

# THE LIFELINER

## UPDATE

JANUARY 2014  
ISSUE 7



Task Force Lifeliner's Lt. Col. Octave V. MacDonald, a native of Baker, La., and support operations officer in charge, 1st Lt. Charlee R. Warford, a native of La Mesa, Calif., and strength manager officer and Lt. Col. Eric J. Sloughfy, a native of Clarksville, Tenn., and deputy commander, serve meals during Christmas lunch, Dec. 25, 2013 at the Koele Dining Facility at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. As tradition has it, senior military leaders served their troops a feast worthy of the Holiday. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)

## *Lifeliner's Celebrate the Holidays*

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

**B**AGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Sitting around a Christmas tree drinking hot cocoa and exchanging gifts with your loved ones is something the Lifeliners will not have the opportunity to do this year. Nevertheless, the Holiday spirit is high as Soldiers take the time to enjoy a Christmas meal alongside their comrades and spend some time with their families through

Skype or Facetime.

A Holiday meal was provided by the Koele Dining Facility (DFAC) that is managed by Task Force Lifeliner. The cooks started prepping the meats three to four days in advance. With only ten ovens and two steam kettles to cook it all, the personnel managed to create a meal fit for a king. The variety of food selections brought big smiles to the Soldiers.

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“This team that we have here is resilient. We have a great work ethic and are one big happy family,” said Sgt. 1st Class Vicente D. Benitescruz, contracting officer representative (COR) with Task Force Lifeliner. “The main thing that keeps me going during these Holidays is simply knowing that we are providing a great service here and feeding so many smiling faces. When it comes down to it, I am very proud of the work that they do to feed over 10,000 Coalition Forces per day.”

The Soldiers really appreciate all the hard work and effort the Koele DFAC does during these special Holidays.

“The decorations and food that they provide make you feel like you are really home for a bit,” explained Staff Sgt. Jason W. Kolb, brigade legal noncommissioned officer in charge with Task Force Lifeliner. “The hard work they put in it is amazing. We are quite lucky to have such an amazing staff.”

Food was not the only thing that brought enjoyment to the Soldiers this day. Being able to communicate with Family and friends back home was key in creating a festive day for Soldiers.

“Technology like Facetime and Skype are wonderful ways to feel like you are with your family even

though you are thousands of miles away,” smiled Kolb. “I have been able to watch my daughter roll over and sit up via Facetime, my favorite though is to watch her smile.”

Kolb added that he is looking forward to contacting his family members to wish them a Merry Christmas and hopefully see them opening up their gifts. Soldiers rely on Family, friends and a hardy meal to keep the morale up during the Holidays,

even if that meal comes from a military dining facility and Family and friend connections come through the screen on their computer.

Aside from being able to provide a great festive meal for the troops, Benitescruz added what keeps him going during the Holidays is “just knowing that once I get home I will arrive to my three gorgeous sons and soon to be born daughter in January.” ●

**Task Force Lifeliner’s Col. Charles R. Hamilton, a native of Houston, Texas and commander of the 101st Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Master Sgt. Katherine E. Lawson-Best, a native of New Orleans, La., and human resources administration noncommissioned officer in charge, serve meals during Christmas lunch at the Koele Dining Facility . (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**



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LATEST COVERAGE

**LIFE  
LINER  
POD  
CAST**



Like

## LIFELINER 6 SENDS



Col. Charles R. Hamilton  
Commander,  
Task Force Lifeliner

Family and friends of Task Force Lifeliner, this is the newsletter you all have been patiently waiting for. Your Soldiers continue to perform at the highest standards and continue to make history everyday with the support they provided to the entire country of Afghanistan. The snow is falling and the winter holidays have come and gone, but our missions continue to increase as the sole Sustainment Brigade in Afghanistan. Our warfighters depend on what each of our Lifeliners do every day and we will not let them down, we will provide the support they deserve. I want to sincerely thank each and every one of you for your honorable sacrifices throughout the last eight months as you have laid the foundation for our successes. Your Soldiers are true heroes of our nation. As the Lifeliners eagerly prepare to transition our mission over to 10th Sustainment Brigade from Fort Drum, N.Y., we continue to support them as redeployment and reintegration can prove challenging. Let's make this a safe and successful transition as we look forward to coming home to Fort Campbell and our loved ones!

## LIFELINER 7 SENDS

The time has finally come; your Lifeliners are packing up and preparing to transition our vital mission to our replacements. We all are looking forward to the long journey home to Fort Campbell. It's cold here and snow is piling up, yet the mission is flawlessly being executed. Most importantly, I am proud to report the Soldiers continue to uphold and exceed the standards that are set in place for them. Our mission remains critical until the last day and our Soldiers take their job of being the absolute Lifeline of Afghanistan very seriously. Family and friends, we are thrilled to be coming home soon, but keep in mind this transition will take patience and compassion from all; Soldiers, Families and friends. I want to reiterate what I always say, my priorities have not and will not change; the Lifeliners will be disciplined, highly trained, professional and physically fit to continue serving you and their country.



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

# Mom Sends Holiday Cheer

Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario, Task Force Lifeline

**B**agram Air Field, Afghanistan – The Holiday season is slowly making its way to the Task Force Lifeline Soldiers door steps in Afghanistan, as they receive gifts from a special mom, who views her daughter’s comrades as part of her Family.

Debra Connell, proud mother of Sgt. Jennifer E. Wynn, a native of Crete, Neb., and accounting specialist with Task Lifeline, personally arranged and packaged gift bags with care and love alongside other Family members to bring out the Lifeline’s Holiday spirit and to show her support and appreciation.

“When my daughter was getting ready for this, her first deployment, I remember being sad and anxious about it,” said Connell. “She is the one that reminded me that she wasn’t going alone. She [Wynn] said she’s going with her brothers and sisters in arms.”

Connell continued to explain that at that very moment the Soldiers became part of her [Connell] extended Family.

“Not a day goes by that I don’t keep them all in my thoughts and prayers,” emphasized Connell. “Sending Christmas gifts is just one small way for my Family to let them all know we care and appreciate each and every one of them (Soldiers).”

Although the troops do not know Wynn’s mother they do appreciate the thoughtful gifts they unexpectedly received, brightening up their day.

“For my family to not only take my morale into account, but also my comrade’s morale as well, is just amazing to me,” Wynn exclaimed. “It means so much to know that they have our best interests at heart. I am so lucky to have such an amazing family!” ●



(Above) Sgt. Jennifer E. Wynn (left), a native of Crete, Neb., gives a Christmas gift bag to Spc. Dmetri Q. Sullivan (right), a native of Albany, Ga., Dec. 10, 2013 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. These gift bags were made by Wynn’s family to be distributed to the Task Force Lifeline Soldiers during the Holiday season. (Below) Task Force Lifeline Soldiers Pfc. Daniel A. Mlachnik (left), a native of Muskego, Wis., Sgt. Jennifer E. Wynn (center), a native of Crete, Neb., and Pfc. Bruno A. Freitas (right), a native of Belo Horizonte, Brazil pose together after receiving Christmas gift bags sent from Wynn’s family. (Photos by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)



# COMBAT CASH

Story by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario, Task Force Lifeliner

**B**AGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan—Support, management and accountability are all three key elements to support financial operations throughout Afghanistan.

The maintenance of financial support for Soldiers in a deployed environment is essential. If a Soldier's personal finances are not in order it can create devastating effects to mission readiness.

"We have to ensure Soldier's pay is accurate; and if it isn't, it is our job to fix it correctly and accurately," said 1st Lt. Wesley S. Tudor, detachment commander of the 101st Financial Management Support Detachment. "If we don't, Soldiers will be thinking about their finances and how they are going to take care of their Families, rather than their mission."

One of the services provided for Soldiers in Afghanistan is disbursing support, which gives Soldiers access to their pay while in a deployed environment. Finance operations also provide military pay services, also known as MILPAY; this is a service that allows Soldiers to resolve pay issues.

Soldiers also have access to military financial programs like the Savings Deposit Program through their finance personnel.

There is one other service military finance personnel manage, a program called Eagle Cash Card.

"Eagle Cash Card, that's pretty much how we do all these things when it comes to disbursing and the savings deposit program," stated Tudor, a native of Morehead, Ky. "You can't do anything without the Eagle Cash Card. That is our main source of completing our task."

With the Eagle Cash Card Soldiers do not have to worry about carrying cash that can be lost or a credit card that has associated personal information.

"You can just carry around this little card that has a pin number tied to it," Tudor said. He added that the card is a valuable asset for finance operations, because a Soldier can use the card at the Post Exchange or even to get a haircut without fear of losing cash or compromising personal information.

"All services a Soldier receives in the U.S. can also be received in Afghanistan by the finance management support unit and it's detachments," said Lt. Col. Derek

G. Bean, commander of 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Few forward operating bases (FOB) have full-time financial support capabilities, so there was a need for Financial Management Support Teams (FMST) to be implemented. These teams consist of two and three financial management personnel. The main function of these teams is to travel throughout Afghanistan to remote FOBs to ensure every Soldier in theater has the opportunity to receive finance assistance.

"It's very important that we make those missions. Soldiers at remote areas need to access their money as much as the Soldiers from the larger FOBs," Tudor explained.

The personnel from the FMST are a unique team with huge responsibilities. "The type of a Soldier that is providing financial services in Afghanistan, in combat, is a highly trained, very smart Soldier who's accounting for hundreds of thousands of dollars a day, and in some cases, millions of dollars, emphasized Bean, a native of Charleston, S.C.

One of those key elements is accountability Bean explained. Every single dollar that comes into Afghanistan and goes out of Afghanistan has to be accounted for. Every transaction has a trail, a receipt. "It's a big responsibility because the loss of one dollar invokes an investigation," Bean continued.

One of the highly trained Soldiers Bean spoke about, recalled an experience she had when she carried a large amount of money as a forward operating base closed and the finance detachment consolidated their team to a larger base.

"We closed down our finance office in Salerno and there were three of us who had to carry all that excess money," stated Spc. Nicoll C. Flores, a native of Woburn, Mass., and a cashier with the 101st Financial Management Support Detachment. "We had about 1.3 million dollars and it weighed a ton... it was so heavy. I got a little bit nervous having all that money because you never know what's going to happen... you just have to keep your eyes open and make sure everything around you looks okay."

Even though taking care of Soldiers is a priority for the finance mission, there are other assets the financial



**Spc. Nicoll C. Flores, a native of Woburn, Mass., and a cashier with the 101st Financial Management Support Detachment fills out the exchange transaction record to withdraw money as part of a transaction for a Soldier, Nov. 4, 2013, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. With this form a Soldier can withdraw money to exchange Afghan currency to U.S. dollars or vice versa. The 101st Financial Management Support Detachment is a Massachusetts National Guard Unit. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**

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management support detachments support.

Ensuring payments are made to civilian contractors are part of their mission. As explained by Bean, simple things such as portable latrines require contracts and those contractors are paid through the military finance company.

“We have our hands in everything throughout the country, that’s the way I look at it,” Tudor smiled.

The finance detachments have their challenges as they are incorporated into just about every aspect of operations in Afghanistan. It is a natural process for there to be a drawdown in financial support alongside the drawdown of Soldiers and the closure of operating bases.

“When we first arrived there were two finance companies and seven total finance detachments,” Bean explained.

“One finance company and five detachments fell under the 101st Sustainment Brigade in Eastern and Northern Afghanistan. One finance company and two detachments fell under the 15th Sustainment Brigade in Southern and Western Afghanistan.”

The 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, will transition the finance support into a smaller more mobile theater asset. As we continue with the drawdown and base closure operations they begin to transition into a single Sustainment Brigade. Bean explained the process as all logistical and support assets consolidate so will the finance management support. Eventually there will be a reduction in the finance com-

pany, which will leave one finance company in theater to provide mission command and operational support to seven finance detachments that will cover the entire finance operation in Afghanistan.

“We started this process last month and we’re gradually taking over the two-finance management detachments in the South,” Bean said. “We’re currently in the process of accounting for all the funds and will assume mission command and operational support.”

The financial operations personnel, although small in number, pride themselves on the impact their mission has in Afghanistan. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are managed and processed to support the troops and sustain the forces. These dollars can be distributed in a variety of ways such as, Eagle Cash Card, cash, and vouchers.

“The only other currency our financial management deals with is the Afghan currency. We use Afghan in an attempt to get the U.S. dollar out of Afghanistan’s economy,” stated Bean. “We’re trying to ensure that as the Coalition transitions out of Afghanistan; the Afghan currency is the one being used throughout its commerce. This is why we encourage the use of the Eagle Cash Card, so there are minimal U.S. dollars being used in Afghanistan.”

The finance teams throughout theater work to effectively manage millions of dollars, to ensure a steady cash flow, provide financial support aimed to assist Soldiers in a deployed environment, assist in the development of Afghan use in commerce and to smoothly transition into a smaller more mobile finance asset. ●

# 2014

*HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR*







# Teacher, Convoy Commander

1st Lt. Monicia Porter, a native of Thomasville, Ga., with the 1230th Transportation Company in support of the 524th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Lifeline, 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan, ground guides one of her platoon's vehicles out of their motor pool in preparation to conduct a sustainment and retrograde support mission to a remote location in Northern Afghanistan on Nov. 4, 2013. Porter is a platoon leader and convoy commander for the Georgia Army National Guard and is a high school teacher at Central Gwinnett High School in Lawrenceville, Ga. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Sinclair)



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

**C**AMP MARMAL, Afghanistan – Army National Guardsmen bring unique skill sets from their civilian lives to the frontline of operations in Afghanistan; for 1st Lt. Monicia Porter her ability to lead students in the classroom gives her an advantage as she leads her troops throughout Northern Afghanistan.

Porter is a high school teacher from Thomasville, Ga., who serves in the Georgia National Guard as a platoon leader and convoy commander for the 1230th Transportation Company in support of the 524th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Lifeline, 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan.

Her company is the tip of the spear when it comes to the sustainment of troops at remote operating bases via convoys in Northern Afghanistan. With efficiency as one of Task Force Lifeline's top priorities, the 1230th returns from almost every sustainment mission with a load of equipment to be retrograded. Although, being a convoy commander for an Army truck company may not be exactly the same as teaching back home in Georgia at Central Gwinnett High School, Porter does relate some similarities in her two professions.

"To teach in high school everyday is kind of like combat," she said with a giggle. "There's a big difference, but there's some commonalities... the discipline that you need in the classroom is the same type of discipline you need on a convoy."

What she has learned in the Army has become useful as she leads her classroom and positively shapes her students.

"The discipline and being organized helps. I deal with a high risk demographic, so I have to be organized, I have to be disciplined, I have to be fair and the Army values really play a huge part in how I teach in my classroom."

Porter talked about the elements that come together in both the classroom and within her Army team, who are known proudly as the Pit-bulls.

"You bring different types of personalities, experience and background to a convoy just like you do to a classroom, there's just a lot that transfers over," she said. "As a teacher you deal with so many dif-

ferent personalities. You have to communicate. I am not the only Soldier here who has those skills, but being a teacher helps. I can apply those skills over to the other side.”

As the Pitbulls prep their vehicles in the darkness of the night to push commodities to a remote area, she talked about what it feels like to ensure her troops were ready for the mission.

“Personally, it is like getting your family ready to go on a big trip that’s dangerous at the same time. We have to go outside the wire on some dangerous roads, but it’s all to keep the mission going and to keep RC (Regional Command) North running and my team does it well... I trust my life to these guys.”

Porter explained what she feels a successful mission is for her team. She stated how her team lines up their trucks and rolls down the road with no incidents.

They drop off their sustainment load to the customer, those troops at austere locations, then roll back

without any incidents. “That’s a successful mission,” she smiled.

As these Pitbulls travel the roads throughout Northern Afghanistan they ensure they stay alert, but they are also reminded of one of the perks of being a Soldier.

Spc. Michael Donaldson, a gunner for Porter’s platoon and a native of Thomasville, Ga., talked about his job as a gunner and why he does what he does.

“There are dangers out there... it’s my duty to stay alert and keep the convoy safe. I have embraced the role of being a gunner... It’s pretty cool, you can see everything this place has to offer. It can be a beautiful sight to see a foreign land.”

The Pitbulls are stationed in a valley with high snow capped mountains surrounding them. The terrain of Afghanistan isn’t what most of the Soldiers are accustomed to in their home state of Georgia. “The mountains are huge,” Porter added.

Even though the team of Pitbulls remain busy and have embraced the

mountainous terrain, Family keeps them going and is a part of who they are and why they travel the roads in a nation across the world.

“I have the best family ever. When I say troops, it’s troops, but they’re my family,” Porter said with emotion.

“They are a great team and they are the best team and I couldn’t ask for more... we argue, we fuss, we fight and we still love each other.”

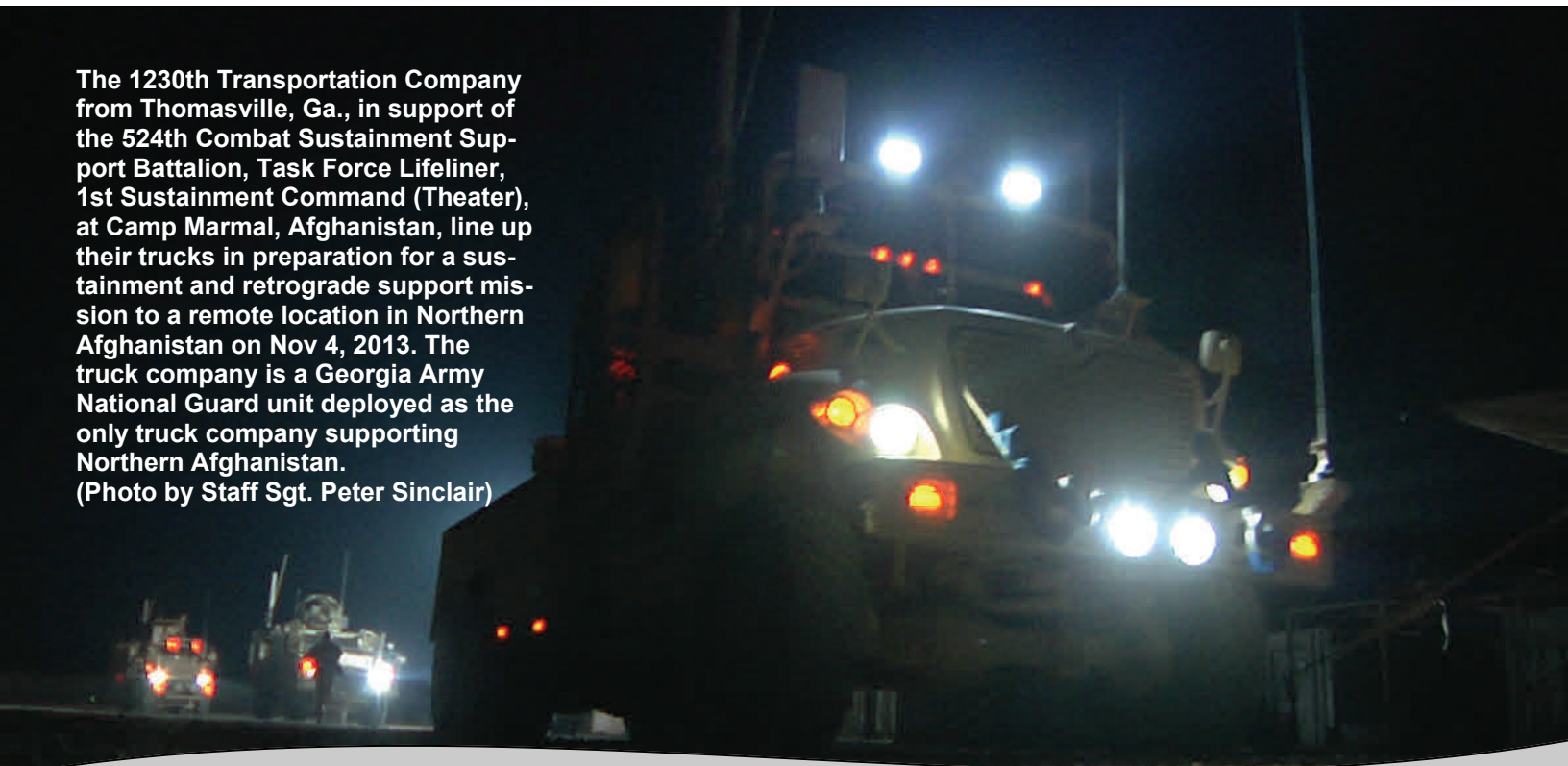
Patriotism drives both Porter and her team. Porter said she has always supported the military in one way or the other and that she has always had extreme support from her husband, two boys, parents and the children she teaches in Georgia.

“I have always been a patriot. Being a Soldier... I love it.”

Porter’s gunner Donaldson reiterated her sentiment with his personal feelings toward why he is in Afghanistan.

“I do it to protect my family, to protect my friends and to serve the nation I love dearly and I hold close to my heart.” ●

**The 1230th Transportation Company from Thomasville, Ga., in support of the 524th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Lifeline, 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan, line up their trucks in preparation for a sustainment and retrograde support mission to a remote location in Northern Afghanistan on Nov 4, 2013. The truck company is a Georgia Army National Guard unit deployed as the only truck company supporting Northern Afghanistan. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Sinclair)**



# Sustaining the Forces through Sling Load Operations



**Spc. Hanook M. Chi (right), a native of Seoul, South Korea, grabs and pulls a cargo hook slung down from a contracting aircraft towards Spc. Vonza Abney (left), a native of Hinesville, Ga., as they prepare to hook up sustainment supplies during sling load operations, Jan. 6, 2014 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Task Force Lifeliner performs sling load operations throughout Eastern Afghanistan. Through sling load operations those in outlying operating bases receive equipment and supplies needed in a fast and timely manner. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**

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

**B**AGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — No matter what obstacles arise two riggers with Task Force Lifeliner make sure they successfully complete their daily mission with skill...its called sling load operations.

Spc. Hanook M. Chi, a native of Seoul, South Korea and Spc. Vonza Abney, a native of Hinesville, Ga., ensure every piece of equipment is properly rigged and that they take extra time to scrupulously double

check their work, keeping in mind why they do what they do.

“I have to focus every single day; while I’m underneath the helicopter I feel very heavy and strong winds. My job is very important to sustain other Soldiers in remote FOBs (Forward Operating Bases) in Afghanistan,” explained Chi.

The hard work and dedication demonstrated by these Soldiers is imperative as it adds a unique capability to sustainment operations for Coalition Forces throughout Eastern Afghanistan.

“The ability for Task Force Life-

liner to conduct sling load operations in Afghanistan is a critical item in the tool bag; it allows for the unit to rapidly support other units at outlying FOBs, whether it be equipment such as generators, or ATV’s (all terrain vehicles), to force pro or construction materials...we can get it out there quickly,” emphasized 2nd Lt. Karl F. Knowlton, a native of Winder, Ga., and air mobility deputy with Task Force Lifeliner.

As a leader, Knowlton has high expectations for how his Soldiers perform their daily tasks. Safety and

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attention to detail are two major elements that must not be overlooked as the sling load operators constantly operate underneath aircraft with extremely heavy loads.

“When conducting sling load operations, the biggest priority of the Soldiers is to make sure the loads are rigged properly before the helicopter even gets here. That helps mitigate a lot of the safety concerns, making sure that everything is se-

cured down on the loads. This way their main focus is hooking the load once the aircraft is inbound and they don't have to worry about debris flying around or hitting them in the gale force winds that come with the sling load operations.”

Abney, a native of Hinesville, Ga., explained that the cold winter weather in Afghanistan only adds to the dangers they face.

“It's very different from summer because now it's cold outside and

it's starting to snow.” “With winter comes ice and ice comes slips, so you wanna try and do everything you can when you hook and come from the helicopter because there's a possibility that you may slip...”

The riggers stay vigilant and take every precaution necessary to safely continue sling operations, which is their part of Task Force Lifeline's mission to rapidly sustain Coalition Forces in remote and sometimes hard to reach places. ●

**Spc. Hanook M. Chi, a native of Seoul (right), South Korea and Spc. Vonza Abney (left), a native of Hinesville, Ga., both parachute riggers with Task Force Lifeline, hook up sustainment supplies to a cargo hook slung down from a contracting aircraft as it approaches for pick up during sling load operations, Jan. 6, 2014 at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. Task Force Lifeline covers sling load operations throughout Eastern Afghanistan. Through sling load operations Coalition Forces in outlying Forward Operating Bases receive equipment and supplies needed in a fast and timely manner. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**



# Officers -VS- Enlisted

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

**B**AGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Officers and enlisted Soldiers with Task Force Lifeliner dribble into the New Year.

They competed against each other in a friendly game of basketball to prove once and for all ‘who the better basketball player is?’ This game gave the Lifeliners an opportunity to demonstrate their sportsmanship and to further build on unit camaraderie outside of their operational mission.

“We’ve been here for eight months plus a few days. The officers and enlisted conduct their missions each and every day,” said Maj. Eric K. King, the Task Force Lifeliner operation’s officer.

“So what we wanted to do was bring the officers and enlisted together to show that just as well as we can go out and accomplish our mission we can get out on the basketball court, have some unit cohesion, some fun, some playing of some basketball and just show that we are one team, one fight.”

As if the Soldiers were in a gymnasium back home, the crowd cheered loudly when their team scored or groaned in disbelief when they missed a shot or experienced foul play.

The players on each side never



**Sgt. Christopher A. Edwards, a native of Virginia Beach, Va., and help desk administrator with Task Force Lifeliner, dribbles a basketball during a game between officers and enlisted Soldiers, Jan. 5, 2014 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. During the game the officers wore blue jerseys and the enlisted wore red jerseys. (Photos by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**



**Maj. Eric K. King, a native of Marianna, Ark., and operations officer in charge with Task Force Lifeliner, dribbles a basketball during a game between officers and enlisted Soldiers, Jan. 5, 2014 at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**

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held back there intensity throughout the game, but in the second half it started to become clear who truly is ‘the backbone of the Army’.

Both the officer team and the enlisted team demonstrated their skills on the court, but at the end of the day there could only be one winner. With shouts of excitement the en-

listed Soldier celebrated their victorious win over the officers with a final score of 58-45.

One Soldier playfully added with a sense of accomplishment why it meant so much for them to capture the win in this particular match.

“It’s very nice coming out here and beating our bosses. It means a lot, we get that bragging rights over

the officers for a whole year,” said Pfc. Ryan M. Sindle, a native of Elkhart, Ind., and convoy security team driver for Task Force Lifeliner.

The officers keep their honor and pride as they shook the enlisted Soldiers hands directly after the final seconds of the game slipped away. The officers all upheld that good sportsmanship, but made sure the winners knew this rivalry was just warming up with comments like ‘good game’ and ‘we’ll beat you next time’.

King, a native of Marianna, Ark., honorably stated “The enlisted played well. They played just like a noncommissioned officer is supposed to play. They truly displayed that they are the ‘Back Bone of the Army.’”

He then reinforced how this game directly aligns with all the hard work the Soldiers do on a daily basis that ensures the officers are successful in their mission with a simple statement, “so they got out, beat our behinds real good to let us know that, hey we still got this.” ●

**Pfc. Ryan M. Sindle, a native of Elkhart, Ind., and convoy security team driver for Task Force Lifeliner, jumps up to shoot the basketball towards the hoop during a game between officers and enlisted Soldiers, Jan. 5, 2014, at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. During the game the officers wore blue jerseys and the enlisted wore red jerseys. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**



# ALWAYS READY: PREPPING FOR THE ROADS



**Staff Sgt. Jose A. Antepara, a native of Mableton, Ga., and truck commander for 2nd Platoon (Lancers), 51st Transportation Company, 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in support of Task Force Lifeline, guides a mine-resistant ambush protected vehicle as part of preparation for upcoming missions, Dec. 22, 2013 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Prior to Soldiers going on a convoy escort team mission, they conduct five days of preparation to ensure their vehicles, weapons and the Soldiers themselves are mission ready. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**

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

**B**AGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Normally, when you hear about a convoy escort team (CET) you hear about how dangerous their missions are; but what does it take to prepare for these long hours on the road?

Soldiers with 2nd platoon, 51st Transportation Company take the necessary steps to ensure their team is always ready to roll. The 2nd platoon, known as “Lancers”, live by a simple phrase ‘success of our mission through preparation’, which keeps their equipment at 100 percent.

Typically, the Soldiers start the preparation of their

vehicles and equipment five days before they have a mission. During these days they conduct PMCS (preventative maintenance checks and services) at the operator’s level. They have their maintenance crew come and do more extensive checks.

Finally, after the maintenance checks are complete the Lancers take their vehicles to what they call their Pit-stop. This is where they check the service of the vehicles, dispatches, personal weapons and gear to make sure they are fully equipped before they go out the gate.

This tight knit team understands what it takes to prepare their vehicles, weapons and themselves before going out the wire.

“It takes a lot of backward planning and it takes the

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training a lot of mission prep, said Staff Sgt. Paul G. Perry, assistant convoy commander with the 51st Transportation Company, 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in support of Task Force Lifeline.

“A lot of times if you don’t know the information in reference to the mission, then you really can’t plan accordingly. Once we get a mission we ask for full details of everything that is entailed in that mission. That way it will give us enough to collect and train for the mission at hand.”

The senior convoy leaders take personal interest and time to make sure the Soldiers are thoroughly briefed for every single mission, so every Soldier is on the same page.

“We go over our routes in reference to where exactly we’re going,” stated Perry, a native of Bronx, N.Y. “We also look over the enemies TTP’s (Tactics, Techniques and Procedures) in that area and we prepare for situations we might encounter that can delay our mission.”

As transportation units have progressed in equipment and technology throughout the past decade, Soldiers

have also progressed in their techniques and preparations prior to missions, explained Perry.

“Now because they give us the time to prep and also do all these checks, it ensures that when we go out on the road we have a second or third set of eyes to notice any faults and that we can fix it before we actually go outside on the roads,” emphasized Perry.

One Soldier explained why it is so important to him to personally ensure he is doing everything that needs to be done without any short cuts.

Spc. Lorenzo D. Mann, a native of Dayton, Ohio, and gunner with 2nd Platoon, 51st Trans. Company, explained how everything changes once the troops are out of the security of the military installations. “It could be one little thing that could be out of line that can cause your life or a battle buddies life because you didn’t do your job.” Everyone from the most senior to the most junior member performs checks accordingly.

“Preparation is the key to our success...it makes us mission ready and it gives the Soldiers a sense of security and confidence in their equipment when they drive out the gate,” expressed Perry. ●

**Staff Sgt. Jose A. Antepara, a native of Mableton, Ga., and truck commander for 2nd Platoon (Lancers), 51st Transportation Company, 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in support of Task Force Lifeline, inspects his Soldiers gear as part of preparation for upcoming missions, Dec. 22, 2013 at Bagram Air Field, Parwan province, Afghanistan. Prior to Soldiers going on a convoy escort team mission, they conduct five days of preparation to ensure their vehicles, weapons and the Soldiers themselves are mission ready. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**





# ANA use modern battlefield logistics to supply their force

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

**B**AGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The Afghan National Army (ANA) acquired small arms ammunition from Coalition partners in the later part of August in Parwan province, Afghanistan. The transfer of ammunition was in response to a shortage in the Southern regions of the country.

This is the first time the ANA has independently used the logistical process to acquire and distribute ammunition throughout their military formations. This action comes at a critical phase; as the country's defense rests in the Afghan security forces ability to manage their force structure and logistically provide for those forces.

The Bagram Airfield ammunition supply point accountable officer, U.S. Army Warrant Officer Alexander Arabian, with the 63rd Ordnance Company, 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade (Task Force Lifeliner) in support of 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), transferred nearly 250,000 small arm rounds of needed ammunition to Afghan Army Maj. Raheem Shama, the commander of



**Afghan Maj. Raheem Shama, commander of the Afghan National Army Ammunition Depot (22 Bunkers), inventories small arms ammunition at Bagram Airfield, Parwan province, Afghanistan on Aug. 26, 2013. The transfer of ammunition from Coalition partners to the ANA is in response to a shortage of small arms ammunition in the Southern regions of Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**

the Afghan National Army Ammunition Depot (22 Bunkers).

The partnership between the Coalition and ANA that allowed for this process and transfer to happen is another step to “strengthen our relationship with the Afghan government and the Afghan military,” said Arabian, a native of Warwick, R.I.

According to Canadian Army Maj. Matt Boire, a Ministry of Defense ammunition advisor and a member of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia, Canadian Light Infantry, this type of forward progress for the ANA is a success. “We are actually seeing for the first time the Afghans come out to the FOB (forward operating base), picking it up, coordinating, doing the paperwork and then they are going to take it back and inventory it themselves. Afghan security forces are actually reaching out, connecting and taking ammo so they can continue their fight in the South.”

The ability to sustain a fighting force is critical for any military and is a priority of the Afghan security forces and their Coalition partners.

“What people often do not realize is that the fighting echelon is only as strong as the logistic capability that supports it,” stated Boire, a native of Shilo, Manitoba, Canada. “If a soldier doesn’t have bullets and beans they aren’t really able to maintain the fight.”

The ability to acquire, process

and deliver ammunition throughout the country is pertinent in building the capability and capacity to support their fighting forces and is going to be the make or break, especially with the withdrawal of the combat forces, Boire stated.

“That’s why it’s such a success. It’s not American, Canadian or Coalition Forces, this is Afghans taking control and maintaining security of their own country.”

During the ammunition draw from the ammunition supply point at Bagram Airfield, Shama accounted for every bundle of ammunition and his troops loaded each bundle onto their trucks. The forms he reviewed were in the Dari language and the presence of translators for communication made the process seamless.

Through a translator, Shama explained the process for him and the challenges the Afghan National Army faces with minimal stock of ammunition. He stated “the numbers (of ammunition) were very limited and because of today we will be able to transfer to different parts of Afghanistan so it’s very vital.”

He added, “In the last two months the help (partnership between Coalition and ANA) has been so overwhelmingly well that we were able to transfer everything that we needed to different parts of Afghanistan.”

Shama, and his troops ensured all documentation was processed me-

ticulously with the ammunition supply point’s accountable officer, Arabian, prior to transferring the ammunition.

“It’s important, a first of its kind and historical,” Arabian commented as they began to load the Afghan trucks. “It’s definitely going to help them fight the war, with us stepping back and downsizing our footprint in Afghanistan.”

For Boire, as a mentor and partner with the 22 Bunkers, to understand the capability to build an autonomous organization that allows the ANA to self-sustain, means there won’t be a need to have as many boots on the ground and overwatch.

“The things that we see today just show us that those communications lines are actually working and also, that they are effective,” he explained.

“Some may say why are we handing off this ammo? The big thing to realize is this is the Afghan fight right now in the South and the Afghans need this ammo to continue the fighting.”

Boire continued to explain the realization from the way he sees the process, “handing over some ammo that’s going to be used by the Afghans to secure their own country is far less expensive then it would be if we (Coalition) go out and use them in a full spectrum operations. I think that the cost really pales in comparison to what could be.” ●

**Afghan Maj. Raheem Shama (left), commander of the Afghan National Army Ammunition Depot (22 Bunkers), along U.S. Army Warrant Officer Alexander Arabian the ammunition accountable officer with the 63rd Ordnance Company, 101st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade (Task Force Lifeline) sign ammunition transfer documents at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The transfer of ammunition from Coalition partners to the ANA is in response to a shortage of small arms ammunition in the Southern regions of Afghanistan. (Photos by Sgt. Sinthia Rosario)**

