



KEYSTONE

Aviation

TF Avenger Soldiers...

Keep on, Truckin'

In this issue: Retiring to a Gun in the Sun
Third Time is a Charm
Keystone Vignettes



KEYSTONE

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KEYSTONE

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Sgt. Steven Gabriel of Lebanon, Pa., is a motor sergeant in the 628th Aviation Support Battalion, 28th Combat Aviation Brigade. He is responsible for ensuring the Truck Platoon's vehicles are well-maintained and mission-ready. (Photo by Sgt. Andy Mehler)

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Keep on Truckin'

Story and Photos by Sgt. Andy Mehler

When a deployed unit begins to approach its end-of-tour date, many Soldiers begin to shift their focus from deployment to re-deployment. For those involved in the logistics, focus is everything.

Each piece of unit-owned equipment must be accounted for and prepared for shipment back home. It's a time of careful planning, cleaning, counting and packing.

But what happens in a support unit responsible for performing its mission until the final moment? How does a section perform its duties while preparing for a big move? Mechanics, for example, face the pressures of repairing vehicles in a timely manner while also taking the necessary steps to shut down their operations.

Sgt. Nic Light is a mechanic, deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom to Contingency Operating Base Adder with Headquarters Supply Company, 628th Aviation Support Battalion, as a part of the mobilization of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade. Light works in the 628th ASB's motor pool, where the units park their vehicles and repairs are made.

Light, a Lebanon, Pa., native, said the motor pool's mechanics collectively operate nearly 24 hours each day. They are grouped into work teams. While some mechanics work on vehicle repairs and maintenance, other teams are tasked with cleaning and packing tools. Light said they must pull all tools and equipment from their storage trailers, inventory them, clean them individually, pressure wash the trailer and then replace all the tools inside. The storage trailer is then locked until it can be inspected by customs officials for shipment back home. It is a big job to inventory and clean the mobile tool sets, but according to Light, "They are doing a hell of a job on cleaning tools, which have to be completely dust and dirt free." That's not an easy task in a desert environment.

Light said they faced another big hurdle as well. No support was in place for non-tactical vehicles, the civilian-model trucks and sport-utility vehicles used around the camp. "We had to build up a parts stock and create an inventory for them," he said. According to Light, the mechanics had to research all of the parts and corresponding stock numbers for the civilian vehicles and enter them into their existing military parts data base for future ordering needs.



Sgt. Nic Light of Lebanon, Pa., and Spc. Andrew Carpenter of Newmans town, inspect a truck at COB Adder, Iraq. Light and Carpenter are mechanics in the 628th Aviation Support Battalion.

Updating the parts inventory to include civilian vehicles will greatly assist the incoming unit which will take over maintenance operations. Light said very soon the mechanics will be unable to order parts because their online system will be shut down, and the order of future items needed for repairs will become the responsibility of the incoming replacement unit. That could mean that an inoperable vehicle may remain off the road until the replacement unit is able to fix it. To avoid that possibility, the maintenance crew is working hard to quickly get disabled vehicles back on the road and mission-ready, while at the same time preparing to shut down and head back home. The chief maintenance warrant officer who supervises the mechanic's operation is Chief Warrant Officer 4 Blaine McKivison, a resident of Annville, Pa.

The motor pool is also the operations area for the Truck Platoon of Company A, 628th ASB, which has been tasked with transporting cargo around COB Adder. As their deployment winds down here, the Truck Platoon remains very busy as they continue to assist in the expansion of the camp. The platoon has been using their tractor and trailer vehicles to haul large storage containers, housing trailers for the growing living areas, as well as cement security walls and road barriers that are placed around the living areas for added safety.

The platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Douglas Kimmel, a



Keep on Truckin'

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Manheim, Pa., resident, supervises the platoon's operations and coordinates missions with the battalion leadership. The motor sergeants, Sgt. Steven Gabriel of Kane, Pa., and Sgt. Michal Franklin of Ephrata, Pa., have been tasked with ensuring the platoon's vehicles are well-maintained and mission-ready. According to Kimmel, his platoon will use their assigned vehicles until they turn over their transportation operations

to the incoming unit, which will then sign for those same vehicles.

"The only thing that could potentially be an issue for us is if the mechanics have already discontinued their operations prior to our missions being completed," Kimmel said. As their deployment shortens, the Truck Platoon will continue to assist the battalion, brigade and the the camp up until they are ready to travel home.

Even as Soldiers prepare to go

back home, their missions at COB Adder remain top priority. The Soldiers of the 628th ASB continue to keep support operations flowing in anticipation of turning over all responsibilities to their replacement units. When the 628th ASB does return home, the battalion can rest assured it has served the 28th CAB well, and the men and women of the 628th can look back on this deployment with a sense of pride and accomplishment.

Sgt. Michael Franklin of Ephrata, Pa., is a motor sergeant in the 628th Aviation Support Battalion, 28th Combat Aviation Brigade. He is responsible for ensuring the Truck Platoon's vehicles are well-maintained and mission-ready.



KEYSTONE VIGNETTES



Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Brubaker fuels the generator that keeps the battalion tactical operations center running with communications while overseeing the battalion TOC's night shift. He is the operations sergeant for Headquarters Support Company, 628th Aviation Support Battalion.

He has been with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard for 13 years and resides in Annville, Pa., with his wife of six years, Kristin, and their four-year-old son.

"I've learned during the course of this deployment that Soldiers are capable of amazing things when pushed past their full potential. They accomplish things they never thought they could do," he said. (Photo by Sgt. James Waltz)

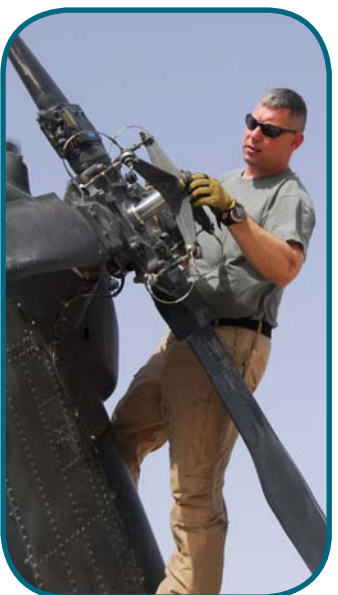
Spc. Branndyn M. Collins uses a forklift to move very important parts to repair a Blackhawk. Collins was a full-time student at the University of Pittsburgh prior to deployment. He resides in Pittsburgh with his two-year-old daughter Amani. He said he joined the National Guard four years ago because he was bored and wanted to see the world and find something exciting to do. (Photo by Sgt. James Waltz)



Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Neal has already served eight of his 17 years of service in Alaska. When he returns to Alaska from his current deployment, his second combat tour, the Brewton, Ala., native plans to retire in Alaska. "I live for flying and fishing and Alaska is a great place to do both," said Neal. He said he also likes Alaska's cold weather. He said this while performing pre-flight maintenance on top of the tail of a Blackhawk helicopter on a 120-degree day in southern Iraq.

His nine-year-old daughter shares his passion for fishing, going with Dad fishing salt water for halibut and fresh water for salmon. "We go with groups on a big boat for the sea fishing," he said.

Neal flies MEDEVAC with Charlie Company 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment, an active-Army unit currently attached to the 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment. While stationed at Fort Wainwright, Alaska, he participated in MAST, Military Assistance to Safety and Traffic, program aiding the local community with rescue and MEDEVAC capability. Neal served in Korea in 1997 and 1998 and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2005 and 2006. (Photo by Sgt. Neil Gussman)



Spc. Josue Manzano and Spc. Tasha Wilcosky, both members of the 628th Aviation Support Battalion, use a computer to research parts for a Blackhawk helicopter.

Manzano is from Lebanon, Pa., and this is his third year in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard as a supply specialist. He plans to use his GI Bill to complete his degree in computer networking at Harrisburg Area Community College in Harrisburg, Pa.

Wilcosky is also a supply specialist and she is from Pottsville, Pa. This is her fifth year working in supply. She is hoping to get a technician job at Fort Indiantown Gap as a material handler when she returns.

"(While deployed,) I have learned how to drive a bus, forklift and a humvee," she said. (Photo by Sgt. James Waltz)



Retiring to... A Gun in the Sun

Story and Photo by Sgt. Neil Gussman

If you're looking for retirement advice, don't ask Master Sgt. William Foster, 55, a door gunner in Company B, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment. The former Punxsutawney, Pa., police department patrol sergeant did not move to Florida and did not take a part-time job like many retirees. 'Punxsutawney Bill,' as he is known in the town he has lived in all of his life, decided to volunteer as a door gunner and go to Iraq for retirement.

Granted, he got the sun retirees crave back home. But most retirees don't load a Gator with a half-dozen guns six days a week in the afternoon sun and help



Master Sgt. William Foster of Punxsutawney, Pa., a door gunner in Company B, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment, inspects weapons prior to a flight. He volunteered to deploy with the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade after retiring as a police department patrol sergeant in his hometown.

prepare a CH-47 Chinook helicopter for a long, possibly all-night, mission.

Although Iraq is low on the list of destinations retirement planners recommend, Foster believes this is the right place for him to be and the right time for him to be here.

"My younger son deployed just ahead of me as a sniper with 112th (a Pennsylvania Army National Guard unit in the 56th Stryker Brigade)," said Foster. "I wanted to be here at the same time, even if we were not in the same place. My older son is working on a master's degree in San Diego and my daughter is at Lock Haven University in physician's assistant training. They are all doing great. It was a good time to go."

Before deployment, Foster served nearly half of each year as a marksmanship instructor for the Pennsylvania Army National Guard.

"I have been leading training since 1996," he said. "After a while you have to get out from behind the podium and use the weapons in the field."

"We (Pennsylvania's Marksmanship Team Unit) instruct active-duty Army. I did not want to stand in front of those guys without first-hand experience in Iraq," said Foster, who plans to return to marksmanship instruction after deployment. "God-willing and the body doesn't fall apart, I've got another five years until I turn 60."

Foster first enlisted in 1972, served four years, went to college, was commissioned in 1979, and served as an officer until 1996 when he resigned his commission. He started over again as a sergeant and was promoted to master sergeant this month by Maj. Gen. Randall Marchi, 28th Infantry Division commanding general, in a ceremony in Iraq.

Foster plans to retire in Punxsutawney and have weekends free to do as he likes and get involved with his beloved community as a volunteer for the first time in forty years.

"I am going to make weekend plans. I haven't done that since high school," said Foster. "In fact, I may grow a beard. I haven't had facial hair since high school either."

The Third Time is a Charm

Story and Photos by Sgt. Andy Mehler

Deployments can be an exciting time for some and a hardship for others, depending on the mission, length and scope of their deployment.

York, Pa., resident, Spc. Ronald Gambrell, currently deployed to COB Adder, Iraq, with Company A, 628th Aviation Support Battalion, is on his third deployment.

Inspired by his foster father who served in Vietnam, Gambrell enlisted in the Tennessee Army National Guard at age 17, on the very day the Iraq War began in 2003. After choosing the military occupation specialty of cannon crewmember Gambrell was assigned to a Field Artillery unit.

His first deployment was to Al Anbar province, Iraq, in 2005. While deployed, his unit pulled convoy security and Gambrell manned the .50 caliber weapons mounted on the gun trucks to protect the convoy. Gambrell traveled as far north as the Syrian border and as far south as Tallil, where he is stationed today.

Traveling the roads throughout Iraq, Gambrell witnessed many enemy attacks. One particularly bad experience for him was an event that occurred after Ramadan. A truck in front of Gambrell hit an improvised explosive device while another was hit with a rocket-propelled grenade. His own truck was hit with small-arms fire. The event drove home how dangerous the roads were in Iraq.



Spc. Ronald Gambrell of York, Pa., is on his third deployment to Iraq, this time as a motor transport operator. He previously served as a convoy gunner and in detainee operations.

While at his base camp Gambrell had a room in the housing trailers, and while on the road he slept in tents. He spent 15 months in Iraq and was not able to call home very often since the conditions for Soldiers were much different than they are today. He also helped set up cement barriers in the streets and around buildings to aid in security during the Iraqi elections. While deployed, Gambrell switched duties and became a motor transport operator.

In June 2007, Gambrell began his second deployment to Iraq. He would spend one year in country. This time his mission was very different. His unit performed detainee operations, which involves the care and supervision of prisoners. Not only did his unit provide shelter and medical care for their prisoners, they also promoted counter insurgency ideals in an attempt to reverse the radical ambitions of their prisoners. The goal was to teach the prisoners alternatives to violence while reminding them the United States is not an enemy of Islam, in the hopes that radical elements in the country would lose their persuasive hold on the people.

His unit was also responsible for ensuring prisoners arrived for court dates and performing inspections of the compound, which they shared with the Navy. While Gambrell was not out facing hazards on the

road as before, mortar attacks on his camp were a regular event. This deployment proved a different sort of challenge for Gambrell. After one prisoner escape and a massive riot in his camp, the differences became more evident.

Gambrell moved from Tennessee to York, Pa., in 2008 and joined the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. He was assigned to Company A, 628th Aviation Support Battalion. The 628th ASB was mobilized in February 2009. On this deployment Gambrell has spent his entire time inside the camp, using his experience to assist his unit. The truck platoon of the 628th ASB has been hauling storage and shipping containers, housing trailers for Soldiers and cement security barriers around COB Adder. Gambrell said conditions for the Soldiers this deployment,



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including internet access available in most rooms, make being away from home a bit easier.

Performing a support mission within the relative safety of camp is much different than his previous deployments and Gambrell sees this as a positive change in the country. He feels the country is much safer than it was before and the many local nationals working on the camp are a sign to Gambrell that the locals show support for the U.S. and other nations helping to build their country and provide security.

Gambrell has experienced Iraq as a driver on the road who got

hit almost nightly by attacks, as a caretaker for prisoners who provided them an alternative message to violence, and finally as a support Soldier aiding in the expansion of COB Adder and its facilities. Gambrell has seen many changes in Iraq and he feels they are positive and encouraging. If his deployments are a testament to the direction Iraq is taking these days, it would seem life here continues to improve.

After this deployment ends, Gambrell plans to remain in Pennsylvania with his wife, and he would like to stay in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard for a full 20-year service to earn his retirement.



It's time to follow up with legal assistance

For Soldiers who sought legal assistance services for family or civilian-related matters: With our transfer-of-authority dates fast approaching, we want to ensure Soldiers who initiated legal matters through our office have the opportunity to resolve the matters or receive guidance on how to proceed once we redeploy. Such legal matters may include divorce, custody, child support or financial issues. Some of these issues, especially divorce, include timelines that must be followed in order to complete the process. If you have any questions on how to proceed, contact JAG immediately at (318) 833-5840.

Points of contact for legal assistance are Staff Sgt. Patty Lundsted and Sgt. 1st Class JoAnn Tresco.

Keystone MWR Events at FOB Delta

Submit your events to
TFKeystone@gmail.com

Sgt. Victor Hernandez

Salsa Lessons
9-11 p.m. Weds. nights

Latin Night DJ
8-11 p.m. Fri. nights

At The Theater

Classes and Tutoring with
Sgt Geneshan Harichandran
at the Education Center
Math classes, preparation for
the JAST and ACT
and more

P 90X Exercise Class
by CW3 Tim Lelie

Every day!
6 a.m.
2 p.m.
8 p.m.

Keystone MWR events at Camp Adder

Financial Peace University

Financial Peace University is a life-changing program that teaches you how to make the right decisions with your money. You'll be empowered with the practical skill and confidence needed to achieve your financial goals and experience true financial peace!

When: Fridays, 4 Sept 09 @1900 Hrs
(13 weeks)
Where: Post Chapel

Who: Anyone who desires to improve their financial situation
with some time proven principles

Cost: Normally this will cost \$100 per person but you are
receiving this course **ABSOLUTELY FREE!**

Guaranteed: To save you money and make you money if you
follow these principles!
POC: Chaplain (LTC) Douglas Compton
28 CAB, Brigade Chaplain 833 - 5865

Volleyball with
SFC Dale Shade

Fridays at the
House of Pain
volleyball court

1800-2100

28th CAB Game Nite
Building 713 w/ CPT
Suzanne Williamson

Rummy, Spades,
Pinochle, Dominos,
Chess, Scrabble...

Weds. 2000-2200

Beyond Narnia
with SGT Neil
Gussman

MWR Library
Mondays at 2000

ngussman@
gmail.com

Tallil Dead Poets
Society with SGT Neil
Gussman

MWR Library
Tuesdays at 2000

ngussman@
gmail.com

Power Yoga by Dave Kocian
Tuesday, Thursday
1800 at The House of Pain

Saturday
0900 at the South Gym

Sunday
1600 at the South Gym

Please bring a mat, blanket or towel
for floor exercises.
POC: david.e.kocian@us.army.mil

Salsa Night
EVERY
MONDAY
WEDNESDAY
FRIDAY
6Pazz! - 2000 - 2345

FEATURING
28TH CAB'S
DJ Garcia
DJ Almonte

Weight Watchers - Momentum Plan
NOW on COB Adder

Mondays - 1900
Warrior Medical Training Site Classroom
Bldg 307, Across from the Post Office

Wednesdays - 1030 and 1900
Bldg 7449D, Rear Door

POC: SFC JoAnn Tresco, DSN 833-5840

Filipino & Okinawan
Martial Arts

HOUSE OF PAIN FITNESS CENTER
SUN. & TUE. 1900 - 2000

POC: Glen Valencia
glen.i.valencia@us.army.mil