



**3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command  
16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade  
Public Affairs Office**

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## **NCO balances demanding op-tempo with higher education**

By Capt. Patrick T. Lyons  
497<sup>th</sup> Transportation Co., 395<sup>th</sup> CSSB

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq – Pursuing a higher education can be a challenge for anyone.

For a deployed Soldier, pursuing a degree can seem like “mission impossible,” due to the stressors of combat and limited resources. However, one non-commissioned officer is proving that with a little sacrifice and a lot of hard work, Soldiers can make their higher education goals a reality, even while deployed.

Staff Sgt. Tamara Patrick, operations sergeant, 497th Transportation Co., 395 Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, out of Fort Lewis, Wash., has successfully balanced her unit’s mission operation tempo with her educational goals. Patrick has completed 30 credit hours towards her bachelor’s degree in business management at Thomas Edison State College, Trenton, N.J., since arriving here last October.

“It has been more challenging than I thought it would be to balance work, school, and even sleep,” said Patrick, a native of Burrton, Kansas. “But it has been well worth the time and effort knowing that I pursued my goals while defending my country.”

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Prior to her deployment, Patrick earned her associates degree in general studies and wanted to continue her education in Iraq.

Although the challenge has been daunting at times, Patrick has received help along the way from her chain of command while pursuing her goal. First Lt. Bradley Nowack, platoon leader, 497th Trans. Co., has proctored five final exams for Patrick during this deployment.

“As a Soldier who knows the importance of a higher education, I have been honored to help my Soldiers achieve their education goals,” said Nowack.

Patrick, like many deployed Soldiers, has unitized tuition assistance in conjunction with eArmyU.com. Soldiers can enroll into associates, bachelor’s and master’s degree programs while deployed in support of missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The online program, “eArmyU,” provides Soldiers web-based access to over one-hundred degree plans at regionally-accredited colleges and universities, offering “anytime, anywhere” flexibility for Soldiers to study at times that are most convenient for them.

For more information, go to [www.eArmyu.com](http://www.eArmyu.com)



Staff Sgt. Tamara Patrick, operations sergeant, 497th Transportation Co., 395<sup>th</sup> Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Brigade, has successfully balanced her unit's mission operation tempo with her educational goals. Patrick has completed 30 credit hours towards her bachelor's degree in business management at Thomas Edison State College, Trenton, N.J., since arriving at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq,

in October 2008. “It has been more challenging than I thought it would be to balance work, school, and even sleep,” said Patrick. “But it has been well worth the time and effort knowing that I pursued my goals while defending my country.” (Photo by Spc. Juan Garza)