

The Sustainment Times

FORWARD Camp Taji, Iraq

Published by the 1st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office

Durable's Half Time Show



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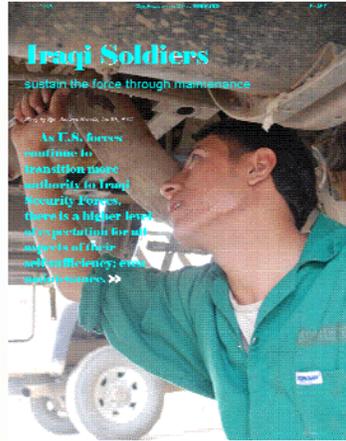
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Iraqi Soldiers

sustain the force through maintenance

As U.S. forces continue to transition more authority to Iraqi Security Forces, there is a higher level of responsibility placed on the shoulders of Iraqi maintenance crews. >>>

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Passion for custom rides

By Heidi Lipp, Benjamin Hightower

If you enjoy engineering I'm not the only person who loves you. As a high-end car engineer and mechanic, it was only a matter of time that Bradley, the 1st Sustainment Brigade, and others like him started building and holding custom rides. He started riding when he was 14 years old because of his dad's involvement with cars. The gear was all custom, still made to order, and he had to travel all around the world and then spend a couple hundred bucks with a 1/18 scale such as this. This love for racing moved him into bigger cars like a race ready Camaro and then into custom building vehicles like this. "I always wanted to get one together and finally found the time," stated Bradley about the custom ride he built. The project was shared by his wife and after he started work it took six months to complete. He built it from the frame up, it is a whole custom build using only the best gear, high speed engine and transmission, and it gets a lot of attention wherever he goes. "It's a hard career," said Bradley with a smile. After working for five years at Honda he hopes one day to be able to run the bike shop. He had for a year after that it is his baby's job. Every time there are all the cars you want ready with everything else from the car world. Bradley's car is a 1/18 scale.



Hot Wheels Pg. 14



Leopards take over Pg. 19

Commander's Corner

Col. Kevin G. O'Connell, Commander



Dear First Sustainment Brigade Soldiers and Families,

April was a month of huge transition for the 1st Sustainment Brigade, as we received three new battalion headquarters, and eight separate companies. New to the team are the 1-152nd Reconnaissance, Surveillance, and Target Acquisition Squadron from the Indiana Army National Guard. Under the "Ghostriders" command and control are the 1038th Engineer Company and the 1123d Transportation Company, both of the Arkansas Army National Guard. The Squadron provides force protection by operating an Area Defense Operations Center, and manning entry control points and guard towers on Camp Taji.

The second new Battalion is the 553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, from Fort Hood, Texas. The "Leopard" Battalion provides general and direct supply and services and is headquartered at Victory Base Complex. New in their formation is the 590th Field Service Company, from Fort Drum, New York. This Company provides shower, laundry, and clothing renovation at nine different forward operating bases, joint security stations, combat outposts, and patrol bases in / around the Baghdad area.

The 168th Brigade Support Battalion received two new convoy security companies, A Company, 39th Brigade Support Battalion and A Battery, 1-206th Field Artillery Battalion, both from the Arkansas Army National Guard. They secure convoys as they traverse roads in the greater Baghdad area.

Finally, the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, from the Louisiana Army National Guard, moved in to Taji. New units under the "Chariot" command and control include the 68th Transportation Company from Germany; and G Company, 39th Brigade Support Battalion, and B Battery, 1-206th Field Artillery Battalion, both from the Arkansas Army National Guard. We welcome all our new units to the team. It's important in this time of transition to focus on the basics of risk management, safety, troop leading procedures, >> Pg.4



Durable hosts Iraqi Security Force Symposium

*Story by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude,
1st SB, PAO*

The 1st Sustainment Brigade hosted a maintenance and supply symposium on May 3rd as a follow-on to the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq symposium held a few days prior.

They gathered leaders from 12 agencies working with the Iraqi Security Forces on Taji in an effort to share the information learned from prior meetings and also to provide a forum where they can talk about the partnership between the 1st Sust. Bde., and the Location Command on the Iraqi side of Taji.

“The purpose of the conference was to gather all Coalition Forces that operate in and around Taji that work with the ISF

and ensure that we are all working towards the same end state – a self-reliant ISF,” said Capt. Tim Weiser, the officer in charge of the Logistics, Training, and Advisory Team for the 1st Sust. Bde.

“I’m very excited about the momentum, about the synergy, about putting all these resources together,” said Lt. Col. Mark Meyer, a native of Neillsville, Wis., and the senior advisor to the Logistics Military Assistance Team for Coalition Army Assistance Training Team, Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq.

“We talked about a lot of different issues that are breaking news with the Iraqi Army with Taji being the center of that entire military complex,” Meyer said. “The professionals that were in this room are the ones that are >>



Capt. Tim Weiser is the officer in charge for the 1st Sustainment Brigade Iraqi Security Force cell. He organized the ISF Symposium held in the base theater on Camp Taji May 3.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

» going to have to make that happen. So [I am] very excited, very pleased with the way the meeting went today and the plan ahead to make things better.”

The attendees discussed a wide range of topics with Clinton, Md., native Col. Kevin O’Connell, the commander of the 1st Sust. Bde., and his staff.

“We had pretty good expectations of it because of the leadership of the system from the Corps down. We’ve gotten a lot more visibility on Iraqi Security Forces logistics issues,” stated Lt. Col. Mark Collins, a Phoenix native and the commander of the 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior”, 25th Infantry Division.

“We’ve been partnering...with three, and soon to be four, Iraqi (logistical) battalions that are in the Iraqi 9th Division. (We can) raise up stuff from the tactical level into the 1st Sustainment Brigade,” said Collins.

“This forum brings together a lot of the players that can help have access to the people who can make recommendations for change; changes that draw in Iraqi solutions to Iraqi problems so that we’re moving forward, but not just moving forward, but moving forward in the direction the Iraqis have a stake at.”

“You never know what you don’t know,” states Meyer. “As a commander, you have to be working towards the unknown and trying to get ahead. In this theatre it’s very difficult to predict what’s going to crop up; it’s a huge issue.”

There was a general consensus among the crowd that basic life support for the Iraqis is an urgent issue and will need to be addressed by the Iraqi government soon.

“It always goes back to, for me, the basic life

support for fuel, water, and electric,” said Meyer. “Once you start with those, then you can build on all these other combat capabilities for sustainment and the infrastructure that the Iraqis will need ... (for) building (themselves) into a viable security force for their nation.”

“What we need to decode for the Iraqi government is to make them understand that ‘yes’ you have 14 divisions now of Security Forces in the Iraqi Army, you have a huge national police force. We have to use some of your nation’s riches and some of your funding to maintain that. To put the fuel back in that you need for these Soldiers so they have air conditioning so they can sleep, so they have the food that does not spoil, so they can train. That piece I think is a big step forward that the Iraqi government has to take to get that,” stated Meyer.

“The (Iraqi’s) spend a significant portion of their time worrying about basic life support; everything from power to fuel, to water, to their basic subsistence,” stated Collins. “If commanders are focusing on their life support, they can’t focus on the missions that they have for ... maintenance, transportation, and supply.”

Early indications from the room point to a forum that will help pave a way for greater communications and improvements for the Iraqi Army.

“This is truly a great forum and I’m looking forward to more of these as far as frequency. I think over time we are going to see a lot more getting done as these go on. The first few of these is going to be more condition setting. As we move into the middle somewhere, we are going to start seeing real changes,” said Collins.

“Huge hope, huge vision of the future. We got the entire national complex here, you got military expertise from hundreds of years in this room all pushing together, all with the American mindset of we can do this, we can make it better. We can find the victory and keep getting the Iraqi forces stronger,” surmised Meyer.

STF



Lt. Col. Mark Collins, a Phoenix native, and the battalion commander for the 225th Brigade Support Battalion for the Striker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior”, 25th Infantry Division (Right), poses a question for the panel at a maintenance and supply symposium hosted by the 1st Sustainment Brigade at Camp Taji on May 3.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

The Sustainment Times

FORWARD

The Sustainment Times Forward is an award winning monthly newsletter produced by the 1st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office.

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We are looking for content, so please submit letters, articles, photos, drawings, comics, etc. to:

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On the cover:

Lt. Col. Randall Bradford and Command Sgt. Major Jerry Harvey unfurl their unit colors at the Transfer of Authority Ceremony.

(Photo by Staff Spc. Andrea Merritt)

CSM Time

CSM Frank G. Cardoza



Command Sgt. Major Frank Cardoza (right) talks with Command Sgt. Major Marvin Hill.

(Photo by Sgt. Jennifer Schweizer)

» and the "Ironhorse" Big 8. With a very complex, huge, and demanding mission, it's the basic, ruthless enforcement of standards and discipline are the key. This takes leadership involvement at all levels, and I know everyone is up to the task.

I'd ask that leaders take a look at your Soldiers' living conditions and ensure they meet your standards. Even though we're in a combat zone, our Soldiers deserve a neat, clean, organized, and safe environment to live in. As you can see, this is NCO business and their emphasis can continue to improve living conditions. Let's also continue to train and enforce the standards on negligent discharges and escalations of force.

Thanks to all the Families for all they do to support our Soldiers. We couldn't do it without you. As important events in your life come up, such as college and high school graduations, if you physically can't be there on R&R leave, let your chain of command know so we can arrange video teleconferences. Congratulations to all our upcoming graduates. There are about 15 across the Brigade.

The Brigade continues its amazing performance supporting coalition forces in the greater Baghdad area with everything from pay, mail, force protection, ammunition, supply distribution, maintenance, and even barriers...the list goes on and on. You are definitely having a strategic impact on the security of Baghdad and Iraq, and the Brigade is re-writing doctrine and shaping the Army for the future. Your hard work is definitely being recognized and I appreciate it. Keep up the positive attitude and keep finding ways to improve as we continue the mission. Take care of each other.



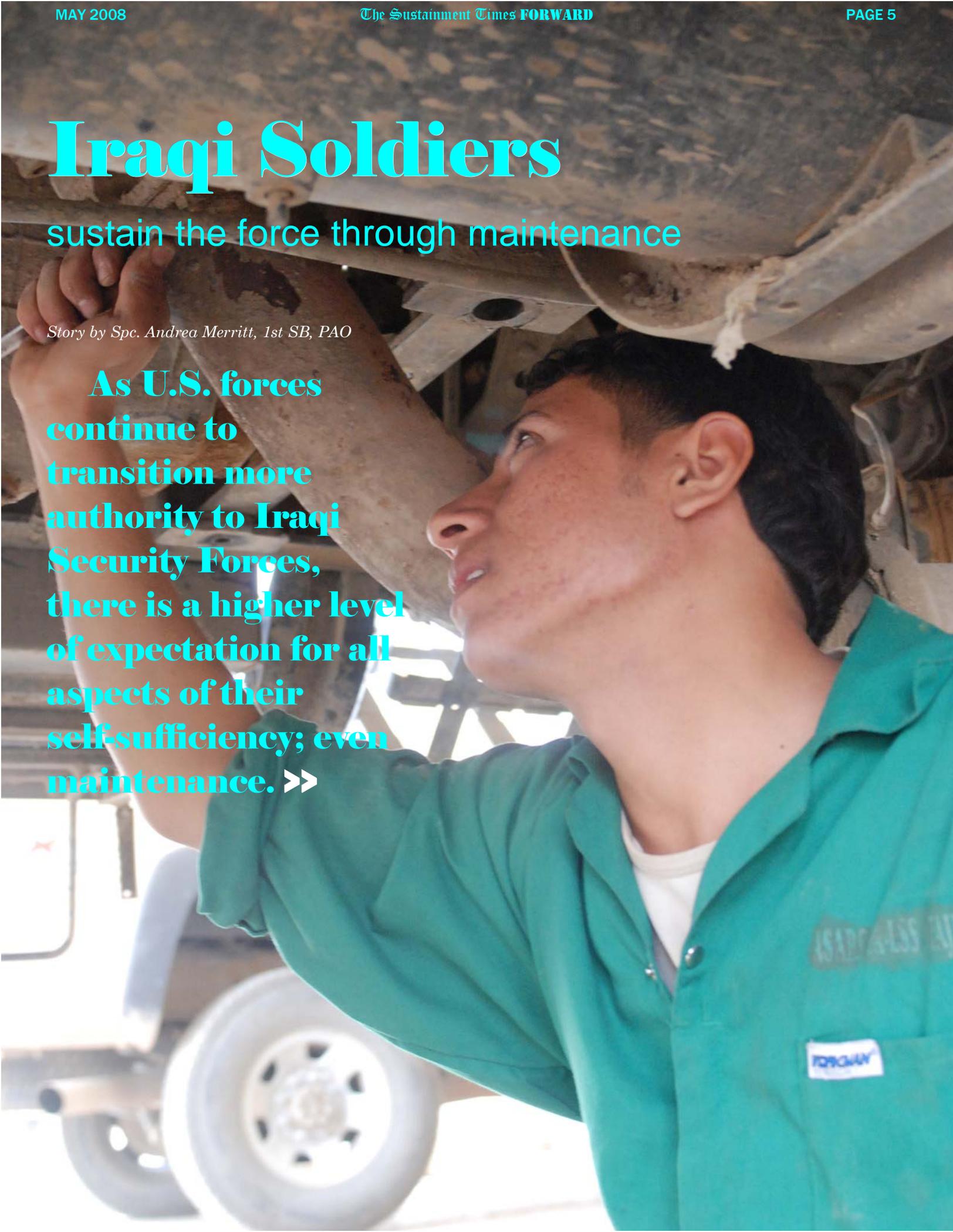
Have you got your Hooah card yet? If you're caught doing great things, you might!

Iraqi Soldiers

sustain the force through maintenance

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB, PAO

As U.S. forces continue to transition more authority to Iraqi Security Forces, there is a higher level of expectation for all aspects of their self-sufficiency; even maintenance. >>





Two Iraqi Soldiers of the 6th Motorized Transportation Regiment, who work in the level-III maintenance shop on Taji, work to repair a camshaft on a light-wheeled vehicle April 22. In order to be a mechanic at the level-III shop, Iraqi Soldiers have to prove themselves to be skilled and experienced mechanics. They are specially-trained to repair or replace engines, transmissions, brake clutches and drive shafts, which is a much larger job than that of a level-I or level-II mechanic. (Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

» At the at the level-III maintenance shop on Taji, 80 Iraqi Soldiers have proven themselves to be skilled mechanics who can handle most of the vehicle maintenance issues for the Iraqi Army units on the camp.

In order to be a level-III mechanic, the Iraqi Soldiers have to show a certain aptitude for the job.

“Of course, every single mechanic has to prove himself as a skilled and experienced mechanic; then, we will bring him to the level-III shop,” said Col. Mohammed Abdalwahab, the maintenance company commander for the Iraqi Army Maintenance Program.

The mechanics are specially-trained to repair or replace engines, transmissions, brake clutches and drive shafts, which is a much larger job than that of a level-I or level-II mechanic.

“At level I, they fix only simple defects like brakes, fuel, oil hazards, and replacing tires; simple things,” said Col. Mohammed. “Every single unit can depend on its own staff to fix these simple defects.”

“Level II is to replace the windshield, radiator, carburetor, alternator, headlights and starters. (The) second level is for the motorized transportation regiments,” explained Col. Mohammed.

The degree to which the Iraqi Soldiers at the level-III maintenance shop perform their duties has even been noticed by their U.S. Army counterparts.

“I think we’ve seen some excellent mechanics come through ... The Iraqi Soldiers are receiving great, hands-on training for a variety of vehicles,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Keith Hammit, the contracting officer’s technical representative, who oversees contracting requirements for the Iraqi Army Maintenance Program.

“As a matter of fact, I would venture to say that their experience is a lot broader than the American Soldiers’, who are responsible for one or two types of vehicles. Here, they’re responsible for at least 10 or 15 different types of vehicles,” added Hammit.

Although maintenance seems to be one small piece of the transition puzzle, each side understands the great role it plays in the Iraqi Army becoming a self-sustaining force.

“All I am looking for is to serve my country and my people, and support them with capable vehicles, (so) that my Soldiers and the Soldiers in other units in the Iraqi Army can do their job to protect the country and the people (from) the terrorists and insurgents,” said Col. Mohammed.

STF



Special Troops Battalion

Lt. Col. Robert D. Brem, Commander

Soldier stays positive despite stop-loss

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB, PAO

As one Soldier's military obligation was nearing its end, he decided he was ready to transition from the Army life he had known for the past four years to civilian life.

With only a few months left on his contract, Spc. Nathan Collins, an all-wheel vehicle mechanic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, was prepared to hang up his hat. That was until he was faced with the reality of being under stop-loss.

Collins, who was originally scheduled to depart the military in August 2007, learned his unit would be deploying to Iraq in September 2007 for a 15-month rotation, and he would be going with them.

"My initial reaction was I should be getting out, going home. I had served my time ... It was frustrating," admitted Collins, a Clarkston, Mich., resident.

His wife, whom he had already spent much of his time away from due to a previous overseas assignment and deployment, also shared his sentiments.

"My wife was upset to say the least, but she's knows my commitment to (the military) and that if I sign up for something or do something, I'm going to see it all the way through. She understood that," Collins said.

On top of everything else, shortly after Collins found out he would be deploying again, he also found out his wife was pregnant with their first child.

"The due date for her was in November 2007, so it was pretty mixed emotions knowing that I was

supposed to deploy and be away from my wife, which was hard enough as it was," Collins said.

"Then to find out shortly after, that we would be having a child and I possibly was not going to be able to be around for raising my daughter was really hard to deal with; but I got through that, and I'm just taking it one day at a time," Collins stated.

Fortunately, Collins was able to take Rest and Recuperation leave in November 2007 and make it home in time for the birth of his daughter, Jacklyn.

"I got home three to four days before that. I was there to actually see the birth and take my wife to the hospital and help her through that," Collins said proudly. "Having my first child was a huge, huge, great experience. It definitely changed my life."



Spc. Nathan Collins

Although stop-loss has caused Collins to delay his original plans of getting out of the military and attending a two-year automotive technology program in Chicago, he remains focused on completing the mission ahead of him.

"I take it just one day at a time, just one job, or just one mission at a time. Once I complete working on one truck, I find another truck, another job, another task that needs to be done to continuously stay busy and not think about it," Collins stated.

In his off-duty time, Collins occupies himself by playing video games, communicating with his wife and family back home, and spending time with his friends.

"I try to keep a happy, upbeat environment

and my friends help me do it for the most part. They're glad that I'm out here. I'm out here for them," Collins said. "If they need someone to their left and to their right to help them out with something, then they come to me, and I do the same with them."

Despite his situation, Collins' attitude continues to be noticed by his supervisors and co-workers, who describe him as a knowledgeable mechanic and an important asset to the team.

"As far as his work ethic, he is always professional and loyal to all within the motor pool. He is a very hard worker and always gives over 100 percent when accomplishing a task or service," said Staff Sgt. Cesar Cobena, a native of Puerto Rico and the maintenance supervisor at the 1st Sust. Bde. Motor Pool.

"Working with Collins is excellent. He knows his stuff, and he teaches me a lot of stuff. All the (noncommissioned officers) and supervisors look up to him as getting the job done. He's one of the top guys," said Spc. Timothy Cameron, an all-wheel vehicle mechanic with HHC, STB, 1st Sust. Bde.

Presently, Collins is at the halfway point of his 15-month deployment and looks forward to the day he finally gets home.

"My plans now are just to finish out my time here until whenever we get back and do our re-integration (training). After the re-integration is over with, to go back home to my wife, my daughter, and to the home we just bought and just enjoy that. I will find a job somewhere and kind of take it one step at a time," Collins said.

Collins also had a few encouraging words for others who may be in his shoes. "Stay positive, always think positive, and just take it one day at a time. **STB**



1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery

Lt. Col. Ian Falk, Commander

Indiana National Guard

takes on

FORCE PROTECTION



Lt. Col. Robert Burke, commander of the 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Martin, the command sergeant major of the 1st Sqdn., 152nd Cav. Regt., uncse their unit's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony . (Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB PAO

After seven months in Iraq, the 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California National Guard unit attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade, has completed its tour of duty.

"I think our Soldiers performed as professionals. They were dedicated and disciplined," said Lt. Col. Ian Falk, commander of the 1st Bn., 143rd FA. "They embraced the mission...They improved on everything and continued to make things better. I'm in awe of their performance."

Before its departure from theater, the 1st Bn., 143rd FA, officially relinquished its force-protection mission to the 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, an Indiana National Guard unit, at a transfer of authority ceremony April 17.

The Soldiers of the Indiana National Guard unit will now be responsible for running the Area Defense Operations Cell and providing security to the forces on

Camp Taji.

After all of its hard work and training, the unit is more than eager to step into its new role.

"We trained just for this mission that lies before us. We're ready to execute and take over from our National Guardsmen from California," said Lt. Col. Robert Burke, commander of the 1st Sqdn., 152nd Cav. Regt.

In the process of preparing for deployment, the Soldiers of the 1st Sqdn., 152nd Cav. Regt., had to withstand three challenges simultaneously.

Before deploying, the unit underwent a transformation from an infantry battalion to a cavalry squadron, which involved re-training its infantry Soldiers to be cavalry scouts.

"We put together a (military occupational specialty) qualification course, in conjunction with Fort Knox, to get our Soldiers MOS (qualified) in a quicker timeline due to our upcoming mobilization," Burke said. >>

>> As the unit was undergoing transformation and re-training its Soldiers, the 1st Sqdn., 152nd Cav. Regt., also had to go through mobilization training to prepare for its deployment.

Despite the challenges, the Soldiers performed their duties well. “They did very well. With good planning and good preparation, Soldiers tend to excel,” Burke stated.

I’m just excited to be here ... It’s nice to finally have something where we’re wanted and where there’s a need for us to step up and take over an important job here,”



Lt. Col. Robert Burke, commander of the 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, delivers a speech during the unit’s transfer of authority ceremony . (Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Upon the unit’s arrival to Iraq, a number of personnel from the unit’s headquarters element were sent to Victory Base Complex and the Anbar Province.

Although it lost some elements, the unit gained two new companies. The 1123rd Transportation Company and the 1038th Engineer Company, which are both Arkansas National Guard units, will be attached to the 1st Sqdn., 152nd Cav. Regt., for the duration of their deployment.

“That’s what the Army’s all about. We have these “plug and play” type units to fill in and take over for another unit’s mission and still drive on with no diminishment of current operations,” Burke said.

“I’m just excited to be here...It’s nice to finally have something where we’re wanted and where there’s a need for us to step up and take over an important job here,” Burke concluded. **STF**



Command Sgt. Major Michael Winstead, the command sergeant major for the 1st Battalion 143rd Field Artillery, folds the units colors as they prepare for redeployment back to California.

(Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)



1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

Lt. Col. Lee Ellis, Commander

LOUISIANA NATIONAL GUARD ARRIVES ON TAJI

Story by Sgt. Aaron LeBlanc

165th CSSB, PAO

The 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, an Army National Guard unit from Bossier City, La., arrived at Camp Taji late Wednesday evening, kicking off the process to assume responsibility for the battle space once controlled by the Alabama National Guard's 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

"Being the command staff of the most robust sustainment battalion in theater means that our performance will be critical to the success of the overall mission in Iraq," said the 165th CSSB's commanding officer, Lt. Col. Randall "Beau" Bradford.

"The 1103rd (CSSB) has done a tremendous job during their nine months here, and we plan to build on the foundation that they are leaving behind. They've given us the tools that we need for success; now it's up to us to use them," Bradford said.

Bradford, an Alexandria, La., native, assumed command of the 165th CSSB in September 2007, after having commanded the 773rd Military Police Battalion, where he served with distinction during the Hurricane Katrina disaster relief effort.

Roughly half of the 165th CSSB's Soldiers have deployed to Iraq at least once before, including the battalion's executive officer, Maj. Randy Green.

"The main thing that we have to bear in mind once we take over is that we're here for our subordinate companies," Green said.

"We need to remember that they're our customers and that we're here to provide them with everything they need to complete the mission," said Green. >>





“COMPARED TO WHEN I WAS HERE BEFORE, THIS IS THE LAP OF LUXURY,”

» Green’s last trip to Iraq included working in a civil military operations center south of the Baghdad International Airport, where he worked closely with local national citizens and also served as a military transition team chief with the 2nd Iraqi Army Battalion.

Sgt. 1st Class George Winham, a maintenance noncommissioned officer with the 165th CSSB, is one of the few Soldiers who can claim three deployments with the unit. The first was during Desert Storm when the unit was known as the 165th Transportation Battalion.

“Compared to when I was here before, this is the lap of luxury,” said Winham. “I can remember when we slept on the ground under canvas tents, or just in our trucks on the side of the road. Now we have real buildings with real beds, hot showers, flushing toilets, and air conditioning. It’s like night and day.”

The 1103rd CSSB will remain in place over the next few days to ensure that the Soldiers of the 165th CSSB are entirely comfortable with their various posts and duties, after which, they will pass the torch and return to Alabama. **STF**

(Left to right) Lt. Col. Lee Ellis roll the 1103rd CSSB colors as Command Sgt. Maj. Hagler holds the flag case at the transfer of authority ceremony held at Camp Taji.

(Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

15th TC Soldiers awarded for valor

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt

1st SB PAO

Personal courage and other Army values are drilled into Soldiers throughout their military careers. Although it is last mentioned on the list, it often presents itself first in a time of chaos and crisis.

On the night of the attack, the Soldiers of the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion were conducting a mission to deliver ammunition and vehicles to Forward Operating Base Hammer.

Even though the unit they replaced had traveled the same route without any incidents, they knew something wasn't right.

back of my neck stood up," said Staff. Sgt. Colin White, an Ocala, Fla., native, and squad leader with the 15th TC. "It was like a ghost town. We were just saying, 'Something is about to happen,' then the whole block lit up like Christmas."

An EFP had detonated within five meters of the first vehicle in the convoy, causing it to erupt in flames. As Soldiers went to assist those who were trapped inside, a gunman atop a roof targeted the troops with small-arms fire.

White took action and engaged the gunman. After suppressing the small-arms fire, White made his way to the burning vehicle, where he was informed there was a Soldier still inside.

As he attempted to enter the vehicle and rescue the Soldier, the intense heat from the fire caused rounds inside to cook off. White sustained cuts to his face from the debris, but continued his efforts to rescue the Soldier.

Johnson, a trained combat lifesaver, initially pulled security for White during the attack. When he was relieved of his security duties, he noticed another Soldier near the burning vehicle was injured. Johnson moved him away from the flames and began treating the life-threatening wounds.

"Honestly, I don't think anything runs through your mind. You look out for your buddy and make sure nothing has happened to him," said Johnson. "If you take fire, you fire back and take care of the people who are hurt."

After receiving the call to put out the fire, Sgt. Brandon Stovall, a Philadelphia, Miss., native and truck driver with the 15th TC, moved forward in his truck. >>



Col. Kevin O'Connell (left), commander of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, presents four Soldiers of the 15th Transportation Company with awards for valor. (Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Four Soldiers of the 15th Transportation Company, a Fort Sill, Okla., unit attached to the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, which is attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade, were awarded for their personal courage in a ceremony April 14.

The quick actions they took after their convoy underwent an explosively formed penetrator attack Sept. 2, 2007, ultimately saved the lives of two wounded Soldiers.

"Normally, you will see people. They're not supposed to be out, but they're out," said Sgt. Michael Johnson, a Dickson, Tenn., native and truck driver with the 15th TC.

Some of the Soldiers' intuition went into overdrive as they entered into the Sadr City district of Baghdad, because they noticed the town was not bustling with activity like it was when they passed through it the previous night.

"That night we were headed back from (FOB) Hammer coming into Sadr City and the hair on the

» Stovall, who is also a trained combat lifesaver, began rendering aid to the Soldier, who kept going in and out of consciousness.

“You do what you are trained to do. It’s instinctive,” Stovall said. “(The training) is redundant, but it’s embedded in the back of your mind so when something does go down, you don’t have to think about it. You know what to do.

In the midst of the chaos, Spc. Joshua Dupuis, a New Iberia, La., native, who serves as the night operations noncommissioned officer in charge for 15th TC, served as the primary link between the convoy and the battalion due to limited communication abilities at the time.

“When they said that (Dupuis) was the only communication the (combat logistic patrol) had between us and battalion, they’re not exaggerating,” White said.

The information Dupuis provided to the battalion on the attack enabled them to get help to the convoy and medical evacuation for the wounded Soldiers.



Left to right: Staff Sgt. Colin White, Sgt. Brandon Stovall, Sgt. Michael Johnson, Spc. Joshua Dupuis. (Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

For their actions that night, White was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with Valor and a Purple Heart. Johnson and Stovall were awarded an Army Commendation Medal with Valor; and Dupuis was awarded an Army Achievement Medal.

other Soldiers such as Spc. Clayton Barnfield and Sgt. Larry Scott, who pulled security, and Sgt. Cherlanda Auzenne, who ran down the convoy to gather medical supplies, also contributed to the wounded Soldiers being saved.

Although many may consider these four men heroes for their actions that night, it is a term they quietly reject. They simply think of themselves as Soldiers who performed their duties.

“We got an award for doing our job. These guys would have done it for me. Any of these guys would have done it for anybody,” Johnson said.

Dupuis, Johnson, Stovall, and White received the awards, but they recognize that the efforts of

“Those two men were hurt ... and they acted without hesitation.”

“Those two men were hurt ... and they acted without hesitation,” said White.

Even though the Soldiers accepted the awards, they wished the incident for which they received the award had never occurred.

“It’s a lot to deal with. Our biggest satisfaction out of that whole mess out there was those two men made it home to their Families,” White said. **STF**



Lt. Col. Lee Ellis shakes hands with the award winners. (Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Hot Wheels



CUSTOM BUGGY

Passion for custom rides

By Master Sgt. Benjamin Wingfield

I always enjoy rediscovering that I'm not the only person who loves cars. As a high-end car owner and enthusiast, it was cool to run into Master Sgt. Bonillo, the Iraqi Security Force non-commissioned officer in charge for the 1st Sustainment Brigade, and listen to his stories about racing and building custom rides.

He started racing when he was 14 years old because of his dad's involvement with cars. "He gave me a '66 Pontiac GTO ready to race," recalled Bonillo. "I raced it for about two years and then upgraded to a nine-second Vega with a 427 cubic inch motor."

This love for racing moved him into bigger cars like a race-ready Camaro and then into custom built vehicles like his buggy.

"I always wanted to put one together and finally found the time," stated Bonillo about the buggy he built.

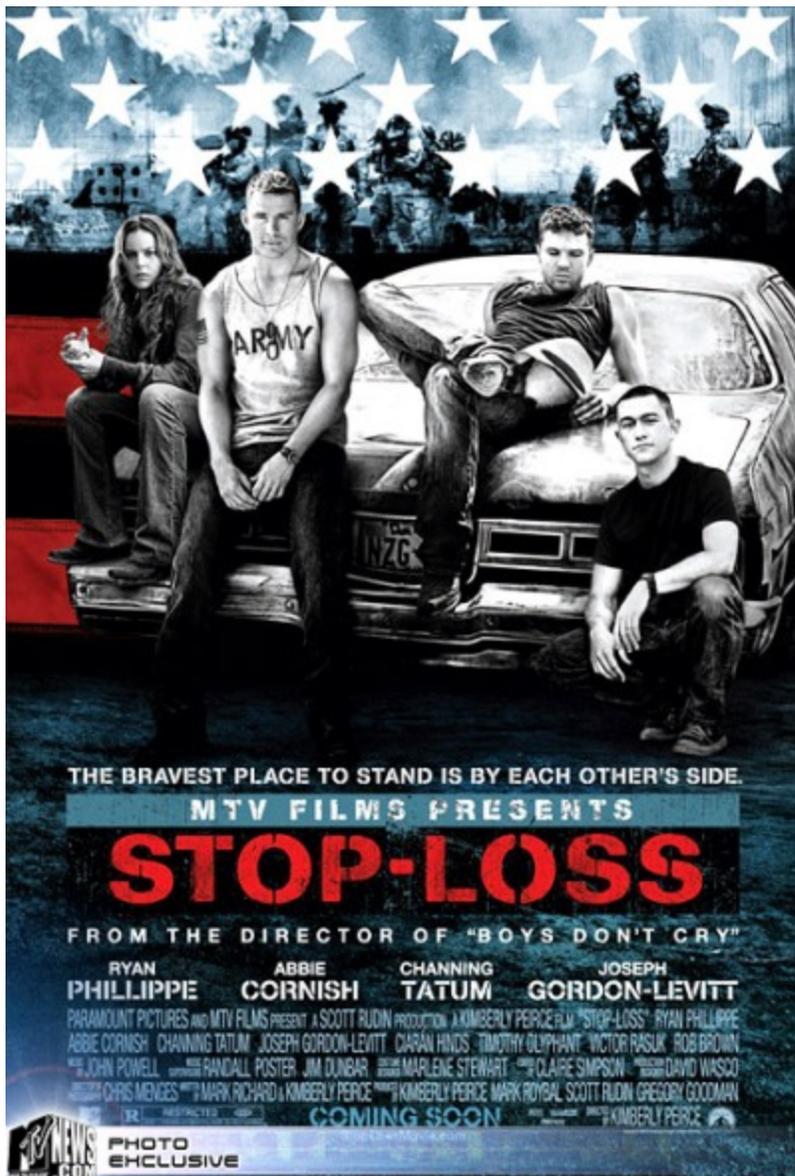
The project was cleared by his wife, and after he started work, it took six months to complete. He built it from the frame up; it was a fully street legal buggy with 105 horse power, high speed engine, and transmission, and it gets a lot of attention wherever he goes.

"It's a head turner," said Bonillo with a smile.

After entering it in a show in Kansas, his buggy won first place in the foreign class. Not bad for a guy who built it in his back yard.

Keep the dream alive, and I'll catch you next month with something else from the car world. Wingfield Out! **STF**





Movie review by Pfc. Samantha Schutz

In the movie “Stop-Loss,” actor Ryan Phillippe (Breach) portrays a staff sergeant who takes on what some Soldiers face in today’s Army.

Ask any service member who’s been deployed about post-traumatic stress disorder – we’ve all heard of it. We’re briefed about it before we ship overseas and again when we return home.

Urban combat is stressful enough – imagine patrolling through alleyways and houses, never knowing who or where the enemy is, your every thought centered on keeping yourself and your buddies alive. Do that every day for up to a year or longer, and it’s sure to have its effect on you. Do it multiple times, and maybe you’ll start looking forward to the day when you can stand down and let a fresher fighter rise up.

Now, imagine that day has finally come. You’ve returned from your second tour of duty in the combat zone, still mourning the losses of several brothers-in-arms and still jumping at any sound resembling a gunshot or grenade. You arrive at your local military base expecting to turn in your

duffel bag and boots, but instead you’re told to fill it up and put them on – you’re being shipped *back* to Iraq.

This involuntary extension of a military contract is known as “stop-loss.” It was commonly used in the Gulf War and has been used even more frequently throughout the current Global War on Terror. Even though it’s in the fine print of all military enlistment contracts, stop-loss has been the basis for many a negative reaction amongst recent veterans – many of whom suffer from PTSD-related symptoms.

In “Stop-Loss,” the movie, the above is exactly what happens to Army Staff Sgt. Brandon King, played by Ryan Phillippe (Breach). He returns to his small Texas town as a young, decorated war hero, proud to have served but ready to end his term of service and begin a civilian life.

As a squad leader in combat, King led his Soldiers into an ambush; now, he feels responsible for the deaths and injuries of his friends and countrymen – even though he is highly commended by everyone for saving two lives during the operation. At night, he suffers through terrible nightmares. All day, he’s plagued by anxiety and deep depression. His two best friends, fellow Texans who served with him during that fateful mission, are haunted by their own wartime ghosts.

While King is clinging to the values the Army taught him and trying to hold himself, his friends, and his Family together, he gets the news – he’s being stop-lossed. All his plans for the future are out the window; he is being forced, against his will, to walk once again in the face of danger for a cause he barely understands.

Hearing this news sends King over the edge. Going against his training, he loses his temper and curses at his officer-in-charge. The lieutenant colonel threatens King with the stockade, which causes him to flee the scene. Now he’s absent without leave and is giving serious thought to his personal values, questioning everything he stands for.

“Sir, I’ve always done the right thing. This is wrong.”

Of all the films that have risen out of the ashes of the Middle Eastern conflict, “Stop-Loss” is absolutely the most poignant. Director Kimberly Peirce is proving herself fully capable of meeting controversial issues head-on. Much like she did with her first movie, “Boys Don’t Cry,” Peirce shows her audience a slice of modern reality that is at once both enraging and enlightening. This film seems to span the entire

Soldier on the Street

We asked Soldiers the following question: "How do you like the transition between Winter and Summer?"

"It's easy because we're from Fort Hood, and the weather is pretty much the same."

Spc. Johnathan Tallvaa



"I think with this deployment, it was a more gradual change since we got here in February. It was a lot better than getting here in the middle of summer."

Sgt. 1st Class Denise Shelton



"I don't really notice it."

Spc. Timothy Delgado



range of human emotion, sparing none. >>

The first scene shows King and his troops in action during their ambush. Short of documentary footage, this is arguably one of the best-portrayed modern combat scenes to date. There is no comic relief; there are no Rambo-esque acts of heroism – what we see is raw, fast-paced, and in-your-face urban warfare at its worst.

Another gripping piece of the film shows King visiting a wounded comrade in an Army hospital. The characters' emotions – and their attempts at masking them – are so believable. Too many movies of this type go overboard with the melodrama, but Peirce manages to keep her actors in check, making it easy to empathize with what their characters are going through.

Although the trailer for "Stop-Loss" might've made it seem like an anti-war, anti-military propaganda piece to some people, the truth is it's absolutely not. PTSD and involuntary extensions are two very real aspects of our current conflict, and the film approaches them realistically. It also broaches some other important topics, including suicide and the importance of friends and Family. However, this straightforward approach to these white-hot issues is bound to offend a few of you. The truth is, both stop-loss, the issue, and "Stop-Loss," the movie, are downright controversial.

"If you're spooked, it's okay. There's no shame in that."

I'll be honest: I didn't make it through the first 15 minutes of this movie without crying shamelessly, and I stared raptly at the screen for the remaining hour with tears in my eyes. Sure, I'm just a journalist, but I'm still a Soldier – plus, I have plenty of good friends who have gone to Hell and back on the front lines.

One of my best friends was stop-lossed just before the end of his three-year enlistment. He ended up spending another year in combat, and the PTSD he experiences has changed him forever. So let's just say this movie hit home hard for me, and I don't think I would recommend it to my friend. If I did encourage him to watch it, it would be with a forewarning.

The forewarning I would give would be this: watch "Stop-Loss" 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.

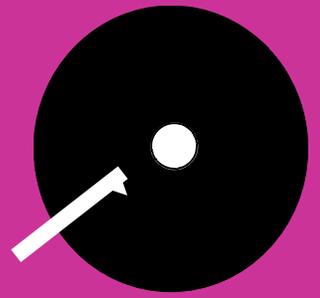
For civilians, though, it's important to bear in mind that King's dilemma is personal, and fictional. The way he feels and the way he chooses to deal with his feelings does not reflect each and every service member who has been affected by these issues.

Still, if it hit home for me, it will hit home for many.

I give "Stop-Loss" five stars out of five. **STF**

Bailey's

Hot Tracks



The Shakeltons unplugged

I was sitting in my office thinking about what I wanted to write about this month for Bailey's Hot Tracks and who should walk through the door but Staff Sgt. Maude. He smiles and sets down a CD on my desk and says "Check it out."

The CD was produced by an underground band called "The Shakeltons". They're out of Chambersburg, Pa., and Maude met them in a Dairy Queen parking lot in "no-where", Texas while on R&R.

I popped it into the CD player and listened to the whole album. It had some good tracks on it, so I decided get in touch with these guys and see if they were willing to do an interview. Just my luck; I got Mark Redding, the lead singer of the band, on the phone, and he was more than cool with sitting down and having a chat.

I caught up with Mark while he was at his day job, and after a few attempts to locate a phone that worked, we had a good conversation. I found him to be a smart person who was genuinely supportive of me and Soldiers here in Iraq. He spoke on a large range of topics, and I couldn't help feel his passion for music and his desire for people to embrace their unique sound.

Mark met his fellow band mates Eric Fisak (guitar), Dan Schuchman (guitar), Josh McDaniel (bass), and Jonathan Slick (drums), at a youth club in their town. He was on the hunt for musicians who were not only talented, but who were committed to the idea of producing good music; music that touched people. Two months later, with just eight songs, the band hit the road with a new name and a desire to create new fans.

After playing a few local events, the Shackeltons felt they were ready to record. They met at a local church and with the assistance of Mike Mateer, a friend; they spent the next nine hours in the church recording studio and walked out with a five song EP. With the new songs in hand, the band found themselves playing in cool places like the basement of New York City's Knitting Factory.

"It was a thrill," said Mark, as they looked out into the crowd obviously enjoying the music.

I asked him about the name Shackeltons, and he



(Photo courtesy of The Shakeltons)

said that it came from a man who attempted to cross the Antarctic with a 27-man crew, and although they didn't complete the journey, they managed to survive the harsh conditions against the odds.

These guys have already signed with a Seattle label, caught the eye of Rolling Stone Magazine where they were mentioned as "An up and coming band to look out for," and completed their first North American Tour.

I agree with the Rolling Stone Magazine; this band has a hunger that will propel them to do great things in music. They are like no other band out there, and the sound is new and fresh. I like them! Look them up online, at www.myspace.com/shackelton or on there web site www.theshackeltons.com. Pick up their new CD, "The Red". Remember to keep a song in your heart! **STF**



Staff Sgt. Kevin Corcoran, sergeant of the guard for Detachment 1, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, poses in front of a tank from World War II he hopes to have shipped home to California.

(Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

THINK TANK

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB, PAO

As the Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California National Guard unit attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade prepare to return home from deployment, there are many memories they will carry with them.

For Staff Sgt. Kevin Corcoran, the sergeant of the guard for Detachment 1, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Bn., 143rd FA, his favorite memory is close to his heart and weighs about 20 tons.

When Corcoran, a Hanford, Calif., native, first arrived to Camp Taji in July 2007, he decided to familiarize himself with the post.

While he was out “getting a lay of the land,” he stumbled upon an M24 Chaffee, a light, U.S. Army tank produced during World War II, sitting static in front of a unit’s headquarters.

As a self-proclaimed history buff who is particularly drawn to the World War II era, Corcoran was amazed by what he saw.

“At first I had to do a double take because I couldn’t believe there was a World War II tank here,” Corcoran said. “I started crawling all over it, crawling through the hatches and looking at it.”

Aside from what appeared to be slight battle damage, Corcoran found that the tank was in good shape and nearly functional. It is not known how the tank ended up in Iraq.

Corcoran has collected firearms, uniforms, and other equipment from the World War II era. His passion for the time period stems from his father, who was a World War II

veteran who fought at the Battle of the Bulge, so finding the tank was of personal significance to him.

“It was kind of a link to an era that’s very attractive to me, which was when my father was in the military. That made it a little more significant to me,” said Corcoran, who strongly felt others in the United States would be privileged to see such a historical piece of equipment.

Corcoran began working to see if he could get the tank shipped back to a museum near Camp Roberts, Calif.

“I’m inquiring as to what the legal requirements are to transport this tank out of theater and back to the museum,” said Corcoran. “Most people take helmets and bayonets and pieces of uniforms home as trinkets, so when you inquire about a tank, people initially think you’re kidding.”

After Corcoran’s many inquiries, the unit in possession of the tank signed it over to him. He is currently awaiting approval from higher authority to have the tank released from theater. Once, and if, he is given approval, he still has to overcome the obstacle of getting the tank shipped back to the United States.

Although Corcoran only has a short time before he returns home, he is very serious about getting the tank to the museum. His persistence has encouraged others to get involved, and he hopes it pays off.

“It’s important for people to realize that by putting military equipment in a museum, you’re not glorifying war. You’re preserving a piece of history,” Corcoran said. “It’s a living piece of history where children can see (and) adults can reminisce. It’s a representation of the price we all pay for war.” **STF**

68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

Lt. Col. Darrell Duckworth, Commander

Leopards take over Stagecoach's trail

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB PAO

After 15 months in Iraq, the Soldiers of the 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, a Fort Carson, Colo., unit attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade, can finally say, "Mission accomplished."

The 68th CSSB "Stagecoach" handed over responsibilities to the 553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, a Fort Hood, Texas, unit, during a transfer of authority ceremony on April 14. >>



Lt. Col. Darrell Duckworth, commander of the 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and Command Sgt. Maj. Colvin Bennett, the 68th CSSB command sergeant major, case their unit's colors on April 14.

(Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)



(Left to right) Lt. Col. Gregory Koller, commander of the 553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and Command Sgt. Maj. Orlando McMurry, the 553rd CSSB command sergeant major, uncase their colors during a transfer of authority ceremony on April 14.

(Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

» The 553rd CSSB “Leopards” will now be in charge of providing Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Multi-National Division – Central with nearly every classes of supply, field services, direct support maintenance, and cargo receipt and shipping.

Although the 553rd CSSB has stepped into their footprints, the accomplishments of the 68th CSSB cannot be forgotten.

When the unit first arrived to Iraq in February 2007, it was tasked with providing command and control for the fleet that established Forward Operating Base Hammer, which paved the way for the first brigade that entered theater during the surge.

“It was just an honor for me to serve as battalion commander during such a critical time in the Global War on Terror, and to be here during the surge supporting the main effort was just a privilege,” said Lt. Col. Darrell Duckworth, the commander of the 68th CSSB.

During their deployment, the 68th CSSB’s tour of duty was extended from 12 months to 15 months; but the Soldiers never complained or lost momentum.

“Our Soldiers worked under some of the most demanding conditions on the planet and never complained.

(They) just did the job,” said Duckworth. “Even through the extension, they still continued. They stepped up to the plate and did the job.”

Now that the 68th CSSB’s tour of duty has come to an end, the 553rd CSSB is ready to fill their shoes.

“They did a great job. They were very professional and detailed,” said Lt. Col. Gregory Koller, the commander of 553rd CSSB, of the transition process with the 68th CSSB. “I believe the 553rd CSSB is ready to take the reins and run with it for the next 15 months.”

Due to the training the Soldiers received before coming to Iraq and the help of the out-going unit, Koller has no doubt that his Soldiers are prepared for the mission ahead.

“The Soldiers are prepared and their Families are prepared,” said Koller. “We came with the mindset to execute operations of sustaining the force on Victory Base Complex.” **STF**



168th Brigade Support Battalion

Lt. Col. Todd Heussner, Commander

YEAR-END REVIEW



The sun sets on the Soldiers of Company F, 151st Infantry Regiment.

Soldiers look back on deployment

Story by Spc. Marcus Johnson, Company F, 151st Inf.

Clint Eastwood, in an interview where he discussed his directing methods, explained, “Most people like the magic of having [a project] take a long time and be difficult...but I like to move along...I like the feeling of coming home after every day and feeling like you've done something and you've progressed somewhere.”

When the Soldiers of Company F, 151st Infantry Regiment mobilized in May 2007, the unwritten goal of the company was pretty much the same as Eastwood's—to move along, to progress, and to preserve among themselves, both as individuals and as a collective body, the sense that something was accomplished.

Looking back on the past eleven months, every Soldier within Company F, 151st Inf., can claim that they have succeeded in achieving that sense of fulfillment.

The road to success wasn't easy. As a National Guard unit, Company F, 151st Inf., was burdened with the stereotype of “weekend warriors” and the assumption that a military experience consisting of weekend drills and annual

training couldn't prepare a Soldier for the harsh reality of a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

However, 1st Sgt. Walter Kuzmin, the first sergeant for Company F, 151st Inf., not only remained optimistic about the unit's potential for success, but refused to view the unit's mission as an effort made in competition with active-duty counterparts.

“We all live in the same culture,” Kuzmin said. “We are all, most truly, in the pursuit of excellence.”

The Indiana National Guard unit spent several weeks in training at Fort Dix, N.J.; Camp Buehring, Kuwait; and at their duty station in Camp Liberty, Iraq. In true “crawl-walk-run” fashion, they learned the ins and outs of convoy security operations.

When the unit first arrived to Camp Liberty, Company B, 1st Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, the predecessors for Co. F, 151st Inf., tutored the company through an on-the-job training program referred to as “left-seat, right-seat.”

On September 15, 2007, Capt. Steven Bell, company commander for Co. F, 151st Inf., and Kuzmin officially assumed control of convoy security missions from >>



Soldiers of Company F, 151st Infantry Regiment render honors at their redeployment ceremony in Camp Liberty. (Photo by Master Sgt. Kevin Moreland)

» Co. B, 1st Bn., 34th Armor Regt.

A combat veteran, whose career was previously highlighted with a tour in Afghanistan, Bell faced a unique challenge for his first assignment as a company commander. In addition to commanding a unit in a combat environment, Bell led a unit that was made up of Soldiers assembled from all over the state of Indiana.

Most Soldiers had not even met each other prior to deployment, and the pressure was on to avoid favoritism and the clique mentality, to “come together and be one cohesive unit,” as Bell says.

The mission was a success, raising the standard of units all over the Multi-National Division-Baghdad areas of operation.

As of April 12, 2008, Co. F had conducted a total of 2,051 convoy logistical patrols, traveling 1,162,034 miles across MND-B.

During the unit’s deployment, 12 Soldiers received Combat Action or Combat Infantry Badges. Several of these Soldiers were from 3rd platoon, which held some of the youngest Soldiers in the company. This was a factoid that 1st Lt. Adam Sheffield, who was the former platoon leader for 3rd platoon, planned to take with him as he prepared to return to his civilian life as a police officer in the state of Indiana.

“Seeing the younger guys mature over this deployment,” Sheffield said. “That’s what I think I’ll remember most.”

Mission success is more than enough to provide the Soldiers of Co. F, 151st Inf., with a sense of pride in their achievements.

Staff Sgt. Kirby Frank, in collaboration with several other Soldiers in the company, designed an extraction harness. This potentially life-saving device was designed to provide leverage for a Soldier in the event

that they became trapped in a gunner’s hatch during a vehicle fire.

As he reflected on the achievements made by individual Soldiers over the course of their deployment, Kuzmin had nothing but praise to offer his Soldiers.

“Soldiering is from within the individual. The ability of the [Soldier] stems from the Army values, where they stand with those individuals’ priorities of work,” said Kuzmin.

Before their tour of duty came to an end, the Soldiers of Co. F, 151st Inf., passed on their legacy of hard work and innovative thinking to Company A, 39th Brigade Support Battalion, and Battery A, 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery, the Arkansas National Guard units that replaced them in late April.

Another accomplishment of Co. F, 151st Inf., was the establishment of the troop medical clinic, which was run out of a refurbished trailer sitting on the gun line. The TMC gave Soldiers immediate access to its services, and was fully stocked with the equipment needed to treat most emergency medical cases. The clinic provided support to more than 900 Soldiers within 168th Brigade Support Battalion.

“Seeing the younger guys mature over this deployment,” Sheffield said, “that’s what I think I’ll remember most.”

While working alongside their active-duty counterparts, the Soldiers of Co. F, 151st Inf. ran missions and serviced vehicles, as well as a host of other projects.

“There is no *us* and *them* in this uniform, it is only *we*,” Kuzmin says, dispelling the notion that National Guardsmen and Active Army components are inherent rivals in the mission they share. “We are the keeper of our brothers and sisters.”

It was that work ethic and diligent attention to detail that Bell wanted to impart to the Soldiers of Company A, 39th BSB, and Battery A, 1st Bn., 206th FA.

When asked what concepts mattered most in commanding and conducting convoy security missions, Bell replied, “Discipline on the missions. Use the deliberate planning process. Plan everything out before execution of the mission.”

It is no great surprise that both Bell and Kuzmin expect great things from their replacements; after all, that is the legacy that they have left behind. **STF**



Chaplain's Thoughts

Chaplain Terrence E. Hayes, Brigade Chaplain

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB, PAO

While the Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, a California National Guard unit, were deployed to Iraq, they used some of their personal time to renovate schools in a village located outside of Camp Taji.

Although the unit has returned home to California, the legacy they left behind has inspired other units to follow in their footsteps and continue to foster the relationship they built with Assiriyah Village.

"I had heard that the brigade chaplain had a lot of supplies and toys that he wanted to give to the school and the community," said Lt. Col. Beau Bradford, commander of the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, a Louisiana National Guard unit attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade.

"They already had the relationship established and I wanted to maintain that relationship," said Bradford, an Alexandria, La., native.

Chaplain (Maj.) Terry Hayes, the 1st SB chaplain, with the help of Soldiers from the 165th CSSB, delivered 40 boxes of school supplies to the village on May 3. It was his second mission in the village.

"I'm a Christian chaplain, and it says in Galatians 6 that we're to do good to all men, especially those of the household of faith. They're not necessarily of my household of faith, but they're people and we have a responsibility to do good," said Hayes, a Grants Pass, Ore., native.

Hayes reached out to his friends in



Chaplain (Maj.) Terry Hayes (Left), the 1st Sustainment Brigade chaplain, chats with Sheikh Luqman (Right), the sheikh of Assiriyah Village, during his visit on May 3. (Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Oregon, Texas, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Colorado, Hawaii, South Carolina, Connecticut, and Germany for donations of school supplies and other items, and they responded by sending hundreds of boxes to aid in his humanitarian effort.

"I think it's important because it gives people in the (United) States a chance to feel like they're doing something for the war effort to bring stability and democracy to Iraq. It gets people involved," said Hayes, who taught high school for eight years.

As the convoy came into the village, a mass of children seemed to appear out of nowhere. Once the truck that was loaded with the supplies pulled up, the children gathered to help the Soldiers unload the boxes. Some of the kids shook the boxes to see what was inside.

"We're just Soldiers and a lot of us have children at home. To see a child's face smile ...it was a good thing to do. We were excited about doing it," Bradford said.

During their two-hour visit to Assiriyah, the Soldiers were able to interact with the children and visit the local shops. Sheikh Luqman, the village sheikh, was proud to show the Soldiers his town and was grateful for the supplies they brought for the children. He even invited them back for another visit.

"We plan to set up another visit for when the kids are actually in school," said Hayes.

"This was a great opportunity to maintain the relationship and introduce ourselves," Bradford added. "Sheikh Luqman wants us to go back, and we plan to go back." **STF**



Staff Sgt. Larkin Rollman, a Soldier attached to Battery B, 1st Battalion, 206th Field Artillery, hands out school supplies to children in Assiriyah village on May 3. (Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

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Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Adams, is the operations noncommissioned officer with the 1038th Engineer Company out of Arkansas. Adams set up a football scholarship for local high school students and named it after a Family friend who died in Vietnam. (Photo by Staff Spc. Michele Meadows)