

THE HICKORY COURIER

230th Sustainment Brigade



The Hickory Courier

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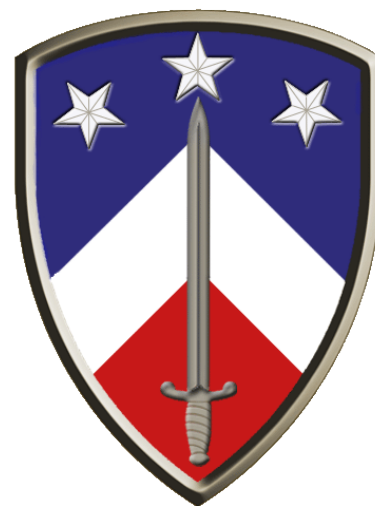
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Cover photo by Sgt. Shannon R. Gregory

Front Cover:

Sgt. 1st Class William Hayes, Spc. Alexandra Skelton and Spc. Ray Vargas, all assigned to the 824th Quartermaster, Detachment 10 from Fort Bragg, N.C., prepare a Container Delivery System bundles for attachment to the anchor line onboard a C-17 Globe Master aircraft, July 13, 2011. When the CDS bundles are rolled out of the C-17, the static line is pulled, deploying the parachute.



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Issue 3

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From the Stump

by Col. Wm. Mark Hart

230th Sustainment Brigade Commander

By now, the colors back home are beginning to change. The bright autumn array of foliage paints the mountainsides. Here in Kuwait, the desert colors remain uninterrupted by fall's advance. Kuwait is not quite the Norman Rockwell setting most Americans envision. For the Hickory Brigade, the most noticeable seasonal variation is the relenting of the torrid heat. Our days are still warm, with highs above 100 degrees and night-time temperatures dipping into the low 80s.

By now, our Soldiers have completed their well-deserved rest and recuperation leave. They have returned to work reinvigorated and ready to sprint to this deployment's finish line. While many daunting tasks still lay ahead, our Hickory Soldiers have performed magnificently. Daily, I am impressed with their professionalism and unrelenting work ethic. My admiration for these men and women continues to grow as I'm sure yours does too. These are real-life, American Heroes "gettin' 'er done" in a big way.

Before us, lay the holiday seasons. This year, our Soldiers will not celebrate amongst family and friends back home. America's commitment to freedom requires them to be elsewhere. Rest as-



sured our Hickory Soldiers will be keeping you in their thoughts and hearts. Many of you know that nowhere is the holiday spirit more valued than by Soldiers in a combat zone. Whether it's 'v-mail' or 'e-mail,' your cards, calls and prayers to the Hickory Soldiers will forever be remembered.

Well, enough for now. I extend my most gracious appreciation for the support you have given our Soldiers. The Old Hickory Brigade couldn't do what it does if not for your support on the home front. As I finish this article, I am reminded of what the English playwright G.K. Chesterton penned, "The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him." From my foxhole, he couldn't have said it better.

"Hard as Hickory."

Col. Wm. Mark Hart assumed command of the 230th Sustainment Brigade in December 2010. Previous to the 230th, Hart served as the commander of the 1/278th Armored Cavalry Regiment during Operation Iraqi Freedom III in 2004. From the time of his enlistment in 1973 until now, Hart has been a part of the 278th ACR, headquartered in Knoxville, Tenn.

Col. Hart attended Walters State Community College and recieved a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from the University of Tenn. in 1990. He received his Master of Science degree in 1999 from the University of Tenn. He was commissioned as a Field Artillery officer from the Tennessee Military Academy in 1983. His military education includes the Field Artillery Officer Basic Course, the Armor Advanced Course, and Command and General Staff College.



From the Trunk

by Command Sgt. Maj. Clay Massengale
230th Sustainment Brigade Command
Sergeant Major

The fourth quarter of a football game is often marked by the players raising a hand in the air, showing only four fingers. No words need to be spoken. The message is clear. This is the final part of the game, requiring the greatest effort from the competitors. The fourth quarter is when the team with the most heart and greatest desire to win will have the greatest success.

The Soldiers and Airmen of the Hickory Brigade are now heavily engaged in the 4th quarter of the responsible drawdown of Iraq. Our nation requires one last period of extra effort from us prior to Dec. 31, 2011. It is time to execute the game plan, and since no game plan survives after halftime, our victory will depend upon the junior enlisted, NCO's and junior officers out in the field focusing on the job at hand. No matter what happens to the game plan, they will find a way to make it work. Force protection measures are our basic blocking and tackling drills and must continue to be our number one priority. We must exercise every safety measure here in garrison, on the boats, in the rigger sheds and out on the roads of Iraq and Kuwait. The fourth quarter is no time to get sloppy with the fundamentals.



"Take a knee" when you need to reenergize, catch your breath and get back into the fight. Keep an eye on yourself and each other, so that when you break the huddle for the next play, the squad is ready to go full speed. It is especially important during times of high stress and fast moving operations, that we monitor our teammates' health and behavior.

I look forward to seeing all of you, my teammates, out in the staging lanes, in the maintenance tents and on the road. When you see me walk up with 4 fingers in the air, I know you will understand. Let's get it done!

Command Sgt. Maj. Clay Massengale was born in Chattanooga, Tenn. in December 1964. He joined the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 196th Field Artillery Brigade in 1984 as a Teletype Operator.

Massengale mobilized and deployed with the unit to Saudi Arabia and Iraq during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Upon his return, he served in the Brigade Tactical Operations Center as a Fire Direction Specialist. He was selected as the Battery First Sergeant in 2000 and later served as First Sergeant of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion 181st Field Artillery (MLRS).

His prior leadership assignments and tactical excellence resulted in his selection and promotion to command sergeant major for the Field Artillery Battalion in June of 2007. He deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and served as the command sergeant major for Task Force Falcon.

Upon returning from deployment, he graduated from the Sergeant's Major Academy in 2008. His awards include the Bronze Star with oak leaf cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, and the Honorable Order of Saint Barbara.



Reflections from the Roots

by Chaplain (Maj) Patrick Brownell
230th Sustainment Brigade Chaplain

Well, the first of the black boxes got packed and loaded a few days ago and slowly we're making preparations to leave.

Going home is a good thing, but we're not quite ready to toss the keys just yet, are we? We've entered that "zone" where we already feel some anticipation for leaving, but still have much to get done here.

I'd like to challenge our Soldiers to focus and move forward in the great style that is the 230th. We all know the improvements we can make to help those who will follow us; let's make them. We know the things that would have been helpful to have known when we arrived; let's share what we've learned. We all made mistakes; let's help others not make the same ones we might have made.

I think if we honestly give these next few months our absolute best, we will set those who come after us up for success, and we will be able to go home with our heads held high and a tremendous feeling of accomplishment.

God Bless.

Patrick Paul Brownell was born on July 11, 1965 in Frankfurt, Germany. As a U.S. military dependent, he spent a good number of his early childhood years on various Army installations. In 1975 his father retired from the Army and his family moved to Columbus, Ga.

In 1985, Brownell enlisted in the



U.S. Army Reserves. He completed Basic Training at Fort McClellan, Ala. and his Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, as a Pharmacy Specialist, and later as an Administrative Specialist.

Upon completion of his military schooling, he enrolled first at Columbus College, Columbus, Ga., and then, at St. Meinrad Seminary College in St. Meinrad, Ind.

Brownell began graduate studies at Kenrick Seminary, in St. Louis, Mo., in 1990. In 1991 he returned to St. Meinrad Seminary where he completed three additional years to complete his Masters of Divinity degree in 1994. Brownell was ordained as a Catholic priest for the Diocese of Knoxville, on May 21, 1994.

Brownell re-entered military service on Dec. 12, 2005 as a chaplain in the Tennessee Army National Guard. He underwent the Chaplain Officer Basic Course at Fort Jackson, S.C. the summer of 2006 and graduated in the top 10 percent of his class. On June 4th of the same year, he deployed with the 1-181st Field Artillery Battalion to Iraq. In early 2010 he was assigned as the 230th Sustainment Brigade Chaplain and was promoted to the rank of Major in November 2010.

Below: Staff Sgt. Michael Biggs and Chaplain (Maj.) Patrick Brownell greet Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam during a visit to Camp Arifjan in early August.



All In The Family: Father And Son Serve Together In Kuwait

Faces From The Front

A Weekly News Feature from The Office of the Chief of Public Affairs

Every family has a defining characteristic that bonds them together; and for the Cannon family, it is their military service. With several family members all concurrently serving in the U.S. Army, and even family members deployed together, their family crest should be painted camouflage.

Of the parents and their four children, five are currently serving in the Army - and presently, the father and one of his sons are deployed to Kuwait with the Tennessee National Guard.

"I think so much of my family serves primarily because of the enthusiasm of each person as they returned from training," said 1st Lt. Clint Cannon. "It was infectious, and one by one, we all joined."

While overseas, Clint serves as the 230th Sustainment Brigade's Munitions Deputy Officer-in-Charge, responsible for providing critical supplies to Soldiers down-range.

"As the Sustainment Brigade, we have to coordinate the movement of ammunition into both Iraq and Afghanistan," he said. "For the guys kicking in doors and driving the tanks, it is pretty important."

Aside from his official duties, the deployment has also provided the father with the chance to get to know his son better.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Zier, 230th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

1st Lt. Clint Cannon "pins" his son, Andrew, during Andrew's promotion ceremony to specialist at Camp McGregor, Fort Bliss, Texas, Feb. 17, 2011. Both are currently serving with the Tennessee National Guard's 230th Sustainment Brigade, headquartered in Chattanooga, Tenn.

"When your children are young, you have to be the parent, but now as my children are getting older, we can become friends. That bond has really developed between Andrew and me since we have been deployed," said the patriarch.

And his son agrees - many evenings after duty hours, the pair can be found hanging out together and keeping in touch with their relatives back home.

While his father works to supply ammunition and supplies to the frontlines, Spc. Andrew Cannon serves as the human resources specialist responsible for completing personnel actions, including attach and release orders for all personnel within the brigade.

"We ensure the proper person-

nel are assigned to the correct units and in the correct positions to help accomplish that unit's mission," he said.

The father and son will return home in early 2012, and they are looking forward to spending time with their family.

Rounding out the Cannon's family contingent in the Army, the other family members who serve include: mother, Spc. Gloria Cannon, and children, Spc. Michael Cannon and Pfc. Rebekah Cannon. Although Clint and his wife are some of the first in the family to serve, they hope they've started a tradition for future generations of the family.

"If there are ever any 'little Cannons' running around, I wouldn't mind having some of them carry on the tradition," said Andrew.

Familiarization Fire

Photos by Spc. Stephanie Moon
230th Sustainment Brigade



230th Sustainment Brigade's Chief Warrant Officer 4 Rita Wilson conducts a safety briefing as the Range Officer in Charge prior to a familiarization firing range at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 15, 2011.

The purpose of a familiarization fire is to get the Soldier accustomed to firing their assigned individual weapon in various positions, while wearing body armor, helmet, and other various personal protection items.

This gives Soldiers the opportunity to refresh their fundamental knowledge of basic rifle marksmanship and allows for adjustments prior to qualifying for record.



From left to right:

A final safety brief is conducted by the on-site range safety officers prior to allowing Soldiers to assume a good supported firing position during a familiarization firing range at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 15, 2011.

The view each Soldier sees before commencing fire during a familiarization firing range at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 15, 2011. The targets are approximately 25-meters away, but the black silhouettes on the record sheets are the same size as if they were on a full 300-meter pop-up target firing range. Ranges such as these give the Soldier the opportunity to determine their weaknesses and strengths before qualifying on their assigned weapon for record, along with practicing target discrimination and proper marksmanship.



A Soldier ensures the proper targets are in place and secured before shooters commence fire during a familiarization fire at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 15, 2011



Sgt. 1st Class Randy Marts checks Spc. Charles Patterson's weapon one final time before commencing fire during a familiarization firing range at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 15, 2011.



Spc. Charles Patterson from the 230th Special Troops Battalion, 230th Sustainment Brigade, takes aim at his target with his M4 rifle during a familiarization firing range at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 15, 2011.

Highway Traffic Division Keeps Operations Running Smoothly Throughout Kuwait

by Capt. Gerald Bowman and
Sgt. 1st Class Charles Hands
330th Transportation Battalion

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait - It is an early morning at the Kuwaiti Naval Base on the shore of the Persian Gulf, but already the temperature is well over 110 degrees Fahrenheit. The sun is just peeking over the horizon as Soldiers busy themselves throughout the truck lot, preparing equipment for loading on the trucks lining the gates. These Soldiers are preparing to move to Iraq, where they are responsible for the continuing mission of training the Iraqi Army and Security Forces. Movement through Kuwait is vital to them accomplishing their mission, and allowing for preparations for massive amounts of equipment and personnel is just one part.

Though Kuwait is only approximately the size of New Jersey, this tiny nation supports much of the work being done in Iraq, and the equipment needed there must first come through Kuwait. As units criss-cross through the roads of this desert nation, they have a central link assisting them through the process - a point to connect the unit to the trucks and roads they will need for their mission. The 330th Transportation Battalion, Movement Control is this link. The Highway Traffic Division is the face of this assistance, and its job is accomplished when the movement and deployment process slides seamlessly into the units' processes of muster, deployments and onward movements into Iraq.

The Kuwait Rear Operation Center is the link between the 330th

Transportation Battalion and the supported units who move through the sands of Kuwait. If it moves, it comes through KROC. In the political system of Kuwait, the Kuwait Ministry of the Interior is charged with the safety and operation of the highways in Kuwait. Together, the 330th and KMOI have forged a joint planning cell that enables the Army to project its force in the region of Iraq, and accomplish a step in the continuing process of creating a free Iraq. This relationship is a piece of what enables the Soldiers sweating in the heat at the Naval Base to get the job done. The relationship-building between KMOI and the 330th has been an arduous process, with many cups of coffee and discussions resulting in the partnership. Sgt. 1st Class Charles Hands and Staff Sgt. Akeem Taylor work alongside the Kuwaiti patrolmen and officers of the Ministry of the Interior. Both parties have the joint goal of safety on the roads, and upon this, the working relationship has been built gradually. Already, they have supported hundreds of the escort missions, along with KMOI, providing for the safety of U.S. forces.

An important part of the relationship is cultural understanding. The Islamic tradition is strong in Kuwait, and from the interpreters integrated into the 330th team, Hands and Taylor have had eye-opening experiences. The tradition of Ramadan has been one



Photo by 1st Lt. Diana Alberti, 330th Trans Bn. (MC)

IAP Worldwide services officials brief the Deputy Commanding General of 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) Brig. Gen. David Clarkson (left) and 330th Transportation Battalion officials on safety regulations and statistics for the company, which supports the U.S. Army with contracted truck services in Kuwait and Iraq.

of the latest ways by which the KROC team has learned about the cultural aspects of Kuwaiti life. During the month of Ramadan, the focus for the Kuwaiti population is on sacrifice and reflection. It is customary not only to fast, forgoing any food, but also to refrain from drinking even water during daylight hours. Working with the Kuwaitis, Hands said, "They have educated us not only on the tradition of Ramadan, but also on the cultural aspects of Kuwait and its people." Though the Kuwaiti driving methods can cause the uninitiated driver to white-knuckle the steering wheel, there are many sites in Kuwait that easily impress. The sights of the oil fields and the Kuwait Towers, recalling images from the first Gulf War, are

unquestionably worth seeing.

Hands and Taylor, in addition to working at KROC, serve with the Mobile Response Team. This mission circulates Kuwait verifying the link-ups and escorts provided by our allies in the Kuwait Ministry of the Interior. This gives them an opportunity to see a wide spectrum of the missions going on throughout the country, and a great view of the vastness of the desert of Kuwait. Every day, Hands and Taylor are where the rubber meets the long road of Kuwait. This is where the mission of the 330th happens.

It is now late in the evening. The sun has gone down, and the trucks are cooling at the Iraq border while the mission prepares to

cross into Iraq. For the Soldiers of the combat arms battalions, the mission is just beginning. However, the transportation process from Kuwait is coming to a close. As Soldiers from the 265th Movement Control Team process the trucks through customs, one can reflect on all the hard work it took to get to this point. The trucks have been spotted and loaded by the crane operators of the 531st, while KMOI and KROC coordinated to get the convoys safely on the road. The HTD verified the movement times to ensure all were met, and the Soldiers made it all happen. Here in the dust between Iraq and Kuwait, the combat-ready Soldiers are ready to continue their journey in the fading light of the desert dusk.



Photo by 1st Lt. Matt Byer, 265th Movement Control Team

Members of the 330th Transportation Battalion participate in a working group at Mutla Ridge, Kuwait, July 4, 2011. The participants discussed how to produce seamless border crossing operations between Iraq and Kuwait at Khabari Crossing, particularly as it pertains to future drawdown operations. Topics included retrograde operations, operability of Customs and Immigration agencies at the border, increasing the width of one of the main supply routes, and scheduling during the Ramadan.

Old Hickory Rises to the Challenge

Story and photos by
Sgt. Shannon R. Gregory

230th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq- As the end of 2011 approaches, so does the push to responsibly withdraw all U.S. Forces from Iraq by the end of this year. The Tennessee Army National Guard's 230th Sustainment Brigade, headquartered in Chattanooga, Tenn., has been chosen as one of several units responsible for this massive task.

U.S. forces have been in Iraq for over seven years, and in that time, an enormous amount of equipment has built up throughout the country. Every piece of this equipment needs to be moved and in a short amount of time. "We're hauling everything from armored

vehicles, to parts, to shipping containers full of office supplies. Everything," said Lt. Col. Martin J. Basham, commander of Joint Task Force Hickory, and the executive officer of the 230th.

The 230th established an operations base, here at Joint Base Balad, to coordinate the extraction of equipment from the northern Forward Operating Bases to central Iraq. "We are collapsing the northern sector of Iraq, in to the center, and then withdrawing the equipment through the southern route," said Col. William Mark Hart, commander of the 230th.

Instead of wearing out trucks by driving 800 miles north, they are hauling equipment from the northern FOB's down to JBB. The task force then transfers the

equipment south to Kuwait or other destinations throughout the theater. Aside from minimizing the wear and tear on equipment and personnel, this process allows for greater flexibility. Weather and road restrictions, both in Kuwait and Iraq, could bring movements to a halt, delaying the mission. Hart expressed by doing it this way, "It gives me more freedom of movement to get the mission accomplished."

Weather and road restrictions are not the only factors slowing this process down. Convoys have to contend with Iraqi checkpoints approximately every 20 miles, slowing the trucks to a crawl. Roadside bombs and enemy fire are constant threat factors to watch for, and the ever-imposing equipment breakdown due to increased use and the heat keeps these service members on full alert.

According to Basham, "The major factor of getting all of this equipment out and on time is getting the paperwork right." Basham continued, "Task Force Hickory has the personnel that can go into their system and check the Transportation Movement Request paperwork and ensure it is correct and moving to the right location."

"The whole responsible draw-down has been referred to as eating the elephant. We knew we could eat the elephant if we ate it in small bites and if we had enough time. Time has been our enemy this whole mission," said Capt. Jack A. Tyer, Joint Task Force



A Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck is being loaded onto a Heavy Equipment Transport assigned to the 129th Transportation Company Sept. 12, 2011, at Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq. The 129th are Reserve Soldiers out of New Century, Kan., assigned to assist the 230th Sustainment Brigade's Joint Task Force Hickory, to haul equipment out of closing Forward Operating Bases as part of the responsible withdraw of U.S. Forces by the Dec. 31 deadline.

Hickory support operations officer. "What we are focusing on is not getting caught up in the overall picture but what we can control, and that is our elements and making the most effective use of them. This puts the focus at the ground level where it needs to be."

Heavy Equipment Transports belonging to the 129th Transportation Company convoy down a highway Sept. 13, 2011 in Iraq. The 129th are Reserve Soldiers out of New Century, Kan., assigned to assist the 230th Sustainment Brigade's Joint Task Force Hickory, to haul equipment out of closing Forward Operating Bases in support of Operation New Dawn.



"Four Corners" Prepares for Withdraw

By Spc. Ekta Shrestha
553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait - The 553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, also known as the Leopard Battalion, took over the Four Corners Operation, a vital part of the responsible drawdown from Iraq, to retrograde multiple classes of supply at Camp Virginia and support redeploying units.

The Four Corners' mission is to receive self-redeploying units from the Iraq Theater and efficiently download multiple classes of supply, including munitions, HAZMAT, medical supplies, office supplies and sensitive materials. These items are then systemized at the site and processed into their designated classification area.

Members of the 553rd have been operating the Four Corners site since May 24, 2011. Since then, they have been busy training and learning their new roles, and assuming new responsibilities.

"The team has accomplished many tasks including the com-

plete set up of the Four Corners convoy lanes, 6-K and 10-K forklift training, individual Soldier skills training along with learning the different classes of supply," said Sgt. 1st Class Maxwell J. Teneyck, noncommissioned officer in charge of the Four Corners Operation. "Training is ongoing and will continue into the future as we wait for convoys to arrive for download."

The Leopard team is ready for the mission and striving for excellence. They have been working hard to improve the download site. "Right now, we have been doing a lot of planning and rehearsals to make sure that we run a safe and efficient download site," 1st Lt. Jounita A. Meekins, officer in charge of the Four Corners Operation.

Meekins and her team aim to have an operational site by the end of June and the mission running as smoothly as possible.

"My expectations and goals for this mission are to quickly and ef-

ficiently download self-redeploying convoys within one hour of arriving at the Four Corners," said Teneyck. "Our goal as a military unit is to process units as quickly as possible and to prevent bottlenecks in the Iraq redeployment schedule."



Photo by 1st Lt. Diana Alberti, 330th Trans Bn. (MC)

Staff Sgt. Juan Carlos Saucedo, a Soldier in the Joint Logistics Task Force 6 who works with the 286th Movement Control Team, briefs 1st Theater Sustainment Command, 230th Sustainment Brigade, 330th Transportation Battalion, and 553 Combat Sustainment Support Battalion personnel during a Four Corners Rehearsal, Aug. 12, 2011. His brief is a mock-convoy commander brief, explaining the route from the Kuwait Border to the Four Corners operation, streamlining the processing of large, self-redeploying units.

Life on the Road

Part 2 - The Heavy Equipment Transporters

By 1st Lt. Charles Clark
217th Transportation Company

Photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Zier
230th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

Today's deployments have seen greater responsibilities heaped on the shoulders of junior Non-commissioned Officers of the U.S. Army. These taskings have taken the average squad leader, normally responsible for equipment to the tune of a few million dollars, into a realm of accountability in excess of \$40 million. Several of these squad leaders become convoy commanders of Heavy Equipment Transport crews. These leaders are not only responsible for their own equipment and their assigned personnel, but also for the equipment they are transporting, the contractors assisting them, and the timely delivery of cargo.

A convoy begins with a notification of "allocation." This tells you the basics of who, what, when, and where. After the first notification, all convoys follow a specific timeline to meet the required start point. The basics of commanding a convoy include picking out the vehicles to be used; ensuring serviceability; designating the proper support personnel to drive and assist the convoy commander throughout the mission; and finalization of the equipment, personnel and Travel Movement Request. All this results in a con-



From top to bottom:

Pfc. Steven Arbenque (left) of Timberville, Va., and Spc. Aaron Sherrod of Bainbridge, Ga., tighten the chains on a loaded Heavy Equipment Transport tractor prior to conducting a retrograde material backhaul, June 1, 2011.

Sgt. Ryan Kessinger of Lawrence, Kan., connects a radio antenna to his Heavy Equipment Transport tractor prior to heading into Iraq, June 1, 2011. Kessinger, a member of the 377th Transportation Company from Fort Bliss, Texas, was allocated to travel by convoy into Iraq for the sole purpose of backhauling retrograde materials as part of the responsible withdraw of U.S. forces by the Dec. 31, deadline.

HET continued on pg. 16



Staff Sgt. Carlos Chavez of Calexico, Calif., and part of the 377th Transportation Company, conducts a pre-convoy mission brief with the members of his team prior to departing on a retrograde material convoy mission in support of Operation New Dawn, June 1, 2011. Convoy commanders, such as Chavez, find themselves in a much larger role as part of the latest operations of the U.S. military. Convoy commanders are responsible for briefing all members of the convoy, both military and civilian contractors, ensuring all participants are familiar with the route and what they should do if they encounter any obstacles inhibiting their forward movement.



Sgt. John Wright of El Paso, Texas, tightens a bolt to a Heavy Equipment Transport trailer by flashlight prior to a convoy operation in Iraq June 7, 2011. On-the-spot maintenance is a common occurrence for HET crews. Ensuring equipment is in proper working order helps to continue the retrograde material back haul missions units like the 377th Transportation Company are tasked with as part of Operation New Dawn.



A Soldier with the 377th Transportation Company of Fort Bliss, Texas, guides a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle on to a civilian contractor's trailer for backhaul from Iraq to Kuwait as part of the responsible withdraw of U.S. Forces by the Dec. 31, 2011 deadline. Soldiers and contractors work side-by-side on these kinds of missions to expedite the flow of retrograde material from the Iraqi theater into Kuwait.

HET from pg. 14

voy brief detailing the specifics of how the convoy will be conducted, and the mandatory rest period prior to movement. And they're off!

Although the details of each mission are unique, convoy commanders follow some basic rules. Always be early, always make sure your drivers have conducted pre-movement checks, and be prepared for the worst. During the actual movement out on the road, one main rule is always adhered to – 'Keep Moving.' This one motto is the answer to most situations encountered, from small arms fire to roadside bomb detonations. If possible, moving your personnel and equipment out of a danger area provides the best alternative for the convoy commanders. Movement through the danger areas represents only a small percentage of a convoy commander's duties. The majority of a convoy

From top to bottom:

Trucks part of a 377th Transportation Company from Fort Bliss, Texas, pass an oil refinery in southern Iraq, June 1, 2011. The convoy was headed north to various locations throughout Iraq to pick up various pieces of equipment for transport back to Kuwait as part of the responsible withdraw of U.S. Forces from Iraq by the Dec. 31, 2011 deadline.

Staff Sgt. Carlos Chavez, a convoy commander with the 377th Transportation Company and Calexico, Calif. resident, verifies his convoy's position while in route to their next stop in Iraq, June 6, 2011. Convoy commanders are not only responsible for ensuring the convoy makes it to its final destination, but the safety of the personnel, equipment and cargo that make up the convoy.

377th Transportation Company's Sgt. Oscar Varela of Belen, N.M., directs a Heavy Equipment Tractor into position to hitch a trailer before a retrogame materila back-haul convoy, June 7, 2011.





commander's duties is comprised of ensuring serviceability of the vehicles, implementing a rest plan for Soldiers and contractors, and ensuring the loads they receive are outlined for them in the TMR. The importance of the last task guarantees the loads are delivered on-time and tracked during its movement to the customer. Failure to accomplish this task causes logistical pains and unexpected deliveries, resulting in longer waiting periods for the customer to retrieve their requested supplies and equipment.



HET crews encounter a great deal of adversity while out on missions. Situations they deal with include breakdowns, enemy activity in a variety of forms, sick personnel and TMR discrepancies. This list is not all-inclusive, and if you can imagine it, then it has probably happened. Despite the usual combat zone worries, these Soldiers always seem to find ample time to sleep, communicate with family and friends back home, and maintain their physical prowess.

To sum up, the U.S Army and its leadership bestow an enormous amount of responsibility upon its junior NCOs. This capable faction of Soldiers has proven they can handle it, firmly preserving the title of "The Backbone of the Army."

From top to bottom:

An Iraqi man prays in the early morning hours along the road as Spc. Aaron Sherrod of Bainbridge, Ga., and assigned to the 377th Transportation Company, drive past in his Heavy Equipment Transport, June 8, 2011.

A wrecker operated by members of the 377th Transportation Company tows a broken Heavy Equipment Transport across an overpass in Iraq, June 8, 2011.

Spc. Luis Franco from El Paso, Texas, removes the lug nuts from the front tire of a Heavy Equipment Transport while on a convoy mission in Iraq, June 7, 2011. Flat tires are just one obstacle HET crews encounter daily.



The 377th Transportation Company successfully redeployed back to Fort Bliss, Texas, in mid-August 2011. The Hickory Brigade would like to wish the men and women of this outstanding unit a happy reunion with their friends and families. Job well done, 377th!

230th Soldiers Shield the Warfighters in Afghanistan

Story and photos by
Maj. Byron Hobbs
230th Sustainment Brigade

MANAS, Kyrgyzstan - For a portion of the 230th Sustainment Brigade Soldiers, a Tennessee Army National Guard unit, they have the important job of protecting the lives of warriors deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. These Soldiers ensure that deploying Soldiers are outfitted with life-saving protective equipment at the Manas Air Base – Plate Carrier Collect Point in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan is located north of Afghanistan, just west of China and south of Russia. It is considered to be in Central Asia. This country gained independence from the former Soviet Union in August 1991, and is the second poorest country in Central Asia. The people of Kyrgyzstan are a mix of Asian and Russian descent with Russian influence still heavily seen throughout the country. The yurt, a round canvas covered tent, is still considered part of their proud heritage. The dominant religion is Islam. The location of the Manas Air Base is a vital economic asset for the locale and country. The Manas Air Base is the deployment-redeployment gateway to Afghanistan, and although this base is small, it is a major player in Operation Enduring Freedom and



The Soldiers working at the PCCP complete an initial visual inspection. During this inspection, they look for any tears, wear spots, or other outer skin defects on each plate. Plates having an external material failure are segregated. To accomplish this repair, the staff is trained on-site to do minor repairs with specialized equipment. This consists of repairing the outer skins of the plates. Once repaired, the plates go through quality control and quality assurance to ensure they have met the standard.

a major economic interest for the country of Kyrgyzstan.

The Soldiers working at the PCCP have the job of providing 24/7 support for OEF. This small group of approximately 15 Soldiers, composed of Reserve, National Guard and Active duty units, have travelled far from their home units to perform their mission. Their job is to supply or ensure that deploying Soldiers have the latest technology to protect them from roadside bombs and small arms fire. The staff ensures the improved outer tactical vest is outfitted with ballistic panels and plates that protect the torso and vital organs from shrapnel and

gunfire during operations and patrols in Afghanistan.

When units pass through the processing station, Soldiers are given the ballistic plates. If the Soldiers deployed with plates, they are inspected and/or exchanged to ensure they meet the current standards. To ensure they have quality protective equipment, each plate is given a sticker stating when it was last inspected. Why do the plates need to be inspected and/or exchanged? Are they not designed to stop bullets and shrapnel? The answer is yes, but every day use exposes the plates to additional stressors, eventually causing deficiencies - vests thrown around



The Soldiers working at the Plate Carrier Collection Point have the job of providing 24/7 support for Operation Enduring Freedom. This small group of approximately 15 Soldiers, composed of Reserve, National Guard and Active duty units, have travelled far from their home units to perform their mission. Their job is to supply or ensure that deploying Soldiers have the latest technology to protect them from roadside bombs and small arms fire. The staff ensures the improved outer tactical vest is outfitted with ballistic panels and plates that protect the torso and vital organs from shrapnel and gunfire during operations and patrols in Afghanistan. If the Soldiers deployed with plates, they are inspected and/or exchanged to ensure they meet the current standards. To ensure they have quality protective equipment, each plate is given a sticker stating when it was last inspected.

when not worn, plates dropped or other significant blows. These factors, over time, can weaken or cause microscopic cracks. Such deficiencies decrease the effectiveness of what the vest and plates were designed to do. For that reason, plates are inspected and processed.

The Soldiers working at the PCCP complete an initial visual inspection. During this inspection, they look for any tears, wear spots, or other outer skin defects on each plate. Plates having an external material failure are segregated. The segregated plates with EMF are usually good plates with minor deficiencies. The PCCP staff

repair the deficiencies on location. To accomplish this repair, the staff is trained on-site to do minor repairs with specialized equipment. This consists of repairing the outer skins of the plates. Once repaired, the plates go through quality control and quality assurance to ensure they have met the standard. All plates are sent through the nondestructive test equipment scanner for further analysis.

The plates passing visual inspection are sent to an x-ray processing station, scanning the internal structure of each plate. This scan looks for cracks, separation or other defects not seen by the naked eye. This level of examination

maintains the high standard protection for the warriors using this equipment every day. This process is part of the program management for the ballistic panels. It ensures effective, durable and economically feasible products are fielded to protect and increase the quality of life for the Soldier. All plates passing this exam are placed back into circulation for future issue.

The process of repairing plates on-site saves the U.S. taxpayers millions of dollars on the transportation cost associated with shipping unserviceable items back to a depot level for demilitarization activities in the U.S. These plates remain in service and reduce procurement costs by keeping the plates in service.

The small team of Soldiers at the PCCP provides a critical service not only for the protection of our men and women deploying to Afghanistan, but also providing a service of fiscal responsibility. This responsibility of repairing and scanning promotes utilization of equipment far forward, but also reduces the requirements of airspace utilization. By reducing airspace requirements for transport of unserviceable ballistic plates, the space is better utilized for passenger transport or for life sustainment and life support materials. By completing their mission, these Soldiers are ensuring protection to deploying warriors and providing fiscal responsibility to the U.S. taxpayer.

Reserve Riggers Deliver Frontline Supply Assets

Story and photos by
Sgt. Shannon R. Gregory

230th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA - The military has several ways to get supplies to its troops. Depending on the amount, type and location, these three major factors determine how the supplies are delivered. The most popular and cheapest mode of transportation is by truck. We see them on the road all the time. However, what if there are no roads or the roads are too difficult for regular semi trucks to navigate? Two words: 'air drop'.

The Army Reserve Soldiers of the 824th Quartermaster, Detachment 10 Airborne Riggers, are there to supply all the war fighters in hard to reach areas. These service members from the Nashville, Tenn., and Fayetteville, N.C., areas ensure much needed supplies get to those Soldiers, Marines, Sailors and Airmen stationed in the roughest terrain throughout Afghanistan and Iraq.

Every day they brave the heat to complete the mission for the day. Whether it is water and rations or fuel and frozen foods, the riggers are responsible for building palette loads and preparing them for airdrop delivery. Anything the warfighter needs, these Soldiers get it ready to deliver.

Even with 130 degree temperatures outside - these Soldiers don't stop. They keep on working through the heat knowing they



Sgt. 1st Class William Hayes, Spc. Alexandra Skelton and Spc. Ray Vargas, all assigned to the 824th Quartermaster, Detachment 10 from Fort Bragg, N.C., prepare a Container Delivery System bundles for attachment to the anchor line onboard a C-17 Globemaster aircraft, July 13, 2011. When the CDS bundles are rolled out of the C-17, the static line is pulled, deploying the parachute. An average month for the Riggers is around 1200 Container Delivery Systems bundles or almost 2 million pounds of food and supplies. They are projected to break the record for that shop with 1562 bundles this month.

have Soldiers lives in their hands with every mission they do.

They work day starts at 8 a.m., having already conducted physical training and eaten breakfast. The crews work until the work is done for the day. If they have to rig 80 bundles, they stay until all 80 bundles are complete.

"We can't just say it's five, we're checking out," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 David Pettus, assigned to the 824th Quartermaster, Detachment 10, Parachute Riggers, as the commander and senior airdrop systems technician from Nashville, Tenn. "If we check out at five, it's to go and eat supper and we come back and work until

whenever we get done."

An average month is 1200 Container Delivery Systems bundles or almost 2 million pounds of food and supplies. They are projected to break the record for that shop with 1562 bundles this month. This past April, they broke the record in theater for poundage dropped - 2.2 million pounds with just around two dozen riggers. The average size for a Rigger Detachment is over 70 people.

"To me," said Pettus, "the amazing part, besides dropping that, is that we also had to order and handle all that (supplies) then rig it and get it to the airfield to be airdropped. It's a major undertaking

to do that much poundage and supplies by the 24 people here on hand.”

They make all the CDS bundles in their shop. All the supplies needed to make the bundles they have to order. From the pallet up, all materials are created and purchased on site, with the exception of the parachute. The CDS bundles are pre-built and pre-staged. They have two lanes and on typical days, both lanes are performing the same function, getting the CDS bundles built and out the door. On fuel days, they build the CDS bundle in one lane, take it outside to put fuel in the barrel then bring it back inside to finish up by placing the parachute on it.

After the CDS bundles are assembled, they are loaded onto a truck, taken to the airfield and

loaded on a plane. Once on the plane, they have to be secured, hooked up to the static parachute line and inspected. After tying the oscillation ties onto the CDS bundles, hooking up clevises from the bundles to the anchor line on the aircraft, they inspect the load to make sure everything is correctly secured and attached.

“You can only have so much of a load on an aircraft. You can’t just throw anything on there,” said Sgt. Cleveland Spain, a joint aircraft inspector assigned to the 824th, and from Fayetteville, N.C. Joint aircraft inspectors have to supply the crew of the plane with a data (load) plan. The data plan shows the weight of the CDS bundles and their location on the aircraft.

Everyone assigned to the 824th has gone through the Rigger

school at Fort Lee, Va., and is para-trooper qualified. It is a very specialized field and there are only about 1,400 riggers Army-wide counting reserve components.

While reflecting on his job, Spain said, “whenever we pack a parachute and someone jumps out of an (airplane) and it’s our parachute that they jumped with, it’s that satisfaction knowing that you can do your job well. And when they walk away on the ground, you know you did your job. It’s awesome; it’s the greatest feeling in the world.”



Spc. Andrew Jimenez, assigned to the 824th Quartermaster, Detachment 10 from Fort Bragg, N.C., cuts honey-comb cardboard, July 11, 2011, for Container Delivery System bundles. The cardboard acts like a cushion for the supplies being air-dropped from a C-17 aircraft. Every piece of the CDS bundle gets made here with the exception of the parachute. Everyone in the 824th helps out. They operate at one-third the manpower, yet still deliver the same amount of supplies as any other rigging detachment at full strength.



Fellow Soldier Remembered

230th Soldiers honor Soldier after losing his fight against cancer.

Photos by Sgt. Shannon R. Gregory

230th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs



Maj. Nathan Dayhuff, the night chief of operations for the 230th Sustainment Brigade, Tennessee Army National Guard, reflects on his friendship with Maj. Kevin Taylor during a memorial service at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 3, 2011. Taylor passed away on Aug. 25, 2011 in Chattanooga, Tenn., due to complications with cancer. Taylor was a member of the 181st Field Artillery Battalion, Tennessee Army National Guard, which currently falls under the 230th's stateside command. He was buried on Aug. 31, 2011, at the Chattanooga National Cemetery.





Previous page and above: Soldiers of the 230th Sustainment Brigade, Tennessee Army National Guard, gather together Sept. 3, 2011, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, for a memorial service for a fellow Soldier who died due to complications with cancer. Maj. Kevin Taylor was a member of the 1-181st Field Artillery Battalion, Tennessee Army National Guard, which currently falls under the 230th's stateside command. Prior to that, Taylor was with the 196th Field Artillery Brigade. The 196th was converted and federally re-designated Sept. 1, 2008, as the 230th Sustainment Brigade. Several Soldiers of the 230th deployed with Taylor to Afghanistan in 2005 and 2006 as part of the 196th Field Artillery.

Maj. Kevin Boardman, 230th Sustainment Brigade security officer, reflects on his friendship with Maj. Kevin Taylor during a memorial service at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Sept. 3, 2011. Taylor passed away on Aug. 25, 2011 in Chattanooga, Tenn., due to complications with cancer. Taylor was a member of the 181st Field Artillery Battalion, Tennessee Army National Guard, which currently falls under the 230th's stateside command. He was buried on Aug. 31, 2011, at the Chattanooga National Cemetery.



230th Soldier Becomes Naturalized Citizen

Story and photos by
Sgt. John Dedman
230th Special Troops Battalion

CAMP ARFIJAN, Kuwait - June 29, 2011, by many accounts, was a normal day during a typical deployment for most Soldiers here at Camp Arifjan. This was not the case for Pfc. George Rano of St. Petersburg, Fla. Rano was born and raised in Toronto, Canada, until he was eight, and then he and his family moved to Florida where they have resided since the move.

He is currently serving with the 130th Financial Management Company here in Kuwait, which is made up of additional detachments from other units all under the 230th Special Troops Battalion umbrella. Rano actually belongs to the 106th Financial Management Company, an active duty unit stationed in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

July 21, 2011, marked his second year in the U.S. Army. He has a couple of roles that keep him busy: he serves as the acting Information Management Officer and the acting Terminal Area Security Officer. The IMO primarily is the administrator of the computer network who updates the computers on the network. The role of the TASO is to ensure there is proper security of databases by controlling access of users on the network.

When asked why he was motivated to become a citizen of the U.S., Rano stated that he had been a permanent resident, but he was not completely satisfied with that

status. "I wanted to make sure it was the same place I will be laid to rest," said Rano. He further envisioned the U.S. as the place he "hopes to one day teach my kids the same values I grew up with." Time seemed to be the greatest obstacle Rano encountered while attaining his citizenship.

Rano expressed that America is built upon values that are important to him and something he believes in, enough to protect with his life. Rano continued, "this country was founded by the people. Freedom isn't a privilege but a born right. Government is run by the people. Checks and balances ensure that it can never change; everything is just so perfect."

"The power of states, the bill of rights," said Rano. "Look at the civil war, people didn't like what was going on, they picked up their weapons and fought for what was right."



Pfc. George Rano of St. Petersburg, Fla., swears in as a new U.S. citizen during a naturalization ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, June 29, 2011. Rano, born in Toronto, Canada, took the oath of citizenship with several other service members all currently serving overseas in support of Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom.



Pfc. George Rano (right) of St. Petersburg, Fla., stands as the National Anthem is played during a naturalization ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, June 29, 2011. Rano, born in Toronto, Canada, took the oath of citizenship with several other service members all currently serving overseas in support of Operation New Dawn and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Snapshots from around the Brigade

Photos by Sgt. Shannon R. Gregory

230th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs



Highlights from Shutterfly



For these and many other great photos, visit our Shutterfly page.

www.230thsustainmentbrigade.shutterfly.com

All photos are for public release and are available for download and purchase through the shutterfly site.

Evolution of a Runner

Story by Spc. Jamie Smith
230th Sustainment Brigade
and

Spc. Tara Keehner
718th Transportation Battalion

As the old adage goes, “you don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone.” It takes a precocious child to be able to process this at a very young age. However, Spc. Zebedee M. Johnson qualifies as one of those rare individuals.

Paralyzed at the budding age of eight, Johnson was immobile for nearly a year of his childhood. After losing the ability to have a “normal” childhood, Johnson developed a new appreciation for a capability he had previously taken for granted. His newfound gratitude for walking soon evolved into an infatuation with running. “At the age of 13, I had a parent who saw me run. They contacted my parents about running track (Amateur Athletic Union), which is a program for the youth,” recalled Johnson. After receiving the approval of his parents, Johnson began to run competitively and never looked back.

Throughout middle school and high school, Johnson continued to run for the track and field teams in school and with AAU. It wasn’t until his senior year of high school, once Johnson won the North Carolina State High School

400-meter Race that he began to see running as a means to fund his college education.

After visiting numerous schools all over North Carolina, Johnson was convinced Western Carolina University was the school for him. Persuaded by the chance to better himself, Johnson was certain. “The coach sold me on an education and a chance to improve, heavily, in track and field,” said Johnson. Not only was it a turning point for Johnson’s life, it was also an important mark in the school’s history. It was the first time that the school offered a full scholarship to a freshman.

From August 2004 through July 2008, Johnson ran with the WCU Catamounts, all while earning a bachelor’s degree in Business. Along the way, Johnson set the



Spc. Zebedee Johnson while competing for Western Carolina University’s Track team. While at Western Carolina, Johnson claimed the 200-meter Indoor Record and was also a member of the record-setting 4x100-meter Relay Team for his school.

Photo Courtesy of NCathletes.com

bar high and proved to the athletic program they did not make a mistake in bringing him on board. Johnson claimed the 200-meter Indoor Record and was also a member of the record-setting 4x100-meter Relay Team for his school. Johnson also left a lasting impression with former college coach, Danny Williamson. During a phone interview Williamson spoke of Johnson fondly "Zeb was a very outstanding young man in our program. First-class individual. Highly competitive individual. And I wish we had about 500 more like him."

Following his college graduation, Johnson ran a couple of professional and semi-professional meets to test the waters of professional running. Even though the possibilities of running for New Balance and Adidas appeared to be promising, Johnson was not convinced it was stable enough to provide for him and his growing son. With a bleak job market that offered few considerable long-term career opportunities, Johnson was motivated to enlist in the Army full-time in October of 2009.

Shortly after completing his Initial Basic Training, Johnson was knee-deep in deployment preparations with his first and current duty assignment, the 377th Transportation Company out of Fort Bliss, Texas. Before long, Johnson and his unit deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, and he was, yet again, largely involved in his mission at hand. Towards the end of the deployment, Johnson was presented with more free time, and he was able to take on additional activities outside of work.

Running was becoming a part of his life again. His unit began to see the zeal Johnson had for running as well as his unique talent, and pushed him to pursue his love of running.

The 718th Transportation Battalion Iron Chariot Athletic Challenge was just the jump-start Johnson needed to "get back in the game." Even though Johnson participated in numerous events during the challenge, his shining moment came when he won the 100-meter dash, fueling his fervor to take his running to the next level. Nearing the end of his deployment, Johnson began looking forward to his homecoming to set goals for his running. The 377th was there cheering him every step of the way. Johnson said, "They have encouraged me to go out for the trials in 2012, the United States (Olympic) Trials." Even though excitement and nervousness are still present, lofty goals



Spc. Zebedee Johnson after one of the several "Fun Runs" held at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in commemoration of various events and activities.

Photo courtesy of Zebedee Johnson

are nothing new to this determined Soldier and he just wants one last shot. Johnson claimed, "I just want any sign that I might still have a little bit left in the tank... any sign..."

Johnson showed he did indeed have a little bit left. He finished the preliminary race with a time of 10.99 seconds in the 100-meter dash. In the finals of the 100-meter dash, Johnson took off on the start and fell. After quickly recovering and taking off down the lane, he had a lot of ground to cover. He dug deep down inside himself and came out victorious with a time of 10.81 seconds. His company was ecstatic about the win and proud of their Soldier.

The week after the race, different members of the 377th Transportation Company motivated Johnson day in and day out. The replacement unit had arrived and company missions were down to zero, leaving plenty of time for training. Johnson got up around 3 a.m. to run, lift weights and train with different members of his company. In the afternoon, he trained again. He left Camp Arifjan a few weeks after the race, with enough motivation to accomplish his goals. He continues to train and has made some plans for the upcoming season. "As of right now, I have a couple of indoor track meets set up in January," said Johnson. "We have a home track meet in March that I'm trying to enter in, in front of my home crowd back in Charlotte... I will always find competition. I might have to drive to go get it, but I'm willing to prepare."