



TASK FORCE MULESKINNER



May 2014

10th Sustainment Brigade

Issue 3

Through the eyes of a child soldier

**From math problems to ambush tactics
Soldier recalls childhood struggle
Pg. 12**



Supporting the Climb!

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The official 10th Sustainment Brigade publication

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COMMANDER'S CORNER



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Fellow Muleskinners, Family and friends greetings from Afghanistan. The brigade is approaching its four-month mark as part of our sustainment mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom XIV. The Soldiers continue to excel and perform magnificently. As CSM Castillo and I conduct battlefield circulation, we are impressed with the amount of pride and professionalism our Soldiers display as they execute their mission. There is not a

day that goes by that a Muleskinner Soldier does not positively impact day-to-day operations across the Combined Joint Operations Area-Afghanistan. The legacy of the brigade continues as we leave our mark while we complete our 4th overall deployment here in support of OEF.

An area of focus for the brigade, as we near our mid-way point, regards the health of the command. Building resiliency across the formation using the five pillars of the Army Comprehensive Soldier

and Family fitness is the approach we use as part of the Army's overall resiliency campaign. The command remains committed with ensuring that our Soldiers remain physically fit, mentally tough and socially adaptable while balancing spiritual and Family needs. We accomplish this through tough and realistic training that builds confidence and training programs designed to meet the needs of both Soldiers and units. Resilient Soldiers and formations equals combat power.

Our road ahead remains busy and we will continue to focus on force protection and safety for all of our Soldiers while we execute sustainment support

across Afghanistan. Operations overall are going as planned and this is in large part due to our professional force who remain committed to accomplishing all of the tasks assigned to the brigade to the highest standard possible.

I would like to thank our Families and friends of the brigade for your support to our Soldiers. You should be proud of your Soldiers commitment to our Army and Nation. I remain humbled to have the opportunity to serve with America's finest men and women.

Thanks again for your support to the Muleskinner Team!

Supporting the climb!



Col. Willie Rios III, commander of the 10th Sustainment Brigade, pins a Bronze Star Medal on the chest of Lt. Col. Hector Agosto, commander of the 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion as his end of tour award during a transfer of authority ceremony May 3. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)

COMMAND SGT. MAJ.'S CORNER



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Another month has gone by and Soldiers continue to impress me with their actions. The Muleskinner Family is strong and doing well. Leaders continue to take care of Soldiers in all aspects of their daily duties and Soldiers continue to trust leadership to do the right thing.

Senior leaders throughout Afghanistan know who Muleskinners are. They associate Muleskinners with excellence, determination and mission success. The

mentality of our Soldiers to get the mission accomplished is without equal. They know when to be serious but they also know when to relax.

Resiliency is a big part of ensuring we are ready for whatever comes our way, which means resiliency equals combat power. Keeping in touch with loved ones, reading, working out at the gym and getting enough sleep are just some measures that can help keep Soldiers resilient.

Muleskinners were part of history as the Afghans conducted their election

for a new president. We will continue to support the Afghan government while ensuring our sustainment mission continues throughout Afghanistan. Taking care of Soldiers in a country approximately the size of Texas is no small feat but our Soldiers make it look easy. Muleskinners touch the lives of thousands of Soldiers daily. We do not consider people customers when we assist them with their sustainment needs. They are teammates, friends and a part of the Muleskinner Family.

We continue to express

our support to our loved ones back home. We could not be as successful as we are without them. Their love and support keep us strong when we need it most. We look forward to the day when we reunite and express our appreciation in person. Know that not a day goes by when we are not thinking of you.

Continue to follow or team on our Facebook site. We try to capture as many Soldiers as possible and we appreciate your feedback.

Supporting the climb!



Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Castillo, the senior enlisted leader of the 10th Sustainment Brigade, shakes the hand of Sgt. Jorge Villa, a command group driver assigned to the 10th SBDE, after his re-enlistment May 17. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Communication gets a facelift



Staff Sgt. Shantina M. Lowden, a native of Whitehall, Penn., spectrum manager assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade, disassembles an antenna as part of a plan to upgrade the communication system at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. She worked daily with a field service representative replacing antennas, running wires and testing land mobile radio systems to ensure everything worked as intended. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)

**Story by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra
10th Sustainment Brigade PAO**

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – There may be some people who don't think there are significant differences between a standard definition TV and a high definition one. One can make an argument that some items get unnecessary upgrades but when an upgrade can assist with security most Soldiers would welcome it.

Staff Sgt. Shantina M. Lowden, a native of Whitehall, Penn., spectrum manager assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade, found a way to improve communication throughout Bagram using equipment readily available.

Lowden found out, during a meeting at Regional Command – East headquarters, there was talk about ordering equipment to improve their primary, alternate, contingency and

emergency plan. It was an idea that would have taken time to implement but Lowden was able to step up and make a difference immediately.

She told leaders she had some equipment that would meet their requirement and that she would work on the existing infrastructure to ensure everything worked to standard.

"She took the initiative in coordinating with the civilian counterpart here," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Edward B. Mendez, electronics systems maintenance technician assigned to the 10th Mountain Division (LI). "She put forth the effort to reenergize and revitalize the network by providing the proper preventive maintenance and care of the systems."

She also found equipment identified to be sent back to the U.S. that she was able to use to improve communications for the first responders here.

"We were able to provide them with another means of communication," said Lowden. "Some of the equipment was already in specific location but were not being utilized. We recycled them."

She said it was a matter of knowing what to look and ask for and using it in a responsible and efficient manner.

Lowden worked daily with a field service representative replacing antennas, running wires and testing land mobile radio systems to ensure everything worked as intended.

"We wanted to make sure the communication system we gave them was up and running," said Lowden.

The equipment replaced didn't simply get tossed in a corner. Soldiers will still be able to use the replaced communication method as a backup if needed.

Although she did most of the coordination, she had assistance and was grateful.

"I would like to thank the Air Force guys for the support they gave us by setting up last-minute work orders," said Lowden.

She also thanked the 10th Mountain Division and Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Castillo, 10th SBDE senior enlisted leader, for assisting in coordination with outside agencies.

"Staff Sgt. Lowden is a great example of a Muleskinner taking care of Soldiers," said Castillo. "She wasn't tasked. She did it because she knew what she was doing and it supported Soldiers. When you have a Soldier who is willing to support others, even on their own time, let them do it; they might surprise you."

Handing out motivation, morale daily



Spc. Mason Schlabs, a South Lake, Texas native, unit mail clerk assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, inspects a package before loading it in the vehicle to be taken back to the unit mail room. Most Soldiers would say that getting something in the mail is one of the largest morale boosters there is while deployed. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Have you ever met or known someone who can lift the spirits of those around them every day? A South Lake, Texas native, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, has the privilege of doing just that.

Spc. Mason Schlabs, HHC mail clerk, arrives at work at 7:30 a.m. to get a jump start on his daily tasks giving him the opportunity to encourage Soldiers to smile across the Muleskinners brigade each day.

One of the first things he does is collect outgoing mail in the brigade's letter drop box, which is a designated location where Muleskinners can place outgoing letters and packages weighing less than 13 ounces. He takes the outgoing mail to the Bagram Main Post Office shortly thereafter.

The main post office, run by the 376th Human Resources Company, 10th STB, is also where he receives all of the unit's incoming mail.

"I like to go pick up mail early so I don't have to wait in line so long," said Schlabs.

He said he normally receives two crates of mail a

day, which can weigh anywhere from 200-300 pounds.

"The bulk of the mail received are care packages from friends and Family members," said Schlabs.

After he loads mail into the truck, he heads back to the mail room where it is downloaded and sorted. Schlabs said it's the letters that take the longest to sort through.

Soldiers see Schlabs downloading the incoming mail and are more than willing to help. Some may help in hopes to see a box or letter addressed to them.

"Every day I'm around, I help Schlabs download that day's mail," said Sgt. Nick Bozzi, a native of Philadelphia, battalion retention NCO assigned to HHC, 10th STB. "At times, he can get a ton of mail. The faster he can get the mail in, the faster he can get the list out and the faster Soldiers can get their mail."

Schlabs constructs a list of the names of the Muleskinners who have mail for pick up. The updated list is sent out via e-mail as well as posted around the brigade building for all to see.

The total process from start to finish takes approximately four hours depending on the amount of mail received.

Schlabs said he was selected by his senior leaders

to become the unit mail clerk shortly after arriving in Afghanistan earlier this year.

Before getting deployed, he worked in the brigade personnel shop ensuring reports were completed on time and assisted in processing awards.

Schlabs said it's different from working in the personnel shop where some people may need something completed immediately and may get an attitude if it is something that requires time to complete, but with the mail room, people get their mail and they are happy.

"We felt as though he was ready to take on additional responsibility," said Staff Sgt. Frank Chaney, a brigade human resources NCO. "And once he was informed of his duties, he took charge."

Chaney said he can see that Schlabs takes a lot of pride in what he is doing.

Schlabs spends the afternoon passing out mail to the members of the Muleskinner brigade.

"The most exciting part of my job is making people smile," said Schlabs. "And I get to see my own mail first and that's always a plus."

He said being the unit mail clerk is a very rewarding

duty position.

"I like to make people happy and they are happiest when they are getting their mail," said Schlabs. "It's a pretty easy job, but I get to make people smile and that's really the bottom line. I've had people say 'This

literally makes my day' when they get pictures of their Family and letters and care packages from back home."

Most Soldiers would say that getting something in the mail is one of the highlights while deployed.

"Mail is definitely one of the things I look forward to each day," said Bozzi. "It's definitely a morale booster. It's always a good feeling when you get something in the mail regardless of who it's from."

The Army says in Field Manual 6-22, Army Leadership, mail is one of the Soldiers' basic human needs.


"This is my first deployment and when I get my mail it makes me feel good," said Schlabs. "It's different from getting mail back in the rear. It still builds your morale but over here is a whole other ball game. It's a bigger deal here."

**"I like to make people
happy and they are
happiest when they are
getting their mail"
-Schlabs**



Spc. Mason Schlabs, a South Lake, Texas native, unit mail clerk assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, passes out packages to one of the civilian contractors who work under the Muleskinner brigade. Schlabs constructs a list of the names of the Muleskinners who have mail for pick up each day so they know before heading to the mail room. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Grease, wrenches, rock 'n' roll



Pfc. Kyle Booi, a Piper City, Ill., native, wheeled vehicle mechanic and Staff Sgt. Jake Harris, a motor sergeant both assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, relax at the end of the work day with a little guitar practice. Harris taught Booi how to play the basic open chords, proper finger placement and how to pick strings. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Salvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Salvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – If you ever find yourself walking past the maintenance bay of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, you might hear the faint sounds of callused fingers strumming the strings of an acoustic guitar.

Pfc. Kyle Booi, a Piper City, Ill., native, wheeled vehicle mechanic assigned to HHC, 142nd CSSB, decided to finally learn how to play a guitar, rather than just make noise, soon after arriving in country.

Booi said learning how to play the guitar is something he has always wanted to do.

Staff Sgt. Jake Harris, a motor

sergeant for HHC, 142nd CSSB, borrowed a guitar from the chaplain's office to help teach Booi how to play.

"Learning how to play the guitar isn't as easy as it looks," said Booi. Harris said he taught himself when he was 16 years old and has been playing guitar off and on for 20 years.

He taught Booi how to play the basic open chords, proper finger placement and how to pick strings.

"Staff Sgt. Harris just kept pushing me to learn my chords," said Booi.

Sgt. Jon Ritch, a Baltimore native, wheeled vehicle mechanic assigned to HHC, 142nd CSSB, said when Booi first started learning, he could hear him through the walls of his room playing the same chord over and over again for hours.

Booi said he really likes playing

the guitar because it's a constant challenge and it's a great way to relieve stress because when he plays, the guitar and music are the only things on his mind.

"I'm nowhere even close to as good as Staff Sgt. Harris is," said Booi. "But at the same time, he has almost two decades of practice I don't."

He said he was getting more and more into playing and he decided to start checking around base for guitars for sale.

He paid \$60 for his first guitar, which also came with the book "Guitar for Dummies" volumes 1-8, which he also learned from.

"I've learned the most from just watching Staff Sgt. Harris play," said Booi.

He said he's also been learning from watching YouTube videos and from Ultimate-Guitar.com,

which provides lessons to teach people how to play songs from their library.

"I average about an hour of playing a day now," said Booi. "Sometimes when the guys from the shop go out for a smoke break, I like to go in the office and play around on the guitar for a little bit."

Harris said Booi has learned to play the guitar a lot faster than he originally anticipated.

He said he can play four songs already and hopes to learn a lot more before going back home. Country songs seem to be the easiest to play, which he said is fine by him since that is one of his favorite genres of music to listen to but he would also like to learn a few rock songs before going back home.

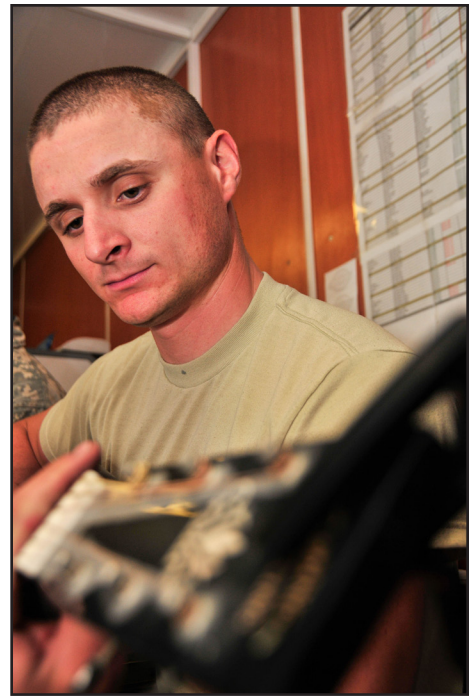
"Anything that takes time, hard work and dedication is always going to pay off in the end," said

Booi.

He said it would be cool to start up a band and play some covers down the road but doesn't really know what he is going to do with his new found talent. When he returns home from Afghanistan, he said he is going to a Guitar Center and reward himself with a brand new guitar.

Booi will always have the skills he learned while deployed and is capable of passing them along.

"The best advice I can give is to first learn the chords," said Booi. "Learn one chord at a time. It takes a lot of practice and dedication so pace yourself. It also helps to have someone teach you first hand. Just don't get discouraged by little things like sore fingers."



Pfc. Kyle Booi, a Piper City, Ill., native, wheeled vehicle mechanic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)



Pfc. Kyle Booi, a Piper City, Ill., native, wheeled vehicle mechanic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, has learned how to play guitar by watching YouTube videos, "Guitar for dummies" and one on one training with Staff Sgt. Jake Harris, a motor sergeant assigned to HHC, 142nd CSSB. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)



Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Castillo, the senior enlisted leader of the 10th Sustainment Brigade, provides guidance to the battalion command teams. The conference was a way to have the battalion leaders in one room and interact face-to-face rather than through other means of communication. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Task Force Muleskinner hosts commanders' conference

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The 10th Sustainment Brigade held a commanders' conference for the battalion command teams, operations and intelligence officers May 1-2 here to better understand the brigade commander's mission intent and review current convoy standard operating procedures.

The conference was a way for Col. Willie Rios III, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Castillo, the senior enlisted leader of the 10th SBDE, to have the battalion leaders in one room and interact face-to-face rather than through other means of communication.

The first day of the conference was geared toward the operations and intelligence officers of the battalions.

Maj. Melissa Ringhisen, the brigade's intelligence officer, and Maj. Josh Lunsford, the brigade's operations officer, addressed the battalion representatives and discussed analysis of enemy intentions, attack operations within each regional command and disseminating information to Soldiers. Other topics included previous operations, intelligence security and reconnaissance assets, convoy escort team academies and debriefings after missions are completed.

Ringhisen said their goal was to have an open

discussion about the most important aspects of intelligence support for convoy escort team operations. Lunsford said the battalion representatives were very receptive to the information.

Some battalion representatives said they wished something like this had been in place when they originally arrived in theater. One representative identified how it has provided them with better situational awareness.

"Only by having an open, honest discussion about the art of intelligence analysis will we be able to learn from each other and identify better ways of providing analyzed intelligence to the Soldiers in our CETs," said Ringhisen.

The brigade's CET SOP has been updated, revised and published, said Lunsford.

"Commanders' conferences assist this command in fostering a positive leadership command climate focused on mission command, discipline initiative, empowering subordinates, and the biggest for me is trust," said Castillo. "Because we operate in the entire CJOA-A as a decentralized organization, this requires leaders at all levels to know their environment, learn quickly, but most importantly they are trusted to lead, manage and influence change."

The second day of the conference was a brief for the brigade commander, command sergeant major and battalion command teams. Ringhisen and Lunsford conducted a play-by-play briefing explaining what had taken place the day before, along with topics not covered, such as force protection.

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Crossman, the brigade's force protection noncommissioned officer, explained, in depth, the process on how to qualify a leader for the position of convoy commander. The process is made up of five steps a leader must complete to earn the responsibility of convoy commander.

"This was a very useful conference that allowed all the members of the intelligence warfighting function in the sustainment brigade to meet together and share information," said Ringhisen.

Another brief was held later that afternoon covering the commander's top five priorities. A few of the topics discussed were the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response Prevention program, force protection and

sustainment operations.

"I thought it was great to talk with my peers to see how they do things and to see what nuggets I could take back to my RC and institute with my convoys," said Lt. Col. James Turner, commander of the 548th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. "I think the standardization of CETs will go a long way so that we all have a base line throughout the CJOA-A."

At the conference, it wasn't only battalion command teams who learned something new.

"The commanders conference was a tremendously helpful forum," said Capt. Garrett Ruud, 10th Special Troops Battalion operations officer. "The [intelligence officers] brought forward great information, in particular the 'deep dive' on ISR assets. I was not aware that many of these packages have radio relay packages. We will definitely use this capability."

Maj. Melissa Ringhisen, the brigade's intelligence officer, briefs Col. Willie Rios III, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Castillo, the senior enlisted leader of the 10th Sustainment Brigade, on the intelligence portion of the conference. Some topics covered by Ringhisen focused on previous operations, intelligence security and reconnaissance assets, convoy escort team academies and debriefings after missions are completed. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)



Through the eyes of a child soldier

From math problems to ambush tactics

Soldier recalls childhood struggle



Pfc. Anthony Lodiong, an automated logistical specialist, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Story by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage
10th Sustainment Brigade Journalist

Pfc. Anthony Lodiong is a U.S. Army logistician with the 10th Sustainment Brigade and is currently deployed to Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"Lodiong is an outstanding Soldier who knows what it means to be a member of a team," said Staff Sgt. Lobsang Salaka the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 10th SBDE Humanitarian Relief yard. "He continues to put the mission first in

everything he does."

Lodiong spends his days on Bagram working at the 10th SBDE HR yard, but he is haunted by childhood memories; memories of war and of a stolen childhood.

In 1992, Lodiong lived with his family in Kaya, South Sudan, a small town that borders the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. He was only nine years old then, but vividly remembers the rebel soldiers pounding on his family's door in the middle of a hot summer night. The rebel soldiers barged in and started

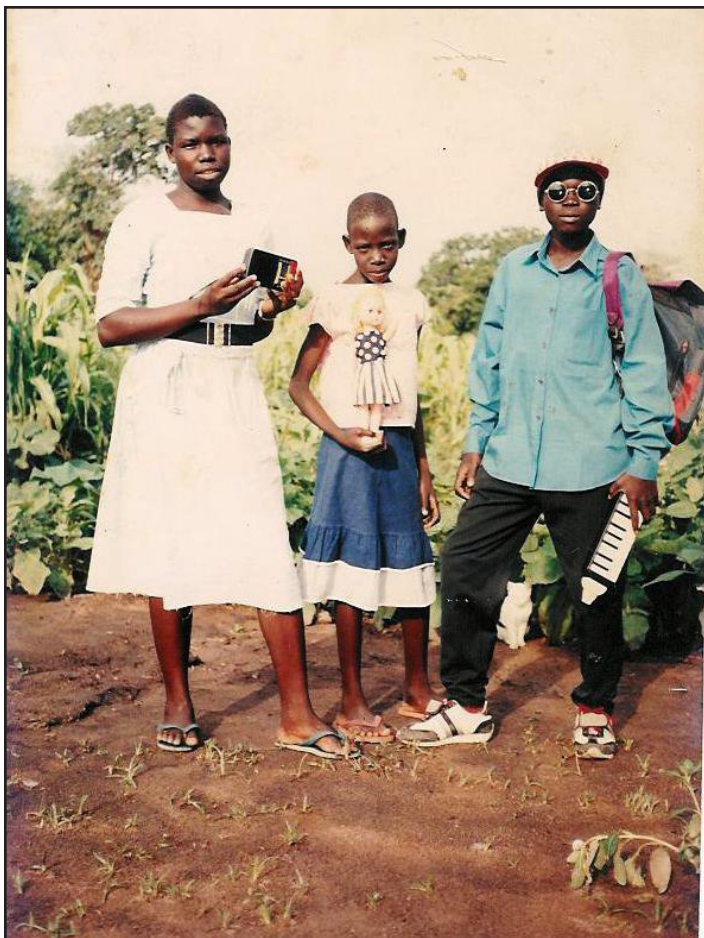
searching the house.

As he heard the voices and footsteps going from room to room, the fear and anxiety forced him to crawl under his bed but was found and forcibly taken from his house. The last memory he had before being taken away by the rebel soldiers was his mother hysterically pleading with them not to take him away.

"In 1992, I got recruited," said Lodiong. "Forceful recruitment is something that is so sudden. You are sleeping at night, and then the soldiers come to your house. They open the

door and search the house for you. When they find you, they take you even if you have already served in the SPLA. They gathered us in a nearby field until morning where they identified the former soldiers and sent them to go fight."

The Sudan People's Liberation Army was founded as a guerrilla movement in 1983, organized to fight the Sudanese government. The Second Sudanese Civil War was a conflict, from 1983 to 2005, between the central Sudanese government and the SPLA. The war



Anthony Lodiong (right) stands with two cousins on a Sunday afternoon on the Magburu refugee settlement in Uganda, 1995. Lodiong went to school and received a scholarship when he was living with his uncle at the refugee settlement. (Courtesy Photo)

originated in the southern part of Sudan and eventually spread as far as the Blue Nile and Nuba Mountains.

Over the course of the war, approximately 4 million people living in southern Sudan were displaced at least once, some multiple times. Lodiong's family was originally from Kajo Keji but was forced to leave to avoid the fighting that had erupted. They moved to Yei, which is approximately 80 miles west, where his father worked for the U.N. as a camp commander helping Ugandan refugees.

Yei is where Lodiong was born and lived for a year before his family decided to move back to Kajo Keji in 1985, but because of the

fighting, they had to keep relocating to try to stay away from it. His family moved all over southern Sudan.

Eventually the fighting caught up with Lodiong and his family.

"There is no way to escape," said Lodiong. "They force you to do it. We were all young children from 8-14 years old."

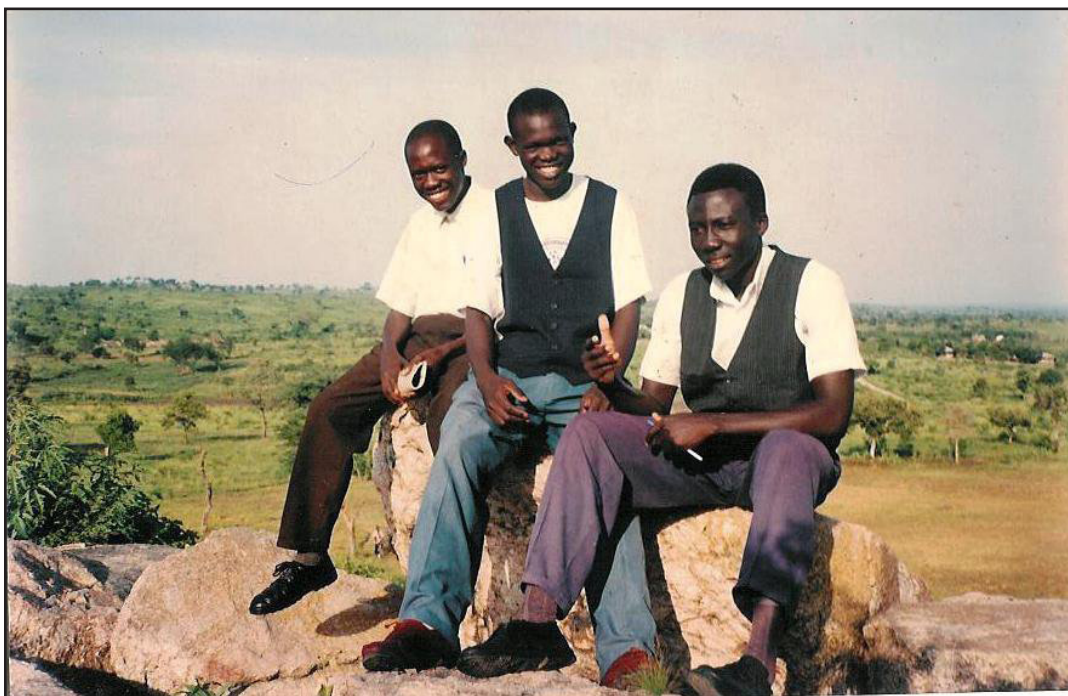
There was an order saying everyone going to primary school must be trained and recruited into the SPLA, he said.

Training Camp

He said the training camp was on the outskirts of Kaya to make it more difficult to sneak or run away during training.

"The memories of the training I had ... wow," said Lodiong. "I still remember my trainer. His voice was so loud. At night, I can still hear him giving us orders for marching and other training."

Lodiong said the training is normally six-months long, but his was only four months because the SPLA desperately needed more soldiers to go and fight. The conditions were hard, as they were given very little, but the young recruits always tried to do their best during the training. His trainer would tell them they were guerrilla



Anthony Lodiong (center) is hanging out with some classmates from primary secondary school, 1998. Primary secondary school was located in the Adjumani district in northern Uganda, which is about 50 miles away from the Magburu refugee settlement. (Courtesy Photo)

soldiers and had to learn the hard way.

“Some of the other training camps had some really serious training and some people even died during the training,” said Lodiong. “I was happy during my training because nobody died. We were all child soldiers so the conditions were not as tough as the older group’s training.”

He figured they didn’t want to discourage the young recruits.

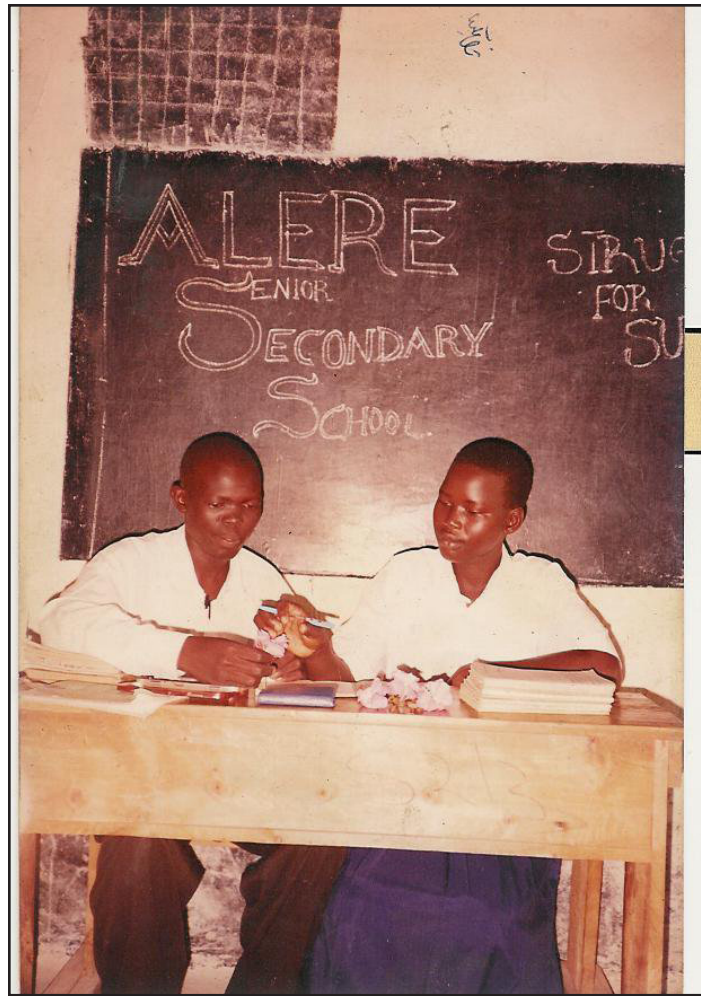
“When I was growing up I had no idea what the SPLA was really about,” said Lodiong. “I only knew that it was an organization that had to fight. At that time, I didn’t know the reason to fight but I was ready to fight since I was recruited.”

The recruits were housed in abandoned school structures, which are large huts with grass roofs.

Their living conditions weren’t much better than their diet, which consisted of beans, hard corn and Sorghum, which is a cereal grass that has corn like leaves and a tall stem bearing a cluster of grain.

“That is your lunch and dinner every day; there was no change of diet at all,” he recalled.

The child soldiers carried a wooden rifle every day during training, as their trainers wanted them to get used to a real AK-47. Training was



Anthony Lodiong studies the reproductive organs of a flower with a classmate, 1998. Lodiong was focused on receiving an education and would ask the teachers if he could take books home with him. (Courtesy Photo)

focused on marching, shooting, attack tactics and group movements. Lodiong can still remember the tactics he was taught to attack the

accurate with the weapon. You were considered trained as long as you could point it in the direction of the enemy and pull the trigger.

“At that time, I didn’t know the reason to fight but I was ready to fight since I was recruited.”

-Lodiong

enemy.

He said they only went to the firing range once because they didn’t want to waste ammo. It didn’t matter if you were

“I was being trained as the leader of a nine-man group,” said Lodiong. “I think it would be compared to a squad leader in the U.S. Army.

I was trained on how to lead soldiers in attacks.”

After his training Lodiong returned back to his family.

“My parents realized since I was already trained it was only a matter of time before I was sent to fight in the war,” said Lodiong.

Liberation

In January 1993, Lodiong’s parents snuck him out of the country to Uganda where he stayed in exile. He lived with his uncle at the U.N. Magburu refugee settlement.

“Living there wasn’t too hard,” said Lodiong. “That was where I got my college scholarship.”

He said if you went to school, studied hard and passed with good grades you could get a college scholarship.

“Looking back, I am happy that I didn’t have to go and fight in the war because I later found out that most of the people I was recruited with and trained with lost their lives,” said Lodiong. “There were only a few who survived.”

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Reigns of sustainment operations exchange hands



Lt. Col. Anthony Huy, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jose Serenil, 419th CSSB senior enlisted leader, uncase the battalion colors during a transfer of authority ceremony May 3 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Task Force Guardian assumed responsibility over sustainment operations in Regional Command-East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra
10th Sustainment Brigade PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The 77th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Task Force Garita from Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, relinquished their authority over sustainment operations in Regional Command-East to the 419th CSSB, Task Force Guardian from Irvine, California, during a transfer of authority ceremony here May 3.

Task Force Garita began their nine-month deployment as a part of the 101st Sustainment Brigade, Task Force Lifeline, and concluded their mission with the 10th Sustainment Brigade, Task Force Muleskinner.

Their accomplishments did not go unnoticed nor did the hard work and dedication of Garita Soldiers.

“Task Force Garita’s success is a testament to the leadership and effort of the battalion command team,” said Col. Willie Rios III, 10th SBDE commander. “These Soldiers have performed magnificently and have added to Garita’s legacy. It would not be possible without

the high quality of its outstanding Soldiers standing here today.”

The battalion provided sustainment and distribution support for all commodities and supplies. They executed more than 380 convoys, which moved approximately 4,370 loads of multi-class supplies. Soldiers drove more than 500,000 miles across some of the most dangerous roads in Afghanistan to accomplish their mission.

They also issued approximately \$65 million worth of food and water and oversaw the largest supply support activity in the Army, which processed 342,000 requests.

“We did it with pride,” said Lt. Col. Hector Agosto, 77th CSSB commander. “We did it with discipline and good training. The most important part is we did it with honor.”

Agosto thanked the brigade command team for their support and the Soldiers who served as part of the Task Force Garita.

As Soldiers bid farewell to the 77th CSSB, the brigade welcomes a

familiar unit; Task Force Guardian.

“The 10th Sustainment Brigade has history with this battalion,” said Rios. “They served as a part of Task Force Muleskinner in Camp Taji, Iraq 2008-2009.”

Guardians conducted portions of their pre-deployment training with the brigade in preparation to support Soldiers in a combat environment.

“You will make history as a CSSB task force,” said Lt. Col. Anthony Huy, 419th CSSB commander.

Huy asked the Soldiers to support the brigade and his priorities as they continue their mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“Prevent SHARP violations, protect the force, accomplish our mission, enforce discipline and safety, and eliminate complacency,” said Huy.

Before the ceremony concluded, Huy had a final message.

“The 419th CSSB is ready to take on the challenge,” said Huy. “We look forward to accomplishing our mission.”



Spc. Vernon G. Griffin, supply clerk assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, verifies a serial number on a laptop that was identified for turn in. Inventories and turning in equipment not being utilized were topics discussed during a 10th Sustainment Brigade Command Supply Discipline Program. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)

Logisticians gather to discuss accountability

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra
10th Sustainment Brigade PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Supply sergeants, commanders, executive officers and other logisticians throughout Task Force Muleskinner gathered for a 10th Sustainment Brigade Command Supply Discipline Program Seminar April 26-27 at the brigade headquarters here.

Senior leaders and junior Soldiers from the 10th Special Troops Battalion, 548th Combat

Sustainment Support Battalion, 419th CSSB, 77th CSSB and 142nd CSSB discussed multiple topics of supply discipline and tactics, techniques and procedures on dealing with some issues but, ultimately, Army regulations were referred to for answers to most questions.

Col. Willie Rios III, 10th SBDE commander, addressed the group at the beginning of the conference and his message to the units was to ensure they are good stewards of

government property and to make sure they know who to contact if they need assistance.

The seminar focused on handling absentee baggage, the financial liability investigation of property loss procedures, theater provided equipment, a Defense Logistics Agency overview and a brief on component hand receipts.

As part of the 10th SBDE's routine inspections of units, the CSDP rolls right into all aspects of a staff assisted visit. Some of

the areas are visited during both inspections, however, the brigade's CSDP is focused more on property accountability based on use of equipment; fraud, waste and abuse; types of responsibilities, types of property, component listings, shortage annexes, establishing CSDP monitors, conducting focus driven visits and assisting supply personnel, commanders and company executive officers in understanding what the program is about.

Soldiers, both senior and junior, had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss any of the topics to clarify anything they might not have understood. Some even learned from just listening to the subject matter experts.

"The seminar was very helpful because it allowed me to see how senior leaders view supply," said Spc. Vernon G. Griffin, Headquarters and Headquarters

Company, 10th STB supply clerk. "There was a lot of experience in the room. I know what mistakes I don't want to make because a lot of people shared their expertise and I learned from that."

Griffin also learned the most from the component hand receipt discussion and gave some advice

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to units who may find themselves with equipment that is no longer utilized.

"If you don't have a need for it, turn it in so someone else can use it," he said.

Among some of the references that were used, Army Regulation 710-2 and AR 735-5 were discussed the most. Some things are done differently in Afghanistan and that was an issue that was brought up for clarification.

"We refresh doctrine but we need to give more scenarios and classes for what happens in theater," said Master Sgt. Leticia Zielinski, senior supply sergeant assigned to 10th Sustainment Brigade.

An issue that was also brought up was how some people might think that because they didn't sign for something they may feel they are not responsible for it.

"It's everybody's responsibility whether you are signed for it or not," said Zielinski. "Direct users also need to understand the CSDP."

Whether it be the end user or the issuing section, there are ways to maintain accountability of equipment.

Soldiers in attendance were active duty, some who were new to supply, but most were from the Reserve or National Guard. The active duty component uses automated systems for supply transactions whereas the other Army components may be using manual methods.

Zielinski said that although a lot of topics were discussed, if Soldiers leave with only one thought after the seminar she hopes it's the importance of property accountability.

"If they understand that, everything that we taught them will fall in to place," she said. "Keeping track of what you are ordering supports supply economy."



Logisticians assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade gather to discuss the Command Supply Discipline Program April 25-26 at Bagram Air Field. Senior and junior leaders shared ideas and tactics, techniques and procedures to improve the unit's supply economy. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)

Pit Stop crew supports mission in Afghanistan



Pvt. Montana Gorey and Spc. Matthew Kraushaar, armament specialists assigned to the 514th Support Maintenance Company, conduct a quick technical inspection on crew-served weapons by verifying the cleanliness and functionality of the weapons. The two armament specialists check all the personal and crew-served weapons for each convoy. (Courtesy Photo)

Story by 1st Lt. Sylvia McDonald
514th SMC, 419th CSSB UPAR

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan- The 514th Support Maintenance Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, based out of Fort Drum, New York, provides maintenance support for convoy escort teams before leaving on missions through a Pit Stop program ran by a crew of mechanics.

The program is intended to accurately identify all faults on equipment before convoys leave on missions. By ensuring proper preventive maintenance checks and services, the program aims to aid companies in eliminating all preventable maintenance issues and contributes to keeping Soldiers safe.

Staff Sgt. Andrew Johnson, Pueblo, Colorado native, Pit Stop noncommissioned officer in charge who oversees the operations as CETs prepare for missions, is responsible for verifying that vehicles receive proper technical inspections from the Pit Stop crew. The crew consists of two automotive vehicle mechanics, two armament specialists for crew-served and personal weapon systems, and two communications and electronics specialists for radios and the Blue Force Tracker system.

The crews' combined efforts help maintain and improve operational readiness for all convoy trucks it services.

"The Pit Stop is a comprehensive quality assurance and quality control technical inspection station," said Johnson. "Our team's number one mission is to ensure the safe operation of vehicles, armament equipment and communications equipment throughout the convoy. It is our priority to fix any deficiencies on the spot and provide any maintenance support needed for the convoy."

One of the more frequent CETs to go through the Pit Stop belongs to the 110th Transportation Company, 419th CSSB. The 110th TC is no stranger to the 514th SMC as both units fall under the same battalion at Fort Drum and trained together months before deployment.

"The Pit Stop is a good additional check that ensures if any deficiencies are found, they are corrected prior to a convoy going out," said Staff Sgt. Brian Weisman, a St. Cloud, Minnesota native, platoon operations noncommissioned officer for 110th TC. "It enables fewer breakdowns during a mission and ensures a successful return."

Since assuming their mission in Afghanistan, the Pit Stop has inspected more than 130 vehicles supporting multiple convoys before leaving on missions. The Pit Stop crew understands that maintenance in the Army allows units to stay combat ready and is vital to the sustainment mission.

Care from the sky



Capt. Glenn M. Cameron, a Bloomfield, N.J. native, executive officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, makes some final checks on a bundle of care packages destined for a remote forward operating base in Afghanistan. Cameron collected packages for months and scheduled the airdrop to take care of Soldiers who may not have access to many of the amenities available at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra
10th Sustainment Brigade PAO

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers may get care packages, while deployed, in the mail from Family, friends or strangers. In forward operating bases located in austere environments, the volume of mail is not as intense compared to here but there are Soldiers who decide to take care of their battle buddies.

Capt. Glenn M. Cameron, a Bloomfield, N.J. native, executive officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, collected care packages for months to distribute to Soldiers in remote FOBs.

Cameron scheduled the delivery with the 647th Quartermaster Company, 10th STB and the 10th SBDE aerial distribution team. He also received assistance from Pfc. James I. Thomas, a Chicago native, HHC supply clerk.

“I would feel great knowing my battle buddy is looking out for me,” said Thomas. “Knowing someone out here is taking the time to send me something means a lot. It doesn’t get any better than Soldiers taking care of Soldiers.”

He said he heard other FOBs do not get mail as often as Bagram and he didn’t understand why but he wanted to do what he could to brighten someone’s day. He compared getting mail while deployed like getting a present on Christmas.

FOBs don’t have the same amenities available. Dining facilities or a post exchange are just some places that may not be available to some Soldiers.

“We have a lot here on Bagram that a lot of Soldiers don’t have on smaller FOBs,” said Cameron. “I want to make sure Soldiers are taken care of. I got an abundance of care packages when I arrived to theater and I decided to collect them and find a place to distribute them where it would make a difference.”

Cameron said he gets excited when he receives care packages and the feeling would be multiplied if he were stationed at a location where it was rare.

Although an aerial delivery is something that is coordinated with multiple agencies, not all Soldiers are aware of the mission.

“It’s always a morale booster,” said Capt. Michael D. McCawley, a chaplain assigned to the 4th Battery, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI). “I didn’t even know it was going to happen.”

He said it was the first care package delivered in 2014. It helped replenish their free issue area where people can get items they need.

“We have the items in front of the chapel,” said McCawley. “It’s always a gathering place now.”

The rarity of deliveries to this particular unit is another reason Cameron wants to increase the efforts of delivering packages throughout Afghanistan.

“I’d like to see if I can get the word out to other units and do this once a month,” said Cameron.

He said the parties involved were more than willing to help. An abundance of care packages typically get delivered during the holiday months so when it is done at a time where it is not expected, it means that much more, he said.



Soldiers assigned to the 647th Quartermaster Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, load a bundle of care packages on a DCH-4 Caribou. The packages were delivered to Soldiers located at a remote forward operating in Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)



Lt. Col. John McDonald, former 10th Sustainment Brigade support operations officer, stands at attention while Col. Willie Rios III, commander of the 10th SBDE, pins his end of tour awards on his chest, which includes a Bronze Star Medal. McDonald was selected to be a battalion commander, while deployed to Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, ending his deployment a few months earlier than originally planned. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)



Spc. Jalen Ridder, a military police officer assigned to the 415th Military Police Detachment, 10th Special Troops Battalion, receives a bag that has been cleared through customs and is ready to be palletized for a flight departing from Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. The Soldiers of the 415th MP Det are currently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Courtesy Photo)

Sgt. 1st Class Roy Flores, contracting officer representative assigned to the 548th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, reads a book to his child with the help of the United through Reading program at the local USO. The program provides parents a chance to make powerful and lasting connections with their children from afar. (Courtesy Photo)



Sgt. Dominique Matthews assigned to the 1229th Transportation Company out of Baltimore, instructs the communications portion of the 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion gun truck academy. During the three week course the soldiers go through a crawl, walk, run, phase of radio communication, to ensure Soldiers fully comprehend the battle drills for convoy operations. (Courtesy Photo)



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