



# Victory Sustained

Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan

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Spc. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

Sgt. Raymond S. Lopez Jr., a 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command ammunitions specialist, plays a critical role in the U.S. troop expansion in Afghanistan. As part of the ammo cell, Lopez helps supply ammunition to all U.S. units in the Afghan theater.

## Army Reserve command moves all US troops, supplies into Afghanistan

BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG  
*Victory Sustained Staff Writer*

In February, President Barack Obama authorized almost 20,000 additional troops to deploy to Afghanistan as part of the Global War on Terrorism. As thousands of American troops arrive in Afghanistan weekly, the 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command is an integral force in Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 143d ESC, an Army Reserve command and the first ESC to deploy to Afghanistan, controls the arrival and movement of troops and supplies by leading the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan in sustainment operations.

“If we were a Fortune 500 company, the

143d would be the CEOs,” said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. LaMeka Grayson, a human resources operations officer.

Since sustainment previously was operated on a brigade level, the 143d ESC pioneered sustainment operations on a command level.

The approximately 300 Soldiers of the 143d ESC are divided into many sections. The heart of the command is the section called support operations.

“Support operations [SPO] is the major information hub for the unit,” said Master Sgt. Michelle J. Jackson-Hanner, the distribution integration branch noncommissioned officer in charge. “There are eight cells in SPO, and each one has a different function.”

The eight SPO cells are the distribution

integration branch, human resource operations, mobility, contracting, plans, supply and services, ammunitions and the material readiness branch.

The distribution integration branch is the internal information center through which all the SPO cells funnel their information. The DIB collects the information and then passes it on to the party for which it is intended.

Human resource operations handles personnel travel, such as emergency leave, and rest and recuperation leave. HR Ops is also responsible for all the mail coming into Afghanistan for U.S. troops, according to Grayson. For Kandahar Airfield alone, the cell tracks mail for nearly 10,000 people.

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# The Commander's Corner



**Brig. Gen. Daniel I. Schultz**  
Joint Sustainment Command-  
Afghanistan Commanding General

On June 15, 2009, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, became the new commander of the International Security Assistance Force and

United States Forces-Afghanistan, responsible for the international mission in Afghanistan – the mission we were sent here to support.

A top priority for our new commander is a review of the entire Afghan mission and force structure. McChrystal brings a fresh perspective to the theater that no doubt will result in some changes.

I don't foresee any major changes for sustainment; however, I urge you to remain proactive, anticipating logistical needs based on a more keen situational awareness of both the Afghan battlefield and the surrounding air, sea and land routes upon which we depend to transport

supplies vital to our fight.

In the coming weeks, your work will enable combat forces to take the fight to the enemy. Those who are not ideologically committed to the insurgency will see that the risks of supporting the Taliban are great. You are enabling the coalition to show a strong presence in the Kandahar and Helmand provinces as Coalition and Afghan National Security Forces together seize the initiative, take back villages and cities, and hold them until ANSF can assume full control. Your efforts will create favorable conditions for governance, reconstruction and development.

Regarding ANSF, your work enables more trainers for the

Afghan army and police forces. In the future, some of you may even find yourselves providing mentorship and training support to Afghanistan's fledgling sustainment structure. There is still a lot of work ahead of us, so remain focused. Work hard to maintain the mission, but also make sure everyone has sufficient down time.

I want everyone to remain productive - doing all we can to meet the objectives of our new leader. Enclosed is McChrystal's initial guidance with his eight imperatives. Please read it so you understand the essence of our efforts.

Sustaining Victory – Army Strong!

# The CSM Message to the Troops

We are approaching our half way point. You have achieved several great things over last six months. As the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan, you have laid the foundation for all future Expeditionary Sustainment Commands here.

You should not rest on your laurels. Many times, Soldiers at the half way point of a deployment tend to get complacent. Safety must be our number one priority!

All Soldiers must stay focused on the mission. I understand that all have made some type of personal sacrifice to come on this

deployment, but we are Soldiers: We must always place the mission first!

Never accept defeat!  
Never Quit!

Never leave a Fallen Comrade!  
This is OUR Warrior Ethos!

You have worked through some adverse conditions thus far during the deployment. You have answered the call simply by doing your job at peak performance.

The success of our mission depends on how "WE" as Soldiers work together as a TEAM. Not one person within our unit is responsible for the mission ac-

complishment or failure. It takes a combined effort on everyone's part. The rules apply to everyone equally. We must all follow the standard. Once we begin to deviate from the standard, we leave ourselves open to perceived favoritism and inequality. We all wear one uniform!

NCOs lead the way!



**Command Sgt. Maj. Michael D. Schultz**  
Joint Sustainment  
Command-Afghanistan  
Command Sergeant Major



The commanding general U.S. Army Reserve Command, Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz Jr., places private first class rank on newly-promoted Pfc. Joshua Ruckman, a 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command Headquarters and Headquarter Company light wheel mechanic during a June 4 promotion ceremony. Stultz visited Reserve Soldiers of Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan June 4 through June 5.

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# Medics shoulder healthcare responsibility

■ BY STAFF SGT. MARCOS ALICES  
*Victory Sustained Editor*

U.S. Army combat medics for centuries have carried the responsibility of tending the health of the American Soldier on the battlefield. The 45<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade Aid Station will carry that obligation as they provide medical care for more than 2,000 Soldiers in Afghanistan.

The 45<sup>th</sup> SB Aid Station is the health provider for Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan personnel and servicemembers traveling on combat logistics patrol.

"It's great," said Capt. Donald T. Stevenson, a 45<sup>th</sup> SB physician assistant. "We can send medics out there, so that way everybody can do their mission. They know if something happens to them, like if they get hit with an IED or anything else, the medics are there, they are fully qualified, they are fully trained, and they will be in good hands."

The JSC-A is responsible for the movement of supplies and personnel into and throughout Afghanistan. In fulfilling that role, the JSC-A moves convoys filled with equipment and gear daily. The 45<sup>th</sup> SB Aid Station provides two combat medics for many of these convoys. They could range from no more than a day to four days.

"My job is to help the injured and sick in combat, to make sure all the guys make it back home to their families," said Spc. Jeremy D. Franklin, a 45<sup>th</sup> SB combat medic.

During convoys, medics are responsible for the welfare of all personnel in the movement. They ensure that all vehicles are equipped with a Combat Lifesaver Bag, and Warrior Aid and Litter Kit. The combat lifesaver bag contains numerous items to provide on-the-spot treatment of trauma and

other conditions. The WALK is a vehicle life-saving kit supplied with a quad-fold litter and medical supplies. Each of these kits makes it possible to treat multiple patients and immediately evacuate a Soldier. The medic also carries his own supplies.

"Basically, we are the first line of medical assistance for the Soldier before we move them on to a higher echelon of care," said Spc. Robert Truss, a 45<sup>th</sup> combat medic.

Not only do they provide medical assistance to Soldiers on the convoys, they ensure that all Soldiers are capable of providing immediate care. Medics of the Aid Station provide 40 hours of training in a Combat Lifesaver Course. The instructors focus on three main areas; bleeding out, lung collapse and airway blockage. The course extends the life expectations of Soldiers on the battlefield by having CLS-certified Soldiers provide initial care until the arrival of a medic.

"The benefit that we have here is that we are located where the soldiers are located," said Stevenson. "Yes, we run our aid station out of a tent, but the soldiers don't have to go very far to get their health care."

Arriving to Afghanistan in January, Soldiers that operate the Aid Station were prepared to provide medical care for no more than 200 Soldiers. Originally slated to only provide care for Soldiers of the 45<sup>th</sup> SB, the medics now open their aid station doors to Soldiers of the 143d Expeditionary Sustainment Command and other units who do not have medical support. They see about 35 to 40 patients each day, according to Stevenson. Since they now serve more than 2,000 Soldiers, the medics have extended their hours of operation and expanded their facility to accommodate the larger patient population.

"A medic's skill set is so much larger than



Staff Sgt. Marcos Alices | Victory Sustained  
Spc. Robert Truss, a 45<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade combat medic, prepares his aid bag for a combat logistics patrol. The aid bag contains medical supplies to control bleeding and breathing as well as items that he deems necessary for the mission. He will be responsible for the welfare of all personnel on the convoy.

just doing vital signs," said Stevenson.

In the aid station, it is routine for medics to have a tentative diagnosis and treatment plan prepared for the physician, according to Stevenson.

"I enjoy doing my job," said Franklin. There is a lot to learn still, and this is the best learning environment."

The 45<sup>th</sup> SB medics are constantly learning new techniques and skills as they rise to the challenge of saving lives on the battlefield. Their mission does not just include tending to the injured on the battlefield but also providing healthcare to Soldiers as well.

# 45th SB Soldiers, ANA Soldiers spread cheer at local orphanage

■ BY PETTY OFFICER 1ST CLASS  
DANIEL A. BRISTOL  
*45th Sustainment Brigade*

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. Soldiers and Soldiers of the Afghan National Army visited a local orphanage to pass out some much needed supplies and spread a little cheer on May 14.

Causing a stir in the local neighborhood, Soldiers of

the Hawaii based 45<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade and Soldiers of the ANA drove up in Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles to the front of the Taya H A Haskan, an all-boy orphanage near downtown Kabul. The Soldiers backed up an MRAP and a trailer as they prepared to pass out school supplies, toys and some candy to the children.

See **CHEER**, page 6



Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel A. Bristol | 45th Sustainment Brigade  
Soldiers of the 45th Sustainment Brigade and Afghan National Army visits Taya H A Haskan all-boy orphanage to hand out need supplies.

## Soldiers dedicate chapel at FOB Ramrod

■ BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG  
Victory Sustained Staff Writer

After almost a year in Afghanistan, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Ramrod have experienced many hardships, including dozens of improvised explosive device strikes, a suicide bomber and the deaths of fellow Soldiers. The newly built FOB Ramrod chapel fills a spiritual and emotional need for Soldiers. In a special service May 31, troops and civilians dedicated this new chapel.

"Every time they leave here, they might hit [an IED] and not come back," said Maj. J. Cale Brown, the 2-2 Inf. executive officer. "[The chapel] is a critical asset for the mental and spiritual health of the Soldiers."

Command Sgt. Major Antoine B. Overstreet, 2-2 Inf. senior enlisted Soldier, said the 2-2 Inf. chaplain, Maj. Thomas G. Conner, talked to the commanders about the Soldiers' need for a place to worship. Until the cha-

pel was built, the chaplain held services in a tent.

According to Conner, the chapel took six weeks to build. Although there were several volunteers who participated in the building, the majority of the work was completed by Staff Sgt. Travis Martin and Staff Sgt. "Bobby Jack" Crenshaw.

"Staff Sgt. Crenshaw wanted to build [a chapel] as soon as we got here," said Conner. "We tried to order a pre-built chapel kit, but couldn't get one, so we decided to go ahead and build our own."

Crenshaw, the 2-2 Inf. repairs and utilities noncommissioned officer, drew up the plans on a basic computer program.

"I knew [the chapel] would be a hard structure that would stay here," said Crenshaw. "I also knew it would be the one building that would serve everyone."

Once the building location had been determined and materials found, Crenshaw began work on the chapel and was later joined by Martin.

Starting at 7:30 a.m., the two



SpC. Elisebet Freeburg | Victory Sustained

**Annamaria Cardinali, senior social scientist for the Army program Human Terrain System and classically trained flamenco guitarist, sings and plays the hymn "Amazing Grace" during a chapel dedication service at FOB Ramrod May 31.**

Soldiers worked until late afternoon or evening most days. They spent five days mixing cement by hand in a wheelbarrow, and the chapel woodwork alone took five weeks to complete.

"[The chapel] will benefit troops coming in who go to church," said Staff Sgt. Matthew J. Kohn, the 2-2 Inf. joint network supervisor who attended the dedication service. "It will give them a place to go. For those who don't go to church, it will give them a place of refuge."

During the ceremony, Chap. (Col.) Stanley E. Puckett, the command chaplain of Regional Command-South, delivered the dedication sermon and prayer, while Conner prayed the invocation and benediction. Brown presented the commander's remarks, and AnnaMaria Cardinali, a senior social scientist for the Army program Human Terrain System and a classically trained guitarist and singer, sang the national anthem and the hymn, "Amazing Grace."



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(Top) Staff Sgt. Jennifer Cintron, a Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan material readiness branch noncommissioned officer, interacts with Afghan children June 10 outside the local Siedad Pasha High School. (Bottom) An Afghan child stops playing to have her picture taken June 10 at the Siedad Pasha High School just outside an entry control point of Kandahar Airfield. (Back) An Afghan child tucks away her new shoes, given to her by U.S. Soldiers. Female Soldiers of the JSC-A visited the school's administrator to negotiate possibly teaching English classes to Afghan children. While there, Soldiers handed out school supplies, candy and shoes to the children.

## Soldiers fly "Old Glory", honor loved ones

■ BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG  
Victory Sustained Staff Writer

After receiving a Red Cross message that his grandfather was ill, SpC. Ronnie L. Kahler flew the U.S. flag April 25 above Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan in honor of his grandfather, a World War II veteran. Days later, Kahler presented the flag to his grandfather on his deathbed.

The flag of the United States of America universally represents justice, liberty and democracy, according to President Franklin Roosevelt's 1944 Proclamation No. 2605. Kahler, the driver for the commanding general of the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan, flew his flag in memoriam of his grandfather as part of a service the JSC-A provides for Soldiers who wish to fly an American flag for varied reasons. Holidays, birthdays or in memory of a loved one are just a few of the reasons flags are flown.

A Soldier of the JSC-A commanding general's personal security detail, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Stephen Prebich, flew the first flag April 20 in honor of Sgt. Jan M. Argonish, who died 2007 in Afghanistan.

"He was engaged to the daughter of a friend of mine," said Prebich.

Together, components of the JSC-A have flown more than 200 U.S. flags since April. The 286<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Sustain-



Courtesy Photo | 286th CSSB

**Staff Sgt. Kyle Roy and SpC. Joshua Sennett, both of the 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion, fold a U.S. flag after flying it Memorial Day. Soldiers of the 286th CSSB hoisted 91 flags that day for patriotism, loved ones and organizations.**

ment Battalion, a JSC-A element, flew 91 flags on Memorial Day alone.

"There were two of us on the flag pole, four folders, and one alternate," said 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Karri L. Bennett, senior enlisted Soldier for the 286<sup>th</sup> CSSB Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Bennett emailed a flyer to 286<sup>th</sup> CSSB Soldiers, and also fastened flyers to doors at troop quarters informing them about flying flags Memorial Day. Troops purchased their own flags and then brought them in to Bennett.

"My arms got sore, but it was fun," said Pfc. Robin W. Larlee, a 286<sup>th</sup> CSSB food supply representative and one of the flag raisers.

Larlee directed all passersby to render honor as the flag-raisers hoisted flags one by one. She saluted all 91 flags.

Besides flags in tribute of family members or someone special, some flags flew for organizations that have supported troops or for patriotic reasons.

Prebich believes this service helps boost the morale of

troops. Soldiers may personalize the wording of certificates, which are signed by the commanding general and officially confirm the flag has been flown over Afghanistan.

"It meant a lot to [my grandfather]," said Kahler. "I'm the only one in the family that has carried on in the military, and he was pretty proud of me for that."

Kahler's grandfather passed away about three weeks later. He plans to continue raising flags for others who have also lost loved ones.

### OPINION

## US must respect our symbol of freedom

■ BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG  
Victory Sustained Staff Writer

As U.S. Marines courageously fought their way forward across the beach, thousands fell, mowed down by the heavy guns of the Imperial Japanese Army. After 36 days and nearly 7,000 American lives lost, legend tells us that Marine Sgt. Mike Strank of Easy Company ordered his troops to raise a U.S. flag so big that "every Marine on this cruddy island can see it." Feb. 23, 1945, five Marines and one Navy corpsman raised that flag on Mt. Suribachi, Iwo Jima. Within weeks, Strank and two other flag-raisers would die on that sandy island.

The flag of the United States of America universally represents justice, liberty and democracy, according to President Franklin Roosevelt's 1944 Proclamation No. 2605.

The Flag Code, *United States Code: Title 36: Chapter 10*, mandates how our colors should

be respected. According to the Code, "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning."

How far our noble flag has fallen today in our minds!

Recently, British-born artist Benjamin Shine created a portrait of President Barack Obama by cutting up an old American flag and weaving it through mesh fabric to craft Obama's likeness. Shine considered this mutilation of the American flag to be an "appropriate" reflection of positive changes in the United States and named his work "Changing States". Although it is admirable that Shine intended to honor the U.S., slicing our symbol of liberty into small pieces is not.

More disturbing, Barnes & Noble Inc. plans to capitalize on this defacement by selling puzzles, posters, and t-shirts created after Shine's portrait.

There are a few things about the U.S. flag that most Soldiers probably know. For example, if the flag is flown at night, it must be illuminated. Another familiar statute is to fly the U.S. flag higher than other flags when flown together. But most people do not realize that the American flag is never to be used as a decoration, not even on athletic uniforms, the exception being military uniforms. As well, the flag should "never be used for advertising purposes in any manner," rendering the monetary plans of Barnes & Noble Inc. completely inappropriate.

As Soldiers, citizens of the United States of America, we should all do our part to respect our flag. Read the Flag Code. Educate your family and others back home. Correct your peers. We are giving a year of our lives here to justice, liberty and democracy. Many give more. Let us at least do our part to revere "Old Glory", our emblem of freedom, as it proudly flies above.

## Cheer

Continued from page 3

As the Soldiers began unloading the trailer Ghulam Ali Zainal, the president of the Department of Orphanages in Afghanistan, met with Maj. Gbenga Kaffo, 45<sup>th</sup> SB's ANA partnership officer in charge.

"I know that this is the start of a long friendship," said Zainal. "I am in charge of all the orphanages in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces and would welcome you to visit any or all of them."

Kaffo and Zainal talked about the goal of this visit and about future visits. Kaffo inquired about other issues with the kids besides not having enough supplies for school. Zainal gave Kaffo a short tour of the school house. Kaffo visited with a cou-

ple of the classes that were in session.

"If you want a good job, if you want to be successful in life, anything you want you can achieve if you remember one thing," said Kaffo as he addressed one of the classes. "Education is the key. Take your education seriously and learn all you can. A good education will take you a long way in life and is the foundation of all you do in the future."

Though their classrooms may not be up to standards, the boys of the orphanage were all smiles as the Soldiers began passing out backpacks full of supplies, soccer balls and some small pieces of chocolate candy. The line of children seemed endless as more and more children ranging from toddler to teenager, kept coming out of the schoolhouse. The or-



Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel A. Bristol, 45th Sustainment Brigade Maj. Gbenga Kaffo, the 45th Sustainment Brigade Afghanistan National Army partnership officer in charge, met with many of the boys who stay at the Taya H A Haskan all-boy orphanage. The orphanage is home to more than 600 orphan boys.

phanage is home to more than 600 orphan boys.

"I am the officer in charge of the partnership between Afghanistan and the U.S. military," said Kaffo. "I will be back to

this orphanage and will visit others throughout the different provinces.

I look forward to a long friendship and partnership between us and you on many future visits."

# Sound advice from the Security Manager

SFC KANDACE MCDONALD, JSC-A

## Operational Security and Cell Phones

Operational Security is a high priority for U.S. forces. Friends and enemies of the U.S. continuously watch you, the Soldier and civilian contractor, especially in our area of operations. We are an easy target because: we look different, we act different, and our efforts to help make Afghanistan a better place for all of its citizens are not welcomed by all local nationals, or insurgent sympathizers.

We are watched 24/7, and any information we carelessly give our adversaries will be used against us. We have met the enemy, and he is us? The story doesn't end here, because we can overcome the enemy. We are the solution to the careless or deliberate information spillage to the enemy.

You may ask, "What can I do?"

(1) Protect classified information (written and oral) by following standard operating procedures governing classified mediums and information.

(2) Always consider the recipients' "need to know" before arbitrarily sharing the information.

(3) Discuss classified information in areas designated for those types of discussions.

(4) Destroy classified material through shredding documents with GSA approved shredders and/or burning the documents until the information is unrecognizable. Take CDs to your Security Manager for destruction.

(5) Do not bring portable electronic devices, aka PDEs, into areas where classified information is processed, discussed and/or stored.

Number 5 generates the most comments, as Soldiers ask why PDEs are not authorized around classified systems and discussions.

The answer: use of these items creates a security vulnerability. Let's look at cell phones.

Cell phones have three major vulnerabilities:

(1) Vulnerability to monitoring of your conversations while using the phone.

(2) Vulnerability of your phone being turned into a microphone to monitor conversations in the vicinity of your phone while your phone is inactive.

(3) Vulnerability to "cloning" or the use of your phone number by others to make calls that are charged to your account.

Keep in mind that ALL cell phones ARE radio transceivers. Your voice is transmitted through the air on radio waves. Radio waves are not directional. They disperse in all directions so that anyone with the right kind of radio receiver can listen in to your conversation. It is easily accomplished and difficult to detect.

Real world example: One of the most highly publicized cases of cellular phone monitoring concerned former Speaker of the House Representative Gingrich. A conference call between Gingrich and other Republican leaders was "accidentally" overheard and then taped. The conversation concerned Republican strategy for responding to Speaker Gingrich's pending admission of ethics violations being investigated by the House Ethics Committee. The intercepted conversation was reported to the New York Times and other newspapers.

Yes, you have seen people use cell phones and other electronic devices in restricted areas. "We have met the enemy." Is it you?" How do we overcome this enemy? We police ourselves. Practice good OPSEC.



Capt. Richard W. Milam, the Joint Sustainment Command environmental science officer, inspects the kitchen of a dining facility at Forward Operating Base Spin Boldak, Afghanistan.

Milam, along with Maj. Mark Green and Sergeant Maj. William Shafer of the JSC-A inspector general section, visited FOB Spin Boldak and FOB Frontenac June 15 to inspect living conditions for servicemembers.

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Pvt. Kristin L. Rodriguez, a 57th Expeditionary Signal Battalion human resources specialist, jumps through the gunner's hatch June 18 while egressing the MRAP Egress Trainer.

# MRAP rollover training simulators save lives

BY SPC. ELISEBET FREEBURG  
Victory Sustained Staff Writer

According to Army statistics, 144 non-hostile related Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle rollover incidents were reported from Nov. 1 2007, through March 31, 2008. U.S. servicemembers increasingly use the MRAP in combat because of its ability to withstand improvised explosive devices. However, because of growing concern about the MRAP's susceptibility to roll, the MRAP Egress Trainer was designed and is currently being fielded in Afghanistan.

"The MET gives the gunners an 80 percent better survivability rate in a rollover," said Tracy G. Watkins, a government-contracted senior trainer for the MET here.

With 12 years of Army experience behind him as an infantry officer, Watkins is involved in several military vehicle rollovers.

"In the past, we were woefully unprepared for events like rollovers to happen," said Watkins. "Although, they did happen pretty frequently, we didn't have any formal training for it."

As thousands of troops arrive in Afghanistan during the troop expansion, they are processed through the Joint Sustainment Command-Afghanistan's Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration system before moving out to their final locations. Most Soldiers process at Kandahar Airfield and are required through RSOI to experience the MET, said Watkins.

"Normally, the second day in country is when they do the MET," said Watkins.

There are four basic scenarios Watkins simulates with the MET. In each simulation, the gunner jumps down into the cab, while his crewmembers grasp a tight hold on him to make certain he does not move around the vehicle.

"I was the gunner," said Pvt. Kristin L.

Rodriguez, a human resources specialist for the 57<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Signal Battalion who trained here June 18. "So I had to get down. It's a little rough, but it was fun."

In the first simulation, Watkins rolls the vehicle to a point where the occupants feel as if the driver is about to lose control of the



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Tracy G. Watkins, a government-contracted senior trainer, instructs Soldiers of the 57th Expeditionary Signal Battalion on the dangers of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle rollovers. Soldiers of the 57th ESB practiced rollover drills in a MRAP Egress Trainer June 18. Soldiers train on the MET before moving on to forward operating bases here.

vehicle.

During the second scenario, he directs the machine to rotate 360 degrees to familiarize them with sensations they would feel in an actual rollover.

The third setting forces the crew to egress through the gunner's hatch, as the vehicle is turned 90 degrees onto its side.

Watkins turns the vehicle over several times in the final simulation before ending with the vehicle completely upside down. MET trainers lock all doors but one from the outside, simulating jammed doors and forcing troops to find the single open door. After exiting the MET, the Soldiers simulate standard operating procedures such as securing the area,

assessing injuries and counting weapons.

"I went twice," said Sgt. Rodney E. Bertrand, a multi-channel transmission systems operator for the 57<sup>th</sup> ESB. "Practice makes perfect in case we go outside the wire. [In case of] real world events, you need to have training like this."

The MET simulator consists of an interchangeable MRAP cab on a special frame high enough to allow the cab to rotate 360 degrees, much like an amusement park ride.

"We'll have a copy, a version, of every MRAP that is out in the field in strategic locations throughout the theater," said Watkins. "So that the Soldiers can actually train on the vehicle that they are most likely to operate in."

Although current cabs are being designed and manufactured distinctively for the simulator; initially, damaged MRAPs from the field were used.

Designers gave the simulator many power options. The MET runs on a multi-power source. For example, it has an electrical motor and could run on batteries, generators or be plugged into a power outlet.

There are two simulators at KAF, one at Bagram Airfield, and many on their way to forward operating bases, said Watkins, making a total of 12 or 13 METs in Afghanistan.

"These guys learn a lot while they are in here," said Watkins. "Everybody leaves smiling. They all enjoy it. They all recognize the training value of it once they've been in it."

The MET puts crews into physically and mentally stressful situations in which they must egress the vehicle. Despite disorientation, Soldiers must unfasten seatbelts and unlock door combat locks all while hanging sideways or upside down. As greater numbers of troops continue to arrive here, the MET helps combat accidents resulting in injury or death due to MRAP rollovers.

# Reflections by the Chaplain

## ■ Arriving back home

Many of our Soldiers have started going home on Rest and Recoperation Leave. No one's second guessing the necessity of a much needed break from Kandahar. Even so, R&R may have a few stresses of its own. Who could stress about the perfect vacation, the ideal time at the house, or the family reunion? After all, homecomings should be happy, joyful occasions, times when families and friends share smiles and laughter.

Homecoming from deployment also is a time when Soldiers and family members attempt to bridge the emotional and physical distance experienced during the deployment. The Army uses the expression "Reunion Stress" to explain the demands experienced by all family members around the time of homecoming. Going home means getting to know each other all over again and both sides of the deployment have experienced very different challenges.

How will we ever share just how much dust we live with or how awful the pooh pond stinks or what wearing body armor on a hot day is really like? How can we describe our chow hall experiences – the divinely designed cakes that never taste sweet or the

curry too spicy to swallow? What about those twelve hour shifts at the office where day to day busyness and personality conflicts can erupt into the biggest nightmares just because we are so close to one another – when from a distance these little family spats are petty nuisances that we know we should dismiss. How much of our deployment can we or should we share with those we love the most?

Reuniting with family and friends means taking time to stop thinking about all that we have been through, and start appreciating everything that they have done in our absence.

Will we ever truly be able to understand what it is like for our families to experience having a loved one in a combat zone, when the rest of the world has no clue what they are feeling? Will we be able to fill the gap for those days missed? How can we? How can we shower them with enough love to truly let them know how much their support carries us through our toughest days?

Some of the difficulties that come with deployments include emotional distance, feeling isolated or alone even with those we love, having difficulty sleeping, and most definitely feeling a little irritable.

Our fellow Soldiers certainly have a high-



er tolerance for those days we feel a little grouchy; our families may not. During deployment, our adjectives become a little more colorful. Our demeanor becomes a little more direct, and we are more likely to speak our minds, unfiltered.

I know from previous deployments, my family is there to remind me – not everyone is in the Army nor would they care to be. And you know that's not so bad.

So when you go on your R&R, remember leave Kandahar behind. Turn that "deployment mode" off for a little bit. Take a deep breath of fresh air, and enjoy just being where you are for the moment.

## Supplies

Continued from page 1

The mobility cell tracks basic commodities that a unit would need while on the ground, said Jackson-Hanner. They cover everything from tent poles and building materials to tactical vehicles.

With the number of units in Afghanistan increasing weekly, mobility provides those units with Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles. The need is evident at Forward Operating Base Leatherneck where thousands of Marines have arrived and need a vast number of MRAPs to become functional.

"[The contracting cell is] responsible for making sure the contractors we use are up to par on licenses, up to date on equipment and delivering what they are supposed to," said Jackson-Hanner.

The contracting cell tracks local contractors hired by the U.S. military to move convoys of supplies.

Plans is the preparation cell. All plans are submitted through this cell, checked for accurate information and then sent to the 143d ESC commanding general, Brig. Gen. Daniel I. Schultz, for final approval. As well, they review and make changes to cur-

rent policies and procedures.

"[Supply and services] establishes all fuel locations and basically fuel distribution throughout [Afghanistan]," said Lt. Col. Richard R. Biehl, the supply and services branch chief.

Besides fuel, the cell brings in and provides rations for troops, such as bottled water and food. In addition, they conduct mortuary affairs, which involves identification of deceased personnel and safeguarding personal effects, and facilitate the Army Direct Ordering program, which allows Soldiers to replace worn-out uniforms. Challenges they have faced include enemy attacks on convoys and the overall demand of expanding FOBs needing more supplies.

"Ammunitions is a vital part of supporting the troops coming in," said Sgt. Raymond S. Lopez Jr., a 143d ESC ammunition specialist. "Without bullets you can't kill the bad guy."

The ammunition cell controls the flow of ammunition throughout the theater and analyzes what each unit needs, said Lopez. One difficulty the cell faced was filling the growing ammo needs of new troops arriving. The problem was solved by dedicating a regular flight into country solely to bring in ammo.

The material readiness branch is responsible for receiving materials to distribute, such as electrical equipment, drilling equipment for wells and large containers of water to be used for bathing.

One challenge the SPO faces as a whole is the constant adaptation to a changing theater as the troop influx grows.

Besides SPO, another section essential to the 143d ESC's operations is the logistics section. It currently oversees building projects in the southern region of Afghanistan. They approve large purchases, oversee vehicle usage and manage service requests. Besides this, the logistics section supervises the base dining facilities to ensure that food service abides by regulations.

The 143d ESC supports the U.S. mission in Afghanistan by helping the local populace. It is currently building a humanitarian yard outside Kandahar Airfield that will cover the entire southern and western Afghanistan regions.

"The yard will hold 150 containers of aid like rice, beans, clothing, sugar and salt," said Master Sgt. Johnny Wise Jr., the Civil Affairs humanitarian assistance NCOIC.

The 143d ESC will employ 20 local Afghans to work as distributors at the yard. The work-

ers will be chosen after a rigorous six week process, including interviews and follow-ups. Eventually Civil Affairs will control the humanitarian yard at Bagram Airfield too, thereby rendering humanitarian aid to the entire country.

The SPO, logistics and Civil Affairs are by no means the only sections of the command who contribute to the build-up of troops in Afghanistan. Many sections assist in sustainment operations or support those sections that do.

"We have a lot of eyes on us to ensure that we were right for the job," said Jackson-Hanner. "I think we've proven that we're able to maintain our logistical sustainment."

The 135<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Sustainment Command, a National Guard command out of Homewood, Ala., will replace the 143d ESC at the end of 2009.

"We're setting the next unit up for success," said Lopez. "We came here with nothing built up and built this ourselves. The next unit will just jump into our seats, and we'll roll out of here."

For troops in the Afghanistan theater, the support operations of a sustainment command will remain a crucial asset to maintain U.S. and Coalition Forces in the Global War on Terror.