



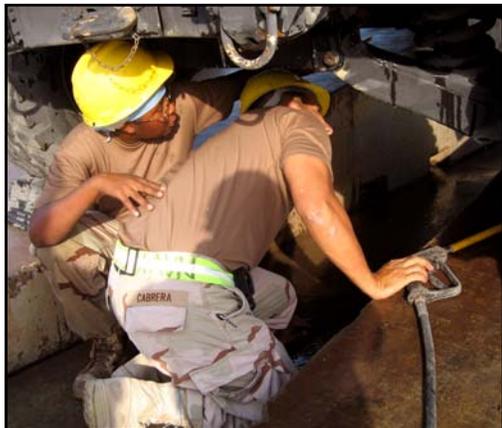
THE QUEBEC INQUIRY



U.S. NAVY CUSTOMS BATTALION QUEBEC

- HQ COMPANY - ALPHA COMPANY - BRAVO COMPANY - CHARLIE COMPANY -

Working at the wash rack: "We're not a car wash!"



All photos this page by MCI Doug Mappin

(Above left) CSSN Charlotte Simmons and SK2 Carlos Cabrera inspect the undercarriage of a HUMVEE. (Left) CSSN Simmons and SK2 Cabrera look in the nooks and crannies of a HUMVEE's passenger compartment, ensuring no prohibited items return to the United States. (Above) EN2 Melvin Greenlee inspects the engine compartment of a HUMVEE. The wash rack crews work 24/7 inspecting military vehicles and equipment of all types ensuring that all USDA guidelines are strictly adhered to.

By MCI Doug Mappin

Kuwait—If you ask Machinery Repairman 2nd Class Jon Schilb, the wash rack's day shift lead petty officer, he will tell you his crews do not work at a car wash.

"We do nothing but tactical vehicle inspections," Schilb said. "Our mission is to insure the vehicles are compliant."

For the casual observer the wash racks resemble a car wash, but the activity there is more focused—and its mission far more serious. Work crews from Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC, the U.S. Army and other civilian companies all have tasks at hand that are meant to guarantee nothing prohibited leaves this work site.

"We have found everything you could possibly imagine," said Schilb. "During our inspections we have found ammunition, grenades and mortar rounds. We see as many as 70 vehicles a day. It is an important task."

"We are focused on following proper inspection procedures," Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Robert Benbow said.

"Our two most important guidelines are maintaining a safe environment for our workers and ensuring we follow USDA guidelines."

Since Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC assumed the duties of the mission, over 41,000 vehicles have been inspected at the wash racks. The job is a tedious and time consuming, but an important task necessary before any equipment can be permitted to leave the Persian Gulf region.

"The hardest part of this job is getting into the tight spots," Seaman Charlotte Simmons, a Culinary Specialist, said. "Some vehicles are more difficult to inspect than others. We have inspected Bradley tanks, trailers, HUMVEEs, Strykers (armored transport vehicles), HEMMITTs (rescue vehicles), and all sorts of equipment."

"Not only do we inspect all different types of vehicles," Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Donald Randall said. "But we also inspect the vehicles and their individual pieces such as tank bearings and their treads."

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Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC



Proudly serving in Iraq and Kuwait!

Message from the Skipper



We are beginning early preparations for our own redeployment home and I want to take this opportunity to reflect on some of the outstanding accomplishments of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC. From when we took over in late March through August 9, 2006, the battalion has processed 102,612 passenger inspections (PAX), 256,000 bags, 7,234 containers, 17,302 pallets and 41,453 vehicles and aircraft. You collected over 70,000 amnesty items and seized another 52,000 items during your inspections. But this is only part of the story.

Since we arrived in Williamsburg we have completed over 62,000 hours of training. We certified or re-certified 360 sailors as U.S. Customs Border Clearance Agents (CBCA), 80 sailors certified as Army Combat Life Savers, 370 sailors qualified on 9mm and M-16 small arms, 22 members qualified as Senior CBCAs. Over 4,200 hours of General Military Training (GMT) were performed in 25 subjects including: Suicide Awareness and Prevention, Sexual Harassment, Safe Driving Practices, Heat Stress, and Privacy Act.

Sixty-three Battalion QUEBEC Sailors took advantage of \$36,000 in college tuition and received 189 credit hours of higher education. We saw 52 sailors advanced in the last cycle, 40 have received security clearances, 20 rate conversion packages were processed and one member received a commission as a Lieutenant junior grade in the Navy Nursing Corps. What an impact each of you will have as you take these skills and accomplishment back to your Reserve units.

One of the biggest challenges faced during this deployment was our manning shortage of nearly 40 sailors. This

had an initial impact on our ability to get the job done. It was most evident at the APOD where the physical layout of the Custom's compound strained the resources of Bravo Company. By re-designing the process flow and completing extensive facility upgrades, we achieved a 22% gain in efficiency despite the manning shortfall. All of these efforts were designed to overcome the manning shortfall and create a more pleasant, hassle-free environment for the redeployers we serve.

Bravo Company personnel contributed their skills and expertise to construct amnesty booths and a gable Sunshade, a compound fence, search tables for the X-ray machine, a Post Office booth, medical and MWR areas, patios, 4,700 square feet of walkways were installed, and a partitioned wall built at the main inspection tent. In all, the 6,800 labor hours on compound refit projects resulted in labor cost avoidance of over \$275,000. Material for these projects was acquired by utilizing Defense Reutilization Marketing Office (DRMO), self help stations, and acquiring excess materials from other units. Using ingenuity and industry, this highly motivated team accomplished these retrofit projects with a net savings of \$75,000 in materials.

Significant improvements were also made to our APOD in Iraq which focused on functional and aesthetic upgrades which enhanced the flow of PAX through the process, improved sterility of bags and PAX after customs inspection, and created a more pleasant environment for redeployers. Combining process improvements with an aggressive information management program, BN QUEBEC achieved a 22% increase in passenger processing efficiency and a net labor savings of approximately \$9 million dollars for the deployment.

Alpha Company has also done a great

job of staying operationally focused while improving their work environment. Work at the Central Receiving Shipping Point (CRSP) yard has evolved and seen major improvements.

What started as a mission working out of an NTV is now operating out of newly constructed building. This new building has been a great benefit for those Sailors who work in the CRSP area and will be enjoyed by many Customs battalions to come. Alpha Company was also successful in having significant improvements made to the Sunshade building where they support PAX missions. This building was internally reconfigured, a new x-ray machine, installed, the ceiling was sealed off, new wiring, generators and air conditioners were also installed. No longer will passengers of the rotator flight have to endure high temperatures and long wait times.

Charlie Company has successfully completed two ammunition downloads without a safety mishap. These types of evolutions take considerable planning and a high degree of situational awareness. There has also been progress in communicating equipment inspection requirements to redeploying units in advance of their arrival. Thanks to the persistence of Charlie Company, redeployers will now have the vehicles cleared of debris and broken down to their lowest configuration upon their arrival. This will not only provide a safer environment, it will expedite the flow of vehicles through the system. Dramatic improvements were also made in the form of more air conditioned spaces at the SPOD.

I want to thank each of you for hard work you've put forward to this point, well done. We are almost to the finish line. Let's stay focused, stay safe, and take some time to savor your success so far.

—CDR Mark Failor



Photo by MC2 Michael O'Day

(photo left) OS1 David Sudderth along with his fellow Sailors conduct personal gear inspections daily at Bravo Company's Checked Baggage Tent (CBT). The layout for the inspection process is one of the many improvements completed by Bravo Company's personnel.

“Your mother wears combat boots!”



Photos this page by PS2 Vuoch Taing

OS2 Marissa Youngbey inspects the engine compartment of a U.S. Army HUMVEE at the wash racks. OS2 Youngbey serves on Alpha Company’s night shift. She inspects the vehicle to insure that no insects, nests, plants and other biological hazards make it back to the United States. So far this deployment, OS2 Youngbey and her fellow shipmates have inspected over 4,000 vehicles at the wash racks.

By MC2 Michael O’Day

Kuwait—Traditionally it has been thought that serving in the United States military was a duty left to our fathers and sons. It is true that for over 230 years men have left their families to fight our country’s battles.

However, women have served with honor in every conflict dating back to the Revolutionary War and their numbers are increasing. It may be surprising learn that 23% of the members of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC are female, and 53 of the 379 Sailors are mothers that chose to serve in the United State Navy and as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“I’ve wanted to join and serve my country since I was in high school and the opportunity came up for me to enlist in the Navy Reserve after I was married,” said Yeoman 3rd Class Sheila Kelley. Kelley is the mother of a 12 year old daughter. “Everyone is going to take a lot away from this; personally, it’s made me a stronger person. It makes you think about what is important in life—material things or your family. My daughter is a ‘mama’s girl’ and I was worried she wouldn’t do well, but she’s been great. She misses me and wants me to come home, but when I call she doesn’t cry. She encourages me to go have fun, do my mission, and stay focused.”

Since Admiral Zumwalt signed the legendary Z-Gram in 1972, it opened the door for women in the Navy. They have moved into virtually every job the Navy has to offer. But women still make up less than 10% of a typical surface ship’s company.

“I think it great. I think it’s great that they turned around and finally let us be in a combat role. I wish I had the opportunity to be in a combat role instead of being in support of the combat role,” said Chief Storekeeper Patricia Tibaldo, a mother of three. This is her second deployment during her service of over twenty years.

“I can’t see why being a man, being a father or a mother is that much of a difference. A man loves his child as much as a woman does. I think it’s just as hard. Spend as much time - quality time - as you can with your kids because there might be a time when you have to leave them for a while. I think my first deployment affected my daughter a lot. Even now she still remembers me being gone, she was worried about me. I remember the day I walked her to the bus stop, I was in my uniform and she said, ‘I don’t want you to go; I love you.’”

“I stayed home with my son during his early years because I felt it was my responsibility to be there to teach him and nurture him. I helped him develop his values and morals,” Mineman 2nd Class Bonnie Cox said. “Now it’s time for his father to teach him to be a man. My being here is a benefit to my son as well; he sees me serving in something that I believe in and living up to my responsibilities to myself, my Navy, and my country.”

Working with QUEBEC, a forward deployed battalion, is often hot, dirty work with difficult living conditions. Whether the



CS3 Valeisa George inspects the interior compartments of a U.S. Army armored personnel carrier. George is looking through the nooks, crannies, storage bins, and compartments to ensure no classified materials, maps, and live or spent ammunition remains inside before the vehicle is certified safe to return to the U.S.

mission is to inspect vehicles on the wash rack, sterile lot or pier, the Sailors of QUEBEC are on their feet in the blazing sun for long periods of time. Some jobs require the Sailors to touch metal that is hot enough to fry bacon. QUEBEC’s mother Sailors stand side-by-side with its fathers, daughters and sons, rotating through all the watch stations: supporting each other and the other brave women and men fighting the global war on terrorism.”

“It’s hard work and it’s very hard to be away from my kids. They’re not sure why I left and every time I talk to them I have to explain that mommy loves them and I’m doing it for them, so when I get home we will be in a better place. I know they don’t understand that now but hopefully they will when they get older,” Yeoman 2nd Class Dee Brown said. With 11 years of service in the Navy, Brown is also the mother of a nine-year old daughter and six-year old son. “I served four years of active duty before getting out and starting my family. I came back after September 11th because I felt I had to do something. I watched the towers burning and the people running, and I had to be part of defending America.”

Sailor Spotlight: A Sailor, a businesswoman and a teacher too!



Photo by MC1 Doug Mappin

CS3 Carmen Jerez leads her students through a lesson involving reading a clock. Carmen and her students meet twice a week where she teaches them to learn to read and write Spanish. As many as 15 Sailors of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC have taken the initiative to learn the language.

By MC1 Doug Mappin

Kuwait—A normal day for Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Carmen Jerez is one that begins early and ends late. Currently, as a member of the passenger (PAX) team for Navy Custom Battalion QUEBEC’s Alpha Company, petty officer Jerez’s job—as well as that of her teammates—is to ensure that all personnel and equipment inspections are conducted in a thorough, efficient and friendly manner.

“Serving here has been a great experience. I love meeting the people,” Jerez said. “I feel that we are helping Operation Iraqi Freedom in many ways. I think I have a better feel for what it is like to be a Soldier now.”

“I like our PAX missions best,” Jerez continued. “I like to see the different types of military vehicles, the equipment, the artifacts, and I like meeting the people on our mission. I would never have had this chance otherwise.”

This is Jerez’s first time serving in the Middle East, though she is a 10-year Navy veteran.

“I enjoyed the training we had in Williamsburg,” Jerez said. “It taught us a lot. The Combat Lifesavers Class was very good. It taught us how to take care of our fellow Sailors in an emergency.”

In her off-time, she teaches lessons for those wishing to learn Spanish. Upon arrival in Kuwait, Jerez asked around to gauge interest in those wishing to learn Spanish. She

found enough people interested, so she started a class for those who wanted to take the class during their off hours.

“I have six regular students—and have had as many as 15—all wanting to learn to speak Spanish,” Jerez said. “Initially, the biggest challenge was finding a place to have classes. Originally we had our class out in the sandlot between our berthing and the dining facility. I worried about that spot. I feared it would be too hot. Later on, we moved to our present spot.”

Jerez and her students meet every Tuesday and Thursday evening for an hour-long class in one of the Admin tents in Zone VI. Getting students together who all have different schedules has proven to be another challenge.

“I love teaching,” she said. “My students have been working so hard, but they also have fun. They sometimes make jokes about some of the words—the language is so different than English.”

Each week the class builds upon what the previous week’s lessons had established.

“Only one of my students had had Spanish classes before,” Jerez said. “For the rest, this is their first time. I enjoy passing along things I know and that I can help with. I find that rewarding.”

While in theater, Jerez—like many of her fellow Sailors—has been studying hard as well.

“One of my goals is to advance to E-5,” she

Photo by LCDR Paul Hibbard

CS3 Carmen Jerez conducts an inspection on a U.S. Army HUMVEE during a passenger (PAX) mission. Jerez is a member of Alpha Company’s PAX team. PAX teams conduct a wide variety of inspections on equipment, helicopters and personal belongings of troops exiting the Persian Gulf region.



said. “Our advancement exams are next month. Eventually, I would like to get a college education, and also retire from the Navy.”

Like each of QUEBEC’s personnel, CS3 Jerez brings a great deal of life experiences to this job. Jerez was born in Caracas, Venezuela, and for the past four years has been a Navy Reservist. In her civilian life she operates a small jewelry business in a flea market back in Chicago, Ill. She is the mother of two—daughter Maryfrances, 14, and son Clark, 5. While Jerez resides in Chicago, Ill., she calls Jamestown, N.Y., her home.

“My parents Maria and Clark Casler, my sisters Dian and Beverli and brother Jose still live there,” Jerez said.

Jerez was happy to receive the call to active duty and to perform this customs mission.

“I think the things we do are but one grain of sand in the big picture,” she said. “I think the job we do here is important. I think the things we do and the people we meet gives us a different outlook. It gives us a great opportunity to meet people of other cultures. Being a part of all of this means a lot to me. I am proud to be serving my country.”

Equal Opportunity: Launch Pad

By Lt. Rory Russell

Kuwait—The collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1980s brought about many changes to the hostilities our nation faces. Communism and the threat of a large-scale nuclear war with our European adversaries have long since disappeared from the headlines. The media now report on terrorism, low intensity conflicts in Middle Eastern countries and improvised explosive devices.

As the face of the enemy has changed, our armed forces have adapted accordingly. Ballistic missile submarines are being converted to house Tomahawk missiles and launch special operations missions. A new Navy Expeditionary Combat Command has been commissioned, which has stood up Navy Coastal Warfare Group 4 to disrupt smuggling infrastructure on the rivers, bays and swamps of terrorism infested countries.

With new techniques and strategies also comes a new Sailor. The Navy has worked hard to produce and mold a leaner, more respectful Sailor. A culture of fitness is being embraced by the top admiral in Washington D.C., to the most junior Sailor working on the deck plates at sea.

The Navy is also striving to ensure women and minorities continue to feel accepted within their ranks, and they're winning this battle. One of the tools used to achieve success is the Equal Opportunity (EO) program.

The Navy is committed to the fair and equitable treatment of all hands, by all hands, at all times. EO works to ensure Sailors are judged by their capabilities and talents, not their race, gender, or national origin.

From July 14 to 20, Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC did their part to ensure EO remains an integral part of life while serving in the desert. Storekeeper Chief Petty Officer Patricia Tibaudó, QUEBEC's Training Officer, organized and hosted an EO class.

Three Army instructors were flown down from Iraq to facilitate the week-long training. Six personnel from QUEBEC were among the 13 Soldiers and Sailors who graduated.

The graduation ceremony was a warm and gracious event. QUEBEC Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Mark Failor, was in attendance and said a few words. The national anthem was sung by another QUEBEC Sailor, and Postal Clerk 2nd Class Andre Booker recited a poem he wrote to mark the occasion.

Booker's hobbies include song writing, and singing and performing hip hop. Said Booker of his poem, "Spoken word is a poetic art form very similar to rhymes or poems. I was asked by the class instructors to perhaps sing once it was discovered that I was a musical

artist. I decided to write a poem, which authored itself once I began to write."

While sitting in a lounge, he borrowed a piece of paper and a pen, and began to write. He searched within himself and wrote of everything he could take with him after learning about EO for the previous seven days.

"The words 'launch pad' came to mind because it gives anyone the chance to take-off or have a smooth landing.," Booker said. We (command EO representatives) have to be that platform or landing site for their issues.

EO is a fundamental element of the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment. Thanks to three great Army instructors, six QUEBEC Sailors now have the tools and knowledge to continue the Navy's battle against discrimination.

Booker's poem follows.



Photo by MC2 Michael O'Day

Launch Pad author, Postal Clerk 2nd Class Andre Booker.

Launch Pad

by PC2 Andre Booker

It's graduation day, and like me I'm sure you're certainly glad.

My bad.

I'll just speak for myself because others could be feeling sad.

But regardless of the situation or my speculations, I'm leaving here with something I never had.

Something I could never fit in a bag or wrap or tag.

I thought about it as I wrote this, and the first words that pop to my mind are...*Launch Pad*.

Wow. How could troops who barely knew the EO scoop troubleshoot, form a group, and strap up their boots for one simple task?

Unmask and when in doubt just ask. And in your feedback, don't hold back, just blast.

Unmask and explore your mind for thoughts of values and experiences of the past. It's all that was asked.

Unmask and we participate and debate, felt what we hate, 10 minute presentations but we made it.

I'll speak for myself again, but don't you feel elated that we graduated...*Launch Pad*.

Wow, I feel honored. Wait. No, delighted. No, privileged to be...

...part of a team that upholds standards, to be...

...a member of a network of professional experts on subjects ranging from sexual harassment to work place equality...

...from racism to sexism, to be...

...a learner of, a listener of, an opportunist standing the watch for that opportunity to be...

...that sought after residential expert with the credentials and potential to be...

...that Command influential Equal Opportunity walking dictionary;

that Work Center visionary;

that mentor by physical sight;

that person who just might help my Command get right;

that *Launch Pad*.

I would like to move along at this time;

demonstrate the portion our instructors mentioned "about how to take charge and ownership;"

and remembering to make that smooth transition;

so the crowd would remain to listen.

Here's my summary of the course, my feedback, and my voice:

The information put up for sale has been bought.

I'd rather you know it than not.

Myself and my peers (speaking for all this time) have been taught.

Thank you for my *Launch Pad*!

Camp Improvements: They Don't Come Easy, but are Greatly Appreciated



All photo this page by OS2 John Dawkins

(Above) AT2 Justin Perry and DC2 Joshua Derryberry walk the heavy AM2 plating into place at the Freedom Area walkway in the Bravo Company compound as BM1 Frank Town directs them.



(Above) DC2 Joshua Derryberry and HT2 Christopher Smith position the new AM2 plating into place to create new wider, safer walkways at the Bravo Company compound.



(Above and right) Before and after: loading checked bags used to be more of an ordeal until new conveyors were brought in to assist the daily loading process at the Checked Baggage Tent.

By AZ3 Nichole Wolanski

Kuwait—Passersby might wonder about all the commotion coming from Freedom Tent Eight at Bravo Company's compound. Wonder no more.

Working parties from Bravo Company have been hard at work to make the compound more convenient and efficient for their shipmates and the Airmen, Marines, Sailors and Soldiers passing through the gates on a daily basis.

Most of the changes are immediately noticeable throughout the compound - bigger paved walkways and new amnesty stalls outside of the Checked Baggage Tent (CBT).

What is not so evident is what happened behind the closed doors of Freedom Tent Eight.

Here, the working party consisting of Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Franklin Town, Damage Controlman 2nd Class Joshua Derryberry, Operations Specialist 2nd Class Brandon Hubbard, Hull Technician 2nd Class Christopher Smith, and Quartermaster 3rd Class Larry Fowler. The crew has nearly finished with the new and improved air conditioned Mail Room, a temporary storage space for contraband, and



an office for Bravo Company's medical personnel.

Personnel from Bravo Company have nothing but praise for the work the working parties have completed.

"We now have a dedicated team to do the work that is required around the compound," Storekeeper 2nd Class Paul Tatoy said.

"It sometimes can be a morale buster for the customs inspectors to do work beyond their original mission, but now they can focus on that mission," BM1 Franklin Town said.

Speaking to the team members themselves, none were quick to boast about the jobs they have completed.

"They should all be Seabees because they have the 'can do' attitude, getting much done with the little resources that they have," BM1 Town said.

"I am glad to be a part of a hard working team, striving to make the customs process more efficient," said OS2 Brandon Hubbard, the newest member of the team.

The Mail Room is a major improvement. No longer will the mail be kept in a sealed container box outside of the Admin trailer, but rather in an air-conditioned room. Security, as a result, will be less of a concern for those

(Below) Work crews built new amnesty stalls which were a vast improvement over the old booths. The new stalls' location improve the movement flow into the Checked Baggage Tent, making the process much more efficient.



responsible for distribution. The air conditioned storage tent will prevent food from melting and photos from being ruined. The Mail Room Petty Officers are looking forward to moving into their new area.

"The new space is more convenient and allows for more room to separate the mail," SK2 Lillian Howard said.

Next to the Mail Room will be the temporary space for amnesty which will be used to count and secure the items collected after each chalk. Next to that will be the Medical Office.

As for upcoming projects, much remains to be done.

"The main focus will be putting the finishing touches on the Medical and Amnesty rooms," BM2 Town said. "Plans also include moving the X-ray machine and placing a new walkway behind the tents."

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Billie Owens is excited about the new location of their medical space.

"Everything is going to be in built so that we can ensure privacy and confidentiality for my patients," Owens said.

Tents also be set up to house new work areas for the MCT, X-ray machines, and the MWR computer area.

If you get the chance, walk through Tent Eight and see the improvements for yourself.

From all indications it sounds like Bravo Company's working party has clearly made an impact as they continue to strive to improve the working and living conditions in their compound.

Data In—Troops and Equipment Out



All photos this page by MC1 Doug Mappin

Lt. Anthony Raneses of HQ Company stands at the foot of the COIC, the information hub for troop and equipment movements for the military in the Persian Gulf region. In this room, Lt. Raneses gathers information for analysis to aid Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC in preparing its daily (passenger) PAX missions and manning watch bills for all wash rack activities.

By MC1 Doug Mappin

Kuwait—When a company of 200 Marines or Soldiers show up for a PAX rotator mission at the Checked Baggage Tent (CBT) or the Sunshade, they do not normally just drop by unannounced with an “oh by the way, here we are.” And if 150 armored vehicles or tanks are lined up at the wash racks for inspections, they did not just appear out of nowhere.

For Lt. Anthony Raneses, each day is a new chance to pour over the data at the Command Operational Information Center (COIC). Personnel and equipment movements and how they are dealt with is a highly coordinated effort that makes properly manning for inspections missions possible. Lt. Raneses job is to help prevent unexpected surprises

Assignments for troop inspections are scheduled by the Tactical Operations Center (TOC). The information they receive derives from analysis gathered on a daily basis in the COIC.

“What we do here is take the re-deployment information and report this to the COIC Battle Captain,” Lt. Raneses said. “My job is collate the information, make an analysis of the data and report those findings to Cmdr. Failor.”

The COIC easily rivals the NASA Space Center’s Mission Control room. The huge multi-level room has scores of workstations. Per-

Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC’s missions run the gamut of personnel, cargo and equipment inspections. MM3 James Covert (top center) gives a pre-inspection briefing to troops preparing to leave the region. (Top right) DC3 Jerry Houghton and HT3 William Benghe monitor an x-ray machine as personal items are thoroughly inspected before moving on to the next stage of inspections at Bravo Company’s Checked Baggage Tent (CBT). (Center) Cmdr. Mark Failor, Capt. Gordon Livingston and Cmdr. James Rooney discuss the new inspection process at the CBT. (Center right) OS2 Brandon Hubbard and OS1 David Sudderth “wand” troops preparing to go home. (Bottom left) AD2 Charles Perkins and (right) CS3 Robert Oring inspect the personal belongings of troops at Bravo Company.

sonnel of all the military services sit at computer stations, and at any time can gaze up at a wall covered with over 20 huge plasma screen monitors. The screens constantly display all sorts of tactical information that proves useful to the staff who work in this cavernous hall.

With Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC’s teams handling an average of 20,000-30,000 PAX inspections a month, an accurate assessment of incoming troop and equipment movements is not only helpful, but essential in the day-to-day planning for our personnel watch bills.

“I look at the data and I interpret what it all

means,” Lt. Raneses said. “I report this to the Skipper so that he can staff accordingly.”

Not only is this information essential to the operation of QUEBEC’s companies, but the information is also useful to other military organizations as well.

“I collate the gathered data and report the findings at the weekly Deployment Update Assessment (DUA) briefing,” Raneses said. “We also brief the Liaison Officers of the other branches of service. I brief them on customs pre-clearance procedures.”

By the time departing troops arrive for a

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ROMEO's PDSS Team visits for mission assessment



Photo by MC2 Martha Ruiz

Navy Customs Battalion ROMEO's Pre-deployment Site Survey (PDSS) Team was in country for a week-long inspection of our work sites in preparation for their assumption of our duties later this year. (Left to right) Front row: R Sailors, Cmdr. Stewart Clarke and Cmdr. Jeffrey Johnson; Q Sailor, Cmdr. Mark Faylor, and R Sailor, Lt. Cmdr. Louis Carl. Center row: R Sailor, Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Afflerbach; and Q Sailor, Lt. Cmdr. Michael LeFlore. Back row: R Sailor, Lt. Ryan Baum; Q Sailors Lt.j.g. Timothy Sanchez, Lt. Cmdr. Neil Glasstein and Lt. Cmdr. Evan Cooper.

This Month in U.S. Navy History

- August 1, 1801 - U.S. schooner *Enterprise* captures Tripolitan ship *Tripoli*.
- August 2, 1943 - *PT-109*, under command of Lt.j.g. John F. Kennedy, is cut in half by Japanese destroyer *Amagiri*.
- August 3, 1958 - *USS Nautilus* (SSN-571) is first ship to reach the geographic North Pole submerged.
- August 5, 1882 - Authorizing of first steel warships, thus the U.S. Navy is ushered into the modern seafaring world.
- August 8, 1945 - Search planes locate and commence rescue operations of the surviving members of *USS Indianapolis* (CA-35) which had been sunk by Japanese submarine *I-58* on July 30. Out of 1,199 crew members, 316 Sailors survived the ordeal.
- August 9, 1945 - Atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki, Japan. U.S. Navy weaponeer arms the bomb for use.
- August 18, 1966 - First ship-to-shore satellite radio signal sent from *USS Annapolis* (AGMR-1) from South China Sea to Pacific Fleet HQ at Pearl Harbor.
- August 21, 1965 - Launch of NASA spacecraft Gemini 5, piloted by Lt. Cmdr. Charles Conrad, Jr., USN.
- August 22, 1912 - birth of U.S. Navy Dental Corps.
- August 26, 1865 - Civil War ends with Navy strength over 58,000 Sailor and 600 ships.

QUEBEC's First Class Petty Officers Association wants to know...



"Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou, Romeo?"

Photo by MC2 Michael O'Day

“Safety, chamber, magazine, safety”—Armory Crews Provide Professional Service to QUEBEC



All photos this page by MA1 Mark Kozee

The Armory crews offer weapons familiarization and weapons training for all personnel of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC, Port Group DELTA and members of NAVELSG FWD. The armory provides professional service 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

By MA1 Mark Kozee

Kuwait—Some are housed in trailers, some are in container boxes. Still others are merely tents. Some might have only a handful of weapons; others, literally dozens. But the armories of NAVELSG Forward Headquarters all have at least one thing in common: all are open 24/7.

Want to clean your weapon at zero-dark-30? Not a problem for the dedicated armorers of Forward HQ.

“We have noticed that Sailors tend to clean their weapons after-hours, when it’s cooler outside,” Scott DeWater, a Gunner’s Mate 2nd Class, said. “When I worked at the armory up north, it was the same way.”

Armorers clean the weapons of Sailors on TAD or otherwise not able to clean them. They also clean the M16s, since they are pool weapons and not assigned to specific individuals.

In addition to making Sailors’ weapons available anytime day or night, the armories have other duties. The armorers are involved in special projects as well. Two of those projects include the assembly of a new armory for Bravo Co. personnel and the restoration of two Soviet-made ZPU2 14.5mm anti-aircraft guns. These guns were found in storage. Before they were disassembled for cleaning, the weapons were certified as safe by the base’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal squad.

“I bet the Soviets who originally made this gun never thought it would be cleaned and put on display by Americans,” Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class (SS) Joe Strehle said. “It makes me

appreciate working in the armory.”

Cleaning the weapon, which languished in a container box for an unknown length of time, is a labor-intensive task. Armorers tried different cleaners on the weapon, including CLP (cleaner, lubricant, preservative) and other industrial cleaners, but they obtained the best results with Coca Cola.

“Coca Cola has soda properties and, oddly enough, is an effective cleaner,” GM2 William Kraus, leading petty officer of the LSA armory said.

But one of the biggest tasks of the armories is to ensure the safe handling of weapons. If ever an organization had a mantra, surely the armories’ of Forward HQ have one.

“I lie in bed and hear ‘safety-chamber-magazine-safety’ constantly in my head,” jokes GM2 Donna DeWeese.

This might sound childish, but such verbatim recitations encourage Sailors to think safety, safety, safety.

“No one even touches their weapon without thinking of that phrase,” DeWeese said.

Many of the armorers have been mobilized since the beginning of January. Gunner’s Mate Chief Robert Hocutt, GM1 Edward Mahoney, GM2 William Kraus, Operations Specialist 2nd Class Scott Sneden and Fire Controlman 3rd Class Jennifer Jackson have been mobilized for approximately three additional weeks. During that initial



The armory crews have a special project in store. They are restoring a Soviet-made ZPU2 14.5mm anti-aircraft gun, shown (above) disassembled, that was found in storage.

period, armorers then qualified other members of the advance party inventoried the weapons, painted numbers on them and designed the scenarios.

But the most recognizable function of the armories is the running of weapons ranges. Every month, the armories ensure QUEBEC Sailors get the opportunity for familiarization and practice with the M9 and M16. The net result is more proficiency—and more safety—with weapons. Because of the large size of QUEBEC, range sessions are conducted monthly even though weapons qualifications are good for a year.

The armory staff members are a dedicated team of chiefs and petty officers who are pleased to serve the Sailors of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC.

Call Forward: All Good Things Must End



All photos this page by MC2 Michael O'Day

(Top left) Crane tanks line up at the debarkation area, waiting to be loaded aboard ships for their return back home.

(Top right) PS2 Juan Cruz-Roman inspects equipment as it enters the staging lot through the Sierra-2 entry control point. A Sierra-2 watch stander is responsible for checking each piece of equipment that passes through the gates to ensure all equipment entering the area has met all requirements and is in compliance with USDA guidelines.

(Left) U.S. Army HUMVEEs are driven aboard USNS Pomeroy (T-AKR 316) after being checked by Charlie Company's watch standers at the Sierra-2 entry control point. Pier watch standers perform the last check of all equipment before it moves out of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC's area of responsibility.

By MC2 Michael O'Day

Kuwait—As the saying goes, the pieces of equipment that have passed through the 214 wash rack stations in Kuwait will end their time with U.S. Navy Customs, QUEBEC like free range cattle being herded into chutes for shipping. Nearly a thousand HUMVEEs, trucks, tanks, trailers, and other pieces of equipment will leave Alpha and Charlie Companies' sterile lots, and join those already waiting at a seaport to be loaded onto a ship. That point is known as the 'Call Forward.'

The Call Forward is a busy place and the activities there will stretch Charlie Company manning to its thinnest level of all. This is a time when speed and attention to detail are critical to the mission success. With the sterile lots, rinse racks, staging lots, and the piers fully staffed the transportation and cargo handling

groups start the high speed ballet of moving the equipment onto the ship in the proper order to balance the load. The Customs Border Clearance Agents of QUEBEC must ensure that all the pieces are within full compliance. Every law and regulation regarding redeployment must be met, without needlessly hindering the operation.

"We all understand the importance of getting this equipment on the ship quickly, the longer the ship sits here, the higher the operating cost. The last thing we want to do is turn pieces away at the dock," said Hull Technician First Class Harold Neales, Operations Command Duty Officer for QUEBEC's Charlie Company.

As some pieces of equipment are shuffled from lot to lot and from base to base, other pieces pass straight from the sterile lots to the cargo hold of the waiting ship. It is not uncommon for a single piece of rolling stock to receive four different inspections from four

different agents in a span of 30 minutes.

"This is our last chance to make sure that nothing on the prohibited list gets back to the United States," said HT1 Neales. "We check every piece as it moves through each watch station, so problems are caught before they get to the ship. This is where we find out how well we all worked together. Did QUEBEC perform as a team?"

When a piece of equipment approaches Charlie Company's Sierra-2 watch station, it becomes known if countless military and civilian personnel performed their customs inspections duties accurately. The pier watch stander is the last Sailor in a long line of personnel working very hard under difficult conditions to protect America's ecosystem from foreign pesticide and agriculture invasion.

We're getting short of time: Get ready to redeploy the easier way!



All photo this page by MCI Doug Mappin

LTJG Amit Sood of EMF Kuwait and LT Rory Russell of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC Headquarters Company wait in line to have their packages inspected before shipping them home. The newly remodeled Post Office reopened for business on Monday, July 24, and it promises to make shipping packages home a more pleasant experience.

LT Rory Russell of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC Headquarters Company prepares a package for delivery home. The new Post Office at the Zone I Base Exchange is well equipped to assist all personnel in shipping their belongings back home with minimum effort.

Upon arrival at the new Post Office in the Zone I Base Exchange, there is a two-step process that prepares all packages to be shipped back home. The first step involves having your belongings inspected by U.S. Army personnel, whose job is to insure no prohibited items return to the United States.

After passing the inspection, the proper customs paperwork is completed and the package is sealed. Each person shipping items moves to the mailing side of the office to pay (and if one so chooses, insuring the items being shipped) for the return trip home. The newly opened Post Office is roomier, and well equipped to help get your items home in a quick and efficient manner.



By YN2 Ginny Clark

Kuwait—So, you have less than 60 days to go before you are to return home. What to do? What to do?

The post office could well become a second home in the desert for QUEBEC's Sailors, as they prepare to ship home all the stuff bought over here (notice, I didn't say crap but we all know that it is what it is).

If that is the case, keep track of all your receipts. Just like when we deployed overseas, we will be authorized a Do-It-Yourself (DiTY) move. For some of us this could well be a major undertaking. It is amazing how much stuff one can collect in seven short months. Postal regulations state boxes can be no larger than 108 inches in length and girth, with the longest side being no longer than 79 inches, and weigh no more than 70 pounds.

Gorilla footlockers are small enough but watch how much you pack into them. If you have "the packing gene" you could easily over-pack them and have to remove items at the post office. Make sure to print an extra mailing label and tape it to the inside of every box you send. This

will ensure your property makes it to the final destination should it break open along the way.

After the contents of your Gorilla box have been inspected, the customs form completed, and the contents secured for shipping, it is recommended you padlock the footlocker. Place the key inside an envelope and seal it with the customs form on the outside of the container.

An inventory list taped along the inside lid next to that extra shipping label is also a good idea. Having an inventory list with you at the post office will also make it easier to fill out the customs form. A maximum of five boxes can be shipped per person, per visit to the post office. If you have more than that, or want to go as a group appointments can be scheduled by calling ahead.

Insuring your "treasures" is also a good idea. Let's face it, our belongings have a long way to go before they reach home and you have to ask yourself if it is worth the additional expense of having one headache removed ahead of time. It is a rough trip home for us, and it stands to

reason that any items mailed home also will face some rough handling too.

When we get back to Norfolk, Virginia, how long do you want to stick around completing the demobilization process? If you are like most folks, your plan is to get out of there and back to your family and loved ones as quickly as possible.

What this means is that you have work to do before you leave the desert. Get your medical and dental appointments completed before you leave. Plan ahead. Be proactive and it will pay off in the long run.

What it all boils down to is it time to start planning *now*. Do you want to stay behind in Norfolk while every one else goes home, or do you want to take care of as many medical appointments as you can while in theater?

Do you want to handle two sea bags (or more) and a carry-on when we go through our customs inspection? And do you *really* want your friends going through your clothing and possessions? Or, would you rather file a DiTY move claim and mail as much home as possible. It is all up to you. Beat the rush! Mail your excess belongings home now!

Data In—Troops and Equipment Out (continued)



Alpha Company photos by MCI Doug Mappin; Charlie Company photos by ABHC Michael Salazar

(continued from page 7)

PAX inspection, they should have already been briefed twice. However, the inspection process can not begin without having received an amnesty briefing from one of QUEBEC's PAX teams.

"We can gauge their actual performance and assess how they assimilated the pre-deployment instructions," Lt. Raneses said. "We don't tell them how to run their battalions, but we do tell them they must comply with our customs briefings."

With efficiency of PAX and vehicle inspections and processing always a concern, safety comes first. The performance and safety of our wash rack

and PAX inspections teams are indicated by the data gathered.

"Basically, the information I gather is of economics in nature," Lt. Raneses said. "It comes down to weighing factors that help Cmdr. Failor and his officers make accurate manning decisions. This helps us to inform re-deployers of process changes which lead to positive improvements, and it allows management to efficiently allocate resources at various locations in Kuwait and Iraq."

By Lt. Raneses performing his job in the COIC daily and QUEBEC leadership adhering to the established guidelines, it's possible to ensure the safe return of our troops back to their families and loved ones.

(Top left) Returning personnel wait in line to verify they have been manifested for their flight home, before going through a PAX inspection at the Sunshade. (Top center) Alpha Company's AE3 Shawn Dickens goes through the personal effects of a Soldier returning back to the United States. (Top right) Charlie Company's BM2 Mary Jamerson prepares to place a 2855 inspection seal on a HUMVEE before it can proceed to the sterile lot for storage and a return trip to the United States. (Center left) Troops empty their bags so that members of Navy Customs Battalion QUEBEC's Alpha Company PAX team (left, SK2 Scott Johnson, AT3 Stephens Storey and MA2 Marcus Blair) ensure no prohibited items return to the U.S. with them. (Center) Military vehicles stand ready for Alpha Company's wash rack crews to inspect them, before they can proceed to the Sterile Lot for storage and a return trip to the U.S. (Lower left) Alpha Company's BM1 Richard Ballwanz prepares to go through the belongings of a Soldier. During his inspection, Ballwanz will go through all of the Soldier's belongings in order for the Soldier to leave the AOR. (Lower right) Charlie Company's CE2 Robert Rudis is preparing to open the engine compartment of a HUMVEE.

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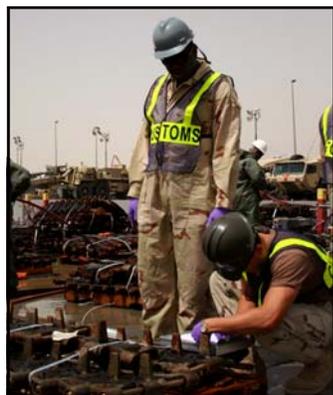
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www.dvidshub.net

Working at the wash rack: "We're not a car wash!" (continued)



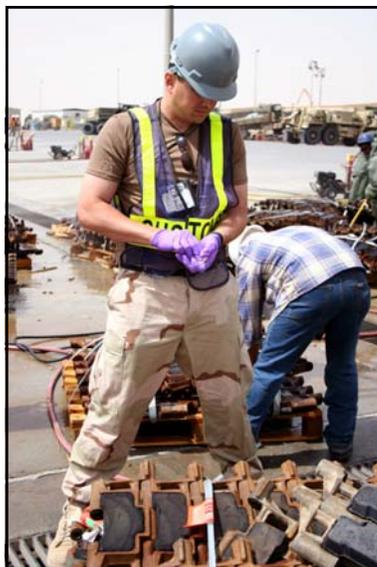
(continued from page 1)

"Our biggest concern is making sure no biological 'critters' make it back to the farmlands of our country," Schilb said. "We generally have eight to twelve inspectors working each shift."

"One of our biggest challenges is working with battle-damaged vehicles," BM2 Benbow said. "Even these vehicles must meet USDA Customs standards."

Schilb agreed. "We have seen vehicles in all states of conditions."

"Even though we work with vehicles in all conditions, it is important to ensure that we do our job properly," Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Robert Waldron concluded. "It is our job to protect the environment back home!"



Wash rack photos this page by MC3 Ernesto Bonilla

(Above left) SK2 Eric Donaldson and SK2 Oscar Huerta inspect the tread assembly of an M1A1 Bradley tank, readying it to be shipped home. (Center) SK2 Huerta places a 2855 inspection seal on the tread assembly indicating the tread has been inspected, and is ready for shipment to the U.S. (Below right) MC2 Donald Randall and BM2 Jerome Mommaerts prepare to place a 2855 seal on a set of tank treads. (Below left) SK2 Oscar Huerta visually inspects a set of tank treads one more time before the equipment is sent off to the sterile yard for safe storage.

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(in alphabetical order)



MC3 Ernesto Bonilla
Alpha Company



OS2 John Dawkins
Bravo Company



MA1 Mark Kozee
Bravo Armory



MC1 Doug Mappin
HQ Company



MC2 Michael O'Day
HQ Company



MC2 Martha Ruiz
HQ Company



LT Rory Russell
HQ Company



PS2 Vuoch Taing
Alpha Company



AZ3 Nicole Wolonski
Bravo Company

Question of the Month: What is your favorite part of your job here?

HEADQUARTERS

ALPHA COMPANY

BRAVO COMPANY TEAMS 1 & 2

CHARLIE COMPANY



MC2 Martha Ruiz

I like the Navy camaraderie of the people. I find it satisfying when I can help the people of our command. I have started enjoying PT-ing.



MM3 George Walden

I like working on the Escort Teams because it gives the junior enlisted petty officers responsibility in performing their duties that they could not do otherwise. Being on the escort team, you learn a lot about other individuals and their duties.



PCCS Kathleen Hotmer

The people. I have enjoyed meeting so many people from all walks of life and conversing with them and learning / opening myself up to a different perspective on a lot of issues.



MMC(SW) Phillip Evans

First, it is a small world running into people you haven't seen in years and when you do, you run into them in Iraq. That is kind of cool! For me, it is the learning experience, becoming a better leader, and possibly, if even in a small way, making the world a little safer.



SH3 Todd Hanes

I like having the opportunity to support my country.

August Birthdays

TM2 Edmond Strong	Aug 1	Bravo
PC2 Andre Booker	Aug 2	Bravo
OS2 Jermame Matlock	Aug 4	Alpha
EM2 Darrell Burgess	Aug 4	Charlie
SK3 Stanley Jackson	Aug 4	Charlie
OS2 Christopher Harvey	Aug 4	Bravo
AME2 Ken Rymanowicz	Aug 5	Bravo
MC1 Doug Mappin	Aug 5	HQ
OS1 Jose Vargas	Aug 8	Bravo
OS2 Roberto Martinez	Aug 9	Bravo
SK1 Cedrick Grinnell	Aug 10	Bravo
AT2 Mark Matlick	Aug 10	Charlie
CS3 Carolyn Baker	Aug 12	Charlie
MM2 Robert Yates	Aug 13	Charlie
DC3 Jerry Houghton	Aug 14	Bravo
OS1 Kim Craig	Aug 14	Bravo
GSM3 John Cobb	Aug 15	Bravo
OS2 James Hanley	Aug 16	Bravo
GSM2 Earl Gumbs	Aug 16	Bravo
SK2 Hector Rivas	Aug 16	Charlie
OS2 Edwin Carnes	Aug 17	Bravo
MM3 Rodney Jessamy	Aug 19	Charlie
MR3 Andrew Richardson	Aug 20	Bravo
ABE3 Basheer Everett	Aug 20	Charlie
SK3 Eric Donaldson	Aug 21	Alpha
OS2 George Tsatsaronis	Aug 21	Alpha
OS1 Sean Fitzpatrick	Aug 21	Charlie
OS2 Joseph Tinger	Aug 22	Alpha
IC2 John Peterson	Aug 22	Bravo
YN3 Sheila Kelley	Aug 23	Alpha
DC2 Joshua Derryberry	Aug 23	Bravo
GM2 Daniel Simonson	Aug 23	Bravo
IT2 Jared Hazzard	Aug 24	Alpha
BM2 Phillip Crower	Aug 25	Charlie
SK3 Julia Norfleet	Aug 26	Bravo
MM3(SS) Devon Patillo	Aug 27	Armory
OS1 Jason Kiritschenko	Aug 27	Bravo
PS2 Jaime Kleeman	Aug 29	HQ (rear)
AO3 Joana Jonas	Aug 30	Bravo
SK2 David Zito	Aug 30	Charlie
MA2 Pedro Perez	Aug 30	Bravo
PS2 Jesus Gelly	Aug 30	Bravo
ABE2 Tanya Golden	Aug 31	Bravo

Join us for...

Our Last Issue

September '06: Our BLOW OUT issue!

- Wrapping it all up! What we've done and where we've been.
 - O.P.Q.—Sailors who have been here beginning with OSCAR and through PAPA and QUEBEC (that's nearly two years, folks!).
 - Learning to swim in the sand.
 - "What I did for my summer vacation."
 - Our Sailors from Puerto Rico.
- AND... (drum roll please)*
- ROMEO arrives!

This and more...

—See you next month when we say "farewell Iraq... bye, bye Kuwait!"

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