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**“FLE Renegade” Provides Logistics Support Forward To Marines At Sinjar**

By CPT Patrick T. Lyons

*497<sup>th</sup> Trans. Co., Commander, 30<sup>th</sup> CSSB*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SYKES, Iraq — Providing first-class logistics support to the Marine Corps and never let a mission fail is the mission of Forward Logistics Element Renegade since arriving at Sykes, Nov. 14. The FLE provides Meals-Ready-To-Eat, rations, bottled water, bulk water, and fuel to the Marines at Sahl Sinjar Air Base, located in Northwestern Iraq, who are conducting counterinsurgency operations to prevent foreign fighters from infiltrating across the Syrian border.

Lt. Jeff Harasimowitz, FLE officer in charge ,497<sup>th</sup> Transportation Co., , and Staff Sgt. Stephan McQueen, non-commissioned officer in charge , 497<sup>th</sup> TransCo., provide experience and leadership to the 37 Soldier from the 497<sup>th</sup> Trans Co.out of Fort Lewis, Washington, who were conducting a combat logistics patrol resupply to Sinjar on the morning of Dec. 14.

FLE Renegade conducts Combat Logistics Patrols two to four times a week to resupply the Marines on ground at Sinjar to ensure they never miss a hot meal, always stay hydrated, and never run out of fuel. The FLE provides their own convoy security with Armored Security Vehicles and Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles while also providing line-haul capability with a fleet of M915's, used to haul both fuel tankers and flatbed trailers.

The day starts early, waking-up at five in the morning, followed by the priorities of work, including preventive maintenance checks and service, refueling, proper head-space and timing of the .50 cal machine guns, test-fire, and a convoy safety brief given by Lt. Harasimowitz. The brief consists of route details, the latest route intelligence, and Soldier safety prior to departure. After his closing remarks, 1LT Harasimowitz signaled for the drivers, gunners, and truck commander's to mount up and prepare for departure.

During the CLP, every element of the FLE performed their designated roles: the scout vehicle provided forward observation, the gunners ensured 360 degree security, TC's maintained lines of communication, and the convoy commander provided command and control. After about 2 ½ hours of negotiating the harsh, unimproved roads of Alternate Supply Route Santa Fe from Sykes to Sinjar, FLE Renegade arrived safely at the austere location with no vehicle breakdowns and no enemy activity.

“The scout vehicle is critical for providing safety for the convoy by identifying potential improvised explosive devices before they detonate,” said Spc. Samuel Grove, gunner, 497<sup>th</sup> Trans. Co., FLE Renegade. “It is an honor to help support the Marines and the mission has been an experience of a lifetime. I don't want this mission to end,”

Upon arrival, the FLE immediately began downloading supplies including MRE's and bottled water to the appreciative crowd of Marines of Combat Logistics Company 19 of the Marine Air Ground Task Force on ground at Sinjar.

“The support is going great. We actually had to tell the FLE to temporarily stop their resupply since they are so responsive. We appreciate everything the FLE has done for us,” said Lt. Joe Maddux, commander, CLC-19.

FLE Renegade, since arriving from COB Q-West on Nov. 15, has had little difficulty in accomplishing their mission despite having to provide support to the Marines for the first time.

“Our biggest challenge was coordinating between two sister organizations, the Army and the Marines. We have overcome these obstacles and are ready to provide support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week,” said 1LT Jeff Harasimowitz, FLE OIC.

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(Photo by SPC Jordan Heer, 497<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company Orderly Room NCOIC)



1LT Jeff Harasimowitz, Forward Logistics Element Renegade officer in charge, 497<sup>th</sup> Trans Co., front-right, and SSG Stephan McQueen, Forward Logistics Element Renegade non-commissioned officer in charge, 497<sup>th</sup> Trans Co., front-left, conduct a convoy safety brief with the Soldiers of FLE Renegade prior to departure to Sinjar at Forward Operating Base Sykes on Dec. 14.