

TASK FORCE *Lifeliners*

March 15, 2011

101st Sustainment Brigade

Volume 1, Issue 3



INSIDE FEATURE: Airdrop weathers storm

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Cover photo - The 131st Transportation Company, a Pennsylvania National Guard unit, delivers cargo and supplies through a mountain pass in the Paktiya Province.



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The Official 101st Sustainment Brigade Newsletter
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From the Commander

To all Lifeliners, Family, and Friends,

TF Lifeliner has excelled within the very dangerous Afghan mountains in the last two months. While the winter weather changes and gives way to the spring season, Soldiers of the Lifeliner team continue to accomplish all that is asked of them in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. From the Soldiers braving the difficult terrain to those that have put up with the harshest weather Afghanistan has to offer, every Lifeliner has sacrificed their time and effort to ensure that all Soldiers get what they need to achieve success.

In addition to the thousands of miles driven over the winter in convoys, multitudes of bundles dropped from the sky, and the millions of gallons of fuel and other assets provided all over the theater, the Lifeliner team made it a personal goal to ensure that Soldiers in every reach of Afghanistan receive whatever they need to ensure success, despite weather that would not allow such a task. One example, the Lifeliner team sorted and processed over four hundred and forty thousand pounds of mail for movement to every corner of Afghanistan. These actions may often go unrecognized, but it is the comfort and aid brought to every Soldier on the ground that is our true reward.

I cannot express how truly proud I am to be a part of a team that refuses to take accept anything but success on the battlefield. To our Families and Friends, I know that you are made proud every day by the actions of your loved ones as we forge ahead in this fight. The sacrifices you make, the missed birthdays, anniversaries, and celebrations of all kinds, are not overlooked. We could not accomplish the tasks for our nation without your devotion and support. I personally want to thank you for the courage and support you provide the team. It is truly the fuel we need to continue to do all that we do.

LIFELINERS, Air Assault!



Col. Michael Peterman
Commander, Task Force Lifeliners

From the CSM

Greetings Lifeliners!!

Everyone is doing well and we all remain busy here in Afghanistan.

Soldiers from the 101st Sustainment Brigade are currently an active part of this moment in history. These accomplishments have come at a high cost to many families. American Soldiers and families have been paying this high cost of freedom ever since the Revolution. We do it because it's about serving, not about being served. Our continued service will help complete this sculpture of democracy and will make the world a safer place for our children and theirs.

We've bid farewell to the 87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion headquarters, as they headed back to Fort Stewart, Ga. Ltc. Daub and Command Sgt. Maj. Howard were a great asset to the team and will be sorely missed. We welcomed the 530th CSSB (from Ft Lee, Va.) into the Lifeliner team. The Transfer of Authority took place on March 6 on Deh Dadi II in RC North.

101st Special Troops Battalion Command Sgt. Major Najee and Command Sgt. Major Gory (17th CSSB CSM) conducted a joint Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony here on Bagram on March 10. Every newly promoted NCO in the two battalions was inducted into the NCO Corps. The ceremony was very professional and each newly promoted NCO received words of wisdom and guidance from the command sergeant major of the 184th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffery Riggs. Pictures and a brief caption were posted on the Lifeliner Facebook page.

To the families back home, please remain in close contact with your loved one and know that everyone is doing a great job. I am very proud of their daily performance and their devotion to mission accomplishment.

To all of our new Soldiers and Family members.....welcome to the Team! Congratulations to all of our Soldiers who were promoted this past couple months and to those that had a new addition to their Family.

CSM Thompson
"Lifeliner 7"



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

Chaplain's Corner

In ancient oriental folk lore the story is told of one of the emperors who loved the beauty of exotic birds that were native to his kingdom. He summoned one of the finest master painters in the kingdom and commissioned him to create a painting of these graceful native birds so that their presence would adorn not only the grounds of the palace but also its interior decorations. The master painter went away and began his work. One year passed ... two years passed ... three years passed ... ten years passed and still no painting appeared. The emperor sent word to the painter to check on his progress. The painter sent word back that he was working diligently on the paintings.

The twentieth year came and still not paintings were presented to the emperor. The emperor was furious and sent his emissary to find out why the master painter had produced nothing. The emissary arrived at the workshop of the master painter. The master painter was surprised to see him, but greeted the emissary warmly nonetheless.

The emissary inquired of the progress of the commissioned artwork. The painter took his visitor into his naturally lit workroom. The painter showed the man feathers and parts of birds. He presented to the visitor small but highly detailed sketches of feathers, body structure, and so forth of many types of birds that had been meticulously drawn. He showed him his experiments with light, color, textures, and various types of canvas. When the conversation had finished, the emissary asked the painter where the finished painting was thinking that the finished work was hidden behind a cloth in the corner.

The artist replied, "All the preparations are here. This is the most important part. The final painting is in all these parts."

The emissary surmised, "You mean that after twenty years, you have not begun the painting. What shall I say to the emperor? You have taken his money, and he will receive bits and pieces of things, but not the painting that he commissioned you to do? What shall I say?"

The master replied, "Tell the emperor that his painting will be delivered in one week."

So the master painter worked effortlessly night and day, almost without breaks for food and rest. At the end of one week, the master painter appeared before the emperor, and revealed to the emperor his greatest work every. As the emissary viewed the event in the shadows of the room, he recognized in that painting the results of twenty years of preparation that had gone into the final product. He realized that even the master could not have produced such a breathtaking portrait of the beauty and grace of the exotic birds which had been the subject of his commission without the twenty years he had taken to observe every detail of these birds – their lives and habitats, their movements, their character, and so forth. Suddenly, the impatience of the emperor melted into ecstatic joy as he gazed upon the painting. There were no words to express fully his appreciation for the work of the master.

Every step in life is but a preparation for what we are yet to become. A great leader is not suddenly a great leader created out of nothing. A great leader is someone who has learned the lessons of life and who knows how to apply those lessons in a way that will mentor subordinates to in turn become great leaders. A good parent prepares and works every day to hone the art of parenting with the results finding full fruition only when their own children in turn become good parents. It is in the preparations of life that the end results make all the difference. Passing the final examination in school or for a professional certification is the end result of years of preparation, not a last minute cramming session. The master painter learned this secret so very well, and his greatest work ever was the result. So, we are challenged to live our lives in all aspects as a preparation worthy of the goal for which we were created – to glorify God and to serve our fellow human beings.

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



SAFETY CHARLIE SAYS...



"Rollovers and Restraint System"

"ROLLOVER, ROLLOVER, ROLLOVER", those are the words that can be heard when a Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle (MRAP) is placed in a precarious situation and starts leaning to one side just prior to a rollover.

Since the "Lifeliners" have joined the fight, we've had Four rollovers with zero fatalities. We recently experienced another rollover which involved five Soldiers resulting in three injuries. Of those, two were seriously injured which required them to be medevaced to Landstuhl, Germany. Because the Soldiers were wearing seatbelts and the gunner's restraint system was properly worn, it stopped them from being ejected and kept them properly secured during the rollover. It is a proven fact that personnel ejected from a vehicle are almost certain to sustain a catastrophic injury. The bottom line is "SEATBELTS SAVE LIVES". When these components are not properly used, Soldiers die.

There have been drastic changes in AMVs in the past several years. To counter the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), armor has been added to most all of the AMVs in the inventory. This armor provided the needed protection; however, it caused a change in the handling characteristics of the vehicle.

With the increasing number of military members combating the insurgency in Afghanistan and the steady stream of larger tactical vehicles, MRAPs, on narrow winding roads along with emplacement of IED's the possibility of rollovers have increased. To assist in the survivability of our military members, rollover training and rehearsals prior to every mission is crucial.

Factors associated with rollovers include but are not limited to snowy and icy roads, collapse of road way edges, operating at high rates of speed, and by hitting objects on roadways. Rollovers also occur on COP's and FOB's not just outside the wire.

Proper training, rollover drills, use of the GTA 07-09-001, (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) Family of Vehicles Emergency Rollover / Egress) and wearing seatbelts alone will not protect our Warriors. It is also important that Soldiers properly secure all equipment inside the vehicle and Leaders complying with and enforcing standards are key to protecting the force. It is also every Soldier's individual responsibility to ensure that they take proper steps and procedures to police up one another and take care of their battle buddy's safety.

"We can be Safe if Standards Are Fully Enforced".

Safety Tips:

- FRAGO 019 (Gunner Restraint System Inspection and Training)
- Ensure Personnel are properly trained and licensed to operate Equipment
- Make sure maintenance is conducted on ALL equipment
- Leaders MUST conduct PCIs/PCCs—"Asking ain't checking, checking is checking"

SAFETY Quote

"Safety isn't just a slogan; it's a way of life"

Why I Serve...

"I serve because I want to be like my father, Eliud Ayala. He served in Korea and was stationed in Germany for a few years, so one of the reasons is to make him proud of me and be productive for society. Also since I was a kid, I dreamed to be a soldier and serve my country. Then I focused on my studies and to be someone productive for my country (Puerto Rico), but inside of me, I still wanted to be a soldier. Then I graduated from the University of Puerto Rico as an Elementary School Teacher. I was a teacher for three years, but the economy in Puerto Rico became worse every day, so I consulted my plans with my wife, Deyalmira Feliciano, and she agreed with me. Now I serve to make the United States a better place to live, to make my wife and my family feel proud of me, and realize my dream as an American Soldier."



Spc. Raul A. Ayala Santiago
Paralegal Specialist
101st Sustainment Brigade Legal Office
native of Puerto Rico

...We Serve Too



"I know we serve too, because when he's not here I have to take charge of everything. Since we made the decision to make a change in our lives, I have had to change my mindset and the way I handle situations. When he left to Fort Knox, KY, for Basic Training, I took all the responsibilities in our home in Puerto Rico. I used to be very dependent, but now I can manage every situation by myself. Then he attended AIT in Fort Jackson, SC and I started to feel a little bit scared because I had never traveled before and I was facing a new way of life with a language that is not my first language. While he was training and preparing for the deployment, I was preparing myself for a year without him. Now I feel more comfortable because I have new friends, like the Ramos' family and some friends from school. I'm so proud of him and I know I'll see him soon."

Deyalmira Feliciano
Housewife
native of Puerto Rico

Announcements



Reenlistments

SSG Simon, L.
SSG Simon, M.
SSG Pitts
SSG Smith, W
SSG Williams, T
SGT Callahan,
SSG McClenton, Xiomara

Promotions

SGT Raymond Christie, Co. A
SGT Keith Elmore, 87th CSSB
SGT Yunde Li, 87th CSSB
SGT Jose Barada, 109th TC
SGT Eliezer Burgos, 577th MC
SGT Eduardo Salas, 577th MC
SGT Brandon Fedoriw, 109th TC
SGT Christopher Hayes, 87th CSSB
SSG Helder Depina, HHC
SSG Christopher White, 101st STB
1LT Courtney Wrinkles, HHC
SFC Mia Gillens, HHC

Mail distribution center gets overhaul



A mat is pulled on to the new foundation built for the Bagram Regional Mail Distribution Center. The 101st Sustainment Brigade worked with the Air Force and local workers to provide a solid floor for the RDMC in order to prevent flooding and damaging of mail. The Bagram RMDC processes all mail destined for servicemembers stationed in Regional Commands North, East, Central and West in Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

by Spc. Michael Vanpool
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Cell phones and the internet offer instant communication across the world, but they cannot replace the simple smile on a soldier's face when a letter or package comes from home.

Recent severe weather created problems for the 90th Human Resources Company, as they moved operations to a new location and battled floodwater from recent rain and snow that threatened to ruin thousands of pounds of mail and packages.

The 90th HR Company recently moved the Bagram Regional Mail Distribution Center to a new location on Bagram Air Field in late January, just a few weeks before the 90th HR Company. The center processes all mail coming into Afghanistan destined for Regional Commands North, East, Central and West.

It's also located on the one of bases' lower terrain points. Weeks after the move, Afghanistan's infamous winter erupted, hitting BAF with rain and snow. After it subsided, the center was flooded with about six inches of water from the rain and melting snow, which threatened to ruin the mail.

"We had to protect the mail and get the tent fixed," said Maj. Richard Strong, 90th HR Company commander.

The company called in reinforcements to take on the flooding. The 101st Sustainment Brigade, the 90th HR Company's higher headquarters, pulled their resources and gathered additional help.

Task Force Red Bull, in charge of base operations for Bagram, and Air Force civil engineers extended their assistance to raise the floor of the RDMC to prevent future flooding, said Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Schaffer, brigade plans section non-commissioned officer in charge.

The teams worked together to lay a new floor under the LAMS-A

tent of the RMDC. A LAMS-A tent, or large area maintenance shelter-aviation, is a quick-to-erect, deployable maintenance shelter systems for military equipment.

"They're placing big rocks for a solid foundation, with smaller rocks to fill in the holes," Schafer said. "A mat will be placed over the combination of rocks to prevent future flooding of mail operations."

TF Red Bull offered their street contractors, consisting of local day workers, to assist with the project "This is something that doesn't happen too often," Schafer said, "The road crew came on the flight line."

The 455th Civil Engineer Squadron built a drainage ditch alongside the RMDC to collect water away from the mail inside, said Air Force Master Sgt. Joe Buck, a heavy equipment journeyman for the 455th CES. The Air Force also helped the local contractors level out the ground with rocks, dirt and sand. "We're helping make it better instead of water getting in to the boxes," Buck said.

The stable floor will combat the risk of flooding and provide solid ground for the heavy equipment and massive loads of mail processed daily. "With the ground muddy and wet, we couldn't drive forklifts to move the mail," Strong said.

The Sustainment Brigade oversaw and organized overhauling the flooring, and arranged all the team to work together. "It took quite a bit of coordination between the brigade headquarters, base operations and the Air Force to pull all this together," Schafer said.

Mail operations moved to higher ground during the renovation of the floor. The RMDC continues its mission by sorting and preparing all mail for outward movement if the mail goes to another FOB. "They'll put all Shank mail together or all Jalalabad mail together and palletize it for an aircraft or prepared for a truck," Strong said. ♦

Chute-ing to success

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - Key leaders from the 101st Sustainment Brigade and the Afghan National Army learned the basics of aerial logistics during their Leadership Professional Development Training at the Bagram Airdrop Rigging Facility.

Key leaders were taken through a step by step process of rigging different types of loads, learning the "do's and don'ts" of basic rigging. Specific instruction highlighted safety, attention to detail, and the importance of teamwork and communication.

"I think it's important for the seniors and key leaders of our brigade to understand what the riggers do on a daily bases," said Cpt. Michelle Wylie, support operations battle captain for the 101st Sustainment Brigade. "The atmospheric conditions can be very rough, but regardless, they always complete the mission."

"The work that's done has depth to it, it's not just about what needs to be rigged, but more importantly, why they do it. They're the unsung heroes of this brigade. The work they do saves lives," she said.

Senior and lower enlisted parachute riggers gave the leaders words of motivation and encouragement as the training began. Wylie was taught in basics of rigging by one of the junior enlisted Soldiers. "Spc. (Kenny) Bosh was guiding me through each step as if he'd been a 20-year veteran," she said.

Participants worked effortlessly to put together bundles of water, preparing, tossing, stacking, and wrapping, working together and communicating with one another to better understand the container delivery system.

"It was hectic at first, but when everyone got into a good rhythm, it was much more organized," said Pfc. Vonza Abney, a parachute rigger of 11th Quartermaster Detachment, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

"As soon as they understood what they were doing, they became even more motivated. They got a chance to see what we do every day. It felt pretty good to see that," Abney said.

Eyes and ears were open wide as key leaders focused in on the future of the Army, correcting deficiencies with ease, learning the intricate details of rigging.

"There was a lot of motivation and mass participation. It was great to see them appreciate the work we do. They'd come down and visit us from time to time while in Garrison, but nothing like this. It was nice to see something different," said Sgt. Jenny Castro, a parachute rigger of 11th

Quartermaster Detachment, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

"I think it's going to take more hands on training for them to fully understand what our day is like out here, but it still felt good to see them out here getting their hands dirty," said Pfc. Ashley Way, a parachute rigger of 11th Quartermaster Detachment.

"It's great to know that our Brigade commander understands what it takes to complete our mission, both in the rigger shed and at the command tower. It was great to see him out here as well," Way said.

"It'd be pretty cool to see them rig the chutes as well. Doing trash runs, use the forklift, go on trash runs...just so they can get the full effect of being a rigger. They did a great job, and looked very excited to participate," Way said.

As the working day was done, key leader personnel gathered to show their appreciation to the parachute riggers, lead in words of commemoration by 101st Sustainment Brigade commander Col. Michael Peterman.

101st Sustainment Brigade Commander Col. Michael Peterman said he believes it was important for key leaders to understand what goes on in the rigger shed.

"What they experienced out there will motivate them to better support the aerial logistics operations," said Air Force Tech Sgt. Joseph Johnson, Air Drop NCOIC for the 101st Sustainment Brigade.

"It's an eye opener to those personnel that don't understand what riggers really go through on a daily basis. It makes people who don't know what we do...respect what we do," Johnson said. ♦



101st Sustainment Brigade Support Operations Battle Captain Cpt. Michelle Wylie and parachute rigger Spc. Kenny Bosh fix minor deficiencies on a rigged water bundle at Bagram Airdrop Rigging Facility. Key leaders learned the basics of aerial logistics and container delivery system. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Donte Gordon)

Deploying her skills

Guardsmen uses civilian life to mentor, train soldiers

by Spc. Michael Vanpool

TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - Guardsmen spend one weekend a month, two weeks a year in the military life. When they are called to deployments, they become Soldiers 24/7.

The National Guard is able to pull upon their civilian skills into the combat zone to help them and lead other guardsmen. Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Chisholm, a platoon sergeant for the 277th Sustainment Maintenance Company uses her experience as a bank manager to lead her Soldiers while the unit is deployed to Afghanistan.

"As a leader in the guard, this is where civilian job skills come into play," said Chisholm, a native of Atlanta, Ga. "We have to mentor the younger Soldiers with our knowledge."

The 277th SMC is part of the 7th Troop Command, a National Guard unit based out of Kennesaw, Ga. They are currently assigned to the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

Chisholm guided her fellow Georgia guardsmen with tips on how to be financially and personally successful by giving classes on IRAs and stocks during the deployment. She said she is planning to teach a career class to prepare her Soldiers for the return home.

"I'm teaching them about what to expect post-deployment and help them transition back to civilians," Chisholm said.

Her civilian job in the banking industry translates into her duties as a platoon sergeant. "My leadership style is similar to that of my management style," she said.

"I will sit down with Soldiers and help them through any issues they may have so they can be successful."

Chisholm said she also provides her Soldiers one-on-one financial counseling during their time at Bagram Air Field. "I do a lot of financial planning with Soldiers," she said. "One of the biggest things is to create a financial goal.

Sometimes they want a car with shiny rims. I try to get them to invest in something more substantial, like a house."

Staff Sgt. Thomas Monroe, a radio repairman with the 277th SMC and native of Hinesville, Ga., plans on investing in real estate, like apartments, condominiums and trailer parks, when he returns to Georgia. Chisholm provided him with the proper tools, contacts and information to be successful on his endeavor, he said.

"She will sit down and guide you," said Pfc. Ruth Santana, a human resources specialist with the 277th SMC, and native of Cumming, Ga. "She helps with the steps of improving your life in the civilian side. When we get back we may not have a job."

The 277th SMC is slated to return to Georgia in the next couple months, and the guardsmen are looking to their shift back to civilian roles. She guides her Soldiers to resources which will help them back home, whether it is a website, an organization or personal experience.

Georgia has a lot of partnerships to help the military, Chisholm said.



Sgt. 1st Class Tracy Chisholm, a platoon sergeant for the 277th Sustainment Maintenance Company and native of Atlanta, Ga., talks with her platoon while they are preparing to return to Georgia in the next couple months. Chisholm used her knowledge as a bank manager to guide her Soldiers during their yearlong deployment in support of Operating Enduring Freedom (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

"There are great programs out there but a lot of people don't know about them," she said. "I think being a Soldier and serving your country is a great honor, but we also need to serve ourselves."

Chisholm also rents out several houses in Georgia. She uses both her bank and real estate expertise to assist her fellow Soldiers.

"She offered to rent out a home to me and helped me get a job with Bank of America," said Spc. Yolanda Goodman, who works in electronic warfare with the 277th SMC, and a native of Columbus, Ga.

Aside from being a bank manager, a landlord and a platoon sergeant, Chisholm is also her unit's career counselor and unit victim advocate.

"She exemplifies the military values," Goodman said. "She can wear 12 hats at the same time and does well with each hat."

Chisholm applies all of her skills, professionally and personally, to lead her Soldiers. "She's willing to help anyone," Santana said. "She gives advice to improve ourselves as a person, as a Soldier, as an individual."

An 11-year Army veteran with three years of active duty as a junior leader, she developed a unique leadership style. "I have a total Soldier concept," Chisholm said. "If you mentor your Soldiers properly, you won't have problems in the future." ♦

Attend-ing to detail

Lifeliners Med-Ops team executes new MASCAL plan

by Spc. Donte Gordon

TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - Servicemembers with the 101st Sustainment Brigade medical personnel conducted a mass casualty exercise, preparing for the possible event of an indirect fire attack, tending to numerous casualties in their area of operations.

Specific buildings, scenarios, casualty collection points, and personnel were put in place prior to beginning the MASCAL exercise, as well as designated vehicles.

"This is a standard plan that every deployed unit should have," said 1st Lt. Mya Morrison, a medical operations officer, 101st Sustainment Brigade. "We're still in a walking phase, but with more preparation and repetition, we'll be in full stride in no time."

The updated mass casualty plan, organized by the 101st Sustainment Brigade Medical Operations staff, focuses on stabilization and evacuation, ensuring a centralized casualty collection point for the walking wounded, and personnel in need of advanced medical care.

Morrison briefed key personnel, pointing out the differences in real life and drill scenarios. Topics such as communication, personnel placement, transportation, and standard operation procedures were discussed.

"We want this to be informational. We're extending this knowledge to all of our soldiers, as well as communicating with key personnel in our command tower," Morrison said. "Our goal is to tend to every injured civilian and soldier in less than 30 minutes. Our intent as a unit is to ensure the casualties on our side of Bagram receive medical attention."

Along with U.S. Army medical personnel, joint medical personnel of the Air Force were alongside Task-Force Lifeliners, helping them complete their mission.

"The overall purpose of this plan is to ensure that everyone knows their part within the standard operation procedure," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Deshae Clinton, a medical operations specialist for 59th Medical Operations Group, 59th Emergency Medical Services Department, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

"We've done everything to make sure our plan runs smoothly, everyone from the Brigade surgeon to the lowest ranking soldier in our staff," she said.

Throughout the exercise, medical personnel worked in teams to pursue and treat the simulated injuries as if they were real, moving quickly from one injured person to the next, yelling out injuries to one another. The Personal Security Detachment team provided the vehicle escort, moving injured personnel from the area of enemy contact to the designated casualty collection point.

"The most important piece of this operation is teamwork, you can have all the manpower in the world, but without attentively working



U.S. Army Spc. Joshua King and U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kristin Taylor, both medical personnel of the 101st Sustainment Brigade medical operations team, tend to an injured Soldier attacked by indirect fire. Medical service members of the 101st Sustainment Brigade medical operations team exercised a mass casualty drill, practicing and implementing a standard operating procedure to tend to injured personnel in the 101st Sustainment Brigade area of operations. (U.S. Army photos by Spc. Donte Gordon)

with one another, the mission will be a failure. We as men and women of the armed forces know better, and that's why we train the way we do. We will always be the most proficient at saving lives, because that's what we're about," Clinton said.

Many lower enlisted soldiers stood by to support the exercise, ready to lend a helping hand and following every order with promptness.

"This is a very important part of our overall training. The key personnel involved need to be focused at all times, practice with repetition and learn as much as they can," said Spc. Heather Franke, a human resources clerk for the 101st Sustainment Brigade.

"As a soldier in the Human Resources office, I'm responsible for learning various routes, ensuring that I remain concealed and protected while approaching specific casualty collection points. I was also told to be prepared to drive, learning the necessary standard operating procedure for that duty as well," Franke said.

The service members reviewed the exercise to discuss what the positive outcomes and possible changes, if any, were to be made.

"I would have liked to see the exercise done at least two or three more times, just so we could get a better look at what needs to be changed or fixed," Franke said.

"If anything like this were to ever happen, I know for sure we'd be prepared to respond. Repetition is key, so if we continue to train, which I know we will, then we will be very successful. Those personnel who take this seriously will be able to direct others in if this type of situation were to transpire, enabling us to complete the mission and continue to fight," Franke said. ♦

Airdrop weathers storm

Lifeliners, Air Force deliver 101 bundles of fuel despite snow

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

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan - The 101st Sustainment Brigade and the U.S. Air Force did their best postman impression by battling the elements and delivered 120 bundles – including 101 bundles of JP8 fuel- to a fuel-starved Task Force Currahee at Forward Operating Base Waza Kwhah.

A planned, record setting Container Delivery System aerial drop to the remote FOB in eastern Afghanistan was altered, and then threatened for cancelation when a sudden snowfall in the area emerged, hindering the pilots' ability to see the landing zone.

The CDS drop originally consisted of the bundles being dropped simultaneously from three C-17 planes. Due to a last minute change in plans and the weather, however, the drops were conducted over two days.

MORE "CDS" ON PAGE 14



"CDS"

Although there were no records set, the mission's importance was no less significant, said Lt. Col. David J. Preston, commander of the 801st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

"The takeaway from this is that these guys rely on this fuel for everything," he said. "This is their lifeblood, and whatever it takes to get it to them, we're going to be persistent and get it to them."

Preston said JP8 fuel is used to power the FOB's generators and is necessary for heat, communication and force protection for the Soldiers. There is no way to deliver the fuel to the FOB by ground, so aerial delivery is the only method of transportation that is available, he said.

Along with the other 19 bundles containing food and drinkable water, the FOB will have supplies for at least 35 days, Preston said.

"Twice we've come dangerously close to running out of fuel here because of the weather," he said. "They went to where they could only run certain generators ... to keep the force protection going, the heaters might not be running. We want to expand the capacity so that should the weather drop, we'll have enough to sustain that capacity."

The airplane flew in under the snow clouds at about 1,500 feet from the ground during the first CDS drop, allowing the Soldiers and members of the Afghan Border Police a fairly close view of the bundles as they descended from the sky.

Once the bundles hit the ground, the soldiers quickly headed to the landing zone to unrig and load the bundles onto their vehicles and return to base.

Air Force Air Mobility Liaison Officer Lt. Col. Stacy "Mad Max" Maxey praised the Sustainment Brigade for the well bundled supplies that arrived to the FOB with little damage, as well as the collaborative efforts highlighting Army combat logistics and Air power.

"The survivability of these bundles were amazing. They were well-rigged, well-loaded, and well-configured for the air drop," he said. "Murphy's (law) always on duty and sometimes weather can be your worst enemy in these situations."

Maxey said the drop validates the combat support given to the warfighter on the ground.

"What this means is that we can give supplies any time and any place, regardless of the environmental or combat situation," Maxey said.

Spc. Robert Smallman, a parachute rigger with the 101st Sustainment Brigade, is assigned to the 4th BCT, where he advises his company on the proper rigging procedures. He was at the drop site to analyze how well the drop itself and assist in determining what malfunction happened in terms of rigging the bundles.

"Most of the chutes opened well. I'd say about a good 85 percent were successful, and that's a pretty good ratio," Smallman said.

Smallman said he helps train the BSB riggers, showing them what they've done correctly or not, and helping them determine what size pallets to use for any specific aerial drops.

Smallman said there are times when aerial drop missions have been cut due to weather, but that was not the case for this particular mission.

"Oh no, this is fuel. This is sort of a necessity," he said. ♦



Retention

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



MSG Michael Bonfardine
101st Sustainment Brigade
Career Counselor

Special delivery: Soldier uses Skype to help coach wife, deliver baby

by Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes

TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Alright, listen up all you deployed dads (especially if you're an expectant father): you can take an active role in the birth of your child, even if you're stationed in a combat zone. All it takes is commitment, a little ingenuity, and Skype.

Just ask Chaplain (Capt.) Joseph Palermo, who recently coached his wife Katherine through the birthing process. Separated by several continents, they both welcomed their daughter, Anna Grace, into the world.

"I didn't think it would work out. It sounded too good to be true," said Palermo, battalion chaplain for the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade. "It was a pretty awe inspiring experience."

Anna Grace was born Jan. 12, at Elmendorf Hospital, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. She is the couple's first child. Palermo, a 17-year military veteran, said he prides himself on his speaking abilities. The birth of his daughter, however, left him speechless, he said.

"I'm a professionally trained speaker, practiced in conveying complex ideas through sermons, but I found myself at a great loss for words at the moment of Anna's birth, even though I was not there," Palermo said. "That's a rare occasion for me, and that says a lot."

Palermo said they had heard there was a possibility that Skype services were available through the hospital. The hospital offers the service as an option for deployed service members stationed who cannot physically be there for their children's birth due to deployment.

"I didn't know all the ins and outs of it," he said. "I didn't think it would work out, or that there would be any rooms available. It turned out there was one room where they have a wireless network."

The battalion senior chaplain's wife was instrumental in getting everything set up, Palermo said. "She brought it up to my wife that it might be available, and the chaplain spoke to the hospital staff, and it sounded like everything was going to work out," he said. "The hospital staff made it happen for us."

A lot of work went into getting everything set, he said. Friends helped by donating their laptop so that Palermo could see everything that was happening from the delivery room. They also had a Doula (a pregnancy coach) on hand to help as well.

"One held the computer and encouraged Katherine, and the Doula was present to coach her along," he said.

Palermo said Katherine was in labor for 24 hours before Anna was born. During that time, he was able to watch as his wife was giving birth on the other side of the laptop, also offering encouragement and support along the way.

"After Anna was born, Katherine immediately wanted to hold her so she could have skin-on-skin contact," he said.

Anna, crying immediately after birth, quieted down once Katherine held her, Palermo said. "She knew where she was supposed to be. Next to momma," he said.

Palermo described witnessing Anna's birth via Skype as, "extremely powerful."

"Seeing God's hands at work through creation of a new human life as a minister and person of faith made me reflect on the awesomeness of God and the wonder of His handiwork," he said. "As a father, it made me very proud. It was a unique moment. I've never experienced anything like it."

Palermo said it was very encouraging that the hospital offered the Skype service, and marveled at the technology itself. "It made a big difference in our experience. "It made me feel like I shared an event where I wasn't there, but was able to witness the event and provide encouragement, and talk to my daughter and see her as she was born," he said.

"It removed a lot of my worries when she came out and was bawling. I knew she was healthy," he said.

Palermo said he would definitely encourage other soldiers and service members who are deployed and expecting children to do the same.

"I would help them explore other possibilities. If Skype is available at the hospital, I would encourage them to ask about it," he said.

Palermo said he is heading home for leave in February, where he will meet his daughter in person for the first time. ♦



Chaplain (Capt.) Joseph Palermo, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, poses with a photo of his newborn daughter, Anna Grace, on his computer screen. Palermo, who is deployed to Afghanistan, helped coach his wife through childbirth using Skype. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes)

Lifeliners aid local clinic

by Spc. Michael Vanpool
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BALKH PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers of the 101st Sustainment Brigade visited a local hospital in the Dehdadi District here to evaluate the building and necessity of medical supplies and equipment, Feb. 22.

The project is part of the continuing Commander's Emergency Response Program of the 87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sust. Bde., and a partnership between the U.S. Soldiers, Afghan National Army and the local government in Dehdadi.

"We visited the clinic to assess the structural and medical needs to help create a CERP project for the local population to provide healthcare support for the community," said Maj. Deidre Lockhart, officer in charge of medical operations for the 101st Sust. Bde.

The 87th CSSB CERP team coordinates with the population of the Dehdadi District to find ways to improve the community. "Every month, we go to the sub-governor's meeting with the village elders," Sgt. 1st Class Nakya McDaniels, paying agent for the CERP team of the 87th CSSB. "Other than education, they all talked about this hospital."

The hospital has the capabilities to support about 50 people, yet supports the nearly 200,000 people throughout the Dehdadi District as the only hospital in the district, McDaniels said.

"Right now, they have limited area, limited operating room space, no mom and children equipment," Lockhart said. "They are limited in support of their own population. We have to help the locals as much as possible."

A majority of the equipment at the clinic is about a decade old, Lockhart said. "They really need incubators and bili lights to help the children, because the area has a horrible infant mortality rate," she said.

The CERP team plans to provide up-to-date medical equipment, as well as the skills to sustain it. "They need a medical maintenance plan," Lockhart said. "Now they take the equipment back to who ever gave them the equipment. We're looking to give them equipment that will require less maintenance to make them self-sufficient."

The team also assessed the ability of the hospital to power the medical equipment. "It's outdated, corroded and in poor condition," said Charles O'Bryant, the safety officer for the 101st Sust. Bde. "They're looking to get new equipment, but the current electrical setup will not work for the new equipment."

The hospital also needs more space to provide medical care for the thousands of locals in the Dehdadi District. There is not enough space for the hospital to expand out, but the CERP team plans to expand up, O'Bryant said.

"We went to check the structures to see if the hospital could hold and support a second floor, instead of tearing it down completely," said Sgt. 1st Class Jerome Parker, purchasing officer for the CERP team of the 87th CSSB.

The CERP team plans to expand the clinic, without disrupting its operations during the construction. "They don't have the room to move somewhere else in the mean time," Parker said.

The local population will be hired by the CERP team for the improvements to the hospital. "The contractors are from this area and know how important it is," McDaniels said. "They may subcontract to hurry up and get the hospital up and running."

The development of the hospital is being funded by the CERP team with the operations controlled by the clinic and local population. "We're trying to get them to build their own medical industry, so they can trust their own government, own healthcare system," Lockhart said. ♦



Maj. Deidre Lockhart, officer in charge of medical operations for the 101st Sustainment Brigade, speaks with one of the doctors of the Dehdadi Clinic during a visit to the hospital to assess the hospital's needs for medical equipment and building expansion, Feb. 22. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

Lifeliners using more precise, higher air drop

by Spc. Michael Vanpool
TF Lifeliners, 101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Resupplying Soldiers on the ground across the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan can be achieved through many different ways.

"There are a lot of choices available for us," said Col. Michael Peterman, the commander of the 101st Sustainment Brigade "Lifeliners." "We have to determine what can deliver by ground, by fixed wing, by helicopter."

The Lifeliners employ their riggers, the 11th Quartermaster Detachment, when supplies can be air dropped into forward operating bases. The riggers can affix several different parachutes to bundles of fuel, medical supplies, ammunition and other supplies the Soldiers on the ground need.

"We have aerial delivery capabilities that give us options in dealing with the terrain," Peterman said.

One of the options available to the 101st Sust. Bde. is the Joint Precision Air Drop System, a GPS capable parachute which delivers supplies from thousands of feet away from a forward operating base.

"The system has GPS, and it actually steers the canopy to the drop zone," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Joshua Hughes, aerial delivery technician for the 101st Sust. Bde. "Other bundles don't steer or have GPS and have to be dropped at lower altitudes."

Two other air drop systems the Lifeliners use require the aircraft to fly close to the FOB. Low-cost, Low-altitude comes in low and the load goes straight down, and the container delivery system can be dropped up to 3,000 feet, Peterman said.

However, the JPADS aerial delivery can be dropped from an altitude of up to 20,000 feet and 10 miles away from the point of impact. It's also designed to land within 150 meters of the point of impact, Hughes said.

The system relies on the onboard GPS and airborne guidance system, which are attached to each bundle during the rigging process, to transport the bundles to the point of impact on the ground.

"The guidance system can steer the canopy," Hughes said. "They can fly bundles to the PI using the airborne guidance system in the bundle."

The bundles' ability to be steered allows air drops to reach FOBs surrounded by mountains and other geographical obstacles. "For hard to get to areas that need the capability to steer through difficult terrain, JPADS can steer around the terrain," Peterman said.

The JPADS can support up to 2,200 pounds of supplies per bundle, which is the same as a container delivery system, Hughes said. The heavy bundles are dropped to the ground gently by the guidance system. "It's going to land as hard as a low velocity chute, so the survivability is high," Hughes said.

Each of the JPADS system cost \$32,000, with



Sgt. Jose Martinez, a rigger for the 11th Quartermaster Detachment, performs final checks of a fuel bundle aboard the aircraft as part of an aerial delivery using the Joint Precision Air Drop System. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

\$22,000 being the airborne guidance system and \$10,000 for each canopy, Hughes said.

"Compared to the other drops, their accuracy and survivability is high," he said. "We can deliver to smaller, more remote FOBs, with more precise results."

Next month, the 101st Sust. Bde. is slated

to field new, low-cost canopies and airborne guidance systems. The new JPADS will include a terrain avoidance system, which will allow the bundles to be navigated around the mountainous terrain, Hughes said. ♦

Simplifying the logistics ground

Future complex aims to centralize, organize logistics yard

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

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The late comedian George Carlin said it best: "Everybody's gotta have a place to put their stuff." That is what the 101st Sustainment Brigade is attempting to do as they undertake the arduous task of re-configuring the logistics complex at Bagram Airfield. It also intends to help transform BAF as it begins its shift from a "contingency operating base" to a more "enduring operating base," according to Cpt. Patrick Kelly, brigade engineer.

"This project has a four-fold purpose. It's to centralize, organize, limit the amount of movement on vital areas of Bagram, and begin the construction of an enduring footprint," he said.

Re-organizing the logistics complex is one of several projects the "Lifeliners" are undertaking during their deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Another includes establishing a railway and port system at the Hairatan Gate Border crossing.

Kelly said the brigade fell in on the project from its predecessor, the 82nd Sustainment Brigade, and begin the task of re-shaping the complex.

"We've taken the idea from just one portion of BAF and the functions around it, to how we want all logistics on Bagram to look and flow with each other," Kelly said. "The idea being if we take everything off the main drive and move it to one centralized location, then that would become the logistical complex."

The project, called "BAF after Next," impacts several buildings around BAF, including the Riggers' shed, the Post Office and the Control Receiving Shipping Point yard. It also includes purchasing additional land to better serve and store cargo on.

"Bagram was built for 15,000 people, and it is now double that,"

said Maj. Joe Suddith, brigade Support Operations officer in charge. "We are the central logistics hub for regional command East, North and Capitol. As we improve the complex, we improve our ability to deliver supplies to our troops ... getting the right stuff to them at the right time, instead of the right stuff on time plus 15 days."

Among the complex's finished projects include the Joint Distribution Management Center, which support the coordination of joint distribution operations, as well as maintaining situational logistics awareness, the CRSP yard, and an Empty Container Collection Point.

"The CRSP yard in particular allows us to process cargo in and out of BAF more rapidly," Kelly said. "By co-locating everything in one location, it's easier to get things done."

Easing traffic congestion on BAF's main road is another by-product of the future complex, Kelly said. "We have a huge traffic problem here, and by consolidating everything, ideally traffic will go down substantially."

Suddith said there is no expectation that the entire project will be completed by the end of the brigade's tour, but adds the leaders are "putting the logistics brain power against the engineer's problems solving skills to creating a long-term solution."

Kelly said they will also use Afghan contractors for the construction project. He also said they could eventually see Afghan workers taking a more active role in the complex's construction by 2015.

"The intent here is to help get the locals trained and learn a vocation to take care of themselves," he said.

Suddith also pointed to recent projects that highlight the brigade's efforts to streamline logistical operations. The volume of empty containers at the Class I warehouse has decreased significantly to below 500, he said. The container backlog at the Class II and Class IV warehouses at the Kabul Holding Yard has gone from 800 to 11, and should be at zero by the week's end, he said. ♦



Spc. Brandon Boone, a native of Montrose, Mich., and a material heavy equipment operator for the 919th Inland Cargo Transfer Company, moves a container with a MHE truck at the central receiving and shipping point here, Mar. 9. The 919th ICTC manages and moves all inbound and outbound cargo for Bagram Air Field and its surrounding forward operating bases. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

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



Lifeliner Gym

The Repair and Upgrade team renovated the Lifeliner's Gym. They added a new cardio room, a second floor and several new pieces of equipment to keep the Lifeliners fit and ready to fight.



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 unallotted 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 unallotted 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 from SDP?

- Withdrawals are limited, during the time within the designated area, to those necessary to preserve the health or welfare of the service member or 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



87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

"Base of the Pyramid"



Sustainment Battalion heads home

DEHDADI, Afghanistan - The 87th Combat Sustainment Battalion, an active duty unit based out of Fort Stewart, Ga., headed home after their year-long deployment to Afghanistan.

A Transfer of Authority ceremony was conducted on March 6th, as the battalion transferred authority to the 530th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 7th Sustainment Brigade, Fort Lee, Va.

The 530th CSSB is assigned to the 101st Sustainment Brigade. Its mission is to execute tactical sustainment. They support customers by providing or coordinating to provide all classes of supply, maintenance and services to support brigades and reinforcing support to brigade combat teams as directed by the higher headquarters.

During their deployment, the 87th CSSB was responsible for the construction and expansion of forward operating base Dehdadi II in Regional Command North, including the expansion of the living quarters, FOB Dining Facility and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center.

Different awards and decorations earned by Soldiers of the 87th CSSB include 19 Bronze Stars and 60 Army Commendation Medals.

Both battalions would like to thank the citizens of the city of Hinesville, Ga., and Richmond, Va., for their continual support. The 87th CSSB is looking forward to once again rejoining the community.



Taking the road most traveled

Trans. Co. puts in heavy miles to provide escort, deliver supplies



Spc. Michael Houck of Reading, Pa., checks the weapon on his turret as they conduct inspection on their vehicle. Houck, a gunner with the 109th Transportation Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, is one of the platoons that has looged in more than 600,000 miles in Afghanistan. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes)

*by Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes
101st Sustainment Brigade*

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Driving the roads here in Afghanistan is quite a different experience from Iraq, according to Sgt. 1st Class Kelvin Windham and Staff Sgt. Davis Miranda of the 109th Transportation Company.

“There are a lot of unimproved roads here, and the elevation is different. You’re literally going up the side of a mountain with a lot of the routes we traverse... no guardrails or anything, so these drivers have to be very proficient in their skills. Any mistake out here is not forgivable,” Windham said.

Yet their drivers constantly brave the dangerous and unforgiving terrain to ensure that Soldiers located in remote combat outpost in Regional Command East and Regional Command North get the supplies they need to conduct their missions.

Since first arriving in Afghanistan in July 2010, the drivers with the 109th Trans. Co. so far have logged approximately more than 600,000 miles – more than any other truck company in the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

Windham, the truck master for the company, said the Soldiers must go through six separate battle spaces to provide escort support and deliver much needed supplies to the various COPs in RC-East and RC-North.

The mission is anything but easy, he said. Along with terrain, Afghanistan weather conditions also figure prominently in transporting goods and services.

“Sometimes it can take us 18 hours or longer just to travel 100 miles,” Windman said. “To put in perspective, back in the states, 100 miles would take a little over one hour.”

Miranda, a squad leader with the 109th Trans. Co., said driving the terrain in Afghanistan is like taking a step back in times “The roads are like from the Biblical times,” he said.

“We’re struggling, trying to drive up these steep hills and the people who live on them herding their animals and walking up them like it’s nothing,” Windham said.

Despite the challenges, the company continued to rise to the occasion to ensure the Soldiers got what they needed. Miranda said the company continually trains on their equipment to ensure they can meet their

mission’s goals.

“When we come back from a mission, it’s critical that we re-set and rehearse our battle drills and train on our equipment,” he said. “There have been some instances where we have been battle-tested out here, and the battle drills helped to minimize damage to our equipment and Soldiers. It’s definitely paid off.”

Miranda gave credit to his Soldiers for their success. “The caliber of Soldiers we have in this battalion is a blessing,” he said.

Windham said one of the things he’s learned from his experiences as a truck master and doing the convoys is the reaction of the Afghan people to the Soldiers.

“I’ve learned that many of them don’t hate us,” he said. “We get to travel through a lot of battles spaces, and many of the villagers are giving us the ‘thumbs-up.’”

“Everyone here is not the enemy. I think it’s good that we get to see that,” he said.

(Editor’s note: the 17th CSSB is part of the 3rd Maneuvers Enhancement Brigade, based out of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. They are assigned to the 101st Sustainment Brigade during their deployment to Afghanistan.) ♦

Trans. Co. conducts safety stand down

*by Spc. Michael Vanpool
101st Sustainment Brigade*

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Two months into their deployment, Soldiers of the 131st Transportation Company are continuing to improve their efforts in Operation Enduring Freedom.

The company recently underwent a three day safety stand down to train on several aspects of their mission to deliver cargo and supplies and provide convoy security across Regional Command-East.

The training included how to perform proper maintenance, how to safely handle weapons, and what to do in the event of spillage of hazardous cargo, said 1st Lt. Jason Chapman, safety and executive officer for the 131st Trans. Co.

They also refreshed training on their main mission, convoy operations. “We took the opportunity for the company to stand down and regroup so we know what right looks like,” Chapman said.

While out on the road, the Soldiers have to remain in constant contact with the company to be ready for any obstacle or event. Company Commander Cpt. Dana Howett said they emphasized communication between the truck and home station when the Soldiers are out on mission.

“With proper communication, the Soldiers can get to where they’re going and come back safely. Just like with any relationship,” Howett said.

Most of the company’s Soldiers were on their home base for the training, offering them a rare break from their constant days of convoys. “A majority of the unit, they’re getting around three to five days off before they’re back on the road,” Chapman said.

When not on the road, or preparing for another convoy, the unit prepares for upcoming missions to become well versed for situations. “Everything is rehearsed, so they know what to expect and how to react,” Howett said.

The terrain in Afghanistan is filled with obstacles, including roads along mountainsides, urban environments and unpredictable weather. The company constantly improves their procedures to prepare for their mission off the wire.

“We’ve incorporated new plans, making sure we are ready for the weather,” Howett said. “One thing is we make sure all trucks have snow chains. We’re gradually learning. Snow isn’t something they teach in the training.”

The training also taught the Soldiers how to interact with the local population of Afghanistan, in keeping with the counter insurgency initiative brought by Gen. David Petraeus.

The legal team briefed the Soldiers and talked about International Security Assistance Force directives and how to conduct themselves on mission, Chapman said.

The company provides escort service to and from various bases across Afghanistan. The Soldiers undergo training on how to assist the trucks in the same situations the Soldiers are in. “They have a lot of practice on how to help out the host nation trucks while we’re on the road,” Howett said.

The 131st Trans. Co. is a National Guard unit from Pennsylvania and is attached to the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and 101st Sustainment Brigade during their deployment. ♦



Charles O’Bryant, the safety officer for the 101st Sustainment Brigade, talks with Soldiers of the 131st Transportation Company about proper convoy operations in Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

A day in the *Life* Liners

