

U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

contact: paoci@eur.army.mil
phone: 49-6221-57-5815 / DSN 370-5815
fax: 49-6221-57-6376 / DSN 370-6376



RELEASE #2008-01-29-02

Jan. 29, 2008

U.S. ARMY EUROPE SOLDIERS MAKE QUICK WORK OF RECOVERING VEHICLE ATTACKED BY BOMB IN AFGHANISTAN

By **Sgt. 1st Class Eric Hendrix**
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sammy Rodriguez, the battalion maintenance technician for U.S. Army Europe's 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment has a job that isn't exciting until things go wrong.



SGT 1ST CLASS ERIC HENDRIX

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sammy Rodriguez of U.S. Army Europe's 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (left), helps prepare a damaged vehicle for recovery to a forward operating base in the Korengal Valley of Afghanistan Jan. 23.

to get done in order to recover the vehicle and get the convoy moving again.

"I took a look at it and it took about a minute. I told the commander, 'We can do this,'" he said.

On a routine mission Jan. 23 to deliver supplies to the Korengal Outpost in Kunar Province, one of the vehicles in the convoy was attacked with an improvised explosive device. Luckily, none of the vehicles' occupants were injured. The vehicle itself wasn't so fortunate.

The explosion ripped through the engine compartment, bent the chassis frame and blew out a tire.

Rodriguez knew immediately what he had

“One of the first things I thought when I saw this vehicle was, ‘We have to retrieve it,’” Rodriguez recalled. “I remembered the commander telling me about a time he saw local villagers dancing on a burned-out chassis and how angry it made him.”

“A standard wrecker can’t make it up the road, so I usually send a mechanic on the patrol,” Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez had to work as quickly as possible while the rest of the convoy’s Soldiers secured the site.

“I had to cut off the remainder of the blown-out tire with my knife to free up some room,” Rodriguez said. “We had to pry the chassis outward from the cab because it was bent up, but it was enough to fit a tire on it.”

Rodriguez didn’t have to work alone. Three of the Afghan drivers who regularly run these patrols with the company immediately came running to help out with hydraulic jacks and pry bars.

“We did greatly appreciate what they did. It was amazing,” Rodriguez said.

Once the crew had the spare tire on the vehicle, it was able to roll, and was towed the remaining short distance up the road to the base. At the top, Rodriguez talked about the Humvee.

“I didn’t think the tires were going to hold out, but it’s an amazing piece of machinery. The armor definitely saved the lives of the occupants.”

“Chief Rodriguez knows his stuff,” said Capt. John Thyng, commander of Fusion Company, 2-503rd. “When I talked ... about the need to make sure we recover absolutely everything to prevent the bad guys from getting hold of it, he really took that to heart.”



www.hqusareur.army.mil