



TASK FORCE MULESKINNER



August 2014

10th Sustainment Brigade

Issue 6

**Sustainment Automation Support Management Office
pulls their weight in support of retrograde operations**

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Supporting the Climb!

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The official 10th Sustainment Brigade publication

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COMMANDER'S CORNER



MULESKINNER 6

Fellow Muleskinners, Family, and friends; greetings from Afghanistan. The Muleskinner team continues to make huge strides as we provide sustainment to our U.S. and coalition partners, assist with retrograde of material and redeployment of forces while simultaneously standing up a new sustainment structure and headquarters. The Resolute Support Sustainment Brigade is the enduring sustainment headquarters during the next phase of the operation. Our final major operation is the establishment of forward logistics bases

across the Combined Joint Operations Area-Afghanistan. FLBs are designed to provide critical sustainment support for our forces operating across Afghanistan.

The brigade continues to live in an exciting and historic time period. We are major contributors in the responsible drawdown of forces and material. TF Muleskinner, along with our partners in the 1st Theater Sustainment Command (Forward)/3 Expeditionary Sustainment Command, continues to work closely together to ensure we meet all of our redeployment, retrograde and material reduction

requirements in a timely manner. The nation of Afghanistan will soon name their first elected president and each day the Afghans continue to make strides with strengthening their country.

I'm proud of the level of professionalism that our Soldiers exhibit on a daily basis. It is humbling to witness the hard work and sacrifices our men and women endure to ensure our nation is safe, and also setting the conditions for the government of Afghanistan to establish a self securing nation.

We will continue to focus on the force protection and safety for all of our Soldiers and Airmen as we set the conditions for our successful transfer of

authority to the 4th Sustainment Brigade. Across the brigade, we have implemented daily leader huddles that focus on safety, equal opportunity and sexual harassment/assault response prevention and awareness. The safe execution of our mission is one of our top priorities.

I want to thank everyone for your continued support to the Muleskinner brigade. Our Soldiers and Airmen appreciate your continued support.

Finally, I want to thank the Soldiers and Airmen who put their lives on the line every day in defense of our great nation.

Supporting the Climb!



Col. Willie Rios III, 10th Sustainment Brigade commander, hosts a commanders conference at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan Aug. 25, where commanders from company to battalion level attended to discuss the brigades internal drawdown plans, resiliency of the brigade and the creation of forward logistics bases. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

COMMAND SGT. MAJ.'S CORNER



MULESKINNER 7

Greetings to all the Soldiers, NCOs and officers of the 10th Sustainment Brigade and Muleskinner team. I can't tell you how honored I am to assume the reins as the senior NCO given the tremendous task of closing the door on our deployment here in Afghanistan. Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Castillo is an outstanding leader and has done much to set this brigade and its personnel up for great success. I will continue to provide the same intensity and integrity to the position I've been chosen to serve.

The Muleskinner Team has direct impact on everything throughout

the Combined Joint Operations Area-Afghanistan as the only sustainment brigade in theater given the dual task of sustainment operations and retrograde of equipment. The enormous successes enjoyed by all who have embraced the commander's intent are due largely in part to the most dedicated individuals throughout our formation. It is my intent to get out to each location to see first-hand all the marvelous things you are doing that bring credit and recognition to you, your team and this organization.

We are transitioning into a new phase of this deployment, Resolute

Support. It is important that we continue to focus to ensure we complete our mission with the same tenacity we had when we started. Below are some areas of emphasis.

Safety: This is the most important of all and will require us to remain alert and deliberate in our plan of action and efforts to mitigate risks within our day-to-day operations.

Professionalism: As we begin to wind down in preparation for return to home station, there is potential for tempers to flare. Don't let any situation place you in that position. Instead, remain calm, courteous and professional with everyone you encounter regardless of the situation.

Accountability: "Be the leader you want to be led by" – Castillo. That simple phrase is loaded with so many great possibilities. As an old Soldier myself, I know that in order to be a great leader, one must be a great follower. Be a member of the team and remain accountable for all your actions good or bad. Strive for excellence in everything you do and hold people and your Soldiers to the standard.

Respect: Respect for self and one another are absolutely critical to the morale of our personnel

and all positive outcomes associated with completed tasks. As a leader, I challenge each of you to treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Standards and discipline: On behalf of Col. Willie Rios III and myself, thank you. Usually, problems of indiscipline and personality conflicts are present during the first 60-90 days into a deployment and it repeats its cycle again 60-90 days before departure. Armed with this information, I'm asking you to please adjust your sensors and help us limit potential incidents before they become a problem.

Help this command team strengthen our teammates who have somehow fallen short of established guidelines and objectives. In closing, I'd like to say to all the Soldiers, command teams and staff that I appreciate the support each you are giving to one another in an effort to meet the commander's intent. Your attention to detail consistently raises the bar and further distinguishes you and your team of professionals on what right looks like. Continue to hunt the good stuff, I am proud to serve alongside each of you.

226th Signal Company cases colors



The 226th Signal Company was recognized for completing its six-month deployment to Joint Combat Outpost Hairatan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in a ceremony at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan July 20. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Wilmer Aguilar, Task Force Sword Unit Public Affairs Representative)

Story by 1st Lt. Josephyne Omokeye
548th CSSB UPAR

CAMP MARMAL, Afghanistan – The 226th Signal Company relinquished responsibility over combat operations in Regional Command-North during a redeployment ceremony here July 20.

The 226th SC, an Army company from Fort Drum, New York, was assigned to 548th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion and had supported combat operations in RC-North for six months.

Led by Capt. Jesse A. Johnson, commander, and 1st Sgt. Masai A. Dalton, the company first sergeant, 226th SC provided more than 20,000 combined man hours of force protection for the personnel residing at Joint Combat Outpost Hairatan.

Lt. Col. James L. Turner, commander of 548th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion,

lauded the Soldiers while presenting them with awards for their individual deployment accomplishments. Turner also recalled 226th SC's previous deployment to JCOP Hairatan from October 2011 through October 2012.

"Some of the Soldiers in this formation deployed with the 226th Signal Company to Afghanistan in 2011," Turner said. "You built the same very structures that you protected during this deployment."

In addition to their force protection mission, the company successfully provided convoy communications support to all sustainment elements within JCOP Hairatan. The Soldiers of the 226th SC supported more than 60 missions and provided signal support for 1230th Transportation Company and 1569th Transportation Company during their deployment.

Many of the Soldiers successfully worked outside of their military occupation specialty. Some of the Soldiers of this Signal unit were trained infantrymen, which positively impacted the signal company's force protection mission. Johnson attributed the diversity of skills to the success of the company.

Johnson said that his Soldiers worked around the clock without complaints, living up to their company motto "all day, all knights." Many worked at levels well above their rank to accomplish the mission. He said even some of the most junior ranking Soldiers were placed in team-leader positions.

The company cased its colors toward the end of the ceremony, signifying the completion of the company's multi-faceted combat mission in RC-N.



Capt. Chaplain Jueun Kim, the 10th Special Troops Battalion chaplain, a Los Angeles, California native, provides comfort to a simulated casualty while Spc. Justin Richburgh, the 548th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion chaplain assistant, Augusta, Georgia native, practices the nine-line medical evacuation procedures at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan July 10. The purpose of the convoy escort team training was a way to familiarize them with the capabilities of the mine resistant ambush protected vehicles as well as their roles on a convoy mission. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Spiritual Soldiers tailor training for mission accomplishment

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Chaplains and chaplain assistants assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade, conducted their religious support team training with the brigade's unit ministry team July 10 here.

The training was made up of three focus areas; first responders to a victim of sexual harassment or assault, religious support and the operations process, and convoy escort team training.

First responders to a victim of sexual harassment or assault is a class that was mandated by Maj. Gen. Donald L. Rutherford, chief of chaplains of the U.S. Army, to be completed no later than Oct. 1, 2014.

The class, which was conducted by Maj. James Pennington, the 10th SBDE chaplain, provided chaplains and chaplain assistants with in-depth

training on how they should respond to a sexual assault crime. The training emphasized that the RST should encourage a victim to report the crime and seek further assistance from the sexual assault response coordinator or the victim advocate.

They received training to better understand the difference between restricted and unrestricted reporting to provide better guidance as to where the victims should go.

“Comprehensive consoling tools are furnished during the training so that victims can receive the best counseling possible from chaplains and chaplain assistants,” said Staff Sgt. Jamie Proudfoot, the 10th SBDEs senior chaplain assistant. “Confidentiality was another key subject that reminds RST members that legally [they] cannot tell anyone what the victims talked about.”

After the RST's completed the first class, they moved

on to the religious support and the operations process, which gave them a better insight on how the Army conducts business.

“Most battalion RSTs have a chaplain and chaplain assistants are brand new to the Army and do not understand what an operations order does or how it relates to their mission,” said Proudfoot. This class also allowed RST members to understand that their role is a sustainment role. It provided them with the eight sustainment principles and advised them that they should act instead of reacting to ever changing religious support requirements.”

After the class, they were released for lunch and were informed to meet back up for their final portion of their training.

The purpose of the CET training was a way to familiarize them with the capabilities of the mine resistant ambush protected vehicles as well as their roles on a convoy mission, which was provided by Spc. Pollanna Tanuvasa, the 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion chaplain assistant.

“Typically, RSTs show up to a convoy brief [and]

jump in the back of a vehicle in which they have no idea of its capabilities,” said Proudfoot.

They were trained on the components and capabilities of the MRAP, casualty evacuation procedures, reporting processes as well as radio etiquette.

Some of the Soldiers were learning something new every step of the way, while others already had a pretty good grasp of the training.

The RSTs learned how to properly secure a casualty to a litter and what it takes to load a litter in the back of an MRAP while in full personal protective equipment.

Once the training was completed, they received real-world scenarios that reinforced the training and what they have learned in the past.

Pennington said, their goal was to focus on the chaplain assistants as much as the chaplains, which he felt they were successful.

“It was a challenge,” he said. “We tried to be creative and keep the RSTs out of the classroom as much as possible and to drum up the competition among the RSTs.”



Staff Sgt. Jamie Proudfoot, the 10th Sustainment Brigades senior chaplain assistant, a Linesville, Pennsylvania native, explains a training scenario to subordinate battalion religious support teams prior to conducting their duties during the convoy escort team portion of the RST training at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan July 10. The training was made up of three focus areas; first responders to a victim of sexual harassment or assault, religious support and the operations process, and convoy escort team training. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Sustainment Automation Support Management Office pulls their weight in support of retrograde operations



Soldiers assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade, work together to disassemble the satellite dish to a logistics information system at the top of the Salang Pass, in support of retrograde operations July 15. The Salang Pass meanders through the Hindu Kush Mountains and has been called one of the most dangerous roads in the world. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade Sustainment Automation Support Management Office contributed to retrograde operations July 15 by recovering logistics information systems.

The SASMO team successfully recovered the first very small aperture terminal, a device used to transmit and receive data signal through a satellite, established in Afghanistan from the top of the Salang Pass. The team also recovered a radio frequency in-transit visibility kit, a system that traces the identity, status and location of cargo from one location to another via satellite.

The Salang Pass meanders

through the Hindu Kush Mountains and has been called one of the most dangerous roads in the world.

As International Security Assistance Force transitions from partnered combat operations to train, advise and assist operations, commanders will adjust the size of their force and the amount of equipment in their area to meet the new mission.

“There are currently hundreds of VSATs throughout the theater of operation,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Robert Kay, a Norwalk, Ohio native, SASMO officer in charge. “The goal is to reduce that number to less than 50.”

Reducing the number of VSATs in the theater is a part of the retrograde mission put in place by U.S. Army

G4.

The 10th SBDE has been successful with balancing the retrograde and sustainment missions simultaneously.

In the early morning hours the brigade’s convoy security team prepared for the long trek through the Salang Pass, which is approximately 45-kilometers long, by conducting their pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections before rolling through the entrance control point.

Soldiers assigned to the 330th Movement Control Battalion played a vital role in the success of the mission by providing a heavy expanded mobility tactical truck with a load handling system in place of a flat bed.

After the convoy made it to the

top of the pass, which is 12,723 feet above sea level, Soldiers from the CST provided security while the SASMO team and other members of the convoy headed to the location of the equipment, which was on the roof of a stone building, to conduct their mission.

There were a few snags here and there but due to the resiliency of the Muleskinner Soldiers they were able to overcome each obstacle.

Spc. Kenneth Jobin, a Staten Island, New York native, SASMO technician, said the disassembly of the VSAT was estimated to take as long as four hours, but with the help of Sgt. Hanson Thomas, an Orange, New Jersey native, truck commander and Spc. Drake Baldwin, a Dayton, Ohio native, utilities equipment repairer, both assigned to the 10th SBDE, it was finished within a half hour.

“They knew all the tools needed,” said Jobin.

For the VSAT to be completely retrograded, all components had to be accounted for and secured. If not, the Army would have lost more than \$96,000, which was one of the many factors that went into the planning process of the mission. The same thing applied to the RFI-TV, which saved the Army more than \$23,000.

“We had to account for every single piece of the equipment,” said Jobin. “Every nut, bolt and cable, I mean everything.”

The biggest issue that arose was the mere size of the VSAT and the welded bars of metal some might call stairs leading to the roof of the stone building. It was deemed unsafe to try and carry parts of the VSAT down the stairs.

An NCO made the decision to use ratchet straps to lower the components of the VSAT and RFI-



Soldiers assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade and the 330th Movement Control Battalion load and secure the recovered logistics information systems on the back of a heavy expanded mobility tactical truck with a load handling system in place of a flat bed at the top of the Salang Pass in support of retrograde operations July 15. The 10th SBDE has been successful with balancing the retrograde and sustainment missions simultaneously. (Courtesy photo)

TV down the side of the building alleviating any safety hazards.

Soldiers lowered the equipment to the ground and secured it to the HEMTT.

This may seem like a difficult task, but teamwork ensured the mission was accomplished in a timely manner.

Once everything was accounted for and secured, the convoy made its way back down the traitorous roads of the pass and back to the

motor pool for an after action review.

Materiel and equipment recovered from Afghanistan will increase the readiness of U.S. forces at home and prepare them for future operations.

The retrograde mission was a success saving the Army more than \$100,000 in part to the coordination and teamwork of the Muleskinner team and the Soldiers of the 330th MCB.

Remembering fallen comrades with a celebration of life ceremony



Soldiers assigned to the 110th Transportation Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, held a remembrance ceremony July 18 here for two heroes, Staff Sgt. Daniel A. Rodriguez, 28, a Baltimore, Maryland native and Sgt. Jose J. Reyes, 24, a San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico native, who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the company's previous deployment in 2012. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers assigned to the 110th Transportation Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, held a remembrance ceremony July 18 here for two heroes who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the company's previous deployment in 2012.

Sgt. Jenna Moffitt, a Dover, Delaware native, truck commander assigned to the 110th TC, coordinated and conducted a remembrance ceremony for Staff Sgt. Daniel A. Rodriguez, 28, a Baltimore, Maryland native and Sgt. Jose J. Reyes, 24, a San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico native. Both NCOs died July 18, 2012 in Ghazni City, Afghanistan, when their vehicle struck a road side bomb.

Moffitt was assigned to the 110th TC when the two NCOs gave their lives in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The ceremony was not intended to be a memorial service but a way to celebrate the lives of the two NCOs.

Capt. Chaplain James Brown, a Phoenix, Arizona native, 419th CSSB chaplain said a prayer for the Families, friends and Soldiers who served with the fallen heroes.

Following the chaplains prayer a dinner was held in honor of the fallen heroes where the battalion and company command teams served the Soldiers.

Non-alcoholic beer was provided for the Soldiers to make a toast to each fallen hero.

After the dinner, Soldiers made their way outside where the ceremony continued.

Moffitt and Sgt. Ramon Mota, a Syracuse, New York native, truck commander also assigned to the 110th TC, talked about their personal experiences they had with the two NCOs.

Moffitt recalled when she was having a rough time in the Army and looked to Rodriguez for guidance. She said he told her it's simple; the Army will throw a lot of crap your way but its training and leading Soldiers that makes it worthwhile.

Moffitt said she has carried his words with her ever since. She concluded her speech by expressing how strongly she believes that both fallen heroes are watching over the company every day and keeping everyone safe on the road.

Mota talked about the memories he had of his friend Reyes.

"I still remember you smiling and

laughing in front of everyone,” said Mota. “Like nothing in life troubled you.”

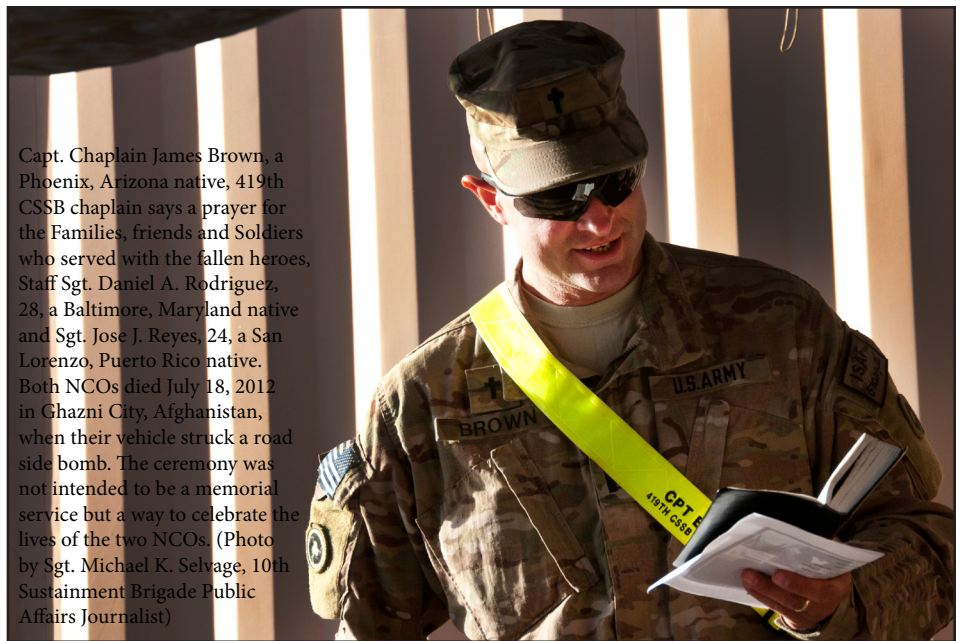
He expressed how Reyes is still alive, how he lives on in every memory they shared.

Sgt. Charles Riggs, a Fletcher, Oklahoma native, truck commander assigned to the 110th TC, played “Amazing Grace” on the bagpipes before a moment of silence was observed for the Soldiers to pray, remember or celebrate the lives of the fallen heroes.

Reyes was originally cremated but was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia July 18, 2014.

The company held a candle light ceremony to conclude the celebration of life.

“It turned out very well,” said Moffitt. “Everyone was happy we



did something in their honor.”

Both Moffitt and Mota said they plan to take their families to visit Reyes’s resting place when they return from their current deployment.

The company also flew two flags

in honor of the two NCOs. The flags were signed by everyone in the company and will be sent to the heroes’ Families.

“They might have fallen but they are never forgotten,” said Mota.

Sgt. Charles Riggs, a Fletcher, Oklahoma native, truck commander assigned to the 110th Transportation Company, plays “Amazing Grace” on the bagpipes before a moment of silence is observed for the Soldiers to pray, remember or celebrate the lives of the fallen heroes, Staff Sgt. Daniel A. Rodriguez, 28, a Baltimore, Maryland native and Sgt. Jose J. Reyes, 24, a San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico native, who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the company’s previous deployment in 2012. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)



Camp Leatherneck rations team prepare for change



Army Pfc. Job Welcome, a Eustis, Florida native, motor transport operator assigned to the 96th Transportation Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, inventories refrigerated storage units at the class I yard at Camp Leatherneck July 22. Daily operations of the Soldiers working in the yard consist of escorting the trucks containing the rations from the entrance control point to the yard, downloading, inventorying and securing the rations. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

CAMP LEATHERNECK, Afghanistan – A combination of Soldiers assigned to the 543rd Quartermaster Company, 96th Transportation Company and a Marine assigned to the Combat Logistic Battalion 7, handed over class one operations to the incoming Marine Combat Logistic Battalion 1 which will sustain more than 11,000 personnel with operational rations at the class I yard here.

The team assigned to CLB1 consists of three Marines.

The mission of the yard is to support the service members, coalition forces and civilian contractors with operational rations, which include meals ready to eat, religious oriented meals, ice and water.

“We only provide the essential rations now,” said Army 1st Lt. Jane Walker, a Springfield, Virginia native, executive officer for the 543rd QM CO. “We just don’t have the lickies and chewies anymore.”

The yard has recently completed their descope mission July 14, when the last of the excess 20 and 40-foot refrigeration and connex containers were turned-in in support of retrograde operations.

Walker said they had more than 125 containers and now that number has dropped to less than 40. They

also had more than 130 accounts back in January and now they don’t have any.

Another portion of the descope mission was reducing the number of civilian contractors working at the yard. There were more than 40 contractors and that numbers was recently reduced to zero and now it’s run by a team of seven service members.

Army Sgt. Christopher Markowski, a Dayton, Ohio native, class I yard supervisor assigned to the 543rd QM CO, said the workload has slightly decreased but, with the team they have, he is confident they are capable of handling the task at hand.

The yard receives forklift support from contractors working at the supply support activity from time to time when they receive a high concentration of customers.

Operations have been more efficient with the few service members than it was with the higher number of contractors, said Walker. Soldiers of the class I team are proud to do the mission of supplying their brothers and sisters in uniform.

On average, the yard supports more than 25 customers a day who pick up anywhere from a single pallet of water to a heavy expanded mobility tactical truck loaded with more than 10 pallets at a time. Some customers may even make multiple trips for a single

request.

Daily operations of the Soldiers working in the yard consist of escorting the trucks containing the rations from the entrance control point to the yard, downloading, inventorying and securing the rations.

Approximately 90 percent of the mission is currently issuing ice and water to units throughout the forward operating base.

The yard will also become the new home to the SSA and the medical logistics warehouse as a way to consolidate logistical operations. This consolidation will also assist in the drawdown and closure of the FOB in the future.

“The yard has been ready for the Marines,” said Markowski. “We were simply making it even better for when they actually takeover operations.”

The incoming Marines have been conducting left seat right seat with the class I team, which is a process used so the incoming unit can learn the day-to-day operations of the outgoing unit, to better understand the processes of the class I yard.

“I’ve been handling yards like this for the past three years now so this is going to be a walk in the park especially since everything is already in place



A contracted forklift driver prepares to load a pallet of water on the back of a customer's truck at the class I yard at Camp Leatherneck July 22. The yard receives forklift support from contractors working at the supply support activity from time to time when they receive a high concentration of customers. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

and ready to go,” said Marine Sgt. Bryan Guinand, St. Petersburg, Florida native, incoming class I yard noncommissioned officer in charge assigned to CLB 1. “The transfer is going smoothly.”

The incoming team is ready and rearing to go. “Running a shop like this with 2-3 people is nothing new to me so I’m prepared,” said Guinand. “I just can’t wait to get started.”



A Marine guides a forklift driver and signals when the pallet is placed in the desired location at the class I yard at Camp Leatherneck July 22. The yard receives forklift support from contractors working at the supply support activity from time to time when they receive a high concentration of customers. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Purple Heart recipients continue to serve

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The Purple Heart medal is not an award many Soldiers aim to receive, but, for those who have, it may be one of the most honorable medals they wear on their chest.

On August 7, 1782, General George Washington, the commander in chief of the Continental Army, created the Badge for Military Merit. It consisted of a purple heart-shaped piece of silk edged with a narrow binding of silver with the word “Merit” stitched across the face in silver. The badge was presented to Soldiers for any singular meritorious action.

The Purple Heart was awarded to only three known Soldiers during the Revolutionary War.

In 1931, General Douglas MacArthur, hoped to reinstate the medal in time for the bicentennial of Washington’s birth. On February 22, 1932, Washington’s 200th birthday, the U.S. War Department announced the creation of the Order of the Purple Heart.

The Purple Heart, the oldest American military decoration for military merit, is awarded to members of the U.S. armed forces who have been killed or wounded in action against an enemy. It is also awarded to soldiers who have suffered maltreatment as prisoners of war.

The current Purple Heart displays a bust of Washington and his coat of arms.

Purple Heart day is dedicated to honoring service members, past and present, who have received the Purple Heart medal.

Sgt. 1st Class Rueda De Leon, a Camarillo, California native, first sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, received the Purple Heart when his truck was hit by a roadside bomb in 2005 while operating in southern Afghanistan.

He lost two friends during the attack and said it was one of the reasons he remained in the military.

“Many of my friends and Family thought I was nuts for wanting to come back for another deployment,



to include the wives of my two best friends,” said De Leon. “I felt that I needed to close out a missing puzzle piece and felt that as long as I can still carry a rucksack and fire a weapon, I would still be able to give something back and honor my two brothers.”

Some states have designated August 7 as Purple Heart Day. For example, the state of Wisconsin encourages the people and organizations to display the American flag as a public expression of recognition to those who were wounded or killed in action, fighting to preserve their rights and freedoms.

1st Sgt. Kenneth Hood, a Columbus, Ohio native, first sergeant for the 297th Inland Cargo Transfer Company, 419th CSSB, received the Purple Heart after a high explosive round exploded approximately eight meters away from him in 2012 while in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in eastern Afghanistan.

He said he has three reasons why he continues to serve. One is that he feels it’s his responsibility to ensure the sons, daughters, mothers and fathers are trained and prepared for combat.

He felt it was his destiny to serve his country as a Soldier.

“The military was my life calling,” said Hood. “Since I was a child watching G.I Joe, I always knew somehow if given the chance I would become a Soldier in the Army.”

He said another reason he continued to serve was because he wanted his three sons to have a positive role model, which he says paid off since his oldest son is applying to the U.S. Military Academy in the near future.

For some Soldiers who have received the medal, this day may mean a lot to them.

“One thing I do know is that August 7 is a day I will always cherish and respect,” said De Leon.

Battery issue turn-in point saves Army money



Spc. James Bowman, a utilities equipment repairer for the ground support equipment section in the 514th Support Maintenance Company, charges batteries on a Pulsetech charger after verifying the batteries are rechargeable. These batteries are issued to various units in Afghanistan by the battery issue turn-in point ran by the GSE section in Bagram Air Field. (Courtesy photo)

1st Lt. Sylvia McDonald
514th SMC UPAR

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The 514th Support Maintenance Company Ground Support Equipment section runs the battery issue turn-in point here in addition to providing maintenance support on various ground support equipment such as generators, heaters, air conditioners and heavy equipment.

The BITIP is a battery maintenance management program, which returns recharged batteries back to the Army supply system.

The objective is to reduce the requisitioning of batteries in Afghanistan by maximizing the use of available batteries.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jonathan Kufuor, GSE maintenance technician, and Sgt. Kason McGriff, BITIP noncommissioned officer in charge, lead a team of three Soldiers who are responsible for receiving,

charging and issuing batteries.

“When we receive batteries, we first test them with a multimeter to see if they can accept a charge of four volts or more,” said McGriff. “If the batteries accept four volts or more, we put them on a Pulsetech charger for 24 hours. If they do not accept four volts or more, we stimulate the batteries before placing them in the charger.”

McGriff continued to explain how the batteries are continuously monitored and routinely checked during charge cycles.

“After 24 hours, we test all batteries with a battery analyzer to determine if it’s good or bad,” said McGriff. “We put the good batteries into a container and turn in the bad batteries.”

The only type of batteries that can be requested, received and turned in by the BITIP are rechargeable gel-type batteries. The most common types of batteries that are at the BITIP are the

Hawker batteries.

Hawker batteries are used in most vehicles that require 12-volt batteries. The cost of a Hawker battery is more than \$300 each. These batteries are able to be recovered through a deep charge. Being able to recharge these batteries reduces the number of batteries ordered in theater and saves the Army money.

Since taking over the BITIP program in March 2014, the 514th SMC has tested and recovered more than 2000 batteries and has saved the Army more than \$500,000.

Overall, the BITIP has improved the readiness of military vehicles and equipment in addition to reducing the battery consumption rate in Afghanistan.

“We consistently strive to be good stewards of the taxpayers’ dollars while assisting in maintaining optimal readiness rates throughout Afghanistan,” said Kufuor.

Keeping Soldiers SHARP



Soldiers assigned to the 548th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion receive Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention training at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan. (Courtesy Photo)

Courtesy Story

CAMP MARMAL, Afghanistan – The 548th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion conducted Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention training at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan.

SHARP training is an annual requirement for all military personnel, but Lt. Col. James L. Turner, the 548th CSSB commander, wanted to make sure that his Soldiers are aware of the seriousness of the issue.

“It’s the chief of staff of the Army’s number one priority,” said Turner. “Our number one priority while we are here in Afghanistan is to make sure that we do not have a SHARP incident.”

The training took place in the reception, staging, onward movement and integration tent and was organized by SHARP representative Master Sgt. Shaunda M. Gordon, also the logistics noncommissioned officer in charge for the battalion.

“Through training and education, we hope to make sure Soldiers understand what SHARP is,” said Gordon. “What sexual harassment is and how they can report it.”

By showing Soldiers the movie ‘North Country,’ a true story based on a class action sexual harassment

case, Gordon was able demonstrate the seriousness of the training.

“The use of the video shows how sexual harassment and assault hurts victims,” said Turner.

Following the movie, Gordon kept her Soldiers involved by staging several interactive training tables along the perimeter of the RSOI tent. Each training table was designed to teach Soldiers the difference between sexual assault, sexual harassment and chain of command issues. In addition, Soldiers were given instructions on who and where to report such issues.

“Our stations focused on sexual harassment complaints and sexual assault complaints,” said Gordon. “We also dealt with the different types of approaches on how to deal with SHARP, indirect, direct and third party.”

By the end of the training, each Soldier was moving from station to station demonstrating what they had learned during the four hour block of instruction.

“We are sending Soldiers home with the knowledge on how to handle and deal with sexual harassment and sexual assault,” said Gordon. “They learned how to use the right forms and different approaches to use and resolve problems at their level.”



Sgt. Joshua Trulson, a customs clearance agent with the 415th Military Police Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, inspects a 105 mm artillery shell casings. Customs agents ensure all military souvenirs are properly demilitarized and are in compliance with customs regulations prior to leaving the theater of operations. (US Army photo by Sgt. Zachary Schellinger)

How do I get this back?

The difference between war souvenirs, war trophies

Sgt. Zachary Schellinger
415th Military Police Company

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - Customs agents interact with personnel from every branch of service and civilians supporting coalition forces. Some individuals wish to commemorate their service in Afghanistan with various types of war memorabilia. However, depending on the items to be brought back, the perspective owner must ensure they have the proper paperwork.

Soldiers assigned to the 415th Military Police Company conduct customs operations to prevent the importation of contraband and to ensure all restricted items are properly documented before they are cleared for entry into the U.S.

War souvenirs are items such as expended cast ammunition and shrapnel fragments. Popular items include .50 caliber shell casings that have been converted into bottle openers or 105 mm artillery shell

casings. These items are permitted to be transported back to the U.S. so long as the individual possessing the shell casings has them properly demilitarized and itemized on a DD form 603-1.

Once the individual has the paperwork signed by their commander, they then must bring the items and corresponding paperwork to the customs agent for an inspection. If the paperwork and items are in compliance with regulations, the agent will stamp off on the forms allowing for their transport back to the U.S. It's advised that all of the paperwork be completed well before the individual's expected departure date.

Sgt. Joshua Trulson, a customs agent assigned to the 415th MP CO, said the most common mistake individuals make when carrying shell casings through customs is not having the items properly demilitarized. What this entails is

that the integrity of the shell casing must be compromised by either reaming out the primer pocket past factory dimensions or drilling a hole into the side of the casing. Additionally, bullet tips cannot remain with the casing and must be left in theater.

For those wishing to transport shrapnel, the only stipulation is that the piece cannot be larger than the palm of the hand.

Individuals often inquire about bringing back war trophies such as AK-47's, used light anti-tank weapon rocket tubes and some foreign military equipment. These items cannot be transported back for individual collection. Units can bring these items back as museum pieces but the necessary paperwork is more intensive and requires an extended period of time for an approval that is anything but guaranteed.

Master Sgt. Dennis Spilman, the customs program manager, said the reason the approval process for war trophies takes longer is that it must be approved by the BAF customs office, the theater commander, possibly the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives depending on the item, and then assigned to the unit's property book.

Even though the process may be cumbersome, Spilman said it is designed to be that way. The intent is to ensure accountability and to prevent individuals from trying to collect government property or items that actually belong to the Afghan people.

If a unit wishes to bring a war trophy home for their unit museum, they may contact a customs agent for example forms. Just be sure to submit the paperwork as soon as possible.



1st Sgt. Michael Rosen assigned top the 1569th Transportation Company lays in the prone position with Pvt. 1st Class Joshua Nunez during a weapons familiarization range. Rosen coached Nunez on how to perform the basic marksmanship fundamentals. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ray Delfi)

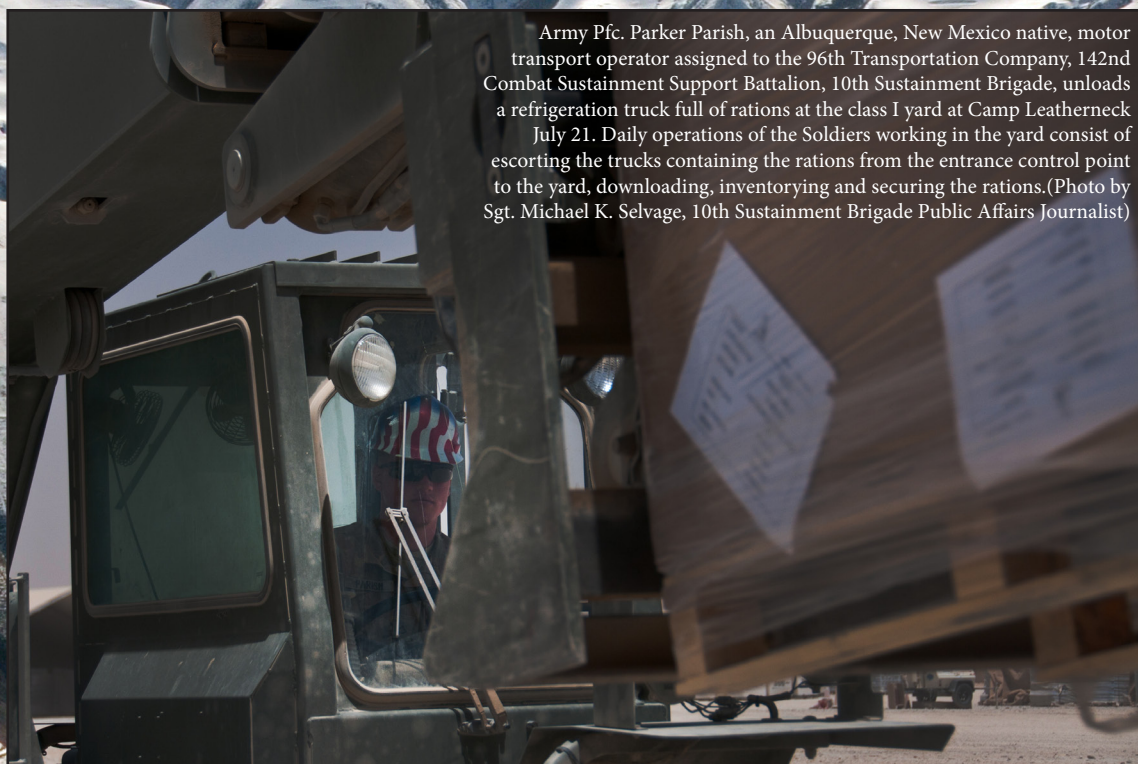


Spc. Mauricio M. Fuentes, a Heavy Vehicle Driver for the 1569th Transportation Company and a member of the 3rd platoon personal security detail, assists in the maintenance of his load handling system vehicle prior to mission. (Photo by Spc Kera Cardona)

Spc. Jose Guillen assigned to the 730th Transportation Company pushes himself to the limit during the sit-ups portion of the Army Physical Fitness Test at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. APFTs allow Soldiers to display their physical fitness as well as maintain their physical fitness to ensure combat readiness. (Photo by SPC Barclay Fernandez)



Army Pfc. Parker Parish, an Albuquerque, New Mexico native, motor transport operator assigned to the 96th Transportation Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, unloads a refrigeration truck full of rations at the class I yard at Camp Leatherneck July 21. Daily operations of the Soldiers working in the yard consist of escorting the trucks containing the rations from the entrance control point to the yard, downloading, inventorying and securing the rations. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)



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Headquarters of 4th Infantry Division on the steps of the Capitol Building, Washington, DC, 4 April 2006.