



Brigade holds Record Setting Re-Enlistment Ceremony

Commander's Column: *Another Month of Excellence for Bde. Soldiers*

This month has been an exciting time for the Soldiers of the Falcon Brigade.

By now, most of you have seen or heard about our historic re-enlistment ceremony here at Camp Taji, where 177 Falcon Brigade Soldiers raised their right hand and committed themselves to continued service to our Army and this great Nation of our. You will read more about the re-enlistment ceremony inside this edition, just wanted to let the families know how proud I am of all of our Soldiers and the Army truly appreciates families re-enlisting as well. It was an exciting day for all, those that re-enlisted and those who watched. The Brigade is very fortunate to have such dedicated and talented Soldiers.

The brigade also reached a milestone this month, when Soldiers of Headquarters and Service Company, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion Forward Arming and Refuel Point here at Taji, reached the million gallon mark. Earlier this month, these behind the scenes hard working

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Photo by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Staff Sgt. Jacqueline Rivas-Martinez, a supply sergeant with HHC 3rd Battalion 3rd Aviation Regiment, raises her right hand to give the Oath of Enlistment during a record setting re-enlistment ceremony April 3. One hundred seventy-seven Aviation Brigade Soldiers re-enlisted in a mass formation that day, with the oath led by Gen. Dan K. McNeill, FORSCOM commander. It was the largest mass re-enlistment ever held in theater in Iraq.

What are your plans for Mid-Tour Leave?

“Going home to Alabama to watch the Forth of July fireworks with my parents and three younger brothers.”



Spc. Shalanda Britford, HSC 603rd ASB



“I’ll be in Iowa celebrating my 21st birthday and going to my brother’s high school graduation over Memorial Day weekend.”

Spc. Zach Imerman, Bravo Co. 4-3 AHB

“During July I’ll be in Jamaica, relaxing with my friends Nelly and Usher.”



Pfc. Rose Wells, HHC Avn. Bde.



“Relaxing and forgetting about this place with my children and family in Fort Bragg, N.C.”

Sgt. Tony Keys, Delta Co. 3-3 AHB

Photos by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Commander: Use Discretion during Hot Temperatures

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Soldiers pumped their 1,000,000th gallon of JP-8 fuel into our aircraft. What makes this such a terrific milestone is that they have done so without incident or accident. Inside this edition you will meet some of these young men and women and hear their story. A super achievement and a great job by all!

This month we also were honored to have members of the 1st Brigade, of the Iraqi Army visit the Falcon Brigade. It provided us with the rare opportunity to meet our Iraqi partners, share ideas, and to forge a lasting partnership as we support their effort to bring democracy to the Iraqi people.

Recently, the temperatures have given us a taste of what we can expect in the coming months. It has been some time since any of us have had to experience the intense heat that comes with life in Iraq. We talk about having a battle buddy there to help and watch over each other. Now is the time to start reviewing with your battle buddy the signs, symptoms, treatment and more importantly the preventions of heat related injuries.

First and foremost, ensure you drink plenty of fluids. There is an ample supply of bottled water strategically placed around the camp. Ice is available around the camp and we will ensure that ice is available on the flight line. Each Soldier was issued a camelback for water, and it will become part of the required uniform while working outside.

Our medics will be monitoring the wet-bulb readings and will notify the TOC when heat category’s become extreme. Leaders, ensure that you know and understand the work-rest schedule when temperatures reach extreme levels.

Ensure that Soldiers who are on the flight line performing main-



Photo by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Pvt. Troy Bahley, a medic with HHC, 1/3 ARB, checks a wetbulb reading.

tenance or in the FARP conducting refuel and rearm missions, take breaks periodically and force fluids. Leaders will review with their Soldiers the signs and symptoms of heat related injuries so that they can intervene early enough to head off a heat casualty. In the safety column this month, you will find additional tips on how to prevent heat related injuries: such as the use of sunscreen. Think safety at all times!

Finally, I want to congratulate all of those individuals who were promoted this month. Congratulations! You will be given increased responsibility and I challenge you to increase your attention to detail and enforcing standards-this is the key to being part of a disciplined force that accomplishes all tasks to standard.

**“WINGS OF THE MARNE”
COL. TUGGLE**

177 Brigade Soldiers 'Stay Army' FORSCOM Commander Leads Ceremony

by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

One hundred seventy-seven Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division's Aviation Brigade re-enlisted Apr. 3 at the Camp Taji Airfield.

Gen. Dan K. McNeill, FORSCOM commander, gave the Oath of Enlistment. He was accompanied by Maj. Gen. William G. Webster, 3rd Infantry Division commanding general.

The mass re-enlistment was the largest ever for the division, and the largest of any Army unit while serving in the Iraqi theatre. The previous record was held by the 101st Airborne Division, who re-enlisted 158 Soldiers July 4, 2003.

The 177 Soldiers have pledged a total of 990 years of additional service to the Army and were paid a total of nearly \$1.8 million in bonus money. There were 121 re-enlistees who received stabilization and education options in their contracts to stay with the 3rd Inf. Div.

The key to organizing so many Soldiers to re-enlist was finding out their needs, wants and desires, then working hard to make sure they could be fulfilled, said Master Sgt. James R. Jay, Aviation Brigade reserve component senior career counselor.

"Most of the Soldiers who re-enlisted today didn't do it for money or anything like that. They wanted to volunteer to continue serving their country, and it meant a lot to them to do it here in the war-zone with Gen. McNeill giving the oath," said Master Sgt. Barry S. Norris, Aviation Brigade senior active-duty career counselor. "Many of them have told me it gives them a great feeling of camaraderie."



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Sezandra Pinckney, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, is promoted by Maj. Gen. William G. Webster, 3rd Infantry Division commanding officer, during the ceremony.



Photo by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Gen. Dan K. McNeill, FORSCOM commander reads the Oath of Enlistment to Soldiers as Maj. Gen. William G. Webster looks on during the brigade's re-enlistment ceremony.

Each Soldier who re-enlisted had their own personal reasons for doing so. One of the re-enlistees, Spc. Rikki Morr, a cook with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (4/3 Assault Helicopter), decided to stay in the Army primarily for good job security and advancement.

"I have a good job and I just became promotable, so I'll be an E-5 soon," said Morr. "Then I'll be an E-6 in no time and will become a warrant officer after that. They have great jobs in my line of work."

Morr also looks forward to continuing to work with the great people in her unit during the next four years she extended for, she said.

Another re-enlistee, Staff Sgt. Tonya Chisholm, a human resource and personnel sergeant with HHC, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (3/3 Attack Helicopter), has been in the Army for almost ten years, and decided to make it another ten to finish her career.

"I'm already half way there; I may as well keep on going. I've loved my first ten years, so these next ten can't be too bad either," said Chisholm. "Also, when I found out that a four star general would be giving the oath really made it outstanding. I was going to re-enlist anyway, but doing it here in Iraq with him made it different and special."

Sgt. Gary Wilkinson, an Apache mechanic with

see **REENLISTMENT**, page 8

Charlie Co. 2-3 Aviation Soldiers... Work Hard

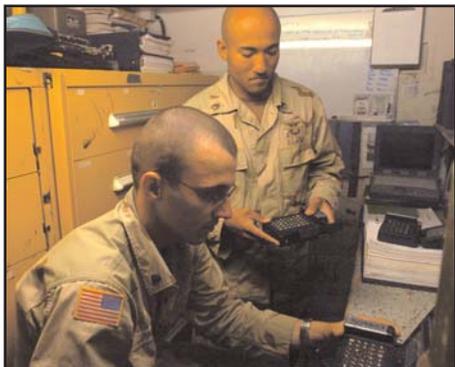


Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Spc. Bradley Johnson and Staff Sgt. Juel Williams, Charlie Co., 2/3 GSAB, fill an ANCD to use on their unit's SINGARS radios.

by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

When the Wright brothers took their first flight in 1903, they could not have imagined the technology of today. What started out as simple gears and shafts has progressed into an intricate system of sensors, electronics and avionics. While pilots must have a thorough knowledge of these systems, it's the job of Charlie Co. 2nd Battalion,

3rd Aviation Regiment (General Support) Shops Platoon to help maintain the electronic systems of the battalion's UH-60 Blackhawks.

The shops platoon has six personnel specializing as either avionics repairmen or electricians. Both specializations play an important role in the function of the Blackhawks in 2/3 GSAB. There are many responsibilities for the Soldiers in Shops Platoon. Avionics involves such things as handling in-flight communication, global position systems (GPS) and having sensors for appropriate aircrew survivability equipment.

Spc. Bradley Johnson, who works the day shifts, begins his day on the flight line at 6:00 a.m. to ensure there are no problems before the morning flight departs, he said. "I go to Alpha Company to make sure everything is ready, and then remain at the hangar until 7:00 p.m. on standby to fix any problems when the aircraft return."

Johnson says that the hours are long, but the gratification he receives from doing his job is well

worth it.

"When I fix or troubleshoot a problem, I feel good about myself," Johnson said. "I complete a challenge, and it makes me say, 'wow, I did that I and made a difference.'"

Staff Sgt. Juel Williams, Shops Platoon NCOIC, has the responsibility of being an electrician and being a leader for his Soldiers.

Williams feels as long as the small group can work together and communicate, there is nothing they can't fix.

"Continuity and squad integrity is a big focus," said Williams. "If we communicate effectively, we can get any job done. The most rewarding thing for me is to see our squad come together and get things accomplished."

Teamwork within Shops Platoon plays an important role in the mission of the Knighthawk Battalion and in the overall success of the brigade.

"Our job is vital to the mission," said Johnson. "Without us, they cannot communicate. We are the ears and voice of the Blackhawk."

...and Play Hard

by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Paula Abdul, Simon Cowell or Randy Jackson weren't in attendance, but the audience of the first ever Camp Taji talent contest got a chance to watch American Soldiers act like American idols April 9.

The event, organized by 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, featured a pop-and-lock break dancer, singers, a flutist and bands.

One band, made up mostly of Soldiers from Charlie Co. 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (General Support), showed that when they weren't working hard, they could play hard.

The band "U3" (a play on words poking fun at the band "U2" and uniform stance three) consists of 1st Lt. Amanda Current, Charlie Co. maintenance platoon leader, on keyboard and backup vocals; Sgt. Charles Cannon, a hydraulics repairman with Charlie Co., on drums; Spc. Chris Barnes, an aircraft electrician with Charlie Co., on bass guitar and lead vocals; and Spc. Chris Semler, an airframe specialist with

see **BAND**, page 8



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

(left to right) 1st Lt. Amanda Current, Spc. Chris Barnes, Spc. Chris Semler and Sgt. Charles Cannon (on drums) of the band "U3" perform during the Camp Taji talent show.

Brigade HHC Protects Officials

by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

A Blackhawk touches down at Camp Taji's airfield. A man exits the Blackhawk, distinguished by stars on his collar. Meanwhile, in the distance Soldiers are scanning the perimeter. "Welcome to Camp Taji, General," says a Soldier from the welcoming committee, as they accompany him to a sport utility vehicle, which drives to his destination. The vehicle with the general exits the flight line along with cars with other VIPs. Around this convoy are Soldiers in Humvees with mounted crew serve weapons, scanning the areas outside to ensure the safety of the VIPs. These Soldiers, those that remain diligent and focused in order to protect the VIPs, are members of the Personal Security Team (PST) of the Aviation Brigade.

When a high profile person comes to Camp Taji, whether it is a military General, Iraqi diplomat, or celebrity performer, ensuring their protection is the duty of the PST. This team of eight Soldiers holds a very important job, Staff Sgt. Javier J. Blanco, PST NCOIC with Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), Aviation Brigade said.

"We provide security for any VIP that comes to this area of operations," Blanco said. "We have a plan of protection depending on what they are doing, where they are going, or what route they are taking."

Sgt. Olantunde Olantunji, crew

"We are all very serious about our job because the life of a person is in our hands. We can't afford to make any mistakes."

Sgt. Olantunde Olantunji
PST gunner



Photo by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Spc. Joshua Wesier, a medic with HHC, Avn. Bde., pulls security outside of the re-enlistment ceremony. The security team guards VIPs, including Gen. Dan K. McNeill at this event.

serve weapons gunner for the PST, HHC Avn Bde, understands the responsibilities the PST has to the security of the VIP.

"We pick up VIPs from the airfield, and we know we have to do whatever is necessary to protect them," said Olantunji. "We are all very serious about our job because the life of a person is in our hands, and we cannot afford to make any mistakes."

When the VIP is on the move, the PST ensures his safety along the route.

"We are on the look out for anything suspicious or out of place," Olantunji said. "We always have our eye out for people watching or suspicious vehicles. We will also move people and vehicles out of the way when an area needs to be clear. When it comes to security, we cannot take any chances."

Providing the security of important people takes careful planning. The PST has weekly meetings to go through drills. As the arrival date of a VIP grows closer, the PST meets more often.

"During meetings we will go over such things as where the bunkers and hard buildings are along the route," Blanco said. "Sometimes we will get short notice

on arrivals, so we might only have one day to prepare."

Along with planning, there are many things that have to be done in preparation for their mission. Preventative maintenance checks have to be done on vehicles, weapons and communications, said Olantunji.

The members of the team were selected by platoon sergeants of HHC, said Blanco. The PST is made up of Soldiers who have to be of high standards.

"They were selected based on discipline and good behavior," Blanco said. "We wanted high-speed soldiers. They were asked if they wanted to be on the team because we wanted to make sure they wanted to be here. We are like a brotherhood in which everyone watches out and helps each other."

Olantunji feels the Soldiers of PST have what it takes to handle the responsibility of their jobs because of their attentiveness.

"Our primary concern is focus," said Olantunji. "Everyone needs to stay focused. We are not letting down our guard until the mission is complete: when the VIP returns home safely."

When it comes to personnel security, Blanco feels that Soldiers need to have a combination of three characteristics.

"You need a combination of attention to detail, discipline and motivation," Blanco said. "You need to be able to follow specific directions, do what is being told of you and perform well under both physical and mental stress."

Despite the stress the job might bring, Olantunji wouldn't change his position. Olantunji works in personnel office, and being part of the PST gives him a pleasant change.

"This is an experience of a lifetime," he said. "Someone's life is on the line, it makes me realize 'wow, this is the real thing.' This is a great and different experience."

Aviation Sold



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Spc. Chase P. Tremble (left) and Spc. David M. Collier, both of Alpha Co. 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, prepare an Apache rotor head to get weighed.



The 177 Aviation Brigade Soldiers who re-enlisted during the largest single mass reenlistment ceremony at the Camp Taji airfield April 3. In the center are Gen. Dan K. McNiell, FORSCOM Commanding General of the 3rd Infantry Division.



Photo by Spc. Brian Henretta

Soldiers from the Division's Ready Reserve, works with 4/3 AHB, evacuate a simulated casualty over difficult terrain at an assault range.



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Staff Sgt. Virjeannia Raines, Aviation Brigade S4 NCO, works on surveys in the ALOC.



Pfc. Chris Gray and Pfc. [Name] with HSC 603rd Aviation S Jaws of Life to open a truck for medical-rescue training at Camp Taji Fire and Rescue.

iers In Action



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

s re-enlistment to date in Iraq and in the history of the 3rd Infantry Division pose M commander, who conducted the ceremony, and Maj. Gen. William G. Webster,



Photo by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Staff Sgt. Gary A. Olsen and Pfc. Marina Soto, armors for 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance), disassemble a M-2 50 Cal. machine gun during a recent weapons class given by trainers with TACOM.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Kadett Derry

Sean Greer, both medics Support Battalion, use the back door during a practical exercise taught by the e Team.



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Lloyd Dillard, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (General Support) pushes through the pain on the calf raise machine at Camp Taji's fitness facility.



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Pfc. Joe "Crazy Legs" Dempsey, Bravo Co. 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, busts a move during his pop-and-lock break dance routine during the first ever Camp Taji Talent Contest. Dempsey's talent earned him a 3rd place finish.

Commo Shop keeps 3-3 Attack Wired

by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Information is a key to winning the War on Terrorism and without proper communication channels to share information, it is useless.

This is where an S-6 shop is critical for operations in Iraq, and why the S-6 with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Helicopter) is so helpful to the communication of the battalion.

The Soldiers who work in the S-6 have been working at a hectic pace since arriving to Camp Taji, and part of that reason is because they didn't have the luxury of falling in on much pre-existing equipment, or even buildings to house their equipment. In both



Photo by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Spc. Rambo Rapu, a communications specialist with HHC, 3/3 AHB installs internet cable in the server room.

their headquarters building and tactical operations center, the Soldiers had to install everything to get the various systems operating.

"We had to completely start from scratch," said Sgt. Jeffery L. Wood, a communications team chief with HHC, 3/3 AHB. "Our headquarters building has been under renovations and didn't have any internet wiring so we have to run cables and knock holes in the sheetrock walls to install it."

The members of the S-6 team are also installing AFN-ready cable outlets in each of the rooms in their headquarters building, as well as building an education center. The education center will be for Soldiers in the battalion to visit during their off time and take electric Army correspondence courses, said Wood.

While 3/3 AHB's headquarters has required wiring overhauls,

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Re-enlistment: Troops Thankful for Gens. Visit

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Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance), re-enlisted to continue to provide for his wife and child. He admits it was a tough decision for everyone to make, but in the end Wilkinson feels everyone owes something to our country and re-enlisting is his way to give to the nation, he said.

The ceremony was seen as a great success and morale booster to those involved, especially with the FORSCOM and division commanders participating.

"It's so awesome that Gens. McNeill and Webster took time out of their busy schedules to come see us and give us the re-enlistment," said Morr.

"It was such a big morale booster that the generals were there. They stayed after the ceremony and took pictures with all of the re-enlistees. It was so nice of them and really made the Soldier's day special," said Chisholm.

Also during the ceremony Aviation Brigade was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its service in Operation Iraqi Freedom I, and McNeill and Webster assisted with the promotion of Chief Warrant Officer 3 Sezandra Pinckney, with 603rd Aviation Support Battalion. Pinckney was accompanied by her husband Sgt. Maj. Allen Pinckney, and son Pfc. Allen Pinckney, Jr. All three members of the Pinckney family serve in the 3rd Inf. Div.

Band Displays Talent, earns Second place

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Alpha Co., 603rd ASB, on lead guitar.

Barnes and Cannon had been playing together since their previous deployment two years ago, but when Cannon saw a flyer for the talent show, he knew a band needed to be formed.

"I saw the flyer and thought 'we're doing it,'" said Cannon. That was the driving force to putting the band together.

Current and Semler joined the band, and two weeks prior to the show they practiced diligently as a foursome.

"We practiced in the hangar every night until the contest," Current said. She was very excited and even a bit nervous, but very eager to get on stage.

U3 covered songs by 311 and Bob Marley during their performance. Their nightly practice paid off when they won second place in the contest.

"I really enjoyed myself. I put everything I had into it and tried to get the crowd involved," said Barnes. "I am definitely looking forward to our next performance."

For Current, the talent show was an excellent morale booster for both performers and the audience.

"I wish there was a place that we can play every week for an audience," Current said. "I had an awesome time. It was definitely a change of pace from the daily grind."

4-3 Assault, Charlie Co. 1-13 Armor Team to Form Division Reserve

by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Pilots from 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Assault Helicopter) have been working closely with the 3rd Infantry Division Reserve, a quick reaction force (QRF), since arriving here to provide air transportation and support for the QRF.

The Division Reserve is a team comprised of tankers from Headquarters and 3rd Platoons, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 13th Armor and infantrymen from 2nd Platoon, Golf Troop, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, and teamed with 4/3 AHB for OIF III. Their mission is to be on constant standby and ready to move quickly to any area in 3rd Infantry Division's area of operations by Blackhawk, humvees, M-1 tanks, or Bradley Fighting Vehicles. They are called upon to provide additional security for troops who need it, being used as backup fighting power. They also secure facilities, areas and political rallies, go on patrols, recover downed aircraft, or relieve other units who may be doing any of these things.

The Soldiers of the QRF didn't know they would be doing this mission for their deployment until after they arrived at Camp Taji. With many of them being tankers, the Soldiers had to train for days to prepare themselves for their new task, said 1st Sgt. Michael P. Summers, team cougar first sergeant.

Although they will train continuously this year, they are now ready for any mission by combining their experience in wheeled vehicles and armor with their new air assault skills they have learned since arriving. They have spent hours properly entering and exiting stationary Blackhawks, then moving ones. They have conducted close quarter marksmanship and



Photo by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

A section sergeant with Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 13th Armor, a member of the 3rd Infantry Division Reserve, points out sectors of fire to one of his Soldiers at an air-insertion and tactical-movement live-fire range.

reflexive fire training scenarios, said Summers.

4/3 Aviation Battalion has been helpful in training and supporting to the Division Reserve. They have had lots of flight time and aircraft dedicated to their mission, said Summers. An example of this is a recent training mission at an assault-range in the Iraqi countryside to give the units better experience working with each other.

During separate day and night missions, pilots from 4/3 AHB flew into the landing zone where the Division Reserve dismounted and

began conducting a patrol to a live-fire range. The range simulated an urban combat setting, said 1st Lt. Jeffrey Rini, a field safety officer with Charlie Co., 1-13 Cavalry.

After engaging targets, the Division Reserve moved to a pickup zone where they mounted Blackhawks and moved out of the area.

The partnership that has developed between 4/3 AHB and the Division Reserve has been a great success so far and the two will continue supporting each other throughout their deployment.

April Promotions

The following Soldiers were promoted as of April 1, 2005.

Sergeant First Class:

Henry Jackson, **4/3 AHB**

Staff Sergeant:

Dennis Burdette, **2/3 GSAB**

Sergeant:

Ernestyn Dennis, Frank Don Kirby, Mark A.

Martinez, and Megan Williams, **2/3 GSAB**

David Lacefield and William Alford, **4/3 AHB**

James Anderson, Steven Colon and Michael

Williams, **603rd ASB**

Captain:

James B. Lewis, **1/3 ARB**

1st Lt:

Lisa Baily, **4/3 AHB**

CW4:

Bienvenido Perez Jr., **2/3 GSAB**

CW3:

Henry Jackson, **4/3 AHB**

Michael J. Grubisha, **2/3 GSAB**

Michael Kennedy, **1/3 ARB**

CW2:

Daniel S. Bickett, **2/3 GSAB**

Jeffrey T. Dean, **1/3 ARB**

Congratulations and good luck to them in their ongoing career development.

Safety Corner

So What's the Buzzzzzz?

by CW5 Jon Dickenson
Brigade Safety Officer

"Did you know that whenever nations send troops into battle, more troops are taken out of action by disease and non-battle injuries than are injured in combat? Many of the disease injuries result from germs passed by the bites of insects and their relatives. Don't let yourself be pestered by insects, or worse, become a casualty due to a bug-borne disease."

These words of wisdom come from the Armed Forces Pest Management Board.

For optimum protection, Soldiers should use the Department of Defense Insect Repellent system. Treat your uniform with standard military clothing repellent (permethrin). Use the IDA kit (NSN 6840-01-345-0237). This product is a permethrin impregnation kit that contains 40-percent permethrin. One kit treats one uniform, and the treatment lasts through approximately 50 washes. To protect areas of exposed skin, apply a thin coat of the standard military skin repellent

(DEET) to all areas of exposed skin. Proper uniform wear will act as a physical barrier against insects. Wear the sleeves rolled down. Close all openings in your clothing that might provide access to insects: tuck pants into your boots, and undershirt into your pants. Wear your uniform loosely because some insects, such as mosquitoes, can bite through fabric pulled tight against the skin. These DEET and permethrin products are the most effective repellents available and they have proven safety records.

There are other measures you can take to help protect you from insects: Avoid wearing after-shave lotion, cologne, perfume, or scented deodorants and soaps while in the field. They may attract insects. Wash and inspect your body for insects and their bites daily, or as often as the tactical situation permits. Inspect and wash your uniform routinely to remove insects and their eggs.

Avoid wearing animal flea and tick collars. They are harmful to human health and have unproven effectiveness. Don't use non-DEET



Courtesy Photo

repellents (such as those containing citronella), or other products not registered as repellents by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). They are not as effective as DEET and may not be any safer.

I encourage everyone to wear a sunscreen to protect against sunburn. You can wear DEET products and sunscreen, but it may reduce the duration of effectiveness of the sunscreen. To minimize this effect, apply sunscreen approximately 30 minutes to one hour prior to applying the DEET so that the sunscreen has time to penetrate and bind to the skin first. Sunscreen does not reduce the effectiveness of the DEET.

Remember, it is military policy that the DOD Insect Repellent System and other personal protective measures be used by service personnel when they are in situations where insect exposure is likely.

Commo: Computer Protection Essential

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their TOC needed an even bigger facelift to become operational.

"We had to take out entire walls," said Spc. Rambo Rapu, a communications specialist with HHC, 3/3 AHB. "The room was too small to hold everyone required to perform tactical operations and aircraft control, so we made it bigger and installed all the computer, telephone and radio equipment."

After spending the first few months of the deployment running wires and setting up equipment, Soldiers from the S-6 are far from done with their important mission. Their current phase of operations, maintaining and protecting equipment, may be even more important, said Rapu.

"Now we work on stopping new viruses from entering the network and troubleshooting computer problems," Rapu. "Virus protection is so important because we can't have anything hidden on any gov-

ernment computers to slow them down or compromise the mission."

The various tasks performed by the Soldiers of the S-6 have critical importance to the battalion's mission, and their efforts have not gone without notice.

"They've been working hard from Kuwait until now. They put all of this equipment together themselves and have accepted great responsibility and long work hours to get our communications working," said Capt. Carlos E. Davis, 3/3 AHB signal officer. "Without their work, and the continuing efforts of the guys working in the TOC, all communication is in the dark."

The equipment maintained by the S-6 shop is used for pilots and controllers to talk while in the air, then relay that information to the TOC, as well as receive unmanned aerial vehicle signals from the Shadow UAV's.

Monitoring the Skies

Delta 1-58th Avn Regiment controls air traffic

by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

"Taxi to 3-4 via Bravo winds estimated calm, altimeter estimated 3002, hold short 3-4," the soldier hurriedly says all in one breath.

For most people this phrase would be as foreign as Chinese calculus, but for the pilots of the Aviation Brigade and Soldiers in the control tower, this phrase is common terminology. The Soldiers in the control tower and who support the control tower are part of the Air Traffic Control Team (ATC) of Delta Co. 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment.

The members of the ATC team ensure that air traffic coming into Taji airfield flows smoothly. 1st Sgt. David J. Ibsen, Delta Co. 1-58th Avn. first sergeant, feels members of the company work hard to ensure their mission is completed.

"Here in Baghdad we are in charge of control tower and flight tracking operations. We ensure flight safety for all aircraft," Ibsen said. "The soldiers are working hard to ensure a safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic throughout Iraq."

To help complete their mission, Soldiers are in the control tower at all hours to ensure that helicopters land safely. Spc. Carlos R. Munoz, an air traffic control specialist with Delta Co. 1-58th Avn, believes his responsibilities allow for order on the airfield.

"Air traffic control is responsible for all flights coming in and out," said Munoz. "We have to separate the helicopters and land them. Airspace can get crowded, so we provide positive control of the helicopter traffic here."

Sgt. Rowland A.T. Conception, air traffic control specialist, says the control tower has to pass important information to the pilots. The air traffic controllers inform pilots when controlled detonations occur, quick reaction forces are being dispatched and sequence helicopters for landing and take off.

"We have to get important flight data to the pilots," Conception said. "Pilots can't see everything out there. We see the whole picture. Pilots rely on us to be their eyes because we get a 360 degree view of the airfield."

The members of Delta Co. are also doing their part in helping the transition of Iraqi forces to take control of their government. Delta Co. has been training Iraqi soldiers in air traffic control duties. The main instructor, Sgt. 1st Class Antoine D. Williams, ATC chief, feels that the Iraqis are dedicated and willing to learn.

"We are teaching them basic ATC knowledge," Williams said. "They are learning things such as how to separate aircraft, weather training and basic flight rules."



Photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Spc. Carlos R. Munoz (background) and Sgt. Rowland A.T. Conception, air traffic control specialists from Delta Co. 1-58th Avn Regiment, control incoming and outgoing helicopters from the control tower at Taji airfield.

The Iraqi forces who train have prior air traffic control experience, but the Soldiers still have some challenges to overcome.

"How the Iraqis control traffic and how we control traffic is different," said Williams. "The Iraqi forces control traffic more leniently. We are trying to show them how to be more aggressive in controlling aircraft movement so they can establish more positive control."

Air traffic controllers also have their own language when communicating with pilots. Munoz feels that it can sometimes be difficult to translate this "phraseology" to Iraqi forces.

"We use a lot of different terminology, and with the language barrier it's sometimes difficult to communicate," Munoz said. "We will go over scenarios to help explain some of the phraseology we use."

Williams has a positive outlook on the training he is giving to the Iraqi soldiers.

"They are fast learners and what we are teaching them is part of the bigger plan," he said. "At some point they will take control of the airfield. This is just one step in helping them establish their country and running their own army."

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FARP Pumps Millionth Gallon of Fuel

by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

The forward arming refueling point (FARP) provides the fuel which is the lifeblood that keeps the Aviation Brigade's helicopters in the air patrolling around Baghdad. The Soldiers of 3-5 Platoon, Headquarters and Service Company, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion hit a milestone by pumping their millionth gallon of fuel April 6 since taking over refueling operations, quicker than anyone expected.

While the Soldiers saw it as just another part of the day's work, leadership was extremely proud, of the professional job performed so far by all, and how quickly they reached this milestone.

"We have been working at a very high pace, but people didn't think we would have pumped this much so quickly," said 2nd Lt. Esperanza George, 3-5 Platoon leader, HSC, 603rd ASB. "My troops are something special. I thank my noncommissioned officers for that. Without them I don't think we could achieve what we did. They are very motivating and make sure the job gets done safely."

There haven't been any accidents at the FARP since the 603rd



Photo by Spc. Brian P. Henretta

Pvt. Junius Richard, a refueler with HSC, 603rd ASB, prepares to fuel a blackhawk after the FARP pumped one million gallons.

ASB took over duties. This can be attributed to daily safety briefings and equipment checks, said Sgt. 1st Class Antonio Martinez, 3-5 Platoon sergeant, HSC, 603rd ASB.

When a helicopter lands in the FARP, a refueling team springs to action and like clockwork, each Soldier knows his role, to allow for a quick turnaround of aircraft. They supply fuel for all coalition helicopters in the Baghdad area,

including Navy, Marine and British aircraft. This is such a critical mission to the coalition and aviation brigade because if they can't refuel, it grounds everything, said Martinez.

3-5 Platoon's hard working Soldiers are proud of all they have done in a very short amount of time.

"We have a great sense of accomplishment. This is just us doing our job, but we've worked our tails off and done it exceptionally well," said Arthur Butt, a petroleum supply specialist with HSC, 603rd ASB.

"The past few months have been a total team effort on our part. We have the fuelers, truck drivers, armament specialists out there keeping extremely busy to pump that much fuel so quickly," said Patrick Wiley, an aviation refueler with HSC, 603rd ASB.

With one million gallons pumped in such a short amount of time, how much fuel can this unit expect to pump throughout OIF III?

"Last time I was here we pumped 3.8 million in 11 months," said Martinez. "If we keep up the pace we're at now, we could hit five million this time."

Leishmaniasis

Leishmaniasis is an infectious disease transmitted by the bite of an infected sandfly found throughout tropical areas worldwide, including Southwest Asia. Leishmaniasis occurs as a skin infection (cutaneous leishmaniasis) or as an infection of the liver, spleen and other internal organs (visceral leishmaniasis).

Sandflies that transmit leishmaniasis in Southwest Asia are active from March through November. Cutaneous leishmaniasis is known in the local population as the "Baghdad Boil". Although it's not possible to prevent all sandfly bites, Soldiers can protect themselves by limiting opportunities for sandflies to get to their skin. Sandflies prefer to bite at night, and live in brushy, shaded areas close to the ground since they are poor fliers. A well air-conditioned trailer is not a suitable habitat for Sandflies. If Soldiers wear little clothing at night and their skin is exposed to the elements, they will be bitten.

Cutaneous leishmaniasis typically presents as one or more open skin sores that develop over weeks to months after a bite by an infected sandfly. While cutaneous leishmaniasis is not life threatening, the skin sores may result in permanent scarring. Visceral leishmaniasis is a more serious, potentially fatal, internal form of the disease, infecting the liver, spleen and bone marrow. Visceral leishmaniasis can occur ten days to several years after the bite of an infected sandfly. Recognition and diagnosis of these infections may be delayed for weeks to months after exposure. Major emphasis is placed on educating Soldiers on identification.

Since no vaccines or medications are effective for preventing leishmaniasis, commanders must emphasize the use of personal protective measures. (See Safety Column). The unit field sanitation team assists unit commanders in protecting Soldiers from sandflies and sand fly-transmitted diseases by stocking protective materials for individual use (DEET, IDA kits).