

KEYSTONE

28TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

BON VOYAGE!

State Dignitaries Bid Adieu to Their Hometown Heroes

By Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

Deploying to a war zone is no picnic. And neither is preparing for it. The soldiers of Task Force Keystone have been preparing for their upcoming deployment here at Fort Sill relentlessly, and the individuals who traveled long distances to see their soldiers, perhaps one last time before they deploy, are well aware of that.

Among the visitors was Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer. His soldiers in the 1/189th are attached to the Pennsylvania National Guard-based 2/104th.

Schweitzer said it is important to be on the ground with his troops and see what they are experiencing. He said a 2006 visit to Iraq and Kuwait to see deployed troops really solidified that point for him.

On March 12, the New Jersey National Guard adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Glenn Rieth, visited



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dale Shade
Montana Gov. Brian Schweitzer meets 2/104th Command Sgt. Maj. Dell Christine during his visit to Fort Sill March 4.



Photo by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones
Pennsylvania Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Jessica Wright, eats lunch with Spc. Anthony Brunner of C-628th at Fort Sill's Mob Cafe.

Fort Sill and brought some of his soldiers' bosses with him.

The group, called Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves, conducted the 'boss lift' to show employers of New Jersey National Guard members what their citizen-soldier employees were doing prior to their deployment.

They were able to observe mounted combat patrol training and eat in the dining facility where the soldiers eat. They also suffered the same 'death by PowerPoint' that soldiers often complain about, during a detailed presentation.

The Pennsylvania adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Jessica Wright, also stopped by for a couple of days with 28th ID's incoming commander, Brig. Gen. Randall Marchi and Pennsylvania Rep. John Murtha's Chief of Staff, John Hugya.

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Suicide Stand Down

KEYSTONE

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Commander

Col. Robert P. Samborski
Deputy Commander

**Command Sgt. Major
Michael F. Wevodau**
Command Sergeant Major

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Public Affairs

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Fit to Fight

By Sgt. 1st Class Dale Shade and Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

The mess hall is the Army's filling station. But when a soldier fills up, is he thinking about the fuel? In Task Force Keystone, one soldier definitely is.

Harrisburg native Sgt. 1st Class Joann Tresco of Headquarters Company, 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, is a lifelong believer in weight management through healthy eating habits. She has made it her mission to help her fellow soldiers lose weight and improve their overall health and fitness.

"It is important for people to take a look at their food intake, within the confines of a day for example, and learn how to eat less and still be satisfied," said Tresco.

She holds weekly meetings to discuss the achievements and challenges each soldier faced throughout the passing week. She also helps assess their progress by conducting weigh-ins.

According to Tresco, effective weight management is not a diet or fad, it is a lifestyle. Making healthy food choices and utilizing portion control are proven weight loss techniques.

"Weight management is simple math," said Tresco. "If you burn more calories than



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dale Shade
Sgt. 1st Class Joann Tresco of HHC, 28th CAB describes the tracking process during a weight management meeting.

you take in, your body will burn fat to give you energy."

She knows from personal experience. Tresco became involved in the program more than 15 years ago. She was in the Army and was becoming overweight. She joined a similar weight loss program and lost nearly 50 lbs.

According to Tresco, the program is working for other soldiers as well.

"I'm really encouraged by the progress people have been making," said Tresco. "I see soldiers making better selections at our dining facilities, and I see them monitoring their workout routine closely."

Tresco will continue to hold meetings and she plans to expand the program when the task force moves into Iraq.

Please keep a look out for flyers or find Sgt. 1st Class Tresco in HHC, 28th CAB.



ABOUT FACE!

“What are you doing for your pass?”



Sgt. Julie Freeze
Human Resources NCO
HSC-628th

“I’m going to Las Vegas. I’m not a gambler, but I’ve never been there before and I’m looking forward to seeing some of the shows. I’ve got Blue Man Group tickets already too.”

Staff Sgt. David Shilke
Mess Sergeant
HSC-628th

“I decided to stay on post during the pass. I have family from Texas, so I’ll probably get to see them. But I didn’t want to go home for such a short time and make everyone have to say goodbye again.”



Staff Sgt. Benjamin Davis
Chinook Mechanic
D-2/104th

“I’m going home to High-spire, Pa. Four days is kind of short, so I wasn’t sure about going, but it wasn’t just up to me. Every day counts for my family and girlfriend.”

Sfc. Jeremy Aldridge
Protocol NCO
HHC-28th CAB

“My wife Kristine is actually in the 628th. So her and I are both going to Fort Worth, Texas to visit my parents for a few days.”



Photos by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

PUBLIC AFFAIRS GUIDANCE

It is the job of the Brigade PAO to tell the story of Task Force Keystone to the people back home, but the job doesn't stop with us. Many of you are already helping tell our story through blogs, facebook pages, personal websites, youtube, etc. This is an important part of the puzzle whether you realize it or not.

First thing's first though. According to MNC-I policy, you are required to submit such things up your chain of command. Additionally, your command is required to review blogs quarterly.

However, the need for wartime discretion must be weighed against the opportunities for the public to personally connect with some of the most effective advocates - the soldiers themselves.

You can imagine which side public affairs falls on, but operational security should be of utmost importance to each of us. Before you post anything, ask yourself if anything you post could be useful to a

potential enemy.

Also, to avoid other problems, use the public affairs acronym SAPP. Security, accuracy, propriety, and policy. Do not post anything that violates the other three rules.

Inaccurate posts could start rumors that create problems down the road. Don't post things that are not in good taste. It makes you, your unit, the Army, or even America look bad. And I doubt I have to explain why violating unit or Army policy is a bad idea.

As long as you follow those guidelines, a blog or similar tool can be a powerful weapon in fighting the information war.

If you have a blog, myspace, or other web site, please share it with the Brigade PAO at TFKeystone@gmail.com and help us tell your story.



The Commander's Point of View

Col. Teresa Gallagher

We're about to close the chapter on our post mobilization training period and as the leader of this tremendous group of soldiers I must say that I couldn't be more proud.

It is hard to believe we started on this journey over one year ago. It has been a long, effort-intensive road to travel. Your dedication to duty and willingness to put forth extra effort and time has paid off. We are well prepared for our mission.

The Mission Readiness Evaluation (MRE) and Aviation Training Exercise (ATX) both went extraordinarily well. Naturally, some mistakes were made, but so were the appropriate

corrections. The feedback I received from our evaluators was generally quite positive and we even exceeded many of their expectations. I am confident we will do the same down range.

Most of you seem eager and ready to get started with our mission. This will happen soon, but first we must complete the last few remaining major training events such as MCP, PR lane, and environmental training.

We will be challenged for sure, but I have no doubts about our ability to successfully complete this training and our mission.

Task Force Keystone is going to do great things in 2009. Your families and



friends are watching closely, and so is your nation. Continue to make them proud.

Keystone 6 Out.

From the Desk of the Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Wevodau

First and foremost I want to thank you all for doing an outstanding job during the MRE and ATX. We not only met the expectations of the evaluators and observers, but we generally exceeded them. It was a small test of our readiness, but the true test is soon to come.

I come across soldiers every day who seem eager to go down range and get started on our mission, but I want to caution you. Take a step back and look at how truly important our mission is before you try to jump right into it.

Our deployment comes at a critical time in the operation

and it's important that each and every one of you realizes that. We're not going there to kill time or to check some boxes on our personal resumes. This is bigger than that.

Most of us have siblings, close friends or other loved ones who have been to Iraq before. Many of us have also been there before. Our mission is the culmination of everything that has been accomplished so far.

Keep that on your mind and you'll be ready to get started and do the great things that will be expected of us from those who came before us, and those who will come after.





NEWS IN BRIEF

Task Force Keystone to Conduct Final Farewell Ceremony

On April 9 at 2:00 p.m., the main body of Task Force Keystone will hold a farewell ceremony at Fort Sill's Polo Field.

More than 1,000 soldiers will participate in the ceremony.

These soldiers are from the 1/150th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 628th Aviation Support Battalion, 2/104th General Support Aviation Battalion and 28th Combat Aviation Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

The 1/137th Assault Helicopter Battalion mobilized separately and held their ceremony Feb. 21.

The 1/130th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion is currently training at Fort Hood, Texas.

A New National Guard Chopper Comes Rolling in to Fort Sill

The Orange Country Choppers Patriot Chopper will be on display at Fort Sill on April 3-4.

The Patriot Chopper, an Army National Guard-themed bike, will be on display in the Mob Cafe parking lot April 3 for Task Force Keystone Soldiers and on at April 4 for everyone on post.

The Orange County Crew visited the aviation facilities at Fort Indiantown Gap August 2007 to gather ideas prior to building the Army National Guard-themed bike later that year. And now, many of the soldiers who provided inspiration for the bike will get to see it in person for the first time.

The Patriot Chopper features a red, white and blue paint scheme, infused with the Army Combat Uniform pattern.

Bon Voyage

Continued from Page 1

Wright and the others ate with soldiers in the Mob Cafe and observed advanced door gunner training as well as other training events.

The visits served as a helpful reminder about the importance of the work the soldiers are conducting and the fantastic job they are doing.

"These are some outstanding soldiers that we work for," Wright emphasized.



Photo by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

Brig. Gen. Randall Marchi, the incoming commander of the 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, talks to C-628th soldier, Sgt. Heather Healy, during a VIP visit to Fort Sill, Okla.



Photo by Master Sgt. Gilbert Benavides

New Jersey adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Glenn Rieth, speaks to a reporter from the New Jersey Network. The two gentlemen, along with several other reporters and high ranking New Jersey Army National Guard officials, visited Fort Sill as part of a 'boss liff'. Dozens of employers of New Jersey National Guard members were brought to Fort Sill to observe the training their soldiers in the 1/150th were conducting in preparation for their upcoming deployment to Iraq.



Standing Down For Suicide Prevention

By Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

Before a unit can be deployed, a vast list of training events must be completed. Much of that training is designed to save lives and this was no exception.

Members of Task Force Keystone participated in the Army's Suicide Prevention Stand Down, which was implemented Army-wide because of a ballooning number of suicides and attempts during 2008.

During the training for the Brigade Headquarters Company, Cpt. Michael Nguyen talked about the importance of the suicide stand down.

"Losing a soldier to battle is heartbreaking enough, but losing a soldier to suicide is unacceptable," said Nguyen. "There are decisions that can be made to help those facing depression or thought about suicide."

The centerpiece of the training was an interactive video titled "Beyond the Front." During the video, soldiers are faced with making difficult decisions that affect the outcome of the stories.

The first scenario is played out from the point of view of a fictional soldier named Spc. Norton. After watching the beginning of the story play out, the soldiers had to make a decision about what to do next. Spc. Norton received a cryptic 'dear John' letter from his



Photo by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

From Left to Right: Spc. Nikki Langs, Col. Teresa Gallagher, Task Force Keystone commander, Sgt. Shawn Parks and Lt. Col. Dominick Nati, Task Force Keystone executive officer, discuss their options during the scenario-driven suicide prevention stand down on Mar. 8. During the training session, the soldiers of the task force were faced with tough decisions involving two fictional soldiers who are facing serious problems.

fiancé on the eve of an important patrol mission. Should he keep trying to get in touch with his fiancé, try to get some sleep, or talk to somebody?

The trainees decided to talk to somebody and the scenario played out from there.

Col. Teresa Gallagher, the task force commander stressed the importance of bringing suspected problems to the forefront despite the stigma associated with doing

so. "Would you rather have your friend be mad at you or be dead? Would you rather be embarrassed about going to the Chaplain to talk about your problems or dead? Because that might be the choice you have to make," she said.

The training was part of a larger, Army-wide suicide prevention stand down, which officially kicked off March 15 and runs through July 15.

On March 26, students from Cameron University's outward careers program visited Task Force Keystone. They took turns in the Chinook door-gunner simulator and were treated to a tour of a Blackhawk helicopter by 28th Combat Aviation Brigade pilots Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jeffrey Alston and Lt. Col. Paul Cervone. (Photos by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones)





Task Force Keystone Scrapbook

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Dale Shade, Sgt. Aaron Gott, Sgt. Matthew Jones

