



**Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson**

Spc. Jacob Valderrama demonstrates his efficiency operating an advanced system improvement program radio during the warrior tasks phase of competition.

## Pacemaker triumphs in competition

**Story by  
Staff Sgt. James Burroughs**

After a week-long competition during which five Soldiers worked to claim the title of Third Army and U.S. Army Central Command's Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, both titles went to the Soldier representing the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), the 43rd Sustainment Brigade CMRE, Spc. Jacob Valderrama.

Valderrama is a horizontal construction engineer from Morgan Hill, Calif., who is assigned to 557th Engineer Company, 864th Engineer Battalion within the 43rd SB CMRE.

The long days of competition tested each Soldier's mettle as they each demonstrated

**"Pacemakers" continued on page 6**



**Photo by Sgt. Khori Johnson**

The 2013 Third Army NCO of the Year is Sgt. William D. Cook, the Soldier of the Year, Spc. Jacob R. Valderrama standing with Maj. Gen. Kurt Stein, commander of the 1st TSC, Command Sgt. Maj. Stephan Frennier, senior enlisted advisor of ARCENT, and Command Sgt. Maj. Charles Tobin, senior enlisted advisor of the 1st TSC.

### 43RD SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

43rd Sustainment Brigade Commanding Officer

**Col. Todd Heussner**

43rd Sustainment Brigade Senior Enlisted Advisor

**Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Traylor**

43rd Sustainment Brigade Deputy Commanding Officer

**Lt. Col. Todd Fish**



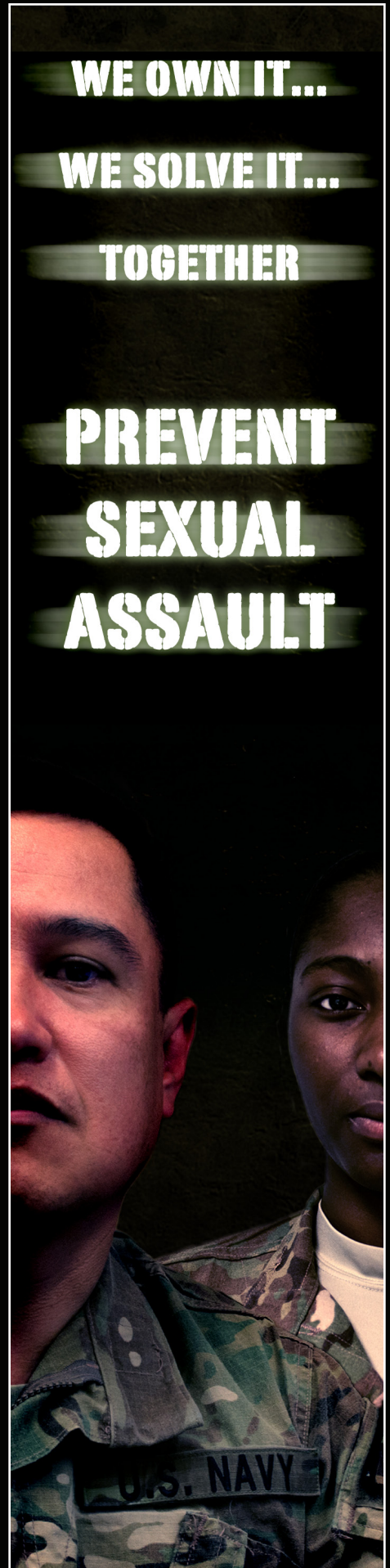
43rd Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Noncommissioned Officer

**Sgt. Khori Johnson**

The Rough Rider is produced in the interest of the Soldiers of the 43rd Sustainment Brigade, CMRE and its subordinate units. The Rough Rider is an Army-funded newsletter authorized under provision of AR 360-1.

Contents of The Rough Rider are not necessarily the views of, nor endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 1st TSC. All editorial content of the Rough Rider is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 43rd Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office.









# THE COMMANDER'S DESK



So not too long ago, my wife Linda puts a note on Facebook that we have four months down and five months to go... Without any context, people immediately assumed that we were going to have a baby. I can assure you that is not the case. She was, of course, referring to the fact that time is moving by very quickly. We have now completed three months of a nine month deployment and every day I wonder how the time is moving so quickly and as I look ahead, I see that we have so much to accomplish. After visiting our Soldiers on the battlefield, it is clear that they are more than up to the task. They are making it happen every day and most importantly, they are making it happen with energy, enthusiasm and great attitudes.

The 92nd Engineer Battalion, "Black Diamonds," focused on construction and deconstruction in southern Afghanistan, continue to set a blistering pace as they reduce operational bases to the ground. Our BCT brothers ask for help and the 92nd shows up and absolutely delivers outstanding results, frequently so quickly that our maneuver brothers have to ask them to slow down. If you want something done quickly all you have to do is call the Black Diamond Battalion and get out of the way. They are a great battalion filled with professional Soldiers who are led by a tremendous group of caring, professional and dedicated leaders.

The 864th Engineer Battalion, "Pacemakers," are matching their brothers and sisters from Fort Stewart by providing outstanding support to the 101st Air Assault team. The Pacemakers are engaged in eight different projects covering nearly half of the country. They too are moving faster than expected and providing more than expected in everything they undertake. It is plainly obvious when you visit the Soldiers and leaders of the 864th that they take great pride in accomplishing their mission while they take care of each other, living out our motto of "You are your brother's keeper."

The 68th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion team, "War Wagon," continues to improve everything they touch, turning an acceptable operation into a model operation that sets new productivity records on a weekly basis. The two quartermaster supply companies, 247th Quartermaster Company, commanded by Capt. Nick Taylor, and the 289th Quartermaster Company, commanded by Capt. Joel Callo, continue to handle anything thrown at them, while they make it look easy. They have reorganized, re-engineered and reworked systems and processes that have resulted in a doubling of output. The complex system composed of a number of intricate pieces requires synchronization and coordination well above the capabilities of the average captain. We are blessed to have two extraordinary leaders who lead from the front while they make complex problems look routine.



**Col. Todd Heussner**  
43rd Sustainment Brigade Commander







The brigade headquarters continues to build a name and reputation worthy of the moniker “Make It Happen!” The combination of support operations, the deputy commander, the construction management team, and the Joint Retrograde Operations Center, manned by military intelligence, Maj. Nikki Bell, and operations manned by Maj. Jeremy Hahn, plan, prepare and execute retrograde support operations throughout the entire country of Afghanistan. This is a Ph.D. level logistics operation and they are all making it look easy. This is an operation that has never been attempted; moving so much, so far in such a short amount of time. We are truly making history as we work to leave Afghanistan in the able hands of the elected government.

Nine months is a long time, but we’ve already completed more than one third of the race. We have accomplished much but have much left to do. There is no time to rest as we work to remove in two years the supplies and equipment that accumulated in the country for nearly twelve years. While it is a herculean task, there is no better team to accomplish the mission than the 43rd Sustainment Brigade. I am completely confident that the Black Diamonds, Pacemakers, War Wagon and Rough Riders will accomplish the mission, while we continue to take care of our Soldiers.

It is not easy being apart from the ones we love. We know we are missing birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and, for some, even the birth of children. While we would clearly rather be home with you, we know that you all are also a great team taking care of each other with the same sense of pride and teamwork that our Soldiers display on the battlefield. Your desire to help one another gives us the ability to focus on our mission so we can get the job done and return safely to you. You make us proud everyday! Thanks for taking care of each other and for “Making It Happen” at home.

God bless you, God bless our Soldiers, and God bless America.

Rough Rider6

Warmest Regards,

*Todd A. Heussner*

Col. Todd A. Heussner



# **At Ease...**

We have conducted US Central Materiel Recovery Element operations for about four months now and it's been incredible to see our servicemen and women working together at a tremendous pace in Afghanistan to retrograde over a decade's worth of materiel and equipment. It's an honor to serve as the brigade senior enlisted advisor and have the opportunity to witness the 43rd Sustainment Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and our civilian counterparts "Make It Happen" on a daily basis like no other organization can.

As our CMRE personnel continue to excel on the battlefield as a progressive collective, there have been a few warriors that have stood out from their peers individually.

Recently, we had four Soldiers successfully complete Warrior Leaders Course and return from Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Sgt. Mafuta Suani, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 68th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion and Spc. Michael Ludwig of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 43rd Sustainment Brigade CMRE, graduated with honors, making the Commandant's List. Congratulations on your first Noncommissioned Officer Education System accomplishment.



Command Sgt. Major Anthony Traylor  
43rd Sustainment Brigade Senior Enlisted Advisor

Spc. Jacob Valderrama, of 864th Engineer Battalion, Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Washington, the 43rd SB CMRE Soldier of the Year, competed and won both, 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) and Army Central Command competitions, these are two and three star-level boards, respectively. Next, he will compete at US Army Forces Command, Fort Bragg, N.C., for a chance to advance to the Department of the Army Warrior Competition, and earn the title of "US Army Soldier of the Year." To all of these stand-out warriors, great job representing yourselves and the 43rd Sustainment Brigade.

Our team has done a fantastic job thus far, working hard towards our mission of clearing the battlefield by the timeline agreed upon by our national leaders with creative problem-solving and forward-thinking. As always, I am grateful for the support of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marine teammates, from our Families and loved ones back home. Take care of each other until your hero comes home.

Rough Rider 7

Respectfully,

Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony A. Traylor





# Pacemakers: Standing out in tough competition

Continued from page 1

physical and mental conditioning, while exhibiting tactical leadership and soldier knowledge and skills in the 100-plus degree heat of Kuwait.

To compete at the ARCENT level, each Soldier had to earn the right by training and preparing for their success in a series of unit level competitions beginning at their respective battalions, continuing through brigade and division level.

The winners of the competition received their awards at a ceremony held at the Camp Arifjan Chapel. Maj. Gen. Kurt J. Stein, commanding general of the 1st TSC and Command Sgt. Maj. Stephan Frennier, Third Army command sergeant major, presented this year's awards.

Stein presented the winners with Army Commendation Medals.

Valderrama is scheduled to travel to Fort Bragg, N.C., where he will vie in FORSCOM's Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year competition.

"I just knew I was representing a lot of people," said Valderrama. "A lot of people put their faith in me and believed in me. That's what drove me to do my best."

## Photos by Sgt. Khori Johnson

(Top) Spc. Joseph Valderrama, 557th Engineer Company, 864th Engineer Battalion, 43rd Sustainment Brigade CMRE, fires his M9 handgun down range during the weapons marksmanship portion of competition. During weapons marksmanship, Soldiers and Noncommissioned Officers displayed their efficiency at firing the M4 carbine rifle and M9 handgun weapon systems while shooting in various firing positions. (Bottom) Valderrama looks on as a medical evacuation helicopter soars in the distance during one of many warrior task phases of competition. During this portion of competition, Soldiers and Noncommissioned Officers showed their skills while executing combat life-saving techniques, requesting medical air support, and proper litter-carrying techniques.



**THE  
ROUGH RIDERS  
NEED YOU TO STAY IN THE FIGHT  
REENLIST TODAY**





# CHAPLAIN'S PERSPECTIVE

Greetings Rough Riders and Rough Rider Families,

I pray at the time of this writing you are well and blessed. One thing I have realized over the numerous deployments I have been on is this: those who are deployed are focused on the mission, while those who are at home are focused on keeping their world in order while simultaneously thinking of and praying for their loved one down range. To the family members reading this article, know that we are blessed beyond measure to have you in our lives. You are the strength of our success and the reason for our service.

Speaking of service, our forward formation is a unique compilation of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, as well as a Special Operations contingency working with us in support of the overall mission here in Afghanistan. One would think with all of the inter-service rivalry, this mission would not be successful. Quite the contrary, we are absolutely "Making It Happen" with our teammates from all services.

I believe the success we have is based on two things: leadership and values. The emphasis on leadership and values leads me to speak of the incredible men and women who make up our CMRE Religious Support Teams: Chaplain Capt. Jake Snodgrass and Pfc. Jamie Luna, 68th CSSB, Fort Carson, Colo.; Chaplain Capt. Paul Tolbert and Sgt. Shaquana Taylor, 92nd Eng. Bn., Fort Stewart, Ga.; and Chaplain Capt. Jamie Freeland, Spc. Joe Blanchard and Pfc. Mike Taylor, 864th Eng. Bn., Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Wash.

Recently, Staff Sgt. Adam Blackwood and I hosted a CMRE Religious Support Team training event at Kandahar Airfield. This event was intended to gather all of our RSTs together for the first time and lay out guidance for religious support operations across the entire theater. One thing I can say for sure is this: we have some of the Army's most gifted and passionate chaplains and chaplains' assistants in our CMRE formation. These great spiritual and military leaders are why our people are so well taken care of. Constantly traveling at all hours of the night and day in convoys, helicopters, and/or fixed-winged aircraft, these selfless leaders are pouring their lives and hearts into every Soldier, Sailor, Airmen and Marine in our formation. If it weren't for these great men and women, there is no way Blackwood and I could accomplish our mission of providing life-shaping, life-changing religious support to our people. We are blessed with the finest our Chaplain Corps has to offer.

Spiritual leadership is a calling, one that I am eternally grateful to serve and one I am thankful to share in with our RSTs. My faith is the very bedrock of what I believe, how I think, and why I serve. Without my faith as my compass, I am personally off target. It is with understanding I encourage you, in your faith, to allow it to shape your heart and your mind. With faith as your core, everything else will fall into place. As Matthew wrote in the Gospel, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6: 33)

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

-Matthew 6:33 (NIV)



**Maj. Peter Keough**  
43rd Sustainment Brigade Chaplain





# A Family that serves together

Story by  
1st Lt. Elizabeth Lewis

On any given day, walking into the 864th Engineer Battalion's medical treatment facility on a forward operating base in Paktika Province, Afghanistan, one would find Spc. Tammy Hyden walking around helping patients with everything from a cough to a sprained ankle.

If not in the aid station, Spc. Tammy Hyden is walking the deconstruction project sites ready to administer first aid if a Soldier gets hurt while working.

Hyden has been serving on active duty in the United States Army as a medic since 2009. However, she is not the only one in her family who is serving on active duty.

According to the United States Department of Defense, only one-half of one percent of Americans were serving at any point in time over the past ten years of war. Additionally, a report conducted by the Pew Research Center in late 2011 concluded that, after surveying more than 2,000 civilian adults and 1,900 veterans, "only 57 percent of civilian respondents ages 30 to 49 said they had an immediate family member who served." The percentage drops to one-third among respondents aged 18-29.

According to Hyden, in her family, they can name three, soon to be four, immediate family members who are serving. In fact,



Photo by 1st Lt. Elizabeth Lewis

Spc. Tammy Hyden works diligently in the 864th Engineer Battalion aid station, helping to keep everything in order.

after her daughter completes basic training, all of Hyden's family will be active duty in the United States Army. Her husband of 24 years, serving since 2005, is a Warrant Officer in the Transportation Corps, also currently deployed in Afghanistan. Her son, recently returned from a deployment to Afghanistan last year, is a specialist serving as a combat engineer. Her daughter is waiting for her husband to finish artillery advanced individual training before entering into active duty service in either

human resources or patient administration.

While standing in her battalion's trauma room behind a wooden table holding a stretcher, the former 911 dispatcher explained her reasoning for wanting to join the Army.

"It was the change I saw in my husband after he returned from (advanced individual training) that inspired me to join," she said. "He seemed happier after basic and AIT. I wanted to better myself as well."

"Hyden" continued on page 10

## DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS INCREASE THE HEAT

### DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS CAN:

- ELEVATE YOUR CORE BODY TEMPERATURE
- ELEVATE YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE
- CAUSE YOU TO DEHYDRATE
- INCREASE YOUR RISK OF HEAT INJURY







**Photos by Spc. Kelun Babauta**

Spc. Enrique Guerra, Sgt. Eduardo Pagan, Spc. Jarvis Bowers and 1st Lt. Tyler Magerkurth take a moment together while out on a base closure assessment mission.

# The perseverance of the 289th QM

**Story and Photos by  
Sgt. Nathaniel Davis**

One may say conducting a mission that seems to be ever growing can seem bleak, exhausting, and even hopeless. Especially when it is not only difficult to see the finish line, but there is also little training available to help you finish the race quicker. The Soldiers of the 289th Quartermaster Company are faced with this challenge on a daily basis while they inch closer to the completion of the US Central Command Materiel and Recovery Element mission while being deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 289th QM Co. arrives to work ready to sort through shipping containers of excess materiel to find serviceable equipment or anything that can be salvaged. Although a tedious job, these containers represent a reduction of Coalition Forces within Afghanistan, since they are filled with what is left from installations that have been shut down or turned over to Afghan security forces.

"We're getting the job done, regardless of the hours worked, regardless of the everyday stressors," said Sgt. Eric Williams, who is a leader within the base closure assistance team. "At the end of the day we are Soldiers, we adapt and



**Photos by Sgt. Nathaniel Davis**

(Pfc. Sonia Diaz and Pfc. Wilnelia Aviles take a moment together while working hard at a sorting yard.)

overcome, and we will do so until the last boot leaves Afghanistan."

Having left their loved ones, the 289th QM Co. steadily works to move the retrograde further, meticulously sifting their way through mountains of containers and what may seem to be a never-ending amount of boxes to save money for the American taxpayer.

The 289th QM Co. senior enlisted advisor, 1st Sgt. Ramon Rodriguez commends his Soldiers on putting forth so much time, effort, and hard work to assist in the CMRE mission.

"The mission has brought out the best qualities of every 289th Soldier," he said.



# Hyden: A family's tradition in service to their country

"Hyden" continued from page 8

Her husband, prior to entering into active duty, was serving in the reserve forces. He enjoyed the military lifestyle so much, he decided that he wanted to go into active service.

"We had a family meeting about his decision to go active duty," she said.

After discussing the lifestyle changes that would occur with switching from reserve to active duty, to include moving her teenage children away from their friends and high school. Hyden said the conversation ended well.

"We supported his decision knowing how

important it was for him," she said.

Almost eight years after that discussion, Hyden discussed both the positive and negative aspects to having almost her entire family serving in the Armed Forces.

For her, one advantage is career stability.

"When we would move around, I would have to start at the bottom [of her job's working structure] every move. Many times, I would have to work nights and I wouldn't get to see him often. Now that I'm serving, I don't have to worry about that anymore. We have the same work schedule now and the same holidays off."

As with all situations, there are negative

aspects to having most, soon to be all, of her immediate family serving in the Armed Forces.

"Being spread all over the country is difficult. Family time over holidays is limited."

Despite being spread all over the country and the worries that accompany deployments to hazardous areas, the Hyden family remains strong in their commitment to serving their country with plans to serve for years to come.

## BEAT THE HEAT

➔ **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER TO REPLACE THE FLUIDS YOU LOSE WHEN YOU SWEAT.**

➔ **EAT ENOUGH TO MAINTAIN SALT INTAKE.**

➔ **MONITOR YOUR URINE OUTPUT.**

➔ **AVOID DRINKING MORE THAN 1.5 QUARTS OF WATER PER HOUR OR 12 QUARTS PER DAY.**



# SMALL BUT SIGNIFICANT

Story and Photos by  
Staff Sgt. Joseph Stone

Recently, two Soldiers hung a plaque in a hallway. Not usually a significant event. They happened to be husband and wife. Not usually a big deal. This time was different.

In January, 32nd Transportation Company, 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 43rd Sustainment Brigade lost one of its own. The attack on Staff Sgt. Mark Schoonhoven's convoy happened in Qareh Bagh Province, Afghanistan, December 2012. He died as a result of his injuries, January 20, at Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas.

Schoonhoven's Family, friends and fellow Soldiers attended a memorial service in his honor January 30. That could have been the end of the story, but it is not.

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Brooks, one of the plaque hangers, was assigned as Casualty Assistance Officer for Schoonhoven's widow, Tammie Schoonhoven, and attended the funeral in Ostego, Mich. with the Family. What he saw there along the roads, as he traveled with the motorcade bearing Schoonhoven, he described as amazing.

"Flags lined both sides of the street," said Brooks. "The people of the town were on the sidewalks paying their respect."

Lt. Col. Roger Giraud, commander, 43rd Special Troops Battalion, also attended.

"After we got back, a little old lady from the (local Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter) sent me a package with newspaper clippings," said Giraud.

That "little old lady" was Francis Klumpp. Known as Zeb, she has been a fixture at the VFW for more than 30 years, said Rick Kelly, a member there.

"Zeb does a lot around here," said Kelly. "She just turned 90, and is still going strong."

Kelly said her husband was a prisoner of war during World War II. Her brother also served in World War II, and was wounded.

"That may be part of her motivation to serve the servicemembers," said Kelly.

When the package of clippings from Klumpp arrived, Giraud talked with Command Sgt. Maj. Jacinto Garza, senior enlisted advisor, 43rd STB. They wanted to do something with the clippings, but were not sure exactly what it should be,



Photos by Staff Sgt. Joseph Stone

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Brooks and Sgt. 1st Class April Brooks carefully hang the plaque dedicated in the memory of Staff Sgt. Mark Schoonhoven in a place of honor at the 43rd Sustainment Brigade headquarters building.

according to Garza.

Another nameplate on the "Fallen Warriors of 43rd SB" plaque was not enough for this Soldier, according to Garza.

"Not for this specific Soldier, because not only did he make the ultimate sacrifice, but he battled for at least a month, month and a half, trying to survive. That just shows, even unconscious, he still had that Soldier instinct," said Garza. "I didn't know him well but Specialist Holbrook (the Soldier in the vehicle with Schoonhoven when they were attacked) spoke so highly of him, and I think that just shows what kind of individual he was. This wasn't just a good

Soldier, this was a good person."

Sgt. 1st Class April Brooks, the other plaque hanger, was given the task of putting it together.

"Sgt. Maj. (Garza) said 'let's get creative with it,' so I did," said Brooks.

The plaque took shape. Along with the clippings from Klumpp, April Brooks contacted Tammie Schoonhoven and received some personal photographs.

The official deployment photo went top center, flanking it on one side was a picture of Schoonhoven and one of his daughters. The other side was a wedding

"Plaque" continued on page 12





Photo by Staff Sgt. Joseph Stone

Soldiers of the 43rd Sustainment Brigade pass and pay respects as they gaze upon a plaque dedicated in the memory of Staff Sgt. Mark Schoonhoven.

## Plaque: Honoring, remembering his ultimate sacrifice

Continued from page 11

picture showing the entire bridal party, with Schoonhoven in his dress uniform and maroon beret.

Below the photos, reads his military biography and two newspaper stories about his hometown funeral, and the pictures that went with them.

"Initially I was doing it on my own," said Brooks. "But I decided to get some professional help."

After a trip to a framing shop, the plaque was framed, matted and under glass.

There was a ceremony to unveil the plaque and Specialist Holbrook, motor

transport operator, 32nd Trans. Co., shared some memories about Schoonhoven.

"He really took me under his wing," Holbrook said. "I felt like I was one of his sons."

Holbrook also spoke about Schoonhoven's ever-present coffee cup.

"We called him 'Tin Cup' because he never went anywhere without that coffee," said Holbrook.

After the ceremony, the plaque was placed near the 43rd SB's command group offices.

While the plaque was being hung, Giraud leaned over to Tammie Schoonhoven and

said, "Now he'll be with us forever."

There are nine nameplates on the 43rd SB Fallen Heroes memorial wall, dating back to 2007. Every single name has a story to go with it. Each of those Soldiers has people at home who will never see their loved ones again. The newest nameplate reads:

SSG Mark H. Schoonhoven  
20 January 2013  
32nd TC, 68 CSSB  
Kabul, Afghanistan

"We figured we'd do something for him," said Garza. "Small but significant."





# Congress Visits Retro Sort Yard



## Photos by Sgt. Bruce Burrus

(Top) Col. Todd Heussner, 43rd Sustainment Brigade commander, speaks with a group of congressmen and women about the Kandahar Airfield Retro Sort Yard and its various operations to assist in the nation-wide retrograde effort. (Middle-left) Cpl. Harold Martin shows Rep. Madeleine Zein Bordallo, a state representative of Guam, a portion of the retrograde process at the KAF RSY. (Middle-Right) Lt. Col. Jeremy Lewis discusses the variety of containers and equipment received at the KAF RSY. (Bottom) 2nd Lt. Daniel Hartion exchanges a handshake with Congressman Robert Wittman, of Va., during their visit to the KAF RSY.





**Illustration by Sgt. Khori Johnson**

The Transportation Corps is responsible for moving supplies, troops and equipment anywhere on the globe. During war, the Transportation Corps utilizes trucks, boats, and airplanes to provide extremely fast support to the combat teams on the frontlines.

## A nontraditional mission in a traditional Army

**Editorial by  
Sgt. 1st Class Miguel Figueredo**

My name is Sergeant 1st Class Miguel Figueredo currently assigned to the 43rd Sustainment Brigade as part of the U.S. Central Command Materiel Recovery Element. Our brigade consists of senior logisticians, a CSSB and two engineer battalions conducting operations in order to enable battle space owners to close or transfer bases and recover, redistribute, retrograde and dispose of equipment. Simultaneously, they conduct counterinsurgency operations, maintain the momentum of the campaign and set the conditions in the CJOA-A to meet post-2014 operational requirements.

CMRE efforts must be the current, main focus of transportation Noncommissioned Officers preparing for deployments and/or working at echelons battalion and higher. Something that isn't new is the extent of duties both direct and indirect which transportation will face while supporting CMRE operations; we are well trained and educated in our core responsibilities and as senior NCOs, we have served in several roles advising at both strategic and operational levels. CMRE operations require an expansion of our roles to accommodate for analysis of direct logistical operations while continuing combat operations, a role that was strictly, in my experience, reserves for the Officer Corps. Now more than ever, our technical and tactical expertise is needed, with our holistic assessments being an integral part of the military decision making process.

The Noncommissioned Officer Academy

is already leading with extended course curriculums at the Senior Leader's Course which addresses the role of the transportation NCOs at senior platforms the same way a captain becomes a logistics officer. Now, senior NCOs are becoming full spectrum logisticians after the completion of the course. Extended instruction is given explaining the role of the BCT and lower echelons during combat operations and their interface with logistical concept of operations.

The biggest challenges faced by those well trained NCOs supporting CMRE missions is that the mission is charged not only with doctrinal activities, but a series of tasks requiring improvisation and plenty of "out of the box" interpretations. History is in the making for 88s as we embark in the

first-ever theater retrograde mission while still conducting full combat operations.

NCOs must arrive in theater with ample knowledge of the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System, transportation priorities, TRANSCOM requirements for ULN management and the roles of the ESC and the TSC level of support. Most importantly, the NCOs must be prepared to adjust to variations of standards procedures via LOI, business rules, SOPs and special orders. Your success will come by preparing yourself for non-standard operations and by looking for ways in which doctrine may need to be revised. Gathering and sharing lessons learned with the NCOA may be a good way to prepare our peers, and as always improving the "foxhole" when your tour comes to an end.

**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."**

**-Margaret Mead**



# Headhunters display retrograde in action



Story and Photos by  
Spc. Kyle Rice

As the snow and ice melted on the mountainous regions near the Bagram Airfield, so has the footprint of Coalition Forces continued to melt away in Afghanistan.

The 247th Quartermaster Company recently welcomed Maj. Gen. Kurt J. Stein, 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) commander, and Defense Media Activity Bureau chief, Gail McCabe, to speak with Soldiers and check on retro sort yard operations.

During the visit, the Headhunters were able to emphasize their successes at the yard due to their leadership and organization.

"A well-structured retro sort yard is essential to providing a successful operation of retrograding materiel and equipment," said Capt. Gary Taylor, 247th QM Co. commander.

Sgt. Charles Bowens was one of the Noncommissioned Officers who spoke with McCabe about operations, his mission responsibilities and his experiences working at the retro sort yard and over flow yard.

"Everyday there is something new," he said. "Each container can be a disaster zone, but every container needs to be shipped properly and packed correctly. I have to say there's never a dull moment."

The visit ended with several Headhunters stripping away a single twenty-foot container as Stein and McCabe observed retrograde in action.

"This is not an easy job, but we have the right Soldiers here doing the right job," said Stein.



Photo by Spc. Kyle Rice

(Top) Gail McCabe interviews Sgt. Charles Bowen about his experiences while working at the Bagram Airfield Retro Sort Yard and Over Flow Yard. (Middle) Spc. Emily Burgos, the wash rack supervisor at the BAF RSY, speaks with Maj. Gen. Kurt J. Stein, 1st Sustainment Bridge (Theater) commander about retro sort yard operations. (Bottom) Gail McCabe interviews Spc. Martiza Guzman, the customs supervisor at the BAF RSY as Maj. Gen. Stein and Lt. Col. Lewis look on.

