



The EAGLE TALON

Printed in the Interest of the Combat Aviation
Brigade Soldiers and Families



Issue No. 3

March 20, 2006

Iraqi Aviators visit CAB Maintenance Facilities



See Full Story on Page 3

Commander's Column

From Eagle 6...

Greetings Eagle Brigade Soldiers and Families

Here we are in our fourth month of the deployment and our Soldiers are continuing to do great things here in support of our nation's calling. Together, with our family members, we have fostered a strong team that has proven time and time again, we are more than ready for this mission.

To our Soldiers, continue to strive for excellence and look to improve your mission each day. I know you're all working long, hard hours, but as professionals, it is what we've been called to do for our nation and I know each of you will do it to the best of your ability. Also, each one of us should seek personal improvement as well. I assure you, when the deployment is over, you will all look back on it with a greater sense of pride.

To our families, I am aware of the stark images that are being seen around the world, and the reports pro-

vided by various news sources. But we're taking every measure to ensure we remain as safe as possible. Our Soldiers are well-trained, determined, and capable of handling any situation. We will continue to be vigilant and alert, as we take the fight to an enemy that is growing more and more desperate. Our goal is to accomplish our mission with the utmost professionalism and return safely to you, our loved ones.



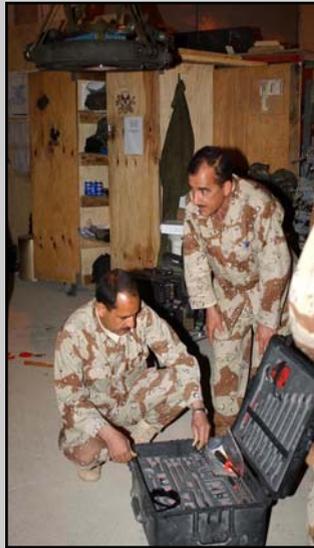
We ask your continued support and we will continue to do our part here as the days go by. Thank you again for all your prayers and support as we move closer to the mid-point of our deployment.

Iron Eagles!

Sincerely,
COL Don M. MacWillie
Combat Aviation Brigade Commander

On the Cover

Aviation Warrant Officers from the Iraqi Air Force's Rotary Division look through a toolbox at the 404th Aviation Support Battalion's Small Hangar during a visit to the brigade's facilities at Camp Taji March 2. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers, Combat Aviation Brigade PAO)



In this Issue

Commander's Column.....	Page 2
Feature Story	Page 3
Photos Pages	Pages 6-7
404th ASB.....	Page 8
1-4 Aviation	Page 9
2-4 Aviation	Page 10
3-4 Aviation	Page 11
4-4 Aviation	Page 12
Brigade Surgeon	Page 13
Chaplain's Corner	Page 13
CAB Retention	Page 14
Equal Opportunity	Page 14

The Eagle Talon is published in the interest of the service members of the 4th Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade.

The Eagle Talon is an Army-funded newsletter authorized for members of the U.S. Army, under the provision of AR 360-1. Contents of The Eagle Talon are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or Department of the Army.

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Iraqi aviation mechanics tour Combat Aviation Brigade facilities

By Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers
Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Aviation warrant officers from the Iraqi Air Force’s 12th Squadron visited the maintenance facilities of the 4th Infantry Division’s Combat Aviation Brigade March 9 to better understand the importance of aviation maintenance.

The group of about 13 mechanics, which was led by Brigade Aviation Maintenance Officer Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rick Malvarose, toured the facilities, to include the 404th Aviation Support Battalion’s small maintenance hangar; the group also walked down the flight line to view the brigade’s aircraft first hand.

The tour is designed to help the Iraqi troops understand how important maintenance is when dealing with military aircraft, said Sgt. 1st Class James Morrison, a member of the team responsible for training the Iraq Air Force.

“They’re taking in the process of how American Soldiers perform maintenance and how everybody is a team,” Morrison explained. “Everybody, from the maintenance officer all the way down, shares information and is able to work as a team. That’s our main goal here today.”

Morrison said the group included warrant officers and commissioned officers. The Iraqi air force currently flies the Bell 206 Jet Ranger aircraft, but should be upgrading to the MI-17 in a matter of weeks. He said the current aircraft were given to them as a gift from the United Arab Emirates.

“The training is important because they can see the scope of our operations and see what it takes to properly maintain aircraft,” he said. “This will allow them to be able to continually maintain them and fly them.”

“I think it’s good because they work together,” explained Muaed Ganem, the Iraqis’ top mechanic, who spoke through an interpreter. “They have a very good system. We didn’t have a system like this. We don’t know everything about it, but from what we see, it is very good.”

Ganem said he thought the development of a maintenance management system will be helpful because it helps them see why maintaining a helicopter is important.

“We want to see the difference in this and what we have in our squadron,” he said. “We don’t have the parts that you have here. But here, they have everything – and they work very well. Therefore, when we came here, we wanted to see how they work.”

Ganem said he also thinks the contractors are a big part in keeping the U.S. helicopters properly maintained, and he would like

to see the Iraqi system that includes contractors.

“I think the main difference is that you have contractors also doing the work for you,” he pointed out. “I wish we had contractors. We just have military and air force mechanics, who try to do the job as well.”

Air Force Master Sgt. Anthony Michael, who will be taking Morrison’s place as the Advisory Support Team NCO for UH-1 Huey helicopters, said the Iraqi soldiers are on a learning curve and they’re progressing quickly.

“They are progressing well and they’re very eager to learn,” he explained. “The MI-17 is coming soon. It’s actually already in country, and it is a much more complex aircraft for them. They will be coming online.”

According to Malvarose, it was important to get the Iraqis here to share ideas with them about maintenance. He said they already know that maintenance is important when it comes to the aircraft, but sharing ideas would really help them move forward in their maintenance procedures.

“I think it’s important to share ideas and establish a partnership between us and the Iraqi air force,” he said. “The training has gone very well. They’re interested in how we do business, and they’re trying to gather techniques and procedures on the way we do things and they’ll try to apply that to what they’re doing.”



Brigade Aviation Maintenance Officer Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rick Malvarose speaks with the Iraqi unit’s top mechanic Muaed Ganem about the Combat Aviation Brigade’s aviation maintenance operation. (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers)

CAB Soldier awarded combat action badge

By Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers
Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – A CH-47D Chinook helicopter mechanic from Company B, 404th Aviation Support Battalion, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, became the brigade's first Soldier to be awarded the Combat Action Badge during this deployment in a ceremony held Feb. 13 at Camp Liberty.

Pfc. Matthew McCann was presented the badge from Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard Cody, during a ceremony at the Ironhorse Conference Center, near the 4th Inf. Div. headquarters.

McCann, a member of the CAB's Downed Aircraft Recovery Team, received the award for his actions Dec. 27 near Camp Taji, following the DART team's recovery of an AH-64D Apache.

He recalled the mission, which actually began at about 9 p.m. Dec. 26, when it was reported that a helicopter went down about 20 miles from the base. As a member of the ground element of the DART, McCann's team is responsible for securing and recovering the aircraft and returning it to the base.

"We spent about 12 hours cleaning up the wreckage," he said. "Once we packed up, my truck was carrying the fuselage of the aircraft. It was mostly the tail boom and a section of the rotor head.

McCann's vehicle, an up-armored light-medium tactical vehicle, was traveling fourth in the convoy, behind the lead humvee, another vehicle carrying the scoop loader and a military police vehicle.

"We were driving through this small town, and everyone was looking at us and standing around trying to get a glimpse of the Apache's tail boom and watching us as we traveled through," said McCann, who hails from New Cumberland, Pa. "When we came through the town, we got to this dirt road and started going straight before making a right onto another rural road."

McCann, who served as the M249 squad automatic weapon gunner, was standing in the cupola of his recovery vehicle when he noticed two lone buildings sitting off the road.

He said they also noticed one individual standing on the roof of one of the houses.

"Then, all of a sudden, we got hit (with an improvised explosive device)," he said. "Lt. (Lawrence) Schmidle's vehicle, which was the lead vehicle and the scoop loader vehicle, which carried Sgt. Scott Lambert of Co. B, 404th and Pvt. Luis Carrillo, took most of the blast," he explained.

"We punched through after the explosion, but the shockwave threw me back into the vehicle.

"At that time, I yelled, 'IED, IED, IED,'" he said. "Sgt. Torres, who was my driver, told me to scan my right lane. I scanned and I said, 'we have contact, right side.'"

McCann said he could see muzzle flashes and hear rounds being fired. He

returned fire, under Torres' direction, and provided suppressive fire.

"At that time, the M240 automatic machine gunners in the MP vehicle returned fire in the same direction," McCann said. "The scoop loader vehicle, which carried Spc. Brough, the 50-caliber (machine gunner), also shot back."

He said they saw two people go into the last house, the one that previously had someone standing on the roof. According to McCann, the two suspected terrorists then ran behind the house and over a berm. At the same time, he said, all of the suspects jumped into an escape vehicle. A cease-fire was called, ending all hostile actions.

Within the short period of engagement, they expended at least 150 rounds.

"On the first day that we arrived, we took over the responsibilities. We had a DART mission and we were ready for it," McCann said. "I give credit to Bravo Company. We were ready, although we didn't expect it."

Continued on Page 15



Pfc. Mathew McCann stands between Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard A. Cody and 4th Infantry Division Commander Maj. Gen. James D. Thurman, following an awards and reenlistment ceremony at the Ironhorse Conference Center at Camp Liberty, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers)

Workhorse mechanics keep Clydesdales hovering

By Spc. Creighton Holub
Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

The Combat Aviation Brigade's CH-47D Chinook helicopters are constantly moving personnel and supplies around the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater and require intensive maintenance to remain in tip-top condition.

The crew chiefs in the 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment and the Soldiers of the battalion's Company D., work together to keep the Chinooks flying high.

"I don't think that, besides the 18-series (Special Forces), there is so much responsibility required by enlisted Soldiers," said 1st Sgt. Sam Sepulveda of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, about his company's crew chiefs and flight engineers.

Crew chiefs perform daily checks on the aircraft. They work hand-in-hand with the support Soldiers of the battalion's Company D to maintain the helicopters.

"The support Soldiers in my company are specialists with engines, airframes, sheetmetal, avionics and hydraulics repair," said Capt. William Dunn, the commander of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment.

Company D's maintenance platoon is a valuable asset to the unit. Their responsibility included all aspects of maintaining the battalion's three different aircraft, which include the Chinooks, the UH-60 Blackhawks and the HH-60 Medevac helicopters.

According to Dunn, the maintenance platoon is divided into two sections, one specializes in repairing the Chinooks, while the other is made up of UH-60 Blackhawk mechanics.

"The Soldiers are what make this possible," Dunn said. "If you invest into your Soldiers, they will do the right thing and perform their job as best as they can. When it comes down to it, take care of the Soldiers and they will take care of the mission."

Each Soldier realizes that his or her mission differs. Soldiers are not allowed to work on parts of the helicopters they have not been trained for.

"We don't mess with any other part other than the engines," said Spc. Tony Cantu, a turbine engine mechanic in Co. D. "The back shops all have their own part, their own job. We are specialists in our job."

The back shops are the special sections that work on specialized features

of the battalion's helicopters.

"The back shops are where we have our seven specialized MOSs" Dunn said. "We also have our tech supply for aviation parts management."

The seven specialized MOSs Dunn referred to feature mechanics who are trained to work on the aircrafts' airframe, electronics, avionics, hydraulics, engines, props and rotors.

"Maintenance management is the same across the board," Dunn added. "You have to make sure you have the right people in the right place at the right time. In the maintenance world, we use the acronym P4T2: Problem, Plan, Parts, People, Time and Tools. When you put it all that together, you come up with a methodology for fixing the aircraft whenever they break. When you boil it all down and get to the root of it, it's problem-solving."

The battalion's Chinook helicopters have played a major role in the Combat Aviation Brigade's mission, by transporting personnel and equipment throughout Iraq and decreasing the amount of trucks that travel the country's dangerous roads. To date, the unit has moved over 5 million pounds of equipment and kept 852 trucks off the roads.



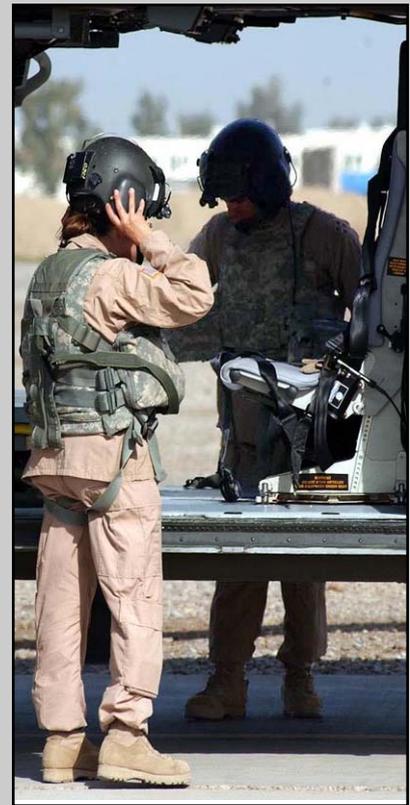
Spc. Sidney Scott, a CH-47 Chinook mechanic from Long Beach, Calif., in Company B, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, works on his assigned Chinook helicopter in his units maintenance hangar at Camp Taji, Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, CAB Public Affairs Office, 4ID)

Photos from Around the Brigade



Steadfast and Loyal

Spc. Tawnya Baca, Spc. John Anderson, Spc. Andrew Flores, Spc. Chad Stuart and Pfc. Sara Frank pose for a photo March 7. The Soldiers are motor transport operators in Company A, 404th Aviation Support Battalion. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, CAB PAO)



Dustoff on the Move

MEDEVAC crew members Staff Sgt. Christina Martinez and Cpl. Freddie Nunez of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, prepare to go on a mission March 8. (Photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, CAB PAO)



Ironhorse Mission

Soldiers in a Blackhawk helicopter take off from Camp Taji on March 7. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, Combat Aviation Brigade PAO, 4th Infantry Division)



On Guard

Spc. Steve Downey and Pfc. James Nakamura guard an entry control point on Camp Taji March 6. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, CAB PAO)

Congratulations to the Combat Aviation Brigade's NCO & Soldier of the Quarter



CAB NCO of the Quarter

Combat Aviation Brigade Commander Col. Donald M. MacWillie congratulates Cpl. Dana Sayer for being named the CAB's NCO of the Quarter at the Brigade Headquarters at CampTaji. Cpl. Sayer is assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment.



CAB Soldier of the Quarter

Combat Aviation Brigade Commander Col. Donald M. MacWillie congratulates Spc. Sergio Cadavid for being named the brigade's Soldier of the Quarter at the Brigade Headquarters at Camp Taji. Cadavid is assigned to Company D, 3rd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment. (Photos by Spc. Creighton Holub, Combat Aviation Brigade PAO)



A Combat Aviation Brigade AH-64D Longbow Apache crew takes off on a mission from the Camp Taji Airfield March 8. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, Combat Aviation Brigade PAO)



Spc. Alejandro Perez, a Longbow Apache armament specialist in Company D, 1st Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, works on an Apache March 6. (Photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, Combat Aviation Brigade PAO)

404th Aviation Support Battalion "Iron Providers"

Cool 404th ASB siblings serve together during deployment

By Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers
Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- The thought of having one's brother or sister serve alongside of you, while performing your duties as a Soldier can be described with just one word - Cool.

That word is an exact description of brother and sister tandem, Staff Sgt. Eric and Pfc. Jennifer Cool, both of whom are assigned to the Combat Aviation Brigade's Company B, 404th Aviation Support Battalion.

The Cools are both aircraft mechanics and at one point, were working within the same platoon. But here in Iraq, older brother Eric now works in Quality Control, while Jennifer, who is five years younger, continues to work in the maintenance section.

Last fall, Jennifer Cool arrived at Fort Hood and was immediately greeted by her older brother who said he had no idea she was even coming to Fort Hood, or that she would be assigned to his unit.

"I found out the day she showed up," he said. "Last I knew, she was supposed to go to Korea and then she ended up coming to Fort Hood. I picked her up at the airport and dropped her off at the Soldier Center. Then later on that day I was told, 'hey, you got a new Soldier.' I went down to the S-1 and sure enough, it was her."

Cool said he thought to himself, "What are the odds of that happening?" He said that despite the fact that she was on Fort Hood, he was still surprised that she came to his exact unit. It ended up being a pleasant surprise for both of them. "It was very exciting knowing that I was going to get to work with my brother at my first duty station," Jennifer said.

According to Eric Cool, it was somewhat awkward for him, but he could see the happiness in his sister's face.

"It was weird," he said with laughter in his voice. "She had this big ole smile on her face and was like, 'hi brother.' So I took her to the unit and down to the first sergeant and told him, 'look at this, it's my sister. He couldn't

believe it. Everybody always asks me, 'is that your sister or your wife?' I go, 'no definitely not my wife.'"

Cool said that although they are both combat Soldiers, he continues to be the protective big brother, in some cases. The Cools actually have one other sibling. Their younger brother, Josh lives in their native Emporium, Pa., which is near Punxsutawney, Pa., a town famous for its well-known ground hog, "Punxsutawney Phil."

Eric Cool said it has been a pleasure serving with his sister. They continue to be professional Soldiers, but also maintain close family ties.

"It's nice to have a shoulder you can lean on, in the sense of being away from home," he said. "But we're here together, so we bring that family togetherness. When I'm having a bad day, I can go talk to her. It's someone I know I can turn to. If she's having a problem, she knows she can turn to me at any time. It's just nice having a family member here."

Jennifer Cool echoed her brother's comments. "It's been pretty cool, actually," she said. "We're both here for each other and provide support for each other."

The Cools agreed that their parents were excited that both of her children were serving so closely together.

"Mom and dad, they liked it," explained

Eric, who along with his fiancée, is expecting a daughter later in the year.

"Mom really liked it. She doesn't like the fact that we're over here, but she feels more comfortable that I'm here and can lean a shoulder over and look after (Jennifer)."

She said she's also happy that they are able to serve together here in Iraq. It provides some comfort to their family members back in the States.

"The rest of the family is doing pretty well knowing that we're both over here, supporting each other," said 20-year-old Jennifer. "There's a lot of support for us back home."

Other Soldiers in the battalion's maintenance section said they're also happy that the Cools are able to serve together.

"I think it's good," said Sgt. Nathan White, who also works in the QC shop with Eric Cool. "I think they'll have a chance to stick together. They are both professional, there's never an issue on the work side."

Serving in the CAB as an aircraft mechanic is perhaps one of the best jobs an aviation Soldier could have. But when you're serving alongside a close family members as well as friends, the job can only be described one way -- Cool.



Staff Sgt. Eric and Pfc. Jennifer Cool both serve together in the Combat Aviation Brigade's Company B, 404th Aviation Support Battalion on Camp Taji. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers, CAB PAO).

1st Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment "Dragons"

Dragon refuelers top one million gallons at BIAP FARP

By Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers
Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq (March 12, 2006) – Twenty-two Soldiers from the Combat Aviation Brigade's 1st Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment have played a major role in the Multinational Division-Baghdad aviation mission since arriving in the Baghdad area in late December. The Soldiers of the Dragon Battalion's E Company have served on the Forward Arming and Refueling Point, or FARP at Baghdad International Airport, which is the busiest in the MND-B area of operation. During their tour of operating the FARP, the platoon has pumped more than 1 million gallons of fuel into coalition aircraft that frequent the airport.

The platoon of refuelers is lead by 1st Lt. Romane Aguon.

According to Company E's Commander, Capt. James Ritch, he is very proud of Aguon and the crew, which has been on site since Dec. 21, 2005.

"They have been averaging about 65 aircraft per day and distributing about 15-17,000 gallons of fuel a day," he explained. "My Soldiers have been doing an awesome job, given the fact that they were the first in the hopper down there." He said his unit's mission has changed a little since taking over for the now redeployed 3rd Infantry Division.

"Our mission has jumped forward greatly from what 3rd ID was doing," Ritch said. "These guys have handled it with no issues, running hard and heavy and doing other missions outside their window and they've been doing it with great efficiency."

He said one difference between the BIAP FARP and the FARP located here at Camp Taji is the different types of aircraft being refueled daily. In addition to refueling U.S. aircraft, including the CAB's Apaches, Chinooks and Blackhawks, the BIAP FARP also refuels aircraft for other coalition forces and those from other branches of the U.S. military.

"They refuel the British aircraft, the Australian aircraft as well as the huge

CH-53s for the Marine Corps," Ritch pointed out. "They also refuel some MI-17s, and other aircraft for the Iraqi Forces. They provide fuel for almost all the forces that operate in and around Baghdad."

The FARP team's noncommissioned officer in charge, Staff Sgt. Leslie Riggio, echoed Ritch's comments.

"We do more than just Combat Aviation Brigade helicopters. We do 101st Airborne Division aircraft and coalition aircraft too. We do Pumas, Lynx and some aircraft that I can't pronounce the names."

Riggio said safety is their number one concern at BIAP.

"The guys are broken down into teams and they go out there to pump fuel and make sure everything is safe," he said.

"They've got everyone keeping their eyes on everything in case something goes wrong. Safety is always important. We have aircraft with all types of ammunition: Hellfire missiles, rockets and chain guns. You've got to be on your P's and Q's out here."

According to Aguon, maintaining equipment is of equal importance to ensure the operation continues to run smoothly.

"We are a support asset for these aircraft and we need to stay on top of the maintenance issues of our fuel trucks. If there's one thing that I don't want to happen, it is

having to tell the pilots that I can't give them fuel because I don't have good, working trucks."

She pointed out that maintaining professional bearing and situational awareness are also stressed to the Soldiers under her command.

"During the day we go through basic soldiering skills just to keep the Soldiers fresh on everything. We're in a combat environment and we don't want anyone to get complacent. When it's a slow day with no aircraft, we use that time to do good, productive training."

"We go to safety classes such as crash rescues, fire fighting plans and spill contingencies."

"We're going to be back here soon and next time around we're going to know it like the back of our hands."

Aguon pointed out that, considering the high optempo around the Baghdad area, her Soldiers must remain aware. Their excitement begins with the sound of a distant helicopter.

"When the helicopters come in, all you hear is: 'We've got birds! We've got birds! Two Apaches, two Blackhawks!' and it echoes. It's heart-pumping, blood rushing and it's probably the same feeling that an infantry Soldier gets when he's ready to go on a foot patrol. It's really motivational when we hear the helicopters coming in."



Pfc. Angelo Ricciardo of Company E, 1st Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, watches a Longbow Apache helicopter get refueled at the Forward Arming and Refueling Point in Baghdad International Airport March 11. (Photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, CAB PAO)

2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment “Mustangs”

CAB MEDEVAC unit supports troops throughout battlefield

By Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers
Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Now in their fifth month of deployment, the Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment (MEDEVAC), Combat Aviation Brigade, have come to think of Iraq as somewhat of a home away from home. This is especially true when one considers that the unit has deployed to the war-torn country three times in the past three years in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The company departed Fort Hood Oct. 14 and arrived in Iraq to provide medical airlift support to the 3rd Infantry Division’s Aviation Brigade. Despite its high optempo, Soldiers in the unit maintain their motivation.

“I think it’s going great in terms of the mission we’re supporting out here and the accomplishments of the Soldiers,” said Maj. Ricky Ortiz, commander, Co. C. “The Soldiers are doing wonderful out here. They picked up a tough mission, made a painless transition and now

they’re out there operating daily.”

Ortiz said his unit has earned the confidence of all the units it supports in the OIF theater, despite having an even mix of seasoned veterans and new Soldiers.

“I think we’ve got an even split with newcomers and some of the old-timers, as we call them,” he said. “As expected, the veterans have taken the new Soldiers under their wings. They told them about the phases of the deployment. Those vets said, ‘hey, you can expect this, and if you do this, everything will come out right,’ and it has been just like that.”

Ortiz said the current deployment offers some differences from the previous tours in Iraq.

“OIF I was a more dynamic deployment for this unit,” he said. “They were assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division at the time when it did most of the offensive and direct support, so I know it was a dynamic time with a lot of jumping, a lot of instability and uncertainty.”

Ortiz, who didn’t deploy with the

unit during the last rotation, said the last deployment, in which the unit supported the Marines, was good for the unit also.

“All I heard about the last rotation was that it was a good rotation with the Marines, and there were some trying times with the Marines I guess, in developing that relationship,” he said.

Company C returned back to the CAB following the 4th Inf. Div.’s Transfer of Authority from the 3rd Inf. Div. in early January.

“It’s been good,” he said. “There was no mission dropped during the transition. Now we’re just refining the procedures and developing new relationships to get to a final set. Now we’re improving our system to make sure we support the Soldiers across the wire better.”

The MEDEVAC unit is responsible for transporting battlefield casualties and Soldiers who require urgent care to medical facilities throughout the Multi-National Division – Baghdad area of operations.



Sgt. Branden Coughlin, a flight medic in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment assists members of a 101st Airborne Division Troop Medical Clinic in transporting a patient to the aircraft during a patient pick-up flight (U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers, Combat Aviation Brigade PAO, 4ID)

3rd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment "Comanches"

Female crew chief one of few in air assault aviation unit

By Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers
Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – There are numerous crew chiefs in the Combat Aviation Brigade. Considering the amount of aircraft assigned, however, not many are female.

Pfc. Vanessa Grambusch, assigned to Company C, 3rd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, is one of the few aviation brigade female crew chiefs. In fact, she is one of only two female crew chiefs assigned to the air assault battalion.

Grambusch joined the Army more than 18 months ago. She came from a military family, so the choice to join the Army was easy for her.

"My mom, my dad, my step dad and my brother were all in the Army," she explained. "My mom got out as a staff sergeant after she was pregnant with my brother. My dad retired as an E-7 (Sergeant First Class) and my brother is now an E-5 (Sergeant) in the National Guard."

Grambusch said she chose to become an aviation Soldier because she wanted to escape the monotony that comes with most other desk jobs.

"I didn't want to do the same thing every single day and get burned out on it," said Grambusch. "I didn't want a desk job that I'd sit there all day, but I didn't want a physically taxing job where I would be outside all day for nine or 10 hours a day."

She said she likes her job because it's different from any other and it offers a nice balance of indoor-outdoor activities.

"It's something different every day," she pointed out. "(As a crew chief) we do a lot of paperwork and desk work sometimes, but a lot of it is work on the aircraft, taking care of it and finding out what's wrong with it. This (aircraft) is something we baby, completely, you fly on it and you get to see so much."

Being able to travel throughout the country performing various missions is a part of her job that Grambusch said she enjoys.

"I've seen so much of this coun-

try already, and I've gotten so many pictures of the mosques and towns," she said. "These are things that some people don't ever get to see because they're always in Taji."

She said the family-like closeness that the pilots and crew chiefs have developed in her unit is what makes her job the best job in the Army.

"It's such a small tight-knit group and nothing here can be done without the other person," she explained. "We could not do our jobs without the pilots and the pilots couldn't do their jobs without us. It's a give and take situation."

"When you're in the aircraft, we're kind of like a family because if you're not watching out for each other, the mission will fail," she added. "You can't have petty issues in your way because we only have 20 crew chiefs (in the battalion). That is enough to maintain 10 aircraft and if one is sick, someone else has to put a sling on for him."

Grambusch, along with Sgt. Lula Jones, of Company B, are the only female crew chiefs in the 3rd Battalion. The bat-



Pfc. Vanessa Grambusch stands near a 3-4 Aviation UH-60L Blackhawk helicopter. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers, CAB PAO)

alion also has two female pilots.

She said meeting the native Iraqis has been one of her most interesting events since she arrived in the country in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The people here are pretty interesting, also. I have a lot of friends who are from Israel who are in the States. There are still some really beautiful places out there."

She said that her job and meeting new people have been a welcome experience for her. That includes other Soldiers from different units on Fort Hood that she's met at Camp Taji.

"My job is important to me and talking to people that I have never, ever gotten to talk to before, because now we're all enclosed in one area," explained Grambusch, who's also a mother of three. "There are people whom I'd probably never see on Fort Hood that I've talked to here."

She said her kids also think her job as a helicopter crew chief is one of the neatest jobs a mom could have.

"They think it's really cool, especially my job; they think it's really neat," Grambusch explained. "At first they were like, 'that's a boy job, you can't do that.' I explained that I get to ride on (helicopters) and do other things. So now they think it's really cool."

She said her children's ages range from 5 to 15 years-old.

She also pointed out that she is very proud of her unit, from the leadership on down to her co-workers.

"I think it's a really good battalion," she said. "We have a really good commander. I can't say enough good things about (Lt.) Col. (Michael) Gawkins. To me, he's top dog. We have a really good team in our unit."

Gawkins, likewise, had high comments for the 31-year-old crew chief.

"Pfc. Grambusch symbolizes how great the Soldiers of today are," he said. "She has super bearing; she's motivated and is rapidly progressed in her individual skills. She's a great example for our junior Soldiers."

4th Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment "Gamblers"

4th Battalion Gamblers maintain 24/7 FARP at Kalsu

By 2nd Lt. Heather C. Bonnett
4th Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment

KALSU, Iraq – Baghdad International Airport and refuel at Taji are not the only places Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers perform Forward Ammunition and Refuel Point duties.

4-4 Aviation Reconnaissance Battalion Soldiers maintain a FARP at Kalsu as part of Team Condor and will also take their place in the rotation at BIAP in the next few months.

"Being down here at Kalsu shows our Soldier's the importance of their mission," said SSG Edward Moorer, E Company NCOIC at Kalsu. "They see the importance of the responsibility they have and how the aircraft down here couldn't perform their mission without them."

Not only are the Soldiers helping complete the mission in Kalsu, but they feel like they are apart of the overall mission in Iraq, Moorer said.

"Soldiers benefit a lot more down in Kalsu because they are operating two fuel systems, FARP and FSS," said 4-4 ARB E Company's 3/5 Platoon Sergeant Sgt. 1st Class Natividad Rios Jr. "So many lives depend on having that FARP operational at all times and our job is to do so. Having the Farp where it's at Kalsu, from my perspective is that it allows the aircraft longer on station and right back into the fight faster after refuel and rearm."

The Soldier's of E Company, 4-4 ARB have, in fact, learned more about their duties in Kalsu because they are performing both hot and cold refuels as well as maintaining ammunition for AH-64D's.

"It's empowered the Soldier's and given them the chance to work their job to the fullest," said Staff Sgt. Ronald Gladden, NCOIC of Ammunition at Kalsu about the opportunities the mission has afforded Soldiers. "This has really given them the chance to control things and set up a system that works, on their own."

"We get to do the job we've trained for everyday," said 4-4 ARB Petroleum Supply Specialist SPC Stephen

Graham. "This makes us proficient, so you can send anyone out at any time and they know what they're doing."

Anyone includes the 88M's and 92W's who are a part of the 13-man FARP team. One-on-one training with the NCOs of the Kalsu FARP has resulted in cross-trained and confident Soldiers.

"I never thought I'd be refueling rather than driving," said SPC Krisna Atilano, an 88M with E Company. "All the experience I've had refueling here will come in handy. Now I can volunteer if a refuel mission comes up, rather than just watch, because I know I can do it."

Another Heavy Wheel Operator, PFC Jose Lucas said at first he did not know anything about refueling, but now he feels confident he can help with the unit's mission.

The cross training the Soldier's received started, slowly, by watching a hot refuel conducted, then was shown, step by step how to conduct a hot refuel while staying safe, until they themselves were able to complete such a task.

"The first time I hot refueled, it was scary," said Petroleum Specialist PFC Prentice Tunney. "I had heard a lot of stories about it, but now I feel confident. I've received a lot more training down here that I wouldn't have received if I were in Taji. I have been trained well by

the hands-on training, which is the best training you can get."

"Before I always wanted to do it, with the helicopter's blades running over your head, but I didn't know how," said Lucas. "Now I can, and I've gotten to refuel all types of different aircraft."

Team Kalsu's FARP refuels aircraft from across the theater, to include helicopters from the the 101st Airborne Division, the redeploying 3rd ACR and the United States Marine Corps. In the past, some of the Team Condor Soldiers had only refueled Apaches, now they are getting the opportunity to refuel aircraft from across the theater.

"The coolest thing I've gotten to refuel is an OH-58," said Graham, "I had never done that before; I had never even seen one before!"

The Kalsu FARP mission has another added bonus, it is allowing NCO's to step up and take more responsibility.

Tenney said his time in Kalsu has made him feel like he is earning his combat patch. "I feel like I'm more of an asset to the unit," he said.

When the Soldiers rotate back to Taji, they take back with them not only the new training and experience they have received but an understanding of the necessity of completing the mission safely and quickly with accuracy.



PFC Prentice Tenney and SPC Krisna Atilano, 4-4 ARB Team Condor Soldiers, refuel a UH60 in Kalsu. FARP operations at Kalsu are around-the-clock, allowing these Soldiers an opportunity to put their prior training into work, helping the aviation fight in Iraq.

The Doctor is IN...

By Dr. (Maj.) Jeffrey K. Hubert, Brigade Flight Surgeon

MASCAL Exercise improves efficiency of CAB medics

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- The Month of February brought a flurry of excitement for the medical personnel of the Combat Aviation Brigade. We were part of a FOB (Forward Operating Base) MASCAL (Mass Casualty) exercise where the medics and physicians practice caring for a large number of soldiers injured at the same time. These exercises allow the Combat Aviation Brigade medical personnel to practice our coordination, communication and trauma skills in a controlled environment. This exercise was performed while wearing our Kevlar /ACH Helmets and IBAS (Flak Vests) to get everyone used to providing care while wearing the appropriate protective gear. Realistic training to prepare for a possible emergency situation.

The providers worked with the medics

as a team. Teams were formed of one provider (physician or PA) and two junior medics. The teams were broken up into several triage areas in order to care for soldiers whose injuries ranged from life threatening to minor cuts/bruises. The providers were in charge of their assigned teams, examining patients as they arrived, diagnosing the "mock patients" injuries and directing needed medical care.

The senior medics were in charge of patient movement to and from the ambulances as they arrived at the TMC. The senior medics were also responsible for coordination of ambulance evacuation from outlying clinics and transport of patients to the evacuation heliport at the airfield. Communications were a concern during the planning phase of this drill but were not a stumbling block for the exer-

cise.

The junior medics were the workhorses for the exercise. They performed most of the hands on treatment under the direction of the Dr. Jeffrey K. Hubert physician. For Example, they applied splints, assisted in assessing the patients, recorded the medical care while it was being provided or practiced moving patients safely on litters. They received hands on training – one on one – with their team leader. This practical exercise improved their efficiency in caring for the seriously wounded and that could be the difference between life and death for a wounded soldier.



Dr. Jeffrey K. Hubert

Chaplain's Corner

Spiritual Physical Training

By Chaplain (MAJ) Steve Maglio
Combat Aviation Brigade Chaplain

Before entering the Army Chaplaincy I was a civilian pastor for 9 years. During this time I pastored in a couple churches and certainly enjoyed every challenge that came my way. When God called me to become a chaplain I recognized that I was entering a different world; one of the biggest differences was physical training. Getting up every morning very early and battling traffic became the norm. Running throughout the week made me realize the importance of staying physically prepared to do battle at a moments notice.

Well, the truth is, there are spiritual correlations to the idea of being prepared to fight at a moments notice. How often do you take time to prepare spiritually for the missions and challenges that are in the future? Each of us has our own faith, but it is up to each of us to feed our beliefs with positive nourishment; we must be willing to do our "spiritual P.T." Taking just 10-15 minutes a day can make the difference in being a positive person of faith; if we don't, we risk spiritual atrophy. Worshipping with other people of faith provides encouragement and support throughout the week...kind of like a battalion run. The key is we all want to finish together!

Upcoming Religious Events:

- Monday-Thursday Service on April 13.
Good Friday Service on April 14.
Gospel Concert on April 15.
Please talk to your Battalion UMT for more Service information.



Gospel Concert at the EMC

Spc. Shana Sanders leads a song for the Eagle Ministry Center Choir during a gospel concert held at the center Feb. 25. The Concert also included the Choir from the Sustainment Brigade's Wrangler Chapel. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers, CAB PAO)

Combat Aviation Brigade Retention Office

CAB Retention NCOs engage in close race for top honors

By Staff Sgt. Derek Scott
CAB Career Counselor

CAMP TAJI, Iraq (March 10, 2006) — The retention NCOs of the Combat Aviation Brigade used friendly competition as a means to successfully achieve the Brigade’s retention mission.

We have designated awards to recognize the NCOs for their efforts during the Retention fiscal year.

The first award our battalions are racing to achieve is called the “Early Bird” award. This award is given to the first battalion to complete its objective in the Initial, Mid-career, and Careerist categories.

This year’s mission is one of highest this Brigade has ever had and the high speed retention NCOs makes it look easy. Staff Sgt. Quentylyn Stephens of the 404th Aviation Support Battalion has closed out her battalion’s mission as of March 14 and has been designated as the brigade’s Early Bird Award recipient. Staff Sgt. Sammie Shipps, the Retention NCO assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment is not far behind with 88 percent of his total objective accomplished.

Currently, the rest of the retention NCOs, Sgt.

Brad Welch of the 1st Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, along with Sgt. Coquece Carter of our 2nd Battalion, 4th Regiment, Sgt. Stephen Bushey of the 4th Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, and Sgt. Kristy Wade of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combat Aviation Brigade are all well above the Army’s glide path.



The next award up for grabs Staff Sgt. Derek Scott is that of the Brigade’s Top Producer. This award goes to the Battalion Retention NCO who achieves the most reenlistments by percentage in each category by the end of this fiscal year. This means the winning battalion will have to surpass their current objectives and achieve the highest percentages by September 30, 2006.

Although the 404th ASB is currently leading the race, there’s still two more quarters in this fiscal year, so we’ll have to wait and see.

Our battalion retention NCO are the best in the Division and any of these NCOs can achieve these Top honors. Which one will it be?

Combat Aviation Brigade Equal Opportunity

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Horwath
Brigade Equal Opportunity Advisor

Sexual Harassment

A behavior that violates the tenants of our Equal Opportunity Program can range from



the mildly offensive to behaviors and actions that are clearly criminal in nature. Leaders need to understand that the climate they create in their organization that tolerates sexual innuendo or sexual harassment is a breeding ground for situations that could go beyond harassment and lead to sexual assaults. Sexual harassment is about power - one person trying to have power and

abuse power over another, generally more junior, weaker, or less confident person. Sexual harassment is not acceptable under any circumstances.

Sexual Harassment Defined: Any person in a supervisory or command position who uses or condones implicit or explicit sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, pay, or job of a Soldier or civilian employee is engaging in sexual harassment. Any Soldier or civilian employee who makes deliberate or repeated unwelcome verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature is engaging in sexual harassment. (AR 600-20)

Sexual harassment can include:

- Jody Calls, Cadences, Profanity & Jokes (verbal)
-- T-Shirts, Calendars, Posters & Stickers (nonverbal)
-- Emails & Screensavers (nonverbal)
-- Attempts To Hug Or Kiss (physical)
-- Patting or Pinching (physical)

- Pulling Someone Too Close (physical)
-- Cornering / Violating Personal Space (physical)

Dealing with sexual harassment:

- #1 DIRECT APPROACH (Tell the harasser that you don't appreciate their actions)
-- THIRD PARTY (Have someone else tell them)
-- CHAIN OF COMMAND
-- A LETTER OR MEMORANDUM
-- ORGANIZATION TRAINING / CLASSES (This allows the harasser to see the problem while helping to inform other Soldiers)
-- File an informal or formal EO Complaint.

Our soldiers face enough stress on today's field of combat, being forced to deal with the affects of sexual harassment could be the straw that breaks the camels back. Equality is a combat multiplier.

CAB Soldiers begin wearing Combat Patches



Proud Eagles

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton affixes a combat patch on Combat Aviation Brigade Commander Col. Don MacWillie's sleeve after the commander affixed a combat patch to his sleeve. Soldiers began wearing their combat patches Feb. 15 after it was announced at the Camp Taji flight line. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Creighton Holub, Combat Aviation Brigade PAO)

Right: Combat Aviation Brigade Commander Col. Donald M. MacWillie places a combat patch on the right shoulder of CAB Master Gunner, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Lance McElhiney as members of the staff watch. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Rogers, Combat Aviation Brigade, PAO)

Combat Badge Continued from Page 4

McCann said he was excited that the Army Vice-chief of Staff was able to present him with his award, especially since Gen. Cody is an AH-64D Apache pilot.

“Him being an aviator is just kind of cool,” McCann said following the ceremony, in which more than 25 other Soldiers were presented the award. “He has flown Apaches and was the commander of the 101st Airborne Division, which used to have the largest aviation assets in the Army.”

The newlywed Soldier also had a

chance to meet Maj. Gen. James Thurman, commanding general, 4th Inf. Div.

He said he was the only aviation Soldier there amongst the other combat action badge awardees.

“It was all MPs, two infantry guys and a medic. I don’t quite understand how I fit into that picture because these guys do it every day. I did it once,” McCann said.

McCann, who left the Army following a previous stint as a 19D Scout, said he re-joined the aviation field in 2004 to please

his fiancée, who felt his previous job was too dangerous.

He said he was happy to receive the award but can never forget the others who were also involved in the mission.

“I believe that maybe, more personnel, other than me, deserve it,” he said. “It’s a great honor to have it. It’s a new badge, and for me to be the first one in the brigade to have it, during this deployment is a really great honor.”