



PRESS RELEASE 21ST THEATER SUSTAINMENT COMMAND

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21st TSC, 598th Transportation Group support 172nd Infantry Brigade redeployment

By Angelika Lantz, 21st TSC Public Affairs

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany – It resembles a gigantic jigsaw puzzle with teams of players holding the individual pieces – and all are poised to complete the picture in the fastest time possible.

The 172nd Infantry Brigade's redeployment through the port of Antwerp, Belgium, Dec. 13-17, illustrates the numerous interlocking parts and



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A team of workers prepare containers for shipment by rail at the port of Antwerp, Belgium, Dec. 15. The containers are part of the 172nd Infantry Brigade's redeployment inventory. The 838th Transportation Battalion, civilian contractors and the 21st Theater Sustainment Command combined forces to complete the port operations mission for the 172nd.

actions necessary to move a unit's equipment during the process.

The Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command's 598th Transportation Group, 838th Transportation Battalion, based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, along with civilian contractors at the port, manage the Antwerp part of the mission. Nonetheless, several 21st Theater Sustainment Command elements also contributed to successfully returning more than 700 pieces of equipment to their home stations in Schweinfurt and Grafenwoehr, Germany.

"It's a matter of having the right people in the right spot at the right time," said Leo Arensman, the senior traffic manager of the 39th Transportation Battalion's Movement Control Team in Rotterdam. The 39th is a subordinate unit of the 21st TSC and is headquartered in Kaiserslautern.

Though simplified, the statement hits three important aspects of the complex coordination process. Every procedure and action involved in off-loading the ship, staging the equipment, separating it for movement via rail or highway or other methods is synchronized with maximum efficiency and speed in mind.

"Our mission is to move every piece of equipment out of the port and on to the home station as quickly and safely as possible," Arensman said.

Despite the hubbub of trucks, tractors trailers, military vehicles and forklifts moving between the ship's belly and the staging area, the ground personnel seem fully focused on completing their various tasks just as swiftly.

Safety precautions include cold weather protection, reflective vests, steel-toed boots, hearing protection, and safety helmets when necessary.

Security is another key aspect of every mission. Kevin Herrig normally works with the Theater Logistics Support Center-Europe in Kaiserslautern, but for this mission he was part of the Marshalling Area Control Group in Antwerp. Among other things, he managed force protection issues, host nation security, port security and port access.

This mission's rolling stock consists predominately of containers, making on-site repair superfluous. Nevertheless, every piece of equipment and every vehicle must still be spotted at the right location when needed.

"Every mission we do is an important mission for the U.S. forces. Whether it is a deployment or redeployment, we have to make sure that the equipment either gets to the war zone or is repaired and forwarded to its home station," Arensman said.

Extensive planning is essential as is flexible problem solving.

"Of course, planning is always successful on paper. But, you also have to be on the spot to make adjustments -- a lot of adjustments at times," Arensman said.

The brigade's equipment will be moved on seven trains, 25 commercial and 25 military trucks.

"The 21st TSC and the TLSC-E are also involved in the military highway transportation. The 6966th Truck Transportation Terminal will move sensitive items and container cargo with tractor trailers to the Schweinfurt and Grafenwoehr," Herrig said.

For Arensman, two factors signal the end and the success of a mission.

"When the port is empty, our mission ends. If there was no accident or incident and if no one was hurt, it was successful," he said.