



POWER LINE



541st 'Pacesetters' poised for drawdown

Story and photo by Pamela Proper
402nd AFSB Public Affairs

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait –

The 541st Combat Support Sustainment Battalion is processed in, and bracing themselves for the onslaught of equipment and personnel heading their way as units depart Iraq.

The battalion, dubbed the "Pacesetters" from Fort Riley, Kan., is responsible for relieving units of their property accountability of their theater provided and government furnished equipment and getting it back into the Army stock.

That is no small task. It's the logistics side of Operation New Dawn and after eight years of getting the boatloads of gear into Iraq, getting it out is just as critical, especially given the condensed timeline established by U.S. Forces-Iraq.

Operational control of the 541st falls under the expansive umbrella of the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade. Lt. Col. William J. Cain Jr. commander, 541st CSSB, said the brigade did a great job setting the conditions prior to the units arrival, which set the unit up for a smooth transition with the 402nd AFSBn-Iraq.

"We had on-going conversation for six to seven weeks prior to deploying that gave us the opportunity to express our concerns along with our requirements. The 402nd did



Lt. Col. Matthew Houser, commander 402nd Army Field Support Battalion-Iraq, welcomes the 541st Combat Support Sustainment Battalion to Camp Virginia, Kuwait, where it will assume responsibility for receiving turn-in from units exiting Iraq.

an outstanding job setting up our living and work spaces at Camp Virginia along with getting us resources so we can be productive upon hitting the ground," said Cain.

It will be a challenging mission, Cain said, but one the unit is fully prepared to take on. The unit went through a deliberate training process prior to deployment in order to prepare them for the challenges they may encounter while in theater. The unit is extremely confident that they are ready for the convoys to come.

"We're expecting multiple Brigade Combat Teams over a sixty day period. Each BCT has between 1,600 and 2,000 pieces of rolling stock (wheeled vehicles) and other items. We will relieve them of their property accountability, provide disposition instructions and coordinate for the onward movement. The 541st CSSB has a trained and ready team that is excited about the increase in operational tempo and are ready to face any challenge that comes our way," said Cain.

Letter from home...



Elizabeth Preston, chief of plans, 402nd AFSB, volunteered for a 179 day deployment in support of Operation New Dawn, from Redstone Arsenal, Ala., where she works for the Army Aviation and Missile Command.

**402nd AFSB
POWER LINE**

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My daughter asked me to write a few words about those back home whose loved ones are serving abroad. I feel unable to speak for others; I can speak only for myself. Though my daughter is a grown woman, to me she is still my little girl. That does not change. Just as a father is protective of his young daughter, so he remains even after she has been out on her own. So when she chooses to serve her country in a faraway place he may feel proud but he suddenly feels powerless to look out for her.

This feeling of course is tempered by the knowledge that she is surrounded by a new family with their strong bonds and protective instincts. He is reassured by this, though his feelings are there.

It is said that absence makes the heart grow fonder; in time of war absence makes the heart grow anxious. This is true but one finds ways of balancing out this feeling through memories, planning for the return, and prayer.

One change I think many share is both a sudden aversion to as well as attraction to the news. I find I often avoid the evening news and walk past newspaper vending machines. We don't want to dwell on the daily dangers, yet when we hear of some incident we have to know and rush to the TV or internet. Then of course the relief that the danger was not in her area is immediately overcome by sadness for those affected.

Often the good times in the past we shared with her are brought up; more often we talk of how it will be when she is home again, when she goes horseback riding, plays with her niece or what we'll do to mark that Thanksgiving of her return. Even planning the menu this far in advance provides some relief.

Lastly, many families rely on prayer and it is here where we have the most in common, though we can only speak of our own child, when we pray for one, we pray for all. So I can end by saying that I pray the Lord for the blessing of a safe return, for my daughter, for you all.

Francis J. Preston

Kathryn and Frank Preston, in Cullman, Ala., parents of Elizabeth Preston, who is currently deployed in Kuwait, share their feelings about their daughter's volunteer service for the 402nd AFSB.



Repair team keeps robots on the road

Story and photos by Pamela Proper
402nd AFSB Public Affairs

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait –

It's every boy's dream, tinkering with robots.

Soldiers in the Joint Robotics Repair Detachment at Camp Arifjan get to do that daily. They are members of an elite program trained specifically to repair robots that are used for route clearance and Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

Staff Sgt. Xavier Smith, 34, is a robot repair technician assigned to the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade and it's evident he loves his job, repairing robotic platforms fielded in Iraq.

"Everything about the job is fascinating, especially knowing that robots can and do save lives," said Smith.

"My team and I fix everything from the communication issues to replacing entire electronic assemblies," said Smith. "Mostly we repair the TALON because it is a highly requested platform and it is awesome. It has a heavy payload; it's extremely durable and adaptable for all battlefield operations."

Robots are extremely useful battle buddies because they limit a Soldier's interaction with suspected Improvised Explosive Devices, Vehicle Borne Explosives, and Homemade Explosives, said Smith.

Smith is so impressed with the training he and fellow Reserve Soldiers received that he encourages others to check it out as another military career option.

"The training that we receive at Selfridge, Michigan, is phenomenal. Basically, we learn how to operate, troubleshoot



Staff Sgt. Xavier Smith, robot repair technician, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, signals to the control operator to maneuver the (IED/EOD) TALON robot that he has just repaired. The Joint Robotics Repair Detachment at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait is a highly specialized team that repairs and tests a series of robotic platforms used by Soldiers in Iraq.

and repair all robotic platforms currently in OND/OEF," said Smith.

The Department of Defense program is managed by the Robotic Joint System Project

Office and is staffed by Marine Corps and Army Reserve personnel. Smith said Soldiers interested in the program should visit the web site, www.rsjpo.army.mil.

Communications gear cleared for passage out of Iraq

By Antonius Vasser & Rhonda Lyons
CECOM Drawdown/RESET team

CAMP ADDER, Iraq -- Since 2003, the Communication Electronics Command's Life Cycle Management Command Drawdown Reset team has been fully engaged in drawdown and retrograde activities in Southwest Asia. The Iraq team provides logistics support to the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade and is embedded in every aspect of processing CECOM equipment out of Iraq.

CECOM personnel work with deployed units 180 days prior to their redeployment to assist and provide guidance from building their Army Reset Management Tool plans, to customs and agricultural specifications ensuring smooth unit turn-in. The team also works closely with U.S. Forces – Iraq, Responsible Reset Task Force, and the supporting Army Field Support Brigade ensuring all equipment is vetted or properly accounted for, prior to sending



Photo by Antonius Vasser

Soldiers of the 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion inventory their CECOM equipment for turn-in as they prepare for redeployment from Iraq.

to the United States.

CECOM Senior Command Representative Kuwait, Cathy Hardman, said it really is a team effort.

“As Iraq undergoes this drawdown process, the CECOM drawdown team continues to ensure the Warfighter’s RESET of equipment is conducted smoothly and their transition back to their home station is made easier,” she said.

“Responsible drawdown of equipment from Iraq is key to successful execution of the AR-FORGEN cycle; getting reset equipment back to the unit to begin training. These teams are pros at what they do. I’m impressed by what they accomplish daily,” Hardman said.



New facility opens

Lt. Col. Kenneth Gill, commander, 402nd Army Field Support Battalion-Kuwait cuts the ribbon to open a new Watercraft Equipment Site at Camp Arifjan. The facility is used to perform maintenance on 682 pieces of Mobile Causeway Systems (MCS) stored in Lot 30. Each module is 40 feet long and 20 feet wide. The 682 MCS pieces are part of the Army Watercraft Prepositioned stocks in Kuwait. The MCS modules are critical pieces of equipment used in downloading equipment from larger contract vessels or larger Navy vessels into smaller Army vessels that can then move to shore for download.

