



# POWER LINE



## 402nd AFSB supports State Department in Iraq

Story and photo by Pamela Proper  
402nd AFSB PAO

**BASRAH, Iraq** – As U.S. forces leave Iraq, they are moving most of their equipment and assets out of the country, but they will hand off some of it to the Department of State to support the diplomatic and security cooperation missions.

The 402nd Army Field Support Brigade will provide maintenance support for all Army equipment transitioned to the Department of State and the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq.

The 402nd AFSB will have personnel at all State Department sites in Iraq, and will establish maintenance hubs in three, Basrah, Kirkuk and Taji. There will be about 180 contracted personnel and a handful of Department of the Army civilians who will remain in the country after the military departs.

Col. John S. Laskodi, commander, 402nd AFSB, said the brigade is taking on another huge challenge in supporting a mission like this.

“The Department of State is establishing its largest mission in its history,” said Laskodi.

“The 402nd AFSB, as AMC’s forward presence in theater, will have several thousand personnel in Iraq to support the Department of State mission. We have great people who are committed to ensuring the mission is successful,” Laskodi



Col. John S. Laskodi, commander 402nd Army Field Support Brigade and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Canterbury, discuss progress on the construction of an MRAP maintenance facility at Basrah, with Dannia Buster, contract officer representative. The operation will support the Department of State as part of the transition in Iraq.

said.

The brigade’s support falls primarily into two categories; the support under the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) which provides base life support and a myriad of other logistics functions and maintenance support to force protection equipment such as Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs).

“Many people have the perception that the United States

will have departed Iraq by the end of 2011,” said Laskodi.

“While the combat mission performed by uniformed military presence will transition, the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade will continue to support our nation’s objective of maintaining a stable, strategic partner in the Government of Iraq.”

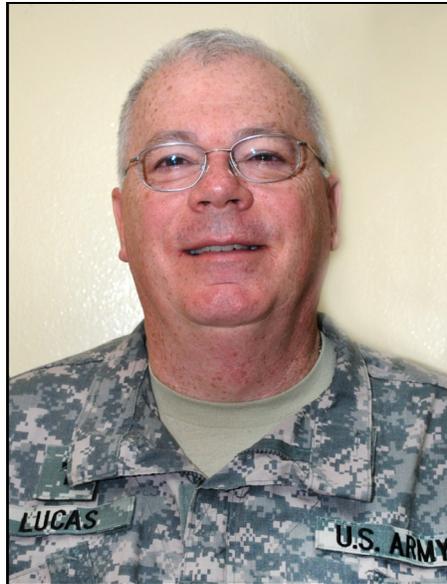
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## Chaplain's Corner

# History of the Holidays

I suspect you noticed, but the PX here had Christmas decorations on display **before Halloween**. We tend to hear lots of complaints about pushing the season earlier every year, but the date itself has been the subject of controversy for centuries.

December 25 was chosen as Christianity spread into Europe and found a pagan festival, the Saturnalia, that had elements in it that the Church wanted to clean up, such as drunken naked singing in the streets, and others that the Church wanted to eliminate, such as human sacrifice on the last day of the festival, December 25. We should also keep in mind that this date is the Western Christian date of Christmas; many branches of the Eastern Church still celebrate on January 6.



**Chaplain (Col.) Howard Lucas**  
402nd AFSB

But the actual date is not the main point. The significance of the date is what matters. Christians everywhere celebrate the birth of the Son of God, the actual act of God's taking on human flesh to experience life the same way we do, with all its hurts and pains, and then for Him to die to pay the punishment for our sins. One of His titles was Immanuel, "God with us."

Our Jewish neighbors celebrate Hanukkah around the same time. This is an eight-day festival that commemorates the purification of the Temple after a Greek ruler had desecrated it by installing an altar to Zeus in the Temple and sacrificing a pig on it. This led to a successful Jewish uprising under Judas Maccabeus, but there was only enough pure oil for the lamps in the Temple for one day.

Miraculously, however, the lights continued to burn for eight days until a new supply of ritually pure oil was available.

That's why the festival is often called the Festival of Lights. It is celebrated by the lighting of the menorah, by the exchanging of gifts, and the enjoyment of fried food (oil, remember?) to remember the miracle.

It wouldn't be honest to try to make the two holidays synonymous, but both do remind us that God loves His people and that He provides for them by intervening in human history in miraculous ways that are beyond our wildest dreams. That's good for us to remember as we are away from our families and loved ones at this special time of the year.

When Jesus was born, the falsely-maligned innkeeper who provided the stable was just doing his routine job, he unknowingly was privileged to give a place for the birth of Christ. And the Jewish patriots who retook control of their Temple were just being obedient to God. In both cases, they had no idea how far-reaching their actions would prove to be, and of the fact that they were influencing human history.

So are we! Even though we can't see the end result, and we may never really know everything that our presence here will accomplish, we are part of what God is doing. Your sacrifice is not in vain, and it is worth far more than you can realize. It's a reason to celebrate.

Merry Christmas and  
Happy Hanukkah!



### 402nd AFSB

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## Kuwait team adding armor, keeping crews safe

Photo and story by Pamela Proper  
402nd AFSB PAO

**CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait** -- There is something to be said for those who build roads while dodging mortar fire because it takes a certain amount of courage to do that, even in an armor-plated cab.

The Army opened an add-on armor facility at Camp Arifjan in 2005 and the work has been steady. The facility, managed by the Army Field Support Battalion-South West Asia, installs armor kits to construction and heavy equipment transport vehicles and line haul trucks. They also performs maintenance, repairs and safety enhancements to bulldozers, road graders, excavators and more than a dozen other heavy-engineering vehicles.

Chris Shetzler is the team lead for the add-on armor (AOA), program at Camp Arifjan which is a tight-knit group with highly developed skill sets.

“The knowledge that each of our guys has is irreplaceable and a huge asset to our men and women in the military,” said Shetzler.

“Our guys have all seen every type of vehicle, armor kits and the different generations of armor, and that makes us capable to quickly armor up vehicles that have not been done in mass for several years.”

Last year the team installed armor and safety enhancement kits on nearly 900 vehicles.

“It makes sense to armor vehicles here in Kuwait since most, if not all, equipment comes through here, either going to Iraq or Afghanistan. Kuwait is logistically like the one-stop shop for all vehicle enhancements before they are issued to the units coming over,” Shetzler said.

Since 2005, the team in Kuwait has turned out more than 20,000 vehicles to keep those who work construction projects protected, so they can continue to build even when attacked.



**Iqbal Modsar, heavy equipment mechanic, downloads an armor kit to add on to a road roller. (Below, right) Shaikh Kamaluddin and Nafees Ahmed complete installation of an armor cab roof on a road scraper and secure AC lines to the roof at the add-on armor facility at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.**



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**AMC deputy visits CECOM-SWA**

Story by Paul Barsamian  
CECOM RESET Drawdown chief

**CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait –** Lt. Gen. Dennis Via, deputy commanding general, Army Materiel Command, visited the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command drawdown operations center here on Oct. 21.

Paul Barsamian, CECOM RESET drawdown chief, gave the AMC deputy a status report of the unit’s mission in support of the drawdown operation in Southwest Asia.

CECOM augments the 402<sup>ND</sup> Army Field Support Brigade’s RESET process in the execution of responsible drawdown of equipment from Iraq.

The U.S. Navy Customs Inspection Team, which conducts inspection, sealing and certifying of tri-wall shipping containers works closely with CECOM personnel to ship excess Theater Provided



Photo by Ismael Rivera

**Paul Barsamian, CECOM RESET drawdown chief, briefs Lt. Gen. Dennis Via, deputy commanding general, Army Materiel Command, during a recent visit to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.**

Equipment (TPE) and Depot Level Repairables (DLRs) back to the United States.

During the visit, Via was able to see that partnership in action along with inventory, accountability, turn-in, and property book processes.

CECOM is a subordinate command of the Army Materiel

Command and as the Army’s premier communications, surveillance, and reconnaissance supplier, outfits and maintains all tactical operations, to include vehicles and aircraft, with communications-electronics systems.



Photo by Pamela Portland

Tactical vehicles returning from Iraq contain as many as five CECOM systems that will be removed and turned in.

## AMC's enduring mission, training Iraqi Army

Story by Pamela Proper  
402nd AFSB Public Affairs

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** -- The Army Materiel Command's, Joint Base Workshop is one mission that is slated to remain after U.S. forces depart Iraq.

AMC is supporting the Office of Security Cooperation- Iraq, providing subject-matter-experts to train the Iraqi Army on maintenance, repair and overhaul of U.S. Army tactical vehicles which they now own. The 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, based in Kuwait, provides administrative control of the mission.

The teams that are in place at Camp Taji, Iraq, are specialists from Army depots in Alabama, California and Texas. Ken Johnson supervises the trainers and advisors from Anniston Army Depot who oversee track vehicle overhaul processes and he has volunteered to stay on after the drawdown.

There are cultural differences and language barriers to overcome, but a clear focus on the mission keeps it all in perspective.

"It's a challenge, but you've just got to have a lot of patience," Johnson said, "They've got their own system and way of doing things."

The Iraqi Army is training its Soldiers to do work that is traditionally done by a civilian workforce at depots in the U.S.

"Soldiers should know field maintenance. That's how the U.S. does it. Our Soldiers don't do overhaul but the Iraqi Army has their Soldiers doing



Photo by Rita Cucchiara

**Brig. Gen. Hazam Jabar Abdul Wahid, deputy commander, Joint Base Workshop, Camp Taji, Iraq, discusses the mission, through an interpreter, with Lt. Gen. Dennis Via, deputy commander, Army Materiel Command, during a recent visit.**

what our civilians do on these vehicles," Johnson said.

Connie Minton is a painter from Anniston who volunteered to come to Taji to train Iraqi Soldiers. She wasn't sure what to expect, as a woman training men, in this part of the world.

"The first day of training, one of the Soldiers pointed out that my ankle was showing, so I just made sure to wear long socks from then on and I do my best to respect their culture," said Minton. "But other than that, I have had no issues. I feel like they learned a lot from me and they really have come a long way."

Many of the team found that the Iraqi's had very good maintenance equipment already in place, but just lacked the skills to use what they had.

"They had a million-dollar carousel paint booth, they just lacked the knowledge to use it. I showed them how to use it," said Minton.

This team of trainers managed to put the challenges in perspective and are determined to make it work.

"The best training would be to get their best students and bring them to the U.S. to work with us in our shops for a year. Then they could come back here and train the others," Johnson said.

AMC has supported the Joint Base Workshop since 2006 and has trained the Iraqi Army in small arms repair, Humvee and 5-ton truck overhaul and is currently conducting training on track vehicle overhaul. The current agreement with the Department of State continues into 2012.

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## AMC training the Iraqi Army at Camp Taji



Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Canterbury, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, engages in conversation with Iraqi Soldiers overhauling a Humvee engine at the Joint Base Workshop Camp Taji, Iraq. (Below-left) Col. John Laskodi, commander, 402nd AFSB, looks over a 5-ton truck repaired by the Iraqi Army. (Below-right) Col. John Laskodi and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Canterbury get a tour of the Humvee facility with Wheel Depot Commander, Col. Jasim Mutlak.



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## THANKSGIVING AT CAMP ARIFJAN



402nd AFSB Commander, Col. John Laskodi and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Canterbury serve dinner at DFAC 2 while dinner guests admire the many festive confections and decorative displays of carved, ice, melons and butter created by the DFAC staff.