

CHANGE OF COMMAND SPEECH- COL AKIN 404th AFSB 15 JUNE 2011

MG Fontaine, Fellow Brigade CDRs and CSMs, Leaders of America's Corps, fellow Soldiers, families and to each of the dedicated Army civilians I want thank you for the past two years and the privilege and honor of commanding such a dedicated team that is the Army 404th Army Field Support Brigade.

This Brigade stationed here at Joint Base Lewis Mcchord represents the Army Sustainment Command and Army Materiel COMmand's face to the field that spans not only JBLM units, but US army Alaska, US Army Pacific and the west Coast States.

Upfront I want to thank both MG Radin and MG Fontaine-- ASC Commanders-- that allowed me the opportunity to Command and have provided the vision and trust that Brigade Commanders must have to execute support to the Soldier, daily at remote locations across USARPAC and here in CONUS-- and sir like me you have benefited from an outstanding CSM and Battle Buddy, CSM Blake - who always supported myself and CSM Mansker, and provided me outstanding advice-- to include yesterday when he stated to hey sir about your speech--two things thank your unit but there is value in brevity.

Got that guidance, CSM - So this speech is dedicated to the Soldiers and Civilians of the 404th AFSB that today begin the new task of turning Army missions and the ideas of a new Bde Commander into reality. I wish they could all be in formation in front of me so they could hear how proud I am of them and their accomplishments and what what a debt the Army owes their efforts-- supporting our Soldiers daily -- but they are spread across 12 DOLs, 3 battalions, 2 LSEs from HI to AK to the NTC and HUA and frankly I dont thing the Army would be happy with my TDY bill if I flew them all here.

But today a new Courage Soldier or Tropic Lightning Soldier should know that there is a AMC Brigade logistics team that will deploy with them to any fight. They are a dedicated group of LARs and LAOs that bring the best of TACOM, CECOM, AMCOM and JMC to the vehicle, comm system or weapon the SOLDIER has as in their hands. And if you were standing in Iraq today as part of the 2/25 SBCT currently deployed you would see CW 5 Richardson and the team from HI making sure Strykers stay in the fight. And they represent only one team-- but my thanks to all of my BLST team LARS and their leaders --, Soldiers like -Maj White, Chief Lal, Chief Shuler, Chief Milyo, Chief SHie--martel, MAj Prince and many others that are in the unit motorpools daily and on the battlefield ensuring equipment readiness.

Behind the BLSTs are the AFSBn-s and Logistic Support Elements and Our OPCON DOLs. These activities provide area AMC support and installation support that over the last two years has moved over a Billion dollars of unit tactical equipment between PBUSE boxes from the Soldier to the LBE Contractor, They Have Reset over 18 Brigade Combat Units to including--, Stryker, IBCT, ABCT, Eng , CAB and sustainment Brigades. They have executed countless support plans to ensure training of Soldiers and their confidence in their equipment becomes second nature in areas like Yakima, yuma Proving grounds, Pokaloa Trainig Area and the National Trainig Center. You may be surprised to know that is accomplished by only about 25 military and 60 dedicated Army civilians in these Bns and Logistic Support Elements.

I want to say thanks to my BN CDRs past and present- LTC Rivers, Nowak, Franke, Harvill, Clowers, and my LSE Chiefs Gene Franks, CW5 Paul Barnes, LTC Glasgow and CPT(P) Ruiz. They execute complicated support missions that as a minimum require the synchronizations of Soldiers, Civilians, Contractors, DOLS, PM and PEO fielding teams and integrate their respective efforts at the tactical level with the unit and the thecapabilitiesabilitites of ASC, TACOM CECOM AMCOM and JMC. When you visualize the difficulty of command and control and what it takes to succeed as a AFSBn CDR-my latest LSOC mission to LTC Rivers was repair 1180 pieces of 1/25 Stryker equipment, using thier rear detachment bays in AK, with Soldiers that will come initially from 593rd Sustainment Brigade using the DOL in Wainwright as the backup facility and in successive months SOLDiers will come from three other Sustainemtn Brigades funded by Army Sustainment command and synchronized by 13th ESC and Tasked by FORSCOM G3 and-- hey LTC Rivers I need you to save the Army over 1.5 million dollars and make sure the equipment is ready for the Bde NLT D-60!--Adaptability- yes if you are going to work in ASC and AMC bring a lot of it cause you will need-- Thankfully my BN CDRs had that and more so resetting the entire I CORPS and every Stryker Brigade on this post is a mission they attack with innovation, rapport and excitement.

To all of the DOLs, their directors and the dedicated personnel who opperate, the ITOs, Maint Shops, CIFs , DFACs, Fuel and HAZmat areas at the installation level-Thak you for your cooperation and coordination with my BDE. I know that the bond that ASC continues to build with the wizards of installation support will provide a key catalyst to logistics innovation --and that with your continued support you will represent the AMC storefronts delivering even better capabilities and services from the materiel enterprise directly to the Soldier, the Units and Senior Commanders and installations. Thank you for your daily work not only pProviding execeptional Soldier Services but maintaining the Pre deployment Training fleet, and supporting LBE and Reset to ensure tomorrows Army force its Soldiers and Equipment are ready to answer freedom's call.

Finally, to My BDE staff- I have had the good fortune throughout my Command time to have an exceptional team of individuals that provided me the confidence that there is not a support mission if resourced they could not accomplish. I coupled that confidence with a healthy dose of listening, and learning that made leading this Bde a rewarding Command experience. I benefited from two battle Buddies in CSM Ray and CSM Mansker- they are both dedicated NCOs and warfighters. I thank them both and to CSM Mansker thanks for your mentorship you represent the best of the NCO leadership and the motto of be know and do.

To my Two deputies Army civilians --Marty Utzig and Julia Lyons - both of which were former Soldiers and both deployed to AFGHN during my Command Tenure-Knowing your dedication to the Army and its mission it did not surprise me in the least that you both asked to go to AFGHN to support the 401st AFSB you brought that experience back to the BDE staff and ensured that Focus on Soldier was always paramount. I thank you for your counsel and your coaching on how to leverage the best from our professional Army civilians corps for the Army Team.

To the primary staff from the SPO to the S8, and my SCRs- Thibodeau, Halliday, Reyes, Macierny, Edwards, Bradley, and Eddy, Glaspie, Willard, Mason, and your personnel - thanks- and working with you was always an adventure in the making-you applied your energy to turn concepts into action and ensured I was informed as the Commander- I have no doubt we learned from each other and I know that you will provide COL Ina Yahn the bedrock for her vision of the 404th AFSB to be successful.

Ina- as the outgoing commander this Change of Command will be my last and understandably is bittersweet - But I know a change of Command is about the Continuity of the unit and its mission-- and I know the Army has made an excellent choice with You and your family and want to welcome you and Rocky to JBLM, I can tell you that I CORPS and USARPAC Soldiers will make this an incredibly fastpaced but rewarding experience.

I close my BDE command time with thoughts about my family-- I'm proud to be a Soldier married to a Soldier and my wife and kids have always given me the reason, encouragement and time that a BDE like the 404th requires. So Robin know that you are here with me in my heart even as the Army has you in DC in school prepping for your next assignment.

To the future command team of the 404th and the civilians and families that take care of us I ask you always to remember the Soldier and Civilians standing shoulder to shoulder in harm's way say a prayer for them both- They represent the best of our nation. 404th my final request- Keep up our MOTTO - Sustain to

win - you represent the Arsenal of the Brave supporting Americas Corps, Artic Warriors and Trpic lightning Soldiers -Always Army Strong- Thank you