



KEYSTONE Aviation



ACROSS THE WIRE

28th Takes Over the Skies of Southern Iraq



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On the Cover:

This UH-60 Blackhawk landed prior to the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade's Transfer of Authority ceremony at Camp Adder's 'West Fingers' May 12. (Photo by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones)

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Task Force Keystone Scrapbook

Photos By Sgt. Matthew Jones and Sgt. James Waltz

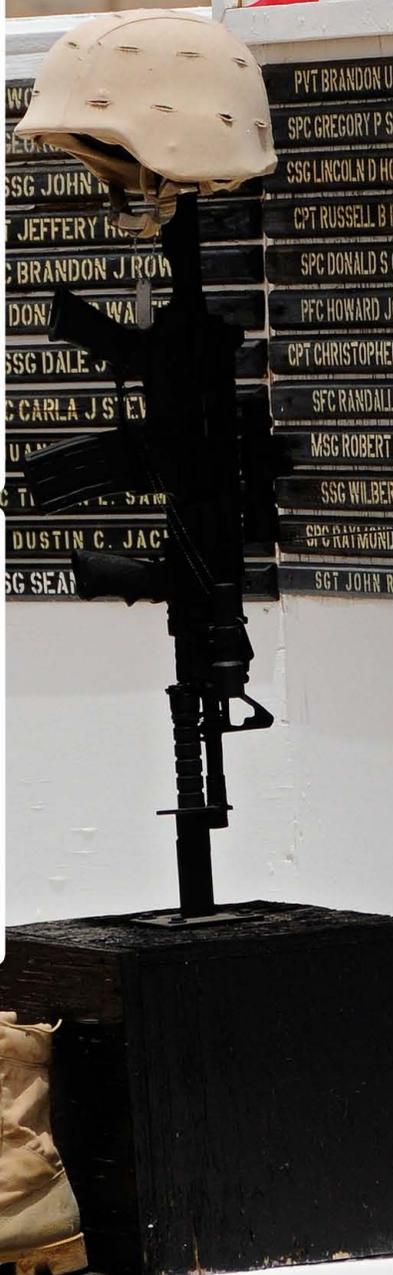




On the morning of May 25, soldiers at Camp Adder recognized Memorial Day with a ceremony at Camp Adder's Memorial Hall. The 28th Combat Aviation Brigade's 2/104th General Support Aviation Battalion performed a symbolic flyover with three AH-64 Apache helicopters during the final seconds of the ceremony.

The names of soldiers whose lives were lost while stationed in the area were read while the flag was ceremoniously raised from half to full staff. Also, a wreath was placed at the traditional helmet-rifle-and-boots display by three non-commissioned officers who were leaders of some of those who died.

Photos by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones



YOGA BEAR

*Story and Photos by
Sgt. Matthew E. Jones*



At six feet and 250 pounds, Spc. David Kocian may not resemble a stereotypical yoga instructor. But after interest in that workout routine began to increase among his fellow Task Force Keystone soldiers, that's exactly what he became.

"A lot of people heard through the grapevine that I did yoga at home and while we were mobilizing at Fort Sill," said Kocian, a human resources specialist and field artilleryman by trade. "Most people were a little surprised, but I thought I might be able to teach them what I've learned."

Kocian had taken classes for three years at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa., where he worked as an active Guard member prior to his unit's mobilization in January.

"I even purchased a video, so I could do it more often on my own," he said.

His teaching career didn't begin until his unit was due to depart their mobilization station, Fort Sill, Okla., and at first, attendance was relatively

low, but Kocian attributes that to the high operational tempo the unit was experiencing as their departure date grew closer.

After the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade arrived at their final destination of Camp Adder, Kocian immediately began to hang flyers at the gyms and dining facilities on post.

Kocian has only held two classes at Camp Adder so far, but attendance is already on the rise.



YOGA BEAR

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“The first night I had about 15 and there were probably 25 on the second night,” he said.

The popularity of yoga in a combat zone is a reflection of its

ability to transport a soldier into a peaceful world where they can leave stress at the door, according to Kocian.

“Once you cross that threshold into my room, its yoga world,” said Kocian. “Forget about your pain, forget about your problems, forget about your supervisor, forget what

you just did and what you will be doing in the future,” he said.

His points are certainly not lost on his students.

First Lt. Dave Sabulsky, the 28th CAB projects engineer, from Jamestown, N.Y., participated in yoga for the first time during Kocian’s second class at Adder.

“I’ve been running projects and planning 24/7,” said Sabulsky. “I haven’t been able to exercise much, and this is a pretty big stress reliever as well.”

There may be an emphasis on stress relief and relaxation, but Kocian’s brand of yoga is definitely a workout as well. Power yoga is not just about doing the movements, but also holding them for an extended period of time.

Yoga can definitely seem intimidating on the surface, but even though he was a first timer, Sabulsky didn’t find the learning curve to be very steep. He credits Kocian’s teaching for this.

“He was relaxed. He knows what he’s doing and enjoys what he’s doing,” said Sabulsky. “That made it easy to follow along.”

Spc. Stephanie Cantando, the brigade commander’s assistant, from East Stroudsburg, Pa., agreed.

“He’s very flexible and knowledgeable about what he’s doing,” said Cantando. “And he breaks it down so that beginners know what they’re doing.”

Kocian enjoys the compliments he regularly receives after class, but this self-described ‘kung-fu panda’ is generally modest about his abilities as a teacher.

“I get people coming up to me, telling me that class was great and they’ll be coming back,” said Kocian. “But what makes me feel great is that I’m providing them with a service.”



Spc. David Kocian, a human resources specialist in the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, teaches a yoga class at Camp Adder, Iraq. The 21-year Army veteran began teaching yoga during the 28th CAB’s mobilization because soldiers showed significant interest when they discovered he was an knowledgeable student of yoga.

The Ziggurat is Ur's Again

Story by Sgt. 1st Class
Damian Steptore



Iraqi citizens gather in front of the historical Ziggurat of Ur during a turnover ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Adder in southern Iraq, May 13. The site is now officially controlled and guarded by the Dhi Qar police and managed by the Ministry Of Tourism. Photo by Spc. Creighton Holub

Approximately 500 attendees were on hand to see security of the well-preserved Ziggurat of Ur ceremoniously transferred back to the Iraqi security forces, May 13.

Since 2003, security of the 5,000-year-old Ziggurat has mainly been under the control of coalition forces. However, that changed during a ceremony as one of Iraq's most famous archeological sites was officially returned to Iraqi authorities.

"What you see here today has been set up by the Iraqi people," said Dr. Anna Prouse, the Dhi Qar Provincial Reconstruction Team leader. "We will still be here to help out and I hope the Ziggurat will be open to the children and the general public."

Prouse's PRT and the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division "Long Knife" brigade assisted the Iraqi security forces and Mr. Hamdani, the Head of Antiquities in Nasiryah, to plan the event, which included various government officials and military leaders throughout central and southern Iraq.

"Every citizen needs to have access to this Ziggurat because education is not just in the class rooms," Prouse added. "Education can also happen here."

The transfer marks one of the final acts of partnership between the Iraqi security forces and the Long Knife Brigade as the unit is set to return to Ft. Hood, Texas in early June.

"I am extremely proud to personally witness this special event in honor of a site that is one of the oldest structures in the history of the world," said Col. Philip Battaglia, the 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. commander. "We will always look back on our time here as a very special moment in the history of this great nation."

The site is now officially controlled by the Dhi Qar Iraqi police and managed by the Ministry Of Tourism.

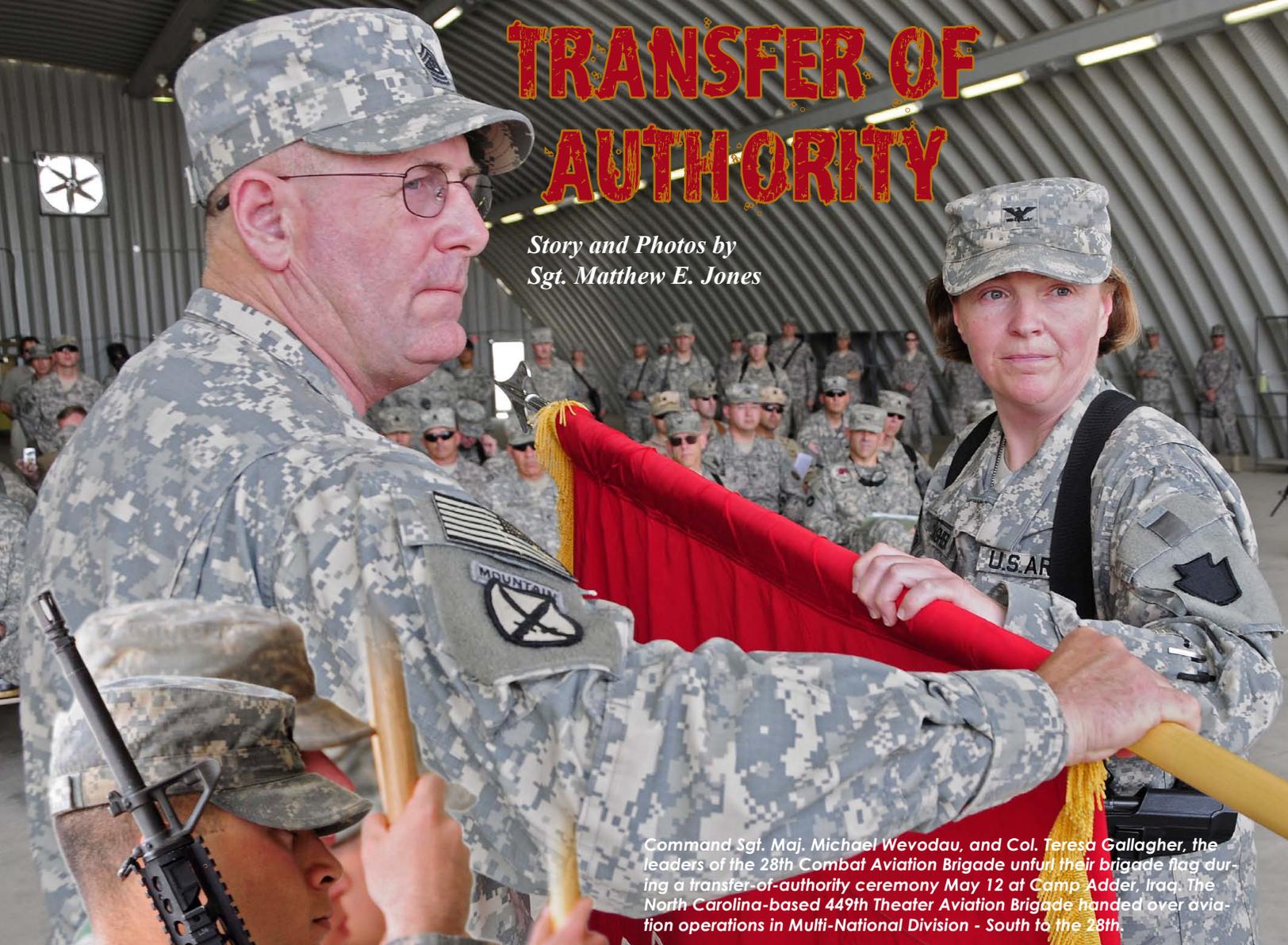


Dr. Anna Prouse speaks in front of the Ziggurat of Ur during a turnover ceremony at Camp Adder in southern Iraq, May 13. Photo by Spc. Creighton Holub



TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Matthew E. Jones



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Wevodau, and Col. Teresa Gallagher, the leaders of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade unfurl their brigade flag during a transfer-of-authority ceremony May 12 at Camp Adder, Iraq. The North Carolina-based 449th Theater Aviation Brigade handed over aviation operations in Multi-National Division - South to the 28th.

The 28th Combat Aviation Brigade officially took control of aviation operations in Multi-National Division – South during a transfer-of-authority ceremony May 12 at Camp Adder.

The ceremony not only marked the changing of the guard, it also recognized the accomplishments, achievements and sacrifices of the 449th Theater Aviation Brigade during their deployment to Baghdad International Airport and Camp Adder while looking forward to the continuation of progress by Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th CAB.

“We are here to continue the mission that the 449th began months ago; the mission to provide aviation support to Multi-National Division – South,” said Col. Teresa Gallagher, 28th CAB commander. “We are the division’s enablers,” she added.

The 28th CAB is made up of mostly National Guard members from several states. Units from



TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY

New Jersey, Illinois, Connecticut, Indiana, Oregon and Montana join the Pennsylvania soldiers to complete the brigade, which has come to be known as Task Force Keystone during the deployment to Iraq.

In preparation for the deployment, the 28th CAB has undertaken three Aviation Training Exercises and a Mobilization Readiness Exercise with outstanding results, said Lt. Col. Michael Koehler, the brigade's human resources officer.

“And although training in the brigade has focused on a possible employment in the time of war, its soldiers

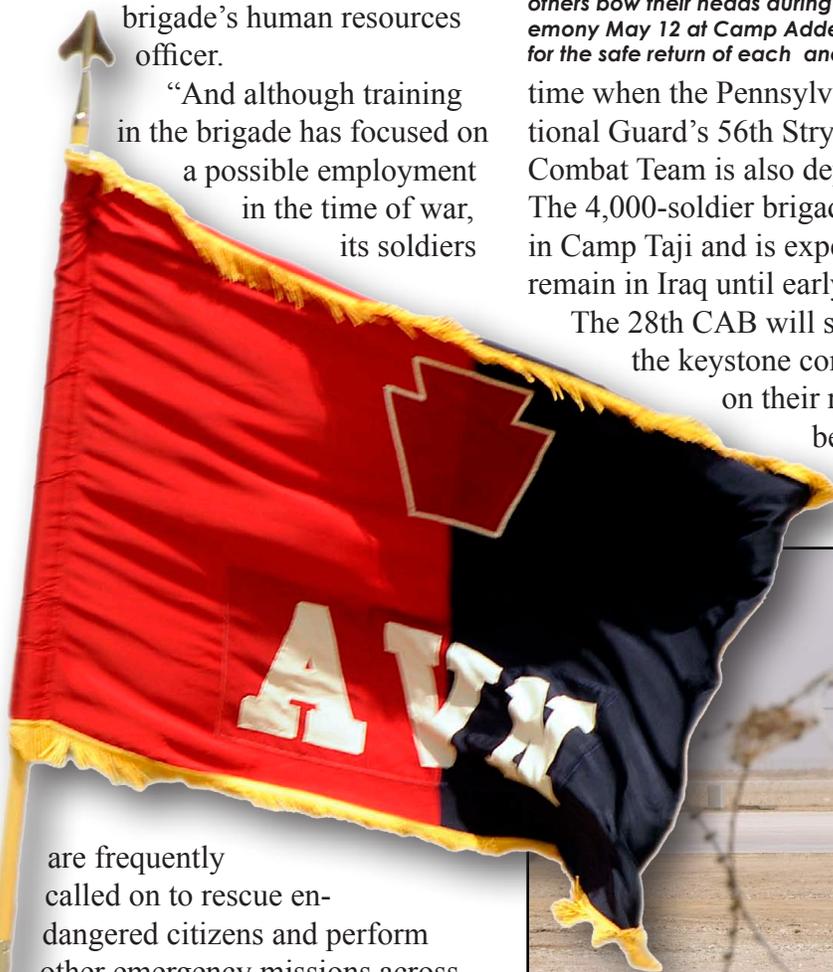


Col. Robert Samborski (far right), 28th Combat Aviation Brigade deputy commander, and others bow their heads during the benediction of the brigade's transfer-of-authority ceremony May 12 at Camp Adder, Iraq. Brigade chaplain, Lt. Col. Douglas Compton prayed for the safe return of each and every brigade soldier.

time when the Pennsylvania National Guard's 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team is also deployed. The 4,000-soldier brigade is based in Camp Taji and is expected to remain in Iraq until early fall.

The 28th CAB will soon wear the keystone combat patch on their right sleeve, becoming only the fourth

unit to do so since Sept. 11, 2001. The 107th Field Artillery, who deployed to Iraq in 2004, the 56th SBCT, which deployed to Iraq in January, and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, which deployed to Iraq for a year in 2005, following a six-month training period in Mississippi, are the only other units to wear the 'bloody bucket' as a combat patch on their right shoulder in recent years.



are frequently called on to rescue endangered citizens and perform other emergency missions across (Pennsylvania), to include flood relief and snow emergencies,” said Koehler.

The CAB's deployment, which began with a late-January mobilization to Fort Sill, Okla., comes at a



A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter lands during the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade's transfer-of-authority ceremony May 12 at Camp Adder, Iraq.

