

ATSS-MH (870)

MEMORANDUM FOR Commandant, United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-8002

SUBJECT: Access Agreement for Personal Experience Papers

1. I, JOHNS, DONNELL, have submitted a Personal Experience Paper to the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy archives regarding events and experiences from my participation in OPERATION RESTORE HOPE that may be of historical significance to the United States Army and the Noncommissioned Officer Corps.

2. I understand the manuscript and attached documents will be accessioned into the historical holdings of the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy archives and will belong to the United States Government to be used in any manner deemed in the best interests of the United States Army as determined by the Chief of Military History or his representative. I also understand that I may retain a copy for my own use subject to classification restrictions.

3. I hereby expressly and voluntarily relinquish all rights and interest in the paper to the United States Army with the following caveat/exception:

- None
 Other:

I understand that the information in this paper may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, and therefore, may be releasable to the public contrary to my wishes. I further understand that, within the limits of the law, the United States Army will attempt to honor the restrictions I have requested to be placed on this material.

Date: 14 JULY 2010

Printed Name: DONNELL JOHNS

Signature: 

Accepted on behalf of the United States Army by:

Printed Name/Date: _____

Signature: _____

USASMA FORM 7273-R, APR 06

Personal Experience Paper

SGM Donnell E. Johns

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

SMNRC CLASS 35 Phase II

MOS 79T

Operation RESTORE HOPE, 01/1992 – 04/1993

07/01/2010

Unclassified

S-1 Clerk, HHC 24 Transportation Battalion

Abstract

The 24th Transportation Battalion (24th TRANS BN) received a mission to provide humanitarian aid to Mogadishu, Somalia. The 24th TRANS BN was responsible for off load ships on the Port of Mogadishu. I supported the 24th TRANS BN from December 1992 to April 1993. My duties as an Administrative Specialist in the S-1 were to process leave, awards, promotions, and NCOER's.

Restore Hope was an operation in Mogadishu, Somalia where the United States expanded peacekeeping, which began after the failure of UNOSOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia). As a Specialist E-4, I was the Battalion S-1 Clerk in charge of processing, Leave, Awards, Promotions and NCOERS.

My Battalion's role was to off load ships on the Port of Mogadishu. Military personnel off loaded food, equipment and supplies as needed. Without the 24th Battalion none of the units or local citizens would have had food, supplies, and equipment needed for basic survival.

The 24th Battalion was always one of the 1st units in and the last units out since we had to return and transport the supplies and equipment needed for units to conduct their mission. We arrived in Mogadishu having just after serving in Desert Storm doing the same mission a year earlier. The unit didn't skip a beat. Loading and off loading ships was everyday operations for the unit. The only thing that changed was locations. The majority of the NCOs had experiences from Desert Storm that they could use during Operation Restore Hope.

During our tour in Somalia, we lost one Soldier due to unsafe conditions while performing his daily duties as an 88H Stevedore. While off loading the FFS (Fast Sealift Ship), the Soldier fell to his death through a hatch in the ship. His death could have been prevented through updated safety precautions. Today ships are assigned a designated safety officer and guardrails at pinch points for every hatch. Other safety precautions put in place include Risk Management and Safety Briefings. There were also two Soldiers who received Purple Hearts because they were hit by shrapnel. One evening a few Somali warlords got on top of the Milvan's that surround the port of Mogadishu and shot a

Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) into the warehouse where we were housed. The RPG hit the ceiling of the warehouse and shrapnel wounded the two Soldiers. Our warehouse was attacked on two other occasions during the operation by small groups of Somali warlords. Of these two attacks only one caused injuries to the Soldiers of the 24th Transportation Battalion.

We worked with the Army and United States Marine Corp Military Police to resolve this issue of attacks by implementing not only a curfew but also implemented our own guard duty. The Army and USMC MP patrolled the perimeter of the Port of Mogadishu 24/7. This acted as a deterrent for the Warlord, which prevented further attacks.

From my perspective, we were able to successfully replicate CONUS operations by being able to get Soldiers awards processed in a timely manner, submit and take leave, process evaluations, administer pay, and conduct promotion boards in the same manner we would have during normal peacetime operations in the U.S. We accomplished the mission and returned to Fort Eustis safely.

The lessons learned were probably the most basic ones taught in the Army, "Train as you fight, fight as you train". The 24th Battalion's training, focusing on those tasks, prior to deployment enabled them to accomplish the essentials to complete the wartime mission.

The role of the Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) was to execute the mission to meet the full intent of the operation. The NCOs' are in charge of conducting daily operations making sure the Soldiers basic needs were met, such as providing food, shelter, and housing. NCO responsibilities also included monitoring morale, mentoring,

measuring performance in order to ensure that Soldiers and small units are prepared to function as affective units and team members. In my section we were able to keep Soldiers administrative paper work in order leave Soldiers free from concern as it relates to Leave and Earning Statement (LES), evaluations, promotions, and awards. All the things Soldiers need to perform at the next level. During Operation Restore Hope my NCOIC trained and groomed me for the next level. He encouraged me to take correspondent courses for self-improvement and I also competed in several boards all while deployed in Somalia.

We had a Reserve Component and Multinational integrate with my unit. The reserve unit was a water purification company that set up our showers and water purified water for our consumption. We had Somali translators working with us. They aided in communications with Somali nationals who worked on the Port of Mogadishu. The USMC also supported the 24th's operations in Mogadishu by completing some of the same tasks required to complete the mission safely.

We had a battle hand off with another unit in our battalion. We worked with the new Battalion showing them exactly how we conducted business. The 24th Battalion was one of the 1st Transportation Battalion in theater. We had to establish everything from scratch. When it came time to hand everything over to the new battalion it was very easy. The S-1 section was also able to refine all the processes, which was very helpful to the new team of Soldiers. To include finding the safest routes to the University where our higher headquarters was located. We also shared our best practices with the new battalion so they wouldn't have the same growing pains we encountered during our tenure in Somalia.

Even though the 24th Transportation Battalion had 1 fatality and 2 Soldiers injured I believe we accomplished our mission. Several units received the supplies and equipment needed to support their mission. The people of Somalia received the humanitarian aid sent to them from the United States and other countries that supported Operation Restore Hope. The Soldiers of the 24th Tran BN were supported to accomplish their mission of off loading ship to proved goods and supplies to all. We made sure we did our part in the S-1 section. It was understood that the allotment turned in was to help the family members back home and if it wasn't submitted in a timely manner it could cause some hardship that would cause the Soldier to be carless at work and not perform their duties to the best their ability. So we took special care of our team members and they took care of us. The S-1 section was invited to the ship to learn what the transportation companies did. They also invited us to special parities given by the ships captains. These are the types of things that we wouldn't be able to do if we did take care of the team. The team includes out customer^s who are the Soldier we support. I think that concept get lost.

The rule of engagement during the operation was to carry a weapon without ammunition. Part of my duty was to drive from the Port of Mogadishu to the University where our Brigade was located, approximately five to Seven miles in order to drop off paperwork (Leave, Awards, NCOER, and pay documents). On many occasions there were barricades set up to slow us down and rob us of anything of value. Because of the lack of ammunition we had to develop other means to protect ourselves. The vehicle was our only protection, hitting and smashing through any obstacles that came between our goal and us.