



KEYSTONE

Aviation



**28th CELEBRATES 50th
WITH A COMBAT PATCH**



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KEYSTONE Aviation

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The Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th Infantry Division combat patch was presented to the soldiers of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade Headquarters on June 1. The other Task Force Keystone battalions soon followed.

(Photo by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones)

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Building a Foundation of Resiliency

Commentary by Lt. Col.
Douglas Compton
28th CAB chaplain



Winning the battles that win the war means overcoming the struggles inside all of us. You see, coping with the adverse situations of life is a battle of the mind and of the heart. It is often what you say to yourself that makes all the difference in the world, listen to your thoughts in your quiet moments and you will discover a great deal about yourself. Have you ever talked yourself into a depressive mood, realized that you did it and then talked yourself out of one? That is *resilience*, the ability to recover quickly from setbacks, it means "to spring back quickly into shape after being bent or stretched."

There are resilient character strengths that will help you to grow in adversity, so that you will be able to conquer those emotions that strive to defeat you. How do you build a resiliency foundation?

Develop character components!

- **Endurance:** The ability or strength to continue or last despite fatigue, stress, adversity and multiple deployments: fortitude, grit, guts, intestinal fortitude, staying power
- **Resiliency:** The ability to recover quickly from illness, change or misfortune; bounding back and driving on despite external stress: spiritual strength, vigor, durability, 'grace under pressure'
- **Character:** Moral excellence, ethical standards and principles in action. This includes virtues and character strengths like wisdom, courage, justice, temperance, humanity, transcendence (spirituality) and the Seven Army Values
- **Thriving & Post Traumatic Growth (PTG):** Enhanced functioning and positive change after enduring a trauma or adversity including relating to others, new possibilities (and choices), personal strength, spiritual strength and appreciation of life

Converting Misfortune into Growth!

From Dr. Al Siebert: The Survivor Personality

& Resiliency Advantage:

"Learning lessons in the school of life is the antidote to feeling victimized. They can convert a situation that is emotionally toxic for others into something emotionally nutritious for them. They thrive in situations distressing to others because

they learn good lessons from bad experiences. They convert misfortune into good luck and gain strength from adversity"

Dr. Victor Frankl lived through the holocaust and knows a few things about persevering in difficult times, he wrote:

"The reason so many people are unhappy today and seeking help to cope with life is that they fail to understand what human existence is all about. Until we recognize that life is not just something to be enjoyed but rather is a task that each of us is assigned, we'll never find meaning in our lives and we'll never be truly happy."

Continue to persevere

Why keep persevering? Why continue standing against the strong currents of temptation, fear, anger, loss, stress, impossibilities, misunderstanding, and mistakes? Because it is in the realistic arena that true character is forged, shaped, tempered, and polished. Because life is a task, we need strength to face it, not speed to run from it. When foundations shake, others disappoint us, and brutal blows attempt to pound us into the corner of doubt and unbelief, we need what perseverance offers: willingness to accept whatever comes, strength to face it head-on, determination to stand firm, and insight to see the Lord's hand in it all. Without it, we stumble and fall. And God is grieved. With it, we survive and conquer. And God is glorified.

2Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4 (NIV)

28th Celebrates 50th WITH A COMBAT PATCH

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Matthew Jones

Soldiers of the Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, 28th Infantry Division, accepted a unique gift on behalf of their unit for its 50th birthday - a combat patch.

The 50th anniversary of the brigade coincided with the timing of the traditional combat patch ceremony for the Soldiers and was celebrated as one and the same.

The Soldiers arrived in Camp Adder, Iraq, at the end of April after a three month training period at Fort Sill, Okla., and Camp Buehring, Kuwait. They will wear the black keystone patch

during their deployment, which is expected to last until early 2010, and will be authorized to wear it after they return.

According to Capt. Anthony Gurski, the 28th CAB historian from Pine Grove, Pa., the combat patch is a tradition that dates back to World War I when soldiers began wearing an extra unit patch on their right shoulder. Soldiers were officially authorized to wear this patch on their right sleeve during World War II. This distinguished the soldiers who had combat experience from those who did not.

The commander of the 28th

CAB Headquarters Company, Capt. Michael Nguyen of Plymouth Meeting, Pa., said wearing the patch is an honor, because it gives him a chance to remember the people he served with during the deployment.

"For me, wearing the patch is all about people," said Nguyen, who also served his country as a police officer in Astoria, N.Y., and an ROTC instructor. "As I switch between the combat patches I have earned so far, I often reflect on the Soldiers I have served with and the experiences we have shared."

Spc. Tiffany Bush, an



Capt. Michael Nguyen and Spc. Tiffany Bush
Photo by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

administrative specialist from St. Marys, Pa., who is serving in the CAB during her first deployment, echoed her commander's statements. "I'm definitely proud to wear the keystone," she said. "It not only symbolizes the unit I've served with, but the people as well," said Bush. "If I served with another unit, I would probably be equally proud to wear their patch though. It's about the people."

The 28th CAB, which is based out of Fort Indiantown Gap in Lebanon, Pa., but includes soldiers from nearly a dozen states, is the fourth unit to be awarded the 28th ID patch as a combat patch in recent history. The 1/107th Field Artillery (military police), the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team were the others.

While addressing the Soldiers of the 28th CAB, Col. Teresa Gallagher, the brigade commander from Chambersburg, Pa., told her Soldiers to "wear the patch with honor and never forget those who

gave their lives while proudly wearing the keystone." There have been 34 Pennsylvania National Guard members killed in action since Sept. 11, 2001.

"We must also remember to uphold the proud heritage established by those who served before us," said Gallagher. "As we selflessly give of our time, we'll become another part of the keystone history."

"Fifty years may seem like a long time to some of us, but when you think in terms of world history, it's a drop in the bucket," said Gallagher.

She described the changes the brigade has seen since it was created. "Like most units, this brigade has undergone an evolution since its birth as the 28th Aviation Company on the first of June, 1959," said Gallagher. "The brigade now has five battalions and three different airframes, totaling more than 100 aircraft," she said.

The unit has grown gradually to meet the need of the citizens for

whom they serve.

"The Citizen-Soldiers of the 28th have always been there to lend a helping hand to our fellow citizens," said Gallagher. The aviators and support staff of the 28th CAB have helped transport vehicles and place bridges. They have even performed rescue missions and transported life-support equipment and supplies during countless storms and floods, both in Pennsylvania and around the nation, including the recovery effort after Hurricane Katrina.

The 28th CAB has always answered the call to federal service as well. Soldiers in the brigade have served in Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan, to name a few.

"And now is our chance to make our mark on the history of the aviation brigade," said Gurski. "Although subordinate units and individual members of the 28th CAB have been regularly deployed, this is the first time in its 50-year history that the brigade has deployed as a single element."

The 28th CAB is also making history outside of the brigade. Along with the 28th ID's 56th Stryker Brigade, the 28th CAB is part of the largest combat deployment for the Pennsylvania National Guard since World War II.

According to Gurski, the 28th ID is the oldest division-sized unit in the United States armed forces.

It was immortalized as the "Iron Division" in 1917 by the commander of the Armies, Gen. John "Blackjack" Pershing. During World War II, the patch was commonly called the bloody bucket by the Germans, due to its red color and distinctive shape.



Hands for Steering Ears for Hearing

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Matthew E. Jones
and Sgt. James Waltz



Between chaplains, counselors, stress-management teams and close friends, soldiers have many places to turn when they need someone to lend an ear.

But thanks to one Pennsylvania National Guard member, the men and women in Task Force Keystone have one additional source when they simply

need someone to listen to them. Spc. Kristy Miller, a Creekside, Pa., resident and transportation

“Each soldier has a unique personality, a different story, and that’s what makes my job great.”

**-Spc. Kristy Miller
Transportation Specialist
628th Aviation Support Battalion**

specialist in the Pennsylvania National Guard’s 628th Aviation Support Battalion, spends much of her deployment transporting soldiers around Camp Adder, Iraq. But she said her job is more like being a bartender than a bus driver.

“Coming

out of the 120-degree heat and boarding an air-conditioned bus can be just as refreshing as that after-work happy-hour drink,” said Miller. “Many soldiers sit down and use the time to unwind.”

Miller cites this as the reason that many soldiers will open up to her, but based on the comments of her riders, it is clear her kind and witty personality are factors as well.

“Who needs a counselor when you have Kristy,” shouted one soldier.

Although driving the same route dozens of times every day can begin to feel redundant, Miller said her job is not necessarily boring.

“The route can certainly become redundant, but the soldiers don’t,” said Miller. “Each soldier has a unique personality, a different story, and that’s what makes my job great.”



Caribbean American Heritage Celebration

Story and Photos by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

There is no such thing as a ‘typical’ American soldier. Like the population they stem from, American troops come from a variety of cultures, communities and even countries.

In an effort to celebrate the diversity among United States service members, equal opportunity representatives at Camp Adder regularly schedule events, such as the Caribbean American Heritage Month Celebration June 27.

Master Sgt. Larry Witmer (pictured below, left) of Lancaster, Pa., equal opportunity advisor, 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, helped organize the event. He was not the only 28th CAB soldier to participate in the celebration.

Sgt. Karl Oakley (right), a 628th Aviation Support Battalion human resources sergeant from Philadelphia, belted out the national anthem as he has during many occasions throughout his time in Iraq with Task Force Keystone.

Capt. Michael Nguyen (below, right), the 28th CAB Headquarters Company commander from Plymouth Meeting, Pa., served as host of the event.

Col. Robert Samborski (right), 28th CAB deputy commander, helped present awards to the winner of an essay contest and also to the guest speaker.

Lt. Col. Douglas Compton, the 28th CAB chaplain from Millersburg, Pa., delivered the invocation and benediction for the event.



Sgt. Karl Oakley



Col. Robert Samborski (right)



Master Sgt. Larry Witmer (left)



Capt. Michael Nguyen

BRICKERS' CHOICE

Story by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones
and Sgt. James Waltz



Quakertown, Pa., residents, Staff Sgt. William Bricker and Spc. Sabrina Bricker pose for an unusual family portrait. They are deployed to Camp Adder, Iraq, while their daughters stay with Sabrina's mother, a retired Army sergeant, back home. Photo by Sgt. James Waltz

During the day, Staff Sgt. William Bricker is fueling UH-60 Blackhawk, AH-64 Apache and CH-47 Chinook helicopters at Camp Adder, Iraq, while his wife, Spc. Sabrina Bricker, is managing the food service employees at Camp Adder's Warriors Dining Facility.

But at night, in the comfort of their room, the Brickers use their internet telephone service to speak face to face with their children, six-year old Kelley and two-year old Hannah,

who are a world away. More than a year prior to this,

“Naturally, I was a little scared about beginning to raise a child without my husband... I was a newlywed in very unfamiliar territory.”

**-Spc. Sabrina Bricker
Food Service Manager
628th Aviation Support Battalion**

the Brickers were faced with a ‘Sophie’s choice,’ a choice between

the lesser of two evils essentially. During a normal drill weekend in February 2008 with the Pennsylvania National Guard’s 228th Brigade Support Battalion in Sellersville, Pa., near their current hometown of Quakertown, the Brickers received their orders for deployment, which would take them to Iraq in January 2009.

William had just accepted a full-time position as a recruiter, a position that would temporarily

make him virtually exempt from deployment with an outside unit. “Being between the two positions, I still had the option of volunteering to deploy anyway, or I could officially accept the position and stay home, but my wife really didn’t have those options,” said William. “She was deploying for sure.”

Five years into their marriage, the couple was faced with a difficult decision. They could deploy together, leaving their young children without either parent for a year, or William could stay home, but the young couple would then be forced to face an entire year of separation for the second time during their brief marriage.

Aside from her part-time Guard duty, Sabrina had been a homemaker during the majority of her marriage to William.

“Being without William and the children would have made the deployment that much more difficult for me,” said Sabrina.

“It would have been like my safety net was pulled right out from under me. Our roles would have been totally reversed.”

The couple was still on the fence, but Sabrina’s mother, Althea Van Heuveln, who happens to be a retired Army non-commissioned officer with 21 years of service, wanted to seize the opportunity to serve her country one more time, by helping her daughter’s family with their situation.

“She volunteered to stay with her grandchildren in support of our deployment,” said Sabrina.

“Obviously this helped ease any fear we had regarding the welfare of our children if we decided to deploy together.”

This tipped the scales in favor of the two of them deploying and the decision had soon been made. The Brickers would be serving together, bringing them full circle since they met as young recruits in 2002 during basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C.

“We were in the same company, but in different platoons,” said Sabrina. “We used to look at each other and smile, but we never really talked there.”

It was not until their advanced

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**-Spc. Sabrina Bricker
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628th Aviation Support Battalion**

training later that year that love started to bloom. At Fort Lee, Va., the two had once again crossed paths.

“She really didn’t like me at first, but I was persistent,” William said with a smile.

After advanced training they went their separate ways, William moving to Huntington Valley, Pa., and Sabrina back to Dassel, Minn. They stayed in touch mostly through phone calls.

The relationship gradually grew more serious, and Sabrina’s parents recognized it. Nothing was holding

Sabrina back at that point and as a retired soldier, nothing was holding her mother back either. Sabrina and her mother decided to move east so Sabrina could be with William.

“After several months of \$500 phone bills, we were finally together,” said William.

“We quickly realized we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together, so we soon got engaged and were married February 27, 2003 at Fort Dix, N.J., just before William left for his first deployment to Kandahar, Afghanistan,” said Sabrina.

Sabrina was pregnant at the time and the deployment brought many difficulties for her and William.

“Naturally, I was a little scared about beginning to raise a child without my husband,” she said. “I was a newlywed in very unfamiliar territory.”

Sabrina was living far away from the rest of her family, and had very few friends to talk with on the East Coast. As it turned out, William would be unable to

return home for the birth of Kelley. He would miss more than 10 months of the newborn’s life.

Following his second deployment, William will begin his job as a recruiter in Lansdale, which, along with the dwell time he has earned from this deployment, would make him nearly exempt from deployment for years, unless he volunteers of course.

Sabrina will return to raising the daughters she has dearly missed. “I know my children are in good hands, but I’ll never want to let them out of mine again.”

Fourth of July in Iraq

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

Celebrating holidays in Iraq can be tricky, particularly a holiday synonymous with fireworks such as the Fourth of July. Soldiers of the Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th Combat Aviation Brigade celebrated July 4th at Camp Adder in Southern Iraq. And yes, there were "fireworks."

The day began with hundreds of Soldiers stationed here, including approximately 50 - 100 28th CAB members, beat the sunrise to participate in the 10K Peachtree Road Race.

Soldiers could then eat breakfast at one of the three patriotically decorated dining facilities. The Warrior's DFAC was bedecked in traditional and unique decorations. Red, white and blue was splashed around the room, but so were colorful sculptures of animals and objects designed to remind soldiers of home. The sculptures included geese, houses, a bald eagle and a special touch for the Pennsylvanians, the Liberty Bell.

The Iraqi Business Zone, a collection of local vendors located near the base, was open for business as usual, but additional vendors gathered in the area to sell their wares under the shade of tents during the Independence Day weekend.

Items for sale included paintings, clothing and electronics, but according to one vendor, the most popular items on July 4th were trinkets and souvenirs such as Iraqi-themed household goods and decorations. Novelties such as camel rides and Arabic name plaques were also popular.

Other events included a firefighter competition and a small



628th Aviation Support Battalion soldiers Spc. Michael Himes of Petersburg, Pa., and Staff Sgt. Jason Zahurak of Johnstown, Pa., pose with a pair of camels near the Iraqi market at Camp Adder Iraq on July 4. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dale Shade

carnival, but like any good Fourth of July event, it was topped off with a fireworks show.

Instead of looking into the air, the troops of Camp Adder were treated with a drive-in style video of a fireworks show projected from the back of a pickup truck onto a pair of concrete barriers. Speakers carried the booms and crackles far enough for passersby to wander into the area.

Unlike the many fireworks shows that would be happening several hours later on the other side of the globe, at the conclusion of the grand finale, the fireworks show started again from the top.



Far Left: Spc. Sabrina Bricker, a 628th Aviation Support Battalion food service manager, watches the fireworks video at Camp Adder's Big Top.

Left: Runners begin the 10K Peachtree Road Race at Camp Adder, Iraq July 4. Hundreds of troops participated including 50-100 from the Pennsylvania National Guard's 28th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Right: Staff Sgt. Patrice Lundsted finishes the last leg of the 10K. Lundsted, who is a paralegal in the 28th CAB, placed first in her gender and age group.





Commentary by Sgt. 1st Class JoAnn Tresco, 28th Combat Aviation Brigade chief paralegal

Are you traveling to a foreign country on leave? If you are, then you may need a passport. One of the only countries to which a soldier can travel without a passport is Germany. And if the soldier goes to Germany and then wants to cross a border into another country, the soldier needs a passport. Here are some frequently asked questions about obtaining a passport in Iraq:

Can I apply for a passport from Iraq?

Yes. The 28th Combat Aviation Brigade JAG office in Bldg 7449D has a checklist of necessary steps and forms needed to obtain a new or renewed passport. Other resources include www.travel.state.us, the Alamo (building 209), or the Adder homepage/JAG Services. The fee and processing time are about the same as they would be in the United States.

Do I have to use my original birth certificate for a new passport?

Yes. If an original birth certificate is lost or destroyed, soldiers can obtain one by going to www.dsf.health.state.pa.us (if born in Pennsylvania) or search for “vital records, state of birth” on the internet. The process may take four-six weeks.

What if I lost my old passport?

Soldiers can submit a form DS-64 along with their application for a new passport. Allow four-six weeks.

How much does it cost and how do I pay the fee?

It costs \$100 for a new passport or \$75 for a

renewed passport. Go to the garrison post office or the post exchange and obtain a money order. For new passports, take the money order with you to the Alamo, building 209, along with your passport application. For renewed passports, fill out and mail the money order in accordance with the passport application instructions.

Who is the passport agent here at Camp Adder?

The passport agent is Staff Sgt. Kevin Vo, and he can be found in the legal assistance office at the Alamo, building 209. If you are located on a base camp that doesn't have a passport agent, you must personally travel to Camp Adder with your paperwork and sign the application in front of Vo.

How long does it take to get a passport?

It takes approximately six weeks from the time your application is mailed to obtain a passport. The applications for new passports are routed through Baghdad to Washington, D.C. and then back. Applications for renewed passports can be mailed to the United States in accordance with the passport application. If you need to obtain an original birth certificate, that lengthens the process to about 12 weeks from beginning to end. It is important for you to allow yourself enough time to get this paperwork completed or your leave travel will be affected.

For more information, 28th CAB legal points of contact are Staff Sgt. Patty Lundsted and Sgt. 1st Class JoAnn Tresco at 833-5840.

BOILING IN THE SUN

Task Force Keystone soldiers participate in 15K 'Boilermaker' road race

Photos by Sgt. Matthew E. Jones

