

**THE GLOBAL WAR on TERRORISM
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**

**195th CONTRACT SUPERVISION
DETACHMENT**

(Orlando, Florida)

February 2003- November 2003



**Office of Army Reserve History
United States Army Reserve Command
Fort McPherson, Georgia**

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Introduction/Lessons Learned
Editor**



**Office of Army Reserve History
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DESCRIPTION: On a dark blue disk the bust of a Minuteman (Captain John Parker) in cocked hat on a pedestal, between two branches of olive or within a dark blue designation band with gold inner and outer borders inscribed UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE in gold.

SYMBOLISM: The minuteman has traditionally been used to represent the citizen soldier. The wreath signifies achievement and accomplishment. Gold is symbolic of honor and excellence and dark blue signifies loyalty.

BACKGROUND: The emblem was approved for use as a plaque in 1972 and is used as an unofficial identification device of the United States Army Reserve. (US Army Institute of Heraldry.)

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Foreword

The Global War on Terrorism-Operation Iraqi Freedom: 195h Contract Supervision Detachment is one in a series of histories of Army Reserve units deployed in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). This includes Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. The histories are based on primary sources collected by the Office of Army Reserve History's GWOT Military History Task Force. The task force provides program management, central collection, and archiving of unit histories. The former Chief, Army Reserve Lieutenant General James Helmly, stated the importance of this collection effort:

The Army Reserve is experiencing a time of great transition to meet present and future challenges to our national security. The events of this transition, while still fresh, must be captured and documented to preserve the story of the Army Reserve's contribution to this unprecedented war. The result will be a unique archive of the wartime accomplishments of all mobilized Army Reserve units, not only of this war, but for all future defense commitments. Nowhere else within the United States Government does an official archive of the Army Reserve exist.

The records collected include narratives with a mission statement, after action reviews or lessons learned, personnel rosters, mobilization orders, demobilization orders, unit briefing slides, photographs, and autobiographical sketches. This information is used to record and to preserve the Army Reserve's contributions to GWOT. This volume and other unit histories included in the series, as compiled from these records, provide an invaluable resource for the Army Reserve and its Soldiers to

learn from their own experiences and retain lessons learned for future operations.

Fort McPherson
Atlanta, Georgia
August 2008

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Introduction

"Through their service, Reserve personnel play an important role in our efforts to advance democracy, peace and freedom across the Nation and around the world. These dedicated men and women train vigorously and work closely with our active duty forces, serving as equal partners in our integrated Armed Forces." President George W. Bush (11 August 2002)¹

11 September 2001 was a watershed in the history of the United States. The terrorist attacks had a profound affect on the country. In his address to the nation that night, President George W. Bush said the attacks had moved "a great people . . . to defend a great nation." Bush set the tone for his evolving doctrine by stating the US "will make no distinction between terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." On 20 September 2001 in a joint session of Congress, Bush further defined his policy by stating, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."²

On 15 September, Bush ordered a partial mobilization of reserve forces with the first call-ups starting on 22 September. The Army Reserve quickly reacted to the largest deployment since Operation Desert Storm. Even before the official call-ups, eighty-five Soldiers from one Army Reserve unit, the 311th Quartermaster Company (Mortuary Affairs), were on the scene at the Pentagon by 17 September 2001.³

In New York after the attack on the World Trade Center, Army Reserve Soldiers aided in the recovery efforts. Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers were quick to answer the call for assistance. Army Reserve Soldiers provided equipment, reserve center space, and other logistical support. Like the Pentagon recovery effort the actions of Army Reserve Soldiers at the World Trade Center preceded official mobilization.⁴

Military intelligence determined that Osama bin Laden's Islamic al Qaeda was responsible for the 11 September attacks. Al Qaeda's base of operations was in Afghanistan where the fundamentalist Taliban regime

controlled the country and harbored al Qaeda. A loose coalition, the Northern Alliance, opposed the Taliban. On 7 October 2001, less than a month after the 11 September attacks, the US, with support from Great Britain, launched an air and naval attack as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. The campaign pinpointed airfields and air defenses along with command and control centers. In a national address Bush said the military action was aimed to "cut the military capability of the Taliban regime." Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld explained that the assault was intended to "make it increasingly difficult for terrorists to use Afghanistan as a base of operations."⁵

The ground war or "boots on the ground" began on 19 October 2001 with a number of twelve-man Special Forces Operational Detachment A teams who joined the Northern Alliance in fighting the Taliban and al Qaeda. By November 2001 over 50,000 American forces involving ground, sea, and air operations were in the theater. "The fighting in Afghanistan," wrote Brigadier General John Brown, director of the US Army Center of Military History, "fractured into several miniature campaigns as each allied Afghan warlord advanced on his own objectives, carefully protecting the tiny contingent of Americans who gave him . . . awesome firepower."⁶ The fall of Kabul and Kandahar and the "destruction of organized resistance in Tora Bora" spelled doom for the terrorists. By late 2001, American Soldiers working with Afghan forces were successful in "decisive[l]y defeating the Taliban and their al Qaeda allies and in liberating Afghanistan."⁷ Operation Enduring Freedom "marked the first commitment of American forces in what would become simultaneous combat operations across multiple theaters of war since World War II."⁸

In his state of the union address on 29 January 2002, President Bush told the American people "in four short months," the country had "rallied a great coalition, captured, arrested, and rid the world of thousands of terrorists, destroyed Afghanistan's terrorist training camps, saved a people from starvation, and freed a country from brutal oppression."⁹

But, as seen later the terrorists rallied, albeit in a weakened state. By January 2002, the US and its allies began to set the stage for Operation

Anaconda which lasted from 2 March through 19 March 2002. Its mission was to destroy remaining al Qaeda forces. Although the operation was successful, a number of al Qaeda fled into the nearby mountains and into Pakistan. While the terrorists suffered substantial losses, fighting still persists in Afghanistan.¹⁰ Operation Enduring Freedom continues as does the mobilization of Army Reserve Soldiers.

The Army Reserve played and is playing a vital role in these operations. According to Lieutenant General James Helmly, then Chief, Army Reserve, "What was once a force in reserve has become a full partner across the spectrum of operations to satisfy the demand and need for Army Reserve Soldiers and units around the world. Wherever the Army committed forces in the world . . . Army Reserve Soldiers are an integral part, providing critical specialized capabilities and augmentation."¹¹

Army Reserve Soldiers were there in Afghanistan serving alongside active component Soldiers. For example, the 911th Forward Surgical Team supported the 10th Mountain Division during medical assistance missions in Afghanistan. The 310th Psychological Operations Battalion served in the isolated mountain regions of Afghanistan determining the needs of the people and organizing the delivery of non-perishable food, bottled water, and medical aid.¹² The 345th Military Intelligence Detachment assisted the Coalition Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) in intelligence operations leading to the identification, location and targeting of the Taliban and al Qaeda. What Army Reserve Soldiers accomplished proved "vital to the war on terrorism." "We," said one Soldier, "helped out the active duty forces that were there and needed the augmentation." Some civil affairs units, known for their distribution of humanitarian aid and assisting in rebuilding projects, found themselves on the front lines working on combat operations with the infantrymen.¹³ In fighting terrorists there often was no clearly defined front line.

The concept for what later became Operation Iraqi Freedom was long in the making dating back some viewed to 1 March 1991, the day after Desert Storm. Based on intelligence that Saddam Hussein had developed weapons of mass destruction President Bush decided that a regime change

in Iraq was warranted. He also based his decision on Iraq's probable connection with terrorists and the belief that Iraq posed a danger to the stability of the Middle East. As some of America's allies questioned the threat of Saddam, Bush was prepared to act alone to crush what he included in his "axis of evil." Others wanted to wait on the results of recently readmitted UN weapons inspectors. Britain sided with Bush as his determination for a regime change in Iraq increased.¹⁴ In a statement to the United Nations General Assembly on 10 September 2002, Bush said:

My nation will work with the UN Security Council to meet our common challenge. If Iraq's regime defies us again, the world must move deliberately, decisively to hold Iraq to account. We will work with the UN Security Council for the necessary resolutions. But the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The Security Council resolutions will be enforced -- the just demands of peace and security will be met -- or action will be unavoidable. And a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power.¹⁵

Seven days later on 17 September 2002, Bush released his administration's National Security Strategy which, in short, set forth the reformulation and posture of America's foreign policy. It was a major shift from a "shape, respond, prepare" posture to the new posture of "assure, dissuade, deter forward, and decisively defeat." It affected how the Army was to reshape itself and went hand in hand with the Army's ongoing transformation. The new posture included preemption to handle rogue states and terrorists with weapons of mass destruction. As Bush said, this was "a matter of common sense and self defense."¹⁶ It would set the stage in 2003 for the invasion of Iraq.

When Bush made this address to the UN plans were already in the making for a campaign against Iraq. In fact on 4 December 2001 General Tommy Franks, commander of the US Central Command (CENTCOM),

briefed the secretary of defense on the first draft war plan. By 1 February 2002, Franks had plans for a four-phased war involving deployment of troops into theater, air strikes, a ground war, and reconstruction.¹⁷

On the eve of the campaign, the Turkish parliament decided not to allow the 4th Mechanized Infantry Division to pass through the country and thereby set up a front in northern Iraq. "This obviated a major feature of the preferred war plan, left the division's equipment out of play as it hastily transshipped from standing offshore from Turkey to Kuwait, and perturbed deployment schedules because the ships carrying the 4th Mechanized Infantry Division equipment were not available for other purposes for a prolonged period of time."

Franks and the ground forces commander, Lieutenant General David McKiernan, had to reassess their strategy in the light of the impending conflict. Franks had several contingency plans. One called for a "rolling start." According to this plan, the campaign would begin by using forces already in theater and supplementing them as needed with "reinforcements as they arrived. Iraqi dispositions and circumstances," wrote Brown, "did not suggest significant resistance much south of Baghdad, so why not sweep up relatively uncontested terrain with a lesser force and feed in further forces as they arrived?"¹⁸ The plan was tactically driven given a twelve-year air campaign dating from Desert Storm with the no fly zones, American ground forces "acclimatized for operations in Iraq" with experienced defensive operations protecting Kuwait, and intelligence reportedly pinpointing Saddam's location.¹⁹

Operation Iraqi Freedom began with an air assault on 19 March 2003 in the "shock and awe" phase. Within twenty-four hours the 3rd Mechanized Infantry Division, 1st Marine Division, and the British 7th Armored Division were on the move. They quickly traversed the theater without much opposition, moving along the west side of the Euphrates River toward Baghdad, reaching the vicinity of Al Najaf with minimal resistance, overrunning the Rumaila oil fields and securing the facilities "virtually unscathed," capturing Umm Qasr and mounting other offensive operations. Western and northern Iraq had virtually been neutralized.²⁰

However, "the campaign did not stay easy." The Fedayeen, special Republican Guards, and other forces mounted a counterattack "with a vengeance." They proved to be "wily and ruthless opponents," ambushing US forces, sniping, attacking the extended supply lines, firing shoulder air defense weapons, and using suicidal tactics. "They knew the American rules of engagement and exploited them to their advantage." An Nasiriyah was one of the most "hotly contested" areas. The expected moral support from the Iraqi Shiites did not materialize as they "seemed to present an overall attitude of sullen indifference." Lieutenant General William Wallace, the V Corps commander, responded to the "troubling surprises" when he remarked that the Iraqis were "'not the enemy we war-gamed against.'" Strategy and tactics had to change to combat the "dynamic battlefield."

The Army Reserve responded by mobilizing primarily combat service and combat service support units. Army Reserve Soldiers were involved in providing military police protection, operating ports and ammunition facilities, repairing equipment, building bridges, hauling fuel, and supporting the theater on a broad-spectrum.²¹ Army Reserve units like the 195th Contract Supervision Detachment received mobilization orders and deployed to Kuwait and then to Iraq.

By the end of 2003, the Army Reserve had mobilized a total of 2,322 units (AA UIC's and derivative UIC's).²² The total number of Army Reserve Soldiers serving on active duty for the Global War on Terrorism was 71,587 incorporating Operations Noble Eagle (home front), Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.²³ Helmly described the mobilization as "for percentage wise the largest mobilization we've had since World War II."²⁴ In a message to Army Reserve Soldiers and their families, Helmly told them: "Today the nation is asking Army Reserve Soldiers to be prepared to serve on active duty when called. Just as the generation of World War II answered the call to service, we are being called upon to sacrifice in defense of our Nation in the Global War on Terrorism."²⁵ "The nation has called," said Lieutenant General Jack Stultz, the current Chief, Army Reserve, "so we've answered the call, and we're going to continue to answer the call."²⁶

Major combat operations in Iraq officially ended on 1 May 2003 when President Bush declared "mission accomplished."²⁷ However, as with Operation Enduring Freedom, the insurgents were relentless. The Global War on Terrorism continued with the nonstop mobilization and deployment of Army Reserve Soldiers. The Army Reserve remained committed to the warfight and to the warrior ethos. For the 195th Contract Supervision Detachment that meant supervising longshoremen, stevedores, labor crews, and military personnel contracted to load and off-load military cargo ships.

Lineage and Honors

To date, no official lineage and honors is certified for the 195th Contract Supervision Detachment by the Center of Military History. The following information is from public sources, official orders and from unit members.

Date unknown: Unit is constituted as a Transportation Corps asset and attached to the 81st Regional Support Command.

April 2003: Unit is assigned to the 32nd Transportation Group, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait in support of the Iraq War.

April 2003: Unit is attached to the 143rd Transportation Command (TRANSCOM), Military Traffic Management Command, Port of Shuaiba, Kuwait.

November 2003: Unit is reattached to the 81st Regional Readiness Command.²⁸

Heraldry

81st Regional Readiness Command



Distinctive Unit Insignia

Description: A gold color metal and enamel device 1 1/8 inches (2.86 cm) in height overall consisting of a blue octagon bearing a vertical gold stripe throughout the center charged with a blue star at the top and overall in base a black wildcat and extending over the left side of the octagon a gold eight-rayed sun and over the right side a gold fleur-de-lis; arched across the top on a gold scroll the inscription "TRAIN" and convexly arched in base, terminating on each side in back of the sun and fleur-de-lis, a gold scroll inscribed "MAINTAIN" on the left and "SUSTAIN" on the right, all in black letters.

Symbolism: The black wildcat is from the shoulder sleeve insignia of the 81st Division and also refers to that unit's nickname. The sun from the flag of the President of the Philippines commemorates the division's World War II Philippine Presidential Unit Citation, and the fleur-de-lis is for the World War I Campaigns. The star denotes Command activities. The octagon and vertical stripe allude to the numerical designation of the organization.

Background: The distinctive unit insignia was originally authorized for the 81st US Army Reserve Command on 12 June 1970. It was reassigned to the 81st Regional Support Command on 16 April 1996. The insignia was redesignated for the 81st Regional Readiness Command effective 16 July 2003.²⁹

Chronology

- 29 January 2003 Unit is placed on alert for mobilization by its commander, LTC Paul Oettinger.
- 10 February 2003 Unit (unit identification code WV36AA) is mobilized at Orlando, Florida in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.³⁰
- 18 February 2003 Unit arrives at mobilization station, Fort Stewart, Georgia.
- 28 February 2003 Unit is validated for overseas deployment.
- 1-28 March 2003 Unit is temporarily assigned to 3rd Transportation Battalion, Port of Jacksonville, Florida, for vessel and port operations training.
- 29 March-
4 April 2003 Unit assists Hunter Army Airfield Arriva and Departure Group.
- 6 April 2003 Unit departs Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, en route to Kuwait. in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- 8 April 2003 Unit is assigned to the 32nd Transportation Group, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.
- 15 April 2003 Unit is assigned to 143rd Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) at Port of Shuaiba, Kuwait.

6 June 2003	Unit is placed under the tactical control of the Military Traffic Management Command.
7 June 2003	Unit divided, team sent to container yard at Port of Shuwaikh, Kuwait.
August 2003	Unit begins mission as part of vessel operation teams.
15 October 2003	Unit receives “Mission Complete” order, cleared to prepare for redeployment.
6 November 2003	Unit departs Kuwait, en route to the United States.
7 November 2003	Unit arrives at Maguire Air Force Base, New Jersey. Departs to home station on four-day pass.
11 November 2003	Unit reports to Fort Stewart, undergoes demobilization processing.
15 November 2003	Unit released to home station, reassigned to 81st Regional Readiness Command. ³¹

Operations

Preparation and Mobilization

The 195th Contract Supervision Detachment, herein referred as “the detachment” or simply, the 195th, is a twelve-Soldier Army Reserve unit formerly based at the Corrine Drive Reserve Center in Orlando, Florida. Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Paul Oettinger during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, the unit’s primary mission was to supervise longshoremen, stevedores, labor crews, and military personnel contracted to load and off-load military cargo ships. Using modern cargo accountability technology such as the Military Traffic Management Command’s (MTMC) Worldwide Port System (WPS), the 195th provided tracking and accountability of military cargo, ensuring that equipment loaded aboard a ship was the same equipment that was unloaded at its destination.

On 10 February 2003, just weeks before the start of the military offensive against Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq, the 195th officially mobilized for Operation Enduring Freedom. Oettinger was newly-assigned, having taken command of the detachment from Lieutenant Colonel Scott Montgomery less than thirty days prior. It was a somewhat awkward situation, not only for Oettinger but for his Soldiers as well. Without the luxury of knowing each other, they were suddenly forced to depend on each other to perform the most important mission they had ever undertaken. Oettinger assembled his detachment, consisting of three officers, six enlisted men and two enlisted women. After briefing them all as best he could with the limited knowledge he had about the situation facing them some 6,000 miles away, he immediately began to simultaneously prepare the unit’s assigned equipment for shipment and complete his Soldiers’ pre-deployment processing. The 195th would report to Fort Stewart, west of Savannah, Georgia, for mobilization and deployment training. Pre-deployment processing at home station encompassed medical record checks for immunizations and medical conditions; dental screening for disease and Panorex radiographs; financial arrangements regarding military pay; preparing wills and powers of

attorney; and a myriad of other details peculiar to the process of preparing to go to war. The 81st Regional Support Command assisted the men and women of the 195th in these tasks by sending along a mobilization team.

After packing their office equipment and supplies into a conex shipping container,³² the 195th performed maintenance on its two Humvees³³ to make them fit for the ocean journey and mission they were about to perform.

On 18 February, after leaving their vehicles and conex to be loaded later onto contracted commercial transporters, the Soldiers of the 195th threw their heavy duffle and kit bags into the belly of their government-leased bus before boarding it for the day-long trip northward to Fort Stewart. The bus was a nice touring bus of the type seen in travel shows on television. It was a comfortable ride and the trip was uneventful, but the weather that day grew ever more overcast as the bus grew closer to the Georgia border. The typically wet and chilly weather that time of year would be punctuated by periods of cloudless, deep blue skies in the weeks ahead, but today, as each Soldier looked out a window and stared blankly at the cars passing them on Interstate 95, they could see only that rain was on the horizon, and that they would soon be in it. The youngest member in the unit, twenty-one year old Specialist Selena Punt, who was already at Fort Stewart as part of the advance party, must have wondered what great adventure awaited her and what did her family think about this unmarried University of Central Florida student going to war. The other female in the unit, Specialist Radoica Farara, left behind not only her husband, but her beloved dog, too. Farara, a native of the Caribbean Islands, and Punt, a native Floridian, would soon become friends and roommates for the next nine months. Movement Officer Lieutenant John Johns, an Individual Ready Reserve augmentee assigned to the unit just eight days before, said an emotional farewell to his wife, Donna, who was six and a half months pregnant. Sergeant First Class Eugene “Gene” Shiner, the 195th’s senior non-commissioned officer (NCO), left behind his wife, Elizabeth, and his 12-day old twins, son Ryan and daughter Madison.³⁴ Some tried to sleep during the ride, but it was difficult; most just closed their eyes and tried to remember if they had remembered all the things they were supposed to

remember. Those who couldn't remain quiet engaged in small talk, trying hard to mask the nervousness that clutched at each of them, except perhaps for the commander.

Oettinger received his higher education at the United States Military Academy, West Point class of 1980. That alone was enough to impress most people and assure his competence as a commander. But the fact he was also an Army Ranger is what earned him the respect of his Soldiers for being strong and resourceful, both physically and mentally. In exactly seven days from this day, he would celebrate his 45th birthday, making him the second oldest member of the unit, behind the Detachment Executive Officer, Major Mark Lloyd Loren, who had celebrated his 51st year just three weeks earlier.³⁵ Oettinger probably wondered where at Fort Stewart he would be on that day, and would his wife be able to call him.

Loren, and his driver, Specialist Selena Punt, served as the advance party and arrived at Fort Stewart ahead of the main party. They finished their tasks and now waited patiently that evening at the main gate of Fort Stewart. Here they would meet the rest of their unit's Soldiers and take them to their barracks, store their weapons, feed them and sign them into the mobilization operations center. They became like family while deployed and friendships developed that would follow them the rest of their lives. As they waited for their fellow Soldiers, Loren reflected on his twenty-six years in the military and how he looked forward to this final adventure in his career with such a fine group of Soldiers. He could not imagine the fate and near morbid celebrity that would await him five months from now. Punt waited quietly at the wheel of her Humvee, the diesel engine idling and the heater humming, keeping them warm on that cool night. Her first important task of the war was as the advanced party driver; she helped the unit's executive officer accomplish all the strange and many tasks the Army required of their team to get everything ready for her unit. Her thoughts, known only to herself, remained unspoken about this new phase of her life.³⁶

Fort Stewart, Georgia

On the night of 18 February 2003, twelve tired and hungry Soldiers reported to the Fort Stewart Mobilization Readiness Office, more commonly known as the mobilization station. After their initial welcoming brief and the preliminary collection of orders, the weary Soldiers arrived at several concrete block style buildings, the standard living quarters at Fort Stewart for mobilized Army Reserve Soldiers. Set aside from the modern main section of the fort, this large, relatively unused section of the fort now housed the thousands of reserve Soldiers coming to Fort Stewart for mobilization training. Since there were only ten male and two female Soldiers in the 195th, housing them at this place was not quite the inconvenience it was for the larger units. The females had their own quarters away from the males, but otherwise shared the same conditions. Dining facilities were located on the main part of the fort and a shuttle bus provided transportation to and from those places. All too often the bus was an inconvenience, especially when schedules were tight and there simply was no time to make the round trip. Sometimes, it was easier to order pizza or Chinese food delivered to the barrack door.³⁷

Training began in earnest, as there were many hundreds of units to train at Fort Stewart and very little time to do it. It was easier for the mobilization training teams to handle small units such as the 195th, as they could be in and out of places like the gas chamber and firing range much more quickly than larger units. Some of the medical screenings at Fort Stewart repeated those already done during pre-mobilization processing at home station the week before. The 195th Soldiers also received additional immunizations at this time, to include the six-dose anthrax series.

In just ten days, the 195th and its sister unit, the 194th Contract Supervision Detachment which mobilized and trained at the same time, completed their mandatory validation training for overseas deployment in record time, a claim made by many other units passing through that place as well, but impressive just the same. Far more impressive was the life-saving action taken by Specialist Christopher Wrzesien who administered cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) to a heart attack victim at Fort

Stewart. For his actions, Wrzesien received the Army Commendation Medal. The 195th was off to a good start.

All that was needed now was to schedule a date and time to board a plane at Hunter Army Airfield and head off to war. As was the case for nearly every unit deploying from Fort Stewart, more units waited to fly to staging areas in Kuwait than there were airplanes available to take them. A backlog of deployable units quickly formed, both at Hunter and at Fort Stewart, which were struggling to keep up with the rush of new units arriving every day. The 195th, along with the 194th, was one of the very lucky and very few units able to provide its mission expertise before deployment during this time of bottle-necked transportation and rising frustration among troops.

As their luck would have it, the port at Jacksonville, Florida, needed the services of units such as the 195th to assist the loading of ships to take on military cargo from the Army marshalling yards. Viewing this as the perfect opportunity to provide critical real life training and to observe his Soldiers in action, Oettinger jumped at the chance to gainfully employ both detachments. For the next four weeks, from 1 through 28 March, the 195th and 194th worked and trained diligently to aid the war effort and train themselves at the same time. “While in Jacksonville we worked with the 1173rd TTB [Transportation Terminal Battalion] perfecting our skills as cargo specialists and computer operators for our mission overseas,”³⁸ explained one Soldier. Loren was more specific. “[Because we] completed our process in record time, this freed us to go to the Port of Jacksonville and assist with the loading of seven vessels that were critical for the start of the war. This mission enhanced our job skills and confidence.”³⁹ But this did not relieve their frustration at not getting a flight to Kuwait. On 19 March, the 195th members, as did thousands of other Soldiers and families across the nation, huddled around television sets at the port, watching the outbreak of war in Iraq and chafing that they were not there.

The Jacksonville mission also gave Oettinger’s unit the opportunity to load its own equipment. The detachment’s conex arrived at Jacksonville and its Humvees arrived at Fort Stewart several weeks earlier. Since his

Soldiers were allowed to drive their Humvees to Jacksonville and use them there, it was a simple matter to load their own trusty sets of wheels. To ensure there could be no doubt of what belonged to whom once they arrived in Kuwait, Loren purchased bright, neon orange-colored flags from a local bicycle shop which he firmly attached to each of the 195th's vehicles and the conex. There would be no doubt as to who owned what.⁴⁰

On 29 March, the 195th relocated to Hunter Army Airfield, not to catch a flight, but to assist the Arrival/Departure Control Group with loading cargo aboard two airplanes bound for Southwest Asia. Their help may have played a part in getting the 195th a flight of its own, for on 5 April 2003, the detachment received word to be ready to depart Hunter for Kuwait on the 6th. The war against Iraq, having begun a little more than two weeks earlier, was well underway and supplies were arriving at Kuwaiti ports quickly and would be sorely needed to support the 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers spearheading the offensive toward Baghdad.

The 195th was already assisting at Hunter, located south of Savannah but adjacent to Fort Stewart's eastern boundary. The twelve men and women had their gear and themselves at the passenger terminal where they were promptly quarantined, a policy which ensured no one would inadvertently miss this overseas movement.⁴¹

Operations in Kuwait

On a cold and damp morning of 6 April 2003, a chartered Delta Airlines Boeing 737 jet airliner lifted off Hunter's 11,375 feet long asphalt runway,⁴² carrying more than 100 souls on board, 12 of them from the 195th. For nearly everyone, the feeling was surreal; it seemed more like a dream rather than the reality that, in just a matter of hours, they would be in a war. The plane turned northward, flying parallel to the eastern United States seaboard. After three hours, the plane headed eastward, over Newfoundland and across the North Atlantic. After nearly nine hours in the sky, the plane touched down at Rhein Main Airport, Frankfurt, Germany, for refueling. Its tired passengers deplaned to stretch their legs and walk about for a little while. Aboard the plane again after just a couple of hours, the next stop was a little more than two flying hours away, at

Vicenza Italy, home to SETAF—Southern European Task Force—and the 173rd Airborne Infantry. It was well into night when the plane landed. From this point, the plane came under direct military control to ensure its safe passage over potentially hostile territory and to confirm its carefully charted flight path. The final stop was Kuwait International Airport, where twenty-six hours from the time the plane left Hunter, the 195th touched down on Kuwaiti soil shortly before dawn on the morning of 7 April 2003.⁴³ After unloading their bags, the travel-weary Soldiers boarded a contracted civilian bus for the short ride to Camp Wolf, a processing center for arriving and departing Soldiers, located between the two main runways. The stay here would be short, just long enough for them to catch a few hours of sleep or explore the place before moving on to their permanent assignment.

The 195th didn't have to wait long. That day it received assignment to the 32nd Transportation Group, headquartered at Camp Arifjan. Camp Arifjan was the largest staging area in the theater. From its relatively simple beginnings as a modern logistics base, it transformed in recent months into a bustling city, swelling from 2,000 assigned personnel to over 23,000 in April 2003. From here, combat support units massed and moved forward to provide sustainment for the rapidly advancing 3rd Infantry Division, closing on the Iraqi capital city of Baghdad. The mission of the 32nd was to keep that fighting force well supplied with food, water, and ammunition. Anything else was secondary at this critical point in the war.

The unit's first home at Arifjan was a large warehouse originally designed to store pre-positioned war materiel, but now held some 500 male and female Soldiers crammed into a single huge living space with no privacy or room to move about. The conditions were miserable as dust and 120 degree heat took their toll on everyone. It was April, but already the desert heat was becoming unbearable; even at night the temperatures were consistently above 100 degrees Fahrenheit and the flies and close proximity to others made it impossible to get a decent sleep.⁴⁴ When the opportunity came to move the 195th into Arifjan's tent city, Oettinger jumped at the chance to get out of the squalid environment of the

warehouse. By this time, all the Soldiers of the unit bonded and were now behaving like a family, protecting each other and looking out for each other's best interests. It came as no surprise then, when the two female Soldiers, Punt and Farara, asked to stay in the same tent with the men. In fact, it seemed a perfectly natural request which the commander and his men readily endorsed, especially in view of the terrible and frequent fights which took place in the assigned female tent. Blankets were quickly set up as dividers in a corner of the tent, surrounding the women's cots to provide privacy, and the women were made to understand they would be protected from any and all predators who might accost them. Within this aura of family protection, the women were made to feel safe and secure in this hot and hostile natural environment.

To the dismay of Oettinger and his Soldiers, the 32nd was a ground transportation organization and had no mission for a unit whose expertise was in the area of port operations. To the 195th, it was akin to selling freezers at the North Pole--there simply was no market for them. But Oettinger was not one to wait around, sitting on his hands waiting for something to happen.

After two weeks of inactivity at Arifjan, Oettinger secured a deal for his unit whereby they would transfer to the 143rd TRANSCOM (Transportation Command), the same command his Soldiers assisted in Jacksonville and which coincidentally happened to be at the Port of Shuaiba, after a long and circuitous route getting there. The detachment Soldiers proudly wore the Military Traffic Management Command's shoulder insignia on their left sleeves. They moved into modern, fixed facilities at the port where they wasted no time getting started.

The mission at Shuaiba involved the accounting for thousands of deploying and redeploying vehicles and items of equipment at the marshalling and container yards. The 195th trained themselves on the use of the Worldwide Port System (WPS) hand-held scanners and other devices that not only electronically tracked the contents of the containers, but printed out various forms, records and reports for their higher command, thereby greatly speeding the accounting of material passing through the port. The detachment was the only unit at the ports of Kuwait

to have all the tools needed for in-transit visibility of vehicles and containers. This access provided “one of a kind service,” assisting 65 units to find their lost containers and vehicles. The detachment was reportedly the first unit in the history of the Military Traffic Management Command to use the onward movement function in WPS called an “Island Scan.” This function provided customers daily and hourly updates for vehicles and containers in WPS and the Global Transportation Network. Specialist Jason Weiland received the Army Commendation Medal for initiating this and other actions. By all accounts, morale was high. It was here, at Shuaiba, that the 195th was also reunited with its sister units, the 194th Contract Supervision Detachment and the 76th Transportation Corps Detachment, whom it had worked with at Jacksonville.

In early May, Lieutenant Johns returned home on leave for the anticipated birth of his and Donna’s first child. After traveling for more than twenty-four hours, Johns arrived just as his new daughter, Olyvia, was born.⁴⁵

By June, 2003, a logistical crisis developed that threatened to destroy the 3rd Infantry Division’s offensive in Iraq. The division was now on the verge of logistical condition BLACK, the point at which all offensive operations are critically affected due to lack of supplies to sustain the effort. In this case, the shortage was life-sustaining water, food, repair parts and basic commodities for the Soldiers. Without water, the advancing Army would slowly grind to a halt; its Soldiers would suffer from heat and dehydration until they could no longer function. There was at that very moment plenty of water in the theater--clear, cool and refreshing bottled water just waiting for the tops to be twisted off and poured down the dry and parched throats of our warriors; water that was sitting that very moment, unmoving, amid 5,400 containers stockpiled at the Port of Shuwaikh, unable to break free of the political logjam in which the containers were hopelessly mired.

The situation required desperate and immediate action. The commander of the 1186th Transportation Group, Colonel Perry Clawson, called upon Oettinger to assemble a team right away and come to the Port of Shuwaikh and clear up this bottle neck. With his hand-picked team of

three others, Oettinger arrived and quickly assessed the situation. It was indeed bleak. According to Loren, “the port was handling 200 percent more cargo than it had ever handled before.”⁴⁶ There was no security or military police support to prevent pilferage; 5,400 ocean shipping containers stacked and scattered was an awe-inspiring sight to behold. But with no way to know which containers held what materials, and little manpower to physically check, the sight was a catastrophe. There was no time to lose; Soldiers’ lives depended on Oettinger and his team to get that water moving. He and his men organized twenty-four other Soldiers into a detachment with the sole mission of clearing the Port of Shuwaikh.⁴⁷ He developed a map of the container yard by which his people systematically searched for those containers that held water and moved them out. Again, the Worldwide Port System and RFID (radio frequency identification)⁴⁸ made it possible to finally break the bottle neck and allow the most needed containers to leave port. In the process, the unit started weekly metric-driven carrier meetings that allowed customers to interface with commercial carriers. Loren and Johns received the Army Commendation Medal for their work at Shuwaikh.

As the Fourth of July approached, special meals ordered for the Soldiers were somewhere in that maze of containers. “These dinners were located at the port in reefers (refrigerators) and dry containers. Working twenty-four hours a day for several days, the team of Soldiers found and delivered over sixty 40-foot containers filled with steak, hamburger, hot dogs, lobster and crab for this meal. With these shipments, over 150,000 Soldiers were able to enjoy this very special celebratory meal.”⁴⁹ Few, if any, Soldiers in the field who enjoyed a wonderful meal that day, knew of the Herculean efforts by Oettinger’s team to bring it to them. Their accomplishments did not go unnoticed and earned the detachment Coins of Excellence awards, presented personally from the Military Traffic Management Command’s commander, Major General Ann E. Dunwoody. But more important than any award was the knowledge that the port was now free of blockage and supplies could move forward, unhindered.

While the critical mission at Shuwaikh continued in earnest throughout the remainder of June and July, the remaining Soldiers of the

195th continued to work at the Port of Shuaiba, maintaining accountability of the marshalling and container yards. These Soldiers were responsible for moving and accounting for over 48 ships and 47,286 marshalling yard containers and vehicles in WPS.⁵⁰

On 5 July 2003, an unforeseen medical condition struck Loren which resulted in the complete blockage of one lung and eventually a 70 percent blockage in the other. He was medically evacuated first to the Combat Support Hospital at Camp Wolf, then on to Landstuhl Regional Hospital in Germany. He was once again medically evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. The doctors at Walter Reed were at first inclined to return him to his unit, but last minute tests confirmed a diagnosis of pulmonary embolism, which up to this point had a 100 percent fatality rate.⁵¹ During Operation Iraqi Freedom nineteen other Soldiers and one civilian news correspondent, David Bloom, developed this condition, believed to be a result of the anthrax vaccinations. Of those victims, Loren is the only one to have survived.⁵²

By mid-August, the mission for Oettinger's Shuwaikh team drew to a close after having established control and continuity with the 841st Transportation Battalion to maintain what Oettinger started. Oettinger and his men were finally reunited with the rest of the 195th at the Port of Shuaiba. The detachment redesigned its mission into a Military Traffic Management Command vessel team, charged with maintaining safety and transportation standards during vessel download and upload. By the end of August, Oettinger was satisfied he and his Soldiers had done all they could and wrote a mission complete memorandum to the 32nd Transportation Group, the first step to redeployment.⁵³

Mission Completed

By the beginning of September 2003, mission work for the 195th waned considerably; nearly all major combat actions in Iraq ended and supplies were plentiful and moving freely. Camp Arifjan was now a desert boom-town with nearly every amenity for the Soldier imaginable. But most of all, troops and units were demobilizing in large numbers, their missions completed. And so it was that in October 2003, the Coalition Joint Task Force-7 approved the 195th's mission complete memorandum

drafted by Oettinger in August. His detachment received the welcome news they would now stand down and prepare for demobilization. It was an exciting and eventful past nine months, but now it was time to return to wives and husbands and babies.⁵⁴

In a reversal of their arrival nine months earlier, the 195th retraced its steps and found itself again at Camp Wolf. On 6 November, the eleven men and women of the detachment boarded a plane for home and loved ones. Each and every one was lost in thought, staring out the windows at the brown desert sand of Kuwait, but their hearts were racing with excitement and joy to be leaving this place. A cheer erupted as the plane's wheels broke at last the bonds of gravity and climbed ever higher into the clear blue sky.

Landing the next day at Maguire Air Force Base, New Jersey, these heroes arrived in time to take advantage of the long Veteran's Day weekend and obtained four-day passes to go home to Florida. After catching the shuttle bus from Maguire to Philadelphia Airport, the entire unit flew to Orlando, Florida, landing that same night at 2300 hours to the cheers and arms of loved ones and friends. They did not return to Fort Stewart until 11 November, Veteran's Day, a fitting tribute for these new veterans.

For the next several days, Oettinger and his Soldiers underwent a series of briefings and reintegration, a settling-in period designed to help reacclimatize Soldiers to their homeland culture. When at last they were released to return to home station on 15 November, they boarded another plane headed south to Orlando. There, waiting anxiously at the airport to see and greet his friends, was Loren. Loren coordinated their homecoming and held a formal ceremony recognizing the achievements of the entire unit on 17 November. It was a great homecoming, and each of them took great pride in knowing they had finished a job well done. Lieutenant Johns took great pride in his promotion to captain shortly before leaving Kuwait. Theirs was truly a story of unsung dedication and devotion to duty. Some would say their mission was heroic, but to Oettinger, they simply did the job they were trained to do and were simply glad to be home.⁵⁵ Loren summed up his experience. "I found the

mission to be very rewarding. I was planning to retire with 26 years in the military before the war started, but am glad that I remained in to do one last mission with the Army.”⁵⁶

During its deployment, the unit had been directly responsible for locating, moving, and identifying over 54,450 containers and vehicles being deployed and redeployed through the ports of Jacksonville, Shuwaikh and Shuaiba.⁵⁷

Lessons Learned

Oettinger made a number of observations and recommendations concerning the detachment's operations in theater.⁵⁸ (1) The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and the Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) must set container delivery priorities to Military Traffic Management Command and the commercial carriers when opening a container port. Commercial carriers cannot deliver all their containers at one time to consignees' and customers' nodes. In a new theater of operation, commercial carriers do not know consignees and their locations. (2) Consignees' Department of Defense Activity Address Codes (DODAACS) and their locations changed consistently and were not updated from May to August 2003. An Internet link, <https://day2k1.daas.dla.mil/daasing/>, was very helpful in obtaining locations to delivery containers. It must be kept updated for commercial carriers and container managers to use. (3) Some 70 percent of all commercial containers coming from the United States to the Port of Shuwaikh had functioning radio frequency (RF) tags. An extensive RF interrogator system must be set up at the port and nodes for the use of In Transit Visibility (ITV). (4) Oettinger recommended when opening a commercial container port, mandatory use of RF tags on all containers should be institutionalized. Ports must have RF interrogators installed. (5) Mobile RF interrogators, scanners and readers should be made available to all container managers or their subcontractors. Level 6-detail information is available through the scanner/reader handhelds. (6) Container RF tags need to be mechanically attached to the containers. Containers need to have a holding bracket for the RF tag so they cannot be damaged in shipping and handling by material handling equipment (MHE). A DO NOT REMOVE battery caution removal label needs to be legibly and clearly written on each RF tag device. (7) Level 6 detail of container contents needs to be readily available electronically to the Military Traffic Management Command and DLA commercial container managers via a website. The Intelligent Road/Rail Information System (IRRIS) did not work at the ports of Kuwait due to modem and satellite

connectivity. Level 6 data was available through the OCONUS ITV site and only worked if the container had a RF tag and the commodity information loaded. (8) Twenty foot and forty foot containers need to have 5"x 8" stickers or removable magnetic placards containing the commodity, the consignee and the commercial container owner. Oettinger thought this would assist container managers to locate, ship, deliver and return empty containers to the container owner. (9) Container liaison officers (LNOs) should be required at centralized nodes in theater. This assists in delivery and return of empty containers. (10) USA container yards need to be segregated from the host nations' container yard. USA containers are not marked any differently than the host nation's containers. Initially in Shuwaikh, until a complete inventory and location system was developed. Commercial and USA personnel took four hours to find one USA container. (11) Delivery of reefer containers from the Defense Supply Center and the Defense Logistics Agency (DSCP/DLA) far exceeded the storage/plug-in capability of the theater. Over 300 reefers at one point in June 2003 were turned away from Shuwaikh and Shuaiba. Reefers were not meant to stay plugged in for six months at the port. At one point there were over 500 reefers stored for four months at Shuwaikh. All these reefers were charged daily demurrage and maintenance fees while host nation container yard owners maintained them. Many reefers went bad with food spoilage costing on the average of \$55,000/container. The Public Warehouse Company was not set up logistically for the voluminous flow of reefers from the port. (12) There should be weekly carrier meetings, Oettinger opined, with delivery metrics attended by consignees and carriers. Commercial carriers, he observed, performed better knowing their performance was being measured against their competitors. (13) The USC-04 (port handling) contract needs to be amended to address demurrage problems when ports get congested. Host nation carriers/trucking companies did not have the cash flow to address this issue in Shuwaikh and Shuaiba. (14) Daily status reports of containers shipped by carriers to higher headquarters should be continued.⁵⁹

The unit's after action report discussed other lessons learned. There were several concerning deployment operations. For instance, many mobilization issues can be accomplished at home station instead of the mobilization station. Smaller units should be mobilized for at least one week at the home station. Also, billeting at the mobilization station was inadequate. The length of stay in billets should be limited. Only mobilize those units to be deployed upon validation.

Among the deployment personnel issues was the fact that the detachment did not have a unit administrator before or during mobilization which was detrimental to the mission. Every unit needs a full time unit administrator. The Soldiers received medical care but there were complications with TRICARE when hospitals did not know how to bill TRICARE. Hospitals need to be better informed.

There were several positive operations in the deployment maintenance supply arena. The unit's vehicles were inspected at Fort Stewart and needed repairs were made. The supply system worked in that the detachment received all ordered supplies. On the negative side, Soldiers received only two sets of desert camouflage uniforms but the mission required four sets. Once in theater it was difficult to acquire them. These should be issued at the mobilization site. Derivative DODAACs were not created for the area of responsibility at the mobilization site but should be.

As far as employment operations and personnel were concerned, the 32nd Transportation Group permitted the detachment the flexibility to find a mission commensurate with its mobilization and table of operations and equipment. If subordinate units are given this flexibility, they can create their own mission. The 195th conducted vessel operations without any injuries. To sustain this more safety personnel need to be working on the vessels. All Soldiers worked in their military occupational specialty. But on the negative side, there was duplication in missions because the Military Traffic Management Command did not completely understand the operation of each unit. Resources should be combined to avoid duplication.

In the area of redeployment operations and personnel, the detachment had redeployment packets which reduced the time at the redeployment station. Soldiers thought redeployment briefings were helpful in transitioning to civilian status. Medical personnel identified problems and tried to set up referrals at the redeployment station. Needed parts were ordered and received on time. But after the detachment received notification of its redeployment, it took several weeks to get the orders. Soldiers believed a unit's higher headquarters should find a way to expedite the process. Redeployment checklists were often not current. The uncertainty of the redeployment date caused family members and employers undue stress. Some Soldiers thought redeployment and R&R briefings should not be done together.⁶⁰

Photographs



Left to Right: Lieutenant Johns, Lieutenant Colonel Oettinger, Sergeant First Class Shiner, Major Loren, Major Minor, at the Fort Stewart nuclear, biological, and chemical chamber, February 2003.



Port of Shuaiba, Kuwait, 2003.



Tactical Operations Center ("Bumble Bee"), Port of Shuaiba. Kuwait.



Mission completed, the 195th minus Major Loren, Port of Shuaiba, Kuwait, October 2003.

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³¹ Unit History Report.

³²An all-metal, waterproof, stackable container measuring ten feet wide by twenty feet long and eight feet high, built to shipping industry standards. Conex containers can be stacked in the hold or deck of a ship, or mounted on ground vehicles for transport.

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³⁷This and other scene descriptions, to include weather conditions, are reproduced here from telephone interviews and personal emails provided to Mr. Dennis Hatcher, which are in the unit history file. Some descriptions of Fort Stewart are from separate historical sources contained in the Global War on Terrorism Collection, US Army Reserve Historical Research Collection, Office of Army Reserve History, US Army Reserve Command.

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⁴³Unit History Report. Military tactical operations policies require travel to hostile theaters during hours of darkness whenever possible to lessen the danger of losses due to enemy fire.

⁴⁴Unit History Report.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Personal history narrative, Major Mark Lloyd Loren, subject: Operations, no date.

⁴⁷Unit History Report.

⁴⁸Ibid. Radio frequency Identification (RFID) is an electronic identification method, relying on stored and remotely retrieved data using RFID tags or transponders. An RFID tag can be attached to or incorporated into a product, animal, or person for the purpose of identification using radio waves. Chip-based RFID tags contain silicon chips and antennae. Passive tags require no internal power source, whereas active tags require a power source.

⁴⁹Unit History Report.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid. Pulmonary embolism is an artery blockage in the lungs.

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⁵³ Unit History Report.

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