



Lifeline of the Kabul Base Cluster

Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario, Task Force Lifeline (Play Video ► by Staff Sgt. Peter Sinclair)

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PHOENIX, Afghanistan – Task Force Lifeline, Task Force Rottweiler, 1438th Transportation Company and other units work cohesively as one to render sustainment and retrograde support successfully within the Kabul Base Cluster, all in support of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command.

Soldiers with Task Force Rottweiler are considered the lifeline of the Kabul Base Cluster because of a rather special operation they manage called a Forward Logistics Element (FLE). This forward logistical operation provides a continuous flow of sustainment to the forces, all while supporting the muscle movement for the reduction of the military footprint in Afghanistan.

“A FLE is basically a multifunctional element that’s tasked organized, to be able to support an operation or a unit, which is geographically separated from normal supply channels, explained Task Force Lifeline support operations officer in charge, Lt. Col. Octave V. MacDonald.

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Newly promoted Noncommissioned Officers (NCO) pose for a group photo after completing their NCO Induction Ceremony, Oct. 30, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. During this ceremony the newly promoted conducted the rite of passage into the U.S. Army NCO Corps. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

FROM SOLDIER TO NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER

Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario, Task Force Lifeline (Play Video ► by Staff Sgt. Peter Sinclair)

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Fifty-two newly promoted noncommissioned officers (NCO) crossed into the corps with a symbolic induction ceremony, which represented their right of entry into, what is known as, the time honored Corps of the noncommissioned officer.

The heritage and history of the corps is rich with symbolism and traces its roots as far back as the 17th century. The NCO Induction

Ceremony gave the NCOs a better understanding of the significance of becoming a Sergeant and what it takes to be a good leader.

“Being able to see Soldiers officially transition to leaders, and learn more about the history of the NCO Corps was a very memorable experience,” expressed newly promoted Sgt. Duy T. Bui, a Soldier with Task Force Lifeline and participant in the NCO Induction Ceremony. “It was humbling to be part of the tradition.”

As the Soldiers recited the Creed

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of the Noncommissioned Officer, senior leaders looked on as these young NCOs took the next step in becoming leaders in today's U.S. Army.

"This rite of passage instills a level of confidence into the inductees as they join the NCO Corps, stated Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher T. Crawford for the 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). "We want our NCOs to know how important they are to us...when it's their turn they will be the ones stepping in to con-

tinue to uphold the NCO traditions."

One young NCO explained how these types of ceremonies are important and represent a huge step forward in their careers.

"It instills pride in the future NCOs that they are joining an elite and vital part of the U.S. Army," explained Bui.

"Current and senior NCOs are reminded where they came from and what it means to be an NCO. These ideas, dedication, and duties are why NCOs are the Backbone of the Army." ●

Newly promoted Noncommissioned Officers (NCO) recite the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer led by Staff Sgt. Cybelle Rey, a human resources NCO with Task Force Lifeline during an NCO Induction Ceremony, Oct. 30, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. During this ceremony the newly promoted conducted the rite of passage into the U.S. Army NCO Corps. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)



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LATEST COVERAGE
**LIFE
LINER
POD
CAST**





Col. Charles R. Hamilton, Commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Eugene J. Thomas Jr., Command Sergeant Major, Task Force Lifeline

LIFELINER 6 SENDS

Friends and Family of Task Force Lifeline, I am humbled to report to you as the Brigade Commander that your Soldiers are performing an impeccable job and exceeding all expectations every day. The mission is historical; Lifeliners are conducting sustainment operations in the harshest environment imaginable while balancing it with the mission to retrograde equipment out of Afghanistan. Our Soldiers are doing this by all means available; by air with helicopters and sling load operations, with airplanes by using parachute deliveries, and on the ground with convoys to ensure all elements in Afghanistan have what they need in order to successfully accomplish their missions. Your Soldiers are intertwined in every aspect of the mission here in Afghanistan taking the title of "Lifeliners" to a whole new level and really are the lifeline of the mission here in Afghanistan. As the winter holidays approach, I ask you, Families and friends of the Lifeliners to continue to provide support to your hard-working Heroes as they continue to surpass all of my expectations, continuously leaving me impressed. We are rounding third base and looking forward to returning home. Keep all Lifeliners in your thoughts and daily activities during these upcoming holidays and celebrate their many accomplishments. Air Assault!!

LIFELINER 7 SENDS

As the Brigade Command Sergeant Major of Task Force Lifeline, I want to send my deepest and warmest thanks to the Families and friends of the "Lifeliners" for your daily sacrifices, especially during the upcoming holidays. Remember your Heroes are doing things most men and women can only dream of having the opportunity and courage to do. Your Soldiers continue to epitomize what it means to be a disciplined, hard working, professional Soldier in the United States Army. Never in my career have I been more proud to lead men and women in combat. We are all heading into the winter holidays together, your support means the world to each and every member of Task Force Lifeline, and enables them to be the best they can be. I want to emphasize to you back at home my priorities will not change; the Lifeliners will be disciplined, highly trained, extremely professional and physically fit to continue serving you and their country.



(Left) Pfc. Dewayne M. Johnson, a native of Muncie, Ind., and fuel noncommissioned officer with the 1438th Transportation Company in support of Task Force Lifeline, conducts a visual inspection of a fuel distribution point during their monthly fuel audit, Sept. 17, 2013 at Forward Operating Base Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. The purpose of this audit is to ensure gain and losses are being tracked. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

Page 1—FLE

“Task Force Rottweiler is an enduring FLE; they conduct a tactical mission...at a strategic location.”

Task Force Rottweiler is a forward element from the Task Force Lifeline team based at Bagram Airfield in Regional Command- East. The Lifelines pride themselves in providing world-class sustainment and retrograde support throughout Afghanistan.

The Forward Logistics Element serves as the battalion’s supply function for larger elements, explained Task Force Rottweiler Forward Logistics Element non-commissioned officer in charge, Sgt. 1st Class Bryan K. Walker.

“Basically, the FLE supports RC-Capital, as a supply point for the entire Kabul Base Cluster (KBC),” explained Walker a native of Atlanta, Ga.

For logistical oversight, multiple assets are centrally located forward from a headquarters element, which in this case is Task Force Lifeline. The FLE is comprised of differing commodities based on the mission requirements in RC-Capital, which currently supports all forward operating bases (FOBs) within the KBC. This FLE in particular includes a transportation company and a support operations (SPO) section. There are also commodity sections, which distribute everything from food to fuel.

The fuel distribution point distributes up to 175,000 gallons of fuel per week. Another vital mission the FLE supports is the mortuary affairs transfer point; it’s a stop for Fallen Heroes from the KBC area before they are sent to the main collection point in Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

The commodities that make up the FLE at Forward Operating Base Phoenix are critical to sustaining the Capital region of Afghanistan.

“Our job is very crucial because we coordinate every-

thing,” explained, Staff Sgt. Katherine S. Roe, SPO transportation noncommissioned officer with the 1438th Transportation Company. “It entails making sure that everything for the transportation company in the Kabul Base Cluster is processed, put on missions and everything is tracked and goes according to plan.”

To ensure all units have a line of communication and the ability to coordinate between each other and their customers is key to the success of Task Force Rottweiler’s mission in Afghanistan.

“We coordinate with everybody. Coordination is a big piece because you have a lot of moving pieces,” said Task Force Rottweiler Forward Logistical Element officer in charge, Maj. Drew Ponivas. Walker touted, “Task Force Rottweiler consists of a team of professionals who go above and beyond on a daily basis to make sure we get the mission done.”

As the Rottweiler’s continue to orchestrate the FLE, they ensure professional guidance and oversight is provided so that all the commodities are synchronized.

“The Forward Logistics Element gives commanders the flexibility to support missions and operations without using a lot of manpower by using critical assets to accomplish the mission,” affirmed MacDonald.

He added, without the resources provided through a FLE, a commander and his staff could lose much of the operational situational awareness. The proximity to the customer assists heavily in the success of properly sustaining the forward operating bases.

MacDonald finished off with, “As we’re drawing down and we’re reducing and we’re doing the ‘right-sizing’ of FOBs... the closures and the transferring and redeploying equipment back... Forward Logistical Elements allow us better visibility, better coordination and better synchronization of those forward locations to be good stewards to the governments dollars.” ●

DIGNITY, REVERENCE AND RESPECT:

OUR FALLEN HEROES

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Mary Rose Middlesteadt, Task Force Lifeline
([Play Video](#) ► by Staff Sgt. Peter Sinclair)

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Mortuary affair's Soldiers on the battlefield have become a vital asset throughout the past century; these proud and strong Soldiers ensure fallen comrades receive dignity, reverence and respect. To ensure each service member comes home with honor is why each one of these professionals put on the uniform every day.

The Bagram Air Field Mortuary Affairs Collection Point is the final stop for fallen heroes in the Northern half of Afghanistan, as they make their way home. The collection point is operated by 54th Quartermaster Company from Fort Lee, Va., that supports Task Force Lifeline, 1st Theater Sustainment Command.

The Bagram Air Field mortuary affairs Soldiers live by three words; dignity, reverence and respect,

which they demonstrate continuously through their profession. No matter who the Hero may be; a Coalition Forces Soldier, an Afghan Security Force member or civilians who work and live in Afghanistan, they are all treated equally and receive their countries colors.

The mortuary affairs team prepares each Hero for their final journey home and then performs the final tangible act of preparing and meticulously draping colors; furthermore, symbolizing the gratitude from the nation they served.

This preparation of the colors begins when the collection point receives the phone call that a Fallen Hero is inbound from somewhere in Afghanistan. The team immediately starts preparing for the arrival. Sgt. Jarrett Ransom, a 54th QM Company Soldier from Memphis, Tenn., clarified the urgency in their preparation by demonstrating the process they go through. "We treat every Fallen Hero as if (he or she) were still living," Ransom stated speaking

on how they respond to the call. "We're going to make sure that we do everything that we can. It is so important, because it shows respects in one of the only ways we can."

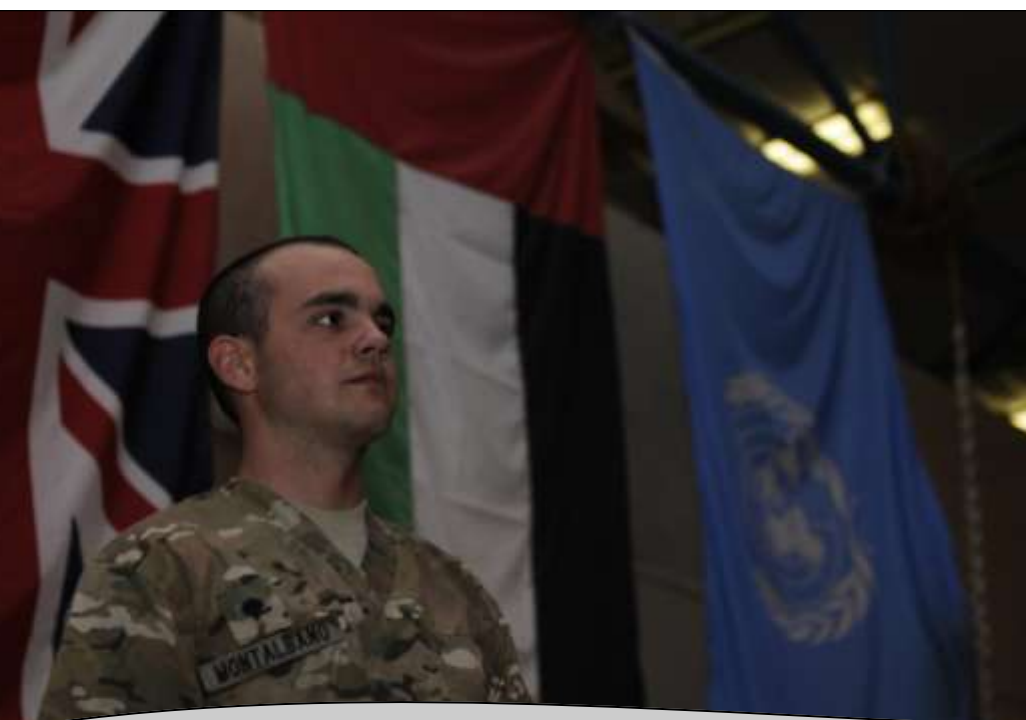
With urgency as a priority, the Soldiers never forget the details.

"Depending on the nationality we drape their flag. (The Fallen) could be Polish, so we get a polish flag and we iron it. If (the Fallen) is a U.S. citizen or a U.S. Soldier we get an American flag, then we iron it, so we can drape it," explained Pfc. Cody Montalbano, a 54th QM Company Soldier from Rochester, N.Y.

The Bagram mortuary affairs team unfurls the colors and begins the thorough process of preparing the flag for the Fallen Hero. Not a single detail is overlooked; the colors are carefully ironed and inspected for even the slightest of imperfections that may be found.

"The importance of making sure everything is perfect is to give the

Respect — Page 6



Spc. Cody J. Montalbano, a native of Rochester, N.Y., and mortuary affairs specialist with the 54th Quartermaster Company, stands and observes his team as they meticulously practice preparing a flag, Oct. 17, 2013 at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. This final act by the Mortuary Affairs team signifies and upholds the highest military traditions for Fallen Heroes. Montalbano and his teammates at the Mortuary Affairs Collection Point Bagram, ensure the Heroes are treated with dignity, reverence and respect. The 54th Quartermaster Company is based out of Fort Lee, Va. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)



The Mortuary Affairs Collection Point Bagram team stand together for a group photo, Oct. 17, 2013 at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. Sgt. Jarrett D. Ransom (top left), a native of Memphis, Tenn., Pfc. Shawn Thomas (top right), a native of Raeford, N.C., Staff Sgt. Joel Wood (bottom left), a native of Plattsburgh, N.Y., Spc. Cody J. Montalbano (center left), a native of Rochester, N.Y., Spc. Jeremy Bennett (center right), a native of Cromwell, Ky., and Pfc. Paul Shrum (bottom right) a native of Casa Grande, Ariz., are all Soldiers with the 54th Quartermaster Company out of Fort Lee, Va. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

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Fallen Hero the dignity, reverence and respect that he or she deserves and also to give the Family closure,” Montalbano added.

The Soldiers face the byproduct of combat routinely, which can take a toll on even the strongest of people. When asked what was the hardest part of his job, the team leader took a deep breath and explained one of the realities he fears the most about his profession. “I have to accept the fact that somebody I know may come through here at some point.”

Ransom knows this may one day happen and he will have to face

his worst fear and prepare a friend for their final journey home.

“I refuse to let anything go wrong with what I do,” he continued. “Most people don’t know about what we do, which is understandable, but I think it’s very important for us to explain to people what we do and why we do what we do.”

The entire mortuary affairs team spoke about Army values, but Ransom was adamant in his beliefs and values by stating, “I am very loyal to what I do. I’m very loyal to my comrades, my battle buddies, even if I’ve never met them. I have a duty, obligation and I’m going to fulfill it.”

The team’s mantra is evident in every step they take from each detail that goes into preparing the Fallen Hero to the honor that goes into draping the Hero’s colors over them, all in preparation for the long journey home.

The team feels a sense of pride in their profession knowing that their mission is to ensure a Hero is treated as a Hero.

“I would like that the next of kin, the wife, the husband, that child, that grandmother or whom-ever it may be, to see their Hero as a shining star. That’s my whole purpose in what I do,” Ransom proudly said. ●

KUNDUZ: 524TH CSSB SEES THE END OF AN ERA

Courtesy story by Capt. Jerry Garner, Task Force Hannibal

KUNDUZ, Afghanistan – As coalition forces work feverishly to prepare for the 2014 withdrawal, Soldiers from the 524th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion made one last retrograde run to Kunduz. This was to be the cumulative event moving hundreds of trucks full of military equipment, fuel and supplies in and out of the North in a massive effort to close this key military base.

Reminiscent of the initial days of the Kunduz Operating Base, all the chow halls, tents and unit headquarters were nowhere to be seen. Soldiers spent their last night asleep on the ground strategically circled around their trucks in an attempt to get enough rest for long-haul back to Camp Marmal in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Kunduz province is located in Northern Afghanistan under the command of the German military and Regional Command-North. The population of the Kunduz district is roughly 775,000 with almost three-fourths of its citizens living in rural, outlying communities. After September 11, 2001, U.S. Special Forces began to work with the Northern Alliance to force the Taliban out of Northern Afghanistan. Kunduz was the last stand for the Taliban in the North and the fight became known as the “Siege of Kunduz”.

Mohammed Daud Daud led the Northern Alliance from Mazar-e-Sharif (current day Regional Command Headquarters) through Taloqan and up to Kunduz. Upon arrival, the Northern Alliance found themselves in a heavy firefight. Daud decided to surround the city and allow American air support to bomb the Taliban in an attempt to weaken their positions. After eleven days of bombing, U.S. forces had destroyed 44 bunkers and 12 tanks. Prior to September 11, 2001, Pakistan had hundreds of advisors and fighters in Afghanistan, to assist in the fight against the Northern Alliance. Pakistan used this time to evacuate several thousand fighters, later coined the “airlift of evil”. With the dissipated support of the foreign fighters and their deteriorated position, the Taliban surrendered Kunduz on November 23, 2001.

After the fall of Kunduz, Northern Afghanistan was regarded as one of the safest areas in Afghanistan. Under the control of Regional Command-North, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops rarely encountered the Taliban. This earned Kunduz the German nickname, “Bad Kunduz or Kunduz spa”. This all changed in 2009. Between April and June of that year,

there were more firefights than the previous seven years combined. By early 2010 U.S. forces began to flood into the Kunduz area.

The U.S. and Germany increased troop levels to 6,000 in an effort to provide security in the Kunduz area. In January of 2010, Operation Wolf Pack commenced with the goal of establishing outposts in the troublesome district.

On October 6, 2013, Germany officially transferred the base of Kunduz to Afghan National Security Forces. This completed ten years of German commitment and dedication to the Afghan people of the Kunduz Province. Nearly 20,000 German troops cycled through the Kunduz base. Of Germany's 35 combat related deaths, 20 were a result of enemy activity in and around Kunduz. The transfer ceremony was attended by the German Defense Minister Thomas de Maiziere. He remarked, “Nowhere else since WWII have more German Soldiers died in combat...(We) built, fought, cried and consoled, killed and fell here.”

Soldiers of the 1230th Transportation Company, a Georgia National Guard unit, and Soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 524th CSSB Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, were able to experience the full circle of a military operation. These Soldiers were a part of a historic moment; as they loaded up the last container to be hauled out, it represented the end of an era in Afghanistan, and new beginning for the ANSF and people of Afghanistan. ●



Soldiers from the 1230th Transportation Company, a National Guard Unit from Thomasville, Ga., in support of the 524th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, made one last retrograde run to Forward Operating Base Kunduz, in October 2013, to pick up the last items to be retrograded prior to transferring to Afghan National Security Forces.

STAFF SERGEANT LANE BROUGHT RESILIENCY

Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario, Task Force Lifeliner (Play Video ► by Staff Sgt. Peter Sinclair)

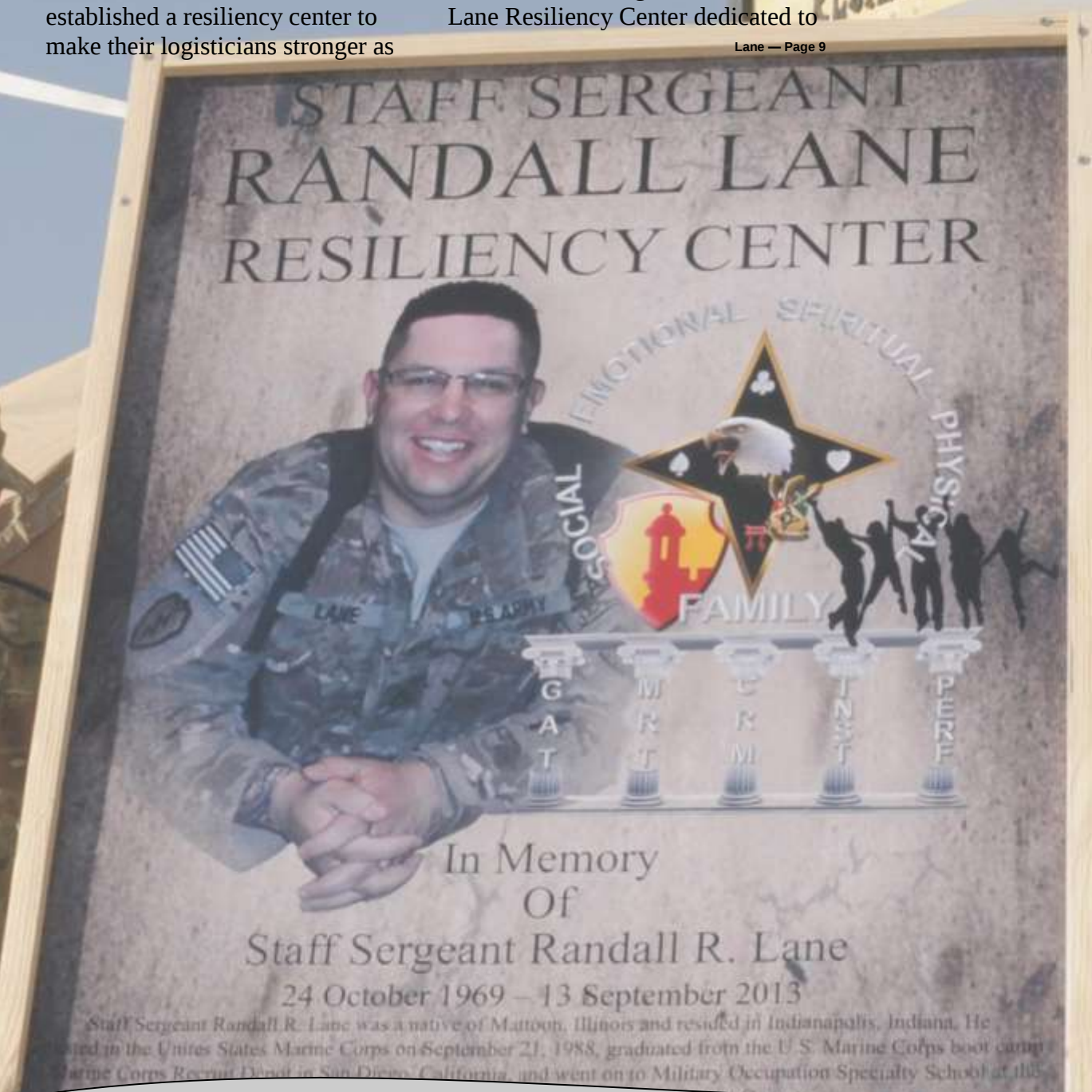
BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The Soldiers of the 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion are logisticians who find themselves on the front lines of Afghanistan. This is where the Army's Master Resiliency Program plays an imperative role in their daily lives.

Task Force Lifeliner's 77th CSSB established a resiliency center to make their logisticians stronger as

they conduct a historical sustainment and retrograde support mission in Afghanistan. The center is a place for Soldiers to work through their challenges; whether it is through physical fitness, reading a book, playing ping pong to talking with a specialist who can provide feedback on challenges a Soldier may encounter.

The new center was appropriately titled the Staff Sergeant Randall Lane Resiliency Center dedicated to

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Task Force Garita's Command Sgt. Maj. Waldemar Rodriguez Diaz (left), a native of Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico, Task Force Garita's Commander Lt. Col. Hector L. Agosto Rivera (center), a native of Salinas, Puerto Rico, and Task Force Lifeline's Commander Col. Charles R. Hamilton (right) a native of Chantilly, Va., conducts the cutting of ribbon during the SSG (Staff Sgt.) Randall Lane Resiliency Center inauguration, Oct. 20, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. The resiliency center was dedicated to Staff Sgt. Randall R. Lane, formerly from Neoga, Ill., who died Sept. 13, 2013, while serving in the Indiana Army National Guard in Kabul, Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)



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the memory of Staff Sgt. Randall R. Lane, formerly from Neoga, Ill., who died Sept. 13, 2013, while serving with the Indiana Army National Guard in Kabul, Afghanistan.

"This represents everything that he would represent," expressed a close friend Staff Sgt. Brandon Wilcher, from Indianapolis, Ind.

Task Force Lifeline's commander, Col. Charles R. Hamilton, reiterated how meaningful and important Randall and now the center is to the Soldiers.

"This resiliency center is really indicative of the man, and character and NCO (noncommissioned officer) that he is and was," said Hamilton from Chantilly, Va.

He continued to explain that Randall was that one Soldier within the unit that everybody

went back to at the end of the unit's CET (convoy escort team) missions.

Hamilton emphasized, "He (Randall) told jokes, he got everybody motivated... so to have a resili-

ency center named after him, that's just perfect."

The resiliency center is made up of two metal 20-foot shipping containers and two large tents. These structures include a chaplain's office, a relaxation room with a variety of movies, a multiuse room for Master Resilience Training, ping pong tables, reading materials and a physical fitness center.

"Our goal is to provide workshops, training and wellness retreats to enhance the well being of all Soldiers while coping with the rigors of being deployed," said Master Sgt. Jose E. Buttervendrell, master resiliency trainer with the 77th CSSB.

Task Force Lifeline's brigade master resiliency trainer, Sgt. 1st Class Ryan O. Bumpers, from Jackson, Ala., explained in further detail the importance of this facility and how it

aligns with the five dimensions of strength: emotional, social, spiritual, family and physical.

"As Soldiers deploy to a hostile environment, they encounter obsta-

cles on a daily basis that produce anxiety, anger and or other strong emotions that hinder judgment and interfere with the ability to perform under adverse conditions," explained Bumpers.

"The resiliency term 'Bounce Back' describes a mental tool used by the Army to help Soldiers get 'back in the game' and focus on the task at hand. The Army's resiliency program teaches us to bounce back from adversity instead of breaking like an egg."

The 77th CSSB is the muscle movement of the retrograde and sustainment of Soldiers in Regional Commands – East and Capital in Afghanistan.

"Soldiers from the 77th CSSB spend more time on the road, exposed to more dangers than the average logistician," explained Buttervendrell, from Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

"The resiliency center helps them find the tools to help them cope with stress, anxiety, depression and other factors that affect their well-being. This facility helps our troops to focus and continue onward with their mission." •

“

... 'back in the game' and focus on the task at hand.

~ Bumpers

”

AFGHANISTAN MAIL SURGE IN FOCUS

Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario,
Task Force Lifeliner

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – With the continued drawdown of forces and equipment along with the holiday season at the door, postal personnel take the necessary steps to prepare for current and upcoming challenges during this critical time in Afghanistan.

Postal workers in Afghanistan gathered, Oct. 19-21, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, to address postal operations, trends, initiatives and lessons learned throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility during the 1st Sustainment Command's (Theater), 310th Human Resources Sustainment Center's *2013 Theater Postal Conference* hosted by 101st Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Lifeliner.

"This conference's goal is to get all the postal leadership together to discuss the postal issues in theater we already know about that are 6-12 months down the road and that we're going to be dealing with. This is due to what's already being laid out for the operational plans of the theater," explained Lt. Col. Scott M. Kerr the chief of postal operations division with the 310th Human Resources Sustainment Center.

Financial accountability was one of the hot topics during the conference. The steps on how to properly and effectively administer postal funds while complying with applicable regulations, policies, standard operating procedures and sound financial practices were thoroughly discussed during the three day conference. Kerr added that there are checks and balances on each step throughout the financial accountability within theater postal operation.

"We went over our annual inspection checklist that we're required to conduct in theater to all APO's (Army Post Office) to make sure everyone's on the same sheet of music and they operate a successful APO and have successful missions," said Kerr, a native of Jacksonville, Fla.

The postal mission takes collaboration, Kerr said, so it takes a team effort between the service members and contractors. The work relationship between both entities has led to successfully performing their mission, which is to serve the customers who receive and ship mail back home.

During the conference, the service members had the opportunity to discuss what works for them in each of their areas of the operation in order to better the overall postal mission throughout the theater.

This allowed for lessons learned to be taken into consideration. "They can apply what they've learned here from someone who has gone through that similar situation and get it resolved at their level. This way they can continue to take care of the postal customers in the APO," said Kerr.

Another hot topic discussed was clear communication to each person who plays a role in pushing mail throughout the Afghanistan Theater of Operation.

"It's very important that those at the bottom know what's going on at the top, so that they can perform their missions, emphasized Task Force Lifeliner Sgt. Brandon W. Smith, a postal noncommissioned officer in charge for postal assistance and assessment team.

"In the postal operations we're always preparing for new things. Click-N-Ship was the last one that came out. Right now

FACT...

The
average
Mail
distribution in
Afghanistan
at a
Postal,
office is
approximately
40,000-
60,000
pounds
Daily

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we're preparing for Holiday season and we're looking at a significant increase in mail."

The conference is an opportunity to synchronize all the postal assets in time for the forecasted increase in mail, explained Kerr.

Postal personnel prepare and plan for the mail surge, which begins Nov. 1, 2013 through Jan. 15, 2013. The incoming and outgoing mails will more than double postal operation's workload, with both the influx from the redeployment of troops and holiday season.

"They're (postal workers) dealing with tremendous challenges because mail is a commodity and it's fighting for space on transportation assets," emphasized Kerr.

The average mail distribution at a postal office is approximately 40,000 – 60,000 pounds daily. In the upcoming couple months postal services is expected to distribute between 100,000 – 300,000 pounds of mail daily.

Postal personnel are also gearing up to ease some of the lines that are expected at the Army Post Offices throughout Afghanistan. When the mail volume rises, like what is being forecasted for the redeployment and holiday surge, the postal assets create teams to set up

postal operation at a units headquarters, called 'rodeos', explained Smith, a native of Hot Springs Ark. "We set up 'rodeos' where we'll take those packages straight from the customer, so that they don't have to go to the post office."

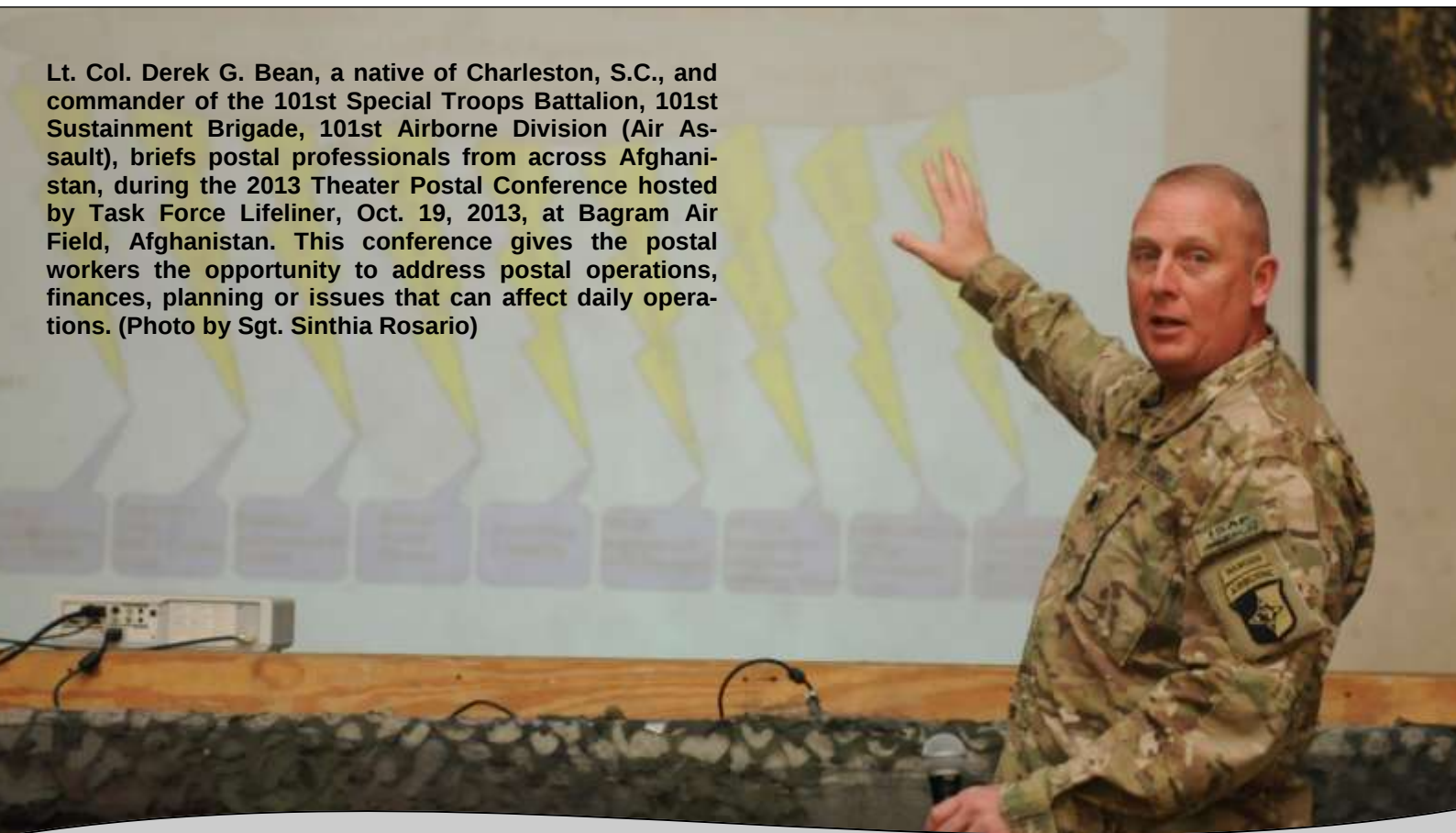
Additionally, the postal personnel are downsizing their footprint as Forward Operating Base (FOB) closures continue.

The conference allowed the postal personnel to discuss the challenges of relocating the postal equipment and personnel to the enduring FOBs, while maintaining the velocity of mail movement.

"We have to relocate postal assets when FOBs close down. We know that as our population gets smaller, that's less of a customer that we have to rely on. Therefore the APO services won't be needed were the populations don't exist. It just makes sense for the human resource community to drawdown as the whole entire theater draws down," Kerr explained in reference to centrally locating postal assets in Afghanistan.

With the 2013 Theater Postal Conference in the past and the holidays and troop redeployment in the near future, postal operations are in full throttle with open lines of communication to ensure mail distribution remains at a steady flow. ●

Lt. Col. Derek G. Bean, a native of Charleston, S.C., and commander of the 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), briefs postal professionals from across Afghanistan, during the 2013 Theater Postal Conference hosted by Task Force Lifeline, Oct. 19, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. This conference gives the postal workers the opportunity to address postal operations, finances, planning or issues that can affect daily operations. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)





WINTER CHANGES EVERYTHING

Pfc. Ryan M. Sindle (right), a native of Elkhart, Ind., with the command security team (CST), drags a snow chain towards a mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle tire during winterization training class. Pfc. Val J. Irick (left), a native of Daytona Beach, Fla., and a driver with the CST, assists Sindle with the placement of the chain, while Spc. Victor W. Stephans (center) a native of Clarksville, Tenn., and instructor, observes the Soldiers performance. (Photos by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario, Task Force Lifeline
([Play Video](#) ► by Staff Sgt. Peter Sinclair)

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – As winter sets in the cold weather will bring slippery ice covered roads that can put Soldier's driving skills to the test if they are not prepared for these types of conditions. Task Force Lifeline Soldiers are taking the steps necessary to prepare for the icy winter ahead by learning how to prepare their colossal vehicles and themselves for the Afghanistan winter.

Veteran Task Force Lifeline mechanics prepared a thorough training curriculum for these drivers knowing what's right around the corner in the mountainous regions.

"Last deployment my driver encountered some black ice and before he knew it he was already sideways. By the time he actually hit the pavement that truck had no-

where to go but to roll over," exclaimed Sgt. Andrew J. Newcomb, mechanic shop foreman for Task Force Lifeline.

The Soldiers received a class on what to expect; then they learn hands-on how to apply chains to their vehicles. This training is imperative for the Soldier as they continue to execute sustainment and retrograde operation missions as they will continue throughout the harsh Afghan winter.

Newcomb, a native of Orfordville, Wis., said, "Handling characteristics are going to change immensely. Everything gets slippery... everything just does not handle the same."

The highly trained mechanics ensure each driver leaves the training with the confidence and knowledge on how to operate safely in winter conditions.

"The roads, they are already hard enough to drive on

A snow chain laid on top of a mine-resistant ambushed protected vehicle tire.



as it is but with the snow it's going to be a lot more treacherous. Keep it smooth, keep it steady and do what I gotta do to keep my guys safe, said Task Force Lifeline Pvt. Maleke F.M. Seaward, a driver with the command security team.

"I think it's very important safety, safety for everything. I have a lot of people I have to take care of when I'm driving. Gotta make sure that I'm safe, make sure all my people are safe so we can go home and see our

families, daughters, wives, husbands..."

Newcomb emphasized the importance for these Soldiers to learn to place the snow tire chains and how to drive in the winter. He continued to explain that they will eventually encounter these conditions and when they do they are going to have to react.

The conducted training better prepares these Soldiers for the missions ahead when these conditions become their new daily reality.

"The key points I picked up really from these guys to stay safe don't panic, keep everything smooth, slow is smooth, smooth is fast and basically just keep eyes on the road and be very vigilant," emphatically explained Seaward, a native of Luray, Va. ●



(Left) Sgt. Andrew J. Newcomb, a native of Orfordville, Wis., and mechanic shop foreman with Task Force Lifeline, guides a High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled vehicle onto snow chains during a winter training class, Oct. 26, at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. This training teaches the Soldiers how to properly apply snow chains on tires and how to operate their vehicles in cold weather conditions. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)