

Brown: EUCOM

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Surface Movement NCO, EUCOM J4 Movement

### Abstract

Like many reservists in the months and years following 9/11, I volunteered for active duty. An announcement was posted for a senior NCO for a logistics position in EUCOM. I applied and was accepted for a 179 day tour. I want to share a couple of days of this tour in which made me feel like I contributed to the United States National Interest.

## EUCOM

I was dressed in formal attire on April 19<sup>th</sup> 2003. It was my oldest son's wedding. The occasion was filled with happiness. Our son was getting married. My wife and I realized that he had past into manhood years before and we wondered where time had gone. However, it was a time of sadness. I had a 23:30 flight to CRC at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was to begin my 6 month tour at EUCOM.

The tour starts at CRC with a one week indoctrination and pre-deployment preparation (SRP). The major offensive started into Iraq. I wondered where I would be assigned. I knew that EUCOM was in Stuttgart Germany. However I was on OEF orders which were for Afghanistan. I wondered if I was going to be deployed forward of work at the headquarters. I meet 4 other soldiers that had the same assignment orders. One of the soldiers was returning to duty. He said that we would work at the head quarters. We may be deployed to Turkey as there was a contingent at the Iraqi border. I said that we did not need to draw field gear from central Issue facility (CIF) as there was a CIF in Stuttgart. Processing for me was very easy at CRC. I am very anal about being prepared. I had SRPed at my reserve unit before I transferred into the IRR to do this tour. More importantly I had documentation to support the SRP.

The five of us landed in Frankfort, Germany. We met with the Liaison Officer at Frankfort. The Liaison Officer said we were TDY and were on our own to get to Stuttgart. For some reason we thought the EUCOM would meet us at the replacement company. We made it to Patch Barracks in Stuttgart about 16:00 the next day. We wandered around until we found the HHD Detachment. They issued us keys to an apartment in family housing and dropped us off at our sections work area about 1730. There were two of us that worked in the same section. We were to share the same apartment. He was a young Captain and I was a middle aged Master Sergeant. It was not a good mix for the six months. The

young Captain and I are standing outside of our work area. It was SCIF and we did not have access yet. An Air Force COL past by, she asked us who we were and what did we want. We explained and her comment was "we don't need you" and walk off. We later found out that she was the G1 human resource manager. Finally we were introduced to the section and then taken to quarters. The quarters were located across town on Robinson Barracks. We had a bus commute every day.

EUCOM thought they needed a lot more help anticipation of the invasion to Iraq through Northern Iraq. However Turkey would allow the US Military through their country even though they were offered 80 Million dollars. The bottom line is Turkey want to control northern Iraq territory. A position that was unacceptable to the United States.

The invasion was over by the time the personnel needs were announced and it sorted through all the layers of resource management. EUCOM had returning to one shift. We were not needed and we were supposed to be canceled. Therefore no sponsor was assigned and no preparations were made for our arrival. Four of the five soldiers stayed. Two soldiers actually worked in their job skill. I was assigned to J4 Joint Movement as a logistics specialist.

My task was to track all surface vehicles that left and entered the EUCOM area of operations. My section leader was a transportation officer. I quickly learned that I was supposed to be an 88N Transportation Specialist. The Navy Commander assigned to write Job descriptions intermixed the terms; Logistics and Transportation. The Air Force COL acquiring personnel wanted what the Army calls a transportation specialist. She requested a logistics specialist. The Army Reserve liaisons officer filled the slot with an Automated Logistics Specialist. Logistics in the Air Force and Navy is transportation in the Army. Automated logistics in the Army is warehousing, which is a division of supply. Supply is concerned with items. Items such as water, fuel, trucks ETC. Supply is how many gallons of gas will it take to do a mission or how many meals do you need to feed the troops. Transportation is concern with

the method or means of getting the item to a destination. Transportation is the pipeline. Joint Movement needed to track surface vehicles. Surface vehicles were the preverbal pipe line.

I was to track the status of transportation or shipment flows. A requirement of tracking surface traffic was to prepare power point slides. I had a choice. I could shrug my shoulders and say that I was not trained. I could tell personnel; you need an 88N or I could accept the task, adjust and become proficient. I took it upon myself to rewrite the job description and submit for a TDA correction. However in the meantime I studied the Military Sealift Command (MSC) web site. I learned MSC ship inventory. I learned what ship could do what task, and could carry what type and how much cargo. I took classes on power point before my shift and earned my power point ranger tab. For the most part the daily reward was learning a new job. I was disappointed as I wanted to play a real role in the war. The opportunity was soon to come but on a different continent.

“The Second Liberian Civil War began in 1999 when a rebel group backed by the government of neighboring Guinea, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), emerged in northern Liberia. In early 2003, a second rebel group, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia, emerged in the south, and by June-July of 2003, Charles Taylor's government controlled only a third of the country. The capital Monrovia was besieged by LURD, and that group's shelling of the city resulted in the deaths of many civilians. Thousands of people were displaced from their homes as a result of the conflict.”<sup>i</sup> I remember reading the situation reports. The victims' dead bodies were being piled in front of the US embassy. This was in an effort to draw us into a fight. MSgt Sutton and I were frustrated; there was nothing we could do from behind our desk. I remember someone saying “imagine how the recon Marines feel. They are just there to observe and appraise”.

A EUCOM staff meeting was convened and information was collected to make decisions of what to do in early June. The status quo at the time was not to put boots on the ground. However, the

immediate need for evacuation of US citizens, and the mounting criticism of the Bush administration's lack of response to the violence brought pressure to deploy troops.

The first priority mission was to evacuate the 2500 US Citizens. The first ship deployed was the USS Kearsarge (LHD-3). The Kearsarge is Wasp class amphibious assault ship. The ship is basically a small aircraft carrier. "The displacement is 40,500 tons, Length 844 feet, beam 106 feet, and draft is 27 feet. It carries three LCAC hover craft. Equipment status was 42 each CH46 Sea Knight helicopter which are supported by 5 each AV-8 Harrier II Jump-Jets."<sup>ii</sup> These assets gave the Kearsarge multiple capabilities for the mission.

The next decision was to put troops on the ground. It was hoped that Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) troop would be able to stabilize the area with minimal support. A team of Recon Marines was dispatched for assessment. What would it take to insert a Light Armor Brigade? My Air force counterpart and I went to work. We were to research air fields and ports to determine what could land or dock. It was my job to provide the locations and capability of ships that could be deployed. Also in need to provide port accessibility by different types of ships. Liberia has 4 ports. However only one port is was truly deep water. This is to say 30 feet or more for 24 hours. This port was in the capital, Monrovia. However, Intel suggested that the port may be under siege or in disrepair. A roll on roll off ship (ROLO) was the type of ship needed for a brigade.

A ROLO is a freighter with a giant garage door in the side and stern. This allows vehicles to refuel and deploy quickly. In addition it has four large cranes for lifting capability. An example is the USS Bob Hope (T-AKR 300). It has a "length of 950 feet, beam of 106, draft 34 feet, and displacement of 62,069 long tons"<sup>iii</sup>. The draft was the caveat; it is 4 feet deeper than the port. As it turned out, only 41 Marines deployed into the country.

The next problem to arise was the need for a medical resupply. There were so many casualties that there was a shortage of blood. In addition, the some Marines were getting sick. The Marines were vaccinated for Liberia. However they contracted an unknown disease. 17 Marines were returned to the ship. They were put into Isolation. However a concern was that the ship may have to go into Isolation. It turns out the marines were infected by the ECOWAS soldiers brought in from surrounding countries.

EUCOM medical called me and asked for a ship close to the Straits of Gibraltar that could pick up blood. It also had to have a medical surgery unit. I was into my research about 10 minute when CNN announced that the USS Iwo Jima is steaming to Liberia. I verified the news and then I called Medical with the news. I had to laugh. It was like the Mama son in Korea. She tells me to back to base. You are going to have an alert. The fact of the matter was the Navy had responded with a back plan. The Iwo Jima was already in movement to back up the Kearsarge. However CCN thought that the USS Iwo Jima was the first responder. They thought that it was going as a result of all the press over the violence. The USS Iwo Jima was able to fly in the needed blood and medical supplies from Rota Spain.

The country became stable, most of the violence ended by August. Refugee relocation started in September and lasted for over a year. I like to believe that I had a very small contribution to the end of the war. The remainder of my tour in EUCOM was uneventful. Little did I know that the unit I am current assigned was forming and 20 days after I returned that I would be remobilized. That was five years and a lot of memories ago.

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<sup>i</sup> Second Liberian Civil War, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 26 April 2008, this article does not cite any references or sources. (July 2007), [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Liberian\\_Civil\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Liberian_Civil_War)

<sup>ii</sup> USS Kearsarge (LHD-3), April 26, 2008 From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, this page was last modified on 25 February 2008, at 13:37, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS\\_Kearsarge\\_\(LHD-3\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Kearsarge_(LHD-3))

<sup>iii</sup> USNS BOB HOPE (T-AKR 300), Large, Medium-Speed Roll-on/Roll-off Ship, Military Sealift Command Ship Inventory web page, 26 April 2008, Last modified: February 7, 2003, <http://www.msc.navy.mil/inventory/ships.asp?ship=104&type=LMSR>