

THE SUSTAINER

SUSTAINMENT WARRIORS SUSTAIN THE FIGHT



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Col. Gregory W. Robinette wishes soldiers of the 371st Sustainment Brigade a merry Christmas at a dining facility at the Manas Transit Center, Kyrgyzstan on December 25, 2013.

371st Command Team Visits Remote Soldiers for Christmas

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Joel Gottke

Col. Gregory W. Robinette, a Bowling Green, Ohio native and the commander of the 371st Sustainment Brigade, and Command Sgt. Maj. Scott M. Barga, a Versailles, Ohio native and the command sergeant major of the 371st SB, traveled to the Manas Transit Center, Kyrgyzstan to see soldiers in the brigade during

Christmas week.

“Seeing the command team is always a pleasure - especially during Christmas,” said 1st Lt. Evan Howard, a Dayton, Ohio native and the Plate Carrier Collection Point Warehouse officer in charge with the 371st SB. “Everyone had a great time sharing stories and pictures.”

The soldiers with the 371st Sustainment Brigade in Manas have been separated from the main body of their own unit in Kuwait.

“Those soldiers working in Manas, whether they are working in the Plate Carrier Collection Point Warehouse or whether they are working in the transit center, they have been working for about seven months remotely separated from our headquarters here in Kuwait,” said Robinette. “They have been working a seven-day week, 24 hour a day schedule, and they have had a little bit of a different environment to work in. They have had a different mission set than those soldiers stationed here (in Kuwait) and I simply wanted to thank them and spend Christmas with them.”

Soldiers of the 847th HRC manage postal operations at Camp As Saliyah, Qatar.

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill

Soldiers with the 847th Human Resources Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade, have been overseeing and managing postal operations at Camp As Saliyah, Qatar for the past eight months while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"You get to learn a lot about the postal world and you get to see a lot of happy faces," said Spc. Christopher Gorski, a human resources specialist with the 847th HRC and a Waseca, Minn. native.

Soldiers working at the post office are charged with overseeing the pick-up of unit mail, aiding contractors who work at the post office, handling official mail and providing customer service to service members deployed to Camp As Saliyah, said Sgt. Matthew J. Bach, the noncommissioned officer in charge of

postal operations and a Brooklyn Park, Minn. native.

Bach and his soldiers work closely with civilian contracted postal workers, who sort and process the majority of the mail, as well as provide customer service to service members at Camp As Saliyah.

"I'm fortunate to have the contractors I do, all of them are veterans and all of them are very knowledgeable and experienced," said Bach.

The 847th HRC has soldiers working postal operations throughout theater, including Camp Arifjan, Kuwait and three soldiers currently working at Camp As Saliyah's Post Office.

In addition to overseeing and working with contractors, the Camp As Saliyah Post Office acts as a distribution point for arriving mail.

"The truck arrives with the day's mail; we unload and distribute it at 1400 when a unit representative will come pick it up," said Gorski.

Gorski also conducts unit mail room

inspections, 32 in total, ensuring mail rooms are up to military and postal standards and mail is being handled correctly, he said.

"We also give unit mail personnel training classes, which trains personnel in mail room operations," said Gorski.

Deployed military postal workers also face the challenge of complying with not only U.S. postal and military mail standards, but must also comply with another country's regulations, said Bach.

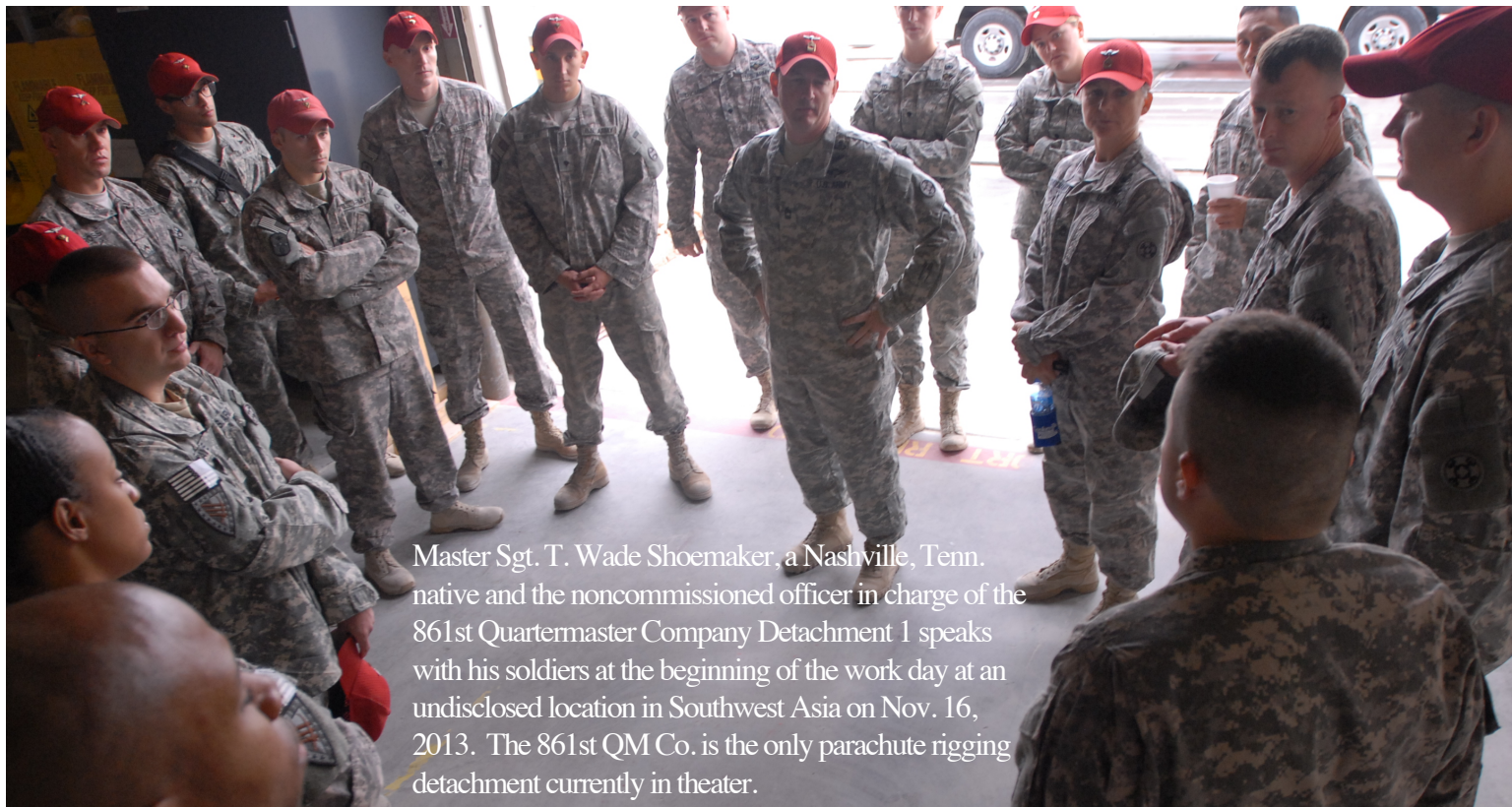
"One of the challenges is keeping up to date with changing procedures and Qatari customs," he said.

Although postal operations can be challenging and even stressful, especially during the holiday season, soldiers of the 847th HRC enjoy their work and feel they are providing a valuable service.

"The better we take care of them the easier it is for them to do their mission," said Bach



Spc. Christopher Gorski, a human resources specialist with the 847th Human Resources Company and a Waseca, Minn. native, supervises Staff Sgt. Scott Dunn, an administrative sergeant with the 3rd Battalion, 116th Field Artillery, as he picks up his unit's mail behind the Post Office at Camp As Saliyah, Qatar on Nov. 14, 2013.



Master Sgt. T. Wade Shoemaker, a Nashville, Tenn. native and the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 861st Quartermaster Company Detachment 1 speaks with his soldiers at the beginning of the work day at an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia on Nov. 16, 2013. The 861st QM Co. is the only parachute rigging detachment currently in theater.

861st QM Co. Rigs for Southwest Asia

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill

The young specialist removes his red hat and smiles as he remembers his first mission while deployed.

He shakes his head and runs his fingers through his short hair as he remembers how exhausted yet proud, he and his fellow soldiers felt at the end of that long day.

“Our first big mission was 14 hours, everyone stayed on it and worked together; we stayed as long as we had to, until two in the morning just to make sure we got it sent out,” said Spc. Daniel Faulk, a parachute rigger with 861st Quartermaster Company, Detachment 1.

Parachute riggers with the 861st QM Co., Detach. 1, are currently deployed to an undisclosed location in Southwest Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, where they are serving as the

only riggers operating in theater.

The Army reservists are based out of Nashville, Tenn., and have been deployed since May where their missions focus on aerial resupply, said Master Sgt. Troy W. Shoemaker, the detachment noncommissioned officer in charge of the 861st QM Co., Detach. 1 and a Nashville, Tenn. native.

“Our job is to rig up loads to send to Afghanistan or wherever we need to send them. We rig up the loads, send them to the flight line and they go to the frontlines,” said Shoemaker, a Shelbyville, Tenn. native.

While the unit is capable of rigging all classes of supply, the main needs in theater have been food and fuel, said Shoemaker.

“Over here you’re making sure the troops on the frontlines get what they need to survive and keep on with the mission,” said Faulk.

Parachute rigging is a job that requires attention to detail and precision, said

Sgt. 1st Class Jennifer Shoemaker, the lanes supervisor with the 861st QM Co., Detach. 1 and a Nashville, Tenn. native.

While parachute rigging can be a challenging job, especially for a small Army detachment that serves all of theater, Sgt. 1st Class Shoemaker believes her job not only helps troops on the frontlines but also helps save time, money and lives, she said.

“You’re saving lives, sometimes it’s safer to drop things from the air than by convoy because of improvised explosive devices and it’s also quick,” she added.

Despite the demands of being the only parachute riggers operating in theater, most riggers wouldn’t have it any other way.

“Parachute riggers don’t idle well, we like to stay busy because it’s such a rewarding job from start to finish,” said Sgt. 1st Class Shoemaker.



Maj. Jacob Kiser, a primary physician for the Camp Arifjan Troop Medical Clinic, smiles for a photo with Sgt. Daniel Bamford, a combat medic with the 371st Sustainment Brigade on Sept. 23, 2013 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Ohio Guardsman oversees Troop Medical Clinic at Camp As Saliyah, Qatar

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill

The 25-year-old medic walks confidently through the halls of the medical clinic, popping his head into open offices and knocking on closed doors to say hello and make introductions.

His friendly blue eyes and easygoing

manner appears to be a welcome sight to the employees, who greet him with jokes and smiles of their own.

“It was really intimidating at first, but I couldn’t have been prouder of the outcome; it’s been an outstanding experience,” he says with a smile.

When Sgt. Daniel Bamford, a Millersburg, Ohio native and a combat medic with the 371st Sustainment Brigade was deployed

to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait in July of 2013, he had no idea the needs of the Army would bring him to the Troop Medical Clinic (TMC) in Camp As Saliyah, Qatar to work as the operations sergeant of the TMC.

“My job combines two different positions above my rank and I’m just a sergeant trying to do it all, so it’s a lot,” said Bamford.

As the operations noncommissioned officer in charge at the Troop Medical Clinic, Bamford is



Service members and civilians at Camp As Saliyah, Qatar participate in a mass casualty exercise near the hospital October, 2013. The MASCAL exercise is a post wide event that trains and tests participants in emergency response procedures

responsible for overseeing all medical training on Camp As Saliyah, revamping standard operating procedures, inventorying and inspecting medical equipment and certifying soldiers in combat lifesaving classes, said Sgt 1st Class Russell Nurse, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Troop Medical Clinic and a Brooklyn, N.Y. native.

While the job may come with plenty of responsibilities, the young medic also took it upon himself to

formulate a plan to replace the Mass Casualty (MASCAL) kits on base, kits used in the event of a catastrophic emergency to treat casualties, that were out of date or damaged, said Bamford.

“When I inspected them they were pretty messed up, so I went to work getting them replaced and it’s ended up saving the Army around \$250,000,” he said.

“Without the new MASCAL kits, any serious accident or medical

emergency event would have ended in absolute chaos,” said Bamford.

Besides his medical duties as the operations noncommissioned officer of the TMC, Bamford has also done volunteer work, acted as the medic for physical fitness tests and helped mentor and train service members around base, said Russell.

“He’s kept everything running smoother and he’s really kept the sunshine up in here,” said Russell.

Soldiers with 371st SB receive Christmas joy in Kuwait

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Hill

Over 1,000 soldiers with the 371st Sustainment Brigade received Christmas stockings packed by the brigade's chaplains and the resiliency center with goodies and treats donated from various organizations on Dec. 25, 2013 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

"I get my jollies out of doing this, it's not only to help out the soldiers, but also a way to connect with those back home," said Maj. Jim Lewis, the brigade chaplain with the 371st Sus. Bde. and a Kent, Ohio native.

Lewis was first introduced to the idea of passing out Christmas stockings

during his first deployment in 2005 to Afghanistan, where he and the chaplain he worked with stuffed roughly 10,000 Christmas stockings for the troops deployed in Afghanistan at the time, he said.

He carried on the tradition when he was deployed with the 371st Sus. Bde. in 2008, with his team packing and passing out roughly 3,000 stockings, said Lewis.

One of the challenges with managing the Christmas stocking program, is acquiring and sorting the treats that fill the stockings, he said.

"For a long time, I've been networking with those interested in donating," said Lewis. "I've also encouraged the senior enlisted to reach out to their communities for donations."

"My VFW sent 15 boxes of candy and toiletries, as a VFW, they're conscious of veterans," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Martin Sutton, the maintenance readiness officer in charge with the 371st Sus. Bde., whose VFW, the Hilliard Memorial VFW, Post 4931 sent in donations for the Christmas stocking program.

Lewis hopes that the Christmas stocking program is a way of not only spreading Christmas joy to the soldiers of the 371st Sus. Bde, but also helps families and friends back home feel connected, he said.

"For a soldier that's away, it's not what's in the stocking that's important, but the thought that someone back home is reaching out and trying to touch them," said Lewis.

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Miller, the chaplain's assistant for the 371st Special Troops Battalion, 371st Sustainment Brigade, gives a Christmas stocking to Sgt. 1st Class Manuel Perez, the human resources sergeant for the 371st STB, 371st Sus. Bde on Dec. 24, 2013 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



Season's Greetings, Fellow Sustainers!

By Lt. Col. Barbra Herrington-Clemens

As we celebrate this holiday season, many things come to mind – most notably family and friends. Holidays are those occasions when we carve time out of our busy lives to see everybody we love and celebrate what's important. I don't know what it's like when your family and friends get together, but when my hillbilly clan gets together, the phrase "free-for-all" comes to mind. Big family, big events, big laughs...I miss it so much, as I'm sure you miss your family too.

When your attention turns to home, make that effort to connect with facebook, SKYPE or any of the other wonderful technological ways we are lucky enough to have readily available. I can tell you from experience that it brings everybody a lot closer than the actual 6,500 miles away that we are.

I know firsthand how easy it is to feel lonely and potentially sad during this time. As a member of a military family we have experienced 10 deployments since 2002 between my husband, my children and now me. This isn't the time to turn inward; you need to share with your battle buddies, your family and your friends to instill hopeful feelings and cheerful thoughts. This helps everybody...

They say happy people relive happy memories. The holidays are not only a time when good memories are made, they should be a joyful time of reflection and remembrance.



Make sure you hold onto and reflect on the good stuff, those happy memories which allow the better part of our angels to shine. Share your memories and joy with your battle buddies and anyone else that looks like they need a reason to smile. Listen to their happy memories as well, and encourage their joyful holiday spirit.

Many of my fellow Soldiers have heard about my children's and my grandchildren's adventures with the traveling magi of our family Nativity. Some have heard about the reckless lengths my husband and I have gone in attempting to maintain their innocence and belief in Santa. All I can say is thank goodness for a well-placed and old sturdy TV antenna tower and a substantial snow drift!

I know I have already begun to reflect on the holiday memories I'm making with the folks around me right now, and I hope you are

too. My vision of SGT Corey Brinkman as *Buddy the Elf* decorating our tent and MAJ Brian Crock as Santa will forever bring a smile to my face and I'm thankful that I had such wonderful people with which to share this holiday.

I know I've made many friends since deploying with the 371st SB, some are like family that I will hold close to my heart forever! So, take time to consider that the memories you're making this holiday season with your 371st SB family and friends will continue to make you smile next year when you're surrounded by your family at home.

I know I speak for many in leadership when I say *thank you* all for your camaraderie this season, we wish you a Happy Holidays and look forward to sharing your stories of holidays happily remembered.

God Bless!