



# Short Haul, Long Night... Photos and Story by Spc. Bob Brown

The 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor's Delta Company are nicknamed the "Drifters," which is a quite fitting title considering the unit's role as a Convoy Security Team, or CST, in the drawdown of American forces in Iraq.

As the number of troops in Iraq dwindles, so does the amount of equipment that has played a part in sustaining nearly a decade's worth of war.

The Drifters and other companies throughout the Minnesota National Guard's 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division earn their keep by providing convoy route security for both military and civilian trucks as they navigate the still dangerous roads of Iraq.

The convoys leaving Kuwait typically include empty flatbed trailers that are loaded with equipment once they arrive in Iraq.

Before a convoy can leave Kuwait, there is a laundry list of things to do. First, the Drifter's Mine Resistant Ambush Protected, or MRAP, vehicles that are tasked with providing security, must ensure all of their radio and communication equipment is functional.

Checking this equipment provides the Drifters with the ability to communicate with other MRAPs on their convoy.

After those checks are complete, the civilian truck drivers are briefed on the mission and what is expected of them on that night's convoy.

In order to bridge the language gap the truck commander will go through a series of large posters written in both Arabic and English.

Following the briefs, drivers and Soldiers board their vehicles and depart for Iraq.

The first stop is the border checkpoint known as "K-Crossing". Upon arriving at K-Crossing, the MRAPs are topped off with fuel and staged for the drive north.

As the CST for this particular convoy, their mission is to ensure that the route to Camp Adder is free of threats. Typically they are looking for hidden explosives on the side of the road and suspicious vehicles that might be carrying insurgents.

The Drifters move slowly and meticulously up the Iraqi highway using high powered lights to scan the side of the road for anything unusual, whether it is a rock that appears out of place or an unnatural part of the landscape that could be hiding an explosive device.

The CSTs travel through areas that have seen previous threats. The

driver, Pfc. Adam Erb, a tanker from Minneapolis, Minn. keeps the speed down to provide the truck commander Staff Sgt. Scott Whittemore, a Tanker from Pequot Lakes, Minn., a clear view of the road.

The same can be said for gunner Sgt. Chad Swenson, another tanker from Elk River, Minn. Swenson pokes out of the top of the truck's turret and scans the road with a sophisticated optics mounted to his machine gun.

In addition to darkness, Swenson must also deal the elements of the harsh Iraqi desert.

"It is hot in the summer, but don't ever let anyone tell you the desert isn't cold!" He said after temperatures dropped to 39 degrees Fahrenheit.

While this group of Drifters is well focused on the mission at hand, they also keep the mood as light as possible. It is not uncommon to hear laughter mixed in with some of the chatter going on over the vehicle's intercom radio system.

Three hours out of K-Crossing seemed like just as good a time as any to pullover and get a count on the semi-trucks in the convoy. It is common for the truck drivers to make wrong turns and occasionally break down making it imperative to account for all vehicles on the convoy.

Sgt. Swenson counts aloud over the radio from his gunner's hatch so Staff Sgt. Whittemore is assured every vehicle is where it is supposed to be. If a truck does fall out of the convoy, it may be up to one of the Drifters to go track it down, making for an even longer night.

Fortunately all of the trucks were accounted for and after a short break the Drifters were ready to make the final push to Camp Adder.

For Staff Sgt. Whittemore commanding a CST takes on a form of art, "Clearing the route for other vehicles to follow really paints the picture for the entire convoy. I can do whatever I feel is necessary to ensure the security of the convoy behind us."

After nearly six hours on the road the sun begins to rise in southern Iraq. The Drifters roll through gate at Camp Adder with everyone on the convoy safe and accounted for.

From here the Drifters will fuel up their vehicles and grab some breakfast chow before heading to cramped transient housing for some well-deserved sleep. It is now 9 o'clock in the morning.

When the Drifters wake, they will start the process all over again, only this time they will be heading south to Kuwait to await orders for their next mission.



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On Thanksgiving Day 2011, Minnesota Adjutant General Richard C. Nash and Lt. Col. Brain Bobo, Camp Commander for Camp Virginia stood in front of the Emergency Operations Center. General Nash visited the troops of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division stationed at Camp Virginia who are deployed in support of Operation New Dawn.

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## THE RED BULL EXPRESS

1st Brigade Combat Team  
34th Red Bull Infantry Division  
Public Affairs Office

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1st Squadron, 94th Cavalry  
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# Practice Makes Possible for 2-135 INF

Story and Photo by Sgt. Glenn Kuehne

A lot of military life is 'getting ready to get ready', to steal a line from the Edge commercial. The S-4 (supply) section of the Mankato, Minn. based 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 135<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment (2-135 Infantry) faced that challenge during an Emergency Deployment Redeployment Exercise (EDRE) at the end of October.

The EDRE was done to work out some of the kinks that are part of any military movement as the 2-135 Infantry moves into its role as a Mobile Reaction Force (MRF) for the rest of its deployment to northern Kuwait.

An MRF's basic mission is to quickly get to a potential hotspot in a region and the EDRE was a chance to make sure that the 2-135 Infantry will be mobile in an emergency. Like any other 'hot' problem from a fire to civil unrest, the speed where help arrives plays a large role in how much damage is caused.

Like preseason football, the EDRE wasn't pretty but a lot of lessons learned from it will make sure the 2-135 Infantry and units that will inherit the mission in the future are able to get the job done when it counts.

At the company level, the EDRE went well. The participating units had their Soldiers ready to go on time and their role in a movement is to focus on planning how they'll accomplish a given mission and getting as much rest as possible so they're ready when they arrive.

Issues started when the 2-135 Infantry had to work with other units to get the equipment and resources needed to get to the exercise areas and be ready to get loaded on ships or airplanes.

The first challenge faced was that the supplies needed for the mission weren't on hand. That's to be expected when a new capability is being built and differs from the battalion's initial mission of being a local reaction force where they inherited the supplies and procedures from the previous unit doing the mission.

Master Sgt. Dana Schiller of Eagle Lake, Minn., the battalion's senior supply NCO, talked about the benefits of the exercise. "We got to work with the boat crews and loadmasters that we normally don't work with to learn what their processes and capabilities are to support us in our current or future missions."

Another reason for the issue is that many of the resources needed to move out quickly on a mission that can't just be driven to are very expensive and having them sit around until an emergency would take away resources that are needed from missions being done every day.

The battalion and its parent unit, the 1/34 Brigade Combat Team from Bloomington, Minn., worked with other units and branches of the service to get most of the items needed to get the 2-135 Infantry loaded up and ready to roll out.

Some items that would be needed if it wasn't an exercise weren't available but a lengthy after-action report (AAR) listed those items so they'd be on hand or accessible if the MRF gets employed in a real-world situation.

The main lesson from the EDRE was how an infantry unit can prepare items for naval transportation and what items need to be issued to the 2-135 Infantry to allow them to complete their MRF mission.

Capt. Scott Shatek of Cottage Grove, Minn. is the battalion logistics officer and he had nothing but praise for the effort his section and the rest of the battalion made to make the most of the EDRE. "This mission was a logistics-heavy mission and the soldiers had to put in extremely long hours and work hard to get the mission accomplished. Sgt. Jason Hacker and Sgt. Adam Gregor played key roles in the movement of the men and equipment to the ships.

Capt. Shatek continued, "The four men in our shop who were part of the EDRE had to learn the procedures for sea transportation along with the usual long and hard work of moving a unit and their supplies."

The EDRE mission was all about 'getting ready to get ready' and was essential to keeping the 2-135 Infantry and the rest of the Army 'rolling along'.



An unidentified soldier from from the Winona, Minn. based Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment is sleeping where he can after a long day during a Mobile Reaction Force exercise in Kuwait.



# A New Father Drives a Draw Down

Story and Photos by Cpl. Trisha Betz

The responsible withdraw of U.S. Forces and equipment from Iraq is more than a catchy phrase.

Meeting the goals for the deadline and getting the troops home in a safe a responsible way is upper most in the mines of troops here.

Spc. Garrett Nelson, a combat engineer for Charlie Company, 1/34<sup>th</sup> Brigade Special Troops Battalion attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 94<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division "Red Bulls" put in the role of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) driver for the duration of 1<sup>st</sup> BCT, 34<sup>th</sup> ID's deployment is very vigilant when performing his duties in the drawn down.

"I like having not necessarily having to know all the guys in my truck lives are in my hands, but I'm really confident in my driving; I am really cautious and careful while driving," said Spc. Nelson, a Richfield, Minn., native.

MRAP vehicles are made with armor to deflect away any explosive ordinances projected toward the vehicle. The same armor that makes these vehicles safe in the ambushes or roadside bombing attacks also makes them up to two thousand pounds heavier.

As a driver trainer, Spc. Nelson knows that the added weight can change the dynamics of handling when braking with air bakes, which he describes to all his trainees.

"I make sure I explain the breaks pretty well because a lot of people have never driven with air brakes," said Nelson. "They're really touchy especially around turns; you have to slow down to be careful."

Although safety precautions need to be met at every corner while operating a MRAP, Nelson feels more experienced with every mile.

"Training my fellow soldiers behind the wheel gave me a lot more miles while training," said Spc. Nelson. "It definitely helps you know your job in-depth having to train other people."

As Spc. Nelson vigilantly carries out his mission in Operation New Dawn (OND), other soldiers benefit from his expertise.

"Watching him drive mission after mission, I think I've gotten the hang of it—I've gotten a lot better driving the MRAP," said Spc. Anthony Hendren, a combat engineer

assigned as a gunner for the MRAP Spc. Nelson drives, also with Charlie Company, 1/34<sup>th</sup> Brigade Special Troops Battalion attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 94<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division "Red Bulls".

Spc. Hendren did not hold a state drivers license until just days before he was activated for the deployment, but he hasn't seemed to deter from driving an MRAP with Spc. Nelson riding in the back.

"Just this pass mission I drove from K (Khabari) Crossing to Camp Buehring," said Spc. Hendren. "When I was done I asked Nelson how I did."

"Hendren just getting his license and then driving these vehicles was probably a big shock to him, but he learned really fast," said Spc. Nelson.

Spc. Nelson has been in the Minnesota National Guard for almost five and a half years and said it's always something he was fascinated by.

"I've been interested in the military ever since I was younger—when I saw soldiers I knew that was what I was going to be in the future," said Spc. Nelson. "I've always

looked up to soldiers."

He enlisted in the Minnesota National Guard the summer after his junior year of high school at South West in



Spc. Garrett Nelson and Spc. Anthony Hendren from Charlie Company, 1/34<sup>th</sup> Brigade Special Troops Battalion, attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 94<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division "Red Bulls" performed maintenance on flat Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) tire while at Khabari Crossing, Kuwait Nov. 20.



Soldiers from Charlie Company, 1/34<sup>th</sup> Brigade Special Troops Battalion, attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 94<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division "Red Bulls" stand in front of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) holding the American Flag for a group photo at Camp Adder, Iraq Nov. 20. Charlie Company, based out of Hutchinson and Redwood Falls, Minn., is currently deployed in support of Operation New Dawn and will be providing convoy security to support the draw down of U.S. Force and equipment from Iraq.

Minneapolis, Minn.

“Once I got close to graduating high school I knew I needed some extra help for college and for the future—that was a definite plus to joining,” said Spc. Nelson.

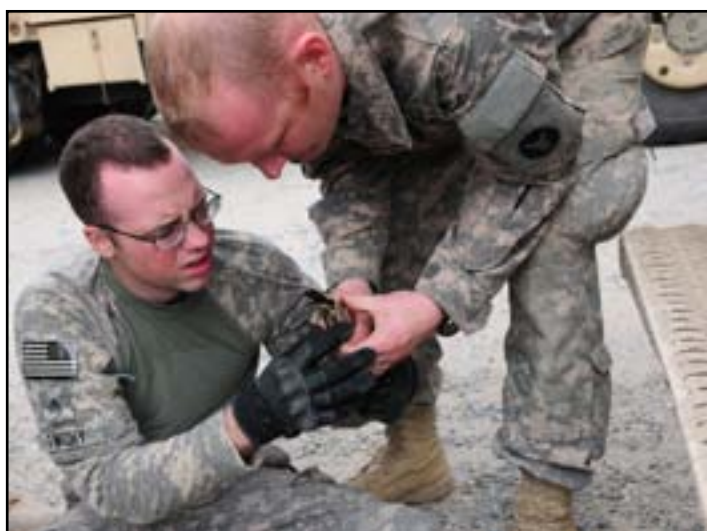
Spc. Nelson enlisted before meeting his wife, however she is just as supportive as any military wife.

“She is really supportive,” said Spc. Nelson. “She has know that this was coming for a couple of years now.”

Spc. Nelson and his wife were married in April of this year. Although the both of them knew the deployment was coming, it hasn’t made it any easier on the two of them.

“It kinda got tough when she found out she was pregnant knowing hat I would be gone during our son’s first 9 months of his life and even be gone while she was in her late stages of pregnancy—that was pretty rough on her,” said Spc. Nelson.

Their son was born on July 21<sup>st</sup> just a few days before Charlie Company departed Fort McCoy to leave for Kuwait.



Sgt. Patrick Twohy and Sgt. Espen Hansen from Charlie Company, 1/34th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, attached to the 1st Squadron, 94th Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division “Red Bulls” examine the scrap of metal that was lodged in the in tire of a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle at Khabari Crossing Nov. 20. Charlie Company is currently deployed with the “Red Bulls” in support of Operation New Dawn and will be providing convoy security to support the draw down of U.S. Force and equipment from Iraq.

“It was a tough being in the United States and never being able to see him,” said Spc. Nelson.

He was given the opportunity to go home on leave Oct. 17 where he was able to see his son turn 3 months old.



Soldiers from Charlie Company, 1/34th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, attached to the 1st Squadron, 94th Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division “Red Bulls” and the 233rd Transportation Company, 3rd Sustainment Command put their hands together for a pray prior to leaving Camp Adder, Iraq Nov. 20. The soldiers are currently deployed to Operation New Dawn and will be supporting the responsible withdraw of U.S. Forces and equipment out of Iraq.

“Those couple of months not being able to see him were kinda hard, but take leave to go see him really helped,” said Spc. Nelson.

Spc. Nelson commented that his family is what drives him do his job well.

“I think about my family a lot while I’m driving—that’s one thing that helps keep me alert and focused,” said Spc. Nelson. “Knowing that, that’s what I want to go back home to—so you have to stay awake, be vigilant and be aware.”

As hard as it is to be away from his family his peers respect him.

“The biggest lesson I’ve learned from Nelson is to be more responsible—obviously he’s already an adult and responsible, but he is becoming a leader and he takes ownership for his actions,” said Spc. Hendren.

With the current deployment almost halfway over for the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Spc. Nelson is pleased to call himself a “Red Bull”.

“I’m proud to be a Minnesota National Guardsman just with the huge role we’ve played over here in Iraq especially with the numerous amounts of soldiers Minnesota has personally deployed to Iraq; Our company a lone on the

brigades last deployment over here broke so many records and set so many records,” said Spc. Nelson. “It’s a real honor to be a part of the draw down.”



Spc. Lucas Damsgard from Charlie Company, 1/34th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, attached to the 1st Squadron, 94th Cavalry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division “Red Bulls” cleans his .50 Browning Machine Gun after escorting the 233rd Transportation Company, 3rd Sustainment Command to and from Victory Base Complex (VBC), Iraq Nov. 20.



# 34th Infantry Division “Red Bulls” Minnesota National Guard provides security for sustainment convoys in Iraq

by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Kyle Koeberl, Alpha Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Combined Arms Battalion 194<sup>th</sup> Armor, Unit Public Affairs and Relations Officer

The Minnesota National Guard 1-194 Combined Arms Battalion of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team has an important sustainment mission during the historic draw down of all US forces from Iraq.

As bases in Iraq draw down, close up shop, and all US forces prepare to be reunited with their families; the mission for Alpha Company 1<sup>st</sup> Combined Arms Battalion 194<sup>th</sup> Armor is ramping up. Alpha Company is based in Kuwait and is one of many National Guard units conducting sustainment operations into Iraq. They are assisting with the draw down and imminent withdrawal of the US Army presence in Iraq. This mission is high priority and as Lord Polonius said to his son Laertes, “the wind sits in the shoulder of your sail” (Shakespeare, 1624) so too is this true for the Soldiers of Alpha Company because on December 31, 2011, it is mission accomplished!

Now that the draw down is in full swing, the Alpha Company Soldiers are tasked to provide security for the thousands of semi trucks driving into Iraq each week. The bases are becoming ghost towns and the roads of Iraq are more congested with the movement of equipment south to Kuwait. With all that traffic flowing up and down the main supply routes there is a relevant need for security. The Soldiers on the Convoy Escort Teams take all threats seriously and security is their number one priority. Hundreds of miles and hazards separate the bases in Iraq from the border of Kuwait and it is the Alpha Company Soldier’s job to make sure the convoys make it safely to their final destination.

In order to complete this task the Alpha Company Soldiers combat many obstacles including Improvised Explosive Devices, Explosively Formed Projectiles, small arms fire, and breakdowns. Breakdowns are the most prevalent threat and the Convoy Escort Teams need to be able to react to the situation, assess the damage, maintain security, and assist in the recovery of the broken down vehicle. Road side bombs and small arms fire also present a notable threat. Quick reaction and assessment of a situation involving any of these events is crucial to keeping the convoy moving through the threat zones. The Soldiers deal with all that while still maintaining security and providing cover to the soft sided semi trucks within the convoy. Even with all the obstacles these Soldiers face, they continue to meet the 194<sup>th</sup> Armor Battalion’s number one goal which is to maintain the velocity of the convoys headed into and out of Iraq, without sacrificing the security and safety of the convoys. According to Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Langley “this is a tough job keeping scared third country nationals moving though elevated threat zones, but a firm hand and stiff security keeps the whole operation rolling”.

As December draws near Alpha Company 1<sup>st</sup> Combined Arms Battalion 194<sup>th</sup> Armor has done more than just provide security for a few convoys. In total Alpha Company has run over 150 missions, escorted over 5500 semi-trucks, and driven over 211,000 miles in just four months. Over the next 30 days Alpha Company will continue to ramp up their operational tempo, and provide sound security for their convoys. Then every Soldier can exclaim “Mission Accomplished” and come home.



Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles the Soldiers use from 1-194 CAB based out of Camp Virginia, Kuwait..

# Pig Roast for 1-125 FA

Story and Photos by 1-125 FA UPAR

Veteran's Day is to be a day of remembrance for past and current Service members. Charlie Battery used this as an opportunity to host their 1<sup>st</sup> annual pig roast since arriving in theater to commensurate their thankfulness to that day and what it stands for. There was no better way to build comradery and morale together as a unit then with great food, socialization, and of course, competitive horseshoes.

Naturally, hosting an event that's center piece revolves around the lengthy process of slow roasting a pig took some planning and coordinated efforts as a team. Many Soldiers contributed in their own way to make the day happen with success. Senior leadership decided that they owed it to the Soldiers for a job well done thus far and contributed enough money to cover the costs.

From there, SGT Hong, our resident cook, lead the way with gathering all the needed food supplies. A pig was ordered from the MWR office at the PX. But there happened to be a mix up somehow because 10 days before the event, a call with very broken english came to our unit that we needed to pick up our pig that day. After a few phone calls, the confusion was cleared up and SGT Hong secured the pig 4 days early, not 10, in order to let it thaw prior to the event. Another issue arose when the prior unit left without telling us where they left the spit for the gigantic homemade grill in our AO. Thanks to the efforts and skills of SFC Pohlmeier, he crafted a spit in the motor pool and saved the day. Our interpreter Shaz also helped contribute in his own way as he purchased and brought in many different food staples custom to our Host Nation in order to facilitate a unique food experience. The day of the roast, SGT Hong and SFC Pohlmeier spent 10 hours standing watch over the grill as they cooked the pig to perfection. "I was a little nervous about the pig coming out the way it did. This was the first time I've ever done a pig roast and most people somehow manage to mess it up their first time.", exclaimed SFC Pohlmeier. There was plenty of food to go around with many smiles, laughs, and conversation to accompany the Soldier's as they ate under the canopied deck.

In the realm of activities for the day, bean bag toss and horseshoes was the name of the game while music played in the back ground. SGT Michael and SPC Armstrong lead the way for getting this activity set up. SPC Armstrong used his artistic skills with spray paint and emplaced two unique outer space themed murals on the bean bag toss set while SGT Michael made the bags using red hots, socks, needle and thread coupled with a little elbow grease. Horseshoes had 8 partnered teams play a preliminary series of half games to determine seeds for a bracketed tournament. SFC Pohlmeier improved the horse pit by producing taller and better stakes for the two pits. At the end of the night, after almost 4 hours of continuous horseshoes, team Dead Ringers with CPT Rice and 1SG Orand walked away the undisputed champions of C BTRY without a single loss for the night. "I think it was all that age and years of experience that gave them a distinct advantage.", said SPC Hart whose team finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

C BTRY leadership would like to extend many thanks to those who put forth effort to make this day enjoyable while thanks must also be given to those who made the venture from Camp Patriot to attend the event. As enjoyable as this event was, we pray that in the cards our future doesn't hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual.



Soldiers from 1-125 FAC BTRY gather together to enjoy their meal of a pig and local food from the host nation.



# BSTB Makes Sure Soldiers Can Rest Their Heads

By: 1st Lt. Aaron Rindahl, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division



Due to the large increase in population of Soldiers moving from Iraq to Kuwait, the camps that are scheduled to receive these Soldiers are running short on bed space. With time running out to provide the supplies necessary, Area Support Group-Kuwait has ordered redistribution of current living space capacity from Camp Arifjan, Kuwait to Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

“Need to account for and load out 1400 beds with mattresses and... wall lockers” was the order that came from Lt. Col. Gary Mundfrom, Battalion Commander for the 1/34 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team. This was not going to be an easy task with only five days to find beds that could be given up, find the resources to move all beds, and prepping them for the haul to Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



As soon as the order was received, the Camp Arifjan Zone 6 Camp Command Cell, Commanded by Capt. Christopher Lotzow sprung into action. Since Zone 6 did not have the required beds in their excess inventory, the tents that are used for transient personnel would have to be emptied to meet the requirement. Zone 6 Billeting Officer in Charge (OIC) 1st Lt. Aaron Rindahl, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team was the first from the Camp Command Cell to be engaged with the project deciding where and when the tents could be emptied. Even though moving all these bunks to Camp Buehring will limit the capabilities of Camp Arifjan Zone 6 in the future, it is nice to know that we are helping a sister battalion in the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division.



To move all 1,400 beds, mattresses and wall lockers, the Camp Command Cell used 40 foot containers to package everything. These containers were moved into place by trucks and large Terex container handlers, usually referred to as a Terex. 1st Lt. Jon Schliesing, Camp Arifjan Zone 6 container OIC, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team arranged the movement of the containers to be loaded. Once the containers were full, 1st Lt. Schliesing had the containers moved to Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Of course nothing can move without the proper paperwork. Sgt. Douglas Pardo, the Camp Command Cell supply non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC), Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team tracked the count of pieces as Soldiers piled it all in the containers. After it was all complete and the necessary movement took place, the Camp Command Cell breathed a sigh of relief having completed another successful mission.



From Top to Bottom: (1) A Terex container handler places a full container on a truck flat bed for movement to Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The container is filled with mattresses, wall lockers and bed frames that will be used to support the population increase in other areas due to the drawdown of forces in Iraq. (2) Sgt. Andrea Wittlief from Hugo, MN (right), Spc. Melissa Rolfe from Coon Rapids, MN (center) and Spc. Joseph Brantley from Detroit, MI (left) all from the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team load mattresses from unoccupied tents onto the flat bed truck and Polaris Ranger for movement to the container for shipping. Once all the mattresses were removed from the tents, the bed frames were dismantled and removed also. (3) Spc. James Ploss from Lancaster, NH prepares to move another mattress into the container for movement to Camp Buehring, Kuwait. (4) 1st Lt. Jon Schliesing from Eagan, MN directs the Terex container handler to the next container that needs to be moved. 1st Lt. Schliesing is the container officer in charge (OIC) for Zone 6 Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

As the container OIC, 1st Lt. Schliesing is responsible for maintaining accountability.





Spc. Chase Xiong, from Eagan, Minn., and Spc. Jonti Roos, from Prior Lake, Minn., unload a drip pan at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, Nov. 12, 2011. Drip pans are a part of the Army's HAZMAT program to reduce environmental impact and are required under light sets. Camp Virginia houses soldiers and equipment coming out of Iraq from the drawdown.

## Supporting the Drawdown: Making room

Story and Photos by Chief Warrant Officer Daniel McGowan

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait - Before the drawdown from Iraq was announced, the 134 Brigade Support Battalion at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, was at work preparing to house the soldiers and units coming out of Iraq. "We're expecting tens of thousands to come through Camp Virginia in a matter of a few months," said Lt. Col. Brian Bobo, battalion commander.

The convoy arrives, and gear, ammo and personal equipment is off-loaded. Units are escorted to the tent areas for housing, and those who fly in follow these same procedures. Military property unloaded at Camp Virginia is stripped of all add-on equipment and processed by property book officers for redistribution back to the U.S. or to another theater.

Redeploying soldiers drop their gear and "enjoy three hots and a cot with all the amenities here at Camp Virginia until they are scheduled to fly home," said Chief Warrant Officer Chad Gould, billeting officer in charge.

Next, units move into their temporary home for anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of weeks. This makes forecasting available billeting more of an art than a science. When units announce their redeployment date is

changed, Gould says, "we do whatever we can to accommodate their needs." Light sets are moved in to light up transient areas, and extra water is delivered to transient areas as well.

Units are free to leave Camp Virginia after they clear their area with the pads NCOIC Sgt. 1st Class Allan Jorgenson. Once he has given the green light, the keys are returned to billeting, and the unit is free to redeploy back home.

The 134 Brigade Support Battalion, 1/34 Brigade Combat Team, is expected to redeploy early next summer.



Sgt. 1st Class Allan Jorgenson calls the Camp Virginia EOC during a tent inspection to clear a unit from Camp Virginia Nov. 12. Units are free to redeploy once they have cleared billeting. 134th Brigade Support Battalion, Camp Command Cell, on Camp Virginia is responsible for tent maintenance, inventories and availability to accommodate soldiers arriving from Iraq.

# Who is G Company

## 700 Forward Support Company (FSC)

At G 700 or Golf Company, they are known as **logisticians**. It's not a word used in everyday language but it's who they are and defines what they do. The word logistician is derived from the word logistics which by one definition means "*the branch of military science and operations dealing with the procurement, supply, and maintenance of equipment...*" (dictionary.com). In layman's terms, we manage pieces (assets) of a puzzle (our missions) that make our world go around. As logisticians, we are considered as experts in logistics.

G 700 is assigned to manage puzzle pieces for the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 160<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery to ensure mission readiness and success. Our current mission includes **Support Operations** (lights, water and ice, sanitation, and container management), **Base Supply**, **Dining Facility**, **Maintenance** and **Contracting**. By bringing all of these pieces together and managing them efficiently and effectively, they can ensure the soldiers that depend on our services have everything they need to accomplish their mission and return home.

At Camp Buehring, the share of the puzzle is even greater due to the recent draw down of troops from Iraq. Providing support to USF-I brings its own challenges but as logisticians, they are well prepared for the challenge.

According to the keyleadership in the unit "We believe what we do is important but we could not do what we do without our soldiers that sacrifice themselves and their families. Who we are extends far beyond logistics. We are mothers and fathers; sisters and brothers; sons and daughters, and grandparents. We are pastors, mentors, businessmen and women, students, truck drivers, law enforcement and everything in between."



Sustinendum Victoriam

"Sustaining Victory"



700<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion



Soldiers of G 700 or Golf Company play a vital part in supporting the draw down in Kuwait.



**Supply Sergeant on Fifth Deployment**

Sergeant First Class (SFC) Thomas Ray McDougal has served 24 years in the military, while holding four different military occupational specialties (MOS). 31B military police, 21E heavy equipment operator, 19D Cavalry scout and his current MOS is 92Y supply sergeant. SFC McDougal is on his fifth deployment currently at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Prior deployments include; Saudi Arabia, Panama, Belize, and Afghanistan.

SFC McDougal's job as the supply sergeant is critical for insuring soldiers have the proper equipment, gear and supplies needed to complete each mission. His job includes providing things such as paper, pens, office supplies, weapons, vehicles, and ammunition. SFC McDougal states "Our support for the troop's movement out of Iraq is a worthy mission".

SFC McDougal is from McAlester, Oklahoma and has been the husband of Cleola McDougal for 22 years. They have two daughters and he says "My family is the most important thing to me." He would also like to tell his wife Cleola he loves and misses her very much.

After returning from deployment SFC McDougal plans on being the readiness Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) of D Co 700 FSC, for two years and then retiring. He would like to leave us with this quote "hope for the best expect the worse, and you will never be disappointed".

**B Troopers Visit Saddam's Palace**

While on a mission to Camp Victory in Baghdad Spc Matthew Coker and Pfc Jim West of Bravo Troop 1/180 out of Poteau Oklahoma were able to take a tour on the outside of Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory.

The Al Faw palace was completed was started in 1989 and completed just prior to Desesrt Storm. It was built to commemorate victory over Iran. The palace was named after a southern town that was occupied by Iranians and won back in a bloody seige.

The Al Faw Palace was used as a hunting and fishing resort for people loyal to Saddam. It was mostly used by his sons Uday and Qusay who use the arificial lake around the palace to travel throughout the resort. Saddam was to believed to have visited the palace only six to eight times.

The lake surrounding the palace was stocked with bass and carp. Saddam cut off water to Baghdad for three days so the lake could be filled. Rumor has it that there are bodies in the lake but the lake has not been drained to prove that.

Upon entering the palace next to the doors you will find arabic writing that says ( peace be to fighter of the faw peninsula. The palace has 62 rooms and 29 bathrooms it is 450,000 square feet and takes 40 people five hours a day to clean it. It was the largest coalition base to used during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Opertation New Dawn.



# 112th MP Soldier is... *Camp Buehring Idol*

For Private Marshall Cates, a Military Police Soldier in 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, 268<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company, duty at Camp Beuhring can be a serious and stressful job. But after the work is done, participating in recreational activities can be a relaxing – and rewarding – way to spend off-duty time. Pvt. Cates experienced this first-hand, competing in and winning the Beuhring Idol competition, sponsored by Camp Beuhring Morale, Recreation and Welfare (MWR) on October 25<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Pvt. Cates competed against approximately 30 other contestants in this talent completion, based on the popular “American Idol” television program. A panel of judges selected Pvt. Cates as a ‘Top Five’ finalist, and he performed the song ‘Higher’ by Creed, winning the contest and a \$60 Post Exchange gift card.

Pvt. Cates is no stranger to performing on stage. He has showcased his talents in school, church, and as a member of a band in his hometown of Covington, TN., playing some of the popular entertainment venues on famous ‘Beale Street’ in Memphis TN.

Just prior to his unit’s deployment, Pvt. Cates and his band mates won a ‘Battle of the Bands’ contest in Memphis, resulting in an offer to record at Sun Studio, which is known for launching the careers of Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Cash and Elvis. Pvt. Cates’ commitment to the National Guard prevented pursuing the chance to record, but he said that being in the National Guard has not prevented his musical ambitions. “The weekend my band played in the Battle of the Bands, my platoon leader let me split – train so I could be in the contest.

Pvt. Cates’ talents are also well known among the Soldiers in 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon. Specialist Carolyn Hagen, a Military Police Soldier in 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon said that Pvt. Cates’ abilities to sing and play the guitar provided stress relief and a way for the whole platoon to unwind during pre mobilization training. “Pvt. Cates writes his own songs, and they were always funny, relaxing” said Hagen.

Pvt. Cates’ fellow MPs, including Spc. Hagen, offered support and encouragement during the competition, maintaining confidence in Pvt. Cates’ talents. He was “Awesome; he had some good competition, some made us nervous, but we know he was going to win” said Hagen. “It came down to one other competitor, who sang ‘Hotel California’ and was really, really good”. When Pvt. Cates won, we were ecstatic, we wanted to run on stage” continued Hagen.

Pvt. Cates’ musical talent goes beyond simple entertainment for his friends. Sergeant 1st Class Grant Montgomery, Platoon Sergeant, 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon 268<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company said that Pvt. Cates’ willingness to share his musical abilities enhanced the morale and teamwork of the platoon and “picked us up” during the challenging times at the beginning of a deployment. Pvt. Cates performance and the support of his fellow Soldiers “shows we can do our job, and at the same time we can relax and make the best of our time here” at Camp Beuhring.

Pvt. Cates plans to continue showcasing his talents while here at Camp Beuhring. “I’m going to ask my mom to send my guitar” to be ready for the next chance to display his vocal and musical talent.



Private Marshall Cates, a Military Police Soldier with 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, 268<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company of Ripley, Tennessee, entertains the audience and impresses the judges onstage during the Beuhring Idol competition held at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Pvt. Cates won the contest.





# *Have a Photo?*

Help us tell the story of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division to everyone! Please send it to:

Lynette.R.Hoke@us.army.mil



## **Thanksgiving Day**

2011, key leadership from Camp Buehring, Kuwait joined Minnesota Adjutant General Richard C. Nash and Minnesota Senior Enlisted Advisor Sgt. Maj. Cynthia Kallberg to serve the troops of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division who are deployed in support of Operation New Dawn.