

MTMC Outport Iskenderun

by Major David C. Fountain, USA

Iskenderun evokes comment from all who have been there or heard the myriad stories spun about it. Located on the southeastern tip of Turkey on the border of Syria, Iskenderun remains shrouded in myth, a kind of shadowy station at the farthest reaches of MTMC Transportation Terminal Command, Europe.

Rumors spread about blazing summer heat, winter rains and floods. Electricity works sometimes. No one knows, except those who have been there, how much is true, how much is exaggeration. Poor telephone connections tend to confirm suspicions that many rumors are true.

MTMC Outport Iskenderun history started in 1952 when two officers arrived to set up the Turkish-United States Logistics (TUSLOG) Detachment 33-3. The officers shared offices in the old port authority building with the Turkish Army Port Detachment Unit. The mission at that time was solely to monitor receipt of Military Assistance Program (MAP) cargo which was discharged by the Turkish Port Detachment.

In 1953, Metcalf-Hamilton Company was contracted to build Incirlik Common Defense Installation. Through 1957, TUSLOG element's workload increased as construction material for the runway and buildings at Incirlik was

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received, along with additional cargo and rebuilt vehicles for the 2nd and 3rd Turkish Armies. As a result, the office was moved to rented space on the ground floor of the commander's apartment building to accommodate additional personnel being assigned to the unit. Space was also rented in a downtown building to properly house personnel.

In 1959, the first Turkish employees were hired and the unit moved to its current location. Barracks were built on top of the main warehouse in 1965 to house the soldiers at the compound. Today, these facilities include barracks rooms, a kitchen and dining room,

laundry facilities, a library and theater, music and television rooms.

Many changes have been made to the compound since 1969, including addition of offices for the commander and expansion of the operations offices to provide space for all employees.

And then the infamous floods came. In 1969, Iskenderun had no major drainage systems to channel water runoff through the city. When the water in the compound rose to more than two feet in height, a boat was used to get around the facility. Pumping out the water took three days.

When the compound flooded

again in 1975, the floor was elevated two and a half feet and the city began constructing canals to properly channel the water.

In 1982, TUSLOG Det 33-3 changed its official name to MTMC Outport Iskenderun. Head-

quarters for Iskenderun and all MTMC posts in Turkey is Ismir, located on the southwestern coast, next to Greece.

Iskenderun may have the warmest weather in the command. Its climate follows typical Mediterranean patterns of hot summers, mild winters and heavy rains which frequently cause flooding.

Though reports of loss of electricity and exasperating communications persist, this can, for the most part, be explained as typical for an area so remotely detached from the kinds of comforts we so often take for granted. Iskenderun does have electricity—sometimes. Telephone service continues to be poor, but rumors suggest that next year things will improve.

Amidst all the tall tales, one doesn't lose sight of the fact that Iskenderun people perform a vital mission, sometimes under trying conditions. And that is no rumor.

(The foregoing article was excerpted from the MTMC TTCE *Cargo Hook*.)

Major David C. Fountain, USA, is Chief, MTMC Outport Iskenderun.

The Southern Flank

by Captain Allen W. Davis, USA

MTMC Transportation Terminal Command, Europe, Transportation Terminal Unit, Turkey consists of Outports in Iskenderun and Istanbul with Headquarters located in Izmir. Originally activated in 1956, the unit began as a combined Army and Air Force operation, designated as Detachment 33-2, the United States Logistics Group (TUSLOG). In 1957 the unit became all Army, and in 1959, was upgraded to a Transportation Corps Special Activity.

In the early 1960s the unit was designated as United States Army Transportation Terminal, and came under the command of MTMC TTCE in 1977. The unit was redesignated as Transportation Terminal Unit at Izmir, Turkey in 1982. Its responsibilities were expanded to include the Istanbul Outport and Iskenderun Outport, making Izmir the focal point of MTMC operations in Turkey.

The primary mission of TTU Izmir, Outport Istanbul and Outport Iskenderun is to manage water terminal operations and provide related services for all DOD-sponsored cargo transiting Turkey. At Izmir, the unit conducts a "SUPALAN" operation, a French term denoting a cargo operation whereby goods are immediately customs cleared and moved directly from a ship's hook to waiting transporters bound for consignee without delay. This operation avoids port congestion, custom tie-ups, intransit costs and carrier port expenses.

The operation at Istanbul is somewhat different involving piers on both sides of the Bosphorus. The European Side, Salipazari, handles breakbulk, while Hayadarpasa, the Asian side, is responsible for container cargo traffic.

Iskenderun Outport is located some 600 miles from Izmir near the Syrian border. Its operation reflects geographical and cultural differences between the Port at the Southern tip of Turkey and Istanbul at the Northwestern sector of the Republic and Izmir in the middle. Iskenderun handles household goods, vehicles, commissary and base supply for Incirlik Air Base, the largest Air Base in Turkey.

Because of port congestion and slower customs operations, cargo often remains on the pier several days before transport to consignee can be arranged. Work at this isolated Outport provides professional transportation services to personnel and installations of a large section of the American interests in Southern Turkey.

Integration of Istanbul and Iskenderun into the Izmir Command has provided nation-wide consolidated transportation service for one of NATO's most important partners. A spirit of camaraderie, the willingness to excel in a challenging environment and dedication to excellence have long been recognized by U.S. personnel and Turkish nationals alike. These qualities of service emphasize the desire of the U.S. Army to contribute to all aspects of life overseas, and equally important, to support the missions of a professional Transportation Corps. (C)

(The foregoing article was excerpted from the MTMC TTCE *Cargo Hook*.)

Captain Allen W. Davis, USA, is Operations Officer, MTMC TTU Turkey.

HHG Specialists Workshop Planned

WASHINGTON—Mark your calendars. Berchtesgaden, Germany, will be the site for the eighth annual military Personal Property Training Workshop, April 8-12, sponsored jointly by MTMC and U.S. European Command (USEUCOM).

The workshop is designed to give in-depth training opportunities to USEUCOM household goods transportation specialists at the traffic management office level. It also acts as a clearing house between European transportation industry representatives and their counterparts in DOD.

For additional information about the workshop, contact Rich Vertigan, HQ MTMC (202) 756-1600, or AV 239-1600.

MTMC's Remotest Outport

by Captain Tyrone Copeland, USA
Excerpted from MTMC TTCE Cargo Hook

Fires, floods and even death are just a few of the adversities MTMC Iskenderun Outport personnel have faced since the facility opened in 1953. Located in Turkey, the outport is a subordinate activity of MTMC Transportation Terminal Command, Europe.

Fire, the first of the port's calamities, spread through the compound in 1960. Without city fire hydrants, the local fire department could pump only 100 gallons of water a minute. This exhausted the city's tankers in about 10 minutes. A call for help was sent to the Adana and Incirlik Common Defense Installation Fire Department 85 miles away. Upon their arrival, the combined fire fighting force laid over 4,000 feet of hose from the Mediterranean Sea to the outport to combat the blaze.

Although the fire destroyed 70 percent of the facility and its contents, outport personnel continued to operate the next day. Damages totaled \$700,000.

Outport personnel were again put to the test during the 1975-78 U.S. embargo when Iskenderun customs officials required written Turkish General Staff (TGS) clearance prior to processing military import cargo. Also required was a Ministry of Customs (MOC) copy of TGS clearance, annotated and processed through MOC channels. Although this procedure added days and sometimes weeks to the import clearance process, the requirement was met by outport employees until the embargo was lifted in October 1978.

Torrential rains, low ground and inadequate drainage create flooding conditions. These conditions were all present in the fall of 1969 and the result was disastrous. Twelve to 18 inches of rain fell and flooded compound offices and warehouses. Although hours were spent pumping, draining and cleaning the facility, employees continued operation on a limited basis.

Despite anti-flood improvement in many areas, flooding occurred again in 1984 as service members from Incirlik Common Defense Installation arrived at the port to process their POVs. Undaunted by

heavy rains and rising water, outport personnel provided assistance and shelter to customers caught in the storm. Others tried desperately to contain flood waters.

Rather than cause service members another day's delay and another 190 mile trip, outport personnel worked in nearly a foot of icy waters and completed processing requirements.

Political unrest within Turkey, currency devaluation, and severe fuel shortages all made for a volatile environment between 1975-80. Security for military personnel and the compound was a major concern. In May 1979, a bomb was thrown over the compound wall. No injuries occurred, but almost two hundred windows were shattered. Still operations continued.

Fire again erupted in the summer of 1979. Outport personnel battled to contain the fire until the Iskenderun Fire Department could extinguish the blaze. All offices opened on time the following day.

One year later, a Turkish policeman assigned to guard the facility was shot to death outside of the main gate while attempting to question three Turkish nationals. Despite the strain placed on all personnel, operations continued.

All this talk about fires, floods and security problems might give you the impression life at Iskenderun is difficult, but there have been lighter moments. Until early 1984, the general facility decor could be deemed "post depressionist." And, the electrical wiring was questionable at best. Flicking a light switch on might set your hair on end. However, long overdue renovations have since been made. For example, the electrical system has been overhauled; walls have been painted; new office and dormitory furniture added; and the library received new books and recorded music.

Although MTMC's remotest outport has had its share of tragedies and setbacks, its employees have always been professionals who take pride in the quality of their work. They will continue to perform their mission regardless of adversity.

Captain Tyrone Copeland, USA, is the former operations Officer, MTMC TTU-Iskenderun.