



**3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command
16th 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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
3rd ESC Release #2008-11-20-01

20 November 2008

JAG Soldiers don't object to helping

JAG

By Sgt. Keith M. Anderson

16th SB Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Staff Sgt. Chad Darby, military justice non-commissioned officer in charge at the 16th Sustainment Brigade Judge Advocate's Legal Services Center here, said this deployment, his fourth, is different.

"I'm not being shot at," said the 34-year-old former infantryman from Zanesville, Ohio. "I was always out on patrols. As a paralegal I don't have to worry about someone coming up on me with a satchel charge."

Darby helps prepare non-judicial punishment paperwork, known as "Article 15" under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, and court-martial paperwork, for military commanders.

Darby said his experience in combat arms helps him to relate to the people that he works with.

-more-

JAG/2-2-2

“I love my job,” Darby said. “And with this job—being previous infantry—I can relate with the Soldiers and commanders from combat units. If I can help one Soldier, then I’ve done what I need to.”

The Soldiers at the legal office here at Q-West got more than they bargained for when they arrived here in July 2008. Because there isn’t a trial defense services office, the JAG office, usually prosecutorial, has had to take on un-official legal assistance roles.

“In the past seven days, we’ve seen over 30 people for legal assistance issues,” said Spc. Ryan Frick, paralegal, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th SB. “It’s busy, and it helps the time goes by.”

Besides the traditional work of a JAG office, the Q-West office can help Soldiers with proxy marriages, divorces, power-of-attorney’s, wills, notarized documents, citizenship packets, even, occasionally, legal advice, for Soldiers and contractors.

In fact, since the 16th SB’s transfer of authority ceremony in August 2008, the office has seen more than 600 people, excluding UCMJ matters, Frick said.

As a battalion paralegal specialist, Frick helps Soldiers create “power of attorney’s,” notarizes documents and helps prepare commander’s affidavits.

“Let’s say you want your wife to buy a house in the states while you’re deployed, I can help with that,” Frick said. “We help people, all of us here.”

Every day is different, said Capt. Joseph Gross, brigade trial counsel, 16th SB.

“Anytime someone walks through the door we never know what they’ll need,” Gross

-more-

said. “We serve anyone who wants to come in and get help from us.”

The 32-year-old military attorney from Cinnaminson, N.J., has served in different roles in the military. He’s been a general’s aide, a company executive officer and a battalion personnel operations officer in charge, but said this job was the most rewarding.

“It’s really fulfilling being able to provide help to the people that’re out there running missions so that they don’t have to worry about issues back home or other problems,” he said. “The real focus should be on them.”



jag
Capt. Joshua Kerton, commander, 51st Transportation Co., 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, registers to get a document notarized at the Brigade Judge Advocate’s Legal Services Center in the Soldier Support Center at COB Q-West Nov. 19. Pfc. Tamalielua Mose (left), paralegal specialist, 81st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, and Spc. Ryan Frick, paralegal specialist, 16th Special Troops Battalion, wait to help Kerton. (Photo by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson)