



DA Official visits Black Belt graduation



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY RHONDA BRUNNING

Deputy Under Secretary Michael A. Kirby address the most recent graduating Black Belt class.

**By Rhys Fullerlove
ASC Public Affairs**

Deputy Under Secretary of the Army for Business Transformation Michael A. Kirby went out of his way to deliver a special message to ASC's Lean Six Sigma Black Belt October graduating class.

Kirby expressed the importance of the Black Belt achievement. "You as black belts are responsible for changing the mindset. You are real people, doing real jobs, making a real difference," he said.

Using Lean Six Sigma as the Army's Continuous Process Improvement methodology, Kirby directs the largest deployment ever attempted. This effort is underway with training, education,

and process selection. Traveling through the Midwest, Kirby made time in his schedule to visit Rock Island specifically to talk to the graduating class.

Ten ASC personnel graduated in the recent class, bringing the total of trained Black Belts in the command to 24, with 16 trained Green Belts also in development.

Kirby has high expectations for all Black Belts in the short term. "Lean Six Sigma is working at the top and the bottom to get the enterprise value we have to pull through the middle," said Kirby. Speaking to the graduates, he said, "You are the ones who generate the value, which is irresistible to the senior leadership."

See GRADS on page 7

Maj. Gen. Radin participates in Hero Street ceremony

**By Rhys Fullerlove
ASC Public Affairs**

Maj. Gen. Robert M. Radin, commanding general of the U.S. Army Sustainment Command at Rock Island Arsenal, reminded people of the hardships faced by our World War II and Korean Veterans while participating in the Hero Street Monument dedication Oct. 6, in Silvis, Ill.

The monument of a bald eagle with its wings outstretched and holding a rifle and a flag pole honors eight Hispanic-American men from one street in this small Midwestern town who died during World War II and the Korean War.

In his remarks, Radin took people back to a time when Soldiers did not have the advantage of modern clothing that would help keep them warm or cold.

"They wore cotton and wool clothing that was heavy and hot when dry, and heavier and cold when wet, which did little to protect them from the ele-



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY JACQUELINE ASHMON

Maj. Gen Radin talks to a local veteran at Silvis's Hero Street

ments," Radin said. "They did not have the advantage of personnel protection equipment like helmets and vests made out of life-saving materials like Kevlar."

Radin put into context what times were like 60 years ago for the eight men being honored. He invited the audience to imagine what Hero Street would have looked like long ago. He held up a ban-

ner, made by his wife, with a red border, a white background and a blue star that was found in many household windows representing the over 10 million men and women our country had in uniform at the time.

"The tradition was started in World War I by Army Captain Queissner of the 5th Ohio Infantry, who had two sons serving on the front lines in France," Radin explained.

"The blue star was designated for each family member serving in the armed forces, with up to five per banner. The blue star would be replaced with a gold star if the family member died while in service."

The monument's dedication marked an end to a project that began in 1993. The completed statue, fabricated in Mexico, first arrived in Silvis in 2006.

The warfighter: then and now

Maj. Gen. Robert M. Radin
U.S. Army Sustainment Command

The recent PBS documentary entitled “The War” brought renewed attention to World War II, its impact on our nation and – most importantly – on the Americans who fought in the war, and who changed history as a result. This is a topic of personal interest to me, because I am the son of a World War II veteran.

Like most veterans of his generation, my Dad never talked much about what he did during the war, nor about the things he experienced. His only advice he gave me when I entered West Point in the summer of 1972 was “make sure you always have an extra pair of dry socks.” As an Infantryman who fought in the European theater, he knew just how important it was to take care of his equipment. For an Infantryman in WW II there was no more basic equipment than their feet. But I know the experience had a profound impact on his life, and it also made him a hero in my eyes. His example inspired me in ways that continue today, and will probably continue for the rest of my life. I started out my career upon graduation as an Infantry officer but over the years I found myself becoming a logistician and never forgetting his lesson about taking care of Army equipment.

More than 16 million Americans served in uniform during World War II, and more than 400,000 of them gave their lives in service to their nation. More than 2.75 million World War II veterans are still living today; within a decade, however, that number is expected to dwindle to about 475,000.

As any veteran from that era could tell you, the Americans who wore the uniform during the largest, bloodiest war in history grew up in and lived in a world far different from the one we know today. Consider this: During World War II, a private fresh out of basic training received basic pay of \$50 a month. Today’s E-1 receives basic pay of \$1,300 a month. While this sounds like a huge gap, when the figures are adjusted for inflation, the pay scale becomes roughly comparable.



Even though a dollar went a lot farther back then, no amount of 1940s money could have bought the high-tech items which are now part of our daily lives. For example, let’s look at how the World War II Soldier was equipped and how much it cost, compared to the Soldiers of today.

The World War II combat Soldier went into battle wearing a wool khaki uniform and a steel helmet. He was equipped with a rifle and a belt used to carry a canteen, ammunition and a few other basic items. In today’s money, that equipment cost

about \$170.

Today’s combat Soldier wears a lightweight Kevlar helmet, body armor, fireproof gloves, knee and elbow pads, protective eyewear, and a camouflage uniform made of synthetic fabrics. He carries a modular carbine with a scope, along with night vision goggles. It costs more than \$17,000 to equip the Soldier of the early 21st-century, a figure that will continue to rise as technology advances.

Because of the investment we’ve made in equipment and training, today’s combat Soldier carries far greater firepower, is much better protected, and is many times more lethal, agile and mobile than his World War II counterpart. Still, there is something about today’s Soldier that hasn’t changed since World War II, nor even since the Continental Army fought for America’s independence.

The 21st-century Soldier still has the heart of a warrior, and still carries the values of service, duty and selfless sacrifice passed down by previous generations. These are the values that were taught to me by my Dad, and that are the legacy of our nation’s veterans.

On November 11, we will celebrate these enduring values as we mark Veterans Day. Let us use this occasion to thank all of our veterans and all those who are now in service, and to dedicate ourselves to carrying forward a set of values that can’t be bought at any price.

THE GLOBAL LINE

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Contributions to The Global Line are welcome.

E-mail address: ROCK-ASC-GLOBAL-LINE@conus.army.mil

Phone: (309) 782-5421, DSN 793-5421.

Maj. Gen. Robert M. Radin
 Commanding General

Daniel M. Carlson
 Public Affairs Officer

Charles W. Fick Jr.
 Managing Editor

Rhys E. Fullerlove
 Editor, design, layout



Stryker repair site is vital for combat ops

By Chuck Sprague
401st AFSB PAO

Stryker Combat Vehicles damaged in Iraq are returning to the fight in larger numbers as facilities at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar, under direction of the 1st Battalion, 401st Army Field Support Brigade, refine the repair process.

General Dynamics Land Systems, a contractor for the Army, and its more than 80 skilled mechanics, technicians and laborers from around the world work seven days a week in a combination Stryker repair/reset mission.

"The Qatar facility saves Soldier's lives and saves the Army millions of dollars in transportation costs. It has churned out 'like new' Strykers; almost 80 vehicles since the facility was created more than two years ago," said Lt. Col. Maxine Girard, battalion commander of the 1-401st AFSB. "The repair site affords the Army a quick turnaround on severely damaged vehicles. Six vehicles per month now roll through the shop," said Girard.

The system works due to a combination of well-coordinated communication between the Stryker manufacturer,

GDLS, its engineers and repair/maintenance facility at Balad Air Base, Iraq, and Army logisticians and implementation of Lean Six Sigma principles, said GDLS Qatar Site Manager, Tim Armstrong.

Skilled welders are the most important facet of the operations, Armstrong explained.

Ron Charette is the chief welder and has been in Qatar since 2005.

"We've come a long way since start-up," he said. "Our processes haven't

changed much, but our techniques for repair have changed as the damage to the vehicles has increased."

Work flow is planned so all crews remain productive, said the welding chief. "If we take all the easy-fix vehicles first, you end up leaving all of the severely damaged vehicles in the shop at the same time and this obviously would lower our production rate. We focus on an even mix as we assign work," Charette said.

The process starts when battle-damaged vehicles are received at the site in Iraq. Engineers assess the damage and notify the Qatar facility. Variants of the Stryker are prioritized to get the most needed vehicles back in the fight in the shortest time, said Charette. Supply specialists then work on ordering needed parts so they arrive in time for the repair process to begin. Strykers are then transported to the Qatar site.

When the Stryker arrives in shop, all equipment is removed and the body



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CHUCK SPRAGUE

A Stryker Combat Vehicle at the Qatar facility's test track

See *STYKER* on page 7

Europe battalion goes extra mile, to Africa

By Jennifer King
405th AFSB PAO

The 3rd Battalion of the 405th Army Field Support Brigade is supporting a U.S. Agency for International Development mission to Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo. The assistance is in response to escalating tensions between Congolese government troops and former Congolese soldiers loyal to Gen. Laurent Nkunda. As of Sept. 7, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated that more than 295,000 internally displaced people were located in the North Kivu Province of the Congo.

In response to the rapidly declining situation, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance contacted the 3-405th AFSB, located at Camp Darby, Italy, and requested immediate support for the shipment of humanitarian supplies to the region. The 3-405th AFSB is responsible for the storage, maintenance and shipment of USAID humanitarian supplies under an interagency agreement between the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Army.

Alberto Chidini, 3-405th AFSB director of supply, calls

the interagency agreement a natural partnership.

"We are experts in pre-positioned materiel management, and USAID needs the ability to react rapidly to crises," he said. "We apply our skills to their needs on a reimbursable basis, making this a mutually supportive arrangement."

The initial shipment of 200 rolls of plastic sheeting, as requested by USAID, was pulled from storage areas within the 3-405th AFSB and prepared for immediate shipment within 48 hours of the initial request. The plastic sheeting will be used to create temporary shelters.

The U.S. Government is providing assistance to 47 countries in Africa, and USAID currently has 23 bilateral missions in Africa.

The 405th AFSB conducts operations within the European theater by performing maintenance, equipment repair and storage missions during peace and war. It also integrates and synchronizes acquisition, logistics and technology capabilities for commanders and deploys on order to support joint expeditionary operations.

The final check before crossing the “berm”

By Chuck Sprague
401st AFSB PAO

Rocks and miles of desert sand mark the vast landscape as one approaches this northern outpost where Logistics Support Element Buehring is “at the ready” providing multifunctional logistic support through the 401st Army Field Support Brigade, as Warfighters cross the border here, traveling into and out of Iraq.



U.S. PHOTO BY CHUCK SPRAGUE

Soldiers and Marines attending to armored construction equipment at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, as they prepare for Iraq deployment.

LSE Buehring support is provided by skilled military and Army civilian workers known as LARs—Logistics Assistance Representatives, specifically deployed to this training area to provide help with last-minute critical equipment/repair issues.

LARs are the eyes and ears of the brigade, the Army Sustainment Command and the Army Materiel Command for operations in the State of Kuwait supporting all Coalition Forces. They represent the three Life Cycle Management Commands under the umbrella of AMC/ASC; the Tank (Automotive) and Armament Command, the Communication and Electronics Command and the Aviation Missile Command. Almost all LARs have spent significant time in the military with many retirees doing their second “tour of duty.”

Camp Buehring is organized as a complex of billets (tents, barracks and containerized housing units) and ranges, is about a 15-minute drive from the Iraqi Border and is designated as the Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration area for all units transitioning into Iraq. Units arrive for about 15 to 30 days of required range training and specific combat training to prepare them for the rigors of Iraq combat operations.

LSE Buehring also has a full-time mission with the theater reserve forces.

“None are here now, so we take care of the enduring units on and around Camps Arifjan, Buehring, Virginia, Logistics Support Area, military air and sea ports and even units assigned to Qatar. Our assigned LARs easily log 400-600 miles per week, driving through Kuwait – anywhere that military units have equipment issues or training requirements,” said Lt. Col. John Glasgow, the LSE Buehring commander.

LSE Buehring isn’t limited to providing support to just Army personnel. They also support Navy, Marines and Air Force units as well. Recently, LARs even provided range support for British and Australian forces.

Glasgow was interviewed at his desk in the small LSE Buehring portable office building on the outside edge of the flat, sand and graveled desert site. He’s an Army Reserve officer deployed to the theater since February 2004. Glasgow has a keen logistics sense of what mission requirements are, having already served at the 2-401st Battalion (when it was known as the Combat Equipment Battalion and Army Field Support Battalion – Kuwait) at the brigade level, and has served in Kuwait, Iraq and Qatar. At home, he’s a civilian hydro-electric power plant operator for the Nashville District of the Army Corps of Engineers. “I love my dam job,” he quipped, “but seriously, I love this uniform more, thus I stay.”

“We are up here because this is where the units rotate through, this is where they train and this is where they can do the last shakedown before ‘it’s real.’ It is such a short turnaround that by being here, LARs must quickly provide the troops location and expedition of hard-to-find parts. Our highest priorities are the Soldiers crossing the berm... we want to be able to take care of their needs: when they pull the trigger they hear bang, not click,” Glasgow said.

“There is never a question of why; it’s when, how much and where do you want it.”

Lt. Col. John Glasgow
LSE Buehring commander

During the interview with Glasgow, the phone rings. It’s the Marines in need of FRAG 5 Kits for their Humvees. Within minutes, he locates the armor, the installers and for good measure, air conditioners. It’s this way everyday; phones ringing and Soldiers coming by looking for help.

The LSE Buehring team fluctuates from five to seven team

Berm

Continued from page 4

members LARs rotating about 150 days on average. Glasgow acts as the “chief sales representative” of the outfit, attending daily briefings with new unit commanders transitioning through the berm with their troops. He provides a “sales pitch,” letting senior leadership know where to go and who to contact if they have logistics and equipment issues. He is also responsible for the LAR’s life support. His extensive experience in theater provides continuity and almost instant answers about whom or where support can come from.

“One of the things I am most proud of, is how fast the rest of the 401st AFSB, ASC, AMC, the LCMCs, and U.S. Third Army Soldiers will step up to the plate when we call asking or coordinating for help. There is never a question of why, it’s when, how much and where do you want it,” Glasgow said.

The entire team advertises LSE Buehring’s support role, conversing with Soldiers at every opportunity, even in the dining facility, troop medical clinic or AAFES.

“As we go through the line, we’ll see a newly arrived unit patch on a uniform. The Soldier will tell us that he/she just arrived and we go from there getting to their Tactical Operations Center, meeting with their commanders and staff. We know in advance when the Brigade Combat Teams come in. We’re there at 0200 when the buses arrive. The smaller units are sometimes more difficult to contact, but we manage very nicely and they appreciate the same support we give the big guys,” said Glasgow.

Battle handoffs are another LSE Buehring mission.

“When a unit gets ready to deploy from home station, its Brigade Logistic Support Team and the stateside LSEs will call us saying, ‘We’re sending our unit over. Here are some of the issues they have.’ Then, we give them our LAR’s point of contact so when they get to Buehring we already have one step up. If a BLST comes with the unit, we set them up in our office. If they don’t have LARs with them, our LARs assume the responsibility for the BLST until they exit here,” Glasgow continued.

BLST Chief Maj. Joel Warhurst, 406th Army Field Sup-



U.S. PHOTO BY CHUCK SPRAGUE

Tony Espinola and “Alex” Alexander make room in the back of their vehicle for an automotive air conditioning refrigerant recovery unit.

port Brigade, was in the Buehring office sitting at a computer terminal set up just for this support mission, assigned to a unit deploying to Iraq when he arrived.

“Our goals are to assist the brigade here as they execute their training tasks,” said Warhurst. “LSE Buehring provides life support for me, along with a phone and computer network. Additionally, the LSE LARs helped our Soldiers set up accounts at local warehouses and settled issues with non-mission capable weapons. They are our local expertise on

the ground, helping us to meet our requirements. They provide immediacy,” he said.

Andrew Luce, deployed from Camp Red Cloud, Korea, is on his second deployment as a Power Generation/Environmental LAR at LSE Buehring, and is a veteran with 12 years experience on active duty, working on air conditioning/heating equipment. He’s been in the Logistics Assistance Program for almost four years.

“I like the one-on-one training I get to have with the young Soldier—away from the desk and the office. I take a lot of phone calls from Iraq LARs looking for specific parts and spend a lot of time at the Regional Support Center at Camp Arifjan. I work closely with the CECOM Arifjan Integrated Readiness Management Team, ‘dumpster diving,’ as they retrieve critical parts arriving in convoys from Iraq.”

Glasgow said Camp Buehring is a unique opportunity, especially for the younger LARs, to gain great experience. They have to be quick on their feet because of the large, transit population moving through; different equipment every day with unique problems every day. There is no routine. New LARs will have seen and experienced almost everything in their job set during their tour. The facilities are top notch. LSE Buehring has a brand new office complex that has the space necessary for them to keep the important communication lines open with their customers.

LSE Buehring is indeed a keystone supporting the AMC arch of logistics as combatants prepare for their individual missions supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Awareness key to winter safety

By Rhys Fullerlove
ASC Public Affairs

As the leaves begin to change and fall off the trees there are two things that are for certain: Holiday shopping is going to start even earlier this year and winter weather is right around the corner. Good winter safety practices are key in preventing accident and injuries. Accident and injury prevention must be a part of winter activities, both on and off duty.

Knowing your vehicle is especially useful in winter driving. You should know what your vehicle can and cannot do in winter conditions. (Hint: Your vehicle probably can't do a lot of the things shown in the commercial that made you want to buy it). You should know if you have front, rear, part-time or full-time four-wheel drive; antilock brakes; traction control; and stability control.

Winter driving cannot be avoided. Before setting out on your journey make sure that windows and mirrors are clear from snow and ice. Clearing the window means clearing the entire surface, not just a small porthole to see out of. Contrary to all-too-common practice, you need a bigger window than the vision block found on an M1 Abrams tank.

Maintaining situational awareness is critical in winter driving. Slow down! Just because your vehicle has four wheel-drive does not mean that you can slow down just as fast (even if you have anti-lock brakes). Increasing the distance between you and the car ahead of you can help prevent accidents. Just because you have control of your car doesn't mean everyone else does.

Even if a road looks clear, it may not be. Black ice is a thin and often invisible layer of ice that can potentially form on sections of roads during the cold temperature months. The condition is most prevalent when air temperature drops, below 32° F. Contributing factors promoting this condition include: fog or dew condensing on the colder surfaces of bridges, overpasses and shaded areas of roadways, windchill, or a rapid drop in ambient temperature causing moisture already on the road surface to freeze suddenly.

How many remember last winter coming into work and someone in the office was complaining about slipping while walking? Last winter, slips and falls were the nation's, and ASC's, leading cause of mishaps. The greatest number occurred while walking down stairs and on sidewalks during inclement weather. Risk assessments must be updated when weather conditions change. Wearing footwear designed for

winter can help reduce the risk of falling. Wearing boots and changing into your dress shoes at work is an increasingly popular tactic.

Wind chill is another safety concern that is often overlooked. Wind chill is not the actual temperature, but rather how wind and cold feel on exposed skin. As the wind increases, heat is carried away from the body at an accelerated rate, driving down the body temperature.

When people say winter "bites" it really can. Frostbite is damage caused by extreme cold. A wind chill of -20° Fahrenheit (F) will cause frostbite in just 30 minutes. Frostbite causes a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes or the tip of the nose.

As temperatures start to drop, use of portable space heaters rises. Make sure to unplug heaters after use. Never leave them running when you are not present. If you must, purchase an electric space heater that bears the mark of an independent testing laboratory, such as UL, ETL, CSA, etc. This ensures that the heater has passed all safety measures. Always place space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn including furniture, people, pets and window treatments.

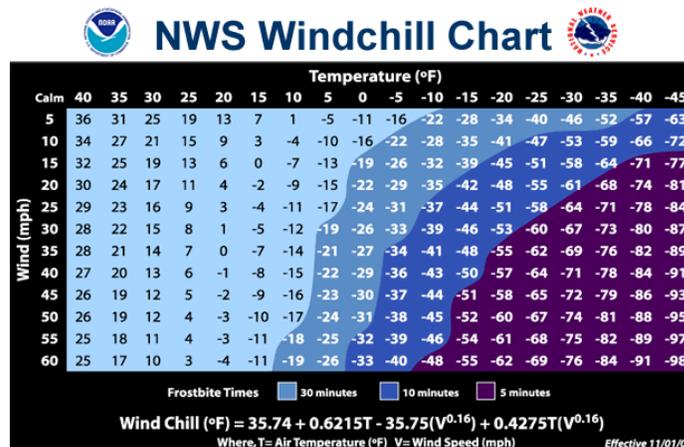
Last winter, an ice storm slammed the Quad City area, leaving many without power anywhere from a few hours all the way to a week. In the event of losing power, make sure that you heat your home properly. Using that tailgate

party charcoal grill to heat your house is not the right way to do it. Last winter, fire fighters were called to a local house because a man threw a bunch of charcoal in a bathtub and lit it on fire.

To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, do not operate generators indoors; the motor emits deadly carbon monoxide gas. Do not use charcoal to cook indoors. It, too, can cause a buildup of carbon monoxide gas. Do not use your gas oven to heat your home — prolonged use of an open oven in a closed house can create carbon monoxide gas. To ensure carbon monoxide is not a problem, make sure that you have proper detectors installed before winter. (Illinois law mandates that every house must be equipped with at least one approved carbon monoxide alarm within 15 feet of every sleeping room.)

We can't run from it, but winter weather is on its way. Make sure you have a plan with your supervisor for inclement weather. It is up to supervisors to be able to adjust for absences due to weather. Family safety comes first.

It is everyone's responsibility to be alert and attentive to safety. Many accidents that happen can be prevented if people just take the time to do a quick safety assessment.



Grad *Continued from page 1*

Kirby went on to note Black Belts are the ones who are going to catch fire and take off. He said he tries to get around and talk to as many BlackBelts as possible because they are an investment in the Army and are going to lead the way for a culture shift.

In his remarks, he went on to address how Lean Six Sigma is making changes in the institutional Army. "Army projects at the Black Belt-level are getting about 10 times more value than the industry standard," Kirby said. "The reason is because we are fat. You can take the skills that you have learned and go out and have enormous impact on your organization because the structure isn't right."

Meredith "Joe" Wilcox, a Black Belt graduate, said having Mr. Kirby speak to them helped put what they were doing into the larger context.

"Hearing what people in other commands were doing helped me realize that the little things I do here make a larger impact on the Army as a whole than I thought," said Wilcox.

Scott Welker, Deputy to the ASC Commander, also spoke to the graduates. Welker talked about how Lean Six Sigma can help us in our mission with ARFORGEN. "We're developing every step in the process on the fly because we have never done it before," said Welker. "What better tool do we have in place than Lean Six Sigma to be able to figure out upfront how to build it more efficiently so we aren't building an archaic system."

Jyuji D. Hewitt, Deputy to the Commander for Joint Munitions Command also spoke to the graduates. Hewitt remarked on the importance of sharing information.

"Information does not have to reside within one command," said Hewitt. "The sharing starts with you. ASC is a perfect venue because it reaches out to all the other life-cycle management commands."

Italy battalion delivers clean water

By Jennifer King
405th AFSB PAO

The 3rd Battalion of the 405th Army Field Support Brigade is supporting a U.S. Agency for International Development mission to the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The shipment from the 3-405th AFSB includes four commercial water purification units, which have been called forward by USAID in preparation for future flooding in Bangladesh.

"These water purification units have been stored and maintained by the 405th," explained Alberto Chidini, 3/405th AFSB director of supply. "They are large commercial units mounted on trailers. Should the need arise, the units will supply potable water to those in need."

Bangladesh has a tropical monsoon climate which, coupled with the country's location in the delta of the world's second largest river basin, makes it extremely vulnerable to recurring floods. Contingency plans, such as the pre-positioning of the water purification units, ensure that people have access to emergency relief supplies immediately after a disaster.

The 3/405th AFSB, which is located at Camp Darby, Italy, is responsible for the storage and maintenance of USAID emergency humanitarian assistance commodities under an interagency agreement between the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Army.

Stryker *Continued from page 3*

is cleaned thoroughly by a team of mechanics who are assigned to a specific vehicle for the total repair process. They pass the Stryker over to the Weld Shop where metal sections are cut out and replaced to exact manufacturing specifications. The re-assembly process then begins with the original team.

**... Lean Six Sigma
principles
speed process**

Workers build the vehicle in zones and put all the required parts in boxes designated to a specific zone, allowing maximum time and focus on repair with limited delay—no time delays with skilled workers taking valuable time to retrieve new parts, Armstrong said. "We've incorporated a 'component repair area,' where the non-skilled foreign nationals build sub-assemblies, such as putting new seats together, new cushions, seat backs, rebuilding and painting them. They install new seat belts and other simpler sub-components, rather than have mechanics do that. The mechanics then install the seats per specification," he said.

"We try to 'Lean-Six' this repair process out as much as we can," Armstrong continued. "Previously, there was no pre-inspection process. Now, our quality assurance inspector works closely with each team assigned to each Stryker, and performs a pre-inspection as each phase or repair is completed. If he sees any deficiencies, they're fixed immediately before they proceed to the next phase."

"When we get down to the final inspection, we end up with just a few minor discrepancies and our deficiency rate has dropped about 30 percent. It's a great effort and humbling to see the team pass a presentable, quality product back to the Army inspector and see him shake hands and congratulate the team after the final inspection," said Armstrong.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Holiday package deadline

Mailing deadlines are approaching for those planning to send holiday packages to troops deployed overseas; parcel post packages must be sent by Nov. 14 to ensure delivery by Christmas. In addition to deadlines, several other factors must be considered when sending mail down-range. For example, each country has customs regulations that apply to all incoming mail, pertaining to everything from food items to reading materials. Furthermore, military units may also have additional restrictions concerning incoming mail imposed by unit commanders relative to size and weight to ensure logistics support can handle the heavy mail load. Finally, all packages and mail must now be addressed to individual servicemembers as required by U.S. Department of Defense regulations. In order to help facilitate the mailing process and avoid many of the obstacles that come with the traditional care packages, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service created 'Gifts from the Homefront,' a campaign that allows anyone to make a direct and tangible contribution to military morale with a gift certificate that can be redeemed for nearly anything a specific servicemember wants.

New military benefit website

ARNEWS reports on the recent launch of the Soldiers' Benefit Services Web site, the Army's official one-stop resource for all benefits information.

The Web site contains the most current benefit information for active-duty and reserve-component Soldiers, retirees and Family members.

<http://armybenefits.us.army.mil>

Open Season

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has announced that the "Federal Benefits Open Season" will take place Nov. 12 through Dec. 10.

Federal employees now will also have the option to enroll for dental and vision coverage and to set up flexible spending accounts for out-of-pocket health care expenses and for dependent care, such as elder and child care

**For more information visit
www.opm.gov/insure**

New AMC Command Sergeant Major



Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey J. Mellinger became the 13th command sergeant major of the U.S. Army Materiel Command in a change of responsibility ceremony Nov. 2 at AMC headquarters.

Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel K. Elder, who held the position since 2005, retired during the same ceremony.

Mellinger was the command sergeant major for the Multi-National Force-Iraq from August 2004 – May 2007 and was recently stationed at U.S. Army Alaska since May.