



From the Commander

As we wind down our combined training at Fort Sill I am impressed by how well all of the separate units within our Task Force have come together to create a successful, cohesive team prepared and ready to deploy and conduct a full range of aviation missions. As the Soldiers of Task Force 34 have been training and preparing to deploy overseas we also think of our families, who in many ways have already started their deployment. We may not be overseas yet, but our families are already familiar with the struggles and issues dealing with day to day living since their loved ones have been mobilized. Just as the military chain of command is an essential part of life for service members who are mobilized with our Task Force, the family chain of concern is equally important to the family members who are still at home. It is important for family members to be familiar with both the Family Readiness Group (ArmyFRG.org) and their Unit's rear detachment contact information in order to be aware of and utilize the resources and help that are available to all family members. As we move forward in our deployment I am proud to lead this team of professional Soldiers and have the utmost confidence that all of our families have the resources they need. Our success depends on the skills we have as Soldiers as well as the support we receive from our families. One Team, One Fight!



COL R. Clay Brock, Jr.
Commander, Task Force 34

From the CSM

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all Task Force 34 Soldiers to the deployment. I have been very impressed over the course of the past few months, observing our Soldiers coming together as a team. We have come a long way since integrating all of our units as a Task Force. Following a few lessons learned getting acclimated to active duty Army life; we are now in the correct mindset for a great deployment. I am continually impressed how we are melding together. With Soldiers from over 10 states, we are very diverse with various backgrounds and skills. The recent Mission Readiness Exercise (MRE) we participated in at Fort Sill, has helped put the pieces together on how to function as a Task Force. Although the MRE is over, we need to stay focused, keep learning, maintain the standard, be professional, and complete our mission.



CSM Gery Thesing
CSM, Task Force 34

To the families of the Task Force, I would like to emphasize that your husbands, wives, sons and daughters have been training hard. We have been focusing on our job specialties as well as knocking the cobwebs loose on all of our basic Soldiering skills. Along with all of the hard work, we have found time to enjoy a small chunk of Oklahoma life. The fourth of July brought us together and helped build camaraderie. The day was spent at the Post Lake playing in the sun. We had a barbecue, mini-golf, boat races and swimming. It was a nice break from our normal routine. The evening was capped off with a Lynyrd Skynyrd concert and a wonderful fireworks display. Most importantly, we were able to enjoy each other's company out of the work environment. Our time at Ft Sill has helped prepare us for the experiences we may encounter overseas. I want you to know that I am extremely confident in the abilities of your loved ones. As a Command Sergeant Major, it is my job to only send qualified, confident trained Soldiers and leaders overseas. I want to assure the families that every one of your Soldiers have shown to me that they are mission ready, and prepared to represent the United States and Task Force 34 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF-08-10). I am truly proud of the great job they have done. They have exemplified what it means to be a Soldier and I feel honored to be part of such a diverse organization.

Watch Out Iraq ... Red Bull is Back

2-149 mobilizes at Ft. Sill for Iraq tour

Delta 2-149 Aviation Maintenance Company's arrival at Fort Sill in early June began with a ritual well known to every soldier. Reminiscent of basic training days we formed long lines for a hot uncomfortable day to be issued new go-to-war personal gear. The pace was fast and furious and at the end of the line we had two duffle bags of clothing and armor and a backpack containing a sleeping bag, odds and ends accessories, and a camel back hydration system. The equipment is of the most recent available styles and models. The modern body armor is heavy with add-on insertable ballistic plates. The new advanced-combat-helmet is a welcome replacement over the outgoing Kevlar helmet. One oddity of the day was the receipt of cold weather gear...fleece, overalls and gloves. It will get cold in Iraq one day. Back at the billets our bags are everywhere stuffed under bunks and stacked into corners of our crowded rooms.

A second day was allotted for reviews of each soldier's information relating to medical history, finances, family matters, and administrative data. Every soldier must be paid, powers of attorney and wills arranged, family support lines of communication established, and credit and entitlements for this tour of duty provided. The not-so-fun part involved vaccinations. Anthrax, typhoid, small pox shots were the order of the day for most recipients and the TB bubble-under-the-skin shot given to all and examined for negative reactions a couple of days later. The small pox shots left large gruesome blisters that were slow to heal.



We are settled into a work routine with the day and night crews of Delta Company turning wrenches on the 34th Brigade's helicopters. Tools, special equipment, and aircraft parts are stored in mil. vans shipped from home stations to this large multi-state organization. After working together for the first time under the guidance of the Brigade staff at this temporary training site we are making the mistakes we should be making at the early stage of the game. Better here than over there. Soon all our equipment and the flight company's helicopters will be packed aboard ship and transferred through the Suez canal to Kuwait and onward to Iraq.

Fort Sill is a particularly attractive Army post. We are garrisoned in an older area that consists of well maintained his-



toric two and three story quarters and barracks. The buildings are of large proportion and topped with red tile roofs. They speak of a time past. Massive entrance doors are in the style of old European architecture. A large vista of cut grass expands out from our barracks and offers a short walk to the main post PX and commissary. A walk across the grounds finds us accompanied by swallows crossing our paths as we flush out insects for their supper.

Air Force trainer jets fly into the Houston Post Army Airfield where we work. They can be seen with their landing gear down as they approach the runway...flying in front of our barracks at a comfortable distance but close enough to wish we were young and in the cockpit.

Our own helicopters, Blackhawks and Chinooks, fly all day and into the early morning hours. Delta Company is tasked to maintain the three company fleet and keep them in a safe and reliable state. The crews will not worry about the quality of our maintenance while on their inherently risky missions in the OIF theater. All our maintainer skills are required to keep the aircraft in a wartime readiness posture.

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A Wing and a Prayer

The question on the minds of families and friends of Soldiers of Task Force 34 is "How are the troops doing at Ft Sill?"

Certainly we are in the process of acclimating to hot conditions (90° to 100°). Soldiers are generally in good spirits and ready to go forward with our mission. We as UMTs (Unit Ministry Teams of chaplains and chaplain assistants), like you family members and home communities, are very proud of our Soldiers. They are living out the Army values (loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage) and Soldiering skills.

Recently, we have completed our MRE (Mission Readiness Exercise) and have proved our capability to do the mission. An emphasis is placed on Soldiers maintaining contact with family and friends back home and the importance of supporting one another. This has been understood in the faith realm. As we started our time here at Ft. Sill, we have combined services at one of the chapels on post, New Post Chapel. Attendance numbers of 70 to 90 Soldiers at these services, along with specific opportunities for various faith groups to worship, indicate the uniting of faith and the building of encouragement one to another.

Many Soldiers are looking forward to leave time where they have the privilege to go home or go to someplace special with friends and family. It is a well earned break from the routine of Soldiering. Enjoy this time together with your Soldiers.

Families and friends, thank you for your prayers and the many ways that you support us. Our God is an awesome God on whom we lean in faith to grant the needed strength and perseverance to fulfill our mission. In the Master's Hands,
Chaplain LTC Tom Jensen, 3-142 Assault Helicopter Battalion.

Guidance from above on deployment

As the TF34 gets ready to deploy to SE Asia, we seek and receive training in many different areas; weapons, land nav., combat lifesaver etc. But as the Unit Ministry Teams prepares to deploy, we need to look at our vision and mission for our unique Task as UMT's. Our mission or vision if will is to provide military religious support to soldiers families, and other authorized personal directed by the commander.

That mission breaks down into three main parts

Nurture the living: Ministry of the presences and offering of religious serves to all persons in the Brigade. As well Chaplains meet with and counsel soldiers who are in need of guidance and support emotionally.

Care for the dying: The UMT's as well provide comfort to those wounded in action as well in other environments such as VA's and hospices'.

Honor the dead: In the even the tragic, the UMT's, along with the Senior NCO's will provide memorial services and ceremonies to reflect and honor those hero's in our nation who have fallen.



Chap. (LTC) Joel Severson
Chaplain, Task Force 34

To help us complete this Train-up at the lovely Ft. Sill, we received a site visit and training from the 34th ID Division Chaplain, CH (LTC) Morris. CH Morris' visit was two fold:

1st to visit and see what our needs are as we prepare to deploy shortly. In other words, CH Morris looks us in the eyes and asks "how are you all doing"?
2nd thing was offer and execute some ministry specific training that would directly pertain to our needs. This training included how to operate well in a command structure.

This professional and high level training and visit was well received by the all UMT's in the BDE helpful to see we are being looked after in more ways then one.

SSG Jeffrey Dexter, Chaplain Assistant, 34 CAB

Soldiers of Task Force 34 qualify with crew serve weapon

Fort Sill, Oklahoma-Soldiers of Task Force 34 learned first-hand what it takes to be able to handle and qualify with the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon at Kerr Hill Machine-Gun Range here on 22 Jun. 08.

Trained on how to be able to have confidence in them-selves using their skills to qualify with the M249 SAW at the firing range.

The 1st Battalion 289th Regiment, 479th Field Artillery Brigade, First Army, Division West, conducts the M249 SAW qualification for units mobilizing through the Fort Sill Mobilization Training Center. The training was part of the 34th CAB's collective training using theater immersion "train as you operate" in preparation for deployment to support the Global War on Terror.

After one day in classroom environment learning the Primary Maintenance Instruction using the basic fundamentals on breathing, aiming and squeezing the trigger and correcting malfunctions before going to qualification.

"This is what they all look forward to while training in the classroom," said Master Sgt. Hilbert Izquierdo 1st Battalion 289th Regiment, Observer Controller/Trainer, 479th Field Artillery Brigade, First Army, Division West.

"Getting hands on experience out here at the range makes them more proficient and allows them to feel more confident about themselves in handling M249," said Izquierdo who has been an instructor on the M249 for two and half years here.

The Soldiers agreed with Master Sgt. Izquierdo that the training caused an increase in confidence levels.

"I learn better with hands on experience rather than just reading about things in a book or classroom," said Spc. Matthew Corman of Minnesota. "This training was great since its very realistic." "For me I really enjoyed firing the M249 and especially the instructors they were there for you one on one helping you" added Pvt. Alexander Andor of Minnesota.

The goal of the 1st Battalion 289th Regiment is that all deploying Soldiers qualify with confidence gained in knowing they're capable and proficient to apply their skills in a combat environment. "According to the Soldiers their goal was met with the M249 SAW" said Andor and Corman.



Spc. Matthew Corman (center -gunner) along with Pvt. Alexander Andor (left spotter) from Task Force 34 are mentored by Master Sgt. Hilbert Izquierdo (right) 1st Battalion 289th Regiment, 479th Field Artillery Brigade, First Army, Division West, here on 22 Jun 08 at Kerr Hill Machine Gun range. Andor spotter uses binoculars to spot the hits while Corman attempts to zero his M249 weapon on the pacers target.

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Gilbert G. Benavides
479th Field Artillery Brigade Public Affairs
First Army, Division West

Realistic combat lifesaver training

FORT SILL, Okla. — Soldiers of the Minnesota Army National Guard's Task Force 34 learned first-hand what it means to be a combat lifesaver. Trained to be first-responders during their upcoming deployment to Iraq, each Soldier learned crucial medical skills that will ultimately save lives on the battlefield. The combat lifesaver training received here went a step further in that it was conducted under a stressful, real-world situation on June 19.

The 1st Battalion, 290th Regiment, 479th Field Artillery Brigade, Division West, First Army, conducted the four-day CLS course to units mobilizing through the Fort Sill Joint Training Center. The training was part of the Task Force 34's unit collective training under 1st Army Division's theater immersion "train as you fight" concept in preparation for their deployment to Iraq.

After three days in a classroom environment learning everything from setting broken bones to inserting a nasal pharyngeal airway, the trainees were excited about the opportunity to practice their skills in a real-world environment.



Working with a practice arm, SPC Jenaye Hoke, prepares to insert a catheter during Combat Life Saver training, June 17.

Photo by SGT Jaime Mitre, Informations Operations NCO.



SSG Melissa Evans, under the watchful gaze of First Army evaluators, administers an IV to SPC Andrew Allison in a simulated combat environment during Combat Life Saver training at Ft Sill, June 26.

Photo by SPC Kristi Sullivan, HSC 834 ASB Unit Public Affairs Rep.

"This is what they all look forward to while we're training in the classroom," said Staff Sgt. Jason Allabaugh, a health care specialist and one of the CLS instructors with 1-290th.

After the classroom portion of their CLS training, the Soldiers were deployed to Forward Operating Base Mow-Way, a simulated operating base complete with mock villages and actual villagers played by actors.

The Soldiers ran through the mock-village while having to deal with local nationals, insurgents and a host of other obstacles that aren't seen inside a classroom.

(cont. next page)

Realistic CLS (cont)

“Getting hands on experience out here makes them more proficient and allows them to feel more confident about what they’re doing,” said Allabaugh who has been providing CLS instruction for nearly two years.

The trainees agreed with Allabaugh that the training caused an increase in their confidence levels.

“I learn better with hands-on experience rather than just reading about things in a book,” said Spec. Justin Button of Olean, N.Y. “This training was great since it’s very realistic.” Others thought the addition of local nationals was an eye-opener.

“The language barrier makes things so difficult in a real-world situation,” said Spec. Diana Tanhueco. “It was difficult in all the commotion to try and find someone to translate. To top it off, the local villagers are out there wondering what we’re up to while we’re trying to keep an eye on them wondering what they’re up to,” said Tanhueco.

The goal of the 290th was to deploy Soldiers with the confidence gained in knowing they’re capable and proficient to apply their skills in the harshest of combat environment. According to the trainees, their goal was met.

“I’ve been through CLS before but never in a real-world situation,” said Spec. Angela Granger. “With all the commotion out here this is much more life-like and much more beneficial. You get to see how you’ll react in the real situation and I feel very assured that we are ready to take on any obstacles we’re confronted with in Iraq.”

By SFC Robert R. Ramon,
479th Field Artillery Brigade Public Affairs Office
First Army Division West, June 19, 2008

After removing a “wounded” teammate from a building, members of 34 Combat Aviation Brigade HHC take a moment to pose for a group shot, June 17.
Photo by SGT Jaime Mitre, Informations Operations NCO.



2-149 Mobilizes (cont)

Day crews sweat in hot hangars and out on the flight line. A nice breeze is a welcome visitor in the hangar. Night crews are privy to the Oklahoma displays of lightning. Winks and flashes on the dark horizon signal the approach of native storms. When that happens all available hangar parking slots are quickly filled and those helicopters remaining on the line are secured and anchored. These helicopters are national assets and are treated as such. We ourselves are national assets.

Your Family Readiness Group

The well-being of our Soldiers and their families is of paramount concern. We recognize the tremendous sacrifice that families are making while their loved ones are deployed in the service of their country. Every effort is being made by leaders at all levels to support the needs of the Soldiers and family members that may arise as a result of this deployment. The Family Readiness Groups back home are trained and willing to provide assistance to each and every family member that may be in need of support. We will utilize every tool available to ensure family needs are addressed. For a comprehensive list of resources and contact information, subscribe to your unit's virtual Family Readiness Group at www.ArmyFRG.org.

Soldiers-we highly suggest involving your loved ones with the FRG website so they have a means of staying connected with current operations and support back home. The FRG volunteers upload new pictures and information frequently and are extremely useful to family members. Every effort is being made to keep families connected during the deployment. Active participation may help your family deal with the stresses of your deployment. Be advised that any family member can register on the website. We encourage spouses, parents, children, and significant others to register and stay updated.

-Your FRG Staff.



Public Affairs Guidance

Welcome to the first full issue of the Flightline. We plan to publish every 4-8 weeks. Please send in your story ideas! Refer to the official Task Force 34 website, www.TaskForce34.org for these stories, and many more, complete with links to fact sheets, photos, video, blogs etc.



A few thoughts to leave you with:

- When dealing with the media EVERYTHING is “on the record”.
- Send us your photos and videos. Training photos, official photos, mug shots, whatever. When we get to theater we'll have a shared photo drive with a directory for each company in the Task Force.
- Soldiers get to know your Unit Public Affairs Reps. There is at least one in every company. UPARs are part-time PAOs and have been tasked with telling the story of your company.

Our mandate in PAO is to tell our story to the public. SGT Lynette Hoke and I are both excited about this opportunity to work with the Soldiers of Task Force 34 during our deployment!

See you in the papers!
SFC Daniel Ewer, TF34 PAO

JAG Self-Help Notes for Consumer Issues

At some time in our lives we all have disputes with businesses or service providers over a product or a service. Before resorting to legal action, there are several things you can do to solve an issue with a business. Below are some web resources you can use to find information and file complaints.

Consumer Education- Become a smart shopper. Review products and tips on how to find and select reputable retailers and service providers. This is the best way avoid problems up front.

1. Better Business Bureau (BBB)- www.mnd.bbb.org

The BBB offers a search feature to allow you to search a business to see what their status is the BBB, whether they have received consumer complaints and what the resolutions were. The website also offers an Army specific page to address military specific issues <http://www.army.bbb.org/>.

2. Consumer Reports www.consumerreports.org

Besides the magazine and subscriber services, Consumer Reports, an independent, non-profit agency has many areas on its website that have free information on safety and product recalls, reviews on products, and advice on shopping for large purchases.

3. Angie's List www.angieslist.com

Angie's List is a word-of-mouth network for consumers. It's a growing collection of homeowners' real-life experiences with local service companies. Rather than digging through the phone book, they check Angie's List to find out what people in their area are saying about the companies they've hired. There is a fee to belong to the network, but if you are building a home, or starting a remodeling or repairing project, getting a referral to a reputable contractor or service provider will save you time, money and hassle.

4. Your state Attorney General's Office website

5. www.consumeraction.gov

The Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC) is a one-stop source for information about consumer problems and government services. Their information includes a wide variety of consumer topics including buying tips, privacy issues, banking credit, housing healthcare etc.

6. www.consumer-action.org

Consumer Action,, is a national non-profit education and advocacy organization offering many free services to consumers. They offer online publications and guides in several areas including banking, finance, home buying, privacy etc.

Taking Action- When you encounter a problem with a business or service provider it is important to bring it to the attention of someone from customer service or a representative. Write down details on conversations with these individuals, asking for their name and number. Ask for confirmation in writing of anything discussed over the phone. Follow up immediately if results are not produced. Ask to speak with management and again record names, dates and numbers and ask for written confirmation. If you are failing to get results over the phone, try wiring a letter explaining the problem, who you have talked to and when, and what action you would like taken. www.consumeraction.gov offers a fill in the blank consumer complaint letter to help you craft an effective letter.

Filing a Complaint- the following websites offer complaint filing procedures and forms for consumer complaints. Many of them also offer dispute resolution services.

1. <http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/consumer.htm>

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) handles consumer protection issues. The website offers education on several consumer topics, as well as consumer alerts on many types of fraud and scams. You can report email scams here as well as file a consumer complaint online.

2. Better Business Bureau www.mnd.bbb.org/complaintsearch.html

Your State Conciliation Court (Small Claims Court) This court allows citizens to bring their legal claims to court without expensive costs or complicated legal procedures.

We're here to assist! Come see JAG if you have questions or concerns.

TF 34 Office of the Brigade Judge Advocate

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Mission Readiness Exercise culminates training

In the early morning hours of July 13th, Task Force 34 completed the culminating training exercise of our mobilization at Fort Sill. Three brigade level Aviation Training Exercises in Fort Rucker, Alabama and numerous individual unit training sets over the past several months built to this final Mission Readiness Exercise (MRE).

The MRE truly exhibited the "one team, one fight" motto of the Task Force. The mission required coordination at all levels from planning through execution. Every unit of the Task Force present at Fort Sill participated in the exercise. Task Force Headquarters, 834th Aviation Support Battalion, both based out of Minnesota, 3-142 Assault Battalion from New York and the Texas based 2-149 General Support Aviation Battalion all played critical roles contributing to the success of the Task Force's culminating exercise.

Initial guidance and planning for the mission conducted in the MRE was received at the beginning of July. Leadership within the headquarters worked at a feverish pace to plan and coordinate and provide subordinate units with timely and accurate information to use in their own mission planning. As the culminating training event of the mobilization, the MRE tested every element of the Task Force: headquarters, assault and support. Each section was critical in the success of the exercise, including those not directly involved in the mission game play. One such section

was the S6 Signals Shop, headed by MAJ Mark Bonner. These computer and signals experts provided all of the communication support ensuring a seamless flow of information throughout the exercise. One member of the S6 shop, SGT Casey Neumann, was recognized as being a hero of the MRE. SGT Neumann provided tireless technical support for multiple locations during the MRE positioning all remote sections for success by ensuring their constant access to required network functionality.



All of the planning and training led up to a dual air assault mission involving multiple targets, locations and units. The 180th Infantry Battalion, an Oklahoma National Guard unit at Fort Sill for their annual training period, assisted TF 34 by providing infantry Soldiers to carry out the ground portions of the Task Force missions. Just after midnight on the morning of July 13th, elements from Task Force 34 inserted 180th Infantry Battalion Soldiers into two separate objectives on Fort Sill simulating the real world missions the Task Force will conduct in theater.

This culminating Mission Readiness Exercise highlighted the ability of a diverse group of Soldiers from over 11 different states, both active and reserve components to effectively work together and complete the mission. All of these units have combined to create a Task Force that displays the competence and professionalism that will ensure continued success as Task Force 34 looks forward to moving into theater.

Courtesy TF34 Information Operations Office, 15 July, 2008

The Flightline is the official command information publication of Task Force 34. The contents of *The Flightline* are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, or the Department of the Army. All editorial content of *The Flightline* is the responsibility of the Task Force 34 Public Affairs Office.

Submissions

E-mail your stories to us by the first Friday of each month. We prefer the photos to be high digital quality (300 ppi or more) and e-mailed to TaskForce34@gmail.com

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