



## **3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)**

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### **“Knights” celebrate Thanksgiving at Q-West with slice of home**

3<sup>d</sup> Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Public Affairs

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq** – With millions of Americans celebrating Thanksgiving around dinner tables with helpings of food, family-togetherness, football and a year’s worth of reflection, Soldiers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sustainment Command’s 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade briefly took time to pause and celebrate while preparing for missions departing this remote post in northwestern Iraq.

Over 4,000 service members enjoyed a variety of holiday meal options Thanksgiving Day event though missions in support of Multi-National Division-North continued like any other day. The efforts of the brigade’s food-service team ensured Soldiers could enjoy a brief slice of home along with their choice of pie in this remote installation 150 miles north of Baghdad.

“This is our Superbowl,” stated 16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde. Food Service Supervisor Master Sgt. Michael Davis from Bamberg, Germany. “We started preparing for this seven days ago with the goal of not only showcasing our talents, but also to come together and give these Soldiers a ‘home away from home.’”

For the 25-year veteran and Cleveland, Ohio native, ensuring each dining facility on Q-west is doing something special for Soldiers is a job he takes seriously. Davis and his team of four non-commissioned officers supervise the preparation of food at all of the installation's five dining facilities. For Davis and his team, food preparation began at around mid-night and would continue until around 8 p.m. "We'll sleep and eat after the Soldiers are done," he added.

The installation boasts one large, main facility and four smaller satellite facilities, catering to units and Soldiers on the go.

"Each facility might not have the exactly same menu," said Davis, "But each one will have the main Thanksgiving ingredients and something special for the Soldiers."

One such satellite facility is the more remote "Knight's Express" near Q-west's Combat Logistics Patrol Readiness Center. Nestled next to a former Iraqi Air Force hanger, the facility, whose 200-square-foot dining room seats a mere 20 people, is a vivid contrast to Q-west's spacious main dining facility.

But at the tiny facility, quality, quantity and atmosphere were not a problem as friends and Soldiers enjoyed prime rib and Cornish hen for their Thanksgiving meal while sharing stories from home.

For friends and fellow Minnesotans' Sgt Dale Berthiaume and Pfc. Bryan Oliverius, the Knight's Express was a nice break on a Thanksgiving holiday spent loading trucks for missions later in the day.

"In a word, it's homey," said St Cloud, Minn.-native Berthiaume, who is on his third rotation to Iraq. Both he and the Blaine, Minn.-native Oliverius serve with the 353<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Company from Buffalo, Minn.

As both friends finished their meals and paused to laugh at Chevy Chase's antics in "Christmas Vacation," they reflected on what Thanksgiving meant thousands of miles from home.

"I miss home and my three kids," said Oliverius. "But I'm looking forward to talking to them tonight by webcam." On his second rotation to Iraq, the young Solider also said he'll miss snowmobiling this year but is thankful for this little slice of home so far from Minnesota.

And what was the specialty at the tiny Knight's Express? The 16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde. food service team offered up a delicacy not usually associated with November's signature holiday meal.

"Banana splits are our specialty today," stated Food Service Non-Commissioned Officer Sgt. Thomas Clendening from Grafenwoer, Germany. "It's not a requirement, but we enjoy doing it for the Soldiers that eat here."

For Clendening, Thanksgiving Day is like any other in that he's always trying to ensure the Soldiers moving through his facility are taken care of before heading out on missions to locations across Iraq.

As Thanksgiving Day ended here at COB Q-west, 16<sup>th</sup> Sust. Bde Soldiers continued their mission to provide distribution of supplies to Multi-National Division-North units. For these Soldiers on mission, however, Thanksgiving was special thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the brigade's food service team who went out of their way to bring their Soldiers a little slice of home.



**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq** – 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade Command Team Col. Martin B. Pitts and Command Sgt. Maj. James E. Spencer serve up Thanksgiving cheer during an holiday meal at the “Knight’s Feasting Hall” at COB Q-West Nov. 27.



**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq** – Sgt. Dale Berthiaume (left) from St. Cloud, Minn. and Pfc. Bryan Oliverius (right) of Blaine, Minn. enjoy a movie, holiday meal and a banana split at the “Knight’s Express” dining facility on COB Q-west Nov. 27. The two friends and fellow Minnesotans are members of Buffalo, Minnesota’s 353<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Company stationed at this remote post in northwestern Iraq.

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