

# Battalion writes book on combat logistics patrols in Iraq

**SGT. RACHEL A. BRUNE**

*Army News Service*

FORT POLK, La. — "It really is Combat Logistics Patrols for Dummies," said Capt. Justin Redfern, joking about a handbook that Soldiers in his battalion put together in Iraq.

Redfern and other Soldiers of Fort Polk's 142nd Corps Support Battalion have made a serious effort to distill their experiences running CLPs in Iraq into an easily accessible handbook. The book, the brainchild of battalion commander Lt. Col. Ronald Green, consists of two volumes.

"Volume One can be picked up by any unit coming into theater to learn how to run a CLP," said Capt. John Gray, the project officer in charge of Volume Two.

1st Lt. Erik Heil, executive officer of the 494th Transportation Company, which recently returned to Fort Campbell, Ky., compiled Volume One in November 2005. The book, now available on the Logistics Network section of Army Knowledge Online, focuses on company-level CLP operations.

"I was the outside eyes [for Volume One]," said Gray. After he reviewed the document, Green tasked him to construct Volume Two.

Gray began by soliciting information from each battalion section, from personnel and operations to the chaplain.

"There's a lot of specialized data, but it was articulated in a manner that



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**Pfc. David Moody, 494th Transportation Company truck driver, secures his M2 .50 caliber crew-served weapon before heading out on a mission Oct. 5.**

could be understood," said Gray.

Gray emphasized that each section provided its own material. He was simply the editorial control to make sure the content could be understood by an outside reader.

Distilling an operation into words

The project was not without its challenges. Staff officers at the battalion are often pressed for time and sitting down to write out everything their section does is difficult.

"You don't realize how complicated

it is," said Redfern, from Salisbury, N.C. He first assisted in reviewing the Volume One and repeated his duties on this volume.

Capt. Faith Chamberlain, operations OIC, from Hopewell Township, Pa., wrote the chapter describing how the S-3, or operations section, tracks the battlefield, including the matrices, procedures and reports the section uses for that job.

"It's difficult to distill an operation into words," said Redfern. The battalion arrived in Iraq in mid-July 2005, and has been running this mission for about six months.

"Some of the products created early on have changed," said Redfern. "Some initial things required intense review in order to make [them] relevant."

Redfern used the imagery of an adobe hut to describe the construction of the handbook. First, one begins with one room and then begins adding rooms until completing a large complex.

One of those rooms belongs to the chaplain. Capt. John Smith, battalion chaplain, from Elk City, Okla., initially thought nobody would want to read a chaplain's section, thinking the handbook would focus on the tactical side of operations.

"There's a lot more involved," said Smith. "I surprised myself."

Smith tries to accompany CLPs as often as he can, after making sure that the forward operating base has reli-

gious coverage, in order to bring services to Soldiers on the mission and stationed in outlying areas.

"The key thing is, I'm there to make sure these Soldiers are spiritually equipped whenever they go out," said Smith. He later added: "Much of our mission is on the road every single night, [and] I have to go on CLPs to fully minister to the people we have here."

Other sections were more prosaic. "The S-4 [supply] section is the wish list," said Gray. Some of the items on that wish list are non-lethal ammunition and hand-held thermal devices that can aid in identifying potential threats.

The handbook is geared specifically for units operating in the 142nd CSB's area of operations, Multinational Coalition - Iraq North.

"It [the handbook] may not apply to Baghdad," said Gray. For example, 142nd CLPs operate mainly at night, and certain procedures such as the rules for escalation of force may not apply in other areas under other conditions.

The handbook is something to use for a knowledge base and additional training, Gray said. Other units have gotten in touch for more information or to suggest revisions based on their experiences.

"I just hope the units get a lot out of it and are diligent in using it to prepare for deployment," said Gray.

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