

# TASK FORCE *Lifeliners*

April 15, 2011

101st Sustainment Brigade

Volume 1, Issue 4

**INSIDE FEATURE:**

**A push through the Salang Pass**



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Cover photo - Sgt. Nicholas Delos Reyes and 1st Lt. Nicholas Bredenkamp, of the brigade Personal Security Detachment look out for a convoy passing through the Salang Pass (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)



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## A Message from the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion "Always Ready"



### From Ready 6

First, I want to thank the Lifeliner Command and Team for this "shout out" opportunity to speak to all the unsung heroes – You, the family members, loved ones, and friends – who continue to provide unwavering support to your Soldier, the Army and our great Nation. As we all know, the Army is not a job, it is a Lifestyle that only a few in America, about 1% voluntarily choose to do; that in itself speaks volumes of the special type of people you and your Soldier are.

As the Commander of Task Force 17, I have had the honor and privilege to serve in the ranks of magnificent Soldiers who come from Active Duty, Reserves, and National Guard units located throughout the United States. Although we come from different components, we all know what our mission is – a cause that is greater than ourselves, service to our Country. Every day our Soldiers serve with great pride and purpose, which is directly attributed to your many sacrifices and selfless service at home giving us the peace of mind and focus to accomplish the mission.

The Lifeliner Team has quickly developed an outstanding reputation throughout Regional Command East, North, and Central. It is well known throughout our Battle Space that the Warfighters never want for supplies or logistics because our Soldiers always deliver on time, on target...no matter how difficult the mission or how tough the terrain.

Our Soldiers continue to look-out for each other, accomplish the mission, and make an outstanding reputation for themselves. Words cannot describe the extraordinary team efforts our Soldiers exhibit on a daily basis; they are truly America's best.

Thanks for all you do.



Lt. Col. Leslie Caballero  
Commander, Task Force 17

### From Ready 7

Greetings Families and Friends of Task Force Always Ready

As we continue to provide Convoy Logistics Support throughout the theater of operations here in Afghanistan, our War Fighters are the best trained, best equipment, professional Soldiers I've had the pleasure of serving with over the past 28 years. It is without a doubt that America sleeps comfortably at night under the watchful eye of our Always Ready Warriors. These brave men and women of our Armed Services are relentless in their craft, both on the battlefield and here on the Forward Operation Bases across Afghanistan.

The Flame doesn't flicker as long as the Warriors of Task Force Always Ready –consisting of officers, warrant officers, noncommissioned officers, and junior enlisted Soldiers—are on point for our greatful Nation. Enforcing good order and standards, our Soldiers' discipline drives the train to succes on and off the battlefield, and is a testament of our unit's success.

Each month the Battalion Commander and I held promotion and awards ceremonies to formally recognized our hard charging Warriors. Also I held monthly Warrior NCO and Soldier of the Month board competitions to select the best of the best Warfighters within the Battalion Task Force. These Warriors are without a doubt, among the best in the Army. They are your "Warrior Soldiers" who go above and beyond to make a difference for America.



Cmd. Sgt. Maj. John Gory  
Command Sergeant Major, Task Force 17

# Chaplain's Corner

By the Christian calendar, we have entered into the season of Lent in preparation for Eastertide. Lent is a journey of soul-searching and repentance, of reflecting and taking stock – of repenting, renewing/finding faith, and celebrating joyfully the mystery of salvation. Lent involves using the spiritual disciplines of reading scripture, prayer, fasting, and giving alms to the poor help us to transform our entire person – body, mind, and soul – that we might become more like Christ – that our lives might be centered in His life. As part of this journey of spiritual centering, Lent is a time for spiritual housecleaning where we clean out those things which hinder our relationships to others and to God.

Put slightly more concretely, the Lenten path of death and resurrection – of radical centering in God – may mean for some of us that we need to die to specific things in our lives: perhaps to a behavior or pattern of behaviors that have become destructive or dysfunctional; perhaps to a relationship that has ended or gone bad; perhaps to an unresolved grief that we need to release; perhaps to a career or job that has either been taken from us or that no longer nourishes us.

Perhaps, we need to release a deadness that has crippled our lives. The Lenten journey reminds us that we can even die to deadness as we allow ourselves to become aware of the reality of God in our relationship to Him. That reminder that can take us out of ourselves, free us from our confinement, and take away our feeling of being burdened, lost, and weighed down that we might be free once again to truly live life to the fullest.

St. Athanasius, one of the early Church Fathers, aptly describes this journey as “becoming by grace what God is by nature.” The Lenten journey is about being free to become what God intended us to be as His creation when he formed us from the dust of the earth and breathed into us the breath of life – of being centered in our Creator God.

Holy Week, in particular, is the week prior to Easter which recites the last days of Jesus’ life from Palm Sunday to the crucifixion on Good Friday and the resurrection in the early hours of Easter Sunday. The setting is the Jewish feast of the Passover which remembers the release of the Hebrew children from Egyptian bondage.

The Hebrews had originally moved to Egypt under the influence of Joseph, the youngest son of Abraham, because there was a famine in the land. They ended up staying and as pharaohs changed they became the slaves of the Egyptians. Under the leadership of Moses, the Hebrews asked to return to their homeland but Pharaoh refused permission to leave because it was profitable to have their services in Egypt. According to the biblical account ten plagues were sent by God to convince Pharaoh to allow the people to leave. The tenth plague called for the death of the first born throughout all the households of Egypt. The Hebrews were instructed to smear the blood of the sacrificial lamb over the doorposts and the tops of the doors so that the death angel would pass over their households – hence the “Passover.” The children of Israel did in fact escape and the firstborns of their households lived. They faced many adversities and wandered in the wilderness for forty years before they entered once again into the Promised Land.

Within the setting of the Passover, Jesus went with his disciples to Jerusalem. He shared a meal with his disciples on Thursday evening, Maundy Thursday. In Jewish tradition, this is the time of the Seder meal with symbolic foods used to retell the story of the original Passover. Here the Christian Church gives Jesus credit for instituting the sacrament of Holy Communion which celebrates the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus. On Thursday evening after the meal, Judas betrays Jesus as he prays in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus is tried before the authorities and condemned to death by crucifixion on Good Friday. On Easter Sunday the tomb of Jesus which has been guarded by Roman soldiers is found to be empty by the women who went to do the traditional attending to the body of Jesus. The days from Easter to Pentecost are full of accounts of appearances of the risen Christ.

The Easter and Passover seasons bind two world religions, Judaism and Christianity, in ways that bring meaning to each. May we each find a new sense of spirituality within our own traditions that will bring us closer to God and to each other as his creation.

Chap. (Maj.) Tammie Crews  
TF Lifeliners Chaplain



# SAFETY CHARLIE SAYS...



Charlie O'Bryant  
TF Lifeliners Safety Officer

## “Complacency Kills”

A soldier once told me it's like on Groundhog Day dealing with the every day-to-day grind of prolonged deployments can dull our edges and give us a false sense of security. Complacency can slip into our ranks, putting our soldiers and missions at risk.

Too often Soldiers and Organizations become complacent when it comes to safety. Leaders are satisfied with mediocre safety performance and do not work to improve the environment by raising safety awareness and eliminating the potential for injury. Soldiers are content and are not attentive to their work environments. They become convinced that Leaders are not concerned about safety. They begin to think they are not responsible for their own safety. Over time, the entire organization gives little meaningful attention to safety.

The result is that soldiers begin to get in a hurry and take shortcuts on the job. They are more focused on getting the job done than getting it done safely. Near-misses go unreported. No one wants to take the time to fill out forms and soldiers don't understand the connection between sharing information and eliminating injuries. Leaders do not pay attention to reports, so they are unimportant. The number of injuries increases and they become more severe. Everyone becomes frustrated. Soldiers blame Leaders and leader's blames soldiers, yet no one is willing to take action to improve the situation.

Another fairly obvious problem complacency causes is with overconfidence. Many safety devices, procedures, or protocols are redundant if nobody makes a mistake or “nothing goes wrong.” We all know you don't need a life jacket unless you fall in the water. But a good swimmer might be less inclined to wear a life jacket, or an experienced ironworker may be less inclined to wear a fall arrest harness, especially if he were only 6-10 feet above ground.

One of our most successful methods to fight complacency while in theater is to keep training, such as monthly weapons ranges, counter-IED training, Battle drills, Rollover Drills, and communications skills. Keep Soldiers focused on improving and “keeping skills sharp.”

Unfortunately, it often takes a fatal injury to cause everyone to focus on safety. Don't let this happen to your organization.

“We can be Safe if Standards Are Fully Enforced”.

### Safety Tips:

1. Standards & Discipline. Always demand and enforce the highest Standards & Discipline from your troops.
2. Take time and talk to your Soldiers about why we're here and what we're trying to accomplish.
3. Give Soldiers a break occasionally for personal rejuvenation.
4. Get Soldier involved by asking their thoughts and ideas about how to fight the enemy and /or accomplish the mission.
5. Physical Training! Keeping your body Strong = Keeping your mind Strong. Don't neglect it.

### SAFETY Quote

“Know safety, no injury.  
No safety, know injury”

# Why We Serve...

“Migrating from Jamaica to the United States Of America has given me numerous opportunities to be who I am today. I am proud to be a part of an elite group that is making a difference in this world; fighting the war on terrorism. Joining the United States Army has always been my dream. After 9/11 they raised the age group and I quickly jumped at the opportunity. I have been asked the same question a thousand times, “Why” my answer as always been the same, because I wanted to and it has always been my dream. I became a United States citizen here in Bagram two years ago, and I feel the least I can do is to give back a little to this great country of ours. I am a 92Y and I am the Supply SGT for A-CO. I love my job and I am glad I have chosen that MOS. I would not trade it for anything in this world. I just added another three years to my contract, but I did so proudly because I was given the opportunity to go back to a country(Germany) that I lived in many years ago. However, this time I will not be going back as a dependent but as a service member wearing the boots. The bottom line is I serve because I love the military and all that it has to offer.”

Sgt. Carol Newland  
Alpha Company  
Supply NCOIC  
Kingston, Jamaica  
Alexandria VA



“I work in the SPO TRANS section of the 101st SBDE. I help customers with getting transportation to move their unit's equipment to various locations. I have assisted customers in ordering Host National trucks. Depending on the type of equipment the customer is trying to move is very important on the type of HNT that needs to be ordered. I have assisted the South Korean PRT in moving their unit to another location in Afghanistan. CPT Lim and I ordered a total of 54 HNTs and there were 10 Pallet Loading Systems that were utilized in their move. This was a difficult mission because of three different languages that were involved. The HNT drivers spoke Pashtu, the South Koreans spoke their dialect and of course the green suitors spoke English. Even though, there were several barriers, this mission was a success. It is the accomplishment of missions is why I serve.”

Sgt. Christopher Newland  
SPO Transportation  
SPO TRANS Movement  
NCO  
Englewood, Ohio

## Passover and Holy Week Chapel Services

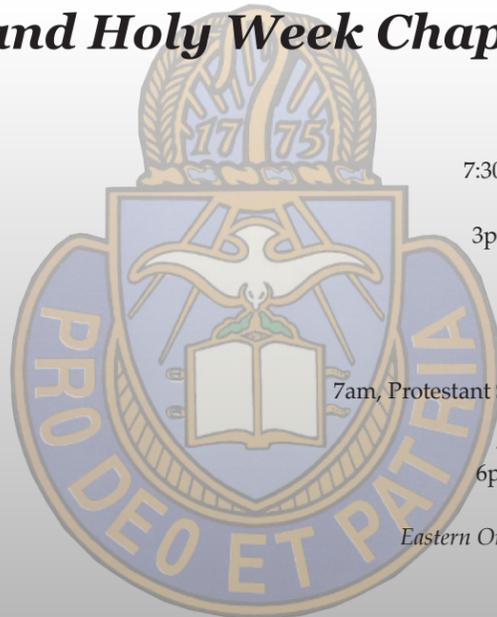
### Passover

Passover Seder, April 18  
7:30pm-10pm at Dragon DFAC VIP Room  
Passover Gathering, April 19  
7:30pm-9pm at EFC Annex  
Passover Gathering, April 20  
7:30pm-9pm at EFC Annex  
Passover Gathering, April 21  
7:30pm-9pm at EFC Annex  
Sabbath Meeting, April 22  
6:30pm-8pm at EFC Annex  
Passover Gathering, April 23  
7:30pm-9pm at EFC Annex  
Passover Gathering, April 25  
7:30pm-9pm at EFC Annex

### Holy Week

Maundy Thursday, April 21  
9am, Lutheran Service, at EFC Annex  
7:30pm, Roman Catholic Mass, at EFC Sanctuary  
Good Friday, April 22  
3pm, Roman Catholic Service, at EFC Sanctuary  
8:30pm, Lutheran Service, at EFC Annex  
Holy Saturday, April 23  
8pm, Easter Vigil, at EFC Sanctuary  
Easter Sunday, April 24  
7am, Protestant Sunrise Service, Breakfast to follow at Kouhle Hardtop Dining Room until 9am  
4pm, Roman Catholic Mass, at Camp Warrior  
6pm, Roman Catholic Mass, at Sabalu-Harrison

Eastern Orthodox Services, at the Blessed Sacrament Chapel  
April 23, 6:30pm  
April 24, 8am and 6:30pm  
April 25, 6:30pm



# Announcements



The 11th Quartermaster Detachment is redeploying to Fort Bragg. The riggers of the 11th QM Det. received awards and Combat Action Badges for their work this past year in support of Task Force Lifeline and Operation Enduring Freedom.

## Promotions

|                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1LT Seth Dorris      | CW2 Nusen Dorlouis |
| CPT Andres Leon      | CPT Temika Davis   |
| CPT Benjamin Carlson | SPC Joseph Cemper  |
| SSG Jeffery Thaxton  | SGT Joshua Miller  |
| SGT Charles Rockwood |                    |

## Reenlistments

SPC Donte Gordon  
SGT Carol Newland  
SGT Christopher Newland  
SSG Mary Perez



# Twenty-five days on the road

*Trans. Co. takes over mission, tackles harsh Afghan terrain, winter weather*

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

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – No one has ever claimed that conducting convoy operations through Afghanistan is a piece of cake. Soldiers who've only been deployed to Iraq quickly learn a valuable lesson once they land on the ground here: the rules in Baghdad or Mosul don't apply.

The only constant in this region's unforgiving landscape is change: that is, change in weather, routes and road conditions. This was a lesson Soldiers of the 131st Transportation Company learned after they spent 25 consecutive days on the road this winter.

The company, a Pennsylvania National Guard unit attached to the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, got a first-hand look at what was in store for them during this deployment: high elevation and uneven roads, snow and rain that turned roads icy, slippery and muddy, stalled out vehicles, and missions that have to be constantly adjusted.

Despite the challenges, the 131st Trans. Co. successfully completed their mission, getting their supplies to Forward Operating Base Salerno and returning to Bagram AF safely.

"We didn't want to leave the job unfinished," said Staff Sgt. Erik Campbell, 131st Trans. Co. platoon leader. "There was a

sense of personal pride to get all of our trucks back to BAF."

Col. Michael P. Peterman, 101st Sustainment Brigade commander, said incidents like this drives home the risk of modularity in units.

"For the units coming, the one question that always has to be asked if they have the right standards in place to ensure the missions are successful," he said. "You have to look at the leaders' efforts, and for those who will follow us, we have to ensure that the proper standards are in place on how to deal with those issues on the road."

Campbell and 1st Lt. Tucker Smith said the first leg of their convoy went well, but then the mission became hampered by weather and road conditions.

"We experienced white-out conditions as we waited for the KG Pass to clear," said Tucker, platoon leader with the 131st Trans. Co.

Pfc. John Speck, a gunner with the 131st Trans. Co., said there were moments that tested the unit's patience.

"Being at the KG Pass was the hardest part," he said. "I personally don't mind going out on convoys because it makes the days go by faster. But it was hard with us having to stop, get out, and hook up all the time because of the weather."

Once the weather cleared, they discovered the weather turned the roads into an icy, muddy mess. They ended up towing a host

national truck up a mountain, he said.

"That became a 24-hour mission," Smith said.

At one point, the company assisted a unit from the 1st Infantry Division who had gotten stuck in the snowstorm.

"That was definitely a high point for us. I'm sure they weren't very happy getting help from a National Guard unit," Campbell said.

The unit spent time at several FOBs in the area, waiting for the weather to clear and get the OK to continue on with their mission. They worked on cross-training each other on their respective jobs, learning the ins and outs of gunner work and combat medicine.

Smith said about half the Soldiers in his company had deployed prior to Iraq, and quickly noticed the differences between here and their previous assignment.

"Iraq is level country. Here, you're dealing with different elevations, as well as going on and off the roads," he said. "We didn't really know what to expect during our mission. It went from get up, on to stand down."

Smith said the unit maintained their morale by playing basketball and keeping the lines of communication open.

We made sure everyone understood what was happening and what changes were occurring," he said. "It helped us keep our focus, especially when dealing with all the curveballs thrown at us." ♦

# Brigade "BAF After Next" project tackles mail, postal operations

By Spc. Michael Vanpool  
101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – When the U.S. military first arrived on Bagram Air Field, there was no formal plan: everyone took their piece of land here they could find it, much like the days of the Wild West.

The 101st Sustainment Brigade is acting on plans to improve the logistical functions on Bagram, with the "BAF After Next" project. They are moving common areas closer together, and making the placement of areas easier for the servicemember on BAF.

One of the aspects of the endeavor is improving postal operations. The "BAF After Next" project will add more Army Post Offices on Bagram. It will also revamp the Military Mail Terminal here, which receives and distributes mail for nearly three quarters of Afghanistan and Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan.

All U.S. servicemembers and

some coalition forces, including the Polish and Germans, receive their mail through the Bagram Military Mail Terminal.

"Postal operations need some fine tuning," said Warrant Officer 1 LaShawn Ortello, Human Resources Operations Branch, Support Operations, 101st Sustainment Brigade. "The first big challenge is to find a facility that meets the requirements per the Department of Defense manual and actually finding that space in reality."

The facilities include creating three separate APOs, two for the Army and one for the Air Force. The new APOs will better serve the growing population on Bagram, by fine tuning the local mail distribution.

"The plan is to deactivate the Bagram zip code, and set up three separate zip codes for Bagram Air Field," Ortello said.

A terminating memorandum will be sent to units and mail clerks letting them know that their zip codes will be terminated and the new zip code will be sent down to the mail clerks prior to the change, Ortello said.

Unit mail for Bagram will be sent to one of the three APOs for the unit mail clerks to



Pallets of mail are unloaded from an aircraft on the Bagram Air Field flightline, as they are received from the military mail terminal in Bahrain. The Bagram military mail terminal delivers mail to nearly three quarters of U.S. servicemembers, civilians and coalition forces in Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

pickup for their mail rooms. However, like post offices in the states, each APO will serve any servicemember sending packages back home.

"Right now, a challenge is the amount of people in line at the APO to send mail home, the three separate APOs will cut down the time spent in line," Ortello said.

The project will also improve the Military Mail Terminal for servicemembers throughout Regional Commands North, East, Capitol and West.

Security will be improved on the pallets of mail awaiting distribution to other forward operating bases. The mail will be kept on the flight line here, a secured area, and security cameras will be installed and monitored by the Bagram Military Police around the clock, Ortello said.

Plans are also being made to improve the journey of packages and letters from the states to Bagram. Mail destined for Afghanistan leaves the states through New Jersey and is sorted at a mail terminal in Bahrain before arriving in Afghanistan.

"Right now, when mail goes to Bahrain from

the terminal in New Jersey, it's not scanned in at Bahrain," Ortello said. "There's no way to track packages until it arrives on Bagram."

The project will also reallocate the manning of the Military Mail Terminal here. Now, a mixture of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and contractors sort, package and deliver mail. By adding more contractors, the servicemembers will be freed for other duties.

"Also, as far as the contractors, we're working on giving some of the mission to contractors," Ortello said. "However, there are certain things that are harder to do with contractors than greensuiters. We have weapons when we deliver by ground, but the contractors won't."

For every variable addressed for the postal operations improvement of the BAF after Next project, there's always one situation that will never be under control.

"Weather impacts everything," Ortello said. "During the rain, only C-130s move." The other modes of transportation, including ground convoys and contracted air planes and helicopters cannot move during bad weather. ♦



Spc. John Worthington of the 131st Transportation Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, checks out the scenery during a recent convoy mission in Afghanistan (courtesy photo)

# Sunrise break, prayer

by Spc. Michael Vanpool  
101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Under the constant roar of C-17s, off the congested streets of Bagram Air Field, away from the bustling offices and motorpools, Soldiers with the 101st Sustainment Brigade (“Lifeliners”) took an early morning break from it all here today.

They gathered for breakfast with comrades, familiar and new, to re-energize and feed their physical bodies and spiritual needs at the crack of dawn on St. Patrick’s Day.

“There must be effort of the spirit - to be magnanimous, to act in friendship, to strive to help rather than to hinder,” said Chap. (Lt. Col.) Paul Hurley, the 101st Airborne Division chaplain and guest speaker, in reading from Gen. George Marshall’s 1953 Nobel Peace Prize lecture.

The 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, hosted the prayer breakfast at the Koele Dining Facility, March 17. Approximately 113 Soldiers from the brigade, STB and the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion attended the event.

“Soldiers were given a chance to recharge their batteries,” said Spc. John Hurley, the chaplain’s assistant for the 101st STB. “It gives them a chance to do something out of the mundane day to day routine.”

This was the first prayer breakfast the brigade hosted since arriving in Afghanistan four months ago for their year-long deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The event offered Soldiers a chance to gather outside of normal ministry events before the Easter Season starts up. “Whether they have a Christian background or not, they have an option outside of the chapel and bible studies to gather with peers,” Hurley said.

The Army is made up of people from diverse upbringings, states and countries



Chap. (Cpt.) Vincent Hardy, the 101st Special Troops Battalion chaplain leads a group of Soldiers in prayer at prayer breakfast, Mar. 17. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

and the breakfast allowed them all to gather for a single purpose. This was true for Spc. Doioko Santos, a human resources specialist for the brigade personnel section and native of Micronesia.

“It made me emotional because my grandma would take me to church every day and it reminded me of her,” she said.

The Soldiers flocked to the dining facility before beginning another busy day on Bagram at the offices, supply yards and motorpools.

“It’s a good way to start the day with self-reflection and to come together with our brothers and sisters in arms with common bonds as we all attempt to strengthen our faith while deployed,” said 1st Sgt. Terence Clay, first sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st STB. “For me, to share with other Christians the importance

of God in my life.”

The Army includes the roles of physical, emotional, social, family and spiritual needs into a Soldier’s well-being with the recently created Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program. The early morning gathering allowed the Lifeliners to fulfill many of those needs.

“I think it’s a good reminder of our spiritual needs that should be within our foundations,” Clay said. “The prayer breakfast reminds us about how short life is and what’s important in our service to God and country.”

While prayer breakfasts are more common when Soldiers are stateside, they are no more or less significant in the garrison or combat zone. “It’s important to have in the Army to get us through difficult times whether at home or deployed,” Clay said. ♦

## Retention

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



MSG Michael Bonfardine  
101st Sustainment Brigade  
Career Counselor

# A Fallen Hero’s final journey

by Spc. Michael Vanpool  
101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - Leaders of the 101st Sustainment Brigade gathered at the Mortuary Affairs Collection Point - Bagram for leadership professional development. The small team at the MACP showed the leaders the steps they do in ensuring all Fallen Heroes and their personal effects make it home. The LPD included hands on demonstrations and training for the process that the MACP undertakes for each Fallen Hero.

LPDs are held monthly for the staff and offer a hands-on glimpse into the jobs of the multi-faceted brigade. This month, the Lifeliners learned about the operations of the MACP-Bagram.

“It’s good that [the 101st Sustainment leaders] came here and understand the process because not a lot of people understand what we do,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Adamski, non-commissioned officer in charge of the MACP-Bagram, and a member of the 111th Quartermaster Company attached to 101st Sustainment Brigade. “We wanted them to learn the process and that there is a process we go through.”

Adamski explained that her unit receives stores and ships human remains and personal effects for Regional Commands East, North and Central, regardless of nationality or status. In addition to handling remains of humans, the MACP-Bagram also handles fallen military working dogs, who are cremated.

The NCOs and soldiers at the MACP-Bagram, from the 111th Quartermaster Company, Fort Lee, Va., demonstrated the steps of their mission from the reception of a fallen hero to the ramp ceremony

on Bagram Air Field, the beginning of their return to the United States.

Three words - dignity, reverence and respect - are prominently displayed all along the walls of the tin building. The LPD allowed the leaders to see how the small team at the MACP-Bagram lives these words with every fallen hero that comes through their building.

“I think the training is positive because it gives people on the outside an understanding of the respect we give to the Soldiers,” said U.S. Army Cpl. Libtobra Swinson, a mortuary affairs specialist who just began her six month deployment to Bagram. “And it lets them know that the soldier is taken care of, and that their personal effects are handled in the same respect as the soldier.”

Ultimately, 101st Sustainment Brigade leaders were taken behind the scenes of a mission conducted mostly in private due to its solemn nature.

“It further helps them know the soldier is treated as a soldier from beginning to end,” said Swinson, “and what we do brings comfort to family and friends.”

The process of sending a fallen hero and their personal effects home is one part science, one part symbolism and a little paperwork.

“It’s a lot more paperwork and legal issues than I thought,” said 1st Lt. Heidi Miller, the personnel (S1) officer for 101st STB. “It made me really sad.”

By guaranteeing that fallen heroes leave Afghanistan with all the personal effects and paperwork, with their feet first, the team assures respect to the soldier on their final journey home.

“They are treated as soldiers all the way to the end,” said Pfc. Daniel Guzman, a mortuary affairs specialist. ♦



Leaders of the 101st Sustainment Brigade gathered at the Mortuary Affairs Collection Point - Bagram for leadership professional development. The small team at the MACP showed the leaders the steps they do in ensuring all Fallen Heroes and their personal effects make it home. The LPD included hands on demonstrations and training for the process that the MACP undertakes for each Fallen Hero. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)



# Where the snow never melts: A push through the Salang Pass

*by Spc. Michael Vanpool  
101st Sustainment Brigade*

BAGHLAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Nearly two miles above sea level, a four-kilometer tunnel lays under a perpetual layer of snow, ice and mud.

Avalanches can strike any month of the year. Exhaust and carbon monoxide from hundreds of daily drivers cannot escape the long stretch of concrete walls. Water drips inside during the day, and quickly freezes as the sun sets and the temperature drops.

The Salang Pass, one of many Soviet-era relics across Afghanistan, is a constant hurdle military convoys of the 101st Sustainment Brigade need to overcome to resupply servicemembers in Regional Command North.

MORE "SALANG" ON PAGE 14

## “SALANG”

As spring approaches and the heat slowly encroaches, the mountain pass, nestled in the Hindu Kush, is unaware of the rising heat taking over most of Afghanistan.

“You go from here to Antarctica, and that’s what it’s like,” said Staff Sgt. Andrew Hutzell, an assistant convoy commander for 2nd Platoon, 109th Transportation Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade during a recent convoy through the Salang Tunnel.

A long stretch of dirt-covered roads and smaller tunnels lead up to the Salang Pass. As a forest in the foothills gets smaller and smaller in the rearview mirror, the road hugs the edge of a cliff as the convoys reach higher into the sky.

“The view is nice because there’s trees and small villages at the bottom, and as you go up it’s all white with snow,” said Pfc. Gary Odon, a gunner for 2nd Platoon, 109th. “It’s a big difference from the dirt and rocks we usually see on the road.”

Earth slides and avalanches are sporadic and can attack a convoy at any moment, blocking the route and potentially trapping Soldiers. The most recent avalanche happened this past February and claimed the lives of 200 Afghans.

Regardless of the conditions that lay ahead, the convoys continue to make the trek through the mountains.

“The roads are unpaved, or at least don’t look paved from all the mud and rocks that fall from the mountains,” said Sgt. Dennis Siguenza, a truck commander and the mission commander for the 2nd Platoon, 109th.

The convoys share the road with hundreds of Afghans, who make the trip through the pass daily. The sides of the pass are littered with cars, minivans and Jinga trucks that couldn’t make the journey up the mountainside.

“The only time traffic builds up is if a car breaks down, which is often,” Siguenza said.

The narrow road quickly becomes congested with vehicles following a breakdown or accident. Soldiers with the convoys, sometimes with assistance from the Afghan National Army, have to lead the way and breakup the ensuing gridlock.

“The drive itself isn’t bad; it’s the traffic and tunnels,” Odon said. “We’re not allowed to push traffic, so we have to direct traffic.”

The road winds along a steep cliff, passing through many tunnels, before reaching the peak. A four-kilometer long tunnel sits at the top and leads the way to the other side. The Soldiers can tell the summit is approaching by the diminishing oxygen and the popping ears.

“The air is so thin,” Odon said. “I’ve never reached muscle failure so fast than putting snow chains on the trucks on the mountains.”

Snow and ice are constant at the top, and the convoys with armored vehicles and host nation trucks need extra attention to make it through. Sometimes, snow chains are not enough for the battered host nation trucks.

Inside the Salang Tunnel, ice prevented every host nation truck from making it through during a recent convoy with 2nd Platoon, 109th. “The HNTs were stuck inside the tunnel, and we had to pull every single one to the other side,” Hutzell said.

Ice is a hurdle for the drivers to overcome, but the gunners in the turrets have other concerns as they travel through the long stretch.

“Inside, carbon monoxide is so bad and thick that it’s almost like a fog,” Odon said.

The massive amounts of car exhaust have nowhere to go. The tunnel walls are sealed to prevent snow from making its way inside, although water still drips in and turns to ice.

“The cars inside will rev their engines, causing more fumes to become trapped inside,” Siguenza said. “They have ventilation fans that don’t work; they only move with the breeze of passing cars.”

There are no lights inside, so only headlights lead the way. Eventually, the sunlight reappears as the convoys near the end of the tunnel and the other side.

“It’s not the easiest in terms of missions, but it’s definitely the most scenic,” Odon said. “It’s a complicated route. You need a lot patience to make it.”



Soldiers of the 101st Sustainment Brigade conducted a convoy through the Salang Pass. Nearly 2 miles above sea level, the Salang Pass serves as one of the routes to move cargo and supplies from the main logistics hub at Bagram Air Field, located in Eastern Afghanistan, to Regional Command North. (U.S. Army photos by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

## Army graduates first Lean Six Sigma course in Afghanistan

by Spc. Michael Vanpool

101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Twenty soldiers, both enlisted and officers, with the 101st Sustainment Brigade and 401st Army Field Support Brigade, both of Joint Sustainment Command – Afghanistan, graduated the first Army-sponsored Lean Six Sigma course in Afghanistan March 27.

The completion of the course is the first step towards Green Belt certification; the next step is the implementation of a project for each of the soldiers. Since the certification is in theater, the projects directly correlate with the jobs of the graduates.

“In theater, it’s a motivating factor for the soldiers to work within their knowledge base,” said Martin Kennedy, black belt and instructor for U.S. Army Central LSS team. “For a lot of projects in the States, we don’t have subject matter experts.”

In addition to the soldiers’ typical 12 to 16-hour work days, students attended the 40-hour class over the course of four weeks, with class held two nights per week.

“They are putting in the time to do the project and leave a legacy,” Kennedy said.

The project phase of the certification comes next for the group.

“For graduates to become certified, they have to complete a project and deliver results identified by project sponsors,” said Lee Olsen, master black belt working with the U.S. Army Central Command LSS team.

For the 20 graduates, the projects directly relate to their present responsibilities within logistics.

“In this case, we’re in theater specifically for units here,” Olsen said. “Many of the projects are for supply and logistics, as well as retrograde process and mass casualty plans.”

Sgt. Randy Castillo, a materials manager for the 101st Sust. Bde., is working on a Class IV (construction materials) container management project to improve the system units use to order building materials and barriers for their forward operating bases in Regional Commands North and East.



Graduates of the Lean Six Sigma course gathered together for a class portrait, Mar. 17. The 20 graduates, from the 101st Sustainment Brigade and 401st Army Field Support Brigade, will now complete their projects to obtain their green belt certification. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

“We’re trying to get the program to run right,” Castillo said. “There are programs to track Class IV, but they’re not being used. We’re going to save millions of dollars if we take control.”

By reworking the process for ordering the materials, the soldiers will receive these necessary resources quickly and more efficiently.

Each of the projects gives the soldiers an opportunity to think outside the box to solve logistics problems at Bagram Airfield, and in turn, throughout RC North and East.

“Lean Six Sigma has grown your mind a little further, not what to think, but how to think,” said Col. Michael Peterman, the commander of the 101st Sustainment Brigade, at the graduation ceremony.

The graduates worked hand-in-hand with project sponsors during the course, and will continue to work together as the projects come to life over the next few months.

“The sponsor is the owner of the project who will identify a process that needs to be improved,” Olsen said. “They need to take it from where it is to where they need results.”

Lean Six Sigma is a process of continuous improvement. It focuses on delivering results to the customer. In this case, the customer is the soldier at the FOB. LSS goes from indentifying a problem to improving it.

“We use DMAIC - which is define, measure, analyze, improve, control - to deliver results to fulfill sponsors’ requirements,” Olsen said. “They key is in a sponsor who cares about the process. We’re very much focused on delivering results.”

Although the course teaches soldiers a way to tackle a problem, the execution is up to the soldier.

“It gives you the tools and more insight on how to approach a problem,” Castillo said. “It identifies a problem and steadily solves it.”

The knowledge gained through the course and certification not only benefits the soldiers now, but will continue to in the future.

“For some, it’s a part of leadership training,” Olsen said. “In personal lives, green belt and black belt certifications are a recognition that can be used in Army and future civilian careers.”

## FINANCE FLASH

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# 530th CSSB eyes fire safety at DDII

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

BALKH PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The 530th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion has not been in country two months, but is already preparing to establish its own enduring footprint in Regional Command-North.

Following in the footsteps of the 87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, the 530th CSSB has the task of continuing the expansion and construction projects at Forward Operating Base Deh Dadi II.

The battalion, based out of Fort Lee, Va., is assigned to the 101st Sustainment Brigade during their deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Among the key projects includes fire safety; specifically, plans to stand up a fire station and an eight-man fire team on the FOB sometime this summer. They're also looking at bringing in a fire truck as well.

The mayor recently met with Air Force fire prevention officials to perform an assessment of the FOB's fire safety standards, and to discuss the feasibility of establishing a fire department on the FOB.

"Right now, DDII doesn't really have any subject matter experts on fire safety and fire prevention assigned here," said 1st Lt. Robert Schnabel, FOB DDII Mayor's cell officer in charge. "We have several personnel throughout the unit designated as fire teams in case something happens, but there's no actual fire department."

"Given the assessment that they've given us, it looks very possible and we'll start moving forward on that."

Schnabel said they are in the initial stages of planning for the fire department, but they want to have everything in place by June. He also said there will have to be a design phase and cost analysis done in order to get everything in place.

"A lot of that has to do with space and size of the FOB, as well as the enduring mission," he said.

Charlie O'Bryant, brigade safety officer, said the battalion is headed in the right direction in terms of fire safety and prevention.

"They're taking baby steps to ensure that everything they're doing is completed before starting the next project," he said.

O'Bryant also said the need for a fire department on the FOB is important, given its continued expansion.



The 530th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion is ensuring the continued construction and expansion of Forward Operating Base Deh Dadi II during its deployment. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Frank Marquez)

"It is required for a FOB to have a fire department and vehicle. It is greatly needed there," he said.

The fire marshals also addressed concerns about the service member's living conditions, citing the one door only exit.

"It needs to have two exit doors, one on each end to allow them to get to safety," O'Bryant said. "It also needs space enough for the fire vehicles to get to where they need to."

The brigade safety officer, however, did say they needed to address the issues of properly using burn barrels on the FOB.

"You have to ensure that there's no paper sticking out and that the wind is not very high," he said. "I've given the safety officer a safety alert on the servicemembers can use them the right way."

Schnabel said they are looking to purchase an intercom system to use to alert the FOB of a fire. In the meantime, they will be using triangle bells in its place. ♦

# The 'Girls next door'

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Thinking of all the places she thought she'd be while growing up, the last place filmmaker JulieHera DeStefano said she would have imagined finding herself was in a combat zone in Afghanistan.

Here is dust and debris, severe weather, unforgiving terrain, and constant traveling to remote areas in Regional Command East. Here is also missing the creature comforts of walking barefoot to the bathroom in her home, as opposed to putting on shoes and walking out of her B-Hut across the sharp aggregate in the dead of night just to get to the female latrines.

But here DeStefano is, a civilian among soldiers and other service members, living as they live, and roughing it out in the harsh, nearly primitive environment that is Afghanistan. There's a story here she wants to tell: a story about our female veterans. She seeks to follow their experiences in a combat environment, and the adjustments they make to life back home after their re-deployment.

The project is titled, "Female Veterans on the Long Journey Home: A Documentary." DeStefano, a Pittsburg, Pa., native who lives in New York City and was there during 9/11, said the experience has opened her eyes to what military culture is all about.

"I've started to understand the type of family bonds that develop here. I think it's profound on how strong and close and wonderful they are," she said. "Just like your family back home, there are days you fight and don't like each other. It's never perfect, but it's kind of wonderful in its imperfections."

This is DeStefano's first foray into documentary filmmaking. A Carnegie-Mellon University graduate, she moved to New York City 16 years ago, where she worked on off-Broadway as an actor, theater manager, and producer. She's also managed a film and photography studio.

She arrived in Afghanistan in December 2010, and has spent most of the winter here among the troops. DeStefano traveled primarily through RC-East, and has interviewed a variety of servicemembers, including female pilots, medics, and the sole female member of an all-male Personal Security Detachment convoy team.

The journey itself started for her nearly two years ago, when she and her partners Karen Gravelle and John McDermott were looking for projects to undertake.

An episode on the 'Oprah Winfrey' show - featuring women who had served in combat in Iraq, telling their stories about what it was like to serve overseas and what it was like to come home- set the events in motion.

"There was one young woman who told a story that struck me. Her young daughter asked her to make her a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. She went into the kitchen to make her the sandwich, but realized she couldn't make it the same way she had before because she had lost an arm," DeStefano said.

Life had changed for that woman in that instant, she said. "I got to thinking about how we talk very little about anyone's experience in a combat zone is, especially women, and even less about when we come home," DeStefano said.

DeStefano said she, Gravelle and McDermott spent a year gathering data and researching the topic of their documentary. They decided the premise of their film would focus on women as emotional leaders in a family, and how or if a combat deployment affects that role.

"We wanted to know how did that dynamic changed if you've witnessed some of the things people are oftentimes witnessing over here, even if it's a totally positive experience of being part of something large and powerful like the military," she said.

"Doing things that are very fulfilling to people ... how do you go back to being a mom, a wife, a sister, or a daughter with the assumption that deployment is a life changing experience. Good or



Filmmaker JulieHera DeStefano poses with Spc. Stephanie Daniels of the 101st Sustainment Brigade on top of an MATV vehicle. DeStefano spent three months in Afghanistan working on a documentary focusing on female Soldiers in combat and how they deal with deployments and returning home. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes)

bad, it's different, and how do you integrate this experience into the person you were once before?"

Sgt. Velma Robinson, a supply noncommissioned officer with the 277th Support Maintenance Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, was interviewed as part of the film project. She has deployed three times and said the transition back home has been different each time.

"It can change a person for the good or the bad," she said. "It's a lot for people back home to deal with. You have to take it as a day-by-day thing."

Another interviewee, Spc. Dierdre Taylor-Scales, an automated logistics specialist at Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 17th CSSB, said she felt she was a different person when she went home on Rest and Relaxation leave.

"Everything is different when you come home. My own husband had a different view of me," she said. "We've had the experience of living in a different environment and having to carry a weapon all the time. We are different after that experience and people will look at you differently."

DeStefano said she has talked to a variety of female service members about their experience of being deployed. Some have multiple deployments under their belts, others are first-timers.

"One particular company commander I interviewed sort of embodied that image of patriotism that I wish a lot of us had in our everyday lives," she said. "She's the soldier who 'bleeds green, but happens to be a woman and doesn't have to change who she is to be a strong leader' type."

"I've also talked to a lot of women who are struggling with an internal conflict that I think most of us don't acknowledge. They love what they and believe in the causes that bring them here, but there's this guilt they're putting themselves through. It's a really powerful thing to see and a real struggle for them to say, 'I want to follow my career, but I'm concerned about the impact it will have on my children.'"

DeStefano described an interview she conducted with one such servicemember who experienced that exact conflict.

MORE "FILMMAKER" ON PAGE 18

## 101st Lifeliner Association, Inc.

The mission of the 101st Lifeliner Association is to organize the Veterans, Soldiers and Friends of the 101st Sustainment Brigade or 101st Airborne Division Support Command:

- Support our soldiers currently serving around the world, honor and perpetuate the memories of the officers, men and women who distinguished themselves by their past service and sacrifices while serving with or attached to the 101st Sustainment Brigade.
- Unite and promote fellowship for the good of the membership through our Reunions, Publications and Website to document the achievements of the unit
- Assist in the relief and special needs of our membership and the education of their children to the betterment of American patriotism and American citizenship, and to promote the national defense.
- Encourage historical research of wars, to acquire and preserve the records of the service of the members, as well as documents and relics, and mark the scenes of the activities of the 101st Sustainment Brigade or 101st Airborne Division Support Command with appropriate memorials and/or monuments, and celebrate the anniversaries of prominent events of our country's wars and conflicts.
- Foster true patriotism, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and at all times to uphold, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America.



For more information, go to the 101st Lifeliners Association, Inc. Facebook page

### "FILMMAKER"

"I had one woman I talked to ... strong, powerful... and I asked her what would she most like her son to know about her time deployed, and she put her head in her hands and burst into tears. And she said, 'I want him to know how much I want to be home with him. I want him to forgive me for not being there,'" she said.

"We're quick to forget that. Even if your deployment is beautifully uneventful, and hope that it is, you're still away from home. You're away for a year, and it's a sense of being in this Groundhog Day for a year, and everything is still moving forward," DeStefano said. "You've missed that progression at home because you chose to this very noble thing with your life."

Staff Sgt. Shalanda Banks, a Human Resources non-commissioned officer for the 109th Quartermaster Company, 17th CSSB, also took part in the project. She said she believes many people also tend to forget that soldiers are also part of the general community.

"We want to be able to take off the uniform, sit back and not worry about having to put it back on and going across the world," she said. "We want the same pleasures in life like everyone else."

DeStefano said she has come to understand how complex the

conflict in Afghanistan is, particularly for women. She said she want to position the film as a "call to action" in the community in creating positive solutions for these transitioning troops.

"We want to open a dialogue with the community about the sacrifices you make for us," she said. "We're allowed to benefit everyday back home from what you do here whatever your job is. So we have an obligation to step up the plate and supporting you in your return."

DeStefano said she is in talks with the Pittsburgh Public Broadcasting Station about airing the film. She also said she's received an offer from the Army Office of Chief of Public Affairs to look into the possibility of airing the documentary on HBO.

One of the promises she's made to the service members is that they are allowed to preview the finished product before it is aired and distributed.

"This is their story, and we don't politics or anything else to get in the way of this being a vehicle for their voice," she said. "We have to make sure those promises are kept going forward with any producing partner."

"It's a very rare glimpse into this world. Not many people are given that opportunity and it's something that I will not take lightly." ♦

# 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



## NCO AND SOLDIER OF THE YEAR



Congratulations to Sgt. Michael Navarro, of the 109th Quartermaster Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, for being awarded the 101st Sustainment Brigade NCO of the Year



Congratulations to Spc. Dale Adams, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 530th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, for being awarded the 101st Sustainment Brigade Soldier of the Year



## Lifeliner Gym

The gym is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. An added cardio room, a second floor and several new pieces of equipment to keep the Lifeliners fit and ready to fight.

## Aid station renovated, medical care expanded

by Spc. Michael Vanpool  
101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The 101st Sustainment Brigade Troop Medical Clinic expansion project was unveiled at a ribbon cutting ceremony here, March 23.

The project combined the old TMC with an adjoining B-Hut to expand the number of treatment facilities, add an administrative area and make the waiting area larger.

“Before the expansion, it was cramped,” said Sgt. Nicole Bowe, a medic with the 101st Sust. Bde. “We expanded for a bigger patient waiting area, added more treatment rooms and are finishing up a pharmacy on the outside.”

The TMC provides service for personnel assigned to the brigade who need regular checkups, sick call and general health care. Medics assigned to the TMC also go on convoys that the brigade and 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, a battalion assigned to the brigade during their deployment, conduct to deliver cargo and supplies throughout Regional Command East

The Medical Operations section and surgeon cell for the sustainment brigade has expanded in personnel as well during the deployment, said Navy Chief Petty Officer Trey Hauptmann, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the TMC. Besides the chief, the staff also include Air Force medical personnel.

The Airmen and Chiefs come from various bases, posts and stations to combine their efforts here on Bagram. They join the Soldiers who deploy with the brigades. “The personnel are a giant conglomerate of individual augmentees,” Hauptmann said.

From installations in Florida, Texas, Hawaii and everywhere in between the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen come together on Bagram to provide health care for the Lifeliners, and subsequent sustainment brigades.

“Having all these services together is the most important part,” Hauptmann said. “Regardless of Army issues or Air Force issues or Navy issues, we can accomplish the tasks and mission.”

The tri-service medics came together to complete the expansion project, which the

main tasks included consolidating two B-Huts, providing a walkway between them and adding wall for the separate rooms.

The 101st Airborne Division and 101st Sust Bde. repair and upgrade teams guided the medics during the construction of the TMC, Hauptmann said. The medics did most of the work, with professional advice coming from the R&U teams.

“I helped do what needed to be done, from cutting wood to electrical work to painting,” Bowe said. “I enjoyed making this place bigger and better for us and the next unit that comes in after us.”

The TMC shut down their sick call operations for eight short days to give time for the overhaul of the buildings. While construction on an adjoining pharmacy is still underway, the TMC resumed operations immediately after the ribbon cutting ceremony and began seeing patients without delay.

The medics received the Army Commendation Medal for their efforts on the renovation TMC project. The medal is considered a rare achievement for Sailors and Airmen. ♦



Navy Chief Petty Officer Trey Hauptman, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the 101st Sustainment Brigade Troop Medical Clinic, cuts the ribbon during a ceremony unveiling the expansion of the TMC to provide more and better care to the servicemembers on Bagram Air Field. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

## PDA's for PDHAs

*New equipment helps medical team process servicemembers*

by Spc. Michael Vanpool  
101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Twenty-four hours after opening their expanded Troop Medical Clinic, the 101st Sustainment Brigade medical operations team is preparing servicemembers with Combined Joint Task Force – 101 to re-deploy next month.

The brigade is conducting their Post Deployment Health Assessment. “Division has no providers to cover, so our providers volunteered to help them and process all their Soldiers,” said Maj. (Dr.) Eric Stickney,

the 101st Sust. Bde. surgeon.

The Lifeliners added a personal data assistant to their arsenal to take care and ease the process of seeing the hundreds of Division servicemembers in a month’s time.

“We’re using PDAs to expedite the process,” Stickney said.

Usually, a PDHA is initiated in country and there’s a couple different ways to do it. “They can fill out questions online at Army Knowledge Online or on paper at the clinic,” said Master Sgt. David Dennis, noncommissioned officer in charge of brigade medical operations.

“When they see the provider, the provider will make recommendations for referral.”

Due to slow internet capabilities, Soldiers using AKO or the medical personnel inputting the information manually from questionnaires take a little longer than it would in the states. With the PDAs, the questionnaires are stored on the device, and allow more time for visits with the provider.

“It’s all local and we can process a Soldier in 2-3 minutes, instead of waiting 10 minutes for the pages to load,” Stickney said.

Senior Airman Richelle Hutto, a medical technician with the Lifeline TMC, oversees the use of the handheld PDAs and makes sure the flow of servicemembers is as smooth as possible

“There’s one of two ways to do it,” said Hutto, who is attached to the brigade from the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Co. “One way is the doctors can review the information on the handheld right there. But because of there are so many people right now, we have them fill out the questionnaire on it and sync it to the computer. Then the doctor sees them, signs off and we give them their meds.”

With the incredible amount of servicemembers of CJTF-101, including 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) headquarters and several reserve and National Guard units, the system allows the TMC to see more people in less time. “Today, we saw about 50-75 people within two hours,” Hutto said. “They all checked in, filled out their info, and there was no lag time for the doctors to see them.”

At the end of the day, after seeing the scores of Soldiers for PDHAs, in addition to usual sick call and immunization tasks, the information is sent into the system. “All of the information is uploaded every night to MEDPROS,” Stickney said. MEDPROS, or the Medical Protection System, tracks all immunization, medical readiness, and deployability data for Soldiers, similar to an electronic medical record.

While PDHAs can be completed 30 days prior to leaving or 30 days after returning, getting the Soldiers up to speed here allows more time once they arrive back at Fort Campbell. “By doing it here, we streamline the process so Soldiers can get out and see their families,” Stickney said.

PDHAs document and tackle any changes to a Soldier’s health during their tour overseas. “It’s going to help identify medical issues, whether physical or mental,” Dennis said. “If they need to see a specialist at combat stress, then that will be addressed with the provider.”

“When we go home, we go through reverse Soldier Readiness Program, and we will finish the process,” Dennis said. ♦



Air Force Senior Airman Richelle Hutto, a medical technician with the 101st Sustainment Brigade Troop Medical Clinic, attached from the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colo., checks information a soldier inputted into a handheld personal data assistant. The PDAs are being used to expedite the process of seeing hundreds of service members for their Post Deployment Health Assessment as Combined Joint Task Force – 101 prepares to re-deploy in the next month. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

## Lifeliners, military prepare aid bundles to earth slide victims

by Spc. Michael Vanpool  
101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan—Soldiers of the 101st Sustainment Brigade and servicemembers of the Bagram Humanitarian Assistance (Class X) Yard, worked late into the early morning to prepare bundles of rice, beans and blanket to Afghan villagers who lost their homes in a recent earth slide.

The earth slide happened, April 6, and affected around 1,000 villagers in Mazar E Sharif. The bundles were air dropped to Forward Operating Base Deh Dadi II, in Regional Command North Thursday morning.

The “Lifeliners” and Class X Yard provided the supplies to assist the 24th Brigade Support Battalion, 170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, who were tasked with dispersing the aid, said Maj. Joe Suddith, brigade support operations officer in charge. Since there is no Class X Yard in RC -North, the food, water and blankets needed to be delivered to the site quickly.

“We can move quickly in an emergency situation,” Suddith said. “We have the ability to move anything within country, and help the Afghans.”

In order to move the aid, the Transportation, Geographic Routing Identifier Code (RIC-GEO) and Aerial Delivery sections of the brigade support operations worked with the servicemembers of the Bagram Humanitarian Assistance Yard.

The Riggers with the 11th Quartermaster Detachment assembled the bundles of beans, rice, and blankets for the air drop. The U.S. Air Force was able to drop the aid to FOB Deh Dadi II around twelve hours after the call for help, Suddith said. The riggers, based out of

Fort Bragg, N.C., are assigned to the Sustainment Brigade during their deployment.

The Bagram Humanitarian Assistance Yard provides supplies to the local populations in Regional Command East and North in emergency situations, including natural disasters, said Air Force Staff Sgt. David Turcios, who works at the yard.

500 bags of beans, 600 bags of rice and 1,350 blankets were pulled from the connexes in the yard and palletized with the help of the RIC GEO section.

“We were there to assist the Humanitarian Assistance Yard in loading pallets to send up North,” said Sgt. 1st. Class Patrick Hall, noncommissioned officer in charge of the RIC GEO section. “We’re trying to build a better close-knit relationship with the Afghans.”

The riggers received the pallets, and prepared them for the Container Delivery System drop, said Air Force Tech Sgt. Nathan Patton, brigade aerial delivery assistant. CDS drops allow larger bundles of supplies to be dropped from a heavier altitude.

The 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, an Air Force command based on Bagram Air Field, keeps an emergency aircraft at all times, and provided the plane to drop the bundles, Suddith said.

Soldiers with the 530th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, gathered the bundles and moved them to Mazar-E-Sharif to be dispersed to the local Afghans.

“We have an opportunity to how the villagers and the Afghan community that we care,” Suddith said. “It’s never a good time for a tragedy, but we can show them that we are here to support them. We can make a difference in their time of need.”



Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Hall, of the Geographic Routing Identifier Code (RIC-GEO) for the 101st Sustainment Brigade, unloads blankets at the rigger shed. The RIC-GEO section worked with the Bagram Humanitarian Assistance Yard late into the night and early in the morning to prepare bundles of rice, beans and blankets for earth slide victims in Mazar E Sharif. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Vanpool)

# Improving the fox hole

by Spc. Michael Vanpool  
101st Sustainment Brigade

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The 101st Sustainment Brigade is acting on a mantra as old as the Army: “Leave things better than when you found them.”

Since arriving on Bagram more than four months ago, the “Lifeliners” have made several improvements in the brigade’s area of the airfield, including renovating the headquarters, expanding the aid station and building up the grounds around the Lifeliner Lounge, a Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility.

The Lifeliner Lounge, endearingly referred to as the “L3” by the Soldiers here, is barely recognizable from the area assumed this past November.

“When we got here, it was below average and lacked any room,” said Sgt. James Croghan, a member of the repair and upgrade team. “There was no pride in it.”

The overhaul of the L3 and nearby gym gives the Soldiers better facilities to work out, hang out with their battles and play games.

“MWR stand for morale, welfare and recreation,” said Pfc. Keon Muldrow, a member of the staff at the L3. “The best thing is morale. If you have a place where everyone has an outlet, it’s going to improve with all the movies, cards and video games. With every improvement, it makes it feel more at home, because we did it.”

During deployments, Soldiers can fall into a routine of work, eat, PT, and sleep. The L3 offers them an escape from the humdrum repetition of life on Bagram.

“We want to have an area where the Soldiers can get out of their B-Huts and spend time together and build camaraderie, whether it’s a game of spades, working out or playing Madden,” said Master Sgt. Michael Negron, noncommissioned officer in charge of the operations section, 101st Sust. Bde., who oversees the improvement projects.



Staff Sgt. Matthew Spivey of the 101st Sustainment Brigade works out at the newly renovated gym at the Lifeliners Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center. The brigade has done major improvements to the MWR facilities across the board. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes)

The repair and upgrade team works on the projects, with the assistance of the mission support platoon and the personal security detachment. They have renovated the gym, by adding a cardio room, new equipment and a second floor, with plans for a deck in the near future. Inside the L3, they are in the process of completing an internet café with 20 computers and 10 phones for Soldiers to call home, web chat with their families and surf the internet.

“The guys like the projects that go towards the majority, that go to helping everyone out,” Negron said.

From the internet café to the laundry room to the theater, the team is taking it on one room at a time. As the walls are painted, TVs and computers are moved in and more books and games are sent from the States, the Soldiers slowly convene on the L3 to kick back and relax.

“What we’re doing as a unit is the whole

concept of ‘improve your foxhole’ and make it better than when you came in,” Negron said. “The whole intent is to give Soldiers something to do, give them a place to relax, and stay out of trouble.”

The countless improvements made by the team should stand tall for the next unit, as well as the several other servicemembers across Bagram.

“We want to leave a history of our time here, especially on the walls,” Negron said. “The Soldiers can hang up a picture or a poster and write on the walls so we can leave our mark here.”

The job is never quite finished. Once the internet café is up and running, the team plans to add a deck to the gym and to pave the volleyball court in preparation for summertime, outdoor activities.

“A lot of people didn’t think it was possible,” Negron said, “but we did it.”



## Bagram's Multicultural Celebration

Everyday you are surrounded by a lively blend of cultures at Bagram. This multicultural fabric is enriched by the distinctive customs, practices, and traditions of our multiple mission partners.

Join us on 24 April to meet our mission partners and gain a greater appreciation and understanding of their vibrant cultures, customs, and practices through conversation and various displays and demonstrations. Stronger communities and greater mutual respect will be realized through this “celebration of cultures”.

MWR Clamshell  
24 April  
1600-1900

 Hosted by CJTF 101-EO

# A day in the *Life* Liners

