



Koa Koluua

599th Transportation Surface Brigade
Wheeler Army Airfield, Oahu, Hawaii



SDDC



Strykers and other 1st Bn., 27th Inf. equipment load onto the Green Ridge during a loadout at Barber's Point on July 7. This view is from the Barber's point public dock.

Suicide prevention, safety crucial concerns

by Col. Gust Pagonis

I want to come right up front with the most urgent part of my message for this newsletter. Suicide prevention is something that we cannot stress enough in the Army. Stress is a good word to use here. Talk to people if you are having difficulty. Talk to your buddies to make sure that they are not having problems. If you think any of the indicators are there, ask your

buddy directly if he or she is thinking of committing suicide. We have all the help in place to take care of any temporary problem that any soldier might have, and there is no excuse to lose any of us.

Our busy exercise season is coming up again. We're in the planning phases for Key Resolve in Korea, Cobra Gold in Thailand, and Balikatan and the Amphibious Landing Exercise in the

Philippines.

No less important than suicide prevention is safety and security awareness. Please be careful when you are overseas. Our exercises and missions are across the Pacific. In addition to the usual hazards on the docks and not knowing how to communicate with locals in their languages, cars drive on the left side in some of the countries to

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CSM's Corner

Back to NCO Basics 101

I want to talk to you today about getting back to soldiers' and NCOs' garrison duties. We've been concentrating on being soldiers and NCOs during wartime, and that has been just right for the times. We have a lot of experienced NCOs who are extraordinarily combat-efficient. They can run convoys, kick in doors, and do everything a war-time NCO should be able to do.

But now I've noticed that some basic tasks have been slipping though the cracks. This doesn't mean that I've forgotten about our brothers and sisters who are still in Afghanistan. I think about them every hour of every day. But that conflict is winding down, and our brigade is not serving in Afghanistan, so we need to brush up on a few things that all NCOs need to know.

NCOs lead by example and train from experience. We all need to get back to the basics in Army Leadership Manual, FM 6-22, to maintain and enforce the standards of the army.

Drill and ceremony is the first thing. Every NCO needs to be able to assemble and march groups of soldiers from squad up to company level in any and all directions.

Along with drill and ceremony come customs and traditions. NCOs should know how to conduct an NCO induction ceremony. They should also know that an



Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin McKeller

NCO induction ceremony does not include hazing. Let me repeat that. No NCO induction ceremony includes hazing. Period. If you are at one that does, put a stop to it. Don't worry about peer pressure or what anyone will think. What they should be thinking is that is not the way

NCOs behave. I'll back you.

Do not forget to get your PT scores up to par. More PT!

Self-development courses are also important for your progression. We have our army courses that are mandated for completion. Make sure that you're keeping abreast or ahead of those. Plus, now that you're in garrison with time in the evenings, try to improve yourselves with more civilian education. Civilian education is key and critical to the role of the professional NCO, never more so than now, with Qualitative Service and Qualitative Management programs are in effect. Our physical conditioning and potential for advancement are being looked at candidly, and those who are not fit will be looked at for reduction in force or retirement. I want you all to be the best, so you can stay in to continue the Army adventure.

While you are adjusting to your lives as garrison soldiers, be sure to take more time with your families. Watch your kids grow up, and enjoy the extra time you have with them. They grow up way too fast.

Koa Kokua -- Warrior Support!

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which we go on missions. Keep your head on a swivel, so you don't make a mistake and step out into traffic.

In addition to safety, be very security-conscious when you are overseas on a mission. Some countries are much safer than others for Americans abroad. Check the State Department advisory before you go, and keep up with updates after you get there by checking the news and the State website. As with suicide prevention, stick with your buddies while overseas, and always have a cellphone with a reliable phone number you can call if you get in trouble.

Another safety concern we have is driving. The children are back in school now, so drive carefully and watch out for them, particularly around Halloween.

Koa Kokua -- Warrior Support!

"Koa Kokua"

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Koa Kokua, a Hawaiian phrase meaning "Warrior Support," is the distinctive unit designation of the 599th Transportation Surface Brigade. Views and opinions stated in this electronic newsletter are not necessarily those of the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, or Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command.



Stevedores load Strykers vehicles onto the Green Ridge at Barber's Point on July 7, during the 599th's fourth loadout at the harbor.

599th completes fourth Barber's Point loadout

Members of the 599th Transportation Brigade spent the day by the sea Saturday as the brigade conducted its fourth loadout from Barber's Point Kalaeloa Harbor, Hawaii.

The cargo, belonging to four units, is headed to South Korea for an exercise. While the vast majority of the cargo and all of the Strykers belong to 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, John Manahane, 599th Trans. Bde. traffic management specialist, said the 8th Theater Sustainment Command, the 130th Engineer Brigade, and the 18th Medical Command also shipped cargo.

On July 2 and 3, the cargo was prepared for movement at Schofield Barracks' alert holding area. It was trucked to the port in three convoys and began staging at Barber's Point at 9 a.m. The loadout was completed at 4 p.m. July 6.

"We made our first move from Barber's Point in December, but by now using the port has become commonplace for us," said Carlos Tibbetts, 599th Trans. Bde. terminal operations chief.

The 599th arranged for the move through Central Gulf Lines as a liner service operation and the State of Hawaii for the use of the port. They, in turn, subcontracted for other necessities such as stevedores.

Manahane said the unit appreciates the opportunity to get to now and work with the partners it needs to put together moves in strategic locations around the island.

Greg "Ben" Benjamin, 599th Trans. Bde. traffic management specialist, agreed.

"This move was a concerted effort in coordination with a lot of people involved: the Directorate of Logistics, Installation Management Command,

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Greg Regpala and Greg “Ben” Benjamin, both traffic management specialists in the Operations Directorate, measure a Stryker’s gun height before it loads on the Green Ridge at Barber’s Point on July 7.

Below: John Manahane, traffic management specialist in the 599th Operations Directorate, talks to Francis Nazarith, vice president of operations for Central Gulf Lines, about the loadout.



Barber’s Point

Continued from page 3

the military units, the State of Hawaii, Central Gulf Lines; and we all played our parts and came together to make this a smooth operation,” he said. In addition to advantages with the size and placement of the staging area and the more convenient drive from Wheeler to Barber’s Point, Manahane said it was fortuitous this particular cargo had been loaded out through Barber’s Point instead of Pearl Harbor.

“Right now, with Pearl Harbor concentrating on RIMPAC, cargo moves on commercial vessels aren’t going in and out of there,” he said. Held every two years, RIMPAC is a multinational maritime exercise that takes place in and around the Hawaiian Islands.

Six members of the 225th Brigade Support Battalion’s logistics support team were also on hand at the port during the 599th loadout.

“The stevedores can start and drive the Strykers, so normally they don’t need us,” said 2nd Lt. Robert Hawkins, officer in charge of the team. “But on the last move, there was an issue with starting one of the Strykers, so we brought out the team for support.”

Stevedores loaded the last item aboard the vessel at 3:26 p.m. Saturday, and it sailed at 6:10 p.m. The cargo is headed to South Korea where it will be offloaded by the 837th Trans. Bn.

599th to lose long-term employee

When Guy Cabral, director of administration and logistics for the 599th, retires and walks out the door of the headquarters on Dec. 31, the brigade will lose its most long-standing employee. Cabral came to the brigade in 1991 under Col. Asimakopoulos, shortly after it first moved from Korea to Hawaii.

The loss will be felt by the whole brigade. Lt. Col. Todd Toman, deputy commanding officer, is Cabral's supervisor.

"We have shared many hours of working thru personnel and logistics issues over the past three years," Toman said. "He has been a positive influence on me as someone to bounce ideas off of. I'll always remember Guy for the many times he set me and command group straight on brigade/battalion issues.

"I want to congratulate Guy on more than 36 years of exceptional federal service. I can't thank him enough for his selfless service to our country. I am excited for him to take this next step in his life and pray it is an easy transition," Toman said.

Arnel Bautista, the programs and support team leader for the Information Management Directorate, has known Cabral for about sixteen years.

"I first met him when I was on Okinawa with the 835th. He used to come over to do manpower surveys then. I'm lucky to have had quite a few mentors in my career, and I consider Guy to be one of them. He's very knowledgeable about how the civilian personnel system works. We're lucky to have had him here," Bautista said.

Cabral first began his government service as an Army lieutenant tank commander for the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment. After he was wounded in Vietnam, he came back to his home state, Hawaii. When he returned, he first worked for the state mental health system.

"We were funded under a federal program to go and count drunks in A'ala Park," he laughed.

His first civil service job was as a supply clerk for the Navy. After six months there, he found a



Guy Cabral will retire Dec. 31 after 21 years with the 599th.

position with the Army at Ft. Shafter as a personnel intern.

"I spent most of the 1980s overseas," Cabral said.

He worked in Berlin for two years, where he described himself as a personnel specialist for DODDS teachers and spies. Part of his mission was to hire the guards for Nazi war criminal Rudolf Hess. He was also in Berlin when President Ronald Reagan gave his famous "Tear Down that Wall" speech. Although he did not hear the original speech, he and his wife went to Templehof Airport later in the afternoon, where Reagan gave another speech.

He spent seven years in Korea, four and a half in Seoul, and two and a half in Daegu. He came to the 599th in a non-competitive transfer as a personnel specialist from the Daegu staff personnel office.

Although he enjoyed his overseas assignments, Cabral said he considers his best assignment to be the 599th. He especially enjoyed his six years as a program analyst. He dealt with manpower and management control, and travelled a lot to the battalions then.

"A career like this exposes you to so many different things," Cabral said. "You don't get too excited about the ups and downs.

"It's fortuitous to have such a nice situation at the end of my career," he added.

835th Transportation Battalion



Top: 835th employees compete in a basketball game as part of the battalion's safety stand down day at Naha Military Port on July 17.

Right: 835th children compete in a water balloon throwing contest at Torii Station's Torii Beach during the battalion's organization day Aug. 10.



836th Transportation Battalion



Sgt. Maj. Willie Jacobs, outgoing senior enlisted leader, Lt. Col Erick Crews, commander; and Bradley Waters, incoming senior enlisted leader, are seated at the front of guests during a change of responsibility ceremony Aug. 24.



Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Williams, cargo NCO for the 836th Trans. Bn., prepares to jump in during a drownproofing class at Nigishi Navy Base pool Aug. 24.



Lt. Col Erick Crews receive the 836th Transportation Battalion colors from 599th commander, Col. Gust Pagonis to assume command of the battalion June 15.

Photo courtesy of the 835th Transportation Battalion

837th Transportation Battalion



Top, Lt. Col. Chris Abbott, 837th commander, points out various aspects of the Busan harbor from the roof of the 837th headquarters during a visit by 8th Theater Sustainment Command commanding general, Maj. Gen. Stephen Lyons, and 599th commander, Col. Gust Pagonis, Aug. 27.

Bottom: Stryker vehicle master drivers from the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment at Schofield Barracks, teach a 10-hour driver training course for 837th Transportation cargo specialists and contract stevedores Aug. 7 at Pier 8 in Busan, South Korea.



Photo courtesy of 837th Transportation Battalion

Hail and Farewell



Navy Cmdr. James Matthews became the operations officer July 2. He came from the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., before which he had been stationed at MARFOR-PAC as the aviation logistics division supply officer. A supply officer with 24 years in the Navy, Matthews moved to R.I. for the course, then was assigned back to Hawaii. He said he is glad to be here again.



Col. Gust Pagonis presents farewell gifts to departing deputy operations officer, Ron Day and his wife, Mia, at a potluck luncheon in their honor in the headquarters S3 on Sept. 5.



Maj. John Adams is the operations directorate future operations officer. He came to the 599th on June 21 from U.S. Army Europe in Heidelberg, Germany. In the year he was there, he developed the USAREUR plan for unit-maintained equipment. Adams is married with three daughters.



Sheila Scott arrived on July 2 from 18 months at USAR-PAC, where she was also the family readiness support assistant. Before coming to Hawaii, she was in Fort Knox, Ky., where she worked for two years as the 2nd Battalion 46th Infantry Regiment commander's secretary.



Staff Sgt. Raymond "Lee" Patterson is an operations NCO who came to the 599th on July 7 from Ft. Campbell, Ky., where he was with the 563rd Support Operations Brigade. Originally from Trenton, Tenn., his MOS is transportation movement supervisor. Patterson is married with four children.



Staff Sgt. Tiffany Dixon came to the 599th on Aug. 12 from Fort Eustis, Va., where she had been stationed for two and a half years. Dixon is working in the operations section as cargo specialist, which has been her MOS since she joined the Army. She is married with three children.



CSCC co-chairs for Ulchi Freedom Guardian 2012, Cols. Jung, Byong-Kwan, ROK; and Sean Cannon, U.S., watch a briefing during the exercise Aug. 27.

599th exercises movement, spirit of cooperation during UFG

The 599th Transportation Brigade wrapped up its participation in Ulchi Freedom Guardian at the Combined Seaport Coordination Center on Pier 8 in Busan, South Korea, Aug. 30.

“Ulchi Freedom Guardian is a key exercise in strengthening the readiness of Republic of Korea and U.S. forces,” said U.S. Army Gen. James D. Thurman, the commander of Combined Forces Command, United Nations Command, and U.S. Forces Korea, in a press release. “It is based on realistic scenarios and enables us to train on our essential tasks and work through crisis management with a ‘whole of government’ approach.”

During the exercise, the 599th Trans. Bde — together with the Republic of Korea Port Operations Group, Military Sealift Command, Naval Support and Guidance for Shipping, and the 25th Transportation Battalion — arranged for the sealift portion of movement into and out of Korea.

Ron Day, 599th deputy operations officer, has participated in 10 UFG exercises. He said the recent exercise was a success for the combined and joint effort at Pier 8. “We have the best working rela-

tionship with the ROK Port Operations Group that we have ever had, now that we’re in a supporting role rather than supported. We look at our procedures and see how they can enhance what we’ve been doing for the past 60 years,” he said.

Cmdr. Tim Pickett participated in UFG exercises from 2004 through 2008, but was at Pier 8 for his first time since he became commander of SDDC 320 in Alameda, Calif. During this year’s exercise, he acted as chief of staff and battle watch captain for the CSCC.

“Now, the U.S. has an opportunity to provide support for the ROK forces,” Pickett said. “This gives us the opportunity to provide the benefit of the experience to help train, educate and advise.

“Going forward with the ROK taking the lead in everything gives us an opportunity to learn from the ROK on their capabilities and the way they do business. They give us some new best practices. The key to this exercise is the relationships,” Pickett added.

Col. Jung, Byong-Kwan, South Korean co-chair for the CSCC during UFG and ROK

TRANSCOM Port Operations group commander at Pier 8, acknowledged the spirit with which everyone came together.

“Although they are new, everybody comes in and recognizes their mission and coordinates with the ROK side, so I appreciate them,” Jung said.

“During the UFG exercise, the government, military, and the ROK and U.S. all cooperate. It is a good chance to strengthen the ROK-U.S. alliance,” he added.

Col. Sean Cannon, 599th deputy commander for deployment and U.S. co-chair for the CSCC during the exercise, was a first-time participant. He agreed that the exercise built and strengthened the alliance between the ROK and U.S.

“In spite of the fact that many of the players are new, I’m impressed with the amount of teamwork within the U.S. component and in the ROK/U.S. relationship,” Cannon said.

“I’ve done a lot of exercises throughout my career and I am the most impressed with this one, both in terms of accomplishing training objectives and bilateral cooperation,” he added.

JSCC stands up for exercise

The Joint Seaport Coordination Center at Yokohama North Dock, Japan, stood up to test its effectiveness from Aug. 15-30.

The center combines capabilities of Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command in the Pacific for movement, and Military Sealift Command for shipping.

Lt. Col. Anthony Aquino, JSCC Army co-chair, said the JSCC is a true, joint success story.

“The unit has gone from non-existent to fully operational in less than a year,” Aquino said. Gonzalo Rivera-Rivera, 599th Transportation Brigade forward planner and battle captain for the center, said combining SDDC and MSC in one center creates improved operational lines of effort in support of theater plans.

Although the center is manned by only one person on a day-to-day basis, it is expanded during exercises to support theater requirements and assess its capabilities.

Rivera-Rivera said he has spent a lot of his time since the center opened in February spreading the fact that the center exists and extolling its unique capabilities for coordination of movement to the commands at U.S. Forces Japan, U.S. Pacific Command, and U.S. Transportation Command.

The coordination and cooperation between SDDC and MSC at the JSCC saves both commands time and money during contin-



Col. Gust Pagonis, 599th commander, and Navy Capt. James Hruska, Military Sealift Command-Far East commodore, talk before signing a memorandum of agreement regarding shared responsibilities for SDDC and MSC at the Joint Seaport Coordination Center at Yokohama North Dock, Japan, Aug. 24. (DOD photo)

gencies, disaster relief and exercises, said Rivera-Rivera.

“We’re able to synchronize movements for exercises around the Japan area of operations,” he said. “The JSCC continues to fulfill its mission to coordinate all movement into and through Japan.”

Cmdr. Jim Mueller, Navy co-chair of the JSCC, who is working in the center for his first time, said working at the JSCC has given him more appreciation for the complete picture of transportation.

“Before, I worked only on the sealift side of the house. Working together with the movement side of SDDC gives both sides a good perspective and a better

idea of the process,” he said.

Aquino said one future goal is for the center to become both joint and combined bilaterally with Japan, similar to the Combined Seaport Coordination Center in Busan, which is combined bilaterally with South Korea.

Most of the manning for exercises is supported by Army and Navy individual mobilization augmentees. The Army is represented by Rivera-Rivera, Aquino and SDDC 320, a Navy Reserve battalion from Alameda, Calif., which is subordinate to the 599th Transportation Brigade. The Navy is represented by IMAs from MSC Far East 101 and nine Sailors from Expeditionary Port Unit 112.



Military and civilian employees of the 836th Transportation at Yokohama North Doc, Japan, learn to stay afloat during a drownproofing class at Nigishi Navy Base swimming pool Aug. 24.

836th offers drownproofing class to all employees

The 836th Transportation Battalion's headquarters at Yokohama North Dock, Japan, emptied Aug. 24 so employees could attend drownproofing safety training at the Nigishi Navy Base swimming pool.

While some of the civilians who attended chose not to participate in the training, the 836th battalion commander, Lt. Col. Erick Crews, made sure all civilians in the battalion were invited, whether they got in the water or not.

"Because we operate on piers and near water, it is important that we offer this training to not only the Soldiers, but Department of Army civilians and Japanese master labor contractors who work with us," said Maj. Kelvin Simmons, 836th Trans. Bn. executive officer.

Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin McKeller, 599th Transportation Brigade senior enlisted leader, was also present and participated in the training.

"I think it was an excellent idea for the 836th to invite its civilian workforce to participate," McKeller said. "Not only does it help keep them safe, taking part in these types of physical activities together is a great way to build esprit de corps."

During the training, students first learned how to protect themselves from debris if an accident occurs

and they are forced to jump into the water: arms crossed over their chests, with one hand holding the nose shut to avoid inhaling water upon entry, and legs crossed at the ankles, to avoid striking an object in the water.

The instructor, Sgt. 1st Class Ruben Caballero, Water Equipment Base, Yokohama North Dock, then demonstrated how to clear obstructions from the water on ascent, and how to swim in oily water.

Once all students had combined these lessons by jumping off the pool's diving board correctly, ascending, and then swimming to the pool's wall to wait, Caballero taught students how to inflate their blouses to maintain positive buoyancy, and how to conduct a rescue swim.

Students floated, treaded water and practiced rescuing one another for about 45 minutes, after which Crews called the group into the pool's racing lanes. Each student had to swim two lengths of the 25-meter pool.

"You've just swum 50 meters," said Crews following the swim. "If you fall into the water at Yokohama North Dock, there's a kilometer between ladders. So you'll need to be able to swim about 10 times that to save yourselves."

Safety

FY 2012 – SAFETY STATISTICS FOR THE 4th QUARTER

Third Quarter July-September	Hawaii 599th	Korea 837th	Japan/Guam/Alaska 836th	Okinawa/Singapore 835th	Total Brigade
Fatalities	0	0	0	0	0
Accidents, Incidents, Injuries	0	0	0	0	0
Lost Work Days	0	0	0	0	0

Continue to practice safety at all times – on the road, at work and off duty

Fall Safety Acrostic

Find the words in the grid. The words may be forward, backward, up, down, or diagonal in all directions.
(This is a recycled acrostic. As always, thanks to Ace Parker for contributing the acrostics.)

B	L	I	E	J	J	S	N	O	I	T	O	M	E	I	Workplace
N	O	I	T	S	U	A	H	X	E	Z	I	Z	R	B	Safety
W	S	E	Y	E	E	R	E	H	W	Y	R	E	V	E	Stress
Y	Y	T	E	F	A	Q	S	F	I	N	J	U	R	Y	Injury
N	O	S	U	N	B	U	R	N	G	E	K	I	Q	X	Binge
E	S	L	K	P	N	E	E	R	C	S	N	U	S	W	Drinking
V	G	N	I	P	M	I	R	P	E	G	N	I	B	N	Sunburn
S	T	A	Y	A	L	I	V	E	P	V	R	F	Q	U	Damage
R	I	U	P	W	G	I	D	R	I	N	K	I	N	G	Eyes
E	G	A	M	A	D	A	R	G	U	M	E	N	T	S	Shade
S	T	R	E	S	S	R	E	D	N	I	M	E	R	S	Sunscreen
Z	Q	E	N	O	H	P	L	L	E	C	J	F	A	H	Exhaustion
R	A	D	I	S	T	R	A	C	T	I	O	N	S	A	Distractions
H	E	U	G	I	T	A	F	A	H	I	R	G	A	D	Stay alive
															Fatigue
															Cellphone
															Reminders
															Arguments
															Emotions
															Primping
															Everywhere

Q&A with Sgt. Maj. Willie Jacobs

As Sgt. Maj. Willie Jacobs, the 836th Transportation Battalion sergeant major, prepared for his last change of responsibility ceremony Aug. 24 to end a career in transportation spanning more than three decades, he took some time Aug. 23 to reminisce about some of the high points of his career.

Q: What made you join the Army?

A: I didn't plan to join. I just went down to the recruiter with my friend because he wanted someone to go with him. I already had a job and he didn't. The recruiter talked me into taking the test, and after we got our scores, we both decided to join. The funny thing is that he got out after four years, and here I still am, 30 years later.

Q: When did you decide to make the Army a career?

A: I was stationed in the 69th Tran. Bn. in Bremerhaven from 1983 to 1988. We drove 915s then, a 16-speed, semi-automatic tractor-trailer. All of the drivers took a lot of pride in themselves and their trucks there. We'd keep it clean, shine it up, do the maintenance. The guys in the barracks would even stay and spit-shine their boots on the weekend. We had driver's badges at 8,000 miles and one-year accident-free, then awards for 20, 40, 60 and 80,000 miles. We were very competitive.

At that time, I also played semi-pro basketball for a German team for about three years.

I was treated like a celebrity in Germany because of that. I had an opportunity to go try out for the all-Army team, but because I'd just got my family set up in Germany, I didn't want to disrupt them again.

I made sergeant there after three years. I was really proud of that. I

wanted to be an NCO. The NCOs then weren't as technical as the NCOs now, and I thought I could be a good NCO.

After one year of being a sergeant, my first sergeant called me in and said that I should go to the board for E6 the next month. I didn't think I could take the board with only one year in grade, and thought he was kidding me, so I was out driving and didn't show up for the board. My first sergeant chewed me out for not making it. After that, I had to wait 90 days to take the next board. So after four years in the army, I made E-6. I was so young, with only one hash mark, only three ribbons and that big rank on that people would ask me if we were having a "playing Soldier day."

I was a squad leader at four years, and had 12 trucks and 12 drivers. I really worked hard at being a good NCO.

Q: So by the end of your first enlistment, you already had decided to make it a career?

A: When I reenlisted for the first time, I talked to the reenlistment NCO. I asked him if I would get my station of choice. The reenlistment NCO said I couldn't have station of choice, just people who reenlisted for their first term could. Because I was already a staff sergeant, he couldn't believe I was still on my first enlistment.

I went back to Fort Benning (Ga.) because that's the only place I'd been and I liked it there. That time I went to the 197th Infantry Brigade from 1988 to 1991, and became a squad leader for a HET platoon (Heavy Equipment Transporter). We did a lot of setting up camouflage and digging foxholes. Funny thing was that, being as tall as I am, nobody wanted to be my foxhole buddy.

During that time we traveled quite a bit. I had three National

Training Center rotations; we went to South Carolina in 1988 for humanitarian assistance support for Hurricane Hugo; we went back to Germany for Reforger; and also did Desert Shield and Desert Storm. I really learned a lot in the 197th about tactical exercises. We spent at least 10 to 12 days in the field every month. I left there with six Army Achievement Medals and two Army Commendations Medals, and was selected for promotion to sergeant first class.

Q: What jobs did you hold as a sergeant first class?

A: After Fort Benning, I went back to Germany — to the 590th Transportation Company of the 181st Transportation Battalion in Mannheim, Germany, at Turley Barracks.

I really enjoyed that assignment. I was a platoon sergeant, and Command Sgt. Maj. Tomas Hawkins (former SDDC command sergeant major) was my first sergeant. He told me he had two platoons that needed a platoon sergeant, one good and one bad. He asked me if I wanted the good or bad platoon. I took the challenging platoon. Command Sgt. Maj. Hawkins was surprised at my choice, but I figured with the bad platoon, there was nowhere to go but up.

Not too long after I got there, the unit was selected to be deactivated, and I was chosen as the first sergeant for the unit as it deactivated. ...

Next, in the 41st Transportation Battalion, I was the platoon sergeant of the truck platoon. We were still driving the 915 trucks at Grafenwoehr and Vilsek. ... The battalion had just come back from Haiti. ... We had to get the vehicles online in 90 days. ...

After that we moved to Fort Drum, N.Y. We provided transport for the West Point cadets, and were augmented with trucks from Fort Campbell, Ken., and Fort Stewart,

Ga. I took over as the truckmaster, so had control of the motor pool and personnel. Then the first sergeant was relieved, so I was both the first sergeant and the truckmaster. Some days there, we would have 120-plus missions. I had to make sure all of the trucks and drivers were available. Colonel Dunwoody was commander of the Division Support Command. So I got a chance to work with her then.

While I was at Fort Drum, I was promoted to E-8, after which I became the Division Transportation Office sergeant major for the 10th Mountain Division.

Q: Other positions as a master sergeant?

A: When I left Fort Drum, I went to Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., as the first sergeant in a basic training company. This was right after the Aberdeen scandal in 1996. There, we all had to learn ... how to manage the cadre. Basic was eight weeks then. ... Anywhere the trainees and cadre were, we had to be there — the first sergeant, the executive officer or the commander. ... We had to provide overwatch for everything on the schedule.

After I had got that position, I was able to better appreciate why we had been so rushed through everything when I was in basic training — why we would just sit down and get started to eat and then had to stop and get back up again. At Fort Leonard Wood, we had 23 basic training companies, all competing for the same resources, and everything was on a very tight schedule. ...

We had 275 privates every eight weeks, plus we had holdovers from the last training cycle, and we had 12 drill sergeants. ... Basically, everything there was highly scrutinized. ...

I successfully finished two years from 1997 to 1999. Although there were a lot of headaches in that job, it was really gratifying on graduation days and family days.

In 1999, I left and went to Korea for 12 months as the first sergeant in the 25th Transportation Battalion, which was then in Yongsan, Korea. There was no curfew then in Yongsan for U.S. soldiers. The sergeant major had left the battalion early, so I was the acting sergeant major for about five months. You won't believe it, but Sergeant Major Hawkins was the one who came to replace me.

Then I went to Fort Eustis as the branch chief for Phase 2 of Basic and Advanced Noncommissioned Officers Courses. After I came out on the E-9 list with 18 years of service, I became the 8th Brigade S3 sergeant major. After one year, the 71st Transportation Battalion was without a sergeant major for

initial entry training, so I became the sergeant major for an AIT battalion for six months and then went over to become the Transportation School sergeant major. I did that until 2005.

Q: Other positions as a sergeant major?

A: I went back to South Korea to become the sergeant major of the 837th Transportation Battalion then. While I was there, they moved their headquarters to Daegu. I really enjoyed working with the KATUSA there. They come in for two years and then go back to their civilian lives. I enjoyed the Korean people. Every now and then I still hear from some of the people that I knew there.

I went from there to the 841st Transportation Battalion in Charleston, S.C. Since I am from South Carolina, I always enjoyed opportunities to go back. Our area of operations included the Port of Philadelphia, Wilmington, Del., and we also had a detachment at Fort Monmouth, N.J. with mostly civilian employees. We were very busy with the war effort and shipping MRAPs. We shipped more than 10,000 MRAPs while I was there.

After that, I had almost 29 years in, and the choices were to go back to the 837th, over to Kuwait, or here in Japan. I asked for Kuwait, but they decided to go with a command sergeant major for that position, so I was going to retire. Then we came over here on vacation, and I have a daughter-in-law who is Japanese. I realized then that Japan would make an interesting tour. Besides, I would always hear about people who got out at 28 or 29 years, and think, "Why didn't he stay and finish up?"

So, even though I had already put in my paperwork to retire, it hadn't been accepted yet, and when the Army called back and asked again if I would take this job, I agreed.

Q: How did your family deal with life with a soldier?

A: I have two sons, both in Sterling, Va. They work for the same information technology company on the same schedule. They man the night shift together. My wife and I did a good job. I never had to worry about either of my sons. They both carry the same values that I grew up with.

I'm looking forward to what the future holds. I hope that I am always a part of the military. I'll look for something as a DAC, so that I can continue.

My wife of almost 31 years is still with me through all the things that a soldier goes through. We've known each other since the 8th grade. We were married before I came in the service and we're still married. I will formally retire at Fort Jackson, S.C., in September.

I always said that when I left the military I wanted to leave on my own terms. ... When I joined the Army, the motto was "Be all that you can be." I'm excited that I've been able to be all that I wanted to be, and I am very excited about my future.



Fall Safety: Get ready for winter before it comes

Because we live in the endless summer of Hawaii, we sometimes forget about the seasons changing. Singapore and Guam are even hotter than here for more of the year. But in Alaska, Korea and Japan, it's about time to winterize.

When it comes to the cold, not all injuries are created equal. Due to their training and issued gear, Soldiers and other military members are considerably better prepared than the general population to stay safe in even the coldest conditions. That's why it might come as a surprise to learn frostbite... among the most serious of all winter ailments – is the leading cold weather injury reported in the Army. According to the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center, 556 U.S. service members suffered at least one cold injury between July 2009 and June 2010. The good news is that among active component members, cold injury

rates have remained remarkably stable during the past few years.

Whether the Soldiers work inside a heated building or stay outside for long periods of times all members of the Army team must be aware of the hazards of cold weather. Training for and preventing cold injuries is a command and leadership function, as well as a personal responsibility for all. The key to overcoming harsh conditions and successfully completing the mission lies with understanding cold weather injuries and how to prevent them.

Be careful driving in the fall. As the days get shorter, the weather becomes gray. People, bicycles motorcycles, and other cars all become more difficult to see.

If you are a pedestrian or bicycle rider instead of the driver, wear visible clothing, and be careful when you are on the road.

Now is the time to make sure your heater and generator are in good working order, are correctly

vented, and that you have extra fuel stored. It's important that your generator runs when you need it.

Heating in general can be dangerous. Carbon monoxide poisoning is no joke. Make sure your furnace is in good working order, make sure space heaters are away from anything combustible, and ensure that your fireplace is safe as well. Keep the chimney clean and a guard in place to keep sparks out of the room.

As the leaves start to fall, they can make a slippery mess on your driveway and other walkways. Likewise, prepare now for the below freezing days on the horizon--keep salt and sand at the ready to control icy patches where you and the family will be walking.

It is also time winterize your car. Everything from changing to a heavier weight oil to flushing the radiator, restocking the car's emergency bag, checking the air in the spare tire, and finding the ice scraper. And the best chains in the world won't do much good if they're in your garage.