



G-5's "Eye on AMC" U.S. Army Materiel Command

Essential in Peace, Indispensable in War

March 12, 2004

Gen. Kern visits AMC operations in Southwest Asia

Gen. Paul J. Kern, AMC's commanding general, visited AMC operations in Kuwait and Iraq to discuss the rapid pace of operations as Army units transition in the largest troop movement since World War II. His fourth visit in theater in the last 18 months, Kern noted how operations have been improved each time he has visited.

In Kuwait he visited the retrograde yard with equipment stacked and sorted by type and destination in separate sections stretching as far as the eye could see. He also saw maintenance shops installing new or additional armor and gun mounts on HMWWVs and other vehicles, and aviation repair facilities where National Guard Soldiers from Missouri were working.

The tour also included a visit with Kellogg, Brown and Root contractors running the supply parts facilities, and a visit to the mobile parts hospital where AMC civilians are working with Soldiers to manufacture parts that are not in stock for vehicles and aircraft. In fact, this group has produced more than 1,000 parts since their operations began. They also have designed and created parts to solve problems or make equipment better based on Soldiers' input.

Flying from Kuwait to Balad, just north of Baghdad, Kern visited maintenance and supply operations. Some shops were repairing Firefinder radar, others were installing extra armor plate on HMWWVs and other vehicles, and some were doing direct support maintenance on vehicles to help units keep their equipment running.

Sgt. 1st Class Chris McPherson, of the 324th Psychological Operations Company, was in one shop as AMC civilians were installing sheet metal plating in one of his vehicles. Soldiers in his unit traveling the streets of Baghdad have been attacked regularly, trying to help the Iraqi people contend with problems of everyday life in Iraq. One vehicle was blown up, so he was at the AMC repair facility with another vehicle to have additional armor installed. "They [AMC civilians] are awesome," McPherson said as he thanked Kern for their support.

Kern thanked Soldiers, civilians and contractors for their hard work under difficult conditions, asking them to continue to provide feedback on what works and what doesn't to make each deployment better. "Clearly I count on you, Soldiers count on you, every single day. You are doing tremendous work putting heart and soul into what you do. I couldn't ask for more from you."

Picatinny lab team ensures safe munitions stockpile

Picatinny's Army Propellant Surveillance Laboratory ensures that the nation's entire stockpile of munitions and explosives is safe to store and is safe for Soldiers' use.

"We service the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, the nation's war reserve stockpile and our NATO allies," said Patricia O'Reilly, laboratory chief.

According to O'Reilly, the surveillance lab tracks ammunition ranging from small arms rounds to mortars to 16-inch naval guns to energetic material used in rockets and missiles.

"We're the only dedicated site in the United States equipped to handle, store, and test bulk propellant."

Ammunition rounds are routed to dedicated storage facilities around the world awaiting withdrawal as needed following production, according to O'Reilly. The military services must store millions of pounds of this potentially hazardous ammunition for years, even decades, while ensuring that they will work when needed.

The Picatinny facility is the Department of Defense's lead laboratory for predicting the life expectancy of propellant.

Box takes 'kitchen' to remote troops

The Remote Unit Self Heating Meal, also referred to as "Kitchen in a Carton," takes the hassle out of serving warfighters hot food in far away places by providing everything necessary to feed up to 18 troops in one tidy package.

Developed by the Department of Defense Combat Feeding Directorate at the U.S. Army Soldier Systems Center in Natick, Mass., the latest prototype of the remote meal reduces the carton's volume compared to previous prototypes by 20 percent by reconfiguring the package, trading larger dining trays for smaller ones, and swapping paper cups and beverage mixes for new resealable drink pouches.

"We've redesigned the whole module," said Lauren Milch, a physical scientist on the Equipment and Energy Team. "Reduction in cube and weight is critical because these are designed for remote units that may have to carry it out to the field with them. It could be airdropped or taken by vehicle, but in the worst case, they're walking out with it. We're still on the heavy side, but it's carryable."

Troops who don't have access to field kitchens, such as Signal units or Special Operations Forces, at best settle for hot food taken to them in thermal containers, only it's not always hot by the time the remote troops are located or are ready to eat the meal, said Milch.

"I feel extremely proud of what you have done and the people you represent. You are winning the peace, identifying better ways to do things, finding solutions to problems."

-- Gen. Paul J. Kern, while on his visit in Balad, Iraq