

## 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait



# POWER LINE



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Readiness Power, Forward

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## Big day for Stryker facility

By Rick A. Hunt  
Qatar Site Manager

**CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar** -- The 300th battle damaged Stryker was repaired and accepted by the Defense Contract Management Agency with zero deficiencies found and returned back to the U.S. Army inventory. This represents nearly a full Stryker brigade repaired at this site.

The mission of the Stryker Battle Damage Repair Facility (BDRF) in Qatar is to receive, assess, repair and return eight of ten Stryker vehicles back to the U.S. Government in "like new" condition. In the six years since the facility has been in business, it has grown from repairing one vehicle in approximately 200 days to its current standard of six Strykers within a 60-day time frame.

Each phase of the rebuild is inspected by the quality assurance and control team and all retrofits are installed on the Stryker throughout the build process, ensuring the vehicle, when complete, is 100% ready for issue to a unit.

The Qatar facility assumed forward repair area responsibilities from Iraq nearly a year ago, allowing major and sub-components for the Strykers to be repaired or rebuilt in-theater.

Nearly 900 visitors have toured this site in the past 30 months, ranging from three-star generals to celebrities traveling with the USO.



Photos by Jon Franklin

**402nd AFSB commander Col. John S. Laskodi and Maj. Gen. Yves Fontaine, commanding general Army Sustainment Command, pose for photos in the back of a Stryker to commemorate the 300th repair. [Below] The Stryker build crew at Qatar strikes a pose [from left], Glen Bongcac, mechanic assistant, Keith Bishop, mechanic, Carlton Williams, production supervisor, Robby Clawson, team lead, Carol Simon, mechanic.**



## The Way Ahead

# A word from the commander

In my short time since joining the Power Forward Team, I am amazed at the size and scope of the brigade's mission. With more than 35,000 Soldiers and civilians comprising the team in Iraq, Kuwait, and Qatar the 402nd AFSB is one of the largest brigade's in the Army and definitely one of the most complex. As we leverage the power of Army Materiel Command and our materiel enterprise partners through our reach back to the U.S., the brigade contributes to Operation New Dawn in ways that would have been unimaginable even a few years ago.

Over the course of the next several months, we will be a part of one of the most complex retrogrades of personnel and equipment in the history of our Army. Our nation has fought wars and departed places before, but we haven't done it with the refinement we are expecting during



**Col. John S. Laskodi  
Commander 402nd AFSB**

this drawdown. As stewards of our nation's resources, we must properly account for the supplies and equipment with which we have been entrusted. As I've traveled throughout the brigade's area of operations, I've been impressed with the level of commitment which each member of the team has taken to heart.

As the drawdown of forces continues in the coming months, I want to keep up the level of enthusiasm for the mission and ensure we continue to operate as safely as possible. This is not the time for complacency as the pace picks up; I do not consider our mission successful if we get our people injured through negligence or carelessness. My goal is for everyone to return home safely to their families as they complete their service.

While we focus upon the drawdown of forces in Iraq, we also concentrate upon the brigade's mission beyond December 2011. The 402nd AFSB will support the U.S. Mission – Iraq on multiple bases in Iraq under the lead of

the Department of State as well as other missions such as the Iraqi Joint National Depot located at Taji. Additionally, the brigade has the enduring mission of the accountability and maintenance of the Army Prepositioned Equipment Sets located in Kuwait and Qatar.

Since my arrival, I've had a chance to meet many members of the team in Kuwait and Qatar and have visited many of the bases in Iraq. CSM Canterbury and I will continue to travel and meet with as many of the members of the team as possible.

One of the changes I've made since assuming command is to revise our newsletter into a shorter format which will be published bi-monthly. We've renamed it "The Power Line" to include the brigade's motto and reflect the incredible logistics power that we bring to the operation. The shorter format should allow the newsletter to be emailed more easily to family and friends so we can stay connected to the people we care about back home.

I'm proud to be part of the 402nd AFSB team and I look forward to working together. Some people read about history, together the Power Team is making history.

**Power 6 Out!**

**John S. Laskodi  
COL, LG  
Commanding**



## 402nd AFSB POWER LINE

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# POWER LINE

## Looking back at the AMC mission in Iraq

**Story and photos by Pamela Proper  
402nd AFSB Public Affairs**

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq –**

The 402nd Army Field Support Brigade is packing up after an eight year presence in Iraq. With the move comes reflection on the mission that brought so many from so far.

James Branham has made the trip to the desert five times including Desert Shield/ Desert Storm. He helped establish the Army Materiel Command's logistics support element here in 2003 when U.S. forces took over the Iraqi air base at Balad. Back then the base was called Logistics Support Activity, Anaconda and over the years it has grown into a large and important logistics hub.

When Branham arrived, under the command of Col. Robert Spidel, with a small team of logistics assistance representatives they began to set up tents, make toilets and shower facilities and design plans to improve their living and work area. At that time, Iraq was an immature theater, there were no amenities such as running water, toilets or electrical power, so they relied on LAR ingenuity to make things happen.

In addition, Branham's team staked their claim on a badly damaged structure that would become, over the years, the headquarters of the 402nd AFSB. The team slept in tents pitched in the desert sand and ate MREs next to their building project.

According to Spidel's historical report, they shoveled sand, stacked sand bags, cleaned and cabled the building with the help of hired labor from the local population. The report stated the Iraqis were very hard working people who came in the morning, stayed all day, did not take a lot of breaks and were very proactive and wanted to make things work.



Courtesy photo

**Operation Iraqi Freedom: Col. Robert Spidel, commander, Army Materiel Command Forward Southwest Asia and Mr. James Branham, deputy commander, stand in front of the headquarters building they stood up at Logistical Support Activity Anaconda, Balad, Iraq in 2003.**



**Operation New Dawn: Soldiers from the 227th Quartermaster Company move furniture into shipping containers for the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade at Joint Base Balad as the unit transitions out of Iraq to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.**

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Branham remembers feeling a sense of accomplishment.

"The first time I left I felt extremely good about what our team established and accomplished on our own," Branham said. "We worked as a cohesive unit doing what was necessary and best for the organization to accomplish the mission. We knew the seed we planted then is what AMC Iraq has become today."

Over the years that single building would evolve into a compound of structures. Today the 402nd is moving out and their buildings, along with the rest of the base, will be given back to the Iraqi Air Force, which is slowly making a presence here.

Col. John S. Laskodi is the current 402nd AFSB commander. He is charged with re-posturing the organization.

"I am extremely proud to be part of the Power Forward Team during this historic time as we support the drawdown of forces in Iraq. The incredible power of Army Materiel Command, synchronized through the 402nd AFSB, ensured the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom and now Operation New Dawn. There is no doubt that operations in Iraq and Kuwait could have been as successful without the 402nd AFSB," Laskodi said.

And now after his fifth deployment Branham has come full circle with the AMC mission in Iraq.

"After so many deployments to Balad, Iraq, it makes me feel proud that as a LAR, I was a part of AMC history. From the establishment of LSE Iraq to AMC Forward Southwest Asia, to AFSB Iraq, and later the 402nd AFSB, and now our transition out of Iraq. It makes me reflect on the number of LARs, and leadership throughout AMC that came to Iraq and left their footprints in the sand. I can tip my hat and say "job well done - mission accomplished," Branham said.



**Col. John S. Laskodi, commander 402nd AFSB and James Branham, chief Logistics Support Element-Expeditionary Support Command, at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, hold the unit crest before it is packed for shipment to its new home at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.**

The baton has been passed and the legacy continues for the 402nd.

"Whatever the future holds, the brigade's presence in Southwest Asia, from its inception as LSE-Iraq in 2003 to its formal

constitution as Army Materiel Command's forward deployed brigade supporting U.S. operations in Iraq, the incredible accomplishments of the Soldiers and civilians comprising the brigade will forever be an enduring part of history," said Laskodi.