

From the Sandbox...

The Oscar Observer



[Our Sailors in Afghanistan](#)

December 2012/January 2013
Volume 3

Group Commander's Corner

CAPT Chuck Rink



Time has passed quickly as we have crossed the halfway mark of the NAVELSG FWD OSCAR deployment. Morale and motivation remain high, and the OSCAR Sailors continue with their diligent inspection of cargo, equipment, passengers and supporting air operations. This time of year is especially difficult in Afghanistan, because of the mud, ice and snow that exist in the many locations of my Sailors. Despite the weather, my Sailors continue to fulfill the mission plus going above and beyond. In Bastion our Air Cargo Detachment not only supports the flight line, the cargo warehouses and maintain heavy equipment, the Seabees have demonstrated their can-do attitude. They have built guard shacks, guard towers, filled Hesco (protection) barriers, reinforced

protection berms driving bulldozers, and graded working yards with gravel. My Sailors are creative in how to work efficiently during this cold winter. Many of the "clean" sterile yards are nothing more than a mud field due to the melting snow and ice. When driving a vehicle through this mud, it wipes out the arduous effort to get the vehicle to the right level of cleanliness. To combat this problem, the customs inspectors have vehicles moved in the early morning when the water in the mud freezes causing the mud to harden. Vehicles can smoothly move to the flight line for shipment without having to be cleaned again.

I can't say enough about the dedication of the OSCAR Sailors. As Command Master Chief Quamme and I travel through Kuwait and Afghanistan we see the perseverance in their eyes. They work outside in the rain, snow, ice, temperatures below 10F, in the mud and in a combat zone without any complaint. They are embedded with the Marines and with the Army. OSCAR Sailors work harmoniously and seamlessly with each of the other services to create one team, one fight. In fact, in some of the camps the Leading Petty Officer is in charge of both Sailors and Soldiers to direct their efforts to support the mission. Every day I am impressed with their performance and I am proud to be their Group Commander.

To the families of my Sailors, thank you. You had to endure another Christmas or Holiday season without

your loved one. You had to bring in the new year on your own. You ran the errands, took care of the children, looked after the car, house/apartment, pets and paid the bills of the OSCAR Sailor. Because you did all these things, my Sailors were able to "Stand the Watch". These Sailors endured the hardships, worked the long hours, day and night, and supported Operation Enduring Freedom. They were able to focus on their mission, because you supported them on the home front. Thank you for supporting the Sailors of OSCAR.

In Hahm's Way

CDR Jimmy Hahm



We are now more than 1/2 way through our mobilization for ESS and approaching 1/2 way for OSCAR Wave 1 and 2. It is at this point in most of the mobilizations where complacency can set it. I urge all of us to

be vigilant and not let complacency set it. And those of you who were extenders from NOVEMBER rotation can be feeling a little burned out. Don't just look at the end with months to go, focus on daily tasks and accomplishments. Let these daily accomplishments lead to weeks and weekly accomplishments lead to months. Before you know it, we'll be going home with the satisfaction that WE have made the difference.

Many of us came here with great expectations and goals that we wanted to achieve. Are you where you want to be? Many of us wanted to focus on getting into shape. I've seen many changes and transformation in us physically and professionally. It is probably good time to reassess and renew our efforts into achieving our mobilization goals whether it be personally, financially, professionally, and/or physically.

In the next couple of months, we'll have PAPA Leadership out here on PDSS. This doesn't leave a lot of time before PAPA wave 1 arrives and OSCAR wave 1 departs. Let's ensure we have thoroughly planned all the moving parts of receiving PAPA wave 1 and executing a smooth departure of our shipmates from OSCAR Wave 1; all this while finishing up EVALS/FITREPs and awards. In order to ensure we take care of our sailors, the leadership must prioritize and focus on devoting required time for EVALs and awards. This is the best way we take care of sailors.

Finally, I thank you for all of your dedication and sacrifice. Many of us have missed our loved ones' birthdays,

anniversaries, and the birth of new members to our families. It is no easy thing to be away from our loved ones when they need us the most. Thank you all for your service.

CMC Corner

CMDCM Scott Quamme



The New Year is in full swing here in the deserts of Kuwait and the mountains and deserts of Afghanistan. We are literally at the halfway point of our deployment and the NAVELSG FWD OSCAR team of Sailors' continue to do an outstanding job supporting the mission we were sent here to do. Our mission is to provide Navy Customs inspections throughout the Central Command area of responsibility to Air Cargo operations with the Marines and our Head Quarters staff providing support to all these teams and Company's.

Captain Rink and myself have traveled to the various sites we have Sailors. I am truly grateful at the high level of morale and commitment to

the mission all of our Sailors project. The professionalism that they display on a daily basis is a true testament to their commitment to the Navy and the mission. As they work alongside their fellow Shipmates, Soldiers' and Marines it is the One Team, One Fight concept that is obvious from my observations. They Skipper and I look forward to continuing our visits and seeing our Sailors hard at work.

Remember Safety in all that we do. I care about all of you, so please look out for, and take care of, each other. We need you for our mission, and I want you all to return safely to your family, friends and parent commands. Again, I wish all of you and your families the very best this New Year has to offer. I am proud and consider it a privilege to serve alongside each and everyone one of you. Keep up the great work!!



**BLACK HISTORY CELEBRATION DINNER
HONORING THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

PROGRAM

Prayer- Senior Chief Tillotson

Presentation

Dinner

Special Presentation

Closing Remarks

Music & Dancing



*The symbol of **Sankofa** is that of a bird whose head is faced in the opposite direction of its body. This is emphasizing on the fact that even though the bird is advancing, it periodically makes it a point to examine and return to it's past, since this is the only way for one to have a better future.*

- Special thanks to:*
- GSM2 Gumbs
 - AB2 Deleon
 - AB12 Mainor
 - GM2 Wilson
 - QMI Durham
 - CS3 Greer
 - HMI Christian
 - ITI Avery
 - CSI Corey
 - MM3 Rennick
 - CS2 Graham
 - LSCSTillotson
 - HM3 Darby
 - LNCS Louk
 - CM2 Fox
 - MM2 Hayes
 - AOC Muller
 - MA3 Marable
 - ETCS Mcbane
 - EN2 Blas
 - BMI Osindero
 - MAI Tapia

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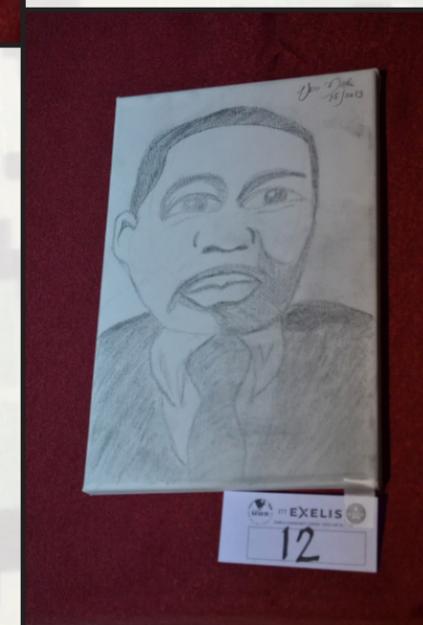
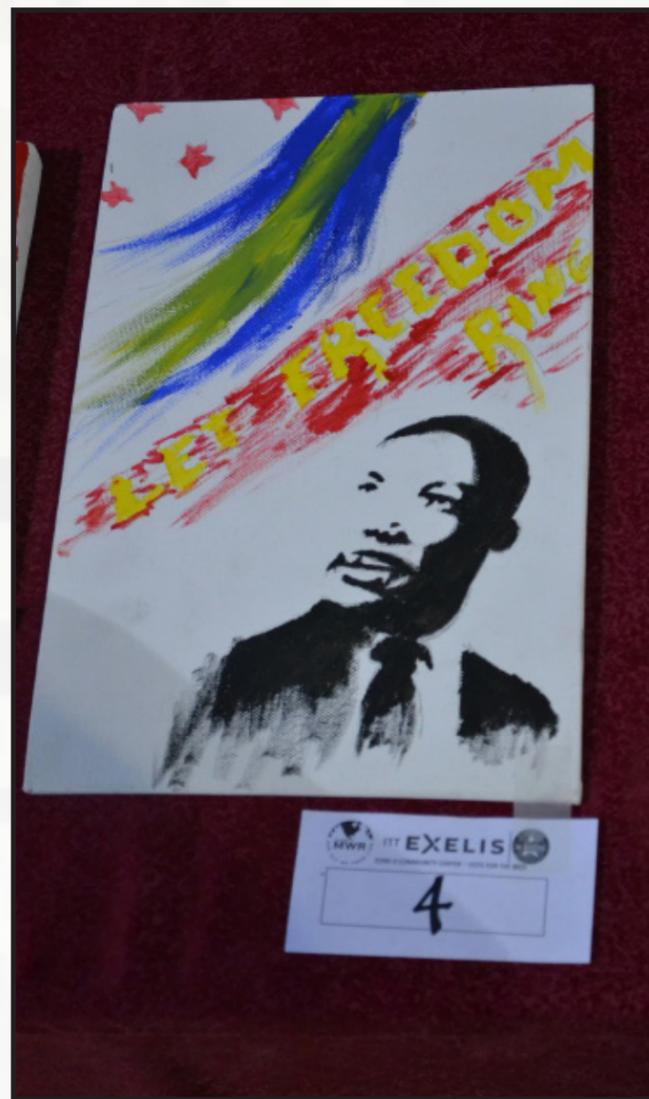
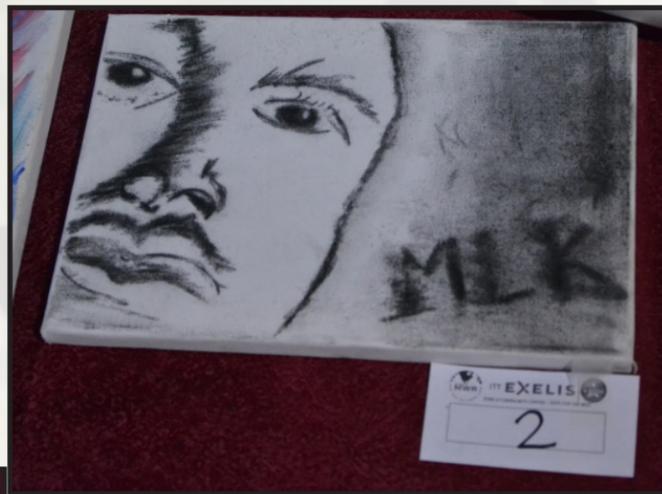
NAVELSG FWD CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY MONTH

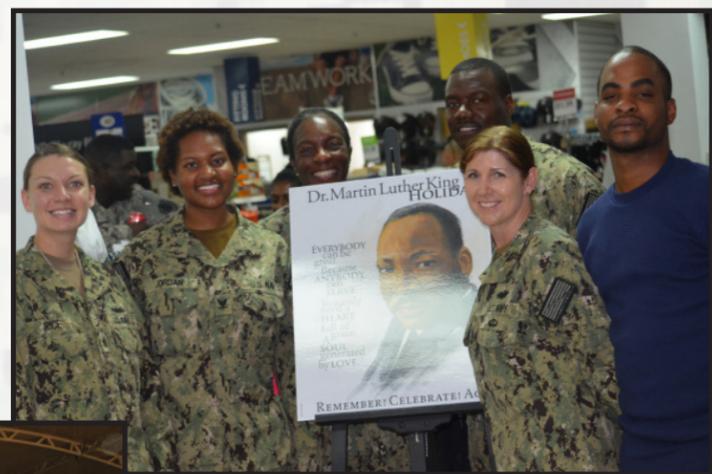
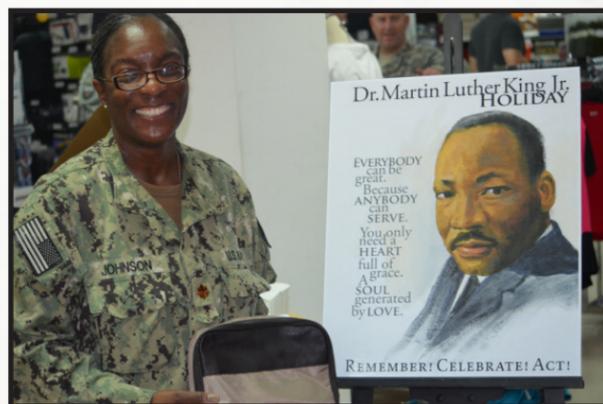
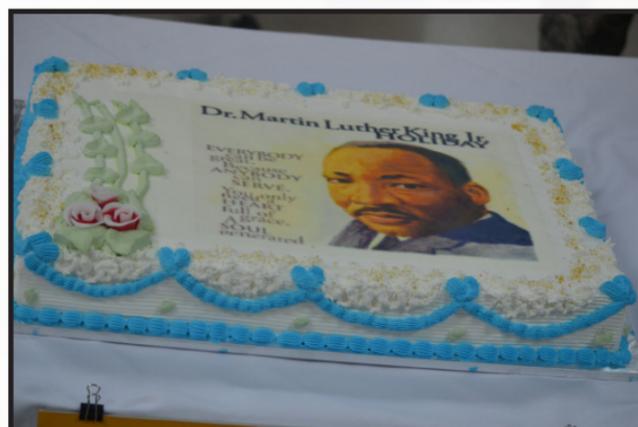
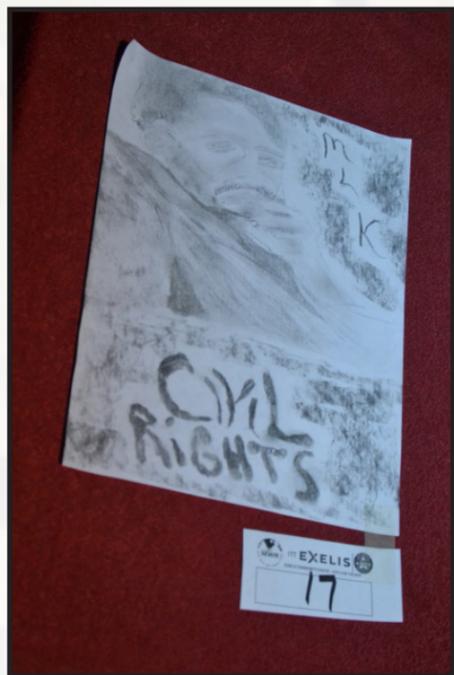


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HEROES OF THE WEEK



NAME: US Navy Customs Team
UNIT: Based at Arifjan, Kuwait
LCDR Hunter, AT2 Lopez, BM2 Brown, BM2 Mancha, AS3 Ardon, EN2 Beckles, and AO2 Nunez.

Beginning the day after their arrival to JTC on 10 February 2013, the US Navy Customs Team based out of Arifjan, Kuwait efficiently and thoroughly inspected personal and organizational equipment belonging to TF 1-181. Their professionalism and high standards were evident throughout the inspection process. The Soldiers of TF 1-181 are greatly indebted to the US Navy Customs Team and respectfully submit them as our Heroes of the Week, for without their efforts, we could not go home. Hit 'em first!



SLEDGEHAMMER!

Military Branches Join Forces to Save Taxpayers

By: Spc. McShane Murphey and Spc. Kyle Rice
December 30, 2012



Soldiers from the 247th Quartermaster Company and Sailors from Navy Customs work together in the customs mission to protect the U.S. borders. The Central Command Materiel Recovery Element operates customs assets in all six regional commands in Afghanistan to assist with the redistribution of U.S. government property. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)

Parwan Province, Afghanistan -- United States Army and Navy forces have joined their efforts to save the taxpayers' money on government resources.

Both Army and Navy forces are working around the clock in an effort to redistribute government resources as the United States continues to assist in the reallocation of government resource in Afghanistan.

The 247th Quartermaster Company, stationed in Fort Carson, Colo., recently arrived in Afghanistan and assumed command of the Central Command Materiel Recovery Element (CMRE) on December 23, 2012. Along with the United States Navy Customs Sailors and civilian counterparts alike, the 247th QM CO participates in a coordinated effort to review, confirm and allocate supplies, equipment and medium to requesting military units.

“By combining our efforts with the Navy Sailors, we can truly maximize our efficiency and responsiveness to better serve the people of the United States,” said Spc. Martiza Guzman, of Ontario, CA, 247th Quartermaster Company.

The CMRE mission is to effectively and efficiently plan, coordinate, execute and synchronize available assets and resources to conduct and implement retrograde operations to withdraw US personnel, property and equipment from the country of Afghanistan, according to the 247th QM Co. CMRE mission.

“The joint effort so far has been greatly successful. The Navy Customs Sailors and the 247th Headhunter Soldiers are contributing substantially to border control and the implementation of retrograde operations across Afghanistan,” stated Cpt. Gary N. Taylor, 247th QM Co. Commander.

The 247th QM Co. has been training for this deployment and the current mission since reactivation on October 24, 2011. The main goal is to move equipment from outlying bases to centralized collection points spread across Afghanistan.

“We are distributing the resources from the bases that are closing to relieve the American citizens the financial burden of military expenses,” stated 1st Lt. Ayana Kendal, Bagram Retrosort Yard officer in charge.

In a recent visit from the 593rd Sustainment Brigade Commander, Col. Douglass M. McBride, said, “[the] key to this operation is velocity, velocity, velocity. The more effort we put into this operation, the more we can save the people [of America].”



130103-A-WZ553-373

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Nathan Atkinson and Army Spc. Eduardo Barraza, of Burbank, CA, 247th QM Co., inspect a box of weapon mounts before the container is sealed and shipped at Forward Operating Base Shank in Logar Province, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130103-A-WZ553-355

Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Nathan Atkinson inspects customs-sealed packages and customs clearance forms before approving items for shipment out of country at Forward Operating Base Shank in Logar Province, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)

THANK YOU

GIRL SCOUT TROOP NO. 10714

CLAY-HENRY COUNTY GEORGIA

Navy Expeditionary Logistic Support Group Forward (NAVELSG FWD)
sends a hearty "THANK YOU" to
Clayton-Henry County Girls Scout Troop #10714.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the girls in Troop #10714 for the homemade Christmas cards. Your thoughtfulness were greatly appreciated. It was kind of each and everyone of you to send a special gift to our Navy Command during a very important period in our lives. We are truly touched by your generosity, your spirit, and willingness to make us experience the joy of the holiday season. We are very grateful to have the support of the Girls Scout.

Thanks for supporting the United States Navy in Kuwait



From The Sandbox...

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SAILOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Sailor in the Spotlight: AO1 Cortez Hardman

Hometown: Born and raised in Bossier, La. I currently reside in Coushatta, La.

Unit: Currently assigned to Navy Expeditionary Logistic Support Group Forward, Kuwait.

Date Joined the Navy: June of 1992

Brief description of your Navy job: Currently serving as the Leading Petty Officer of the Wash Rack and Sterile Lot Division, Alpha Company.

Who has been your biggest influence since joining the Navy? My Shop supervisor from my first Active duty command has been the most influential person in my navy career. He stressed the importance of Sailor development, taking care of the Careers

of the Sailors whom you lead and building solid interpersonal relationships with your personnel.

What do you enjoy most about the Navy? I enjoy the camaraderie that I share with the people that I serve with most of all. The diversity that the navy provides has made me a more proficient person in all aspects of my life.

What do you think has been your most significant contribution to the Navy, NAVELSG? Taking the challenge of being a Proactive leader, throughout this deployment and my entire Navy Career. Providing my Sailors with the guidance and tools to successfully achieve the milestones that are important to their careers and the Navy.



Sailor in the Spotlight: EN3 Phougeune Borihanh

Engineman Third Class Borihanh exemplifies tenacity and customer service in a department whose success or failure directly impacts the ability of everyone at NAVELSG FWD to complete their mission. As part of the N6 Information Technology and Communications department, he is often called upon to solve the most difficult problems and does so with persistence and professionalism. In the rare instance where he doesn't immediately know the answer to a customer's question, he seeks out resources conventional and otherwise to find the answer. EN3 is a great asset to NAVELSG FWD and the United States Navy.

Hometown: Sacramento, California
Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC): Sacramento, California
Date joined the Navy: January 1997

Brief description of your Navy job: I am an Information Management Officer (IMO) in the N6 IT/Comms department. I maintain computer and network related equipment and assist customers with prob-

lems related to that equipment.

Brief description of your civilian job: I work at Rowy Networks as a technician specialist managing clients, servers and workstations. I also work at a card room part time dealing cards. I go to school full time working on getting my associates degree in computers and completing certifications that improve my skills related to my job such as Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA), Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH), and Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP).

Who is your biggest influence since joining the Navy? ETCS McBane...while being deployed to Kuwait, I have learned so much from him. Picking his brain and taking in the knowledge he has is priceless. He goes above and beyond to help out his subordinates.

What do you enjoy most about the Navy? I like the travel, and also the pride in putting on a US Navy uniform.

What is the most interesting place you have visited since joining the Navy? Being stationed aboard the USS Radford and going to Seychelles. It's not just the island itself, but being able to participate in a Navy tradition in becoming a Shellback.

What do you think has been your most significant contribution to the Navy, NAVELSG FWD, Unit, Department, etc.? Going to Kuwait and contributing to the work we do in N6 and making a real difference to our customers.

What are your hobbies? Golfing, basketball, taking apart and putting together computers, and most of all I love spending time with my family.

CONGRATULATIONS MR3 JORDAN

On December 22nd, 2012, MR3 Erica Jordan completed her Bachelor's of Arts degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. She majored in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. She plans to obtain and master's degree and become a Naval Officer.

Well Done Shipmate!



CONGRADULATIONS SIR,

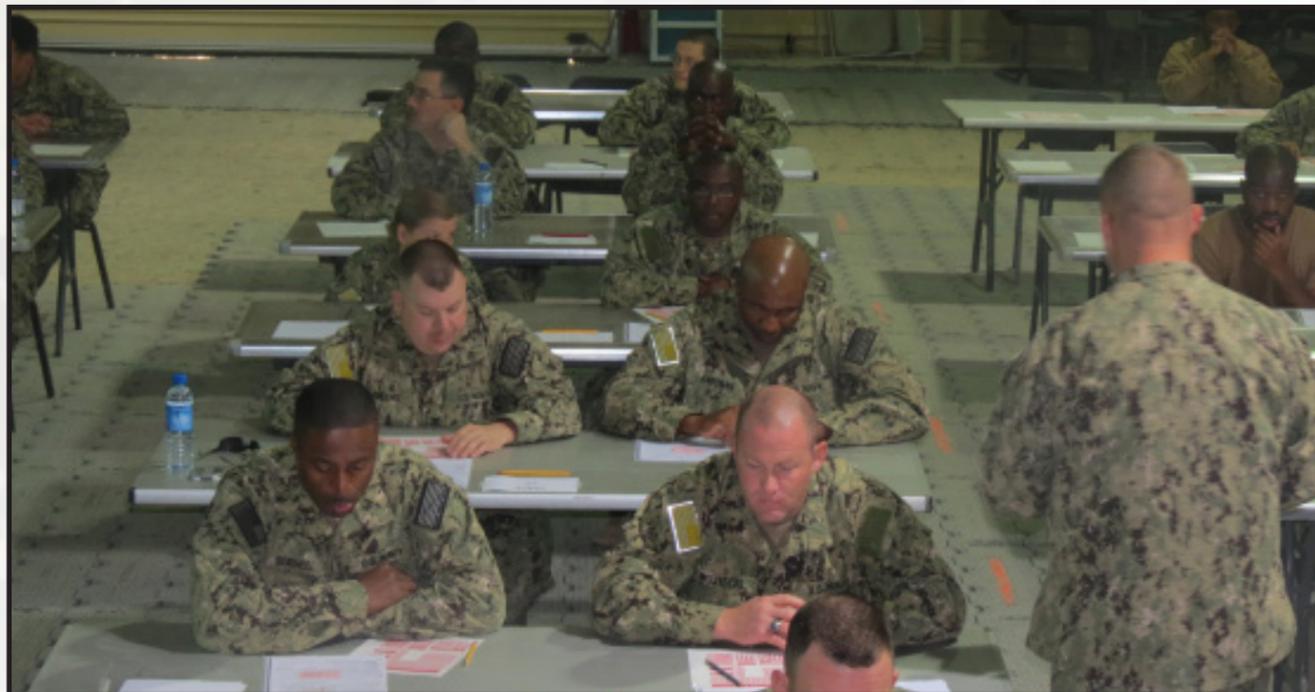


LT. HOLBROOK

From The Sandbox...

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BEST OF LUCK TO ALL ON THE ADVANCEMENT EXAM



OSCAR'S FIRST EXW RECIPIENTS



ETCS (EXW/SS) HAROLD MCBANE
QMC (EXW) BETH RENIER

From The Sandbox...

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February 21st, 2012

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NEWS MEDIA RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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By 1st Lt. Henry Chan
18th CSSB Public Affairs

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The 38th Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno visited the Bagram Airfield Retrosort Yard on the drizzly morning of Feb. 21. The general’s visit was a part of a larger tour around the Afghan battlefield to better visualize retrograde operations.

The yard is under operational control of the 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Michelle Letcher, and the 593rd Sustainment Brigade, Central Command Material Recovery Element, commanded by Col. Douglas McBride.

After the Soldiers and Sailors welcomed the chief of staff, 18th CSSB Executive Officer, Maj. Rosendo Pagan began the tour with an overview of one of the most mature redistribution and reconfiguration operation in Afghanistan.

The BAF RSY operates along with two other retrograde sort yards in Afghanistan that either ships excess materiel out of the Afghan Theater back into the Army supply system, or re-distributes excess materiel within Afghanistan for deployed military units to re-utilize them.

Through the in-brief, the general and his staff discussed with 18th CSSB members on different ways that they could further develop the retrograde process in anticipation for future operations.

With U.S. military forces transferring primary combat responsibilities to Afghan forces, CMRE Soldiers clear items from the battlefield to return back to the military supply system. Retrosort facilities determine on whether items are worth shipping back to military depots for redistribution.

BAF RSY Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Sgt. 1st Class Isani Labriel showed Odierno the main sorting area. Workers shuffled through the processing tent to unpack items into 64 cu. ft. cardboard “kicker boxes”, and sorted the contents into other kicker boxes labeled weapons parts, medical, wood, auto parts, etc.

Although a kicker box may take up to \$1,200 for shipping costs, prices of expensive individual items that return to military warehouses are well worth the trouble. Pagan showed Odierno a small pair of optical displays being returned to the military supply system that were worth more than \$23,000 each. One box could easily add up to \$200,000.

The BAF RSY also houses customs personnel to ensure items shipped are within Customs and Border Control regulations.

Customs clearance section service members, Spc. Martiza Guzman, the 247th Quartermaster Company, based out of Fort Carson, Colo., and Petty Officer 2nd Class Guadalupe Jimenez, from Hotel Company, U.S. Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group explained to Odierno on importance on customs clearance.

“If there are insect eggs left in containers for example, and an invasive species may hatch in when it returns to the U.S., and subsequently destroy entire ecosystems. This poses a significant issue, because some of these organisms can destroy entire crops, giving America less food, and higher gas prices,” said Jimenez, “we’ve got to do what we can as customs clearance agents to protect our country.”

Wash-rack supervisor, Spc. Emily Burgos, from the 247th QM introduced Odierno to the new shipping container wash system. The contraption that resembled an automatic car-wash separated dirt, oil and waste products from the drained wash solution and recycled water.

This method minimizes the environmental damage, while maintaining customs and border control standards at a 300 percent increase in efficiency.

As the visit concluded, Odierno personally thanked the service members. “A job well done,” he said while presenting them with coins, a traditional memento from officers to recognize soldiers for excellence.



130221-A-WA553-254

Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army, shakes hands with Maj. Rosendo Pagan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion executive officer during a visit to the Bagram Retrosort Yard on the morning of Feb. 21. Odierno visited many military retrograde facilities to inspect current logistical efforts in Afghanistan and plan for further operations. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130221-A-WA553-316

Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army, shakes hands with Navy Customs Sailor, Petty Officer 1st Class Janelle Switzer during a visit to the Bagram Retrosort Yard, Afghanistan, on the morning of Feb. 21. Soldiers and Sailors operate the retrograde facility as a joint Army-Navy operation. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130221-A-WA553-408

Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army discusses with his staff and 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion executive officer, Maj. Rosendo Pagan, future strategies on retrograde operations during a visit to the Bagram Airfield Retrosort Yard, Afghanistan, on the morning of Feb 21. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130221-A-WA553-461

Navy Customs Sailor, Petty Officer 2nd Class Guadalupe Jimenez explains the customs clearance procedures at the Bagram Retrosort Yard to Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army during a visit to the yard on the morning of Feb. 21. U.S. Customs and Border Clearance Agents diligently inspect every container that leaves Afghanistan to protect the continental U.S. from invasive species and plants. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130221-A-WA553-463

18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Executive Officer, Maj. Rosendo Pagan, shows Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army, a pair of optical displays worth more than \$23,000 each, that were recovered and returned the Army supply system, at the Bagram Airfield Retrosort Yard, Afghanistan. Odierno visited to the yard on the morning of Feb. 21. U.S. to help his office plan for increased logistical activity in Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130221-A-WA553-498

Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the Chief of Staff of the Army, thanks Bagram Retrosort Yard Customs Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Sgt. Kenneth Green, of the 247th Quartermaster Company, for dedicating himself, and working hard to keep his mission smooth at the Bagram Retrosort Yard, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130221-A-WA553-534

Virtual Warehouse supervisor, Spc. Ian Parnell of the 247th Quartermaster Company, introduces Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the Chief of Staff of the Army to the Bagram Retrosort Yard "Free Issue" program. The Virtual Warehouse helps distribute high-demand military supplies to local units. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130221-A-WA553-538

Maj. Rosendo Pagan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Executive Officer discusses the dramatic 300 percent increase in production in less than six months, while he escorts Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army, on a tour through the Bagram Retrosort Yard, Afganistan on the morning of Feb. 21. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)



130221-A-WA553-612

Container Wash-rack Supervisor, Spc. Emily Burgos shows the container washing facility at the Bagram Retrosort Yard to Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the 38th Chief of Staff of the Army during a visit on the morning of Feb. 21. The container washing system cleaned all dirt and mud from shipping containers for customs inspection with 75 percent less time, effectively increasing the production velocity of the Bagram Airfield Retrosort Yard, in Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Henry Chan, 18th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Public Affairs)

GREAT CAR & BIKE SHOW

Great show! It's nice to see classic American cars far from home. It's obvious the term 'car nut' is global. All of the cars and motorcycles were kept in good shape. It would have been cool to drive these classics. Again Great Show!

CS1(SCW) Todd Corey



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JOLLY ROGERS

Jolly Rogers has represented the NAVY with the highest level of class and skill. They have pulled away from all competition and are the team to beat, not only here at Camp Arifjan but also at Camp Ali Al Salem. Jolly Rogers has won both softball tournaments making them 2-time, uncontested champions and the best softball team in Kuwait. The line-up consists of:

3B – MA2 Novak, Matthew

LF – BM2 Dahlke, Kyle

SS – MM2 Benson, Shawn

2B – MAC Keatts, Jamie

LC – YN3 Taylor, Javari

P – AO1 Graham, Maurice

1B – LT Brown, Craig

RC – LT Frasier, Lindsey

RF – LSC Roberts, Ben

C – CM3 Baker, Josiah

EH – EO2 Barretocolan, Carlos

Job well done, Jolly Rogers!!!!!!



From The Sandbox...



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NAVELSG FWD BASKETBALL TEAM

An opportunity arose to form the NAVELSG basketball team. The team started off slowly, but through some tough practices, they learned to play together. They built a strong camaraderie being the only Navy team in the league that was dominated by Army teams.

BM1 Samuel W. Bishop III



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