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16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

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**‘Lions’ of the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion head back to
Alaska**

LIONTOA

By Sgt. Keith M. Anderson
16th SB Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Soldiers from the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, concluded a 15-month deployment and welcomed the 30th CSSB, a Tennessee Army National Guard unit headquartered in Humbolt, Tenn., during a transfer of authority ceremony here Oct. 3.

“From a small cadre of folks who moved from Hawaii to Alaska in 2006, through building a combat sustainment support battalion from scratch, to a successful 15-month deployment, I could not have asked for more dedicated leaders and Soldiers; thank you,” said Lt. Col. Rodney Fogg, commander, 17th CSSB.

The Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 17th Combat Support Battalion, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, was moved to Fort Richardson, Alaska, in July of 2006 and redesignated the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, in October of 2006.

The “Lions” of the 17th CSSB accomplished many milestones during their deployment.

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The 17th CSSB supported operations across Multi-National Division-North, and units including the 25th Infantry Division, the 1st Armored Division, the 101st Airborne Division, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 10th Mountain Division, the 4th Infantry Division, military transition teams and special operations; encountered more than 240 improvised explosive device (IED) events and 60 complex attacks; and suffered more than 40 serious injuries, but didn't lose a single Soldier.

“We can list off a few numbers, logisticians like to do that,” Fogg said. “We completed over 3,000 successful combat logistics patrols *without loss of life*. We logged over 5 million miles, over some of the most dangerous roads in Iraq.”

Soldiers from the battalion were awarded 390 combat action badges, combat infantry badges and combat medic badges, and 80 Purple Heart medals.

One honored Soldier received a Bronze Star medal and a Combat Action badge.

“I feel it's prestigious, and it's something that I won't take lightly,” said Cpl. Kevin Kersch, HHC, 17th CSSB. “But at the same time, I was just doing my job.”

The 28-year-old from Pierce, Neb., taught Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 2nd Iraqi Army Division to perform logistics processes like tracking and ordering parts and equipment, and to understand and use the supply system. He also went out on explosive ordnance disposal missions with Iraqi bomb disposal companies.

“In February we went out on a mission to blow up an improvised explosive device and on the way back got hit by another one,” Kersch said, explaining how he earned the CAB.

Spc. Christopher Piegari, intelligence analyst, HHC, 17th CSSB, said he was ready to go

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home, but that he was grateful for the job training and experience in Iraq.

“I thought it was going to be more like the movies,” said the 23-year-old from Bethpage, N.Y. “It was long, with ups and downs, but the best part was being brought into a difficult job and getting to know the activities and situation in Multi-National Division – North.”

For Staff Sgt. David Head, motor sergeant and platoon sergeant, HHC, 17th CSSB, this deployment — his fourth deployment in six years — was less dangerous and more positive.

“It was safer,” said the 29-year-old from Dothan, Ala., “There wasn’t as much danger and we had more protection.”

Head, who is married and has four children, reenlisted during the deployment.

“I’m already 10-years deep, and this is a good job,” Head said. “And we’re doing something that helps the world become a better place.”

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Lt. Col. Rodney Fogg, commander, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, and Command Sgt. Maj. Charlie Lane, command sergeant major, 17th CSSB, cover the battalion colors during a transfer of authority ceremony at Lions Memorial Field here Oct. 3. The battalion transferred authority for logistics operations under the 16th Sustainment Brigade to the 30th CSSB, a Tennessee Army National Guard headquartered in Humbolt, Tenn. Soldiers from the 17th CSSB were awarded 390 combat action badges, combat infantry badges and combat medic badges, and 80 Purple Heart medals, during the unit's 15-month deployment. (Photo by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson)