



**3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command  
16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade  
Public Affairs Office**

Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq  
DSN (NIPR) 318-827-6101  
DSN (SIPR) 302-243-5104  
[keith.anderson@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:keith.anderson@iraq.centcom.mil)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
3rd ESC Release #090705-5  
July 8, 2009

## **Soldiers need to be able to bring problems to their NCO**

By Staff Sgt. Keith M. Anderson  
16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde. Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — Staff Sgt. Carlenna Hawkins said that the worst thing that could happen would be for a Soldier to think he couldn't come to his non-commissioned officer with his problems.

Hawkins, a squad leader in the 70<sup>th</sup> Transportation Co., 264<sup>th</sup> Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade, said she had one Soldier who felt overwhelmed and hopeless, but because he felt comfortable talking with her, she was able to help him turn his life around.

“I have had a Soldier be reduced in rank and hit rock bottom,” said Hawkins, a native of Austin, Texas. “He felt like there was no reason to do good anymore. I mentored that Soldier and gave him hope that he could overcome the bad that has happened to him. He turned his outlook on the military around and wanted to make a change.”

Hawkins said the Soldier has turned his life around.

“He earned his rank back and got promoted again to specialist,” Hawkins said. “After he got his rank back he saw the light again, and told me that if it wasn't for me keeping his head in the game, he would have lost more than just his rank. Now at this present time he

is studying for the promotion board and will be attending the next board. He is attending 'fast class' to raise his GT (general technical score, a part of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery used to determine what jobs a Soldier is eligible for), so he can become a warrant officer."

Hawkins, who has served in the Army for almost nine years and is on her second deployment, said Soldiers have to know that their NCOs have their best interests at heart.

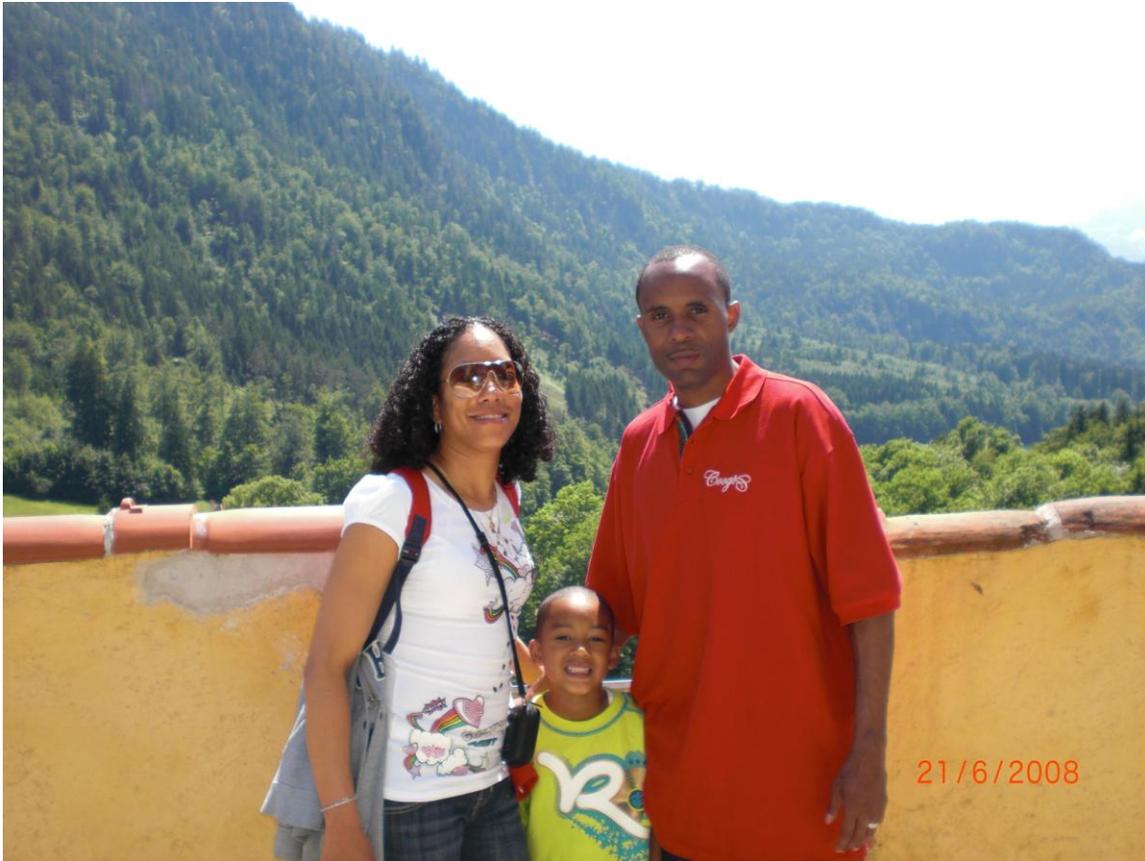
"Always place the Soldier's needs above your own," Hawkins said. "There's one thing that good NCOs never want from their Soldiers: that is for Soldiers to not be able to come to them for any issues, not to be able to confide in that NCO for help of any kind. Trust is the biggest thing that Soldiers look for in their NCOs, as well as a knowledgeable NCO."

This deployment has had some stressful moments, she said.

"This deployment has been stressful in some ways, due to the fact that I am a squad leader on this deployment and I have my hands full," Hawkins said. "I have more Soldiers than I did during my last deployment, and also I've been a convoy commander on this deployment. I have not only my own life in my hands, but I have my Soldiers' as well as the rest of the convoy."

When she can find time, she tries to better herself and her Soldiers.

"I have a couple of additional duties, just one of them being the unit prevention leader," Hawkins said. "I've taken several Soldiers to the promotion board and to the NCO and Soldier of the quarter board. One of my NCOs won the boards all the way up to brigade level. I also try to better myself. I am preparing to go to the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club board. I know it will take a lot of hard work, but I know I can do it."



Staff Sgt. Carlenna Hawkins, squad leader, 70<sup>th</sup> Transportation Co., 264<sup>th</sup> Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade, and her husband Reginald, and her son Marquis Rene Whitmore, 7, stand at Neuschwanstein Castle in Germany.

(Courtesy photos)