

THE SUSTAINER

SUSTAINMENT WARRIORS  SUSTAIN THE FIGHT



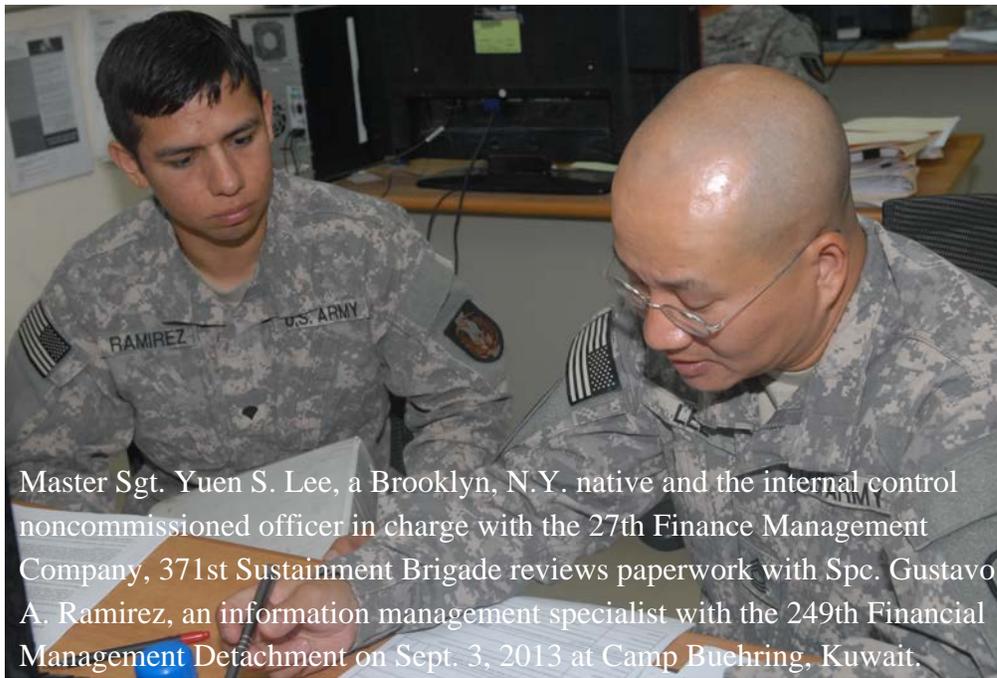
**Akron Shadow
Marathon**

**Ohio National Guard
Brings SAMS to Sea**

**Army Divers Train
on AWC(P) Boat**

**Message From
371 STB Commander**





Master Sgt. Yuen S. Lee, a Brooklyn, N.Y. native and the internal control noncommissioned officer in charge with the 27th Finance Management Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade reviews paperwork with Spc. Gustavo A. Ramirez, an information management specialist with the 249th Financial Management Detachment on Sept. 3, 2013 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

27th FMC team travels Southwest Asia safeguarding soldiers' finances

Story and Photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill

"It's the best part of the job," the young soldier says with a smile. "Traveling is interesting and makes the time go by a lot faster, you get to meet new people and experience different things."

While most soldiers working in administrative positions like finance are chained to their desks or working customer service ironing out eagle cash card issues for soldiers, Sgt. Vuthy In and Master Sgt. Yuen S. Lee, both Brooklyn, N.Y. natives with the 27th Finance Management Company are traveling to financial offices throughout theater and conducting reviews of the offices' protocols and ensuring soldiers' financial information is secure.

"We work well together, he's very experienced for his rank and age and we enjoy traveling together, it's a lot of work, but it's great," says Lee, nodding to his counterpart.

In and Lee are tasked with internal control. As the eyes of the commander, they travel from base to base, country to country, ensuring that paperwork is filed correctly, soldiers get the benefits they have earned, procedures are being followed, soldiers' privacy is protected and the proper safeguards against fraud are in place.

The 27th FMC, based out of Queens N.Y., is deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait and have four detachments located throughout Southwest Asia. These detachments provide financial guidance and support to soldiers deployed in the region.

The financial reviews include a courtesy review that provides the detachments with guidance and a formal quarterly review, said Lee.

A courtesy review is completed prior to an official quarterly review, giving the finance office a chance to make on the spot corrections, implement policy changes and fix any issues in their

process, he said.

Quarterly reviews score the finance office on their implementation of Army finance policies and an official report is given to the commander of the unit so he can see how well his office is performing or where his soldiers need improvement, said In.

"Courtesy and quarterly reviews help us by ensuring our internal controls are in place and are functioning at the highest level of efficiency," said Cpt. Shannon Leppo, the commander of the 249th financial detachment in Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Due to the sensitive and personal information that financial specialists and officers have access to, it is vital to maintain separation and verify that the information is properly safeguarded, said In.

"Internal control is exactly what it sounds like, internal checks and balances, there's a lot of potential for issues and we must safeguard against abuses in the system, that's why nobody working in finance should be able to see the whole picture of a soldier's finances," he said.

Keeping the different processes of military finances can be a challenge due to the limited number of soldiers working in the job field and small detachments operating for an entire camp in theater, said Lee.

"As a commander, I rely on our reviews as an assessment of how we are managing ourselves in the Finance Office, and it gives me a little peace of mind because I know if our internal control standards are high, then our risk of fraud or abuse is low," said Leppo.

"We are acting as the eyes and ears of the commander, and we enjoy what we do, we're always learning something and having a positive impact on the units we visit," said Lee.

Medic on Deck: Ohio Soldier Experiences Life at Sea

Photo and story by Staff Sgt. Kimberly S. Hill

“Doc, Doc I need help,” he shouts.

The young specialist jogs down the narrow hallway, holding his finger and yelling.

He knocks on the door labeled ‘Sick Bay’ as he holds his finger tightly, blood drips from his hand to the gently rocking floor below.

The young female medic opens the door almost immediately, despite the late hour, and quickly assesses the injury while the soldier explains how it happened.

She opens the door wider revealing a few personal possessions, a neatly made bed and an open closet filled with medical supplies which she begins sorting through, grabbing what she needs to treat her patient.

She begins cleaning and bandaging the wound, working quickly and apologizing to the soldier for any pain he may feel.

“You’re always on call when you’re a boat medic,” Piening says with a smile.

Sgt. Rachel E. Piening, a combat medic and a Cincinnati, Ohio native, is currently serving as the medic on deck for the United States Army vessel Churubusco, Landing Craft Utility 2013 (LCU- 2013) of the Army Watercraft Company (Provisional) since her deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom began July 2013 at Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait.

Piening, who is part of the medical section of the 371st SB, based out of Springfield, Ohio, is tasked to provide medical support to the crew of the LCU-2013.

Her duties include maintaining medical equipment, diagnosing illness, and treating any injuries while at port and at sea, said Sgt. Kimberly S. Brown, a Brevard, N.C. native and a medical administration sergeant with the 371st SB.

The excitement of being at sea also provides its own unique challenges to safety and health that surprised the Ohio medic, she said.

“I was just surprised with the types of injuries that can happen with the lines snapping,” she said. “I’m not a boat person, so I was surprised, that doesn’t even go through my mind.”

Working with ropes and nets is a part of the job of a watercraft operator and includes ropes and lines to help anchor the vessel while at port, said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael J. Byrne, the vessel master of the LCU-2013 and a Swansboro, N.C. native.

“It (the ropes) can sever limbs, we’re well trained, but the layman might not see the danger immediately,” said Byrne.

Aside from the danger of ropes, burns are another potential risk due to the chemicals used below deck in the engine room, she said.

“Dealing with fuel, diesel and different chemicals makes it a real risk,” Piening said.

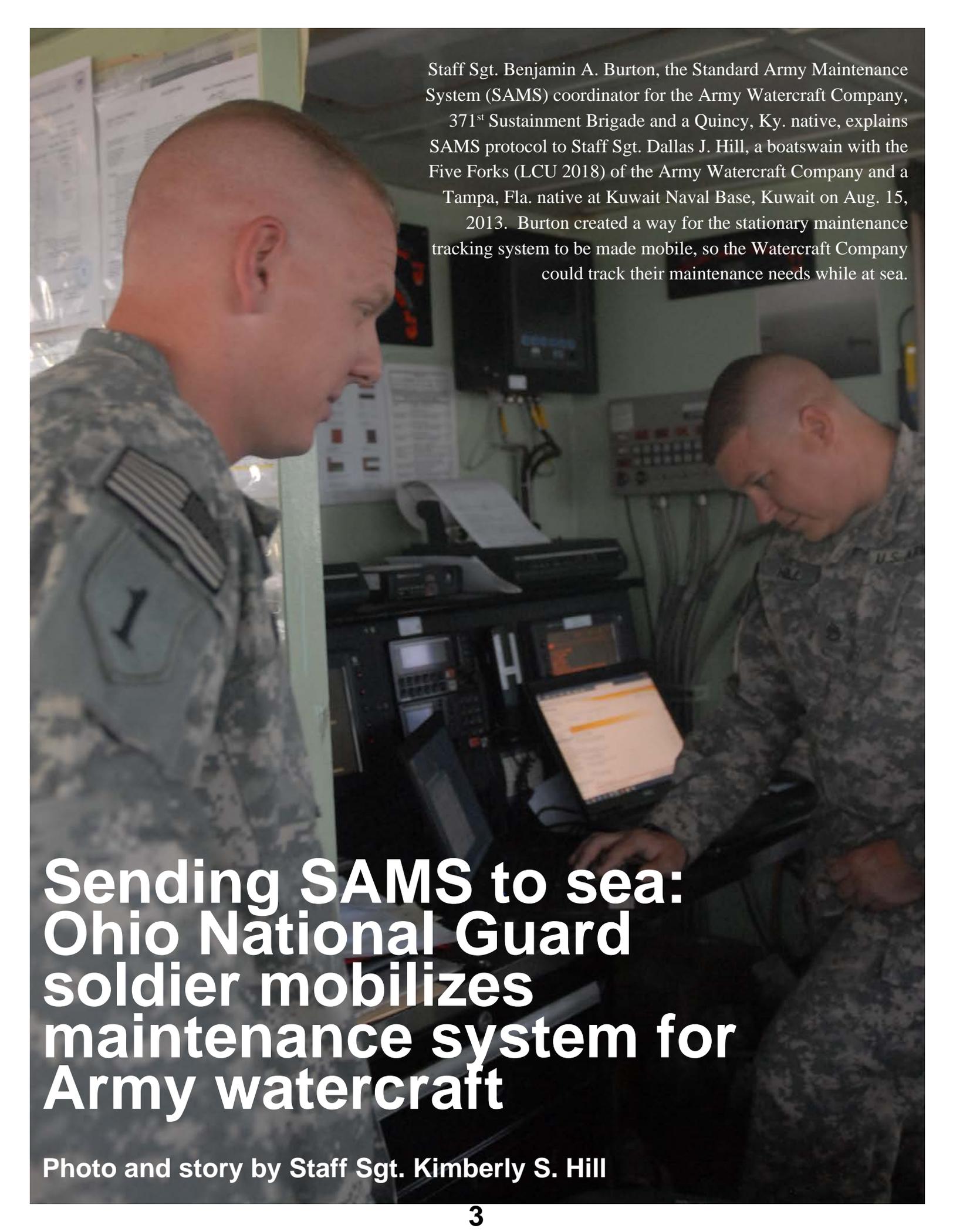
While Piening is always on call, she is often on deck during loading and unloading cargo, and participates in the frequent safety drills the vessel conducts, she said.

“They do abandon ship drills, fire drills and things like that about once a week; so, it’s been important for me to participate and not only see what they do, but also to learn my role in the drills,” Piening said.

Despite the challenges of working as a medic on an Army watercraft vessel, Piening is grateful for the opportunity to not only experience a life at sea, but also to broaden her horizons and knowledge as an Army combat medic.

“It’s been a huge learning experience, I love going out and learning what they’re doing,” she said. “The best part is that it’s a whole new experience, I’ve never done anything like this.”



A photograph showing two Army soldiers in camouflage uniforms working at a computer workstation in a control room. The soldier on the left is looking at the screen, while the soldier on the right is typing on the keyboard. The room is filled with various pieces of equipment, including monitors, a printer, and control panels. The lighting is somewhat dim, typical of an indoor workspace.

Staff Sgt. Benjamin A. Burton, the Standard Army Maintenance System (SAMS) coordinator for the Army Watercraft Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade and a Quincy, Ky. native, explains SAMS protocol to Staff Sgt. Dallas J. Hill, a boatswain with the Five Forks (LCU 2018) of the Army Watercraft Company and a Tampa, Fla. native at Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait on Aug. 15, 2013. Burton created a way for the stationary maintenance tracking system to be made mobile, so the Watercraft Company could track their maintenance needs while at sea.

Sending SAMS to sea: Ohio National Guard soldier mobilizes maintenance system for Army watercraft

Photo and story by Staff Sgt. Kimberly S. Hill

“The boats were basically invisible to us, we had no way of tracking them and every time one broke down it would place strain on the other vessels since the turnaround times for maintenance were so slow,” said Staff Sgt. Benjamin A. Burton.

“It really affected mission readiness, which is unacceptable since the watercraft vessels play such a huge role in hauling equipment and supplies all over theater and aiding in the drawdown from Afghanistan,” he explained.

Burton, the Standard Army Maintenance system (SAMS) coordinator for the Army Watercraft Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade was handed the challenge of setting up a consistent and efficient way to install and use the stationary SAMS on the mobile Army watercraft vessels in July of 2013, just one month into his current deployment.

The Quincy, Ky. native who has served in the Army National Guard in landlocked Ohio his whole career, was surprised when he was tasked with using the SAMS for Army watercraft vessels, equipment he has never encountered.

“The challenge with the vessels is that they aren’t just a piece of equipment, they’re a whole unit,” said Burton. “I’ve been in the Army for 13 years and I didn’t even know we had boats.”

Armed with his knowledge of SAMS and his civilian experience as a production control manager at an Field Maintenance Shop for the Ohio National Guard in Piketon, Ohio, Burton worked long hours while deployed to Camp Arifjan to create a solution that would solve the maintenance issues of the Army Watercraft Company.

“It was a painstaking process, I knew it could be done, I just didn’t know how it could be done. I spent a lot of time in the lab,” he said.

“The problem has been in the past, for multiple years in theater, how do you track maintenance

on a boat because a boat’s mobile and SAMS is fixed to a spot,” said Burton.

Maintenance is an integral part in the mission readiness of the Army and is usually a streamlined process.

“SAMS is the Army’s fleet management tool,” said Sgt 1st Class Joel A. Capell, a Williard, Ohio native and a SAMS operator in support operations with the 371st Sustainment Brigade, an Ohio National Guard unit based out of Springfield, Ohio.

Deficiencies are entered into a computer using the SAMS, which records the information, sends it to higher headquarters, records the fault in the vehicle’s maintenance history and orders the replacement part.

As simple as this task may seem, here at Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait, the use of SAMS hasn’t been applied to an extremely important yet often forgotten piece of Army equipment: Army watercraft.

SAMS, an efficient and integral piece of Army maintenance for land equipment, was not previously used in a consistent manner to track maintenance and order equipment in theater for more mobile pieces of equipment, like watercraft vessels.

The Army Watercraft Company, 371st SB, is currently deployed to Kuwait Naval Base and their vessels are often at sea without unclassified network access and no way to send the information back to base or correctly use the SAMS installed on the boat, which until recently, sat in the corner collecting dust.

As a result, maintenance was often a slow process and leadership was in the dark about the maintenance issues or problems that the boats were experiencing.

“The question was posed, ‘how can we track maintenance and their logistic needs in this theater?’” said Burton.

Burton devised a system with a standard fixed very small aperture satellite system and SAMS computer. They act as a conduit at the vessel support office (VSO). While at sea, the crew can send an image of their SAMS computer with the defaults listed in the system as an encrypted file. The encrypted file is received by a coordinator manning a SAMS computer at the VSO who then enters the data for parts and maintenance. An image of the computer after the data is entered is then sent back to the vessel, he explained.

This allows deficiencies and maintenance issues to be recorded immediately, no matter where the vessel is in the world, said Burton.

“I can in one system find a fault, analyze it, figure out what we need, how long it will take to fix, it, order the parts and track where the parts are,” Staff Sgt. Dallas J. Hill, a boatswain with the Five Forks (LCU 2018) of the Army Watercraft Company and a Tampa, Fla. native.

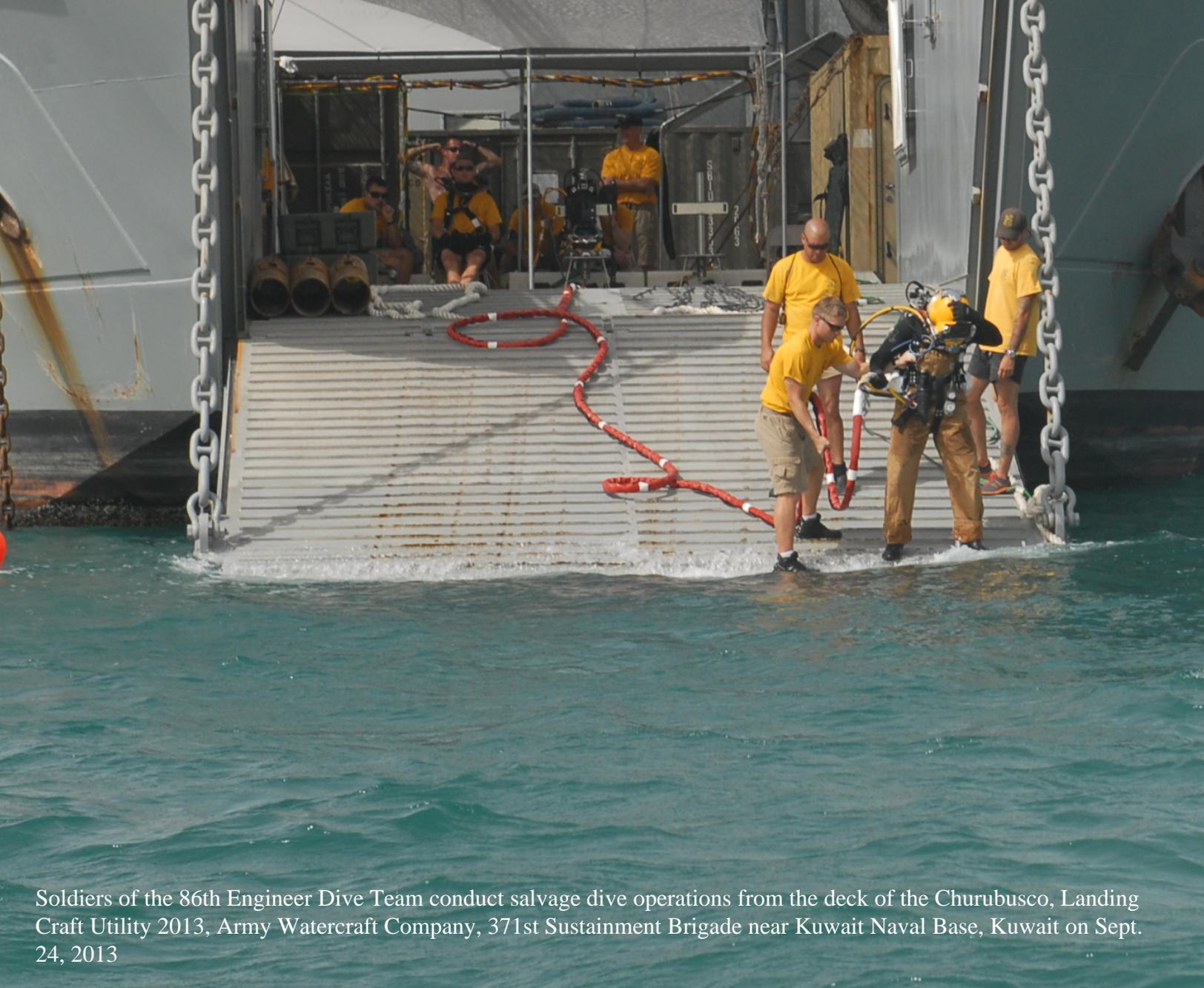
“They’ve been having a lot of logistical issues with the fact that they can’t get parts, their parts come in slow or they have really long lead times because they haven’t been generating their demands in SAMS,” he said.

It’s also helping the Watercraft Company’s visibility, since the SAMS updates higher headquarters when a demand is generated, said Capell.

“We’ve brought visibility to the higher echelon so whenever they hit snags we can give them the support they need,” said Burton.

With the implementation of SAMS, the Army Watercraft Company, based out of Fort Eustis, Va., is already beginning to see faster turnaround times for needed parts and maintenance.

“It’s really streamlined our process and made us much more efficient,” said Hill.



Soldiers of the 86th Engineer Dive Team conduct salvage dive operations from the deck of the Churubusco, Landing Craft Utility 2013, Army Watercraft Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade near Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait on Sept. 24, 2013

The diver's bright yellow helmet is visible beneath the clear waters of the Persian Gulf as he swims up to the ramp where his team members wait.

His hands break the surface of the water first, as he hoists his body on the ramp and his team circles around him to help pull him out of the water and unto the vessel.

They help him remove his helmet and take his air tank off his back as he begins unzipping his wet suit.

The Army diver collapses into a fold-

out chair provided for him while his fellow divers remove his shoes and peel his wet suit off his legs, congratulating him on a job well done and asking him questions about his dive.

Although the diver is exhausted from hours spent below the surface patching equipment, he answers the questions with a slight smile on his face, knowing he has just passed his salvage diving qualification.

Soldiers with the 86th Engineer Dive Team and the crew of the

Churubusco, Landing Craft Utility 2013 with the Army Watercraft Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade, conducted salvage dive operations in the Persian Gulf near Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait on Sept. 24, 2013.

"For us in the dive field, engineers, you need to have the salvage level qualification within a year of being promoted to sergeant, it's something they need in order to progress in the dive field," said Capt. Matthew Schiller, a Germantown, N.Y. native



86th Engineer Dive Team Conducts Salvage Dive in the Persian Gulf

Photo and Story by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill

and the commanding officer for the 86th Engineer Dive Team.

The divers who participated dove approximately 30 feet and after assessing the situation, they were supplied with the equipment needed and patched a vessel at the bottom of the Persian Gulf, he said.

“We put the diver in the water, they assess what they need, we make the patch on deck and then they repair it,” said Schiller.

To earn their qualifications, the

divers must successfully assess and repair the equipment without any aid and complete their task in only a couple of hours, said Staff Sgt. David Craig, a diving supervisor with the 86th Engineer Dive Team and a Honolulu, Hawaii native.

“I assessed the hole, to see if it could actually have a patch put on, it couldn’t so I had to actually cut the metal first in order to put the patch on,” said Spc. Thomas P. Hunnicutt, an Army diver with the 86th Engineer Dive Team and a Macon,

Ga. Native.

The exercise granted some of the newest members of the team an important qualification, which ensures that all members of the team are certified to appropriate level in the dive field, said Craig.

“Rank goes with rate in our field, the salvage diver level is a diver where I’m fully confident that they can go down by themselves, map out the scene and do all the work I need accomplished without direction from me,” said Craig.

A view below deck: Army watercraft engineers share their experiences

Photos and Story by Staff Sgt Kimberly S. Hill

The waves of the Persian Gulf lap gently at the hull of the vessel as it sways back and forth along the port. The air is humid, but comfortable as a cool wind drifts in from the sea.

The sun sets on the horizon, casting golden and pink shadows on the blue waters and the deck of the boat.

It's a tranquil and beautiful image of life at sea aboard an Army watercraft vessel.

Below decks it's an entirely different image.

In the engine room below soldiers are gathered around a piece of machinery, the air is 15 degrees warmer and far more humid than above deck.

The scent of chemicals, diesel and oil coat the air and the constant noise of the engines churning makes it almost impossible to hear anything else.

Oil is splattered on the wall behind them, coating the white paint with streaks of thick oil where a cap broke off one of the engines earlier.

The soldiers work quickly in repairing the leak, shouting commands above the din of the engines and wiping their oil streaked hands on their mechanic jumpsuits.

The soldiers are Army watercraft engineers, and it's their job to maintain the picturesque image above deck by maintaining the equipment below.

"If they don't do their job, there is no way I can do mine, said Chief Warrant

Officer 2 Michael J. Byrne, a Swansboro, N.C. native and the vessel master of the LCU-2013.

Watercraft engineers of the United States Army Vessel Churubusco, Landing Craft Utility 2013 (LCU-2013) with the Army Watercraft Company (Provisional), 371st Sustainment Brigade, have the challenge of maintaining not only their transportation, but also their home at Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait.

Both at sea and at port, the watercraft vessel serves not only as a piece of equipment, but where the soldiers sleep, eat and live, said Omar J. Cruz, first mate of the LCU-2013 and a Tampa, Fla. native.

The soldiers of the LCU-2013 are with the 824th Transportation Company and are headquartered out of Moorhead City, N.C., with a detachment in Tampa, Fla.

The geographically separated unit had to learn to work together and become an integrated unit for their current deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"There isn't a job on this boat that doesn't matter, everyone interlocks with each other," said Spc. Lisa F. Carlisle, a watercraft engineer with LCU-2013 and a Kansas City, Kansas native. "Half the crew of this boat is from the Tampa detachment and the rest are from Morehead City, it doesn't matter."

Whether the boat is at port or at sea it is the engineers job to constantly perform preventative maintenance checks and inspect and maintain the equipment to

ensure the boat is mission capable and the mission will be completed while at sea, said Carlisle.

"If we broke down at sea, we could drift, we could float into enemy waters that we don't want to be in, we could have fires or damaged equipment very easily," said Cruz.

The expertise and skill required to avoid such catastrophic events means that each engineer is licensed to a specific level and must maintain their licensing throughout their military service, which can be a challenge for reservists, said Byrne.

The very unique thing about our field (Army watercraft) is that it is license driven," said Byrne. "Maintaining that license is difficult for a reservist, our annual trainings are usually at least 29 days, a month away from home during the summer."

Carlisle looks at her job as a way to see the impact of her hard work immediately as well as a way to prove to her husband that she's more than capable to be an engineer, she said.

"I like adventures and I thought this would be an adventure," said Carlisle. "My husband said it was harder for women to be mechanics, so of course I had to prove him wrong."

Despite the challenges of the job coupled with hot and dirty work, the engineers of LCU-2013 wouldn't want to be doing anything else.

"Every day you learn something new, there's so much down here," said Spc. Miguel S. Rodriguez, a watercraft engineer with the LCU-2013 and a Tampa, Fla. native. "It feels good at the end of the day."



Above: Sgt. Arthur Sims, a Brooklyn, NY native and a watercraft engineer with the Army Watercraft Company (Provisional), 371st Sustainment Brigade inspects equipment in the engine room of the United States Army watercraft vessel, Churubusco, Landing Craft Utility 2013 at sea on Aug. 27, 2013. The crew of the LCU-2013 is currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom at Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait. Below: Spc. Miguel S. Rodriguez, a Tampa Fla. native and a watercraft engineer with the Army Watercraft Company (Provisional), 371st Sustainment Brigade and Spc. Kevin L. Terre, a Lacey Wash. Native and a watercraft engineer also with the Army Watercraft Company (Provisional), 371st Sus. Bde., change the oil of one of the engines on the United States Army watercraft vessel, Churubusco, Landing Craft Utility 2013 at sea on Aug. 27, 2013. The crew of the LCU-2013 is currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom at Kuwait Naval Base, Kuwait.





371 Coordinates and Runs

Photo and Story by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill

Soldiers of the 371st Sustainment Brigade, currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, organized and ran a shadow marathon of the Akron Marathon on Sept. 28, 2013 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

“I was really proud to be a part of the Akron Marathon. I had the

opportunity to carry the American Flag for the duration of the event, and truthfully that is what got me through,” said Spc. Brian Soucie, an intelligence analyst with the 371st SB and a Cleveland, Ohio native.

“Every time I wanted to quit I had to think of setting down the flag and what that means to me, it was just unacceptable, so I kept moving,” he

said.

Over 300 service members and civilians came out to run the event, with 191 runners finishing either the half-marathon, full marathon or relay race, said 1st Lt. Kevin Mcgee, the race coordinator for the shadow run.

“This is the first half marathon of the fall running season, we haven’t had one all summer, but now the



Service members and civilians start the Akron Shadow Marathon at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, on Sept. 28th, 2013

s Akron Shadow Marathon

weather's cooling down," said McGee.

McGee, the Kuwaiti National Guard liaison officer and support operations officer with the 371st SB, was in charge of organizing the event, which included coordinating with the Akron Marathon organizers, mapping 5K, half-marathon and full marathon routes, he said.

"They sent us medals, a starting banner, really making us feel like we're right back at home in Ohio," McGee said.

While the event was open to all military service members and civilians at Camp Arifjan, the event allowed soldiers from the 371st SB, an Ohio Army National Guard unit based out of Springfield, Ohio, to show support for the state most of

them call home.

"All who ran yesterday showed that the desert, the night, the confined training environment, the austere deployment . . . none of these are enough to defeat our spirit. I sincerely thank each one of you for your participation in this physically challenging event," said McGee.



By Lt. Col. Mark A. Raaker, 371
Special Troops Battalion,
Commander

Professions provide a service to society through the expert and ethical application of knowledge and practice. Professions are granted significant autonomy in the society they serve because of the trust they earn. They govern and police themselves, holding one another to a set of standards. Familiar professions include doctors, lawyers, clergy, architects and engineers. The "**Army Profession**" is a unique vocation of experts certified in the design, generation, support, and ethical application of land power, serving under civilian authority and entrusted to defend the Constitution

and the rights and interests of the American people.

We, members of the Army and the Ohio National Guard, are professionals. We are professionals because of our competence, character, and commitment. We are members of the best trained force available to any national government. We hold ourselves to a standard that sets the example for all other Armies of the world. We strive to be the best in all we do. Our character and commitment is such that we volunteer for this profession, to provide the security and defense of our great nation. We do so willingly knowing of the hardships it entails and with the knowledge that we may make the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our country.

Dr. Don Snider, a CAPE Senior Fellow stated "The Army is a profession because of the expert work it produces, because the people in the Army develop themselves to be professionals, and because the Army certifies them as such. They're not just time servers, they're not government bureaucrats; these are people who are motivated intrinsically by a calling—far more than a job—the desire to serve and defend the Republic."

I am humbled that in such an honorable organization, I am allowed to be a leader. I am ever amazed at the talent and professionalism that is displayed by those that serve beside me. I am brought to tears when I consider the love and support of our families and friends. I am blessed. I am proud to be a Soldier.