

The Sustainment Times

FORWARD
Camp Taji, Iraq

Published by the 1st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office

HISTORIC JOURNEY

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1,215 Soldiers re-enlist in mass on July 4th, 2008, in Baghdad.



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1st Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office

Commander:
Col. Kevin O'Connell

Command Sergeant Major:
Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Cardoza

Editor in Chief:

Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude

Staff Writers:

Spc. Andrea Merritt

Staff Sgt. James Brown

Sgt. Jennifer Schweizer

Assistant Editors:

Lt. Col. Christopher McCurry

Capt. Adam Smith

Sgt. Leonard Sparks



5 1st SB in Kuwait

The first stop for the Brigade was Camp Buehring, Kuwait. It was in Buehring that Soldiers got their first taste of the heat and sand.

18 All roads lead to Taji

Taji is the logistical hub for the Iraqi Army. It was not uncommon to see trucks, trains, or helicopters filled with much needed supplies for U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers.

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The editorial content of The Sustainment Times Forward is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Public Affairs Office.

The Sustainment Brigade Times welcomes columns, commentaries, articles, letters, and photos from readers.

Contact us at bryant.maude@iraq.centcom.mil

Cover photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude.



A job well done

As we reflect on the last 15 months, what amazes me most is the mission we accomplished together, sustaining Multi-National Corps-Iraq. The complexity, magnitude, scope, and scale are truly unprecedented, whether we're talking about food, water, ice, fuel, barriers, ammunition, major end items, medical supplies, repair parts, transportation, maintenance, financial management, human resources, force protection, convoy security, or Iraqi Security Forces training. By supporting well over 150,000 Coalition Forces and contractors in a city the size of Dallas, as well as the Brigade Combat Teams in Multi-National Division-Baghdad and Multi-National Division-Center, we've had a strategic impact on the security of Baghdad and Iraq in a critical time in America's history. We've also been instrumental in helping the Iraqis rebuild their Army and create civil institutions such as railroad, trucking, security, and banking, so that Iraq can be self-reliant as a country.

Our Soldiers are also amazing in

that they are serving in a time of war, when their Nation needs them most, in an all-volunteer Army. At the peak of World War II, roughly nine percent of the eligible population served in uniform. Today, it's less than one percent. Thanks for all you do and thanks for taking the path less traveled. You can be proud to know that when you were needed, you were there. We need quality Soldiers like you to stay in the Army. Think about it -- if not you, who?

The Families have sacrificed so much with husband, wife, dad, mom, son, or daughter deployed for such a long time. Things missed such as anniversaries, birthdays, reunions, football games, graduations, and father / daughter dances mean so much, but Army Families are Army Strong and find a way to Soldier through the separation. I want to thank all the Families for all their support and all that they've had to sacrifice, so that their Soldier could serve his or her Nation. You probably had it harder than we did; you didn't get paid for all you did, but we couldn't have done it without you.

Thanks for being a Sustainment Brigade team player. The Army and sustainment operations are both

team sports, and no one can do it alone. The synergy is where everything comes together, and the whole is greater than the sum of all its parts. That's when you know you're in a high-performing organization. You -- whether you're a Soldier or Family member, regardless of your rank, specialty, or unit -- have made the 1st Sustainment Brigade a very high-performing organization.

Our unit history traces back to 1917 in the First Division's Trains in World War I. We were the Division Troops in World War II. In Viet Nam, Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom II, we were the Division Support Command. The unit deployed in September 2007, only seven months after it reorganized on an accelerated timeline to the 1st Sustainment Brigade. Even though we're a relatively new unit, we have a lot of history, lineage, and honors with the 1st Infantry Division, the Big Red One. This has not only been the longest deployment the unit has had, but arguably the most critical, productive, strategic, and important as we fight terrorism and protect our way of life.

Be proud of your association with the Big Red One and remember the motto: No mission too difficult. No sacrifice too great. Duty First. Sustain to Victory!

With great admiration and respect,

Kevin O'Connell

Col. Kevin O'Connell

Durable 6



1st SB HITS THE GROUND IN KUWAIT



"This exercise involved many tasks. It didn't stop so it was real tiring to the wrists. We didn't take a break and had to move in all our gear. It was challenging, but it was good training," said Sgt. 1st Class Luis De La Rocha, a maintenance manager for HHC, 1st SB.

After the range, everyone moved to their respective groups and focused on conducting the convoy. The route was displayed on a map, and everyone had to work together to come up with a plan for overcoming the obstacles they would encounter on the road.

The convoy was as realistic as possible. Local nationals acted as townspeople and insurgents. Some

1st Sustainment Brigade in Kuwait

Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade left Fort Riley, Kan., Sept. 17, but before their boots hit ground in Iraq, they stopped in Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Sept. 18, for two weeks of additional training.

The Brigade conducted IED, entry control point, and drivers training the first week, then completed a three-day field exercise Sept. 26 to Sept. 28, where Soldiers practiced close-quarter marksmanship (CQM) and conducted a counter-IED convoy training exercise.

At the CQM range, Soldiers fired their individual weapons at 25-meter targets while standing in close proximity to each other.

"They must get used to working closely together," said Eric Daniels, an observer controller for the CQM range.

"The training is more realistic than at a qualification range where you fire from a foxhole ... It's more feasible because there are no foxholes (in Iraq) and the methods of engagement are more reflexive and instinctive," Daniels said.

Everyone was separated into groups and practiced stationary and non-stationary movements for about two hours while wearing all of their gear before they fired with live rounds.



could be found waving at the convoy as it passed and others were seen videotaping the convoy as it went by, usually in places where the IEDs were hidden.

At one point, a man acting as a suicide bomber drove through an Iraqi police checkpoint at a high rate of speed and detonated his vehicle.

"It went very well considering we had a lot of people with not a lot of experience conducting convoys. We





also had a large group thrown together who had never worked together before,” said Capt. Adam Smith, 1st SB personnel officer, who served as a crewmember during the convoy.

DID YOU KNOW

Camp Buehring is the staging post for U.S. troops in the north of Kuwait. The areas surrounding Camp Buehring, known as the Udairi Range Complex, are largely uninhabited, but for a few nomadic Bedouin tribes raising camels, goats, and sheep. Average temperatures in September range from 108 F to 115 F and can get as high as 125 F in the shade.

“I thought the MPRI instructors were very knowledgeable and provided excellent (tactics, techniques, and procedures) necessary to execute convoy operations,” Smith said.

The exercise tested everyone’s situational awareness because during the convoy, Soldiers had to identify and report any IEDs and suspicious personnel they came across along the route.

If they weren’t vigilant, the observer controller would set off the explosive devices that were hidden under trash, behind guard rails, or in shrubs.

“One thing that went really well was we exercised a lot of tactical patience, which allowed us to find and identify enemy threats along the route,” Smith said. “One thing to improve on is to develop communication procedures between vehicles so that everyone has a clear image of what is going on, increasing cross-talk between vehicles.”

Smith’s group made it through the 7-mile convoy, which took approximately three hours to complete, without having any explosive devices take out their convoy.

“Take advantage of the instructors and the tools provided, ask a lot of questions because the more you know, the more training you can get, the more successful you will be,” Smith concluded.



Agility tour

Steve Nelson, retired Navy Senior Master Chief (food service), and the executive director, PV Operations Agility Defense & Government Services, points out the operation inside their main facility at Safat, Kuwait, on Sept. 21, 2007.

Agility is the primary vendor in theater who provides food to the Coalition Force Soldiers and contractors in Iraq.

The food is trucked into Iraq from their facility each day by civilian drivers.

The tour was arranged by Chief Warrant Officer Russell Campbell.



FYI

18th

21st



"DURABLE'S" DAY

They will perform logistics, human resources, financial management, force protection, and convoy security operations while in Iraq.

"I know the 1st SB will continue to build on the 15th SB's past successes as well as create new ones," said Brig. Gen. Gregory Couch, commanding general of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Before the 1st SB arrived in Camp Taji, they kept in close contact with the 15th SB through phone calls and video teleconferences; therefore, the 1st SB's transition into command would be easier.

**1st Sustainment Brigade takes over**

The 1st Sustainment Brigade officially took charge of support operations throughout Iraq in a transfer of authority ceremony Oct. 19 outside of the Brigade's headquarters.

The 1st SB assumed command from the 15th Sustainment Brigade, which deployed here from Fort Hood, Texas, in August 2006.

While in theater, the 15th SB "Wagonmasters" supported 13 brigade combat teams, conducted more than 5,800 combat logistics patrols, and drove more than four million miles across an area the size of Kentucky. Now, it is the 1st SB's turn to make its mark.

The 1st SB has taken charge of seven battalions and commands more than 4,000 Soldiers who are spread throughout Multi-National Division-Baghdad.

"Our transition has been flawless because of your support of us. Ever since we got our deployment orders ... it's just been first-class operations dealing with a first-class organization," said Col. Kevin O'Connell, commander of the 1st SB.

"To the Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, look back on the giants that have gone before us,

stand on their shoulders, both from the 1st Infantry Division and the 15th Sustainment Brigade. They've set the foundation, now it's our turn to keep improving," O'Connell said.

"Look back at the motto of the Big Red One, "No mission too difficult. No sacrifice too great. Duty first and sustain to victory," O'Connell concluded.





1st SB Soldiers sustain Iraqi drivers

Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade helped sustain an Iraqi fuel convoy during its stop at Camp Taji by bringing food, water, and ice to the drivers Oct 22.

The convoy was a joint effort between the U.S. Army, U.S. Marines, Iraqi Army, and local nationals.

The Marines provided route clearance and the Iraqi Army pulled security as the drivers, who are local nationals, transported fuel to different locations throughout Iraq.

It was the Army's job to handle lodging for the Marines and Iraqi Soldiers and to provide food for the local nationals driving the fuel trucks the day they left for the convoy and the day they returned.

After their mission, which lasted about three days, the drivers lined the fuel trucks along the side of the road and rested.

Some of the drivers could be seen lying in a bed hanging above the seats in the cabs of their trucks.

As the 1st SB Soldiers pulled up in a 5-ton truck filled with boxed meals, bags of ice, and water, the drivers climbed out of their beds to collect their share.

The Soldiers rode down a line of 120 trucks, which was about a mile long, and handed out the goods with the help of a two Iraqi Soldiers.

"We had to feed close to 300 people," said Master Sgt. Oscar Bonilla, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 1st SB Iraqi Security

Forces Cell. "We handed out six pallets of water, 62 boxes of meals, and 300 bags of ice."

"Missions like this greatly improve American-Iraqi relationships. It changes the overall vision of the Iraqis toward the U.S. Army," Bonilla concluded.



Soldiers move into Taji

Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade assist with the placement of containers on Camp Taji. The containers were shipped from Ft. Riley a few weeks prior to the deployment.



Soldiers recognized for excellence

Col. Kevin O'Connell, the commander of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, along with Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Cardoza, recognized a few dozen Soldiers for their excellent work leading up to the deployment.

The 1st SB transitioned from the 1st Infantry Division DISCOM in February 2007 and, as a result, only had a few months to prepare for the 15-month deployment to Iraq.

DID YOU KNOW

Camp Taji was formerly Al-Taji airfield. Located in the volatile Sunni Triangle, it was originally an Iraqi Republican Guard base during the Saddam era. It was once the center for the manufacturing of chemical weapons. Taji is also home to the Taji National Depot.

19th

22nd

FYI



STOP AND GIVE THANKS



Thanksgiving feast in Taji

The line was out the door at the Cantigny Dining Facility on Thanksgiving Day as Soldiers and civilians on Camp Taji gathered together to enjoy a holiday meal with their peers Nov. 22.

As soon as the patrons walked into the dining facility, they were faced with the impressive displays that the staff had spent about eight hours a day for the previous week working on.

"I like it all," said Spc. Gerald Medford, a cook in the 1st Sustainment Brigade who, along with five other people, worked on the displays. "I put my heart and soul into it. I think everything looks pretty good."

The displays included cornucopias, ice sculptures, fruit carvings,

gingerbread houses, and styrofoam sculptures, which were made by Soldiers and civilian contractors who work in the DFAC.

"I was surprised they went through all this effort for us," said Spc. Steve Guerrero, a force protection specialist in 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, when he saw the decorations.

During the meal, patrons had their choice of prime rib, ham, Cornish hen, green beans, mashed potatoes, and various other foods during lunch and dinner hours at the DFAC that day.

"(Thanksgiving Day) is where we get to showcase our talents and skills and put on a great meal," said Chief Warrant Officer Russell Campbell, the Brigade's food technician.

"It means even more so when

we're deployed because we want to give the Soldiers things they would eat at home," said Campbell.

For some Soldiers, it was their first Thanksgiving away from home, and although they missed being with their loved ones, they enjoyed their holiday feast.

"The food is good and the decorations are nice," said Guerrero, who is deployed for the first time.

"I miss being with my Family and kids, but these guys make it feel good, easier," Guerrero added as he pointed to his colleagues.

In keeping with a long, withstanding Army tradition, leaders in the 1st Sustainment Brigade and its subordinate battalions served the Soldiers their Thanksgiving Day meals.

At the end of the day, almost 9,000 meals had been served and the servicemembers and contractors on Camp Taji were able to get a little taste of a traditional Thanksgiving away from home.



11th





➔ **K-State shout outs begin**

Leaders and Kansas State “Wildcats” fans within the 1st Sustainment Brigade film a shout out to the Kansas State University basketball team Nov. 17. “Coach Martin, great job on your team’s impressive start. As you can see, we are big fans of the Wildcats, and we’re looking forward to watching you go all the way to the Final Four,” said Col. Kevin O’Connell, commander of the 1st SB.

The 1st SB Wildcat fans went on to make a half-dozen more shout outs during the deployment. Most of the shout outs were aired on the jumbo-tron during K-State sporting events.



➔ **Honorary Colonel visits 1st SB Soldiers**

1st Lt. Benjamin Culbertson, a platoon leader in Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 138th Field Artillery, 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, shows retired Maj. Gen. Robert

Shadley, honorary colonel of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, the inside of an armored security vehicle Nov. 18.

“I just wanted to stop by and personally thank as many of the Soldiers as I could for their dedicated service here in Iraq,” said Shadley.



Later that day, Col. Kevin O’Connell, commander of the 1st SB, and Shadley, who commanded the unit from 1990 to 1992 when it was the 1st Inf. Div., DISCOM, cut the ribbon to mark the official opening of the Shadley Room in the Cantigny Dining Facility on Camp Taji. “This is our way of honoring one of the giants that came before us,” said O’Connell.



➔ **In search of Abraham**

Maj. Terrence Hayes, the 1st Sustainment Brigade chaplain stands at the base of the Ziggurat Nov. 19. The terraced-pyramid temple of the ancient Assyrians and Babylonians was built over 4,000

years ago. The temple has slanted walls with steps and rises about 50 feet above the surrounding desert. The site was of great interest to the chaplain.

His search for Abraham, led him to the ancient city of Ur, which is believed to be the oldest city in the world.



➔ **Hot Salsa**

Lt. Col. Angela Odom, commander of the 15th Personnel Services Battalion, dances to “Suavemente” by Latin singer Elvis Crespo with Spc. Hugo Ramirez, a mechanic with HDD, 15th PSB, during the Battalion’s monthly Organizational Day Nov. 25

DID YOU KNOW

The Cantigny served 1,200 lbs of home style turkey, 577 lbs of Cornish hens, 900 lbs of ham, 550 lbs of steamship round, 1,282 lbs of prime rib, 648 lbs of raw peeled shrimp, and 100 lbs of turkey thighs to 8,887 Soldiers during Thanksgiving lunch, and thousands more for dinner.

17th 18th 19th 22nd 25th FYI



COMBAT READY



Patch ceremony

Veterans Day commemorates the signing of the armistice that ended World War I and is a day to honor the service members who fought and died defending freedom and the American way of life.

The 1st Sustainment Brigade, which deployed in September, observed the holiday with a combat patch ceremony Nov. 11, which was featured in the December issue of the Sustainment Times Forward.

Since its arrival at Camp Taji, Iraq, the 1st SB has taken command of sustainment operations throughout Multi-National Division-Baghdad and earned the right to wear the highly-respected patch, which signifies wartime service.

The Soldiers stood under the heat of the sun wearing their army combat helmets, interceptor body armor, and ballistic eyewear as commanders and leaders in the

Brigade walked down the line and placed the patches on their right shoulder.

“Many already have a combat patch from one or multiple tours with previous units,” said Col. Kevin O’Connell, commander of the 1st SB. “Be proud of this patch because you are the 1st Sustainment Brigade.”

The units that participated in the ceremony were Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st SB and Signal Company, both of the Special Troops Battalion, 1st SB; the 15th Transportation Company; and 377th Transportation Company, of the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

Brig. Gen. Gregory Couch, commanding general of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), was the guest speaker during the event.

“Although the Army has taken the 1st SB away from the 1st Infantry Division, it is great that they get to keep all the lineage and honors,” said Couch.

“They did a great job designing the patch,” Couch said of the shoulder sleeve insignia, which was designed by O’Connell; Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Cardoza, 1st SB command sergeant major; Lt. Col. Hielke Welling, the support operations officer; and Maj. Lowell Howard, executive officer of the STB.

“Be proud to wear the 1st SB patch on both sleeves because the best unit you’ve been in should be the unit you are in now - because you make this unit the best,” said O’Connell.

Santa visits 1st SB Families

Santa stopped by Ft. Riley on Dec. 7, and gave away some gifts and posed for photos with children of 1st Sustainment Brigade Soldiers who are deployed to Iraq.

The gathering was put together by the 1st SB Rear Detachment with help from the Mayors of Platte County, Missouri. The Mayors of Platte County adopted a number of units within the Brigade shortly before their deployment and have been great supporters of the Soldiers and their Families.



DID YOU KNOW

The 1st Sustainment Brigade processed over 2,000 casualty liaison team reports, over 400,000 R5 passenger accountability transactions, provided medical care to over 22,000 Soldiers, including 46 urgent evacuations, filled 13,000 prescriptions, administered over 7,000 immunizations, and certified over 1,000 Combat Life Savers.

7th

FYI





Just in time for Christmas

While some people were making lists of all the lavish gifts they wanted for Christmas, the Soldiers of the 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, stationed at Seitz Annex, were just happy to have a place of their own to sit and eat.

After months of traveling back and forth on buses to the nearest dining facility after theirs closed down, the Soldiers of the 68th CSSB can literally walk right outside their doors to grab a meal.

“When we first got here, we had tents. They didn’t have any trailers, so we just went with what we had,” said Staff Sgt. Kevin Frazier, the senior food operations noncommissioned officer for the 598th Maintenance Company, 68th CSSB.

After some of the leaders decided a new facility was needed, they came up with a plan to have one built.

About four months after the building process began; the Stagecoach Café was complete and ready for business.

Although the Stagecoach Café doesn’t have the same wide variety as other DFACs in the area, some Soldiers from the Battalion still feel a sense of pride.

“We might not have the selection as the other big DFAC, but our cooks bring us the best they have,” said Sgt. Reynaldo Luna, the battalion commander’s driver for the 68th CSSB.

Unlike many other dining facilities, where civilian contractors make the meals, Soldiers in the battalion are responsible for preparing the food.

On Christmas Eve, Soldiers from the 598th Maint. Co. could be seen grilling food for lunch on a deck right outside the back door of the Stagecoach Café.

“There’s a lot of pride there because it’s our own. (It’s) run by our Soldiers, not KBR,” said Luna.

The Soldiers of the 68th CSSB have benefited from the convenience of the Stagecoach Café since Thanksgiving and will continue to enjoy it well into the New Year.



Nutrition class offered to 1st SB Soldiers

Capt. Lamar Sales, the officer in charge of mortuary affairs for the 1st Sustainment Brigade, has been a certified personal trainer for six years and generously offered his expertise to Soldiers who wanted to

improve their eating habits during a nutrition seminar held on Dec. 29.



Gen. Petraeus administers oath

Commanding General of Multi-National Force - Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, renders the oath of enlistment to Spc. Anthony Russell, a motor transportation specialist with the 494th Transportation Company, 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, on New Year’s Eve.

“I feel very privileged to re-enlist this great guy,” said Petraeus. Russell has been in the Army for five years and re-enlisted for six more. He is currently on his second deployment, which he volunteered for, and is due to return home in April. Petraeus agreed to participate because Russell’s mother, Staff Sgt. Lorie Jewell, a photojournalist with MNF-I, works for him and asked him to do it.

“I’m very proud. I’m just really happy I could be here. I always shoot General Petraeus re-enlisting other people and when Anthony said he was looking into it, I was pretty sure Gen. Petraeus wouldn’t mind,” said Jewell. “I’m just glad. I think the Army is a very good fit for him.”

29th

31st



IMPROVE YOUR SWING IN 2008



Friday Night Fights

"Welcome to Friday Night Fights," shouts Staff Sgt. Jerry Maldonado, the equal opportunity representative for the 168th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade.

What started out as a small vision for Maldonado has mushroomed into the place to be for some Soldiers on Camp Liberty.

"Each Friday night, there's a little 'boxing smoker' that we hold -- a tournament for the Soldiers -- so we can allow Soldiers a chance to let off a little steam," said Maldonado, the promoter and referee of Friday Night Fights.

When he found the abandoned, semi-falling down, framed tent, he



thought it might be a great place for him to teach Soldiers the art of boxing.

"There was a single-string boxing ring and a whole lot of trash in here," said Maldonado. When he started fixing the place, people within the command took notice and offered to help.

With the help of Sgt. Robert Flanagan and Sgt. Kyle Butler, drivers for the 168th BSB command team, Maldonado restored the tent.

They repaired the walls and roof and built a raised boxing ring complete with ropes, corner guards, and a bell fashioned from an old fire extinguisher and bolt.

For Pfc. Sergio Cedeno, a supply specialist with Headquarters Company, 168th BSB, it's the fulfillment of a childhood dream.

"Growing up in Puerto Rico, I watched the boxers on T.V. and dreamed of one day being like them," said Cedeno.



Flexibility is key to success

For Soldiers serving in Battery B, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, 168th Brigade Support Battalion, the word "flexible" takes on real meaning.

"I was trained as a 31 Bravo, military police," said Spc. Jacob Chrones of San Diego.

"19 Kilo, tanker," stated Spc. Michael Dahl, of Beaumont, Calif., who is one of a dozen California Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the Rapid Aerostat Initial Deployment (RAID) mission for the 168th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade.

"It was kind of thrown in our lap," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Coy, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the RAID mission.

RAID is a giant balloon that flies

11th



high above the skies of bases in Iraq. It gives commanders on the ground a visual look at the area outside of the wire. Bravo Battery was tasked with the mission shortly after arriving in theater and has adapted well.

“It was difficult at first because you have to calculate the right mix of helium and oxygen,” stated Spc. Uriel Torres, with Btry. B, 1st Bn., 143rd FA, “but it’s easy now.”

Each of the team members underwent two and a half weeks of training before they were handed the around-the-clock mission of maintaining the giant balloon. “It’s going great now,” said Coy. “These guys are all smart, and we’re all flexible. You have to be, I guess.”

Monitoring giant balloons is not the only thing Btry. B has had to adapt to. Just down the street, at Entry Control Point Three, is another group of Soldiers performing an equally critical mission - force protection.

“Basically, we’re the defense of the base,” stated Sgt. Michael Taylor, from Newberg, N.C., the gate sergeant of the guard at ECP Three for the 46th Chemical Company. Trained as a chemical specialist, Taylor had to adapt quickly to the security mission given to him by Btry. B, 1st Bn., 143rd FA.

“A guy has to be flexible to do this job,” said Taylor. “It takes flexibility to manage security, make improvements, control traffic, and whatever else they may have for you.”

The old saying, “If life gives you lemons, make lemonade” seems to apply for these Soldiers; as all indications point to them making lemonade out of lemons.



➔ **First snow in Baghdad in 100 years**

Two 1st Sustainment Brigade Soldiers watch the first snowfall in the Baghdad area in more than 100 years Jan. 11. The light snow began to fall in the early morning hours and ended shortly after 9 a.m. “My first reaction was, ‘Man, it’s really snowing in Iraq!’ I was told it hasn’t snowed out here in over 70 years. We were here for a rare event,” said Master Sgt. Mark McPhan, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the personnel services section of the 1st SB.



➔ **Signal Soldiers set savings goal**

In an attempt to “bring something to the table” that his Soldiers could benefit from, 1st Lt. Justin Haug, the Joint Network Node platoon leader for Signal Company, Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, took the advice of his platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Meveran Banks, and started

counseling his Soldiers on the basics of money.

He and his Soldiers set a group savings goal for the deployment, where each Soldier would voluntarily agree to save money, and they would track the results. Based on how well everyone did, a series of awards would be offered.

“We figured \$10,000 per Soldier throughout the duration of the deployment. At the time, that put us at \$140,000,” said Haug.

In all, his Soldiers have saved \$265,000.

DID YOU KNOW
The 1st Sustainment Brigade had command and control of 11 different battalions at one time or another while deployed to Iraq. The battalions came from places like Louisiana, Oklahoma, Maryland, California, Alabama, Texas, Indiana, and Kansas.



➔ **Lt. Gen. Ann Dunwoody visits Taji**

Lt. Gen. Ann Dunwoody, the deputy chief of staff, G-4, United States Army, speaks with a Soldier during her stop at the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion’s area during her visit to the 1st Sustainment Brigade, Jan. 30.

Dunwoody went on to become the Army’s first female four star general.

FYI

30th



BUILDING EQUITY



A fast moving train

The Special Troops Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Robert Brem, has wasted no time in creating equity in the 1st Sustainment Brigade. Just 90 days after their transfer of authority ceremony, the STB has assumed the mission previously done by three battalions; missions that have a significant impact to the fight.

“It’s a big mission and a big change, but we planned for, trained for, and looked forward to it,” said Brem; referring to the addition of the 510th Human Resources Company and the 24th Financial Management Company.

“Both companies are commanded by field grade officers, and they both assumed missions held previously by individual battalions,” continued Brem.

It was the early decision by the 1st SB Commander, Col. Kevin

O’Connell, to take the human resources operations and the finance operations staff in the Brigade and embed them in the STB.

“This early decision allowed us to prepare as a team,” stated Brem.

Just one of their new missions, finance, has a huge impact on the welfare of 92,000 Soldiers, civilians, and contractors working in two divisions, Multi-National Division-Baghdad and Multi-National Division-Center, and the future of Iraq.

“They (24th Fin. Man. Co.) indirectly support the (Iraqi) economy in this way,” explains Maj. Thomas Buchholz, the financial management support operations officer for the STB. “They provide money for paying agents who in turn pay contracts.”

“These contracts do everything from build or improve roads, improve structures, build guard towers for Iraqi security, etc,” continues Buchholz. “All these contracts are out there to support the Coalition Forces and the Iraqi economy.”

The 24th Fin. Man. Co. also cashes checks for corporations. For instance, if a civilian company operating in their area has a memorandum of agreement with the U.S. military, they can cash a large corporate check at one of their offices. They can then turn around and pay their workers, sub contractors, and suppliers in cash.

“Anything that deals with Soldiers’ money, the 24th Fin. Man. Co. has something to do with it. Anything having to do with paying agents...or a contractor being paid,”

said Maj. Buchholz.

Additional growth comes with its challenges, and the STB is no exception. They’ve gone from a Camp Taji centric battalion, to one with four companies placed in 16 additional forward operating bases throughout Iraq.

Leveraging technology is one key to success for Brem. “We utilize the communication tools we have to stay in touch with our subordinate units. We encourage the companies to do the same,” states Brem.

“Using and recognizing communication tools are our weapon systems for command and control. You need to treat them like a weapon system. Maintain them, train on them, and deploy them to gain maximum effectiveness. These are some of the things I brought with me from Korea where we were early adapters,” Brem added.

From a processing standpoint, Brem found finance and human resources very similar to the logistics functions. “Although the names and processes are different, from a management function, it’s really similar to logistics,” said Brem.

Looking back, it has been a fast moving train for the Soldiers of the STB, and the pace is not going to let up.

DID YOU KNOW

The 1st Sustainment Brigade distributed more than \$4 billion in nearly 425,000 Soldier support, paying agent, and commercial vendor payment transactions. They also processed over 3 million pieces of mail weighing more than 45 million pounds.





→ **STB celebrates renovated building**

Anji Reddy, foremen for the contractor Al Bashaer, and Lt. Col. Robert Brem, the commander for the Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, participated in a joint ribbon cutting ceremony to commemorate the renovation of building 28, the Special Troops Battalion Headquarters at Camp Taji, Iraq on Feb. 2.



→ **STB celebrates renovated building**

Spc. Jessica West, a cashier with Detachment B, 24th Financial Management Company, Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, assists customers in the International Zone in Baghdad Feb 10. Det. B, 24th Fin. Man. Co., is a Fort Stewart, Ga., unit deployed to provide financial support to Soldiers, civilians, contractors and local nationals throughout Multi-National Division-Baghdad.

→ **1st SB Soldiers form human patch**

On the morning of Feb. 8, 2008 1,252 Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade gathered at the old helicopter landing pad on Camp Taji and formed into a human patch to pose for photos. The uniform of the



day was either black fleece jacket with black fleece hat or ACU top with ACU cap.

Soldiers with the Brigade staff, Special Troops Battalion, 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and 1st Squadron, 143rd Field Artillery showed up for this historic photo.



Soldier pops the question

Sgt. Nathan Cummins of the 15th Transportation Company surprised his girlfriend, Mary Beth with the age old question, "Will you marry me?" Between many tears of happiness, and a faint "oh my goodness," she said "YES!!!"



MARCH 2008

UNLEASH THE (SPO) NATION



Driven to perfection

Throughout the 1st Sustainment Brigade headquarters and the various battalions in its organization, there is a group of Soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers who pride themselves in being members of the “SPO Nation”.

“SPO Nation is a mental state of being,” says Lt. Col. Hielke “Hike” Welling, the officer in charge of support operations at the 1st SB. “It’s a collective group of officers, NCOs, and Soldiers whose mission is to be combat multipliers for the warfighter...where we try to do everything right the first time.”

If you look at the SPO Nation, you will find out quickly that this mindset has definitely produced exceptional results in a short period of time.

The term “SPO Nation” was first coined by Maj. Christopher Dexter,

the deputy support operations officer for the 1st SB, at Fort Riley, Kan., prior to their departure for Iraq.

“I was looking for some kind of team name,” recalled Welling. “He was talking about living the dream and SPO Nation...because of the size of the organization...so I put it out there and it wasn’t long before it caught on with the Soldiers.”

This group of logisticians took on the challenges of supporting 19 brigades at the height of the surge and did it better than anyone in the country.



Water, water everywhere

Staff Sgt. Franklin Stoner, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Class I for the 62nd Quartermaster Company, 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, stands in the middle of an ocean of bottled water. The cache of over a half-million bottles of water was only a fraction of the water destined for Soldiers, civilians, and contractors serving in Multi-National Division-Baghdad this summer. “Each pallet holds 720 individual bottles of water, and we have an estimated half-million bottles currently on hand,” said Stoner.



Forging friendships

It started with a handshake between the 1st Sustainment Brigade Commander, Col. Kevin O’Connell, and the Taji Base Commander, Staff Brig. Gen. Abdul Mahady Sharaqe Sabah, a native of Diyala, Iraq, March 29.

The two leaders sat down in General Sabah’s office with some of their key staff and shared chi, discussed needs, and got to know one another. Sabah is a 27-year veteran of the Iraqi Army.

“We look forward to a partnership with General Sabah to improve the support he gives to his customers, the Iraqi units on Taji and in the surrounding area,” stated O’Connell.

Taji is the largest [Iraqi Army] base in Iraq, with maintenance depots, supply depots, the 9th Division, and all their schools. General Sabah’s span of control and responsibility is huge, and his resources are scarce.



12,000 Pallets by air



DID YOU KNOW

The 1st Sustainment Brigade built and moved over 12,000 pallets by air to FOBs throughout Iraq, completed over 24,000 direct support maintenance jobs, 500 combat service support automation maintenance jobs, and installed over 1,000 life saving objective gunner kits.



Around the world 48 times

2nd Platoon, 2nd Transportation Company out of Fort Riley, Kan., racked up an estimated 1,200,000 miles on their 32 trucks, or the equivalent of 48 times around the earth, since their arrival in May 2007. Just 60 Soldiers strong, this mixture of drivers, maintenance technicians, and a few capable administrative personnel have managed to clock on average 20,000 miles each.

“We do three to four missions a month,” said Staff Sgt. Thomas Skinner, squad leader and gun truck commander for the Company. “Each mission runs between 1,000 and 2,000 miles and can last a week to 18 days.”

The 2nd Platoon was visited by Col. Kevin O’Connell, the commander of the 1st SB, on March 26. Although they are not in his chain of command,

the unit is from Fort Riley, Kan., so he felt it was important to say hello.

“You should be proud of your accomplishments, I’m sure your Families back home are,” said O’Connell.

Iraqi Truck Company makes progress

When Capt. Curtis Yankie, the commander for Company A, 168th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, and his team took over the management of the Iraqi Truck Company at Camp Liberty, they knew it would be challenging.

The equipment readiness rate was declining, and there was a limited supply of parts for repairs. It was a mess.

This situation created additional challenges for Lt. Col. Todd Heussner, the commander of the 168th BSB. Every time an Iraqi truck broke down on the road it meant convoys were stopped, troops were vulnerable to attack, the

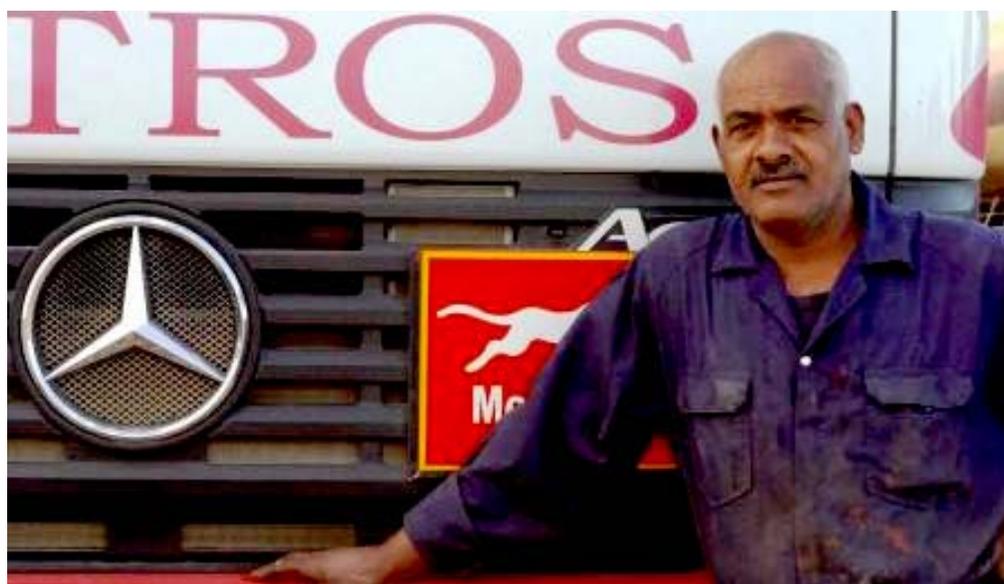
mission was delayed, and additional Soldiers and trucks were needed to recover the downed vehicles.

“When I looked at the ITC...I had to consider risk to the Soldiers and accomplishment of the mission,” recalled Heussner. “Until we could get the ITC to make the necessary changes and improvements...we had no other choice but to shift ITC trucks to on base missions only.”

This shift in mission provided a window where ITC could be monitored and tested.

“Logistics operations... integrates deliberate combat logistics patrols with mission requirements and improvises when standard support will not meet the requirements,” said Yankie.

With this in mind, Yankie and his team went to work to create a four-step plan that focused on improving cultural awareness, training, living conditions, and vehicle maintenance. This focused approach is what ultimately transformed the ITC into a proficient, reliable operation.



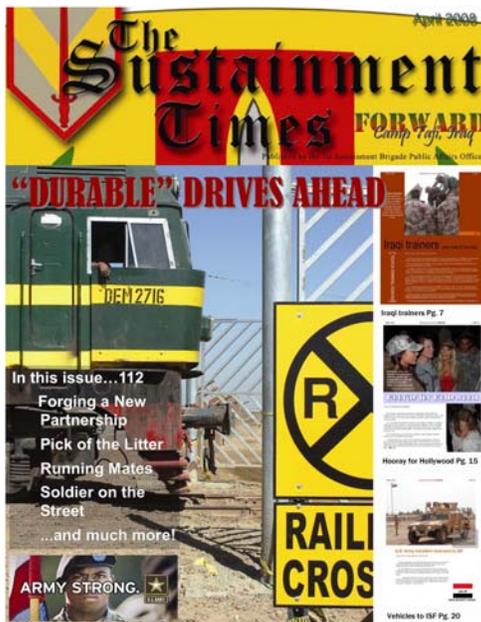
FYI

26th

29th



ALL ROADS LEAD TO TAJI



A train runs through Taji

Waving to spectators and honking the horn of his bright, green and red locomotive, Mustapha the train conductor, was the first Iraqi Republic Railways (IRR) worker to make the journey along the old tracks between the central Baghdad rail yard in Baghdad and Camp Taji, in many years.

This historical journey was part of a proof-of-principle designed to rebuild the tattered railway and stimulate the young economy; it was one small step in that direction for sure.

“An increased use of the rail infrastructure will translate to big dinars for the Iraqi economy,” said Maj. Ira Baldwin, mobility chief for the 1st Sustainment Brigade.

As far as Coalition Forces are concerned, the new train will enable large movements of cargo between

the port at Um Qasar and Camp Taji, creating greater logistical economies-of-scale.

“Since Taji is the closest, secured location nearest Joint Base Balad, the trains will allow a faster movement between the two,” stated Baldwin. “This will reduce the costs of moving cargo as compared to over the road, but the greater benefit is that trains will take a great number of Soldiers off the road which translates to lives saved.”

This increased use of the IRR will equate to increased income generated by local, national, and eventually international trade; overall, the rail industry will provide solid jobs for the Iraqi people as exemplified by the conductor Mustapha who has been employed by the IRR for over 27 years.

“I am very lucky to be a part of history in the making by helping to

make a train run through,” stated Baldwin.



Building hope in Assriya

Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California Army National Guard unit attached to the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, load concertina wire to place around the wall of a girls’ school in Assriya,



2nd

10th

14th

Iraq, a village located outside of Camp Taji, Apr.2.

Since February, the Soldiers have delivered school supplies and made some repairs to the schools in the village. "When we first started, we started with volunteers, but everybody volunteered so it ended up 100 percent participation," said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Weaver, the platoon sergeant for 2nd Plt., Battery A, 1st Bn., 143rd FA. "It's a good cultural awakening for these guys. It gives them a side of Iraq that they normally don't get to see and a chance to interact with the Iraqi people."



Teaching supply to Iraqi Army Soldiers

Sgt. Timothy Holden, a supply sergeant for the 1st Sustainment Brigade and an instructor for the supply course at the Iraqi Army Service Support Institute, teaches his students about customer receiving during their visit to the Supply Support Activity on Camp Taji March 29. "I think today's visit went well. I think they got a better understanding of how a warehouse is run," said Holden.

DID YOU KNOW

The first section of railway to open in Iraq was a 76-mile length of the Baghdad Railway between the city and Samarra that commenced operations in 1914.

FYI



A rare find

Staff Sgt. Kevin Corcoran, sergeant of the guard for Detachment 1, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, poses with a World War II era tank Apr. 10. As a self-proclaimed history buff that is particularly drawn to the World War II era, he felt strongly that others in the U.S. would be privileged to see such a historical piece of equipment.

"It's a living piece of history ... It's a representation of the price we all pay for war," said Corcoran, a Hanford, Calif., native, whose father is a World War II veteran who fought in the Battle of the Bulge.



Pick of the litter

As flight medics of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, were teaching Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade a class

on safety during a medical evacuation, they received a request for a MEDEVAC, so they had to cut class short. The unit, which is based out of Hunter Army Airfield near Savannah, Ga., provides medical evacuation services to areas between Baghdad and Kalsu, Iraq. They never know when they are going to receive a call, but when they do, they are ready to answer.



Soldiers awarded for valor

Four Soldiers of the 15th Transportation Company, a Fort Sill, Okla., unit attached to the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, post in front of the company formation April 14. The four Soldiers received awards for valor because of their quick actions the night their convoy suffered an EFP attack, ultimately saving the lives of two wounded Soldiers.



Down and dirty

Spc. Joseph Smith, an all-wheel vehicle mechanic performs a technical inspection after fixing a power steering pump on a Humvee April 28.

28th

HALF TIME SHOW



Lots of turnover in the Brigade

May marked the halfway point for the deployment, and there was a lot of turnover inside the Brigade. Three battalions and eight separate companies transitioned into and out of Iraq, including the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion out of Bossier City, La. who replaced the 1103rd CSSB out of Eufaula, Al.. The 553rd CSSB out of Ft. Hood, Texas replaced the 68th CSSB out of Ft. Carson, Colo., and the 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, an Indiana Army National Guard unit replaced 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California Army National Guard unit.



Trebil

Located a few hundred meters east of Jordan on a very small plot of dirt, in the shadows of a tall Muslim prayer tower, sits Trebil; an outpost that houses 120 Soldiers, Marines, and civilians – including the 266th Movement Control Team, who ensure cargo from Jordan gets into Iraq and to the warfighters located in Multi-National Forces - West.



HighRollers rock out

Members of the HighRoller Band (left to right) Spc. Malcolm Barker, a Tupelo, Miss., native, Spc. David Palmer, a, Chicago native, and Sgt. Brandon Jones, a Whiting, Maine, native, all of the 515th Transportation Company, 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade in support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad, perform a song at the Camp Taji Mudhouse here May 10, called “Do It Again,” written by Palmer.



Sustain the pain

1st Sgt. Nick Medeiros, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, first sergeant, prepares the “Sustain the Pain,” physical fitness members for a force march on Camp Taji.



Sand Storms roll in

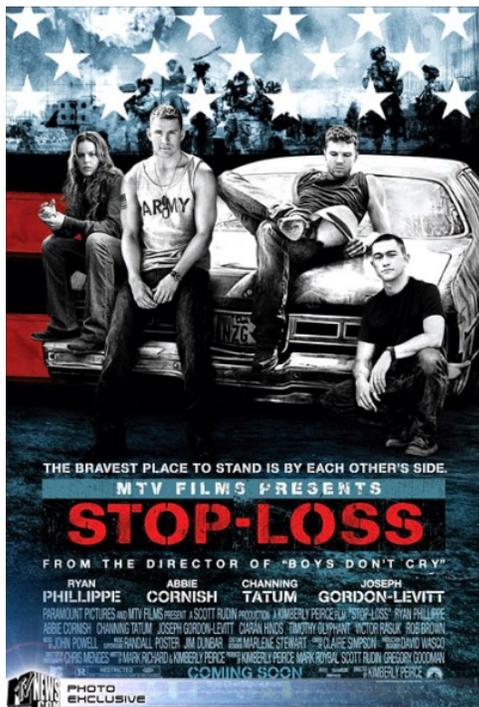
Red and orange dust fills the air in and around Camp Taji May 15.

Desert dust, smoke from biomass burning, and anthropogenic air pollution are the three main particles that blow through the air at speeds up to 40 knots.

10th

15th





Stop-Loss reviewed

Pfc. Samantha Schutz previewed the movie "Stop-Loss" and gave the film 5 out of 5 stars. It was featured in the May issue of the Sustainment Times Forward.

She did warn people to approach the movie with an open mind. "As a proud Soldier, it might be easy to get defensive when King starts challenging authority and questioning his values. A bitter person might find it too easy to side with King and lose sight of his or her own values."

Small Arms repair facility opens in Taji

Lt. Gen. James Dubik, the commanding general of Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq, gestures to Dr. Mowaffak Baqer al-Rubaie, the Iraqi national security advisor, to assist him in cutting a red ribbon, thus



DID YOU KNOW

The two main rivers in Iraq, the Tigris and Euphrates, are part of the Fertile Crescent. Many dynasties and empires ruled the Mesopotamia region such as Sumer, Akkad, Assyria, and Babylonia. Modern Iraq was organized in the early 1900's and claimed it's formal independence in 1932, when the British Mandate officially ended.

Lots of turnover in the Brigade

Spc. Ronald Williams, a shower, laundry, and clothing renovation (SLCR) specialist with the 549th Quartermaster Company, 68th Combat Sustainment Support

Battalion, which is attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade, gathers laundry that has been dried and needs to be folded Apr. 17.

Williams is part of the SLCR team at Iskandariyah, which provides shower and laundry services to all the Soldiers on the base.



Star power

Gen. Griffin, the commanding general of the U.S. Army Materiel Command, shakes hands with leaders from the 1st and 10th Sustainment Brigades on May 22. The event was hosted by Col. Kevin O'Connell, the commander of the 1st Sust. Bde.



17th

FYI

21st

22nd



FAMILIES IN THE FIGHT



Support for her father

We featured Susan D. Tyree, of Brooklyn, Ark., the daughter of Sgt. 1st Class Michael Mizell, a Bay, Ark., native, as part of our Family issue of the Sustainment Times Forward. The cover photo depicts Susan as she shows her patriotic support at her graduation from Arkansas State University back on May 10. Mizell is assigned to the 1123rd Transportation Company, 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, 1st Sustainment Brigade.



Lady's Bible study

A group of wives gathered together on a regular basis and studied the Bible and shared each others thoughts and prayers while their husbands were deployed to Iraq.

"I have learned to rely more on Christ and let Him help me and fulfill my needs while my husband's gone," said Tina VanHook, the Bible study organizer, and wife of Chaplain Larry VanHook of the Special Troops Battalion..



Finance class takes off

"Live like no one else," says the man on the stage dressed casually in an unassuming buttoned-down shirt and blue jeans. "So you can live like no one else!" he continues as the crowd joins in. The man, Dave Ramsey, is talking to an audience of attendees of his Financial Peace University, alternately called FPU. Watching a DVD of Ramsey's lecture is a class of students from the Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade.

Every Thursday night in the Cantigny Dining Facility on Camp Taji, about twenty Soldiers gathered inside the Shadley Room to watch Ramsey teach about how to save money, live on a budget, eliminate debt, find bargains, and "experience the joy of giving." Each participant had different reasons for going and

they all enjoyed themselves as they learned ways to improve their financial posture.



A Soldier's faith

Each Sunday morning, Lt. Col. Chris McCurry stood behind the podium in the Brigade headquarters conference room and taught a Bible study to a group of Soldiers from Taji. His church back home donated the study material for each of the four 13 week lessons. The study averaged 13 Soldiers per week throughout the deployment.

DID YOU KNOW

There were over 4,000 Soldiers assigned to the 1st Sustainment Brigade and that the Brigade completed over 4,700 awards. The Brigade was made up of 69% active duty, 23% National Guard, and 8% Army Reserve Soldiers. The 1st SB Soldiers were spread out on 19 different locations throughout Baghdad and central Iraq.





Education center provides help

Pvt. Melanie Credle, a Chocowinity, N.C., native, assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, is able to sign up for a “Go Army Ed” account with the help of Sgt. Seth Griffin, a New Orleans native, and noncommissioned officer in charge of the Camp Taji education center, here June 17. “I was tasked to set up the communications system in January and get the center operational,” said Griffin. “There was nothing here; it could barely be called an education center,” he continued.



Hawaiian dancers liven up the party

Dancers (from left to right) Sgt. Sukhvinder Virk, a Bakersfield, Calif., native; Sgt. Putu Berry, a Lawton, Okla., native; Spc. Merna Tolenea, a Korean native; Sgt. Natalia Perez, a Plantation, Fla., native; Sgt. Brandijo West, a Sun, Nev., native; and Staff Sgt. Ivet King, a Glendale, Calif., native, perform one of four Hawaiian style

17th

dances during the 515th Transportation Company, 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, Hawaiian luau.

Once everything is checked out, they can choose to enter the ring and go glove-to-glove with a person of their choosing. It’s a fun way to get in shape and stay fit.



House of Pain

A group of Soldiers from the 1st Sustainment Brigade took a vacant building and turned it into a place where people on the camp could get a good workout and learn the fine art of boxing.

Once a month, a boxing smoker is held at the Durable House of Pain Boxing Gym, where competitors can actually put all that they have learned into practice. Before competing, boxers have to complete a physical with the medics at the Easy Red Aid Station.

“Warbirds” have some fun in the sun

Pictured here are the Soldiers of Signal Company, Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, on the morning of June 27 after participating in their monthly, company sports day.



27th

DCLP SOLDIER

**32 days in a HET**

The 32 day journey was long, complicated, grueling, both hot and cold at times, but according to several members of the Heavy Equipment Truck Transport Platoon, it was totally worth it.

"I had a blast," stated Staff Sgt. David Jenkins, squad leader for the HET Platoon, 416th Transportation Company, 165th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade. "I'd give just about anything to do it again."

"It was a good break," said Sgt. Isidro Sanchez, a Midland, Texas, native, and truck driver. "I wish more of these jobs came down."

They were tasked to pick up dozens of heavy vehicles like the M1A2 Abram tank from Camp Buehring in Kuwait and deliver them to multiple destinations throughout Iraq.

The mission was just one of many this platoon of 54 Soldiers has embarked on since their arrival in Iraq July 2007, but it may very well have been their most memorable.

The 32 day mission was long, support was limited, the roads were dangerous, and after adding 83,446 miles to the odometers on their vehicles, they drove into their motor pool with no injuries.

The unit has now logged over 210,000 miles, they've changed locations three times, increased the readiness of their vehicles, and managed to promote seven Soldiers to staff sergeant, a good number of Soldiers to sergeant, made sure they all passed their physical fitness tests, and kept a can do attitude.

"It's been fun. And now I can go on R&R," smiled Jenkins.

4th of July mass reenlistment

The temperature approached 120 degrees Fahrenheit Friday, but the blistering heat couldn't deter more than 1,200 U.S. Service members from re-affirming their oaths of enlistment in a ceremony held in Al Faw Palace on July 4th, the 232nd birthday of the United States.

The mass reenlistment ceremony, touted by organizers as "the largest of its kind in history," was headed up by the Multi-National Forces—Iraq Commanding General, Gen. David Petraeus, who administered the oath of enlistment.

"Volunteering to continue to serve our nation while deployed is both noble and inspiring," he said.

Among the 1,215 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines that made their way here from all over Iraq and Afghanistan were 74 members of the Army's 1st Sustainment Brigade, based out of Camp Taji

4th

12th



Baptism by fire

With less than a month left in theater, the Soldiers of the 24th Transportation Company, 1st Sustainment Brigade, can say that even though their deployment was long and challenging, it was indeed a success.

Since April 2007, the 24th Trans. Co. has been deployed to Combat Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, attached to the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, an Alaska-based unit, in support of Multi-National Division – North conducting line-haul and convoy security missions.

One of the unit's main missions has been escorting convoys that haul critical supplies from Harbor Gate Turkish border back to Q-West.

“One of the most critical routes we have in MND-North is their route to Harbor Gate Turkish border and back,” said Lt. Col. Rodney Fogg, a Castlewood, Va., native and the commander of the 17th CSSB.

“Starting out it was pretty rough. The first month we had 10 or 11 IED incidents. We had an IED incident on almost every mission that we went on that first month. We found two IEDs in that time, but we had a lot more detonate on us,” said 1st Lt. Luke Pratt, the platoon leader for 3rd Plt., 24th Trans. Co.

“We didn't really know what we were looking for at the time and we hadn't figured out a way for our scouts to operate with the convoy as well,” said Pratt, an Oklahoma City native. “Plus the enemy was surging in its activity at that time and all of that kind of wrapped up together to a pretty rough baptism by fire.”

DID YOU KNOW

The 1st Sustainment Brigade was formed from the Division Support Command of the 1st Infantry Division; the Brigade carries the lineage and honors of the Big Red One dating back to World War I campaigns as early as 1917.

FYI

Stage Right: “21”

Featured in the July issue of the Sustainment Times Forward was a review of the movie 21 by public affairs Spc. Samantha Schutz. She gave the movie 3.5 out of 5 stars..



Commanding General visits Taji



Brig. Gen. Michael Lally, commanding general of the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), meets, for the first time, with key members of the Iraqi Security Force during his visit to the 1st Sustainment Brigade here July 12.



Financial and postal support at FOB Kalsu

Soldiers in Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade were all over Iraq providing great financial management, postal and human resource support to the Soldiers.

MAKE IT HAPPEN



Inside the mind of a Battalion Commander

The August issue focused on the various Battalion commanders in the 1st Sustainment Brigade. In all, there were 11 battalion commanders who served the 1st SB.

Lt. Col. Robert Brem with the Special Troops Battalion, Lt. Col. Ian Falk with 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, Lt. Col. Robert Burke with the 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, Lt. Col. Kevin Gentzler with the 15th Finance Battalion, Lt. Col. Angela Odom with the 15th Personnel Services Battalion, Lt. Col. Darrell Duckworth with the 68th CSSB, Lt. Col. Lt. Col. Randal Bradford with the 165th CSSB, Lt. Col. Todd Heussner with the 168th CSSB, Lt. Col. William Arther with the 398th CSSB, Lt. Col. Gregory Koller with the 553rd CSSB, and Lt. Col. Lee Ellis with the 1103rd CSSB.

Each commander provided superior leadership while in Iraq.

3,000 DCLPs

The 168th Brigade Support Battalion has reached a significant milestone in its quest to being the best support battalion in the Army. Since arriving in Iraq less than a year ago, the Battalion has conducted more than 3,000 Deliberate Combat Logistics Patrols as part of its efforts to sustain units located at eight forward operating bases across Multi-National Division - Baghdad and Multi-National Division - Center.

Driving more than 1.7 million miles, the Soldiers of the 168th BSB have spent countless hours on the road providing support that directly impacted more than 80,000 Soldiers each day. The Battalion supported these Soldiers with food, water, ice, fuel, repair parts, barriers, and any other cargo required.



Eagle Express

The 68th Transportation Company, out of Manheim, Germany, known affectionately as the "Eagle Express," plays a critical role as part of the heavy-lift capacity of the largest battalion in Iraq.

The Company, which is commanded by Capt. Donna Johnson of Columbus, Ohio, is currently operating out of Camp Taji, Iraq and is attached to the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st



8th



Sustainment Brigade, in support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Traveling exclusively at night, the men and women of the 68th Trans. Co. are responsible for moving everything from beans and bullets to Humvees and radio towers down some of the most dangerous roads in the world.

DID YOU KNOW

The 1st Sustainment Brigade completed over 7,500 Convoy Logistics Patrols (CLPs), issued over 200 million gallons of bulk fuel, issued over 6.6 million rounds of ammunition, issued over 170,000 meal cases, and produced over 12 million cases of bottle water.



Truck Rodeo

Gravel was thrown and rubber traffic cones were crushed without mercy as Soldiers of the 41st Transportation Company, “Out Front,” took their best shot at taming the 88,000 pound beast known as the “Palletized Load System” or “PLS” during the unit’s “Truck Rodeo.”

“The purpose of the Truck Rodeo is to allow the Soldiers an opportunity to showcase their driving skills and technical and tactical knowledge of their equipment, and of course, to create esprit de corps and teamwork within the Company,” said Sgt. 1st Class Debra Ford, the truck master of the 41st Trans. Co.



Major mile marker for 1st SB

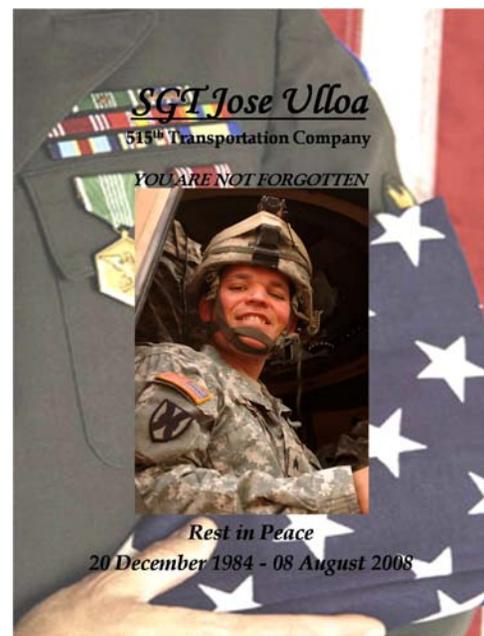
They were all smiles as Col. Kevin O’Connell, the commander of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, took some time out of his schedule to recognize the excellent achievements of the 1st SB, Support Operations Transportation Team Aug 25.

“The synchronizing of 7,000 Transportation Movement Releases, in less than a year, demonstrates the professionalism and dedication by the Soldiers and leaders here. It is an honor to share this moment with them,” said O’Connell.

“It’s mind boggling to think about the number of missions and miles our Soldiers have executed and driven in such challenging conditions,” stated Lt. Col. Hielke “Hike” Welling, the 1st SB support operations officer. “And to think, in the last 30 days we have had no TMRs over the Required Delivery Date. I am so proud of all our Soldiers.”

The 1st SB Soldiers are responsible for providing sustainment support and distribution of all classes of supply to the 80,000 plus Soldier, contractors, and Coalition Forces serving throughout Multi-National Division – Baghdad and parts of Multi-National Division – Center.

“The dedication of our Brigade and SPO team to achieve this level of support is just phenomenal,” concluded Welling.



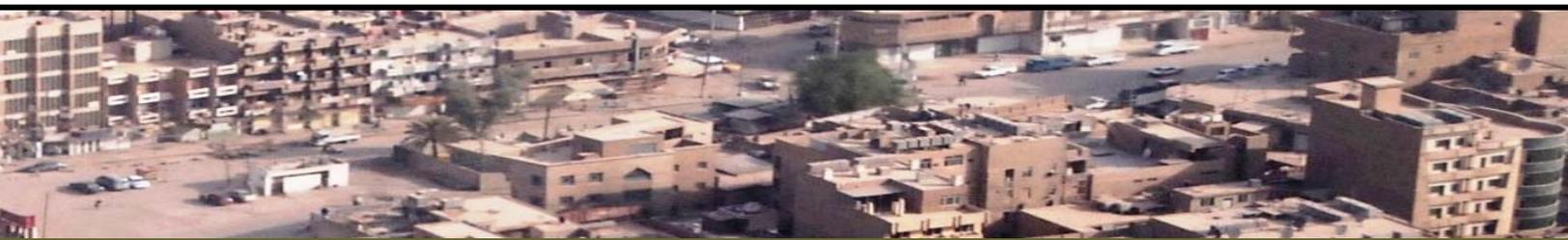
Fallen Soldier

Sgt. Jose Ulloa was a 515th Transportation Company Soldier who loved life. He was killed in action on Aug. 8, 2008. His death was a sobering reminder of how dangerous Iraq still is.

Ulloa is survived by his wife Melanie, and his son, Steven. He will never be forgotten!.

FYI

25th 26th



BUILDING IRAQI LOGISTICS



Level III Maintenance celebrates success

The temperatures swelled into the triple digits as Iraqi maintenance troops stood tall and proud next to one of the 150-plus vehicles on parade near the Taji Level III Wheeled Vehicle Maintenance Facility Aug 26. The vehicles and mechanics were part of a ceremony held to highlight their recent achievements. The guest of honor was Staff Gen. Nasier Abadi, the Iraqi Army Deputy Chief of Staff.

A passage from the Holy Qur'an was read and a moment of silence for prayer was observed. Then, the guest speaker, Brig. Gen. Muniem the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Officer, took the podium and praised the hard work of the officers and Soldiers of the Level III facility.

"We have done a great job fixing a lot of vehicles during this campaign,

so congratulations," stated Muniem. "They are very professional and work very hard to support the Iraqi Army and our country."

In April of 2008, a small group of officers and Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade started working with their Iraqi counterparts, so this event was very rewarding for them to see as well.

"It's exciting. This is a ceremony that highlights the Iraqi's ability to do Level III maintenance, and the Iraqi Army took over the Level III Track and the Level III Wheeled vehicle facility officially 1 June. So from June to now, they have managed to repair 150 wheeled vehicles and 25 tracked vehicles," said Capt. Tim Weiser, the Iraqi Security Force Cell officer in charge. "This averages out to about 20 vehicles a week, which is great."



Dignitary pays visit to GTR

TAJI, Iraq - Brig. Gen. Peter J. Talleri, commander of Defense Distribution Center, stationed at New Cumberland, Pa., met with Iraqi Col. Muhammad, commander of the General Transportation Regiment Sept. 21. Talleri was given an update on the progress of their

capabilities and was briefed on the future campaign of the Iraqi logistics plan.

"We are continuing to strengthen the relationship between the Iraqi military force and the U.S. military force. Helping them with their national supply and distribution capabilities," said Talleri. "We are working together, in a partnership, to build a bridge with our experts to grow the capability the Iraqi Army wants. By utilizing our subject matter experts, we are able to establish an effective system together with them that is working well."

Louisiana Army National Guard in action

The effort put forth by the Soldiers of the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion has been grand, and is by any standard truly impressive. In the past, the Battalion as a whole has moved nearly 20,000 barriers, a milestone they were projected to fly past by Oct. 15. This means that, at over 10,000 pounds per barrier, the 165th has moved more than 200 million pounds of American ingenuity down some of the most dangerous roads in the world, and has had a far-reaching and significant impact on the current face of the war.

DID YOU KNOW

The 1st Sustainment Brigade had the fastest Central Receiving and Shipping Point (CRSP) cargo distribution in the ESC (3.7 days) and delivered and emplaced over 57,000 concrete barriers throughout the Baghdad area of support, including Sadr City.

FYI

15th





168th BSB gets ready to leave

Spc. Raymond Lopez, makes sure his DD Form 1750 (packing list) is included on top of his tuff box Sept. 17. Lopez is a member of Company A, 168th Brigade Support Battalion, under the 1st Sustainment Brigade, and returned home later that month.



398th CSSB takes over Seitz Annex

The 398th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, an Army Reserve unit based out of Rockville, Md., officially took control of operations from the 553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion during a transfer of authority ceremony Sept. 21 on Camp Liberty.

Soldiers give school supplies to Iraqi kids

Soldiers from the 1st Sustainment Brigade passed out backpacks filled with school supplies to children of the Somer School, near Taji, in an attempt to strengthen the relationship between Iraqi citizens and Coalition Forces.

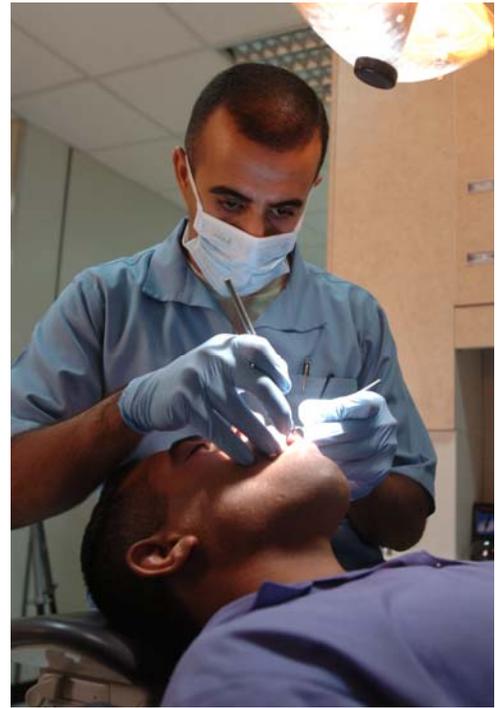
Traveling with the Soldiers was the 1st SB Chaplain, Maj. Terry Hayes, who described the day's events as important in providing help to Iraqi citizens.

"It's been a great experience getting our Soldiers out of Taji and into the schools and classrooms to meet the children and teachers," said Hayes. "These missions are important for getting the American people involved in producing peace."

This mission allowed Coalition Forces the chance to earn the trust, support, and respect of the Iraqi citizens at the lowest level. The building of these relationships is vital to the future of Iraq.

"The humanitarian mission is a great aspect of what we are able to provide as American people in support of the local Iraqi populous," said Capt. Audrey Iriberry of the 1st SB Iraqi Security Forces Cell.

"Humanitarian missions enable Coalition Forces to get their faces out to the Iraqi people, and it helps the local populous gain support and loyalty toward the American people."



Iraqi dentist performs root canal

2nd Lt. Dr. Bahaa Sabree, a dentist at the Taji Level II Clinic-West, performs a root canal on an Iraqi Soldier Sept. 23. "We are able to perform minor teeth cleaning, fillings, all the way to root canals and minor dental surgery on Iraqi Soldiers," said Sabree.



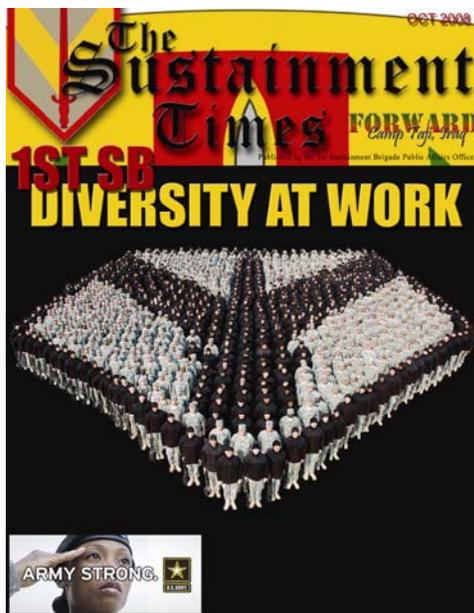
17th

21st

23rd



DIVERSITY AT WORK



Diversity of all types was celebrated

October was a busy month for the 1st Sustainment Brigade. It was also a time to look at the diversity of mission, cultures, backgrounds, and life stories within the Brigade. This was highlighted in the October 2008 issue of the Sustainment Times Forward.

Spanish American heritage celebration

A group of 1st Sustainment Brigade Soldiers gathered at the Taji Theater to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month Oct 3. In addition to a guest speaker, comedian, and slide presentation, everyone enjoyed some Spanish cuisine after the ceremony concluded. Hispanic Heritage Month is a dedication to celebrate and honor Hispanic-American culture and heritage.

Quiet on the set

Soldiers are trained to be highly

3rd

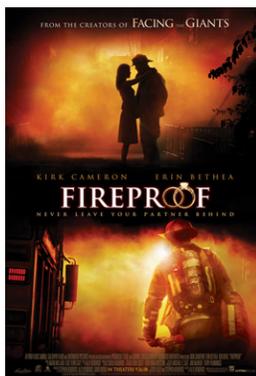
proficient in their jobs, but sometimes, unexpected opportunities come along, and they are able to showcase other gifts and talents.

For Sgt. Franshun Beard, that opportunity fulfilled a dream of reading the news for the 1st SB Update produced by the 1st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office. The update is a weekly T.V. show that highlights news from around the Brigade.



Entertainment reviews

One faith-based film talked about marriage and two new artists peeked the interest of Pfc. Rashi Bailey, the Brigade's music reviewer.



Coming to America

Between 1892 and 1954, more than 12 million people came to the United States through Ellis Island in pursuit of the American Dream, hoping to find a better life in "the Land of Opportunity."

Like the immigrants who passed through Ellis Island, Staff Sgt. Vincent Zokou, the item manager for the General Supply Branch of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, came to the U.S. in search of the same dream; but during his journey, he decided to serve the country that provided him a new way of life.

The 1st Sust. Bde., the unit that Zokou serves with, is currently serving a 15-month deployment in Iraq. It is a diverse organization in terms of the various missions it conducts as well as the Soldiers who carry them out.

There are Soldiers of different races and religions and some who come from about 20 different countries all over the world. Despite which ends of the earth they originated from, they all have sworn



to defend the United States of America.

“In a unit, we have all different backgrounds. It’s really important to get to know about people’s backgrounds just to better interact with each other,” Zokou stated.

Zokou was born in Saioua, Côte d’Ivoire, a French-speaking country located in West Africa, which in English is known as the Ivory Coast. He immigrated to this country in October of 1988 with only \$137 in his pocket. Many years later, he now serves proudly as a Soldier in the U.S. Army.



A diverse set of skills

It’s no secret National Guard Soldiers bring a force multiplier to the fight when they deploy; their military expertise and their civilian expertise. In most cases, these citizen Soldiers must master two sets of skills – one for their Nation and the other to provide for their Families.

DID YOU KNOW

1st Sustainment Brigade Soldiers provided medical care to over 22,000 Soldiers, including 46 urgent evacuations. They filled over 13,000 prescriptions, provided over 7,000 immunizations, and certified over 1,000 Combat Life Savers.



GTR Graduation

As the Iraqi Army (IA) and Coalition partners looked on, roughly 600 Iraqi Army sustainers of the General Transportation Regiment graduated from training in a ceremony here Oct. 23.

The GTR graduation was another step in a growing partnership between the regiment’s Soldiers and their mentors from the 1st Sustainment Brigade’s 68th Transportation Company. The 68th Trans. Co. has spent the past two months training and mentoring the new unit.

With a number of dignitaries in attendance, the unit conducted a parade, demonstrated its skills, and was inspected by Iraqi Maj. Gen. Kassim, the Director of Transportation and Provision for the Ministry of Defense.

After graduation, the GTR will assume an important mission that will help lead the IA towards self-sustainment. The GTR has been on the ground since Sept. 1, and is the first unit of its kind to provide the assets and manpower needed to distribute all classes of supplies to location commands positioned throughout Iraq.

Soldier witnesses birth of child

Capt. Phillip Anderson, commander of the 1538th Transportation Company, an Indiana Army National Guard unit from Elkhart, Ind., was able to share in the birth of his second child on Sept. 26, via webcam from his quarters. Anderson, a resident of Plainfield, Ind., was able to join his wife, Michelle, and his three-year-old son, Lucas, via webcam to witness the birth of his daughter, Makayla Jolee, at 2:05 p.m. EDT, in Indianapolis.



Leading the way

Of the five subordinate companies of the 398th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, two are led by young female officers who were unexpectedly hoisted into leadership positions, but continued to thrive and guide their organizations in the necessary direction to successfully complete their missions.

This is not an uncommon sight in the Army anymore.



FYI

23rd

26th



END OF THE ROAD



Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, 1st Sustainment Brigade, and are due to leave Iraq in a few weeks.



PSD prepares to move out

Sgt. Salvador Ramirez, a personal security detail member with the 1st Sustainment Brigade, puts on body armor a few minutes prior to convoying to Joint Base Balad Nov. 11.



1st SB command team bids farewell

Col. Kevin O'Connell, the commander of the 1st Sustainment Brigade and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Cardoza, presented personalized plaques to all five Battalion command teams, signifying their relationship with the 1st SB while deployed to Iraq, at a hail and farewell, held outside of the Cantigny Dining Facility on Camp Taji, Nov. 6.

Also in attendance, was several of the Iraqi Army leaders that the 1st SB worked with during their deployment.

1st SB Soldiers rewarded for hard work

Nearly every seat in the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation theater on Camp Taji was filled by Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade Nov. 12, as they gathered together for their final awards ceremony before returning home to Ft. Riley.

Col. Kevin O'Connell, the commander of the 1st SB pinned each of the officers, warrant officers, noncommissioned officers, and Soldiers one-by-one as they approached center stage.

Their mission was the largest of all the five sustainment brigades in Iraq, and so each Soldier recognized could be proud of their superior performance over the past 15 months in Iraq.



Indiana National Guard packs up

Sgt. James Bevel and Spc. Keith Auspland prepare packing lists for every duffel bag and footlocker in their unit prior to being inspected by the customs representative Nov. 4. Bevel and Auspland are both members of the Headquarters and

4th

6th

11th

12th





▶ Making history

On Nov. 11 – Veterans Day – nearly 300 service members from across Iraq, 98 of them 1st Sustainment Brigade Soldiers, gathered to re-enlist here at Holt Stadium, the largest mass re-enlistment in the base’s history.

After helicopter and convoy movement, rehearsals, and warnings of what to do in the event of a mortar attack, all 274 service members raised their right hand and swore oaths to defend their country – again.

Addressing a crowd of spectators, Brig. Gen. Michael Lally, the commander of the 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and the host for the event, said: “We gather today to remind ourselves that our mission as fighting men and women must continue. And to continue, we must have those that are willing, able, and are inspired to raise their hands again and again to be counted with those that came before them.”

To the re-enlisting service

members, all of whom volunteered for the occasion, the significance of holding the ceremony on Veterans Day was important.

“Every Veterans Day has been big for us in uniform,” said Sgt. Juan Rojas, a cook with the 297th ICTC and a Miami native. “It gives me great pleasure to be here and be part of history.”

Since switching over to an all-volunteer force in 1973, the armed forces have depended on re-enlistments to retain qualified personnel, which has become more critical in the face of the ongoing operations around the world.

According to Col. Kevin O’Connell, the commander of 1st Sustainment Brigade, Soldiers stay in the Army for the same reasons they join: training, education, adventure, money – and the most important reason they stay in the military, however, is service to their Nation, he said.

“They’re patriotic,” O’Connell said. “They want to serve in an all-volunteer Army . . . to give back to a great Nation what it’s given to them.”

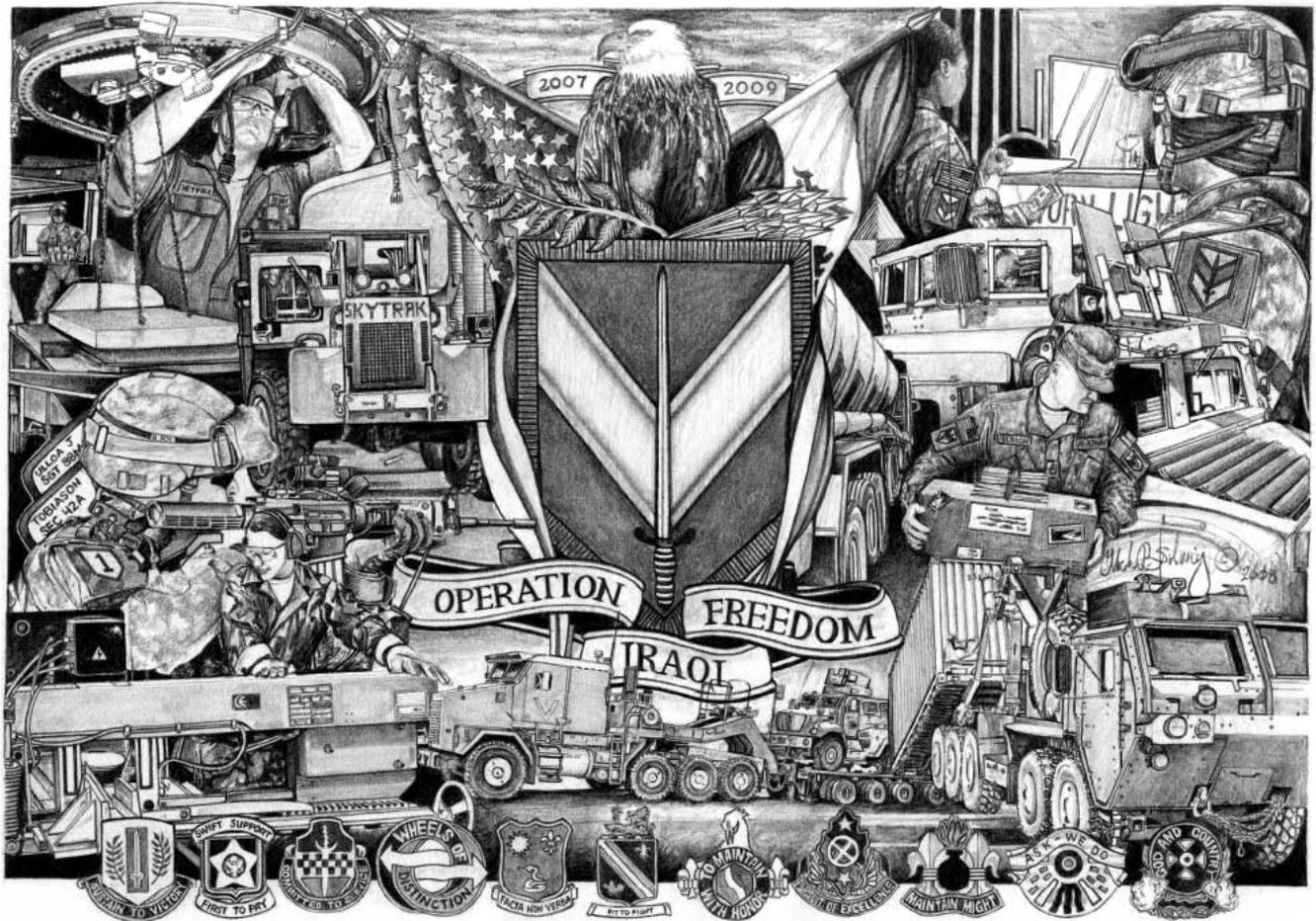
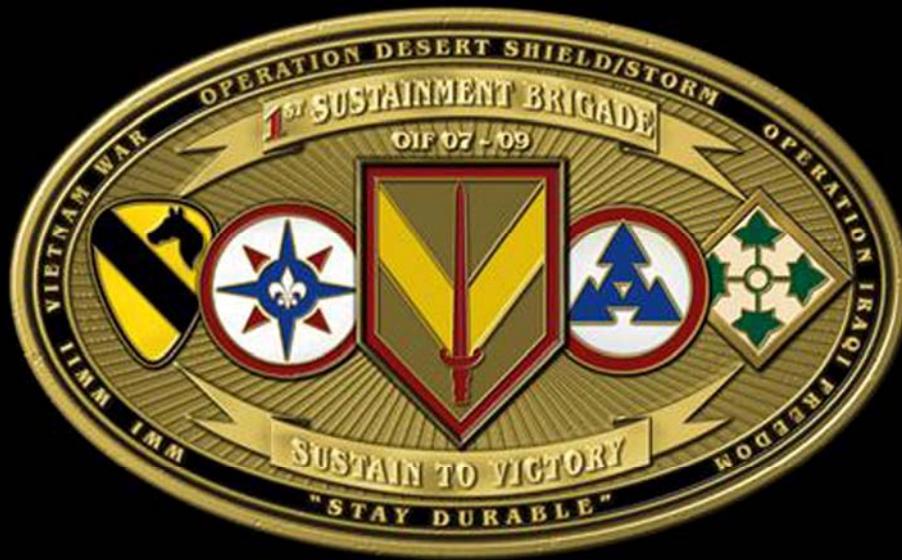
While she was not planning to make the Army her career, Sgt. Latasha Myers, a mechanic with the 503rd Maintenance Company and an Allentown, S.C., native, said her experiences and the people she works with inspired her to re-enlist.

“I love what I do,” she said. “I love fighting for my country.”

“As I stayed in, I realized I really liked serving the United States of America and wearing the uniform,” Rojas said.

O’Connell said friends and Families should be proud of what their sons and daughters did this day.

“They re-enlisted on a big day, while they’re in combat. They continue to serve when their Nation needs them, when we’re in conflict,”



"SUSTAIN TO VICTORY"