

Soldiers, civilian contractors support EAB mission

By Cyle Fena

Echelons Above Brigade Support Operations Officer

The Echelons Above Brigade Support Battalion here is one of the only battalions in the U.S. Army comprised mostly of civilian contractors, commanded by an Army officer, and staffed by Army officers and enlisted personnel.

As one of two support battalions in the National Training Center Support Brigade, and in service for about 15 months, it's designed on the Combat Service Support Battalion principal framework.

The EAB demonstrates a very unique characteristic – it is composed of MTOE units that are deployable for contingency operations, while the bulk of the organization, Northrop Grumman contractors, can remain at here to support Army brigade combat teams slated for rotation.

The contractors assigned to the EAB Support Battalion serve as a critical component of the entire rotational process from Theater Distribution and Support operations to actual competitive roles in the training that adhere to basic doctrine, tactics, techniques, procedures, and Rules of Engagement that rotational units must observe.

Employees of Northrop Grumman must be proficient in basic skills and related Soldier tasks; they must observe and understand the operational environment and the impact of support at all levels in supporting training whether it's driving a Heavy Equipment Transport System, staging and preparing various classes of supply, or executing detailed maintenance.

The EAB is comprised of three subordinate functional areas that all operate harmoniously in direct support of rotational units. The Movement Control Company is comprised of all Soldiers. They support Reception, Staging, Onward Movement Integration by providing detailed control of inbound units and their equipment simultaneously at Southern California Logistics Airport, Marine Corps Logistics Base in Barstow, rail operations, and Soldier reception and departure at Fort Irwin.

The Service Support Element of the EAB is comprised of a transportation section and a general classes of supply section with a mission of daily delivery, receipt, temporary storage, and issuance of all classes of supply. Northrop Grumman employees execute all missions in this element. The EAB also runs a Field Ammunition Supply Point that serves to expedite Class V delivery to Rotational Unit's while providing an invaluable



An M984 Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck Wrecker, another vehicle in the convoy.

service in allowing tactical access to the RTU's meeting extremely demanding and time constrained operational tempos.

The strength of the EAB is its ability to rapidly address logistics demands created by the continuing changes in the training environment. The catalyst for success is the "exempt" employee assigned to Northrop Grumman located in all commodity areas giving the EAB immense mission flexibility.

Even with a very streamlined personnel base and support apparatus, the Northrop Grumman EAB contingent manages the peak intensity support requirements by implementing controls such as training all of its drivers on all equipment in its low density fleets, providing staff support in critical commodity areas such as Class I, II, III, IV, V, and IX on a 24 hour basis throughout the entire training process (including regeneration).

Other examples of flexibility is the EAB's ability to plan, prepare, distribute, and consolidate multiple unit Combat Concentrated Loads of ammunition simultaneously allowing the sequential support of units arriving and departing NTC.

The nucleus of the EAB is its Support Operations team, all Northrop Grumman employees, that provides com-

mand and control, plans, prepares, organizes, coordinates, and tracks all aspects of the logistics process either internally or in direct support of the RTU for the EAB. The EAB SPO cell acts as a conventional Logistics Operations Center that functions with the "pencil to paper" approach, due to a lack of digital tracking systems, to augment C2 efforts.

The contributions of Northrop Grumman Employees in the EAB have exceeded tactical logistical unit operational TEMPO's on numerous occasions over the past fifteen months.

The EAB Northrop Grumman employees have executed 13 rotations without a single logistics shortfall; they have executed over 1,662 convoys (averaging more than 150 convoys in a 19 day period per rotation), logged more than 185,000 miles across multiple low density fleets without a single accident, and utilized over 15,000 pieces of organic equipment while maintaining a 98 percent operational readiness rate.

Recently the EAB exceeded an unprecedented milestone when it broke the 2.4 million gallons of JP8 fuel delivered to RTU's in its short existence. That's an amazing and critical accomplishment for the civilian employees who make their contributions count for this newly formed organization on a daily basis without a formal doctrine.



An M931 5-Ton Truck pulls a M871 Trailer during a convoy conducted by the Echelons Above Brigade Support Battalion, National Training Center Support Brigade.

Photos by Sgt. Sylvia Vella

For more information go to www.irwin.army.mil