

THE LIFELINER

DECEMBER 2013
ISSUE 6

UPDATE



Col. Charles R. Hamilton (left), commander of the 101st Sustainment Brigade (Lifeline), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Command Sgt. Maj. Eugene Thomas Jr. (right), senior noncommissioned officer in charge of the 101st Sustainment Brigade, present arms during a transfer of authority ceremony between the 15th Sustainment Brigade (Wagonmaster), 1st Armored Division and the 101st Sustainment Brigade (Lifeliners), Dec. 4, 2013 at Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan. This ceremony signifies the successful completion of the Wagonmaster's mission and the continuation and expansion of the Lifeline's mission. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

One Brigade, One Big Mission

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

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan—The 15th Sustainment Brigade “Wagonmasters”, 1st Armored Division, from Fort Bliss, Texas, cased its colors during a transfer of authority ceremony held on Dec. 4, 2013, as they handed the reins to the 101st Sustainment Brigade “Lifeliners”, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) from Fort Campbell, Ky.

This ceremony signified the successful completion of one sustainment brigade's mission and the continuation and expansion of another's mission. The Lifeline brigade's initial mission in Afghanistan was to support Regional Command's (RC) - East, North and Capital, essentially Northern and Eastern portion of the country. As the 101st Sustainment Brigade headquarters, known as Task Force Lifeline, continues their mission, they will increase their support to RC's - South, Southwest and National Support Element West, which comprises the Southern and Western portions of Afghanistan.

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“We merged two sustainment brigades worth of work into one single logistics headquarters, as Col. Charles Hamilton and Command Sgt. Maj. Eugene Thomas from the 101st Sustainment Brigade become the only sustainment Brigade for all of Afghanistan,” said Maj. Gen. Kurt J. Stein, a native of Middletown, N.J., and commanding general of 1st Theater Sustainment Command (Theater).

During the Wagonmaster’s deployment they sustained more than 40,000 U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) personnel throughout the Southern half of the country, logging more than 200,000 miles on dangerous Afghan roads, supplying fuel, food, mail,

water and any other type of commodity troops may need.

Now as the sole sustainment brigade in Afghanistan, the Lifeliners will provide logistical and retrograde support operations for the entire Combined Joint Operations Area - Afghanistan (CJOA-A), in support of 1st Theater Sustainment Command (Theater).

“This represents a new chapter in the Lifeline history,” stated U.S. Army Col. Charles R. Hamilton, Task Force Lifeline commander. “Both teams have already done tremendous work preparing for this day.”

Hamilton a native of Houston, Texas continued to explain that the Task Force Lifeline’s are committed to provide support to the troops

in these new areas of responsibility to ensure that the forces have everything they need. He also thanked the Wagonmasters for “setting the Lifeliners up for success”.

Stein bid a warm farewell to the Wagonmasters and proclaimed them as a “superb Army unit”. He ensured both commands knew that “the Army always gets it right” as he touted about the Lifeliners accomplishments thus far in their current mission in the Northern half of Afghanistan.

“In many Army situations, success is often rewarded with more responsibility... yes more work, and this is definitely the case today as we merge two sustainment brigades worth of work into one single logistics headquarters.” ●

FACTS...

In the Month of November
Lifeliners sustained 72,000 U.S. personnel;
dropped 160,000 lbs of commodities through
aerial delivery operations to outlying bases;
And provided support to more than 50 bases
throughout Afghanistan.

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LIFELINER 6 SENDS



Col. Charles R. Hamilton
Commander,
Task Force Lifeline

Friends and Family of Task Force Lifeline, Happy Holidays! I would like to personally thank each one of you from the bottom of my heart for the sacrifices that you have made and continue to make for the sake of our great nation. Thanksgiving has come and gone and the Lifeliners' spirits are high in anticipation of the winter holidays ahead. Since the last *Lifeline Update*, Task Force Lifeline has taken a historical step forward in the drawdown of forces in Afghanistan by taking the responsibility as the sole sustainment brigade in Afghanistan. Your Soldiers have already proven they can handle this task. As the holidays approach, keep your Lifeliners' close in your thoughts as they will surely be thinking of you as well. As Task Force Lifeline continues its most recent rendezvous with destiny your continued support and dedication to your loved ones is imperative. Thank you for all you do. Air Assault!

LIFELINER 7 SENDS

I want to extend my most heartfelt gratitude to the Families and friends of Task Force Lifeline, especially throughout the Holiday season. Your Heroes continue to meet challenges head on and impress all who are impacted by their motivation and sheer job performance. Above all, they are performing to the highest standards as U.S. Army Soldiers. I am one proud Command Sergeant Major. The last seven months have put our men and woman to the test, and within the past month they have risen the bar by taking on the historical mission to support more than 70,000 U.S. forces throughout the entire country. Our mission has grown and so have our Soldiers; they are the absolute Lifeline of Afghanistan. The holidays are almost here and your continued support is treasured; the care packages, the warm messages and your heartfelt acknowledgement keep our Lifeliners' in top condition. I want to reiterate what I have always said, my priorities have not and will not change; the Lifeliners will be disciplined, highly trained, professional and physically fit to continue serving you and their country. Air Assault!



Command Sgt. Maj.
Eugene J. Thomas Jr.
Command Sergeant Major,
Task Force Lifeline



Maj. Gen. Kurt J. Stein, a native of Middletown, N.J., and commanding general of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command (Theater), raises his right hand as the reenlistment officer and recites the oath of enlistment while the Task Force Lifeline Soldiers stand before him with their right hand up to repeat the oath to him, Nov. 18, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. By raising their right hand the Soldiers pledge to continue to proudly serve their country and fellow Soldiers. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

TAKING THE OATH

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan—As the U.S. Army “right-sizes” into a more lean and lethal fighting force, Soldiers face fewer career opportunities. Today’s Soldiers have to make the decision to continue their service even with the looming budget and reduction tensions.

A group of fifty-two Soldiers deployed to Afghanistan raised their right hand signifying the ultimate commitment and swore to defend the Constitution of the United States of America in a ceremony held outside of the Task Force Lifeline headquarters at Bagram Air Field, Nov. 18, 2013. Maj. Gen. Kurt J. Stein, com-

manding general of the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) performed the symbolic act of leading the oath of reenlistment. Col. Charles Hamilton, the host of the ceremony and commander of Task Force Lifeline, proudly watched as his Soldiers renewed their commitment to our Nation and the U.S. Army.

“It’s tough to reenlist in our Army today,” Stein stated to the group of Soldiers. “We keep the very best and brightest. Our Army is right-sizing and the fact that you’re getting to reenlist today is special, very special... special for our Army.”

Stein ensured each Soldier understood the importance of their decision, especially during this pivotal time in the U.S. military. “It’s hard to get in our Army, so I congratulate all of you for being that one percent. You’re part of that proud few, congratulations to you.”

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Maj. Gen. Kurt J. Stein, a native of Middletown, N.J., and commanding general of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command (Theater), speaks to Task Force Lifeliner Soldiers during their reenlistment ceremony held Nov. 18, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. During this ceremony Stein will raise his right hand as the reenlistment officer and recite the oath of enlistment while the Task Force Lifeliner Soldiers stand before him with their right hand up to repeat the oath to him. By raising their right hand and repeating the oath the Soldiers pledge to continue to proudly serve their country and fellow Soldiers. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

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For one young Soldier this reenlistment represents the fervor he feels to serve his country.

"It means that I'm taking the next step in my career, that I'm doing something most Americans will never know the feeling of doing, said Spc. Ezekiah Jackson a native of Chicago, Ill.

"I reenlisted for four more years in the United States military... the General came out and reenlisted us. It's a very proud feeling," he added.

Staff Sgt. Montray Andrews, the retention noncommissioned officer for the 536th Support Maintenance Company in support of 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Lifeliner, assisted 27 of the 52 Soldiers in their reenlistments. Andrews spoke about the "great heart it takes" to reenlist while serving in a hazardous duty location. "The Soldiers raising their right hand and swearing in... that oath means that they are going to support and defend our great nation," said Andrews, a native of Corsicana, Texas.

There are many memories Soldiers keep with them from their experi-

ences serving in the Army, but reenlistments are pivotal points in a Soldiers' career that are most often cherished. For a general to conduct the Soldiers' reenlistment, it will give them a memory to last throughout their career, Andrews added. ●

Task Force Lifeliner Soldiers stand together in formation during their reenlistment ceremony held Nov. 18, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. During this ceremony the Soldiers will raise their left hand and recite the oath of enlistment in a pledge to continue to proudly serve their Nation. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)





Soldiers with Task Force Hannibal receive the Schutzenschnur, a German Armed Forces Badge for Weapons Proficiency, at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan. (Photo by Capt. Jerry Garner, Task Force Hannibal)

SCHUTZENSNUR, WEAPONS PROFICIENCY

Courtesy story by Capt. Jerry Garner, Task Force Hannibal

CAMP MARMAL, Afghanistan—In the spirit of friendship, training and as Coalition Partners, the German Army deployed to Camp Marmal, Afghanistan hosted Soldiers from Task Force Hannibal for a Schutzenschnur German marksmanship qualification. Twenty Task Force Hannibal Soldiers attempted at the qualification. To begin, German Soldiers served as trainers and mentors for Task Force Hannibal's Soldiers as the participants became familiar with the German weapon systems. During the first part of the Schutzenschnur, the Soldiers fired a German Heckler & Koch G36 A1 5.56mm rifle at targets from 100 meters, then from the prone position at 75 meters and finally from the standing and kneeling position at 50 and 25 meters. During the second portion, the Soldiers used the German Army P-8 pistol to fire at targets in the standing position at 25 meters. The final portion was a timed event. Participants had six seconds to fire at two targets from the prone, kneel-

ing and standing positions with the pistol.

The event was a rare opportunity for the Soldiers stationed out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. It provided an opportunity to foster camaraderie between two nations that have been partners for more than ten years here at Camp Marmal. It also gave the U.S. Soldiers a rare chance to learn new weapon systems.

The Schutzenschnur is a very difficult competition, and the Soldiers valued the opportunity to earn a new badge to display on their uniforms. Participants earned a gold Schutzenschnur badge if they hit all targets perfectly. If they missed only two times on the rifle range or one time on the pistol range, participants earned a silver badge. If three targets were missed on the rifle range or two on the pistol range the participant earned a bronze badge.

1st Lt. Joann Marquez serving with the 524th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Hannibal, raved about the experience. "The machine gun was awesome." "Its power was impressive and the German Soldiers were excellent teachers and trainers." ●

FALL FESTIVAL: MUSIC & FUN

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan—Despite being away from families and friends, Task Force Lifeliner Soldiers take a moment out of their deployment to celebrate the arrival of fall with an afternoon festival in Afghanistan.

“This is a Tremendous opportunity to get people to break away from the office...for the most part just have fun and a great opportunity to listen to some music, have a cookout and just have some camaraderie and build the team,” excitedly exclaimed Lt. Col. Eric J. Sloughfy, deputy commander for the Task Force Lifeliner and a native of Clarksville, Tenn.

The fall festival had door prizes, cookout and refreshments, and music by the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Rock Band. The festival also included the *Sustainer Superlative* awards for the categories of Old and Crusty, Shredding-it, Drill Sergeant, Diva and more. These awards were given to those nominated and who met the criteria of each type of award. In addition the Soldiers had the chance to play dominos and cards games. It is obvious from the smiling faces of the Soldiers everyone had a good time and needed this time to reset.

“At the end of the day we’re out here and we’re deployed, we don’t have our family members with us. This is as close as you can get,” said Staff Sgt. Anre P. Hall, a native of New York, N.Y., and a casualty operations noncommissioned officer in charge with Task Force Lifeliner. “It’s a close-knit team and I wouldn’t have it any other way.” ●



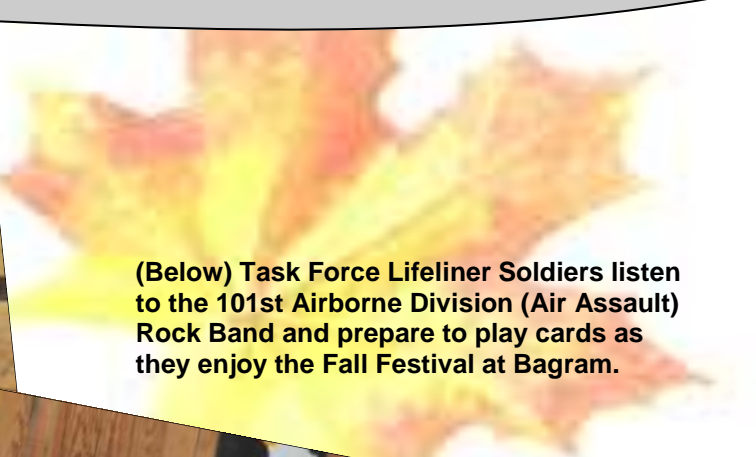
(Above) Task Force Lifeliner Soldiers play a game of dominoes during a fall festival celebration hosted by the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Nov. 17, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. Despite being away from families and friends, Task Force Lifeliner soldiers take a moment out of their deployment to celebrate the arrival of fall with an afternoon festival in Afghanistan.

(Below) Master Sgt. John J. Deikun, a native of Columbus, Ohio, and information technology specialist with Task Force Lifeliner, receives an Incredible Hulk action figure for winning the Sustainer Superlative 'Shredding-it Award' during a fall festival celebration. (Photos by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

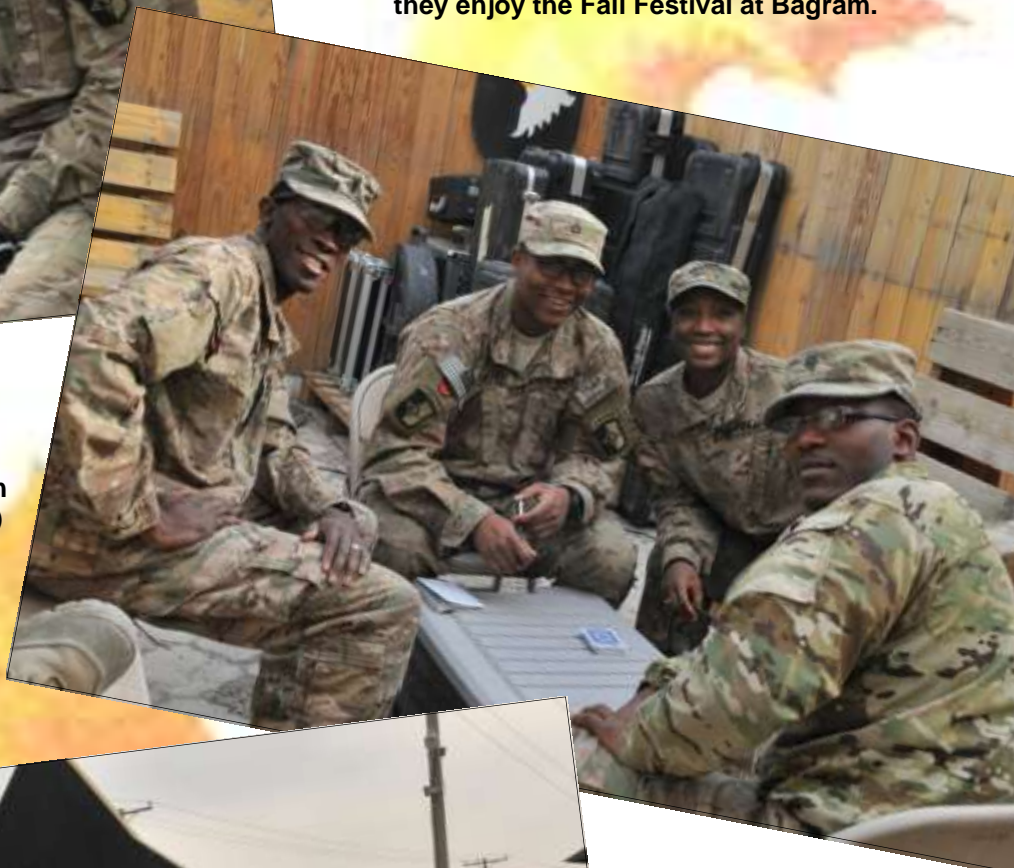




(Above) Task Force Lifeline Soldiers listen to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Rock Band and enjoy friendship and good company at the Fall Festival at Bagram.



(Below) Task Force Lifeline Soldiers listen to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Rock Band and prepare to play cards as they enjoy the Fall Festival at Bagram.



(Left) The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Rock Band provides musical entertainment to the Task Force Lifeline Soldiers during a fall festival celebration. (Photos by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

MOVING PIECES:

SSA KEEPS MARMAL RUNNING

Courtesy story by Maj. John Lankford ,
Task Force Hannibal

CAMP MARMAL, Afghanistan —As they move into the second half of their tour in Afghanistan, the Soldiers of Task Force Hannibal continue to excel in virtually every aspect of their operation. From administrative processing of awards and evaluations to operational sustainment to advise and assist mission. Soldiers of the 524th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB), Task Force Hannibal, are making a definite impact. One section that has led the way as they continue to provide logistical support to customers across Regional Command (RC) – North is the Supply Support Activity (SSA).

The SSA, simply defined, is the Army's version of a warehouse. The activity operated by Task Force Hannibal is a multi-class warehouse where equipment and supplies are ordered, received, stored and issued for every supported customer across RC-North. As the lone warehouse supporting forces in the North, it is the vital link that enables customers to order and pick-up valuable supplies and maintenance repair parts to conduct their wide array of missions. From toilet paper to helicopter engines, there is an enormous variety of equipment and supplies that are managed from this location.

The SSA located on Camp Marmal is comprised of nearly 40 contract personnel that are charged with executing daily operations. While contractor operated, the oversight of daily operations is done by an Army accountable officer, and there is lit-

tle doubt as to who is in charge of the more than 5,400 items on the Authorized Stockage List (ASL - items on the shelf) – Chief Warrant Officer 2 Mele Taukilo, runs a tight ship. Taukilo is a 16 year Army veteran and this marks her fourth combat deployment, two of those serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom and two serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. She has an extensive background in warehouse operations and her experience is a vital multiplier as Task Force Hannibal sets conditions to retrograde equipment out of theater and reduces the size of the warehouse.

Prior to 524th CSSB's arrival into RC-North, the focus of operations within the SSA were largely on processing requisitions and receipts for supported units in order to ensure their supplies were ordered and received at the warehouse.

This was successfully accomplished by the previous unit, but the overall size of the SSA continued to grow.

However, due to the massive ongoing drawdown occurring in Afghanistan, the requirement to retrograde and redeploy equipment out of theater has become a primary effort as well. Task Force Hannibal has accomplished the feat of reducing their footprint through two primary means;

- 1) emphasis on retrograde and redeployment of equipment,
- 2) emphasis on ASL reduction.

Retrograde and redeployment is centered on getting equipment out of Afghanistan. In order to success-

fully execute this mission, there are numerous other tasks that must be completed to ensure the equipment is prepared properly for disposition. Among these are the hazardous material inspections, customs inspections, and general parts processing through the Standard Army Retail Supply System (SARSS) to validate the destination of property.

The procedure is lengthy, but the Soldiers of the CSSB have established processes to streamline operations. Additionally, they have also combined efforts with their U.S.

**C o a s t
G u a r d**

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their home station in Hawaii, the work that is being done by Taukilo and her joint team are extraordinary.

Through the first half of the deployment, the SSA is averaging 80 pallets of retrograde per month that is destined for locations all across Afghanistan as well as Kuwait, Corpus Christi, Texas and Sierra Army Depot, California. Comprised of both serviceable and unserviceable

...the 524th
CSSB
continues
sustainment
operations
as the lone
U.S. logistics
headquarters
in RC-North.

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excess parts and equipment the retrograde that is processed is returned into the Army supply system at a savings of millions of dollars every month.

The 524th CSSB's efforts have contributed tremendously to the shrinking footprint of the warehouse and continue to set conditions for further reduction in 2014.

The second point of emphasis for down-sizing is being done by reducing the amount of 'stuff' that is maintained on the shelves. By re-

viewing requisition history (what is being ordered), the 524th is able to get rid of what isn't being used and maintain what is truly needed to support the theater's advise and assist mission. While this sounds simple, it can be quite complex. To manage and identify items that can be removed, the CSSB conducts a very deliberate process called an ASL review.

While typically done every 120 days; they are done a bit more frequently in theater. Since taking over in July, Task Force Hannibal

has reduced the ASL on-hand from just over 5,400 lines to just over 4,000 lines (that's a 26 percent reduction). At the end of the day, the CSSB has eliminated nearly half of the containers that were in the SSA and they continue to shape the way ahead facilitating ongoing reduction.

As the 524th CSSB continues sustainment operations as the lone U.S. logistics headquarters in RC-North, the battalion remains focused on support and the advise and assist mission. Until they return to Hawaii, their home station •

Sgt. Gerda Ngirchokebai a Soldier with Task Force Hannibal and a native of the Island of Palau. Ngirchokebai conducts inventory of Regional Command—North Supply Support Activity products distributed out of the (Photo by Pfc. Elissa Rosas, Task Force Hannibal)



TRAINING SISTER UNIT FOR SUCCESS

Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario, Task Force Lifeliner

KABUL BASE CLUSTER, Afghanistan—Guardsmen with the 1438th Transportation Company train their sister unit, the 1638th Transportation Company with the Indiana National Guard in preparation so they can take control of the mission of sustainment operations in the Kabul Base Cluster of Afghanistan.

The two units work together, one with nine months of real world operational experience in Kabul under their belts and the other eager to take on the momentous sustainment mission.

The guardsmen with the 1438th take pride in the fact that they are well trained professionals and know all too well what their sister unit is in for.

The units have a close working relationship back at their home station, which makes it easier to better prepare their replacement for success.

“Some of the Soldiers from the 1638th were members of the 1438th at one time and vice versa, so you can see why we have this close relationship with them,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brian D. Cohen, incoming unit maintenance technician with the 1638th Transportation Company, 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Lifeliner in support of 1st Theater Sustainment Command (Theater).

“From what I have seen since my arrival our sister company has done a great job. The training that they’re providing us will be a valuable asset. They know their job very well and can give us good pointers so

that we can be as successful as they are.”

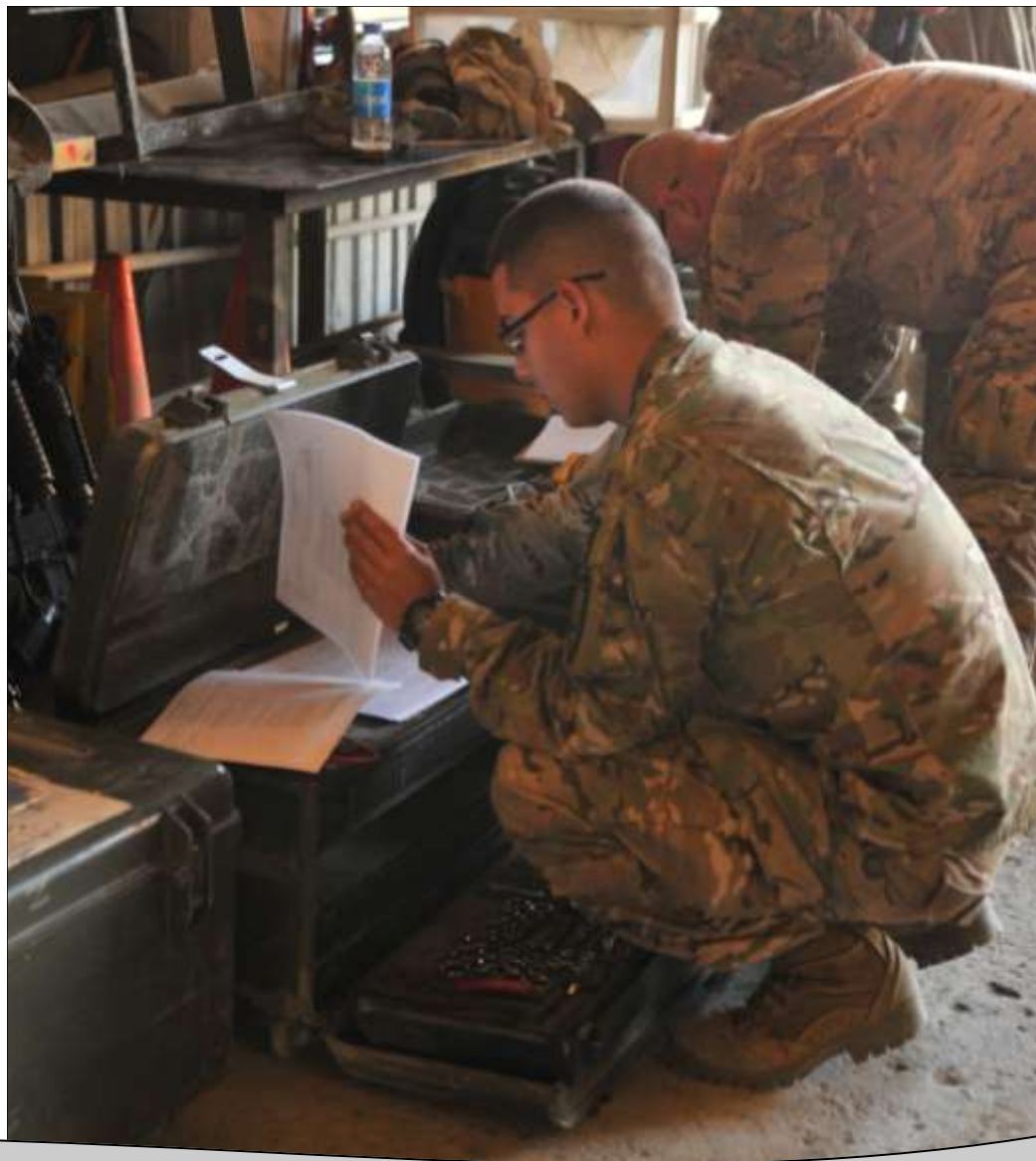
The incoming Soldiers spend time together sharing knowledge on a variety of subjects in the form of hands on instruction and briefs that cover topics, such as communication equipment, commander and convoy commander classes, LHS

(load handling system), MRAPs (mine resistant ambush protected), mine roller training and more.

They also had the opportunity to spend much needed time together on the roads. This allowed for drivers to have adequate time to learn the

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Spc. Marcos Garcia, a native of Chicago, Ill., and a wheeled vehicle mechanic with incoming unit 1638th Transportation Company, ensures accurate accountability and serviceability of a tool kit as part of the relief in place with the outgoing unit 1438th Transportation Company, 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Lifeliner in support of 1st Theater Sustainment Command (Theater), Nov. 11, 2013, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Both units are sister companies from the same battalion with the Indiana National Guard. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)





Sgt. Thomas D. Frazier (right), a native of Shelbyville, Ind., and support operations transportation national Afghan trucking (NAT) noncommissioned officer in charge for the outgoing unit the 1438th Transportation Company, 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Lifeline, explains to his replacement Sgt. Theodore K. Roseberry (left), a native of Portage, Ind., with the 1638th Transportation Company, how to fill out a NAT tracker as part of the relief in place, Nov. 11, 2013, at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. Both units are sister companies from the same battalion with the Indiana National Guard. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

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terrain they will be traveling through.

“We’ve been working on these trucks the last nine months, so we can share any problems we had encountered when we first arrived and how we dealt with them,” said Master Sgt. Jayson L. Smith, outgoing truck master for the 1438th Transportation Company. “We have the knowledge and experience to share with the incoming unit on the issues that we had.” Smith continued to describe some of the obstacles their unit went through early in their deployment, especially through the challenging narrow road systems.

“Some of the challenges we faced

when we first arrived were maneuvering the larger trucks like the M916, which is a big tractor-trailer and the LHSs, which can be a double trailer.”

He added the ability to maneuver vehicles through entry control points was a challenge. It just took time and practice.

Smith, a native of Indianapolis, Ind., stated, “We used our skilled drivers first; then once the other drivers got confident that they could drive, we put them on smaller missions and then build them up to the longer missions.”

The leadership of both units came together to pick each other’s brains to ensure their troops were well

trained and prepared to take on the 1438th’s mission.

Being trained wasn’t the only task these guardsmen were focused on, inventories had to be conducted.

“I am doing an inventory of the tools that they’re transferring over to me as part of the RIP TOA (relief in place, transfer of authority),” said Spc. Layne T. Mueller, a mechanic with the 1638th Trans. Company. “I want to make sure I have the proper tools to work on our vehicles, and also make sure they’re all accountable. If I don’t do this (inventory) correctly and tools are missing that is money coming out of my pocket.”

There are other areas of opera-

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tions that play a vital role in their mission. The support operations (SPO) work with the National Afghan Trucking (NAT) company, which is vital for sustainment and retrograde operations.

"The NAT companies provide a service where they provide their trucks to come pick up cargo and move that from point a to point b, stated Sgt. Thomas D. Frazier, SPO transportation NAT noncommissioned officer in charge for the 1438th Transportation Company.

"They send their trucks here to Camp Phoenix and I coordinate that truck to get loaded and send it out or escort it to its destination, depend-

ing upon what the cargo is. I do that for the entire KBC and all the bases within it."

He added that it is vitally important that his replacement Sgt. Roseberry understands the ins and outs of their very important role.

Frazier, a native of Shelbyville, Ind., emphasized, "The most important part that I'm trying to instill in him (Roseberry) is that he knows the paperwork end...most importantly I've got to teach him the personality that you have to have dealing with the local nationals."

He continued to explain that there is a language barrier between the Afghans and Coalition partners, and they must know basic interaction

skills to meet mission requirements.

This sharing of knowledge will continue to prepare the 1638th Transportation Company as they get ready to take on the 1438th mission upon the Transfer of Authority.

"My troops have been great, they've learned a lot, stated Master Sgt. Lowell S. Wagoner, a native of Monrovia, Ind., and a motor sergeant with the 1438th Transportation Company.

"We came in inexperienced, we learned from the unit that was before us. They've (1438th) learned a lot of ways to fix trucks and keep them going. Now it's their (1638th) turn to take the time and learn everything they can from us." ●

Spc. Dewayne M. Johnson, a native of Muncie, Ind., and class III manager with the outgoing unit the 1438th Transportation Company, 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Lifeline, shows the fuel yard to his replacement Spc. Robert P. Ibarria, a native of Wheatfield, Ind., with the incoming unit the 1638th Transportation Company as part of the relief in place. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)



A Dog Gone Good Time



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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan—The Soldier walked in with her head held high, standing on all four legs ready for her mission. The task at hand, to give a paw and warm woof to other Soldiers deployed in a high stress combat area.

The four-legged combat stress control Soldier, named Maj. Eden works with the Bagram Warrior Restoration Center and travels from base-to-base, unit-to-unit around Afghanistan spreading her unconditional love to help raise spirits and reduce tensions. During her travels, she made a special stop at the 101st Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Lifeline headquarters on Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan.

“There is only one of her kind (combat stress control dog) in theater, she is a therapy dog for Soldiers to love on, let loose and relax. To

help remind Soldiers of home,” said Sgt. Nicole Linn, a behavioral health specialist with Task Force Lifeline.

The Lifeliners are known across the U.S. Army for being the logistical lifeline for service members across Afghanistan, but for a day Maj. Eden reached out to provide a lifeline for those who work tirelessly taking care of others.

“We brought her in today to provide the Lifeliners an outlet, it is a morale booster for everybody,” said Linn, a native of Baumholder, Germany. Maj. Eden made her way through each work area to introduce herself. Each Lifeline Soldier then had the opportunity to head outside and play ball with Maj. Eden and give her some much appreciated attention.

“Everybody really enjoyed playing with her. There were smiles all around,” added Linn.

For Capt. Carol Jordan, the 101st Special Troops Battalion human resource officer, the visit from Maj.

Eden brought back fond memories of who she has waiting back home.

“I have two doggies, Sir Charles and Molly,” said Jordan, a native of Charleston, S.C.

Jordan didn’t become a pet owner until about two years ago when she found the need for companionship. She realized how she had become accustomed to having consistent interaction with someone around at all times during her previous deployment.

“When my pets entered into my life it was truly life changing. I love them and they love me back and it is an unconditional love,” she smiled. “They are a part of my family. It was comforting to see Maj. Eden and to find comfort in the memories of my own pets.”

As resiliency stays a top priority for the Army, Maj. Eden will continue to travel around Afghanistan to give unconditional love and provide a dog gone good time to the Soldiers she meets. ●

Spc. LaCedric Cobbs (left), a native of Shreveport, La., Sgt. Matthew Webber (center), a native of Sacramento, Calif., and Spc. Ezekiah Jackson, a native of Chicago, Ill., all human resource specialists for Task Force Lifeline, take a break from their job to spend some time with Maj. Eden, a combat stress control Soldier, who works with the Bagram Warrior Restoration Center and travels from base-to-base, unit-to-unit around Afghanistan spreading her unconditional love to help raise spirits and reduce tensions. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mary Rose Mittlesteadt)



A Thanksgiving Day Feast Away From Home



Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario, Task Force Lifeliner

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan— Thanksgiving Day is a time to be thankful and traditionally Family and friends come together to enjoy a lavish meal.

For Soldiers with Task Force Lifeliner currently deployed to Afghanistan a Thanksgiving meal brings a little comfort from home as it gives them a chance to sit down and enjoy a meal with their comrades.

This timeless traditional includes a variety of food dishes such as mashed potatoes, green beans, corn, sweet potatoes, turkey and more. These are just some of the foods the Soldiers had the opportunity to enjoy.

The Koele Dining Facility (DFAC) managed by the Task Force Lifeliner in Bagram Air Field provided a bountiful meal to ensure the Soldiers had a happy Thanksgiving Day in Afghanistan.

“I think that it is extremely important to celebrate Thanksgiving Day or any other major holiday to simply break the monotony of being away from loved ones while being deployed in a foreign country, stated Sgt. 1st Class Vicente D. Benitescruz, contracting officer representative (COR) with Task Force Lifeliner.

“For me holidays like today will really be fulfilling when I see our dinners faces light up and hopefully love what the staff here at Koele Dining Facility has done to perhaps take away from being a bit saddened from be-

ing away from their families and loved ones.”

Soldiers anxiously awaited in lines to see what the Koele DFAC had in store for the holiday celebration. One Soldier in particular expressed a sense of gratitude for the work the staff did for the troops on this day.

“I am very impressed with the Koele DFAC, the setting for Thanksgiving gave us Soldiers an at home feel,” explained Sgt. Melinda S. Tucker, a native of Elizabethtown, Ky., and an automated logistics specialist with Task Force Lifeliner. “The setting helped us feel a little closer to home regardless of the distance between us and our Family.”

Little by little the Soldiers began to leave the DFAC with big smiles on their faces after completing a hearty meal.

Benitescruz, a native of Miami, Fla., sincerely expressed “Each and every time someone tells me ‘thank you for the great meal’, it really makes me delighted to know that everyone’s hard work is at least being recognized because they truly put in lots of love and dedication in their performance and make my job here as a COR that much easier.”

“Although it may not seem glamorous to most, I absolutely love food service and what it represents.”

The Koele DFAC staff takes satisfaction in the art of food preparation and today they had the chance to show off their talents and at the same time ensured troops enjoyed a Thanksgiving Day banquet away from home. ●



Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher T. Crawford, the 101st Special Troops Battalion Command Sgt. Maj., gives Spc. Victor W. Stephans, a mechanic with Task Force Lifeliner, his tray of food while serving lunch at the Koele Dining Facility during Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. The Task Force Lifeliner Soldiers had the opportunity to enjoy a bountiful traditional holiday meal. (Photos by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

THANKSGIVING IN AFGHANISTAN

Lifeliners serve up a smile on Thanksgiving Day on Bagram, Afghanistan.

