



**13th Expeditionary Sustainment Command
16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

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Army's top enlisted in Iraq visits last of 'surge' Soldiers

By Staff Sgt. Keith M. Anderson
16th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs

HABUR GATE, Iraq — Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, command sergeant major, Multi-National Force – Iraq, visited Soldiers of the 16th Sustainment Brigade, one of the last units in Iraq serving a 15-month deployment, Aug. 12 and 13.

The 16th Sust. Bde., a Bamberg, Germany, based logistics unit, is responsible for logistics operations in northern Iraq. The unit arrived in Kuwait July 19, 2008, just 12 days before the Aug. 1, 2008, deadline that ended the 15-month deployments.

Wilson, escorted by Command Sgt. Maj. James E. Spencer, command sergeant major, 16th Sust. Bde., first visited Soldiers at Contingency Operating Base Q-West Aug. 12, and visited some of the new facilities on the base, including the new combat stress center, convoy support center, dental clinic and education center.

Wilson and Spencer then convoyed to Habur Gate to speak with the Soldiers of Logistics Task Force – Alpha, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sust. Bde.

The small group of Soldiers at Habur Gate maintain one of a handful of points of entry

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into Iraq. Habur Gate is a convoy staging facility on the Turkish border near the Iraqi town of Zahko, and is the second busiest point of entry into Iraq, and a main point for goods coming into the country from Turkey.

Wilson spoke with LTF - Alpha Soldiers and leaders about the difficulties associated with long deployments, including suicides and assaults, and the importance of Soldier care and leadership engagement during deployments.

“We have all kinds of things going on in the Army because someone didn’t want to intervene,” Wilson said.

Wilson said long deployments can be difficult for Soldiers, so it is important that non-commissioned officers stay engaged in their lives. He said some leaders are “stuck on stupid.”

“Why am I telling you all this?” Wilson asked. “Because I was once a private. I was once a sergeant. Every time you talk to a Warrior, always go back and evaluate what you said.”

Wilson said it is OK to apologize to a Soldier if you’re wrong, or too harsh.

“The problem is that many leaders can’t do that,” Wilson said. “They think that it is a sign of weakness. Only egomaniacs look at themselves as being weak. That’s an ‘I’ leader.”

Wilson stressed the importance of putting Soldiers first, and doing the right thing.

“I’m where I’m at because of you,” Wilson said. “If you lead with your heart you’ll

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always be right.”

It was the second trip for Wilson to Q-West and Habur Gate to visit the Soldiers of the 16th Sust. Bde.

“It’s just reinforcement to him, as the senior enlisted advisor in Iraq, that we are staying engaged with our Soldiers and are continuing our mission,” said Spencer. “The visit allows him to get a true picture of the status of our Soldiers and assess any changes in the operational environment.”

While he was in the area Wilson also visited with the deputy mayor of Zahko, Dr. Basil, Aug. 13. Basil is also the mayor of Dahuk, a nearby community.

The two discussed the construction of Zahko Emergency Hospital. The \$2.9 million facility, a Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq project, is slated for completion in October.

According to information from the GRD, the project was initiated because many residents in Zahko can’t afford health care or don’t have access to it, and many existing facilities need renovation.

Wilson and Basil also discussed long-term relations in the largely Kurdish area.

“Our request is that [the U.S. Army] remains partners and friends,” said Basil, through a translator.

Wilson said he hoped to continue the great relationship that the Army has with communities in northern Iraq.

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“We hope that with the Strategic Framework Agreement, a long-term global strategic partnership with Iraq, that we’ll have that relationship for a long time,” Wilson said.

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Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, command sergeant major, Multi-National Force – Iraq, visits with Soldiers of the 16th Sustainment Brigade, one of the last units in Iraq serving a 15-month deployment, at Habur Gate Aug. 13. The Soldiers of Logistics Task Force – Alpha, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sust. Bde, maintain one of a handful of points of entry into Iraq. Habur Gate is a convoy staging facility on the Turkish border near the Iraqi town of Zahko, and is the second busiest point of entry into Iraq and a main point for goods coming into the country from Turkey. Wilson spoke with LTF - Alpha Soldiers and leaders about the difficulties associated with long deployments, including suicides and assaults, and the importance of Soldier care and leadership engagement during deployments. (Photos by Staff Sgt. Keith M. Anderson)



Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, command sergeant major, Multi-National Force – Iraq, tours the shopping district of the town of Zahko in northern Iraq, to see the progress being made and to get feedback from local leaders. Wilson was in the area to visit the Soldiers of Logistics Task Force – Alpha, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, at Habur Gate, a convoy staging facility on the Turkish border near Zahko. Habur Gate is the second busiest point of entry into Iraq, and a main point for goods coming into the country from Turkey. While in Zahko, Wilson met with the deputy mayor, Dr. Basil, and discussed the construction of Zahko Emergency Hospital. The \$2.9 million facility, a Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq project, is slated for completion in October.