

# Army Sustainment Command

## Public Release

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## Quartermaster Soldiers join 402<sup>nd</sup> AFSB as retrograde ramps up

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** – More than 150 Soldiers of the 249<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company have deployed to support 402<sup>nd</sup> Army Field Support Brigade reset and retrograde missions, marking the first time an active-duty company has been assigned to an AFSB.

Most of the Soldiers are settled into Power Village at Joint Base Balad, but some are assigned to or travel to other sites.

Capt. Matthew Haistings, company commander, said two platoons will augment operations at Redistribution Property Assistance Team yards at major installations, one platoon will be assigned to supplement mobile RPATs that travel to redeploying units, and the headquarters platoon will take care of the administrative work.

Noting that the unit's mission at their home station of Fort Bragg, N.C., is running warehouses, Haistings said the deployment will give his Soldiers opportunities to learn new skills.

"Soldiers at fixed sites are learning how to burn RFID (radio frequency identification) tags and complete [DD Form] 1348s," said 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Renee McElroy, 3rd platoon leader.

Soldiers are partnered with Airmen, civilian employees and contractors to learn their new jobs and have completed a variety of training. Some have completed Customs inspections training; others have become qualified mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicle operators with MRAP maintenance training; and still others are learning to operate the various vehicles turned in at the RPAT yards.

Now they are mission-focused and ready to get to work.

"The Soldiers are excited and eager to get started," 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. John Hogan said. "They understand the magnitude of the mission."

"With our expanding mission, these Soldiers bring much-needed manpower, expertise and continuity," said Air Force Capt. Elim Snaidy, Balad RPAT officer in charge. "We're happy to have them."

Snaidy said the Balad yard is operating around the clock with Soldiers and Airmen on every shift.

Seated in front of a computer, Spc. Christopher Woolard said he was inputting equipment information into the Master Blaster to provide visibility of the items.

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Woolard, who is on his third deployment, said his job now is a good change of pace for him.

Out in the RPAT yard, Spc. Angel Gonzalez was checking an MRAP that had been turned in.

After checking the paperwork to make sure the serial numbers matched the vehicle, Gonzalez said he inspects the vehicle for "brass, ammunition and trash."

"These vehicles usually come into the yard right from a convoy," said Air Force Master Sgt. Robert Lopez, noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

Gonzalez said he is enjoying working with the Airmen and his Air Force comrades were anxious to "bring us (the Soldiers) up to speed."

Lopez said he found the Soldiers are eager to learn and want to go out and excel on the job.

Some Soldiers have already been deployed to the other fixed RPAT sites McElroy said. She said her goals for the platoon are for the squads at the fixed sites to work together as a team, for the squad leaders to grow as leaders.

Two platoons are assigned to augment the mobile RPATs and several Soldiers have already been on missions. Soldiers awaiting missions are anxious to get to work.

"We are looking forward to our mission," said Staff Sgt. William Ortiz, a mobile team leader.

Spc. Lorna Lawrence will be on one of the mobile teams and said she has learned to drive an MRAP, had hands-on training for completing the documentation required for reset of organization equipment, and has had some Customs training.

Lawrence, who is on her first deployment, said her focus is on the mission and she hopes to progress in her military career while also completing some college courses.

Company Executive Officer 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Eric Nilsen said he thinks the company will have a very interesting mission.

Commenting on the quality of life, he said, "We were told to expect good housing, but we didn't expect it would be this good."

Haistings added that the Soldiers at Balad have an education center, MWR and other amenities nearby. He said he knew the Soldiers assigned to the other fixed RPAT sites also have good accommodations.

Haistings said his goals for the deployment are to successfully complete the mission and provide good customer service for the supported units. He also wants his Soldiers to maximize their down-time to take advantage of educational opportunities.

**For queries, contact the Army Sustainment Command Public Affairs Office at [rock-amsas-pa@conus.army.mil](mailto:rock-amsas-pa@conus.army.mil) or by phone at 309-782-5421.**

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