

Sandsporter

143rd Transportation Command

November 16, 2003

Tampa reserve unit steps up

By Maj. Bobby Hart

A U.S. Army Reserve unit working at Kuwait Naval Base (KNB) stepped up to the plate and saved American taxpayers millions of dollars with its quick evaluation of a potential logjam and its willingness to work around the clock to complete the mission.

The 640th Automated Cargo Documentation team from Tampa, Fla. completed a stow plan--the document used to ensure equipment is safely stowed on watercraft--for the ship Strong Virginian in less than 48 hours when initial estimates indicated the process might take up to two weeks.

"We knew we had some issues getting the stow plan done because of some computer problems," said Maj. Kyle Reichle, an operations officer for the 143rd Transportation Command at the base. "Chief Handley (Chief Warrant Officer 2 Marvin Handley, commander of the 640th) said his team would

take on the mission.

"A couple of days later, the chief called me back, and I asked him, 'What now?'" Reichle said. "He said, 'We're done.' I couldn't believe it."

The quick action by the 640th enabled crews to load ammunition being sent back to Europe on the Strong Virginian--which was to sail before planners thought the stow plan would be finished.

"I always heard the 640th was a 'can-do' unit and there was nothing you couldn't do," Col. Mike Kaczmarek, base commander at KNB, told the unit. "If the Virginian had sailed partially loaded, Military Sealift Command (MSC) would have had to order another ship and tie up those crews for weeks. It would have cost millions of dollars."

Members of the 640th said the main obstacle to finishing the stow plan was getting the correct information on what was supposed to



Spc. Jeff Torres, Staff Sgt. Jessie Estrada and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Marvin Handley helped save the government a lot of money.

be loaded on the vessel, verifying the data and inputting it into the computer.

Members of the unit worked around the clock completing the tedious task of manually entering data in the 15 data fields for each of the 400 containers that went onto the Virginian.

"We knew we had to get things right the first time," said Spc. Jeff Torres, who along with Staff Sgt. Jessie Estrada coordinated the process. The two analyzed potential problems and came up with a solution within 30 minutes. "The key was getting everyone's computers talking to each other. MTMC (Military Traffic Management Command) let us log into their system, and we went from there."

Estrada said the key to completing the mission was that everyone worked together. "Everyone has been very supportive," he said. "The end result is we saved taxpayers a lot of money, but there wasn't one person I've gone to who didn't bend over backwards to help us."



Col. Mike Kaczmarek, commander of KNB, congratulates the 640th ACD on their accomplishments. (Photo by Spc. Petersi Liu, CFLCC PAO)



Spotlight

On rules for a happy homecoming

By Barry R. Fetzer (From Army Times) (Part 1 of a three part series.)

Many of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen are returning home after long months away. Even as hostilities continue in Iraq, another perilous encounter awaits our troops. They are about to experience one of the most exciting and dangerous things of their deployment: their homecoming.

As someone who has experienced long separations from loved ones courtesy of the Marine Corps and unexpectedly conceived two out of three children as a result of homecoming "celebrations," I am eminently qualified to offer the following eight simple rules to help make the homecoming experience less hazardous:

Rule 1: For married folks, no matter how rough you had it during your time away, not matter how tough it is being in the military, you didn't have it as rough as the loved one you left behind. Nothing will convince your loved one that taking a flight to exotic places made your job tougher than being left home, alone to be mom, dad, nursemaid and Mr. Fix-it rolled up into one.

Rule 2: Unlike the military, where immediate response and proposed solutions to problems--with alternatives--are expected, applying such a take charge attitude to events at home will not help.

Rule 3: It's you, the one off gallivanting all over the world, who can't understand how tough it has been being at home alone.

Rule 4: Remember that the excitement and partylike atmosphere of the eagerly anticipated homecoming will last indefinitely--indefinitely meaning one or two days, depending upon whether you pick up your socks and underwear off the floor.

Rule 5: Find a way to enter into a "discourse" with you loved one immediately upon arriving home. For those small children who need to be entertained for a while--"so mommy and daddy can be alone to talk about some real important things since they haven't seen each other for a long, long time"--I recommend a bag of 100 green jelly beans. Scatter the jelly beans in the front yard--after eating one to freshen your breath--assemble the kids in the front yard and after tell them that a 100 emeralds have been lost in the jungle. Their mission is to find all 100 before entering the secret headquarters (the house) to receive their reward. This strategy provides more than enough time required for an appropriate discourse between husband and wife following a long separation.

Rule 6: Remember not to violate Rule 1 by belittling your loved one's problems with the words, "You can never understand how rough I had it." If you are dumb enough to utter these words, forget Rule 5.

Rule 7: Rule 5 may result in the unanticipated addition of new members of the emerald treasure hunting team.

Rule 8: If you come home and find your loved one sobbing uncontrollably over a horrific event like a broken fingernail, apply Rules 1 through 3. You must consider proposed solutions--with alternatives--and weigh each carefully before acting. In this predicament, I recommend pursuing "discourse" with your loved one is pointless. Go pick up your underwear.

Soldier Talk

What self-improvement activities have you been doing since you were deployed?



I've been working out to keep myself in good condition.

Spc. Edward Negron
143rd TRANSCOM



I'm doing a lot of physical training plus taking language courses.

Spc. Sebastian Gawron
1244th Trans. Co.



I've been trying to make our living conditions better over here.

Sgt. 1st Class Richard McConnell
1244th Trans. Co



I'm working on physical fitness and C & GS. (Command and General Staff College)

Maj. Edith Greene
143rd TRANSCOM



Mostly reading and working out.

Sgt. Jessie Duffing
1244th Trans. Co



The hands-on experience we're getting makes us all better soldiers.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Ron Archibald
1244th Trans. Co

News Briefs



Stryker vehicles were staged once they were unloaded at Shuaiba and troops like Spc. Jon Amos (insert) moved the Army's new interim armored vehicle forward during the historic deployment. (Photos by Maj. Bobby Hart)

"Future look" of Army arrives in Kuwait

PORT OF KUWAIT, Kuwait (Army News Service) -- For the first time since World War I, the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division has deployed overseas. The brigade's Stryker vehicles and other equipment arrived Nov. 12 at Shuaiba on board the USNS Shughart and USNS Sisler after a three-week voyage from Fort Lewis, Wash., via the Port of Tacoma.

Soon after docking, advance-party crews from 3rd Brigade and members of the 598th Trans. Group, a Reserve unit deployed to Kuwait, went to work unleashing the vehicles and equipment in the ships' cargo holds to prepare them for unloading and eventually for their convoy to Camp Udari.

Bush extols support of employers

WASHINGTON - (From Military.com) President Bush recognized the importance of employers in making their employees' military service possible as he signed a proclamation marking National Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Week.

"In times of need, our nation counts on the Guard and Reserve members to fulfill their commitments of service," Bush said during a White House ceremony. "We value their courage, and we honor their sacrifices. They're defending their nation in the war on terror, and they are serving in a just cause."

The president said Reserve Component service members depend on the understanding of their employers for their service. "Across America where units have been activated, employers at offices, factories, schools, hospitals and other workplaces have been understanding and really supportive," he said. "They have given priority to the needs of our nation."

Bush said most employers have shown great consideration for their workers. "These companies have the gratitude of our nation; they have the gratitude of the commander-in-chief," he said.

The tradition of the citizen-soldier began with the Minutemen at Concord, Mass., in 1775. Some of the most famous fighting divisions of World War II started as National Guard outfits.

Resistance is "despicable bunch of thugs"

WASHINGTON - (From Military.com) The terrorists trying to undermine Coalition efforts in Iraq are a "despicable bunch of thugs," but no military threat exists in Iraq that can drive the United States out, the commander of U.S. Central Command said.

"The enemy will stop at nothing to create the impression that we can't win," Army Gen. John Abizaid said. "They put ammunition and explosives in ambulances. They store ammunition and explosives in schools and mosques. The same things that you saw from this enemy during the march to Baghdad, you see from this enemy now.

"They're a despicable bunch of thugs that will be defeated," he continued. "There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that with patience, perseverance and courage, we will see this thing through."

Abizaid dismissed the notion that the low-intensity guerrilla conflict in Iraq is the result of a strategy Saddam Hussein planned before major military operations began. "I think Saddam Hussein is one of the most incompetent military leaders in the history of the world," he said, "and to give him any credit, to think that somehow or other he planned this, is absolutely beyond my comprehension."



Bailey remembered... Members of the 1275th Trans. Co. and company commander Capt. Kenneth Martin (right, front) pay tribute to Staff Sgt. Nathan Bailey, who died at Camp Arifjan on Nov. 12. Bailey of Nashville, Tenn., is survived by his wife Patricia and two sons. (Photo by Maj. Bobby Hart)



Relatives show support as 35 soldiers leave the 143rd headquarters to report to Fort Stewart.



Maj. Kevin Morey and Lt. Col. Jim Horey—who is expected to deploy in January pose at the going-away ceremony before Morey departed for Fort Stewart, Ga.



The 35 members of the 143rd who deployed will continue the unit's presence in Kuwait that started soon after Sept. 11, 2001.



Soldiers stand in formation prior to boarding vans to Fort Stewart.

Help is on the way
 Soldiers from the 143rd TRANSCOM departed Orlando this week to report to Fort Stewart, Ga., for mobilization. The soldiers are expected to arrive in Kuwait by Dec. 1.
 (Photos courtesy of Lt. Col. Jim Horey)

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