

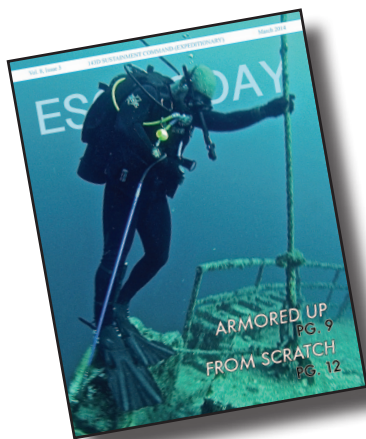
# ESCAPE DAY



**ARMORED UP**  
PG. 9

**FROM SCRATCH**  
PG. 12





## << On the Front Cover

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Franklyn Tamarez from Underwater Construction Team-1, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, conducts underwater training around the sunken U.S. Naval Ship Vandenberg Feb. 8 off the coast of Key West, Fla. The U.S. Army Landing Craft Utility-New Orleans, crewed by the 824th Transportation Company (Heavy Boat), 143d ESC, provided the diving platform for the divers in a joint training mission to conduct annual underwater diver qualification training.

Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy

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## ESC TODAY



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# The Command Post

After the privilege of commanding the 143d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) for more than six months, it's time for me to transition back to the Deputy Commander position. Thank you all for the professionalism and care you showed as we worked through what was a difficult time of transition for the ESC. You approached each task with energy, worked through difficulties with class and professionalism, and spent time taking care of one another. At the end of the day, that's what being in this Army is all about – caring for one another while making the mission happen. You've accomplished great things during the past few months, regardless of where you are and what job you do. As I've said before, I'm humbled and blessed to be able

to count myself as one of you.

I want to congratulate and welcome Brig. Gen. Francisco A. Espallat and his family to the 143d ESC as he assumed command of our great organization Feb. 15. The Army really got it right in choosing BG Espallat to command the 143d. He's a tremendous leader who cares for Soldiers and Families while demanding excellence from his organization. We all wish him and his family our best as he begins his command in direct support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Like all great organizations, the 143d ESC must continue to grow and improve to meet the needs of today's total Army force. We'll continue to work together to strengthen our weaknesses and build upon our successes. I ask each of you



**Col. Christopher P. Govekar**  
**Deputy Commander**  
**143d Sustainment Command**  
**(Expeditionary)**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Shay 143d ESC

Colonel Christopher Govekar (left), deputy commander, 143d ESC, and Col. Kris Belanger (right), officer-in-charge for G-1 (Human Resources), 143d ESC, serve Thanksgiving dinner to service members and contractors Nov. 28, 2013, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Govekar commanded the 143d ESC for six months before returning to his current position when Brig. Gen. Francisco A. Espallat assumed command Feb. 15.

to look around your battlespace and police up those things that are either not as they should be or not as good as they should be. Every day should be better than the one before.

As I told the staff and leaders, we must be a team of supporting teams, built around confident, disciplined and competent professionals, who train hard to published standards, who espouse to the Army values, and who employ new transformational methodologies to execute more with less. Change is no longer a force in the environment; it is the environment we operate in. We must maintain our readiness in all areas. The Army Reserve and the 143d ESC remain an operational force focused on the War on Terror, humanitarian missions, joint exercises and homeland defense. Our Soldiers and their families will be physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and financially ready to perform these duties and ensure family, Soldier and mission success.

Thank you for making the 143d an outstanding Sustainment Command!!

Sustaining Victory!

Army Strong! 

## DID YOU KNOW?

## FREE TAX PREPARATION FOR MILITARY

Most large U.S. military installations worldwide offer service members and their families free income tax filing assistance through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program which is sponsored by the IRS. VITA sites have volunteers trained by the IRS to provide assistance with some of the more complicated military-specific tax issues such as combat zone tax benefits. Military One Source also provides free access to the H&R Block at Home online tax filing service for military families. This allows active duty, Reserve and National Guard service members to electronically file federal and up to three state tax returns. Visit [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil) for more information.



# THE BOTTOM LINE



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Clayton Camara 310th HRSC

Most military ceremonies that we conduct are for retirements, changes of command and changes of responsibilities. These pay homage to our retiring team members and outgoing/incoming commanders, command sergeants major.

There is a ceremony that is not seen as often but has significance in a young noncommissioned officer's career: The NCO induction ceremony.

**"No one is more professional than I."**

This is how the NCO creed begins, and on Feb. 12 the NCOs of the 143d ESC proved just that. When we first started planning for the ceremony we thought that it would be relatively small. However, as word of the ceremony started to spread around Camp Arifjan, we started to get requests from other organizations that wanted to participate. In our effort to accommodate our other team members we gladly incorporated their new NCOs into our ceremony, including our Air Force partners from the 387th Air Expeditionary Wing. In total we inducted 85 NCOs from the Army and Air Force.

The importance of the ceremony was not only to welcome our newly promoted NCOs into the corps, but also to provide them with them with

knowledge of the rich history of the NCO corps and our contributions to our Armed Forces. On Dec. 1, 1988, United States Armed Forces Command (FORSCOM) Command Sergeant Major George L. Horvath III described the NCO induction ceremony to Class 32 of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy after seeing one conducted with a German Army unit. He understood the importance of recognizing Soldiers as they reached a milestone in their career. The very first NCO Induction ceremony took place April 27, 1989 and inducted Army Sgt. Lotts, the daughter of a Class 33 student.

The ceremony has evolved into a well organized tradition. Some induction ceremonies have had the inductees pass through an arch, cross over a bridge and even pass under crossed NCO swords, indicating that every ceremony is different. The one thing that they all have in common is the welcoming of new NCOs into the corps giving them a sense of unity, brotherhood and an assurance that another NCO will always have their back.

I am extremely proud of all the hard work the NCOs and Soldiers put into the induction ceremony. 🇺🇸



Command Sgt. Maj. Ferdinand Collazo, Jr.  
Command Sergeant Major  
143d Sustainment Command  
(Expeditionary)



## DID YOU KNOW?

## ARMY SAFETY SLOGAN COMPETITION

The Army Reserve launched its new "Safety Slogan" competition. This competition is a chance for you to set the stage for safety in the Army Reserve by shaping the way it promotes the Command's commitment to safety. The winner receives a Certificate of Achievement signed by a three-star general and a command sergeant major, exposure of the winning slogan at all future safety venues and promotional items, distribution of the slogan on Army Reserve social and web channels, and a story in "Warrior Citizen" magazine. The competition ends April 29, so visit the [Army Reserve Safety](https://www.armyreserve.safety) website and submit your slogan today!



# HOW DO I FIT IN?

With homecomings on the horizon, it's time for many of us to reflect on what it means to return to being more civilian than Soldier. Even the few who return home to wear the uniform back in the USA will find themselves in a civilian world. No matter where you spent your time on deployment, many of the challenges will be the same.

I've been married to my wife, Anita, for 25 years—one year longer than my Army career. All of my homecomings have been a reunion with family. In 2003 I returned from Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to a face the challenges of potty training my daughter and teaching my son how to ride a bike. Fitting back into the picture wasn't easy as Anita had done so much without me. In my absence, my family had become a single parent family where my long distance contributions were appreciated but were easily ruled out by what actually worked while I wasn't there. I know that more than a few of our Soldiers are single parents who will reunite with their sons and daughters raised by grandparents or other family during their absence. While these reunions will initially be filled with joy, the question is sure to rise.

## HOW DO I FIT IN?

Whether married or single, returning to school or to work, that question is sure to hit hard after the initial homecoming glow wears off. Yes, there will be a celebratory honeymoon shine to our returns. That shine may last for days, weeks, months or longer. Still, both the Soldier and family have grown over the course of the year. Relationships change, some get stronger, some face challenges, others find they no longer can go the distance. This applies to friendships just as much as relationships.

When I returned from Kandahar, Afghanistan, in 2010, Anita constantly demanded to have her old husband back. I had changed. I had a sense of hyper-vigilance that helped me make sense of that year. I had become battle hardened and stoic. My wife had a hard time getting close to me.

No one truly understood what I went through, except those who lived it with me. While there is a bond among men and women in uniform, there is also a distance. No one ever has it as hard as the

other guy. Having seen so many give their lives for freedom, I had a hard time understanding why friends and co-workers back home did not have the same understanding of military service as I.

As a high school teacher in Orange County, Fla., I start my day with my students saying "The Pledge of Allegiance" much like we start our day with Reveille here. This is often where the greatest divide between the Soldier in me and the lack of understanding hits head on. Students I teach reflect the values of the families and communities they come from; they don't really understand what it means to say the pledge. And so I share with them what it means to me. I show them a short video of Arlington National Cemetery and they get it.

Our families, our employers, our friends, our schools and our churches all deserve a salute from us for the support they have given over the course of our deployment and that they continue to give out of the love in their hearts.

It has not been easy on either side of the divide. It hasn't been easy in Afghanistan, Kuwait, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar or wherever we have served. And it hasn't been easy at home. No one ever



**Master Sgt. Ward T. Gros**  
**Master Chaplain Assistant NCO**  
**143d Sustainment Command**  
**(Expeditionary)**

has it as tough as the other guy, and so few truly understand.

So enjoy the homecoming and be prepared for the reunion. Find your own answer to the question, "How do I fit in?" But know that you are not alone. Your chaplains, Military One Source, Army Reserve Family Programs and Veterans Affairs are just a few of the resources you have to help along the journey. ☒



Photo by Brenda Ahearn





# FEELIN' TEXTY?

**HIDE THE TEMPATION  
BEFORE DRIVING!  
PUT THAT PHONE  
OUTTA SIGHT!**

At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has held steady since 2010. In 2012 alone, 3,328 people died on US roadways in distracted driving crashes, and an estimated 421,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver.

Texting while driving creates a crash risk 23 times worse than driving while not distracted.

**PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR  
BATTLE BUDDIES!**



**Practice  
Safe  
Text!**



U.S. ARMY

ARMY STRONG



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS/SAFETY CENTER

<https://safety.army.mil>



# SHARPENING

■ BY MAJ. SANDRA L. GOSCINIAK  
*SHARP Officer-in-Charge, 143d ESC*

There have been numerous updates to the Sexual Harassment /Assault Response and Prevention program in the past few months. These include the addition of Special Victim Counsel (SVC) as an additional resource for victims and the SHARP training program being extended to an eight-week course from the original two-week course. These changes continue to strengthen the SHARP program in a positive manner.

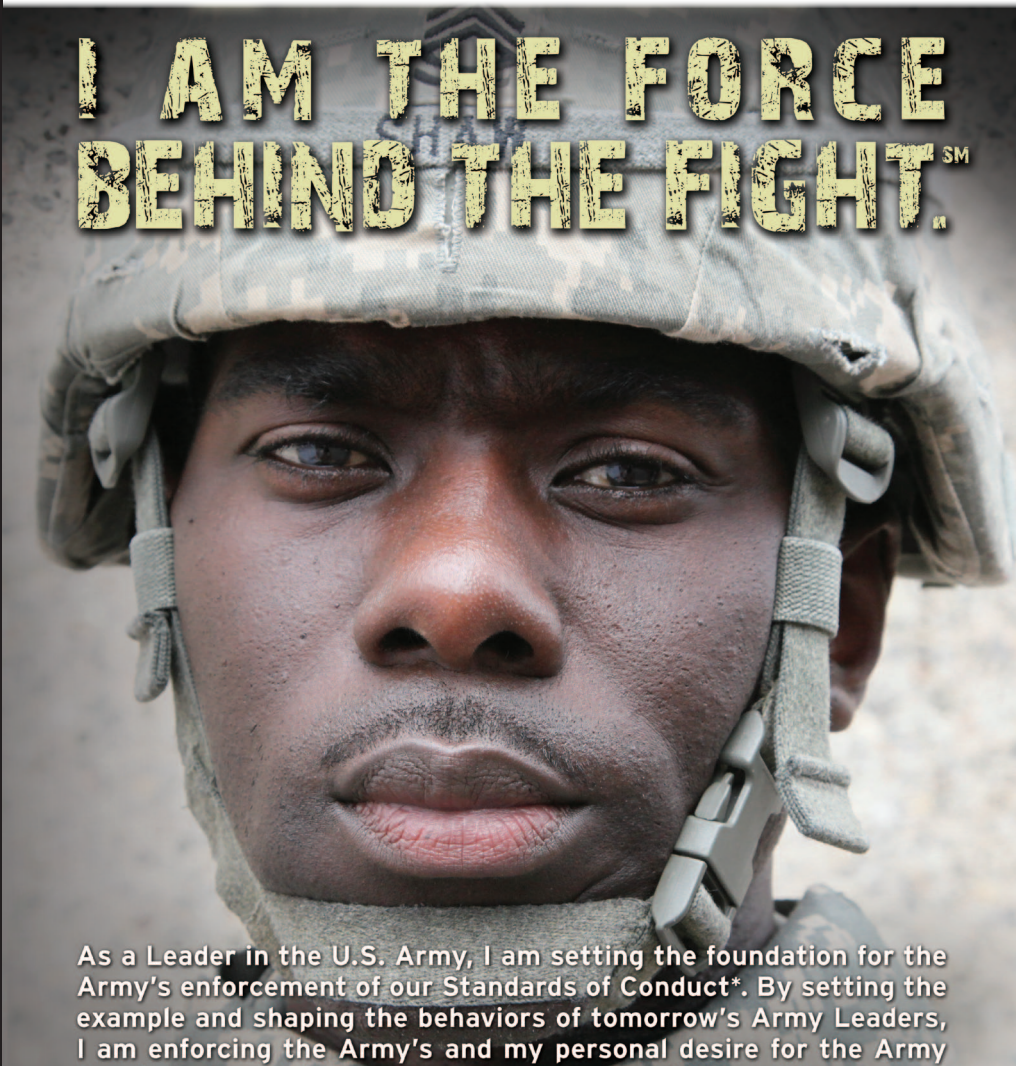
According to the Special Victim Counsel Handbook, the purpose of the Special Victim Counsel is “to strengthen our support of victims within our ranks, while neither causing unreasonable delay nor infringing upon the rights of the accused.” The role of the SVC is “to zealously represent the client’s interests throughout the military justice process.” The SVC supports the victim throughout the process by providing advice and representation during: the investigation; pre-trial, referral, negotiations; Article 32 hearing; trial; and post trial. The goals of this program is to strengthen support of victims of sexual assault which will encourage reporting and lead to more prosecutions with the end result being less sexual assaults in our formation.

The eight-week Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention pilot program kicked off its first class Jan. 27 at Fort Belvoir, Va. It is designed to better prepare SHARP personnel for the kinds of situations they are likely to encounter and to help eliminate sexual harassment and assault in the military. The new program helps bolster students’ skills in conflict resolution, conducts training to other SHARP personnel and helping victims in need. Curriculum will include material from the U.S Army Criminal Investigation Command, Office of Judge Advocate General and Office of the Surgeon General.

These positive changes in the SHARP program reinforce the Army’s commitment to eliminate sexual harassment and sexual assault from the ranks and provide caring support to victims. ✖

# THE SHARP PROGRAM

## I AM THE FORCE BEHIND THE FIGHT.™



As a Leader in the U.S. Army, I am setting the foundation for the Army's enforcement of our Standards of Conduct\*. By setting the example and shaping the behaviors of tomorrow's Army Leaders, I am enforcing the Army's and my personal desire for the Army



Photo by Sgt. John L. Carkeet IV • 143d ESC

Soldiers from the 143d ESC and 1st Theater Sustainment Command attended Class 14-111's Sexual Harassment and Assault Response and Prevention graduation ceremony held Feb. 21 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Julio Pagan (third from left) and Master Sgt. Samantha St. Louis (center) were two 143d ESC Soldiers who graduated that day.



# 108th Sustainment Brigade takes over sustainment operations in Kuwait

■ STORY AND PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. MICHAEL CAMACHO  
*108th Sustainment Brigade*



Colonel Drew Dukett, the commander of the 108th Sustainment Brigade from Chicago and Command Sgt. Maj. John Burns, the 108th SB's sergeant major, unfurl the brigade colors at a transfer of authority ceremony Feb. 18 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait – The Illinois National Guard's 108th Sustainment Brigade from Chicago took over sustainment support operations here from the 371st Sustainment Brigade in a transfer of authority ceremony held Feb. 18.

"Today we honor and salute the outgoing 371st Sustainment Brigade and welcome the incoming 108th Sustainment Brigade," said Maj. Gen. Darrell Williams, commanding general of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command. "The 371st performed magnificently ... I know for certain the 108th is ready to go and support to our warfighters won't skip a beat."

The 108th SB arrived in Kuwait in early February to meet and train with the 371st SB, an Ohio National Guard unit, to prepare for its mission in Kuwait and the transition from one brigade command to another.

"Over the last 18 months we've been preparing for this deployment but it's been the last two weeks when we received the most critical training to take on the mission," said Col. Drew Dukett of Roodhouse, Ill., commander of the 108th SB. "You learn best from people



with experience and the 371st has done an outstanding job in Kuwait."

During its deployment to Kuwait, the 371st SB conducted numerous sustainment support operations in the U.S. Army Central Command's area of operations supporting Soldiers and units in the region.

The 108th will provide sustainment and support operations in the CENTCOM area of operation. This support includes mission command of Army watercraft, postal, transportation, human resources and finance operations in support of

Operation Enduring Freedom.

The brigade directly supports the 143rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and 1st Theater Sustainment Command's ongoing support mission in Theater.

As the 371st SB prepares to return home, Col. Gregory Robinette of Bowling Green, Ohio said he is sure the 108th SB is ready to take the reins from the 371st SB.

"After seeing the way (the 108th staff) professionally and enthusiastically took on the (relief in place process) I know the 108th SB is ready to assume the mission," said Robinette.

Roughly 270 Illinois National Guard Soldiers serve in the 108th SB which consists of the brigade headquarters, the 108th Special Troops Battalion and the Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

"I feel extremely confident in the 108th's ability to take on this mission and perform to the highest standards, said Dukett. "This is a unique and exciting mission. We will take what the 371st and sustainment brigades before it have done and build onto this legacy of excellence."■



**M**ANAS, Kyrgyzstan – As operations come to a close in Afghanistan, the transient mission at Manas Transit Center, Kyrgyzstan, has begun to steadily decrease, with many services and facilities beginning to close their doors. Many Soldiers and airmen stationed here have already begun to pack their bags to begin their long awaited journeys home.

The mission, however slowed, still requires warm bodies to fill key positions. The plate carrier collection point (PCCP) warehouse is one of those important components, requiring dedicated Soldiers to ensure that the men and women traveling to Afghanistan remain as safe as possible.

With Soldiers of the 371st Sustainment Brigade re-deploying in early February, Soldiers of the 143d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) have answered the call and will close out plate operations in Manas until mid March.

“Soldiers going downrange need serviceable plates,” said Sgt. 1st Class Edward Elliot Jr., operations noncommissioned officer in charge and the acting PCCP NCOIC, 143d ESC. “The 371st Soldiers that were here were top notch and they drilled it into us how important this job is.”

The 143d ESC sent seven Soldiers to run, operate and close down the PCCP warehouse, most with limited to no plate operation experience, and all with various skill sets and backgrounds.

“They have been outstanding,” said Elliot. “Not everyone has a supply background, but everyone is willing to learn and been very receptive. High motivation. We are open 12 hours a day, and we are running the entire operation with as many Soldiers as the 371st had on one shift.”

The 143d team gave out praises when asked about their training and transition with the 371st SB.

“From the first day they welcomed us in,” said Spc. Christopher Hattaway, intelligence analyst, 143d ESC. “There was a lot of information. It felt like they were feeding us with a fire hydrant. What they stressed was accountability, so there is no loss in inventory that could cost tax payer dollars.”

“The transition was very easy,” said Sgt. Gabrielle Hopkins, PCP warehouse NCO in Manas and a supply sergeant and unit armorer,

# ARMORED UP

## How a diverse group of Reserve Soldiers are keeping deploying troops safe

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY STAFF SGT. IAN SHAY**  
*Public Affairs NCOIC, 143d ESC*



Specialist Chanel Coco (right), support specialist, and Staff Sgt. Anthony Sabato (left), intelligence analyst, 143d ESC, use soldering irons to make repairs to the outer cover of damaged plates Feb. 13 at Transit Center Manas, Kyrgyzstan. The hot soldering irons allow the plate team to melt composite backing over any rips or tears that might expose the plates' interior.



143d ESC. “They [371st] stayed late nights, all the way up to the day they left.”

The 143d ESC team includes two Soldiers from Intel, two with support operations backgrounds, one from operations, one communications Soldier and one with headquarters company.

“This has been a great opportunity,” said Hopkins. “It brought people from different sections together. The others get to see that supply is really a hands-on field and I enjoy getting to show other Soldiers what I can do.”

“We all fight the same,” said Hattaway. “You do your Soldier skills first, and everything falls into place.”

Although the PCCP can seem dull at times, the Soldiers of the 143d ESC realize what’s really at stake.

“One a scale of one to ten, it’s an eleven,” said Hattaway. “If [deploying] Soldiers are taking small arms fire or if there is an explosion . . . if they are wearing proper plates, it can save their lives.”

Hattaway knows the importance these plates make as he regularly wears a protective vest when working as a police officer with Cocoa Police Department in Florida, “I do not go anywhere without [my vest],” said Hattaway. “That’s the only thing between me and an active shooter that can save my life. Getting to make sure Soldiers get the same quality I get.”

In less than two weeks the team has processed more than 1,400 service men and women. The process involves the inspection of each plate,

swapping good plates for defective ones, making minor repairs and adding inspection stickers to expired plates.

The ceramic plates can break relatively easy, either by being banged around in a duffel bag in transient or dropping one on the concrete.

“A common occurrence is Soldiers dropping plates,” said Hattaway. “As soon as it hits the ground, it can crack or shatter.”

“Because they are ceramic, the first initial impact can cause cracks, so once a Soldier drops a plate in line, we take it,” said Spc. Chanel Coco, support specialist, 143d ESC.

The team starts off by briefing the service men and women passing through on the process, after which they inspect each plate’s exterior for rip and tears in the composite backing that surrounds them, missing or expired inspection stickers and for cracks in the plates themselves.

“The last thing we do is push the plate against the table and listen for any crackling sounds. If it’s cracked we pull it from service and issue a one for one exchange. The crackling sound lets us know it’s damaged,” said Hattaway.

Cracked plates are then removed from service immediately, but plates with missing or expired stickers are updated on site and the team even fixes the rips and tears surrounding the plates.

“If we find a rip or tear, we can burn more material over the exposed parts [using a soldering gun],” said Hattaway. “That is why you get plates that look a little burned on the corners; it is



because they have been repaired.”

Afterwards Hopkins’ supply experience allows her to assist each Soldier with installation support modules (ISM), which gives her the ability to add and remove items from clothing records to reflect the issue or re-issuing of plates and plate carriers.

“I try to keep Soldiers abreast of new things that come up, how to clear clothing records and how to use ISM correctly,” said Hopkins.

The work has been rewarding for the 143d ESC Soldiers as they rarely see deployers and re-deployers during their time in Kuwait.

“Unlike back in Kuwait, we are having a firsthand effect on the Soldiers going down range,” said Elliot. “We are seeing Soldiers going into harm’s way, and we are doing a small but important part in ensuring they get home safely.”

As fewer transients pass through Manas, the PCCP team will transition from issuing and re-issuing plates to focusing more on completing shutting down the warehouse.

“We can’t just throw away plates,” said Elliot. “Each plate is worth more than \$500. We are trying to be good stewards of taxpayer money.”

The remainder of items left in the warehouse will be shipped by the 143d ESC team to either the new transient center in Romania or back to the United States.

The six-week mission has already given the 143d Soldiers a great feeling of accomplishment, as they help safeguard the lives of the servicemen and women closing out one of the last historic chapters of Operation Enduring Freedom. ☒



From left to right: Spc. Christopher Hattaway, intelligence analyst, Spc. Chanel Coco, support specialist and Staff Sgt. Anthony Sabato, intelligence analyst, 143d ESC, inspect and exchange plates at the plate c-carrier collection point Feb. 11 at Transit Center Manas, Kyrgyzstan. They look for any rips, tears or cracks in the ceramic plating that might endanger the lives of deploying service members.





6,718 photos and counting





# FROM SCRATCH

## BUILDING A TRANSIT CENTER IN ROMANIA



■ STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. JOHN L. CARKEET IV  
*Public Affairs NCO, 143d ESC*

Airmen, Soldiers and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agents pose for a group photo Feb. 1 at the newly erected customs building at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base (MK), Romania. The airmen, who hail from the 387th Air Expeditionary Wing, and their U.S. Customs and Border Protection partners from the Balkans have led a month-long course to train 30 soldiers from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment out of Grafenwoehr, Germany, on how to manage the customs process at MK's new transit center overseen by the 21st Theater Sustainment Command.

**M**IHAIL KOGALNICEANU, Romania – The Soldiers from Sustainment Task Force 16, 16th Sustainment Brigade, 21st Theater Sustainment Command, slowly catch their breath, put away their shovels and line up along a sidewalk that minutes earlier had been blanketed by ice and snow. They stand at parade rest when a convoy of blue buses turns toward their direction. Ice shatters under rubber tires as the vehicles roll to a stop near the shivering Soldiers. Seconds later hundreds of multicam clad troops hailing from the 101st Airborne Division, 2nd Brigade, pour out of the buses and walk briskly into a newly constructed (and heated) passenger terminal.

**This is the first large group of service members to set foot in Romania with the sole purpose of transitioning to Afghanistan for their deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.**

**It won't be the last.**

By this summer the last American service member must vacate Transit Center at Manas when the Department of Defense hands over the 12-year old base to the Kyrgyzstan government. Mihail Kogalniceanu (MK), a U.S. military installation situated inside a Romanian airbase snuggled along the Black Sea coastline, must pick up where Manas leaves off.

To help ensure MK meets this deadline, American service members stationed in Europe or deployed to Southwest Asia have converged here to lend their technical and logistical expertise. Army Sgt. Maj. Thomas Schultz, a 143d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Soldier serving as the Army Central liaison officer noncommissioned officer in charge at Manas, joined

this elite group to advise his MK counterparts from 21st TSC on how to mold a streamline operation that will soon process thousands of Soldiers and Marines as they begin or conclude their deployment to Afghanistan.

"We've come here to advise the personnel at MK on how to stand up the operation and solve any bottlenecks or issues," said Schultz, a native of Abingdon, Md. "We will do our best to help troubleshoot and streamline the process."

Schultz and other experts are working closely with Soldiers from the 21st TSC, the unit with overall mission command of the transient process. He hopes his experience overseeing the Army elements at Manas will help build a transit center that will one day rival Manas' textbook efficiency.

"Manas has been running for 12 years, so it's a well oiled machine," said Schultz. "The people at MK will likely go through the same growing pains as any operation standing up from scratch. It will be a 'learn as you go' situation."

Though the mission and infrastructure at Manas and MK share similarities, certain elements make each theater gateway a unique entity.

"In Manas the Air Force is in charge," said Schultz. "At MK the Army's in charge. The Air Force piece begins and ends at the airfield, so there's no Air Force personnel involved in the pax (passenger) flow."

Schultz also identified exactly who the 21st TSC and its subordinate units will process, equip, feed and house as they wait for aircraft heading east or west.

"Manas also processes American service members from all branches as well as coalition troops. Only two services will come through MK: the Army and the Marine [Corps]. In that regard the pax flow will not be as heavy



In addition to supplying advisors the 387th Air Expeditionary Squadron, an Air Force unit that falls under the 143d ESC and the 1st Theater Sustainment Command's mission command, sent three airmen from Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to instruct 30 Soldiers from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment (2CR) on how to manage the customs stage within the transient process.

Air Force Master Sgt. Jose F. Diaz leads the team with the support of a pair of U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents.

"We found out that we would go to MK a couple days before we left Kuwait," said Diaz, a customs agent with the 387th AES and a native of Monterey, Calif. "I was ecstatic at the opportunity to do something new as well as stand up a brand new operation."

The two other customs and border clearance agents from the 387th AES shared Diaz's sentiment.

"I was excited because it was something new, and the people we are training seemed excited to learn," said Air Force Senior Airman Robert J. Money, a native of Owings, Md. "They were actually looking forward to learn something different than their MOS (military occupation specialty)."

"It's an enlightening experience," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Charles T. May who hails from Brownsville, Calif. "You don't see some of the stuff that's in the Air Force and not in the Army and vice versa."

The passenger terminal, baggage barn and customs facilities were erected in three weeks thanks to the coordination skills of Robert Walters, chief customs agent for the Balkans area of operations, and the construction power of the 902nd Engineer Battalion, 15th Engineer Battalion, 18th Engineer Brigade, 21st TSC, based out of Grafenwoehr, Germany.

"I was expecting to come here and start from the ground up," said Diaz. "To my surprise Mr. Walters had already done a lot of the leg work. The facilities were already under construction, and a lot of coordination had been done. This allowed my team to jump straight into training."

Despite the ongoing construction and blizzard-like conditions, Diaz's team commenced training shortly after their arrival in country.

"We gave the Soldiers hands-on training in everything from 100 percent bag inspections to operating the X-ray machines and body scanners," said Diaz. "Initially we started as taking the leadership roles during the hands-on training simulations. We then started stepping back and observing the process as the Soldiers felt more comfortable in those roles ... It took a little more than a week to get to the point where the NCOs [of the 2 CR] run the show."

The team has dedicated their time and energy toward teaching not only Soldiers how to search bags and scan people for contraband but also submitting work orders for desks, tables, body scanners, X-ray machines and other equipment necessary to process hundreds of troops in a single day.

"By doing this we learned a lot more about our positions," said May. "We can go back [to Kuwait] and teach our guys something they didn't know or something they missed."

Dozens of distinguished visitors dropped by the customs facilities as Diaz and his team put the 2CR Soldiers through a simulation that consisted of briefing, scanning and frisking their comrades playing as passengers.

"We gave them a rundown of how the troops will react to them searching their bags and scanning their bodies," said Money. "We started hiding stuff in their bags so they could see that they need to search through clothing and not just dump out the bag."

Schultz was one of the senior noncommissioned officers who observed the exercise.

"I was impressed," said Schultz. "I believe the customs piece has more space and people to search bags than its counterpart [at Manas]. Once they get up and rolling, their operation will probably be a little more efficient than Manas."

Schultz plans to stay in MK in an advisory capacity until the end of February. Diaz and his team hope to stay long enough to watch the 2CR Soldiers perform their customs duties with actual passengers when troops bound for the United States touch down in Romania later this month.

"The team is ready to rock and roll," said Diaz. "We just need the real thing to happen."



Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division, 2nd Brigade, file into the newly constructed passenger terminal Feb. 2 at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania.







# AROUND THE ESC

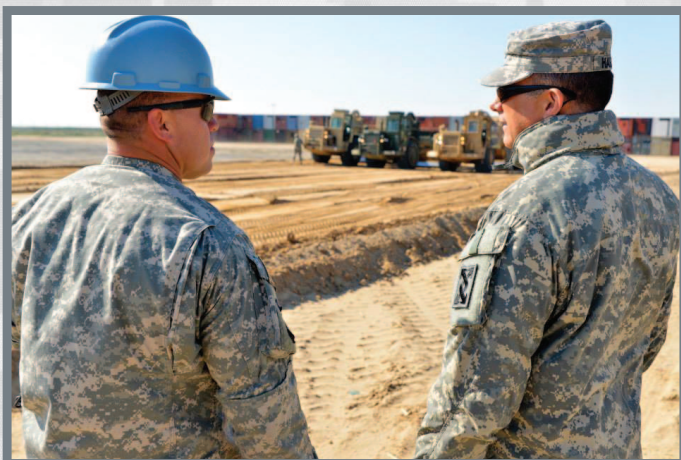


Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Shay | 143d ESC

Staff Sgt. Douglas Anderson (right), project noncommissioned officer with the 15th Engineer Company, 19th Engineer Battalion, speaks with Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael E. Harden, command engineer, 143d ESC, about improving a work area's load bearing capacity to better support ammunition operations Feb. 3 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The surface treatment permits heavy equipment and containers to safely traverse the grounds.



Photo by 1st Sgt. Tyrone Walker | 210th MPAD

Captain David P. Wedlock, Jr., 385th Movement Control Team Commander, addresses a question asked during the 362nd Quartermaster Battalion Leadership Stand-Down Jan. 25 at Fort Jackson, S.C. Approximately 50 officers and noncommissioned officers gathered for the four-day event focusing on various aspects of being a leader in today's Army.



Photo by Maj. John Adams | 143d ESC

Soldiers from the 143d ESC conducted a site visit with members of the Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Support Command Feb. 18 at Camp Tahreer, Kuwait. Here, Maj. Jonathan Pipkens-Smith (left), supply & services deputy branch chief, 143d ESC, inspects one of the KNG's supply warehouses. This evaluation will help the 143d ESC and the KNG improve their logistical processes and capabilities.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Shay | 143d ESC

While waiting for a ride to the Udairi Range, Soldiers from the 143d ESC gather around an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter operated by the 4-227 Air Assault Reconnaissance Battalion Feb. 23 at Udairi Army Airfield, Kuwait. Minutes earlier these same Soldiers were aboard four UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters that transported them from Patton Army Airfield to Udairi Army Airfield before convoying out to the Udairi Range to qualify on their pistols and assault rifles.



# AROUND THE ESC



Photo by Staff Sgt. Raul Tirado | 143d ESC

Family members of fall Soldiers from Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom release letters attached to balloons to their fallen loved ones Feb. 23 at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2093 in Orlando, Fla. Survivor Outreach Services hosted Operation Love Letters so family members of fallen Soldiers could share their stories through prose, music and poetry.



Photo by 1st Lt. Nicole A. Rossman | 143d ESC

Seconds after a tackle Capt. Robert J. Luzaragga (center), company commander, 143d ESC, pitches a rugby ball to his fellow U.S. Army Eagles teammate Feb. 14 at Kuwait University stadium in Kuwait City. The match stands as the first full-contact face-off between the Kuwait Scorpions Rugby Football Club and an American military team. Watch the game unfold through the news video, "[Partners on the Pitch](#),"



Photo by Staff Sgt. Ian Shay | 143d ESC

Colonel James C. Bagley (center), chief of staff, 143d ESC, cuts a cake during a Black History Month Celebration held Feb. 6 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The ceremony honored African Americans that have served and continue to serve in the defense of their nation while simultaneously helping shape America's culture.



Photo by 1st Lt. Nicole A. Rossman | 143d ESC

Three of the 143d ESC's newest noncommissioned officers stand next to Command Sgt. Maj. Charles M. Tobin, command sergeant major, 1st Theater Sustainment Command, at the conclusion of a NCO induction ceremony held Feb. 12 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The ceremony honored 85 Army and Air Force sergeants and staff sergeants as they transition into leadership positions. From left to right: Sgt. Brittany N. Cavazos, Command Sgt. Maj. Charles M. Tobin, Sgt. Teresa S. Munoz and Sgt. Joanna Prokop.



# **AROUND THE ESC**



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Camara Clayton | 310th HRSC

On his way to Camp Buehring in February, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Julio A. Pagan, human resources technician, 143d ESC, gives right-of-way to a curious four-legged pedestrian. Herds of camels are often seen walking along desert highways of Kuwait.



Photo by Sgt. John L. Carkeet IV | 143d ESC

Army Sgt. Maj. Thomas Schultz (center), a 143d ESC Soldier serving as the Army Central liaison officer noncommissioned officer in charge at Manas, Kyrgyzstan, observes a bag inspection exercise conducted Jan. 31 at the newly erected customs facilities in Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base (MK), Romania. Air Force Senior Airman Robert J. Money (right) was one of three airmen from the 387th Air Expeditionary Wing sent to MK to teach Army Spc. Jonathan Lopez (left) and 29 other Soldiers from the 2nd Cavalry Regiment on how to manage a customs operation that will process thousands of Soldiers and Marines deploying to Afghanistan or redeploying to their home stations.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Camacho | 108th SB

Major Robert Bland III of Belvidere, Ill., with the 108th Sustainment Brigade receives the Army Watercraft Company (Provisional) guidon from Col. Gregory Robinette of Bowling Green, Ohio, commander of the 371st SB, during a change of command ceremony Feb. 15 at Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Raul Tirado | 204th PAD

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tom Heald, captain of the U.S. Army Landing Craft Utility New Orleans, calls the engine room for system checks during a joint training mission with Navy Underwater Construction Team-1 Feb. 8 off the coast of Key West, Fla. Crewed by Soldiers from the 824th Transportation Company, 143d ESC, the LCU New Orleans transported the team of divers to the open sea so they may conduct annual underwater diver qualification training.





Photo by Staff Sgt. Rael Tirado | 204th PAD

Master Sergeant Cheryl Harmon (center), training noncommissioned officer, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 143d ESC, stands in for a group photo with her fellow Soldiers Feb. 18 at the David R. Wilson Armed Forces Reserve Center in Orlando, Fla. From left right: 143d ESC Soldiers Sgt. Leiana Oliver-Williams, Sgt. Porscha Jones, Sgt. Elisa Wooden and Sgt. Lindsey Rose planned a surprise farewell luncheon with a Hawaiian Luau theme for Harmon. She was presented a photo slide show, farewell video messages and an encased U.S. Flag with sword.

# AROUND THE ESC



Photo by Maj. John Adams | 143d ESC

Colonel Christopher P. Govekar, commander, 143d ESC, takes a moment to join three Kuwaiti children for a group photo during a military open house held Feb. 1 at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait. Govekar spent the day viewing various displays of military hardware operated by Kuwaiti and American forces.



Photo by Sgt. John L. Carkeet IV | 143d ESC

While serving as a range safety, Staff Sgt. Eric Cintron (left, kneeling), watches Soldiers fire at paper targets Feb. 24 at the Udairi range near Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The day before, Cintron, an information assurance officer with the 143d ESC, and his team conducted a safe successful weapons qualification test in the midst of a sandstorm.



Photo by 1st Lt. Nicole A. Rossman | 143d ESC

Sergeant William J. Bowen, a Facility Maintenance Office noncommissioned officer with the 143d ESC, receives a certificate of appreciation for supporting the 371st Sustainment Brigade's logistical missions Feb. 1 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Bowen and several Soldiers from the 143d ESC exchanged coins, gifts and certificates with their comrades from the 371st in honor of their mutual partnership during their deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.





■ STORY BY MASTER SGT. KEVIN D. SHARP  
*143d ESC Staff Judge Advocate Office*  
■ PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAJ. SCOTT PEPIN  
*143d ESC Staff Judge Advocate Office*

**Below: Capt. Scott Pepin, currently the staff judge advocate for the 143d ESC, sits with his comrades from the 18th Airborne Corps during their deployment to Bosnia in 2001.**

## SAILOR, SOLDIER, AGENT, ATTORNEY

Put together a brief period of living in a homeless shelter, an ex-girlfriend who lived in Spain, being witness to a historical event in world history, law school, meeting two former Presidents of the United States and later becoming a member of the largest Intelligence Agency in the world, you might have the beginnings of a fictional novel. Throw in an added fluency in Russian and a meeting in a dark bar in Moscow where warring gangs met to discuss business, this might be the description of the main character for an Ian Fleming movie.



But this is not fiction or a movie. This is the life of Maj. Scott Pepin, Deputy Command Judge Advocate, 143d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) (ESC), currently deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Pepin, a native of Barrington, R.I., might not have ever become an attorney or worked for a Department of Defense (DOD) intelligence agency if it hadn't been for an ex-girlfriend who was studying in Spain.

"In 1988 I was studying in London and was making plans to return to the U.S. for the holidays. My girlfriend Debbie decided to fly up to London so we could go home together on the same flight.

I decided to fly home with her rather than on Pan Am 103, which most of my classmates were booked on," Pepin said.

On Dec. 21, 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland in a terrorist bombing, an attack which former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi took responsibility. The plane explosion killed all 243 passengers, 16 crew members and another 11 people on the ground from falling debris.

Pepin began his military career in 1984 joining the Naval Reserves as a cryptologist and attended basic training in Orlando, Fla., when the Navy still had an active post there and remained a member of the Naval Reserves until 1992.

"I wanted to be a Navy SEAL, but my parents wouldn't sign for me since I was only 17 years old. Later, they signed when I decided on being a cryptologist. If I can't shoot them, then I wanted to be the James Bond type of guy," Pepin added.

Following his graduation from Syracuse University in 1989 with no job, he was forced to live in a homeless shelter for several days until finding a friend with whom to live. For the next two years he held an assortment of jobs.

"Even now, I still remember vividly my father kicking me out of the house," Pepin stated. "After graduating from college I went overseas for the





Seaman Recruit Scott Pepin and his basic training companion smile for the camera at the former Naval Training Center in Orlando, Fla. Pepin enlisted in the Navy Reserve in 1984 at the age of 17. He served as cryptologist and deployed to the Middle East during Desert Storm before leaving the Navy in 1992.

Navy, I got home from my Navy assignment in September and couldn't find a job. My parents had never been to college and none of their friends had gone to college, so they really had no idea how hard it can be to find a job even with a college degree, especially one that will pay at least enough to cover the rent, student loans and other expenses."

"In any case, my inability to find a job caused problems at home and within a month of returning from my assignment with the Navy I was kicked out of the house," Pepin said with a smirk. "A little while later, I was in the city (Providence R.I.) when I ran into a friend from high school. He agreed to let me stay in a spare room in his apartment. I ended up working in a lot of places, though my first job that fall was at American Eagle Outfitters at a mall in Connecticut not far from the Rhode Island border."

In 1991 after returning from activation to support Desert Storm, Pepin applied to graduate school.

"I could not afford it, but anything seemed better than living the way I had been. I also had a genuine interest in the language, culture and politics of the Former Soviet Union. After all, as a cryptologist in the Navy I'd been intercepting Soviet/Russian communications for years. It was scary putting myself so much deeper into debt for graduate school," Pepin added.

In 1992, using the same student loan money he feared, Pepin moved to California to start graduate school which began in the summer.

"I decided to spend the fall semester in Moscow. It was a bit of a gamble, I didn't see the point in staying in California and taking out huge loans to study about Russia when I could go to Russia as a grad student and, once the semester ended, just stay there and try to get a job, which is exactly what I ended up doing.

"I went to Russia to study and I didn't even know the language. I hired tutors, lived with a Russian family, and had girlfriends who helped me learn the language. I worked very hard to learn the language. Eventually, I got a job with the U.S. Government in Moscow.

"I think the government got a pretty good deal in hiring me. I had my security clearance from the Navy, I was familiar with Moscow and could get around pretty easily, and by then I could speak the language," Pepin said.

Pepin worked for the U.S. government in Moscow from the beginning of 1993 until the fall of 1994. It was a very dangerous time to be in Moscow. Winters are usually cold and dark, and with a general lawlessness as rival gangs killed one another and government officials either looking the other way or taking sides, Pepin said he was yearning to leave.

"Gunfights were common," said Pepin. "I got used to the sound of gunfire. Even though I was employed by the U.S. Embassy I didn't really hang out with Americans. Of the Americans I did meet most were people trying to start a business there, which as these folks found out, would not usually

end well for them, fortunately most of them returned home OK.

"One interesting American I met was a former Marine Recon guy. He was a cool guy, but kind of crazy though. I remember once we went to a nightclub where you had to turn in your weapons before you could enter. I didn't have a weapon, but he had a mini-arsenal on him (a gun, a knife and brass knuckles). The room behind the counter where they stored the weapons was basically an arms room. Apparently this nightclub was considered a neutral zone where warring gangs could discuss business in relative peace. I didn't stay at the club very long. The next time I saw the Recon guy was at the mini revolution, in October of 1993," Pepin laughingly said.

In October 1993 Pepin found himself dead square in the middle of some of the worst street violence in Moscow since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. It was during this time that former President Boris Yeltsin disbanded the Supreme Soviet, equivalent to the United States' Congress, and ordered the Russian Army to shell and storm the country's legislature.

"My apartment was right behind the Russian White House. I would walk to work everyday to the embassy right past the soldiers and even would talk to them. You hear gun fire all the time so that wasn't alarming, but one day (Oct. 4, 1993), I was walking to work and the gun fire was more intense than usual, and people started falling. The soldiers that were usually standing around the white house surrounding the anti-Yeltsin (communist) protesters had taken shelter



In 1993 Pepin began working for the U.S. government.<sup>56</sup>YY His assignments included Russia and Moldova. Here, a bearded Pepin spends a little R&R in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1995.



and were in gun battles. There I was walking through these gun battles as I tried to get to the U.S. Embassy. I ended up turning around and going back to my apartment,” Pepin said.

By 1994, Pepin grew tired of living in Moscow. Pepin cites the long dark winters, the danger and the expense as reasons to move. In 1994 Pepin moved to Moldova where he remained until late in 1995.

“I remember exactly the date. July 4, 1994 at the Spaso House (home of the American Ambassador in Moscow), the former FBI director Louis Freeh was there to meet with the head of the Russian equivalent of the FBI to post FBI agents at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. I met with all of the agents and talked to them about becoming an FBI agent and they set me up for all the tests. Throughout 1994 I flew back and forth to the U.S. to go through the FBI application process/testing. I left Moldova in 1995 because I had been told by the FBI recruiter that I was hired and could plan on starting at the academy in the beginning of the fiscal year 1996,” Pepin said.

Due to a federal government hiring freeze in October 1995 the FBI would not materialize as planned. Rather than wait for the FBI to start the academy up again Pepin applied to law school, and in 1996 Pepin enrolled at the School of Law at the University of Connecticut. He spent a summer studying law at Moscow State University and working for a U.S. law firm in Moscow. He graduated in 1999 and due to the debt he had accumulated to pay for law school, he took the first organization which would hire him immediately – the United States Army.

Pepin went to the Judge Advocate General’s School in Charlottesville, Va., in the summer of 2000. His first active duty assignment sent him to the 18th Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, N.C.

“I knew coming into the Army [that] I wasn’t going to stay in for 20 years. I had really planned to go back to Russia to work for a U.S. law firm there or to work for the U.S. government there.



Pepin met his wife, Yelena, in 2001 while she was selling flowers in Kiev, Ukrain. Five years later Pepin and Yelena would marry at a Russian Orthodox Church in Washington, D.C.



The Pepin family gather around the Christmas Tree at their new home in Bowie, Md., 2012. Yelena holds their two youngest sons, Winston (left) and Cooper (right). Pepin’s stepson, Alex, stands behind his mother and father-in-law.

I kept in touch with the lawyer I interned with in Moscow while I was in law school and in 2001 was offered the opportunity to run a law office he was opening in Kiev. So, in the summer of 2001 I flew to Kiev to see the office space, meet the employees, and talk to about potential employment there after my 3 year Army obligation ended.” Pepin added.

The job was not attractive enough for him to leave the Army as it was a commissioned based

opportunity with a very minimal base salary, but the trip did prove to be beneficial in ways Pepin did not expect.

“I met my wife, Yelena, then. She was selling flowers in Kiev. I thought she was very attractive, and I decided to talk to her. We started dating, and I would fly over as much as I could, and we eventually got married in 2006,” Pepin said.

Pepin and his wife have two boys, Cooper and Winston and he also has a stepson, Sasha.

Pepin stayed at the 18th Airborne Corps from 2000 until 2003 when he then was assigned to the Criminal Investigative Task Force (CITF) and was sent to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba where he worked with detainees.

Following his stint with CITF, he was assigned to the 742nd Military Intelligence Battalion at Fort Meade.

“Around 2006, I knew I was going to get out of the Army, and I was either going to work with DOD or another government agency,” Pepin recalled.

In September 2007 Pepin made it official and left the Active Army. He began as a GS-15 attorney with a DOD intelligence agency.

“The real difference between why I decided to work for my current employer over other government agencies was the number 15. Fifteen minutes was my drive to get to where I work now compared to maybe over an hour driving time to other locations from where I lived,” Pepin said.

Pepin never severed his ties completely with the military as he joined the Reserves and became a member of the 151st Legal Support Organization (LSO) until he transferred to the 143d ESC in

March 2013 to mobilize with the unit.

“I have had a wonderful life. I used my 20s and 30s to take chances, have fun, travel the world and meet people. I have used my 40s to have a family and have a career I love. I wouldn’t change a thing,” Pepin said.

Pepin will return to the 151st LSO following this deployment and return to his position as a GS-15 attorney. ■



# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

## *Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and*



Jaida Im

Janet Yellen



Tammy Duckworth



Caroline Kennedy



VADM Michelle Howard

## *Commitment*

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