



TASK FORCE MULESKINNER



June 2014

10th Sustainment Brigade

Issue 4

Taking the scenic route Traveling across Afghanistan to deliver goods Pg. 10



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. I want to first thank the brigade for their outstanding achievements over the past 30 days. We continue to provide critical sustainment support and assist with transition efforts in support of U.S. forces and our coalition partners. We recently witnessed a historic achievement by the Afghan people with the successful execution of their elections. The brigade is proud to have shared in their success and to serve in these historic times.

Muleskinner Soldiers continue to operate at

a very high level. We currently have Soldiers across each regional command and their presence with sustaining the force is making a difference. Our focus across the command remains building a disciplined, skilled and trained warfighting formation that is built on dignity and respect for each of our fellow Soldiers, civilians and Afghan partners.

My commitment is to maintain the safety, well-being and force protection of our forces as we near our mid-way point in this deployment. We have programs and systems designed to protect our force; our Soldiers have

the best force protection equipment, training and leaders. Engaged leaders, at all levels, continue to make a difference by developing and fostering an environment of disciplined initiative. That deliberate orders process is what empowers our leaders to execute our mission while taking care of our Soldiers.

I would like to again

thank our Families and friends of the brigade for your support to our Soldiers. We all are proud of our Soldiers commitment to our Army and nation. I continue to remain humbled to have the opportunity to serve with America's finest men and women.

Thanks again for your support to the Muleskinner team!



Col. Willie Rios III, commander of the 10th Sustainment Brigade, greeted Maj. Gen. Darrell K. Williams, commander of the 1st Theater Sustainment Command, to Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan before taking him on a tour of the brigade's footprint June 7. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

COMMAND SGT. MAJ.'S CORNER



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If you ask me what the best decision I ever made was, it was to fully devote myself to being a servant leader. Not just saying that to lead is to serve but truly dedicating myself to serving others; our officers, NCOs, Soldiers, civilians, American people and my Family.

The worst decision I ever made was not having my Family with me at the sergeants major academy. Our Army's many missions separate Families enough. When at all possible, keep the Family together. At the end of the day, that is all you will have.

How do I deal with setbacks? I remind myself

that my position, my status and my health will all fade but the one thing that will stand the test of time is my character, values and morals. Being true to self and doing the right thing every single time helps because those decisions matter.

One of the things I have been focused on lately is how to have Soldiers own up to the decisions they make when it comes to standards, discipline and safety. We can give them all the training in the world. We can set all the right conditions for them to be successful, and we do but at the end of the day it is an individual who makes a decision. It's what is going to keep

you safe or what is going to keep you from hurting yourself in a preventable accident or keep you from doing something that will get you in trouble.

How do we assist people in realizing it ultimately rests on them? I think that by making sure Soldiers understand that the decisions they make impact and affect their career, professional growth and possibly those around them. Your decisions have second and third order affects. I can give you all the positive leadership and training you need but if you don't come to work with the right attitude, state of mind and motivation, you are only going to absorb what you want.

How do we make Soldiers understand that although the training is important, they need to understand they are more than just Soldiers? They

are extensions of their systems. We can give you the best weapon in the world but at the end of the day, it is the Soldier who has to aim and fire it. I can tell you that you need to conduct physical fitness everyday but how much do you put in to it? If you see yourself as an extension of a system, you may understand why you need to be physically fit. You may understand why you are our most valued system. Your mental agility to adjust and think through problems is something we cannot replicate.

We want Soldiers to be great but us wanting them to be great doesn't help the cause until they decide to step forward and accept greatness.

Decide to accept your chosen profession; our great profession of arms. Supporting the climb!



Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Castillo, 10th Sustainment Brigade command sergeant major and Pfc. Whitney Bassett, a human resources specialist assigned to the 10th SBDE, take the second slice at the U.S. Army's birthday cake June 14. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th SBDE PAO)

Calibrated equipment equals combat power



Cpl. Yiliang Lu, a test, measurement, and diagnostic equipment shop foreman assigned to the 514th Support Maintenance Company, troubleshoots and repairs an EEDM503B multimeter. (Photo by Spc. Jason White, 514th Support Maintenance Company)

1st Lt. Sylvia McDonald
419th CSSB UPAR

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The 514th Support Maintenance Company provides quality maintenance support to various units throughout Afghanistan. The test, measurement, and diagnostic equipment shop is critical to their mission success. The shop aids in the support of general and special purpose TMDE and ensures all calibrations meet Department of the Army standards. The accuracy is reported to the National Institute and Technology in Colorado.

There are three TMDE labs supporting units in Afghanistan. The 514th SMC operates the only military lab in theater. The 514th split the section into two teams supporting both Regional Command-North and Regional Command-South.

Staff Sgt. John Santos, a native of Palm Bay, Florida, is the section's senior noncommissioned officer. Santos is in charge of two TMDE maintenance support specialists. This small team supports approximately 20 customers and 1,100 lines of equipment for RC- N.

“The TMDE mission is vital to all customers in theater or home station,” said Santos. “What makes TMDE important is that customers have confidence in the equipment that they are using once it has been calibrated.”

There are various types of equipment the section calibrates ranging from oscilloscopes to signal generators, spectrum analyzers, multi-meters and multiple torque wrenches with a variety of sizes and

dimensions.

“The usual calibration can go for half an hour to 26 hours,” said Santos. “As calibrators, we are expected to know, learn and retain not just a specific type of equipment but a multitude of equipment. We have the ability to adapt from multi-meters to flow meters, which processes the rate of fuel being expended, to tension meters that determine the maximum tension on cables.”

Each unit has a TMDE coordinator who is trained and responsible for identifying items that need calibration.

“My section is responsible for sending out the delinquent list, pick-up list and projected list to each unit's calibration coordinators,” said Santos. “Based off the list, the TMDE coordinators link up with us to ensure their equipment is calibrated or repaired in a timely manner.”

The 514th SMC TMDE section works off their motto, “precision, accuracy and service is what we do so you can carry on the mission.”

Their focus is on increasing overall unit readiness.

“The 514th TMDE came to RC-North, established a rapid footprint and delivered their services to D Company, 1-227th ARB, Task Force First Attack and D Company, 2-227th Team Legion, Task Force First Attack,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ivory Dugar, quality control officer in charge. “The 514th TMDE section is without reproach here at RC-North. It has been our greatest experience to work with these true professionals.”

Sgt. Brandon Jackson, mail transport NCO, and Spc. Erik Townsend, mail transport driver, both assigned to the 502nd Human Resources Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, secure a load of mail with ratchet straps before being moved to a distribution site May 11 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Mail is distributed to the units via ground convoy or air assets such as helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)



Muleskinner brigade tackles postal operations throughout Afghanistan

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Have you ever wondered how a piece of mail makes its way from your hometown in the United States all the way to the little forward operating base here in Afghanistan?

The human resources operations branch mission is to provide technical guidance for units throughout Afghanistan concerning casualty operations, personnel accountability and postal operations.

The 10th Sustainment Brigade is the only unit in theater who handles all postal operations throughout Afghanistan, providing support to the war fighter, coalition partners and civilians.

“We are responsible for planning, integrating, and synchronizing postal operations within the CJOA-A,” said Staff Sgt. Scott R. Klaas, HROB noncommissioned officer in charge. “Our Soldiers are well trained and extremely dedicated to ensuring the mission is accomplished.”

The 10th SBDE has one human resources company

and seven postal platoons that attribute to the success of the postal mission in Afghanistan.

“The mail moves 24 hours a day here,” said Maj. Ardreanna Ruiz, HROB officer in charge. “We are constantly sorting and distributing that mail.”

Mail is distributed to the units via ground convoy or air assets, such as helicopters and fixed wing aircraft.

Postal operations average approximately 9 million pounds of mail each month. The monthly average weight may fluctuate during the holiday seasons as well as when units return home from deployment.

“Christmas is the heaviest time of year,” said Ruiz. “We get a surge, which is about a 30 percent increase to what is normally received.”

She said as soon as the mail comes in, the sorting process begins. The goal is to get it out to the mail room clerks at the company level as quickly as possible.

“Postal operations are our bread and butter,” said Klaas. “We take the mission very seriously and are dedicated to ensuring we get it right.”

I AM BEYOND: Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders honor heritage while deployed to Afghanistan

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Task Force Muleskinner hosted the observance for the Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage month, May 22 here, which was dedicated to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

The history of the 442nd RCT was highlighted because the unit was mostly composed of Soldiers of Japanese descent who volunteered to fight in World War II even after their families were subject to internment. The 442nd RCT is considered to be the most decorated infantry regiment in the history of the U.S. Army, with 21 of its members receiving the Medal of Honor during the war.

Every year during the month of May the Army comes together to celebrate and honor the many ways Asian American and Pacific Islanders helped forge our great country.

As Soldiers entered the tent for the observance they were presented with a lei, a garland of flowers worn around the neck, adding a festive twist to the celebration.

The celebration started off with the national anthem followed by the invocation given by Capt. Jueun Kim, the 10th Special Troops Battalion chaplain.

The first event of the celebration was a muay thai demonstration performed by students of The House Muay Thai Kickboxing class. The demonstration consisted of two rounds. The first round was between two female fighters and the second was between two male fighters. The fighters showcased the different techniques and styles of muay thai kickboxing. After the muay thai demonstration was complete, the stage was cleared for the next performance.

Up next were the Polynesian dance teams who performed authentic Pacific island dances. The dance teams performed the Haka, Te Tama Maohi, Tausagi Mai Manu e and the O Le Tauluga. The dance and war cries added to the atmosphere of the celebration.

Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia T. Vimoto the senior enlisted leader for International Security Assistant



Pfc. Joseph Manaea, a mail clerk assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade, participates in a dance called Haka as part of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month celebration May 22 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Force Joint Command, was the guest speaker for the celebration.

Vimoto explained how far Asian American and Pacific Islanders have come throughout history. How some were Soldiers and fought to preserve the union between the North and South, and others are currently serving as advisors to President Barack Obama.

“More than 36,000 Asian American and Pacific Islander Soldiers serve in today’s Army,” said Vimoto. “Despite facing racial discrimination, hatred, violence, bigotry and even internment, Asian American and Pacific Islanders served this country with honor and patriotism.”

The ceremony came to a close after Kim gave the final invocation in Korean.

“The observance was fantastic, I couldn’t have asked for a better outcome,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jefferson Henry, 10th SBDE equal opportunity advisor and event coordinator. “It’s great to see how proud people are of their heritage, as well as people of different cultures and ethnicities taking their time to learn and participate in the dances and demonstrations truly shows an interest in diversifying their knowledge of other cultures.”

At the end of the celebration, to show their appreciation, Col. Willie Rios III, commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Jose A. Castillo, senior enlisted advisor for the 10th SBDE, presented Vimoto with a Samoan battle club with the brigade’s coin inlaid.



Sgt. Nate Mast, shop noncommissioned officer in charge, a Grand Rapids, Michigan native assigned to 2nd Platoon, 514th Support Maintenance Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, welds the frame of a box that will be used to keep loose items in the shop consolidated May 28 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. The shop does a lot of custom jobs as well, which may help increase morale. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Sparks fly in the allied trade shop

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

BARGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers assigned to 2nd Platoon, 514th Support Maintenance Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, provide fabrication and metal work here to meet the needs and enhance the safety of the Soldiers who put their lives on the line every time they roll out on a mission.

No matter what the temperature is outside, the allied trade specialist work with extremely hot plasma cutters, bench grinders, welders and torches to ensure their mission to support the warfighter is

accomplished.

Sgt. Nate Mast, shop noncommissioned officer in charge, a Grand Rapids, Michigan native assigned to 2nd Platoon, said their mission is to support any needs that may come up from those here on BAF. He receives approximately 5-10 work orders a week.

Soldiers in the shop have worked on an array of work orders from fabricating bumpers for the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles to demilitarizing arms secured from enemy weapons caches.

With their experience and knowledge, allied trade specialists may be seen as problem solvers.

“Recently, a unit was having

issues with their ammo getting stuck in the ammo can so we made some modifications to allow the ammo to feed into the weapon system freely,” said Sgt. Robert Fair, the shop foreman, a Montgomery, Alabama native assigned to 2nd Platoon.

The shop has supported military units and civilian companies throughout BAF, sometimes just by providing metal to the units who may not have access to it.

“We also help with container repair and support for any of the containers that have to go back to the states,” said Mast. “We patch the holes and repair or replace the seals.”

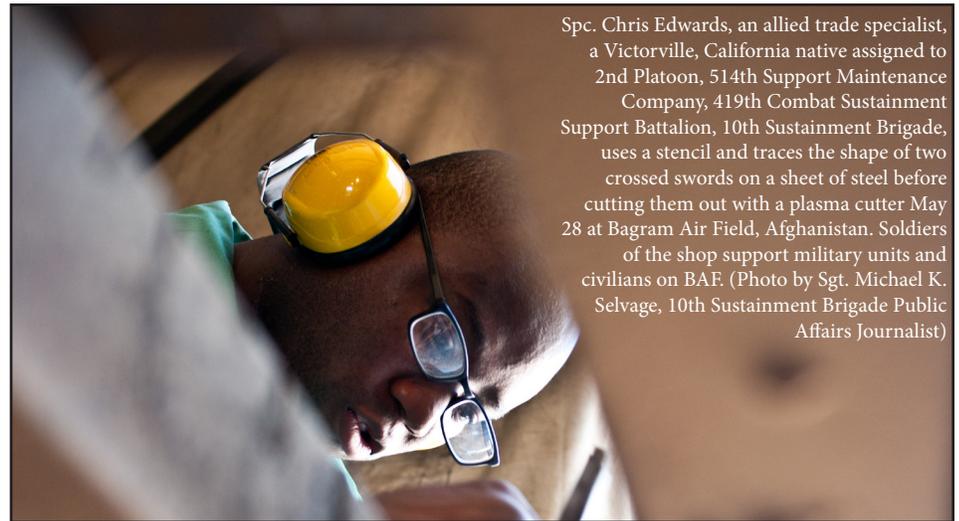
The Soldiers understand their

responsibility of mission support and strive to improve themselves each day.

“Back in the states we really don’t get to do our job because there isn’t a big demand for it,” said Pfc. Toney Chambers, an allied trade specialist, an Atlanta, Georgia native assigned to 2nd Platoon. “But here we are constantly busy doing our job. I like that.”

Receiving work orders requesting a second weapon system mount in the turret or repairs to a trucks Q-Net, a lightweight armor solution capable of protecting a wide range of tactical and lightly armored vehicles against rocket propelled grenades, is not uncommon.

“We have a very productive atmosphere in the shop,” said Mast. “I let them know what needs to be done and they do it their way to



Spc. Chris Edwards, an allied trade specialist, a Victorville, California native assigned to 2nd Platoon, 514th Support Maintenance Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, uses a stencil and traces the shape of two crossed swords on a sheet of steel before cutting them out with a plasma cutter May 28 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. Soldiers of the shop support military units and civilians on BAE. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

accomplish the mission.”

The shop does a lot of custom jobs as well, which may help increase morale.

“There are a lot of commemorative awards for units getting ready to leave,” said Mast. “Commands request things like guidon stands or ornaments for

someone’s desk and we make it happen.”

Soldiers of the shop embrace their duties as allied trade specialist.

“Anything you can think of we can probably do it,” said Chambers. “Not even probably, we will do it.”



Pfc. Toney Chambers, an allied trade specialist, an Atlanta, Georgia native assigned to 2nd Platoon, 514th Support Maintenance Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, uses a plasma cutter to cut through a sheet of steel May 28 at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan. With their experience and knowledge, allied trade specialists may be seen as problem solvers. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

Taking the scenic route

Traveling across Afghanistan to deliver goods



A Soldier assigned to the 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, provides security at the Salang Pass after his convoy escort team halted for a quick refuel. Soldiers who served as gunners, drivers or dismounts rotated positions during the mission, which allowed them to execute their training in multiple roles throughout the operation. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers assigned to 1st Platoon, 114th Transportation Company, Minnesota National Guard, and 1st Platoon, 730th Transportation Company, Army Reserve unit from California, joined forces to conduct a convoy escort team mission to pick up goods from a remote forward operating base in Regional Command-North and transition them to here.

CET operations are the most dangerous type of mission logisticians do throughout Afghanistan.

Master Sgt. James Sabyan, convoy commander assigned to 1st Platoon, 114th TC said Soldiers prepared for their mission by conducting preventive maintenance checks and services on their vehicles and ensuring quality assurance/quality control inspections were completed. They conducted a map reconnaissance, a manifest convoy brief and called ahead to make sure the loads were ready.

Soldiers also test fired weapon systems and ensured communication equipment was operational among many other checks.

Leaders conducted their pre-combat checks before rolling out the gate and Soldiers from both companies

arrived to wish the convoy safe travels.

The 114th TC took the lead on the first leg of the trip. Soldiers assigned to the 730th TC recently arrived to Afghanistan and this mission allowed them the opportunity to ask questions about how tactics, techniques and procedures may be implemented during certain scenarios as they watched road-tested warriors execute the mission.

“I’m glad we got paired up with the 114th,” said Sgt. 1st Class William Gentry, convoy commander assigned to 1st Platoon, 730th TC. “They were the perfect unit to work with. They were very willing to give up their knowledge.”

The two platoons built a relationship based on trust and understanding during the mission.

“The knowledge is there,” said Sabyan. “The leadership is there. They just had to get rubber to the road and make things happen. I’m confident they will do great on their own when they start running missions.”

The respect among Soldiers was evident in the way they spoke about each other and how they worked as a team.

“They have been really respectful,” said Spc. Javier Toyos, a gunner assigned to the 730th TC. “They have

been here before so their experience helps people who have not been here like me. They know what they are doing.”

Sabyan said although there are sustainment missions being conducted, lately, most have been to transition equipment.

Items such as generators, vehicles and containers full of equipment were among the loads that were being transported by host nation trucks.

Transportation movement requests were checked and Soldiers verified the National Afghan Trucking vehicles were mission capable by visually checking oil and fuel levels, tire tread and batteries.

After the inspections, leaders held meetings to ensure the 730th TC Soldiers were ready to take the lead on the return trip.

Gentry said the team was excited and prepared well, which made him feel comfortable with his team being able to accomplish the mission.

Soldiers were given a 24-hour rest period before preparations were made for the trip back.

Gunners and dismounts exchanged duties with drivers and truck commander’s, which allowed them to experience the mission from a new perspective and put their training to the test.

The roads were narrow at times and the Salang Pass tunnels were riddled with traffic. A quick fuel stop allowed some Soldiers to dismount and view the environment in a more intimate way.

Staff Sgt. Natale A. Neely, assistant convoy commander assigned to the 730th TC, said the view was surreal.

“It looked fake,” said Neely. “Like a cartoon.”



Vehicles from the 114th Transportation Company and 730th Transportation Company convoy escort team prepare to enter several tunnels located at the Salang Pass in Afghanistan during a mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. The CET provides security for National Afghan Trucking vehicles to ensure the loads arrive to their destination safely. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)

Several stops were made to check on trucks that were having maintenance issues but, for the most part, the mission was accomplished safely.

Gentry said his Soldiers did a good job driving, a vehicle that they typically don’t drive, on the austere Afghan terrain.

After the mission was complete, sensitive items were accounted for, trucks were cleaned and a debrief with the battalion intelligence section was conducted.

Soldiers went to get some rest. They know they have many missions ahead. Logisticians will continue to travel across Afghanistan to ensure sustainment operations are successful as well as the transition of equipment in order to assist the Army with meeting its goals in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Soldiers assigned to the 114th Transportation Company and 730th Transportation Company halt their convoy escort team momentarily to refuel their vehicles, which included Mine Resistant Ambush Protected trucks. Stops were kept to a minimum and only done when absolutely necessary to ensure the mission was accomplished successfully. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)



Spc. Keshab Ghosh, right, a gunner assigned to 730th Transportation Company, checks the oil level of a host nation truck to ensure it is mission capable. Soldiers also checked fuel levels, tire tread and batteries to minimize maintenance issues they may have encountered during the mission. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Luis Saavedra, 10th Sustainment Brigade PAO)



A Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office employee utilizes a torch to destroy contraband seized by Soldiers assigned to the 415th Military Police Company, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade. The 415th MP CO's mission while deployed to Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan is focused on customs operations. (Courtesy Photo)

Sgt. Zachary Schellinger
415th Military Police Company UPAR

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Customs agents assigned to the 415th Military Police Company dispose of personal property seized during customs clearance operations weekly here.

For many people departing theater, part of their re-deployment process includes getting cleared by customs agents. Most are cleared without any issues, but every day agents confiscate personal property due to improper paperwork, packaging or other prohibitions.

Once confiscated, the items must be disposed of in accordance with Army Regulation 195-5. The disposal process for metallic items includes being destroyed via oxyacetylene torches. The flame and ensuing sparks make for a brilliant show, but most of the destruction is avoidable if a little research and proper procedure is followed.

Processing through customs is comparable to checks conducted by the Transportation Security Administration at airports. Despite the subtle differences, the similarities include the confiscation of belongings if necessary. Before any items are confiscated, service

members are given a brief that details prohibited and restricted items, procedures for being cleared, and they are allotted a ten-minute amnesty period to dispose of any non-clearable items before being processed.

“Most items that get seized by customs agents are usually due to individuals not following proper procedures or being unaware of which bag they have their knives or weapons magazines in,” said Sgt. Casey Schuetz, a customs agent assigned to the 415th MP Det.

To ensure personally purchased multi-tools, knives or other bladed instruments make it to their final destination, it may be placed in checked baggage. However, some items simply cannot be brought back regardless of which bag the item is in.

The prohibited items list includes martial arts weapons such as nunchucks and throwing stars. Customs personnel simply cannot allow those or similar weapons to make it into the U.S. Soldiers may check with customs prior to purchasing a weapon to ensure it was not acquired only to be left behind.

Money can be needlessly wasted

on items other than weaponry as well.

“Service members need to be aware of the restrictions placed upon counterfeit items,” said Staff Sgt. Erik Haugen, a customs agent assigned to the 415th MP Det. The fact that an item is sold in an on-post bazaar does not guarantee its clearance through customs.

Service members are allowed one of each like-counterfeit item. For example, one watch, one purse, one DVD, DVD set and one set of headphones. Any additional like items must be confiscated and eventually destroyed.

“The most commonly seized counterfeit items are Beats headphones and watches,” said Haugen.

Some items really shouldn't need an explanation as to why they are considered prohibited, for example, the bottom half of a mortar round. Although some people might consider them interesting, some people would not seriously consider trying to bring these items through an airport in the U.S. without some serious repercussions; customs in Afghanistan is no different.

Some war souvenirs are permissible. Expended demilitarized brass and very small pieces of shrapnel are examples. People simply need the proper paperwork with a customs clearance stamp, which can be obtained at a customs building.

If you speak to a customs agents they might tell you they don't enjoy confiscating personal belongings because seized property equals unwanted paperwork. To ensure that your personal property is not subjected to 6,000 degrees Fahrenheit, people can reference Central Command Regulation 600-10 or speak with a customs agent.

Nations gather to observe Memorial Day



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hurndon, the senior enlisted leader of both the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and Regional Command-North, recognizes service members who have fallen on battlefields at a Memorial Day ceremony held at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan May 26. (Photo by Sgt. Faxiss Ayuso, 548th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion)

1st Lt. Josephyne Omokeye
548th CSSB UPAR

CAMP MARMAL, Afghanistan – The Regional Command-North headquarters garrison command hosted a ceremony in observance of Memorial Day at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan May 26.

Initially called Decoration Day, the day of remembrance originated in the U.S. Memorial Day honors men and women who have died in service of the U.S. The first Decoration Day was celebrated on May 30, 1868, having been designated as a holiday by Gen. John Logan, the national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic.

On that day, at the Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, the graves of 20,000 U.S. Union and Confederate Soldiers were decorated by approximately 5,000 people.

Since World War I, the U.S. has used the holiday to commemorate the U.S. fallen of any war. The National Holiday Act of 1971 designated Memorial Day to be celebrated the last Monday in May. In December 2000, the National Moment of Remembrance was passed. It encourages Americans at 3 p.m. local time wherever they are to pause for a moment of silence or to listen to “Taps.”

Over the years, the name and date have since

changed, however, the purpose and motivation behind this significant American event have not. Leaders of RC-N stuck to the tradition of honoring U.S. service members, however, they went a step further by extending an invitation to people of all nations and services to attend. Soldiers, civilians, and contractors of more than a dozen nations to include: Mongolia, Germany, Croatia and the U.S. filled many of the seats.

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Hurndon, the senior enlisted leader of both the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and RC-N, recognized the countless Afghan National Security Forces and more than 3,441 International Security Assistance Force coalition service members who have fallen on battlefields across Afghanistan since Operation Enduring Freedom commenced October 7, 2001.

More than 2,300 were U.S. service members. Camp Mike Spann, an American outpost in RC-N, was named in memory of Michael Spann, a paramilitary operations officer assigned to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

In 2001, during an uprising led by Taliban prisoners, Spann became the first American killed in the Afghan war.

“C.I.A. Agent Johnny Michael Spann was killed November 25, 2001 during the Battle of Qala-i-Jangi



Multi-national Soldiers, civilians, and contractors attend a Memorial Day ceremony held at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan May 26. (Photo by Sgt. Faxiss Ayuso, Task Force Sword human resources NCO)

Fortress in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan,” Hurndon said. “He was the very first in this fight to give his life so that others might live.”

Participants in the event came from near and far to support the ceremony. The national anthem was sung by 1st Sgt. Kenneth Blackstone, the senior enlisted leader of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 48th IBCT. Blackstone flew in from Kabul.

2nd Lt. Andrew Christ, a chemical officer assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group visited to perform as a guest Bagpiper. Christ, a U.S. Citadel graduate who adorned a traditional Scottish blue kilt and brought his own bagpipes, played “Amazing Grace.” After the song was complete, a firing party from 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment delivered a 21 gun salute.

548th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, the logistics task force of RC-N, provided logistical and administrative support for the event.

The tone of the gathering was solemn, yet prideful. The intent was to be conscious of the enormous impact made by the many who have served and fallen.

Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia Vimoto, the ISAF Joint Command senior enlisted leader, contributed as a guest speaker. He wanted attendees to recognize three important groups during the day of remembrance: those who served, those who had served and made the ultimate sacrifice, and those who are left to carry on.

Vimoto discussed the story of a young man, the

eldest of his siblings, who enlisted in the U.S. Army after graduating from high school. The young man proudly followed his father into military service, both eventually assigned to Italy and deploying to Afghanistan in 2007.

Pfc. Timothy R. Vimoto, a paratrooper assigned to 173rd Airborne Brigade, was killed in action on June 5, 2007 in Kunar Province, Afghanistan.

“That boy,” said Vimoto, “was my son.”



2nd Lt. Andrew Christ, a chemical officer assigned to 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), performs as a guest bagpiper during a Memorial Day ceremony held at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan May 26. (Photo by Sgt. Faxiss Ayuso, Task Force Sword human resources NCO)

Spc. Sara Mays, radio operator specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, assists a Soldier with computer access at Kandahar Air Field USO June 14. Mays uses the skills she has acquired as the battalions help desk representative with computer problems and answering questions during her time as a volunteer. (Courtesy Photo)

Driven by selfless service

Sgt. Lauren Amey
142nd CSSB UPAR

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD – Afghanistan – Spc. Sara Mays, a Cambria County, Pennsylvania native, radio operator specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, was awarded the Outstanding Military Service Medal June 3.

Mays began volunteering April 29 originally for promotion points. As she continued her service she now volunteers for other reasons. “I have made some great friends there that I hope to see again as my career progresses,” said Mays. At 40 hours the USO presented Mays with a coin for her time, and now that she has reached the hundred hour mark she was presented with the medal.

“Volunteering can take a lot

of energy,” said Sgt. 1st Class Edward Moor, HHC company first sergeant, “The level of passion and excitement Mays has doesn’t allow the craziness of the unknown overwhelm or bring her down.”

Some of Mays’ duties at the USO include working at the help desk for phone and computer access and coordinating events to include karaoke night, trivia contests and gaming competitions. Although her schedule is packed with work, taking three college classes and spending a minimum of an hour a day at the gym, she still finds the time to give back.

“It’s a good way to get away from the stresses at work, said Mays. “No one has a negative attitude there.” Mays joined the Army in 2010 and recently volunteered to deploy.

“I am a single Soldier who hadn’t deployed yet and took the opportunity when it was presented,”

said Mays.

With the end of her first deployment drawing to a close, she is still giving 10 hours a week to the USO and plans to continue to do so until it is time for her to leave.

“What started as an avenue for promotion has turned into a very fulfilling part of deployment,” said Mays. “I like to be there to help and spend time with fellow Soldiers and the staff.”

Soldiers make a difference every day and some decide to go above and beyond to take care of their battle buddies.

“When individuals use their talent, passion and humor, they bring life in to the tasks at hand,” said Moor. “Mays’ selfless service is a testament to her enormous heart and giving spirit. She is a true professional.”

Finance Soldiers keeping warfighters focused



Capt. Walt Simkins, the deputy disbursing officer assigned to the 368th Financial Management Support Unit, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, counts more than \$415,000 as part of the safe transfer. The disbursing office is where cash is disbursed to the Soldiers who need it. (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 – For the Soldiers assigned to the 368th Financial Management Support Unit, 10th Special Troops Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, the mission isn't focused on combat patrols or guarding entrance control points, but ensuring warfighters are financially ready at all times.

The 10th SBDE is the only sustainment brigade providing sustainment support for all of Afghanistan, which includes finance. The 368th FMSU provides military pay support, disbursing operations, commercial vending services and banking assistance here.

Staff Sgt. Michelle Payne, senior financial management advisor assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th STB, 10th SBDE, said there are less than 200 finance personnel that handle the entire finance mission for the Combined Joint Operational Area – Afghanistan.

“Military pay support is for the warfighters,” said Payne. “If they have any pay issues, the military pay

office will assist them with getting their pay corrected and making sure that their entitlements are correct and paid properly.”

The disbursing office is where cash is disbursed to the Soldiers who need it. Most FOB's, there are no ATM's for U.S. currency. The 368th FMSU and subordinate detachments can have anywhere from \$9-15 million worth in U.S. and foreign currency at any time to support the warfighters.

“The disbursing office is for the Soldiers in the remote locations where they don't have access to an Eagle Cash kiosk,” said Payne.

The Eagle Cash Card is like a debit card and functions as an electronic check.

“You load your Eagle Cash Card with funds from your account and after 72 business hours the money will be debited from your account,” said Staff Sgt. Nicole Guderjohn, detachment noncommissioned officer in charge and dispersing agent assigned to the 368th FMSU.

Another service provided by the 368th FMSU is the contracting vendor service.

The contracting vendor service is how the contractors who provide services throughout the CJOA-A are paid.

The banking electronic fund transfer assistance center assists in making sure the banks are operating properly. It also helps ensure the finance office can get money when it is needed.

The disbursing section is where unit paying agents get funded. This is how finance really affects the counterinsurgency effort.

“A paying agent is a service member who is designated by their unit to spend physical cash, said Capt. Walt Simkins, the deputy disbursing officer assigned to the 368th FMSU. “They could be doing anything from making condolence payments to locals whom we accidentally hurt in operations, to purchasing gravel at a remote location to build up their operating base.”

The finance operation is an intricate part of the sustainment mission.

“The main focus of finance in theater since 2008 has been removing U.S. currency from the battlefield,” said Guderjohn. “I believe that we have been successful with implementing the Eagle Cash Card as opposed to Soldiers carrying cash around.”

Each month the 368th FMSU ships the U.S. currency to Kuwait and from there it is sent to Germany where

it is held for the U.S. Federal Reserve. They also fund the sites with Afghani to pay the vendors in the local currency.

The reason behind removing U.S. currency from the battlefield is to help the Afghan people stand up their banking system.

“We are here to do more than just fight our battle,” said Guderjohn. “We’re here to help build their economy.”

Finance is important and most people may not realize it until they need the support.

“Going out to these outlying FOBs is the most satisfying thing we do,” said Guderjohn. “When you show up at these places that have next to nothing for amenities, compared to the larger FOBs, [the Soldiers] act like we are doing them a favor. I am continuously left speechless because this is just my job. It’s a very humbling experience.”

The 368th FMSU has several locations set up to sustain the financial operations throughout Afghanistan. Teams are sent out with the capabilities to assist and support the warfighters with the same support as the larger sites.

“Our mission is supporting the warfighters,” said Guderjohn. “The crew I have will do whatever it takes to ensure those warfighters are taken care of to the best of our ability.”



The 368th FMSU and subordinate detachments can have anywhere from \$9-15 million worth in U.S. and foreign currency at any time to support the warfighters. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)



**Sustaining the Line!
First Team!
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1st Theater Sustainment Command (Forward)

Sustainer of the Week



SGT STANLEY TYLER

Heavy Wheeled Driver, 88M

110TH TC, 419th CSSB, 10th SB

Where are you from: Wallace, NC

What are your hobbies: Gym, Video Games, Sports

What is your favorite activity in Kuwait/Afghanistan and back home: Working out in the gym, spending time with friends and Family, playing video games and having cookouts.

What are you most proud of and why? Proud of the NCO I have become and the impact on my Soldiers lives and career.

In your opinion, what is the most important Army value? Selfless Service. I try to be an example of a tactical and caring leader on a daily basis to ensure a unit success on all levels.

What are your future goals? To continue my career as long as possible while growing and progressing along the way.

Why Soldier is being recommended: SGT Stanley Tyler is an outstanding NCO who works long hours in the company operations cell. His daily performance exceeds all expectations from the company leadership. He communicated effectively with convoy escort teams while they are out on mission throughout RC-East as well as performing a multitude of duties which includes coordinating pick up and transportation for the Soldier between Camp Warrior and the company area and motor pool; planning, coordinating and executing on FOB missions, accurately processes daily reports to battalion S3 as well as preparing the daily Company Update Brief for the commander.

SGT Tyler is a shining example of a young hard charging SGT! That's why he's a Black Knight!

239th

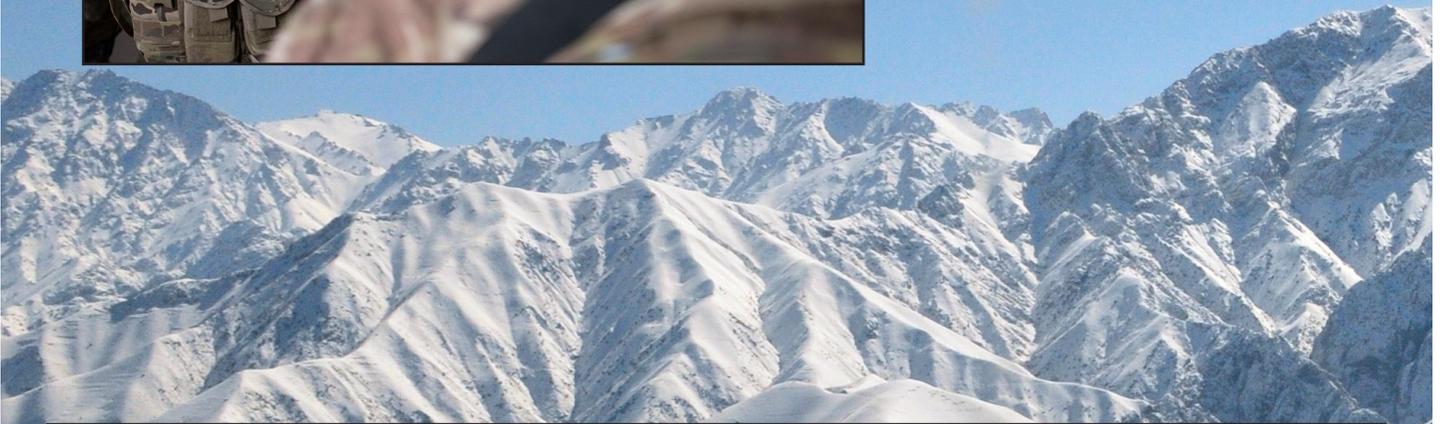
ARMY BIRTHDAY

AMERICA'S ARMY: OUR PROFESSION





Sergeant 1st Class Jose Ramirez, a convoy commander assigned to the 730th Transportation Company, briefs his convoy escort team before heading out on mission from Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan May 31. The mission brief is always executed in order to review battle drills, conduct pre-combat checks and inspections as well as disseminate updated information on significant activity and updated intelligence. (Photo by Spc. Barclay Fernandez, 730th Transportation Company)



President Barack Obama thanks deployed troops for their sacrifices during his surprise visit to Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan May 25. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)



Sgt. 1st Class Bernard Lithkousky, command support team noncommissioned officer in charge assigned to the 10th Sustainment Brigade, provides security during a key leader engagement between the 10th SBDE command team and Lt. Gen. Mohammad Abdul Rajab, chief of the Salang maintenance department, May 27. The command team met with Rajab in an attempt to strengthen the partnership with the Afghan leader. (Photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage, 10th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Journalist)

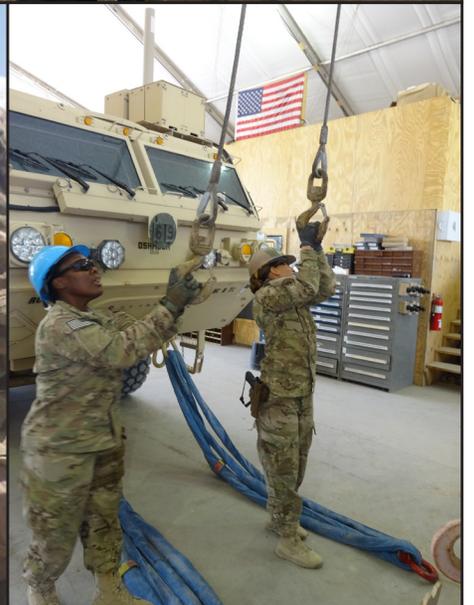
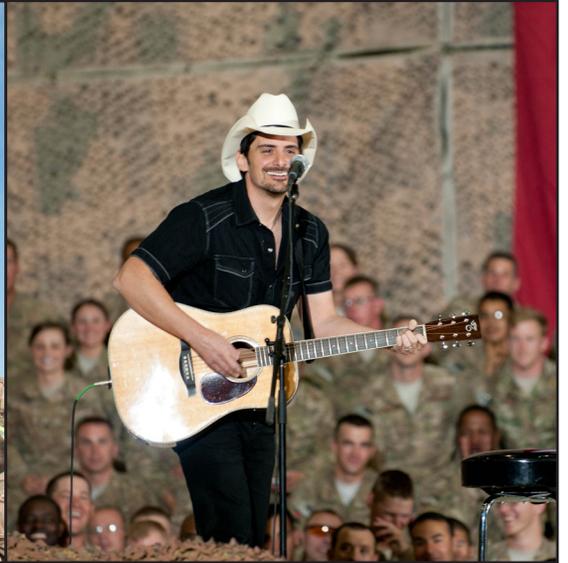


Two maintenance Soldiers assigned to the 1569th Transportation Company, provide instructions to 2nd Lt. Alexandra Feliciano on the proper procedures to replace a tire on a heavy expanded mobility tactical truck with a load handling system. (Courtesy Photo)

MULESKINNERS GET'N IT!



MULESKINNERS GET'N IT!



LEADERS, SOLDIERS, FAMILIES AND CIVILIANS: MANAGE YOUR RISK

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