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16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade  
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## **Transportation Soldiers complete mission in overtime**

Story by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Kailey Vilches  
70<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — Most Soldiers in Iraq are serving a 12-month tour, but one transportation company has been working overtime.

The 70<sup>th</sup> Transportation Co., 264<sup>th</sup> Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade, was the last unit to deploy for 15 months as part of the surge in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The company touched ground in Kuwait just days before August 1, 2008 cutoff date for 15-month deployments.

Initially the unit was deployed to support line haul transportation missions in the Al Andbar province based out of Al Assad Air Base. However, due to repositioning forces in Iraq, September of last year, 70<sup>th</sup> Trans. Co. received a change in mission and orders to relocate to Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq. In doing so the company's mission changed from serving as a traditional medium truck transportation

company to a multi-tasked unit primarily serving in area recovery escort and continuing to carry line haul support with a fleet of 16 semi-tractors.

The transportation company has seen many changes during their deployment. In January, the new security agreement went into effect as well as the share the road policy, which effectively gave the roadways back to the Iraqi people.

“It was really hard to adapt to the share the road policy,” said Spc. Yuriy Matviyenka, combat recovery wrecker operator, and Meriden, Conn. “I still feel uncomfortable with Iraqi vehicles passing me, but I have to accept it and trust the decisions of our gunners.”

Another milestone that directly impacted the mission came June 30th as all Coalition Forces pulled out of the cities of Iraq. This made the rural roadways that unit operates on potentially more dangerous. The unit needed to focus heavily on sustainment training for gunners on escalation of force in order to counteract this challenge and remain vigilant on the roadways.

“As a gunner the entire time I’ve been in recovery escort, I can honestly say that I eat, breathe and sleep escalation of force and the mechanics of the .50 cal.” said Spc. Laura Bulvas, recovery team, 70<sup>th</sup> Trans. Co.

The Chicago, Ill., native spent 13 months as a recovery escort for the transportation company.

Many of the Soldiers in the unit have seen the transformation of Iraq because of previous deployments and are glad that the country is headed in the right direction.

“I feel better about leaving this place and redeploying this time around,” Staff Sgt. Colan Roberts, platoon sergeant, 70<sup>th</sup> Trans. Co. “I always knew I’d be coming back, now it feels more like a job completed.”

The unit redeploys back to Mannheim, Germany, in October.

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Sgt. 1st Class Shannon Gordon, motor sergeant, 70<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company supervises

Soldiers unpacking and laying out tough boxes in preparation for a customs inspection at Contingency Operating Base Speicher Sept. 10. (Courtesy photo)