram, he went searching for him.

"I was trying to find out everything possible, as well as trying to contact him before (Oysti) deployed," Nowell said. "When all else failed, there was Facebook. Ever since Timothy's been here, we've made sure to keep in contact, sending messages to each other on Facebook as much as possible," he said.

"Different people were telling me what rank they'd heard he was. Some were saying Sergeant Major, others were saying Command Sergeant Major," Nowell said. "I didn't know what to believe."

Nowell said his peers teased him about Oysti being a captain, believing he'd try to use it to his advantage.

"I'm a professional soldier," Nowell said. "I understand he's my blood, and that's what makes saluting him even more special. Heck, I just find it to be pretty dang cool."

Before digging deeper in their past, the two began to share information about their immediate families, what they've endured as soldiers, and what they plan to achieve after returning home.

"My goal is to become a Warrant Officer, something being offered to my MOS for the first time," Nowell said, excited about his opportunity to become an officer, like that of his cousin.

"When I get back to Ft. Campbell, I plan on going to Air Assault School, and hope to get a company command," Oysti said.

Aware of the opportunity to someday work under his older cousin, Nowell uses such a possibility as motivation.

"It'd be amazing to not only work under someone you understand, but also work under someone who understands you," Nowell said. "There's a great chance that what we've began in our family could one day become a legacy," Oysti said.

"It's exciting to know that were the only two in our family serving our country, and it's even more amazing to know that we're defending our country side by side," Nowell said.

"I'm always in my son's ear about serving his country," Oysti said.

"The same thing goes for my brother," Nowell said.

Being the first two members of their family to serve during Operation Enduring Freedom, Oysti and Nowell have made up their minds to dedicate their lives to their country.

"As long as my wife is happy, I'm happy. I'm going to be a soldier as long as I can," Nowell said.

"I plan on retiring from the Army. It's something I enjoy doing," Oysti said.

With the holiday season in full swing, Nowell and Oysti are aware of the duties that may prevent them from seeing each other on Christmas day.

"Between missions and personal tasks, it's hard to keep track of one another, but were going to do our best to see each other on Christmas" Oysti said.

"It's going to make that day of the year much more special than what it already is. Not a lot of soldiers get to see their families around this time of year, even in the states. This is big, and I've considered myself very blessed," Nowell said.

A purpose behind the painting

Spc. Paul Bernal, an ammunition specialist of Alpha Company, 626 Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 101st Sustainment Brigade, looks over his current project inside 101st Sustainment Brigade Headquarters. Bernal has received more than 65 coins for his work in the Army, as well as earning over 6,000 dollars for his personal art projects. (U.S. Army Photo by Pfc. Donte' Gordon)

By Pfc. Donte' Gordon
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan, December 10, 2010 – Just days after the "Transfer of Authority" ceremony, the 101st Sustainment Brigade began remodeling, redesigning, and revamping the Brigade headquarters.

An integral part of that success derives from the talents of Spc. Paul Bernal, an ammunition specialist of Alpha Company, 626th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

"Painting, art, designing in any artistic form, is something I love to do," Bernal said.

The Dallas, Texas native began "tagging" at the age of 15, a term many graffiti artists use to describe their way of displaying art. After having many run-ins with the police, Bernal was told by authorities to express his talents in a more productive manner.

"I was getting into a lot of trouble, and they told me to be more constructive with my talents instead of being involved with the law," he said.

Bernal took their advice to heart, working on his craft and molding himself into a professional 'Fine Tuning' airbrush and painting artist.

"I didn't actually get into Defining Arts until I was 20. At that time, people began paying me to design their children's rooms, and that's when my future got brighter," Bernal said.

Bernal joined the United States Army in 2003, not knowing they'd embrace his gift.

"I had no idea the Army was going to allow me to exploit my talents. I always pictured the Army as being a very stern, gritty organization, pretty much against what I love to do," Bernal said, looking as amazed and shocked the day he found out using his gift was accepted.

"They've embraced my talents, and encourage me to continue," he said.

Bernal began multiple airbrush and painting projects for the Lifeliners in December, displaying various designs inside and outside Brigade headquarters. The "Death Star", the nickname given to the Lifeliner's compass symbol, is a focal point of Bernal's projects.

Bernal also began decorating the brigade's command parking spaces, under the direction of current Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. David Thompson. Thompson was the former 626th BSB command sergeant major.

"He's very diligent," Thompson said. "He ensures his assigned tasks are complete for taking on any personal projects," he said.

"I have pushed him to stay in the Army and become promotable. He'll make a fine noncommissioned officer," Thompson said, nodding his head in certainty.

"I do a lot of my projects for units," Bernal said, scrolling

MORE "PAINTING" ON PAGE 11

The foundations of education

Americans, ANA team up to provide school with desks, chairs

By Pfc. Michael Vanpool
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BALKH PROVINCE, Afghanistan, Dec. 30, 2010 – They had been waiting all morning.

When they heard the trucks arrived, they jumped from the concrete floors of the bare classrooms and ran outside.

"We're glad to sit down and study," the school kids said, surrounded by the new desks and chairs, as well as an opportunity for education.

The 87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, and the 5th Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 209th Afghan National Army Corps, brought 75 desks and chairs to the Khasapaz Primary School in the Dehdadi District.

"Today is a good day to help solve the problems with our children and give them desks and chairs," said Maj. Mohammad Sali, executive officer of 5th Kandak.

The 87th CSSB's Command Emergency Response Program teamed up with the 5th Kandak to help bring the desks to the school.

"CERP is a way for commanders to make positive humanitarian aid effect in their area of operations," said 1st Lt. Pierce Pettis, CERP project purchasing officer for the 87th CSSB. "With CERP, our commander can reach beyond the walls of the [forward operating base]."

The 87th CSSB CERP team met with the district village elders of and Wali Shah, the sub-governor of Dehdadi, to find ways to provide assistance for the people.

The Khasapaz Primary school was recently built and has 1100 students who attend, but it lacked desks and chairs. Some students were turned away from the school before the chairs and desks arrived, Shah said.

"Education is getting very good and the children have a brighter future," Shah said.

"This a beginning. Hopefully we can continue this and help the children out."

Many groups gathered together to build the school and to ensure the children receive an education.

The Afghan National Police provide security so that the children can go to school safe and without fear, Shah said. The land was donated was a Haji in the village and built by the education department, Sali said.

"I'm asking village elders to motivate the children with their education," he said. "If you don't have an education, the enemy can come and get you. If you have an education, the enemy will never reach you."

Khasapaz Primary School project is an opportunity for the ANA and provincial governments to show the people of Afghanistan they are willing to help them.

"When these kids grow up, they will remember the ANA helped them and brought desks to them," Pettis said. "It will strengthen the bond between the people and the government."

The Dehdadi district has over 30,000 students in attendance. The ANA and 87th CSSB CERP team will carry on and provide aid to the area with future projects. "We will continue the operations because many schools need supplies and wells," said Sali.

Pettis said the CERP team of the 87th CSSB will continue their efforts in the Dehdadi district by directly providing humanitarian aid through education, civic centers and municipal projects to help improve lives.

The project giving desks and chairs to Khasapaz Primary School was the 87th CSSB CERP team's first major project since being formed in early November. They provided extra wood to local Afghans, and they donated concrete to a civic center, where village elders gather to hold meetings, Pettis said.

"The best way to inspire them is to show them we are here to help them," he said. "The more you educate them, the better off the kids will be."

"Education is the best thing for our country," said Chudam Rasul Rustahi, chairman of the Dehdadi District Education Department. "Education can help build our country."

Local workers load one of the 75 desks built for the Khasapaz Primary School here in a joint effort between the Command Emergency Response Team of the 87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade and the 5th Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 209th Afghan National Army Corps.(U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Michael Vanpool)

(Top right) Students of the Khasapaz Primary School look on during a ceremony for the recption of 75 new desks and chairs. Prior to receiving the desks from the Command Emergency Response Team of the 87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade and the 5th Kandak, 3rd Brigade, 209th Afghan National Army Corps, the 1,100 students in attendance sat through classes on bare concrete and rugs. (Bottom right) 1st Lt. Pierce Pettis, the project purchasing officer for the Command Emergency Response Program of the 87th Combat Sustainment Cupport Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, speaks with local children while loading 75 desks and chairs to be delivered to the Khasapaz Primary School here. (U.S. Army photos by Pfc. Michael Vanpool)

"PAINTING"

through his iPod for the next song.

As Bernal worked on his assigned tasks, he dressed himself with a focused persona. He puts on his iPod, drowning out the sounds of hammers, nails and sidebar conversations, and zones in fully on his own work. Bobbing his head, Bernal carries on his mission with hip-hop melodies in his ear.

"A lot of times, I don't get paid. I'm either rewarded a coin, or not rewarded at all. In the end, it's about doing what you love to do. To me, that's worth more than anything money can buy. To me, it's about gratitude, honor," Bernal said.

Bernal is on his third combat deployment, the second with the 3rd BCT. He has received 26 coins during this deployment for his artwork, raising his total stash to 65.

"I'm a big fan of coins," he said.

"The biggest coin I've ever received was in the shape of an axe," Bernal said, holding up his hands, separating them as if he were measuring it. "It was given to me by a Brigadier General. He said he'd given it to me "for making the 4th Infantry Division logo look immaculate", Bernal said, smiling from ear to ear.

As Bernal continued to display his skills for the Lifeliners, he began to talk about the many influential people in his life, encouraging him to continue his hard work and dedication.

"My biggest supporter has always been my wife," Bernal said. "She's even encouraged me to open up my own business," he said.

"The eldest of my twins, Ariel, is already at a level that I wasn't when I was her age. Her mother encourages her to follow my every move. She already has a drafting table, including all of the art materials she wants," Bernal said.

Bernal began telling more stories of his projects, highlighting some very interesting moments.

"I hand painted a logo for a company in an Aviation Brigade from Fort Hood, Texas. Without even being completely done, the command sergeant major told me I had to paint over it, telling me it counted as graffiti. The very same day, he called me into his office, sat me down, and wanted me to paint the same logo on his wall," Bernal said, laughing hysterically.

As Bernal began to set up for his next project, he began to talk about life after the Army, pointing out that he's a fairly talented tattoo artist as well.

"I feel as though it's my duty as a soldier, a husband, and a father to complete my initial term honorably," he said. "When I'm finished here in the Army, I'll continue to use my talents abroad. This time, I'll be the solution, not the problem."

(editor's note: Bernal has earned over $6,000 for his art work, the largest bidder offering 450 dollars for one project.)

Lifeliners conduct "Big Drop II"

Riggers, unit ministry team deliver bundles for Soldiers during holidays

By Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan, December 22, 2010 – The 101st Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, dropped 101 bundles of Christmas cheer to the Soldiers living in remote forward operating bases throughout eastern Afghanistan Dec. 22-25.

Dubbed, "Big Drop II," the Lifeliners are using the low-cost, low-altitude aerial delivery system to get some much-needed supplies, as well as some extra goodies like snacks and personal hygiene items to the troops. The brigade conducted a similar aerial delivery drop during its last deployment to Afghanistan in 2008.

MORE "BIG DROP" ON PAGE 16

"BIG DROP"

The delivery mission is a combined effort between the brigade and its unit ministry team, who received donations from families and community groups at Fort Campbell, Ky.

"There are still people trying to send things to us even now," said U.S. Army Chaplain (Maj.) Tammie Crews, TF Lifeliners chaplain. "The thought was to be able to do something a little special (for) the FOBs that don't have a lot of the amenities we have here at Bagram."

Crews said the Soldiers assigned to the FOBs face many hardships and dangerous situations daily and she wanted to let them know they're being thought of during the Christmas holiday.

The brigade trained using LCLA for the past 18 months. Using smaller aircrafts and non-perishable parachutes, supplies can be dropped directly into a FOB or a nearby landing zone from a minimum 150 feet in the air. This method is used in lieu of combat logistics patrols and eliminates the risk of Soldiers being victims of roadside bomb attacks.

The UMT and parachute riggers assigned to the 11th Quartermaster Detachment, 101st Sust. Bde., spent most of December gathering and packing the bundles for the drop. Col. Michael Peterman, TF Lifeliners commander, said being able to deliver the bundles directly to the FOBs was a way to ensure a better Christmas for those Soldiers far from home.

"Because these packages are coming directly from hometown America, we wanted to ensure that nothing got left on the side," he said.

Peterman allowed the riggers to fly on the aircrafts and watch as the bundles were dropped onto the FOBs.

"The riggers are a very special group," he said. "Their motto is, 'I will always be sure.' They're the ones who have to ensure 100 percent accuracy in those bundles because lives depend on them."

Sgt. Joshua Wetzel, a 11th QM Det. squad leader, said it was good to know the riggers were able to do some things for the Soldiers to make them feel better during the holidays.

"We're able to get some stuff to them that they want to have, as well as what they need," he said.

Spcs. Nathaniel Mumbulo and Johnny Perez, both with the 11th QM Det., were two of the riggers who flew on the drops.

They said, compared to their fellow Soldiers assigned to outlying FOBs, having access to a Post Exchange to purchase snacks and other goods, decent Internet access, hot meals daily and a relatively safe environment, minus the occasional indirect fire from insurgents, they understand they have it pretty good.

"I can't imagine what it must be like to have the delivery drops come. We're their only source of survival," Perez said.

Mumbulo said he put on a harness and helped push cargo out of the aircraft. The experience made him appreciate how fortunate he was in doing his job, he said.

"It puts things in perspective," Mumbulo said. "We're not directly in the fight like many of those Soldiers are, but we do serve an integral part of their mission."

Mumbulo also said it was good to know he was helping a Soldier enjoy Christmas a little better.

"We got to be Santa Claus for them," he said. ✦

(from top to bottom) Pfc. John Schwartz, a rigger for the 11th Quartermaster Detachment, 101st Sustainment Brigade, loads care packages on a bundle. • Pfc. Jorge Nieves, a rigger with the 11th QM Det., secures the bundles to be dropped. • The Riggers of the 11th QM Det. prepare several of the 101 bundles. • One of the bundles about to be dropped to a remote forward operating bases in RC-East. • Pfc. Ashley Way, a rigger for the 11th QM Det., and Staff. Sgt. Jeffrey Duncan, chaplain's assistant for the 101st Sustainment Brigade, tie down bundles. • Two of the 101 bundles are dropped from a CASA-212 to a FOB below. (U.S. Army photos by Pfc. Michael Vanpool)

Bagram receives new fuel system

Fuel hydrants on flight line cut refueling times in half

By Pfc. Michael Vanpool
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan, Jan. 2, 2011 – The construction of a new fuel delivery system is in place on the flight line here to quickly refuel aircraft on Bagram Air Field.

The 101st Sustainment Brigade oversaw construction of the project and will be used by the Air Force here to refuel aircraft on Bagram Air Field.

"The fuel hydrant system is designed to alleviate and decrease the amount of movement on the air field," said Warrant Officer Nusem Dorlouis, petroleum system technician of the petroleum section, Support Operations, 101st Sustainment Brigade. "It cuts the refueling time in half."

The hydrant system was designed for the Air Force and paid for by the Army, Dorlouis said. Currently, airmen of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing are using the system to fuel American, Coalition and contractor aircraft on Bagram Air Field.

This is the first completed project of a fuel hydrant system in the Afghanistan theater of operations, Dorlouis said. The hydrants are similar to the refueling systems stateside.

"The system upgrades the base refueling capability from tactical storage to a legacy system comparable to a system found in any major airlift base or commercial port," said Senior Master Sgt. Arnaldo Rodriguez-Matos, 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron fuels flight superintendent. "It allows us to save wear and tear on the tactical equipment and get quality fuel on demand."

The hydrant system is part of the Bagram Air Field Fuel Master Plan started in 2007, Dorlouis said. The plan will refuel aircraft and other vehicles more efficiently throughout Bagram Air Field.

The $130 million constant pressure system consists of two 1.1 million gallon storage tanks and more than two miles of pipes, Rodriguez-Matos said.

Multiple fuel trucks were dispatched to refuel aircraft on the flight line before the hydrant system became operational in December.

"The Air Force can refuel two or three planes at the same time like a pumping station," said Sgt. 1st Class Montenez Smith, noncommissioned officer in charge of the petroleum section, SPO, 101st Sustainment Brigade. "Instead of 10 or 12 fuel trucks, they can just pump straight from the hydrant."

One R-12 fuel truck and one operator will now be dispatched to handle any size fuel request to the aircraft in about half the time, Rodriguez-Matos said.

Airmen of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing and engineers of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District - North connect an R-12 fueling truck to the new fuel hydrant system on the Bagram Air Field flight line, Dec. 21. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Montenez Smith)

The hydrant system is operated by the Air Force on Bagram Air Field, because it takes certain skill sets to operate and be trained on the system, Dorlouis said.

"We're very happy to use the new system. It makes everyone's job, including the air crews, much easier and more efficient," said Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Whitworth, 455th ELRS noncommissioned officer in charge of refueling maintenance.

The 101st Sustainment Brigade oversaw the construction of the fuel hydrant system, Dorlouis said. The hydrants were built in to the flight line by contractors with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Bagram supervising and ensuring quality and assurance on the project.

The Lifeliners will continue to oversee manning of the hydrant system. "The Army will need the Air Force to provide contracting for appropriate usage," Dorlouis said.

Dorlouis was named as the Contracting Officer Representative for the month of December by the Bagram Regional Contracting Center Flight for his work on the fuel pipeline project.

"This project has required an extensive amount of coordination on [Dorlouis's] part and impacts many people on base," said Cpt. Rebecca Emerson, chief for the Construction Flight of Centcom Contracting Command. ✦

Retention

For reenlistment information regarding your future Army career, contact your unit reenlistment office

MSG Michael Bonfardine
101st Sustainment Brigade
Career Counselor

Pushing the parcels

By Pfc. Michael Vanpool
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan, Dec. 10, 2010 – Warrant Officer Thaddeus Lumar says mail is about transportation, storage and relationships.

"When you receive 200,000 pounds of mail a day, a slow day for mail in Bagram during the holiday season," said Lumar, the mail movement officer in charge of the Bagram Regional Mail Distribution Center, "you have to have enough space to store the mail from the elements, and enough transportation assets to get it out of Bagram before the [U.S. Central Command] mandate of 72 hours."

The holiday season is the busiest time of the year for postal centers. Families and friends send letters, cards and care packages to their loved ones across the U.S. and overseas.

The 510th Human Resources Company, 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade at Bagram Air Field makes sure that mail reaches the hands of thousands of servicemembers deployed to Afghanistan.

The Bagram Regional Mail Distribution Center, operated by the 510th HR Co., receives mail for five Army Post Offices and 14 Satellite APOs throughout Afghanistan.

The Bagram RDMC receives hundreds of thousands of pounds of mail each day from the Military Distribution Center in Bahrain, said First Lt. Liz Evans, executive officer for the 510th HR Co. The MDC in Bahrain is the central hub for all military mail for forces deployed in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility.

The Soldiers and civilian contractors at the RDMC prepare for incoming pallets of mail from Bahrain before the plane lands on Bagram, so that it will be processed within 24 hours, Evans said.

All mail is documented by date of arrival to guarantee it moves to its next destination within 72 hours, and it is sorted by zip code, Evans said. The zip codes tell the postal workers which Forward Operating Base or Combat Outpost to send the letters and packages.

There is constant communication between the Bagram RDMC, the outlying FOBs, contractors and transportation while the mail is processing at Bagram, Lumar said.

"When 300,000 pounds of mail arrives two, three days in a row, there is no room for error when it comes to onward movement," said Maj. Marilyn Walls, commander of the 510th HR Co. "We simply do not have the storage space for that amount of mail, so we move it. We work side by side with the contractors and the Air Force to ensure the flow thru of mail is constant."

Army Post Offices at the FOBs receiving the pallets of mail from Bagram break down incoming mail to the unit level and coordinate with Brigade Support Battalions to ensure the mail reaches the Soldier, Evans said.

The Bagram RMDC and outlying APOs prepare for the sharp rise in the amount of mail during November and December.

"Mail volumes increase 250% during the holidays," Evans said, "so augmentees and volunteers are a great benefit to the mail processes and always appreciated."

The Bagram RDMC received seven augmentees from the 1/376th Postal Platoon and the 3rd Human Resources Sustainment Command to assist during the holiday season, Evans said. "It may seem like the extra help is minimal," she said "but one person working a 12-hour shift can potentially pitch 5,000 pounds of mail. Any additional volunteers make a difference."

Soldiers across Bagram AF are volunteering their time to help the letters and packages reach the servicemembers across Afghanistan.

"I never understood how mail works until I volunteered," said Sgt. Shenna Keller, a volunteer for the 510st HR Co. "Now, I know just how much time and energy is needed to ensure each package goes to the correct unit mail bin. I don't know how people do it every day. I've never seen so much mail in my life."

The 510th HR Co. arrived at Bagram AF in early 2010, and they have spent the past several months guaranteeing that all mail arrives at its final destination.

"We have been working mail for ten months, 24 hours a day," said Evans, "it's all we think about, and we will not accept failure."

Contractors with the Bagram Regional Mail Distribution Center unload pallets of mail at Bagram Air Field. The Bagram RMDC unloads at least 200,000 pounds of mail daily during the holidays. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Donte Gordon)

A lesson for the leaders

Lifeliners take on the daunting task of mailroom operations

By Pfc. Donte Gordon
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan, Dec. 16, 2010 – Leaders of the 101st Sustainment Brigade spent the day familiarizing themselves with Military postal operations and assisting in the distribution of increased mail during the holiday season.

Key leaders of Task-Force Lifeliner visited the Bagram Air Field Mail Distribution Center, separating letters and packages of all sorts. The exercise was part of the brigade's Leadership Professional Development training.

When the working day was complete, the Lifeliner family distributed 132,000 pounds of mail, as well as gaining a new found respect for the 130 postal workers who handle a task as hefty as this one every day of the year.

Before the working began, leaders were briefed by Warrant Officer Thaddeus Lumar, mail movement officer for the 510th Human Resources Company, 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, and taken to each area of the flight line that plays an important part of the distribution process.

Then the work began.

The team was separated and assigned to specific areas of the distribution center. Command Sgt. Maj. Katrina Najee, command sergeant major of 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, manned the forklift, transporting bundles of mail to the key leaders for distribution.

"What can I say, I've got skills," Najee said, handling the forklift with style.

Meanwhile, the Lifeliner officers were hard at work, lifting and sorting packages alongside the civilian workforce of Bagram Air Field.

"It was great to see the rest of the staff get out there and really understand how important the mail distribution works," said Lt. Col. Robert Davis, commander of the Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

"Everyone was learning a lot, as well as asking some very good questions. Many of the NCO's asked questions their soldiers ask, that way they could share with them the information they've received," Davis said.

The Soldiers worked diligently throughout the distribution process to complete the task at hand, having a good time with one another and sustaining a high level of motivation.

"Receiving mail around this time of year is very important from a moral prospective," said Maj. Mario Washington, personnel officer in charge for the 101st Sustainment Brigade. "The importance cannot be overrated around this time of year."

Along with the distribution of packages, other Lifeliner leaders took on the responsibility of letter distribution.

"Where we were…that was hard stuff," said Sgt. Maj. Doug Emmons, operations sergeant major for the 101st Sustainment Brigade.

"Attention to detail is much required for that specific task. It's easy to have a letter in your hand and just throw it in the wrong delivery bag. Yet, at the same time, you have to think about that soldier who's waiting, and that's what motivates you to do the right thing," Emmons said.

The day's event kicked off with a visit from 101st Airborne Division Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Schroeder.

Schroeder, a graduate of Thomas Edison State College, covered many topics regarding the 101st Sustainment Brigade's mission, as well as embracing their arrival.

"Lifeliners, I'm glad you're here," Schroeder said to each soldier in the room. "You all have made a difference in not only the 101st Airborne Division, but our nation as a whole."

"Standards and discipline go a long way. Let's continue to do the right thing, and make our country proud of what we've accomplished," Schroeder said.

Soldiers with Task-Force Lifeliner help distribute mail to forward operating bases throughout Afghanistan. Lifeliners helped distribute 135,000 pounds of mail, about half of the weight handled by the postal clerks a day prior to the Professional Development Exercise. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Donte Gordon)

FINANCE FLASH

Savings Deposit Program

What is SDP?

- SDP pays 10 percent annual interest on deposits made by qualified service members, compounded quarterly.
- Soldiers are able to contribute to their SDP account on a monthly basis.
- The maximum amount that can be contributed per month is limited to the Soldier's unalloted income which is the amount remaining after the collection and payment of all existing taxes, allotments and debt obligations.
- Total contributions for the year may not exceed $10,000, and interest will only accrue on principal and interest up to $10,000.
- Deposits to the program made on or before the 10th of the month accrue interest from the 1st of the month.
- Deposits made after the 10th of the month accrue interest from the first day of the following month.

How do I enroll in SDP?

- Soldiers are able to make deposits into the SDP after serving 30 consecutive days in a designated area or by spending one day per month for three consecutive months in a designated area.
- In order to establish your SDP account, visit your local finance office with a copy of a current LES, and make a deposit by cash, check or money order.
- Active Duty Members only may make deposits by allotment. With an appropriate power of attorney, outside parties are authorized to make deposits into the SDP program, as long as the deposit does not exceed the service member's monthly unalloted income.
- A remark will appear monthly on your LES indicating the amount of money, to include interest, you have earned.

Can I withdraw my money form SDP?

- Withdrawls are limited, during the time within the designated area, to those necessary to preserve the health or welfare of the service member ot their family.
- However, you may withdraw quarterly any interest which causes your account to exceed the $10,000 limit.

What happens when I redeploy?

- Interest will continue to accrue for up to 90 days after redeployment.
- After 90 days, the balance of the SDP account will be sent to the bank account or address provided by the servicemember.

Provided by the Bagram Finance Office
DSN (318) 481-6722

Around BAF

Chapel Services

Enduring Faith Chapel

Catholic Mass
Saturday, 7;45 p.m.

Protestant Traditional Service
Sunday, 8:30 a.m.

Protestant (ChapelNext) Service
Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic Mass
Sunday, 12:30 p.m.

Protestant (Unplugged) Service
Sunday, 6:30 p.m.

Aviation Chapel

Protestant Service
Sunday, 7 p.m.

AMC Chapel

Protestant Service
Sunday, 8 pm.

Warrior Chapel

Catholic Mass
Saturday, 4 p.m.

Protestant Service
Saturday, 10 a.m.

For Information call:
Enduring Faith Chapel
431-3045

Pool, Movies, Dominoes, Cards

All day and night at the Lifeliner Lounge

Salsa Night

Every Thursday and Saturday from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m. at Green Beans

Bible Study

Every Tuesday from 6 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the Lifeliner Lounge Theater

Hip-Hop Night

Every Friday night at 9 p.m. at the 8-Ball MWR

Rock Band Night

Every Wednesday from 8 p.m. until midnight at the 8-Ball MWR

Bingo

Monday & Thursday at 8 a.m., Friday at 7:30 p.m., Saturday at 12:45 a.m. at the Vulture's Nest in Camp Cunningham

17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

"Always Ready"

Task Force 17 held a battalion promotions, awards, reenlistments, and patch ceremony, Dec. 10, to recognize personnel across the battalion for their accomplishments. The battalion commander proudly promoted one Staff Sergeant, three Sergeants, and five Soldiers. In addition, six personnel reenlisted into the Active Army. Awards presented to the Soldiers included 8 Army Achievement Medals, 25 Combat Action Badges, 15 Certificates of Achievements. Also, both the 592nd Ordnance Company and 919th Inland Transfer Cargo Company conducted a Patch Ceremony for their Soldiers to proudly display their combat tour. The ceremony concluded with remarks by the brigade Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Thompson.

919th Inland Cargo Transit Company

919th Inland Cargo Transit Company Soldiers have been putting a lot of sweat equity into their latest project to improve cargo throughput on Bagram Air Field. The Joint Distribution Management Center, or JDMC, has been in the works for over five weeks and is a combined effort between the sustainment brigade and Task Force 17. 919th ICTC is the single biggest player in the new distribution center and is relocating their Tactical Operation Center operations as part of the integration. 919th ICTC Soldiers are busy improving work areas in preparation for the highly anticipated move. During a recent visit to the JDMC, Soldiers could be seen hard at work. Sgt. Last and Spc. Vatter are cooks by trade but have temporarily traded their ladles for a pair of crimpers. They ran data cables for the 919th TOC. When asked what he thought of the new TOC Spc. Vatter replied: "I believe it is a good thing. We had two or three different sections working in one 8′ X 20′ container. The new TOC will allow us to work more efficiently with the proper amount of desks to accommodate the Soldiers working each shift in each section."

Staff Sgt. Schweitzer is a carpenter by trade and is able to put his skills to good use. He states that "I did a little of this and that. I built the walls, re-enforced the floors, shelving, doors. We did what we needed to do to make the project happen." After wiping the sweat from their brows at the end of the day, only one thing is sure: There is a great sense of accomplishment and pride within the 919th.

2123rd Transportation Company

The Soldiers of the 2123rd were honored to be visited by Kentucky's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Edward Tonini. The TAG's visit followed a Christmas dinner with the Soldiers" families back in Richmond, Kent.

During his visit, Tonini visited with company leadership to get a deeper understanding of the unit's mission here in Afghanistan. He also spent time with the Soldiers, listening to their ideas for ways to improve future deployments and sharing stories from home with them. Sgt. Fugitt was honored to have dinner with Kentucky's highest ranking General Officer, stating that: "It shows that he really cares about the troops under his command, to come all the way over here just to listen to us and visit with us. That meant a lot [to us]."

The General also took part in the company's awards ceremony, presenting Combat Actions Badges to 12 Soldiers who had been engaged by the enemy during convoy operations. One of the Soldiers receiving their CAB's by General Tonini was 2123d Transportation Company Commander, Cpt. John Moore. "It's not every day you get awarded by a General Officer" he states, "which made it an exciting and memorable experience for all the Soldiers receiving awards, as well as all the Soldiers present for the ceremony."

Tonini was accompanied by the State Chief of Staff, Col. Rondale Turner and the State Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Armstrong. The visit was a morale booster for the troops who may have started feeling some of the holiday blues here in Afghanistan.

Please join the CJTF 101 Equal Oppurtunity Team in celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday

MLK March starting at the Enduring Faith Chapel at 6 a.m., on Jan. 17, 2011
Breakfast and Program following the march at the MWR Clamshell
Guest Speaker: Apostle Preston Harris
Musical Selections by Enduring Faith Chapel Choir
Dance Selections by Enduring Faith Chapel Mime and Praise Team
Dress: Uniform of the Day/ Appropriate Service PT Uniform
Sponsored by CJTF 101 EO, Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan

A logistical game changer

101st Sustainment Brigade Commander Col. Michael Peterman discusses economic development plans with Brig. Gen. M. Zaman Dlawar, Hairatan District Police Chief, as part of their key leader engagements in the Hairatan District. The Lifeliners will play a crucial role in the development of a distribution network running from Central Europe to Northern Afghanistan. (courtesy photo)

Lifeliners take on Hairaton Gate project

By Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BALKH PROVINCE, Afghanistan, Jan. 11, 2011 – An ambitious railroad project could see an increase in cargo supply movements and potentially create strong economic development and stability for the Northern Afghanistan community.

101st Sustainment Brigade Commander Col. Michael Peterman and members of his staff spent several days visiting with key government officials in the Hairaton district to discuss plans to re-establish a distribution network in the north from Europe.

Most of the ground freight in that region comes through Pakistan. "To say that it's problematic is an understatement," Peterman said. "For all the interruptions, attacks, theft, corruption …it has a negative effect on combat power. It can be a game-changer logistically if we get it right."

The Hairaton Gate crossing is the only border crossing point with a rail line, according to Peterman. The Lifeliner's role in the project would be to tie the infrastructure in Northern Afghanistan to that network, he said.

The brigade sent a team to Hairaton Gate to help build container yards for the project. Peterman referred to Gen. David Petraeus' initiative on helping get the Northern Distribution Network – a network of trains, ports and airplanes coming directly from Central Europe into Afghanistan- run efficiently.

It would also mean the brigade would coach, mentor and teach Afghan commerce, business and military leaders on how to conduct cross-border logistics in Hairaton, he said.

"The truth is, that freight is going to come. We have to figure out how to educate the Afghans to make sure it moves efficiently down to the rest of the battle space. We'll be critical to have in terms of coaching and monitoring, along with our Afghan partners," Peterman said.

The commander said while the focus in Regional Command East has been counterinsurgency and security (with the intent to gain a space for economics to grow), the Northern region has a strong governor and security.

"We have an opportunity, with that rail line and commercial trucking, to move that portion of the country forward economically and also reinforce governance for tens of millions of dollars that's going to come across that port in the next year that's going to go directly to Afghan taxpayers," he said.

Peterman said he has spent time with the Hairaton District Governor Atta and other key officials trying to understand, "Afghanistan's human terrain."

"We had a great dialogue with Gov. Atta, as well as daily meetings with the port authority … to let him know what this means to him economically. He's a very smart man, and he understands developmentally what this means to his country," he said.

Peterman said conversations with the district sub-governor raised concerns about the negative impact the projects would have on the community, such as children being struck by trucks

"Those concerns are no different than a small town in America that's right next to a rail hub, if you can picture it," he said. "If we put Afghans to work, it will have less negative effects on his community," he said.

Peterman said engagements by USAID, the European Union and others are also coming into play regarding Afghanistan's economic future.

He also said the project fits in with President Obama's intent of having combat troops leave Afghanistan by 2014.

"The trains are going to have to get that combat power out some way," he said.✦

Food for the soul

By Spc. Donte Gordon
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan January 7, 2011 – Ministry teams and soldiers of 101st Sustainment Brigade gathered for fellowship during a day of rest, setting themselves aside from the combat zone and taking advantage of spiritual nourishment.

The Prayer Breakfast began with encouraging words from 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Leslie Caballero, who told the soldiers of Task-Force Ready to embrace their spirituality, take the days of combat one day at a time, and encouraging them to always pray.

"This is an opportunity for the soldiers to receive some words of encouragement…take a break from the fight," 17th CSSB Chaplain (Capt.) Joseph Palermo said. "This gives soldiers time to reflect on their faith. The Sergeant Major and I wanted this to be an enjoyable event," Palermo said.

The message to the soldiers keyed in on using God as a resource, even in the midst of trying times. Soldiers were also made aware that God helps us make the right decisions, and is able to be trusted with the lives of all our fellow soldiers.

"I feel as though this is a very uplifting time for people. It helps them feel better about themselves. It'd be great to have this type of gathering once a month," said Chaplain (Maj.)Tammie Crews, Brigade Chaplain of 101st Sustainment Brigade.

"They breakfasts help to build inner strength, look at the bigger picture in life…reflect," Crews said.

Palermo also prayed for the soldiers in need, asking God to restore their minds as they travel inbound and outbound, making their way throughout the combat zone, allowing them to have a smooth transition.

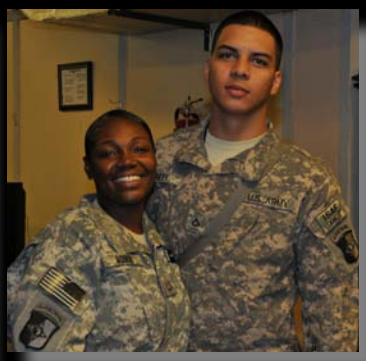
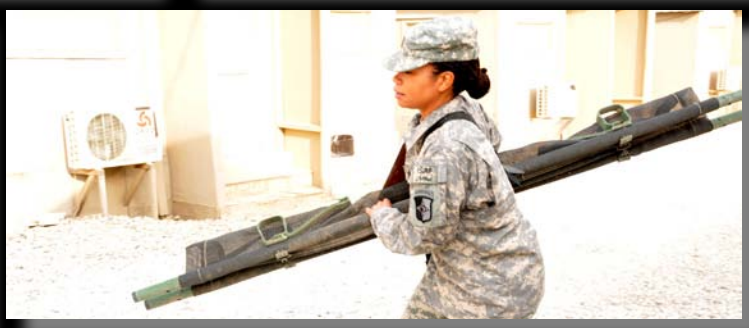
"The key is to provide religious support to the soldiers," said Chaplain (Capt.) Vincent Hardy, 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade. "The purpose of the prayer breakfast is to give the soldiers a moment to relax, fellowship, and clear their minds," Hardy said.

Although the prayer breakfast hasn't been implemented into the units' battle rhythm, several Soldiers said they believe that it should be.

"It'd be nice to put something like this in the battle rhythm. The more it happens, the more soldiers talk about it…the bigger the turnout," Hardy said.

"Messages of hope and sustainment are needed here in the combat zone more so than in Garrison. It's a dramatic difference back home because of the relaxed environment…not the same here," Hardy said.

As the mornings' event came to a close, amazing grace was played on the soprano saxophone by Capt. Jonathan McDougal, 17th CSSB Equipment Readiness Branch officer in charge.✦

Staff Sgt. Jeffery Duncan, chaplain's assistant of the 101st Sustainment Brigade, bows his head in solitude, led in prayer by Chap. (Cpt.) Joseph Palermo, chaplain for the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade. Soldiers throughout the brigade gathered for fellowship, setting aside their tasks in combat, and taking time to reflect on their spirituality. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Donte Gordon)

A day in the Life Liners