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December 1, 2009

'Charlie's Angels' make history "C Co's" all-female MEDEVAC team takes flight



Chief Warrant Officer Andrea Galatian, a pilot in "C" Company, 3-238th MEDEVAC, prepares a Black Hawk at COB Adder, Nov. 25.



Photos by Sgt. Neil Gussman

Sgt. Debra Lukan, Capt. Trish Barker, Staff Sgt. Misty Seward and Chief Warrant Officer Andrea Galatian of "C" Company, 3-238th MEDEVAC, became the company's first all-female crew just before Thanksgiving.

In fact, with a total of nine deployments amongst them and between eight and 12 years of service apiece, this is still a first time experience for the entire crew.

~ Capt. Trish Barker, Operations officer

By Sgt. Neil Gussman
28th CAB



COB ADDER – In the three days before Thanksgiving, one of the on-alert crews for Task Force Keystone made history at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, as the first all-female MEDEVAC crew ever for their company.

"There must have been another all-female MEDEVAC crew somewhere, but I haven't seen one," said Chief Warrant Officer Andrea Galatian, the pilot.

The odds are slim for such a crew to come up on rotation, said Maj. David Mattimore, commander, "C" (Charlie) Company, 3-238th MEDEVAC, from Hampton, N.H.

"It would not have been possible until one of our avionics sergeants became a crew chief," he said.

That crew chief is also the newest name on the flight roster: Sgt. Debra Lukan, 43, of Keene, N.H. She enlisted just after 9/11.

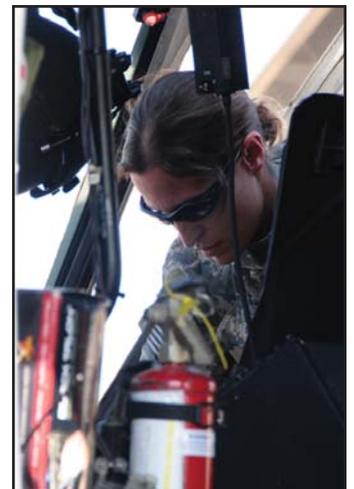
She trained as an avionics mechanic and just recently switched from the shop to flight crew. Lukan deployed to Camp Speicher and Tikrit from 2005 to 2006 and served in the avionics field.

She is happy to be on the flight rotation this time, she said.

In the civilian world, Lukan is a federal technician in avionics for the New Hampshire National Guard.

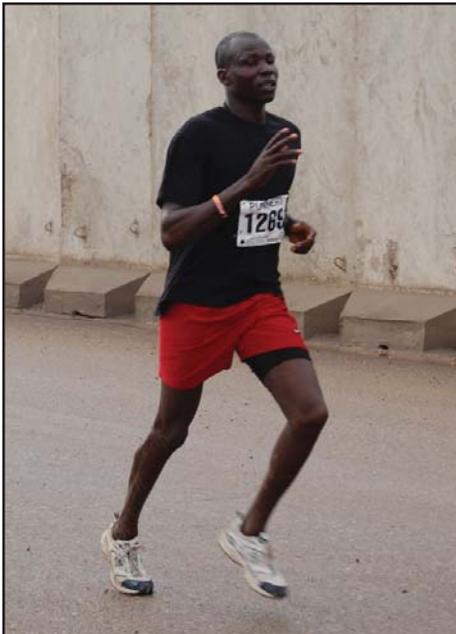
Staff Sgt. Misty Seward, 30, of Owosso, Mich, agreed with Galatian on the uniqueness of the crew.

In fact, with a total of nine deployments



Capt. Trish Barker, operations officer for "C" Company, 3-238th MEDEVAC, performs pre-flight safety checks on a Black Hawk at COB Adder, Nov. 25.

COB Basra Marathoners run the gamut



Photos by Sgt. Benjamin R. Kibbey
COB Basra Marathon winner Isiah Mamai, a security guard with Saber international, comes into the finish line at three hours, 14 minutes, 23 seconds, Saturday. Though he has run long distances in his home country of Kenya, Mamai said this was his first marathon.

By Sgt. Benjamin R. Kibbey
367th MPAD 

COB BASRA – Hours before the sun rose Saturday, service members and civilians gathered in the damp cold at Contingency Operating Base Basra. Despite steady rain and mud like axle grease, 139 runners had turned-up for the first ever COB Basra 10-miler and Marathon.

“It takes an awful lot for a runner to go out there and run by himself on this, when there’s no crowds,” said Capt. Jim Pereda, effects section, 34th Infantry Division, from Rogers, Minn. “You’ve got six water stops, they go by each one twice, and that’s your cheering section.”

Pereda’s section ran the event.

Most of the course passed within feet of the fence separating the base from the flat, barren terrain around it. With miles between the points, the risks to volunteers and runners were obvious.

So, organizers placed the water points at guard towers. This made them stand out to the runners, but also gave the volunteers added protection.

“At home you have to organize security to block the roads,” Pereda said. “Here you’ve got to organize security be-

cause you’re in an unsafe area.”

Other preparations included music, like the “Rocky” theme, which blared from the Moral, Welfare and Recreation stage as runners gathered at the start.

No gun signaled the start. A chase vehicle, a gun truck from the 305th Psychological Operations Company, started the race with the Beatles’ “Come Together,” blasted from its speakers, as it pulled out, the runners dutifully followed.

Around 15 Soldiers from 308th Brigade Support Battalion, 17th Fires Brigade ran, said 1st Sgt. Jilanna Malachi, the battalion first sergeant.

MARATHONERS
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With a final time just over four hours, Pfc. Terrance Jackson, supply specialist, Headquarters Support Company, 34th Inf. Div., finishes running a marathon plus a few extra miles at COB Basra, Saturday.

HOMETOWN HIGHLIGHT

Rockin’ Rogers Days is held annually the last weekend of June. It is a city wide celebration complete with a carnival, softball tournament, classic car show, parade, and many other annual activities.



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THE RED BULL REPORT

34th Red Bull Infantry Division
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-  17th Fires Brigade
-  4th BCT, 1st Armored Division
-  28th Combat Aviation Brigade
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MARATHONERS

"I run probably about 20 miles a week," Malachi said.

The 10-miler, which Malachi completed as the second female across the line, was not a huge challenge for her.

"This was something to do for fun," she said. "I like to run."

The 17th FB's chaplain's assistant, Staff Sgt. Caroline Keller, had similar sentiments.

"I run all the time," she said, "so this is pretty much just a way to get outside and do it and have company to run with."

"This is me versus me, not me versus 300 other runners," Keller said. "This is me getting out here and trying to do something positive with my time while I'm here."

Pereda is amazed with people who run marathons, he said.

"It's one of those things, you've just gotta have the goal to do it," he said. "It takes an awful lot of guts."

One man who ran with a goal was Pfc. Terrance Jackson, supply specialist, Headquarters Support Company, 34th Inf. Div. The farthest he had ever run before was 10-miles, he said.

As the 10-miler and marathon shared the first portion of the course, Jackson, due to miscommunication, turned around with the 10-milers instead of continuing.

When he reached the 10-miler finish, he could have quit, and a part of him



Photos by Sgt. Benjamin R. Kibbey

Runners in the 10-miler and marathon at COB Basra start out shortly after 5 a.m. Saturday. The runners were led out by a gun truck from the 305th PsyOps blasting the Beatles' "Come Together."

wanted to, he said, realizing how far he was from finishing.

"I had to finish it," he said. "I promised my wife that I'd finish a marathon while I was here."

The marathon winner, Isiah Mamai, a security guard with contractor Saber international, said that, although he has run long distances before at his home in Kenya, this was his first marathon.

Running against military, Mamai wasn't certain he would win, but knew he had a chance, he said.

The event was organized by Lt. Col. Luke Charpentier, 34th Inf. Div.

"We contacted Kristine Smith from the Twin Cities Marathon office," he said. "We were delighted when she graciously agreed to sponsor the marathon here."

The marathon was coordinated with the Twin Cities Marathon organizers in Minneapolis, which was run Oct. 4. The COB Basra Marathon was delayed until November to allow t-shirts and medals from the Minneapolis race to make it to Iraq and for the participants to train, Charpentier said.

With 49 of the 52 marathoners finishing within the six-hour time limit and 84 of the 87 10-milers completing the race, there was no question as to the success of the event.

"Events like this help soldiers have a positive event to focus on," Charpentier said, "and then the great feeling you get in finishing a race."

For more of Sgt. Kibbey's stories, visit: www.TheRedBulls.org/Kibbey



TASK FORCE THUNDERBOLT
ST. BARBARA'S DAY
5K RUN

In Honor of the Patron Saint of
the Field Artillery

Date: Saturday, 5 December

Start time 0630

Race Day Sign-up 0545

Location: In front of Consolidated Chapel Tent
across from the Fire Station and the entrance to
Brady Lanes

For more information or to Preregister/sign-up contact:
caleb.underwood@iraq.centcom.mil or
caroline.keller@iraq.centcom.mil

Sponsored by
The 17th Fires Brigade &
The Field Artillery Association

ARABIC WORD
OF THE DAY

Ma Esmooka-
What is your name?
Esmi-
My name is.....



Arabic word of the day



Photo by Spc. Samuel Soza

Maj. Gen. Douglas Carver, Army Chief of Chaplains, shares a meal with chaplains and chaplain's assistants working in MND-S at COB Basra Nov. 23.

Chaplain Chief cheers the chosen

By Spc. Samuel Soza
367th MPAD



COB BASRA – Army Chief of Chaplains, Maj. Gen. Douglas Carver, met with chaplains and chaplain's assistants from throughout Multi-National Division South at Contingency Operating Base Basra Nov. 23, on his tour of Iraq.

He is taking the Thanksgiving tour to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the chaplain's assistant as a Military Occupational Specialty and deliver a message of appreciation to service members.

"I've been going throughout Iraq visiting Soldiers, specifically our chaplains and chaplain's assistants, to bring a word of encouragement," Carver said, "To thank them for serving our great nation during a time of war, and to let them know that they remain in our thoughts and our prayers."

"Also, it gives me an opportunity to give a professional update for our chaplains and chaplain's assistants

to let them know strategically where we are going as an Army and as a chaplaincy," he added.

Carver expressed his appreciation for the Army Chaplain Corps and the role it plays in bringing "encouragement and strength, comfort, and hope" to Soldiers.

"Especially if they see our chaplains who are non-combatants standing in a hostile environment," he said, "It has to give them encouragement that, regardless of where our Soldiers go, wherever there are boots on the ground, there will be a chaplain or chaplain's assistant near, reminding them to have courage, that God is with them in peace or in war, when there is danger or no danger."

Carver then spoke with pride about the work the chaplain's assistants do, and how they allow Soldiers to observe their faith wherever they go.

"One of the greatest examples of what our chaplain's

A BASRA THANKSGIVING



Soldiers with the 34th Infantry Division, based in Rosemount, Minn., celebrate Thanksgiving with a traditional meal of turkey and ham on Contingency Operating Base Basra, Nov. 26. The Soldiers stated that in this season they remember what they are most thankful for and many said it was their families and comrades in arms.

Workers at Contingency Operating Base Basra created the 34th Infantry Division "Red Bull" logo out of bread for the Soldiers meal.



Richard Pettiford, of London, England, a chef for nine years, carves the likeness of an eagle into ice. Pettiford said he had never done an ice sculpture before and decided to "give it a go."

Photos by Spc. Samuel Soza

assistants do is set the conditions for our Soldiers to worship in accordance with their faith, practice, and tradition," he said. "I'd like to thank our Soldiers for their sacrificial and selfless service to our nation during a time of war. They are doing a magnificent job and in the 234 years of our history, no one's done any better. I am so proud of them and their families."

And what is the general most thankful for this season? In two words, his family.

"I'm most thankful, first of all, for my faith in my God," he said, "Secondly, I am thankful for my own family, my wife and children who have been with me. And I am thankful to have been called as a chaplain in the military," he said. "If I can't be home for Thanksgiving and holidays, then I am with my brothers and sisters who wear the Army uniform."

For more of Spc. Soza's stories, visit www.TheRedBulls.Soza

Packing your gear for home with Goofus and Gallant

In the next few weeks many of us will be packing our duffle bags and totes, and every duffle bag and tote will be inspected by a trained Customs Border Control Agent (CBCA).

In order to expedite those inspections here are some things to look for and to think about when packing up equipment and personal items:

When packing his duffle bags Goofus haphazardly throws his gear into his bags. Gallant carefully inspects his gear to make sure it is free of sand, soil, rocks or mud, paying close attention to the bottom of his boots and shoes.

Make sure all your equipment and personal items are clean. Before packing your tote, make sure there is no sand in the bottom.

Goofus packs his OCIE without checking his ammo pouches. Gallant checks his ammo pouches for loose rounds and checks his magazines to make sure they are empty.

Be certain to empty all magazines of ammo. We have found a lot of loose rounds while inspecting other units.

Double-edged or "automatic" knives (switchblade, gravity knives, butterfly knives) are prohibited. If you were issued one, you will need a memo-

randum from your commander stating that the knife was needed for the performance of your duties. Wrap the memorandum around the knife when you pack it.

Goofus packs ten "Knockoff" watches in his tote so he can sell them when he gets home. Gallant packs one "Knockoff" watch and one "Knockoff" purse to be given as gifts to his parents. Goofus packs thirty "Knockoff" DVDs in his tote. Gallant packs one..

You are allowed to bring home one "knockoff" item per type. That means you can bring home one "knockoff" DVD and one "knockoff" watch, but not two "knockoff" watches, and so on. DVDs sold at the PX are legal to bring back to the U.S.

After having one last smoke of his hookah, Goofus packs it away without cleaning. Gallant carefully cleans his hookah of all resin before packing it away.

Hookahs (nagila, shi-sha) are allowed to go back to the U.S. only if free of resin.

Goofus puts his prescription drugs loose in a Ziploc bag and throws the bag in his tote. Gallant keeps his prescription drugs in their original container and puts them in his carry-on bag.

Prescription drugs must be in a carry-on bag.

Goofus takes the Iraqi pistol he found and buries it in his tote. Gallant takes the Iraqi helmet he found to his commander so he can get it approved on a DD Form 603-1.

Helmets and head coverings, bayonets, uniforms and uniform

items such as insignia and patches, canteens, compasses, rucksacks, pouches, load bearing equipment, flags, military training manuals, books, pamphlets, posters, and photographs are considered war souvenirs. All are subject to the war souvenir retention process and must be approved on a DD Form 603-1 by the appropriate reviewing officer (company commander or an officer O5 or above).

Goofus packs his Cuban cigars carefully into his tote so as not to ruin them. Gallant knows Cuban cigars are prohibited from going back to the U.S.

After the Customs inspection Gallant goes to his CHU to relax. After the Customs inspection Goofus is standing at parade rest in front of his First Sergeant's desk.

Don't be a Goofus when it comes to packing up your equipment and personal items. If you have any questions on what you can and cannot bring back to the U.S. contact your first sergeant or commander.

Some of the most common violations that we have encountered during our inspections include mud on the bottoms of boots, loose ammunition, full magazines of ammunition, and prescription drugs.

During the inspection you will be given an amnesty period. If during that time you find something you know should not be going back to the U.S. that is your chance to dispose of it. If something is found during the inspection you could be subject to UCMJ action.

The post office uses the same standards as the CBCAs. If it can't go home with your gear, you won't be able to mail it home either.

Bottom line, if it can't go back to the U.S., leave it here.

If you have any questions prior to packing your equipment and personal items contact your first sergeant or commander.



Based on the characters from the Magazine "Highlights for Children"

COMBAT ZONE TAX EXCLUSION

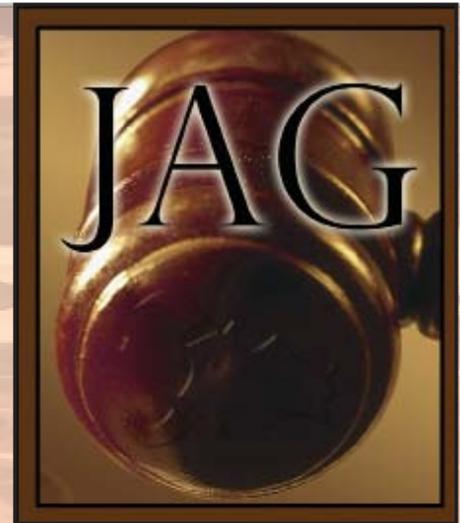
What is the Combat Zone Tax Exclusion (CZTE) and how does it work?

The CZTE starts the moment you set foot in theater. Even if you are only in the combat zone for one day of any given month, your pay for that month is excludable.

While in theater, Soldier's, especially National Guard Soldiers, have all kinds of pay they are not used to receiving -- family separation pay, BAH, BAS, hostile fire pay -- and they certainly haven't had to attempt to get taxes right when it comes to this new and exciting income.

For enlisted personnel, warrant officers, and commissioned warrant officers, the following types of pay are excluded: Active Duty pay, Imminent Danger/Hostile Fire pay, reenlistment bonuses, pay for accrued leave earned while in a combat zone, NAF activities pay, student loan repayments, and any payments you are entitled to because of a suggestion, invention, or scientific achievement you submitted while in a combat zone. (A full list of excluded pay is available in The Armed Forces' Tax Guide, IRS Publication 3, available online at www.irs.gov).

Commissioned officers (other than a commissioned warrant officer) may exclude pay according to the rules described above. However, the amount of the exclusion for officers is limited to the highest rate of enlisted pay (plus any imminent danger/hostile fire pay received) for each month you served in a combat zone.



For more of JAG's comments, visit www.TheRedBulls.org/TheGavel

SUDOKU

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From Page 1 MEDEVAC

amongst them and between eight and 12 years of service apiece, this is still a first-time experience for the entire crew, said, Capt. Trish Barker, the operations officer.

Seward enlisted in 1998 and has served as a medic for 11 years. She has four years as a flight medic and seven on the ground. She deployed to Kuwait from 2001 to 2002 and to Baghdad from 2006 to 2007, both tours as a ground medic.

When she returns from her current tour, Seward will resume her job as a security officer at a level-one trauma clinic in Lansing, Mich., part of Sparrow Health Systems.

Galatian enlisted in 1997 and served five years as an administrative clerk before going to flight school in 2002. She has served seven years as a pilot, including a deployment to Bosnia in 2005.

As a civilian, Galatian is the business analyst for the real estate division of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Barker, 30, enlisted in 1999 as an aircraft fueler. She went to Officer Candidate School in 2003 and Flight School in 2004.

A native of Menominee, Mich., she was deployed to Bosnia in 2005 as a MEDEVAC section leader.

When she returns from this deployment, she will resume her job as the state occupational health specialist for the Michigan Army National Guard.

For more of Sgt. Gussman's stories, visit: www.TheRedBulls.org/Gussman

For puzzle solutions visit: www.TheRedBulls.org/puzzlesolutions



Around the world in 34 seconds



BAGHDAD – Turning on their TVs during the long holiday weekend, Iraqis were greeted by a familiar if unexpected face from their brutal past: Saddam Hussein. The late Iraqi dictator is lauded on a mysterious satellite channel that began broadcasting on the Islamic calendar’s anniversary of his 2006 execution. No one seems to know who is bankrolling the so-called Saddam Channel, although the Iraqi government suspects it’s Baathists whose political party Saddam once led. The Associated Press tracked down a man in Damascus, Syria named Mohammed Jarboua, who claimed to be its chairman. The Saddam channel, he said, “didn’t receive a penny from the Baathists” and is for Iraqis and other Arabs who “long for his rule.” Jarboua has clearly made considerable efforts to hide where it’s aired from and refuses to say who is funding it besides “people who love us.”



TRENTON – A New Jersey blogger about to stand trial on charges he made death threats against federal judges apparently was paid by the FBI in its battle against domestic terrorism, according to a published report. The Record of Bergen County reported Sunday that Hal Turner received thousands of dollars from the FBI to report on neo-Nazis and white supremacist groups. He goes on trial Tuesday in New York, accused of making death threats against three Chicago-based federal appeals judges after saying in Internet postings in June the judges “deserve to be killed” because they had refused to overturn handgun bans in Chicago and suburban Oak Park. The postings included the photos and work addresses of the judges — Richard Posner, Frank Easterbrook, and William Bauer — along with a picture of the Dirksen Federal Courthouse in downtown Chicago and notations indicating the placement of “anti-truck bomb barriers.”



FLORIDA – Tiger Woods finally gave his side of the story Sunday, on his Web site, not to police, and took the blame for an “embarrassing” car crash that gave him cuts, bruises and public scrutiny like never before. His statement failed to clear up any questions about the middle-of-the-night accident outside his Isleworth estate in which his wife told police she used a golf club to smash the back windows of the Cadillac SUV to help him out. “This situation is my fault, and it’s obviously embarrassing to my family and me,” Woods said on his Web site. “I’m human and I’m not perfect. I will certainly make sure this doesn’t happen again.”



FLORIDA – Customers at one Gulf Coast gas station in Clearwater might be surprised at who responds to the counter when they pull up to the drive-through window: The store owner’s dog. Dozens of times each day, Cody the chocolate Labrador retriever will pop up on two paws behind the counter at a BP gas station and convenience store in Clearwater. He even has a BP logo shirt and a name tag. Customers grin and kids squeal with joy in response. Store owner Karim Mansour said he started bringing Cody to work five months ago for company on the early morning shift. The dog quickly became a celebrity among store regulars. Mansour said Cody helps customers by calming those who come in sad or angry.