

FALCON FLYER

The way forward



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Chief Warrant Officer 5 Bobby Sebren of Enterprise, Ala., a tactical operations officer with Task Force Falcon smiles as he directs his passengers onto the UH-60 Black Hawk he piloted from Forward Operating Base Shank Dec. 17 with Col. Pedro Almeida.



Fly to Glory!



December 2010



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon **BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan** — Staff Sgt. Peta-Gail Rodney of Spanishtown, Jamaica, and ISAF Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, smile for the camera as they wait for the arrival of President Barack Obama on Dec. 03. Servicemembers, to include Soldiers from the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, gathered at a hangar on the airfield for a chance to visit the Commander in Chief.



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon **PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan** — 10th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers got to spend some time with Army Chief of Staff, General George Casey, Dec. 23 at Bagram Airfield. After eating dinner with the Soldiers, chatting with them about their experiences in the Army, Gen. Casey thanked the Soldiers for making a difference in the coalition's efforts to neutralize insurgents and wish them a Merry Christmas.



Capt. Carolyn Frazier, Task Force Gambler **PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan** — An AH-64 Apache sits on the flightline at Forward Operating Base Sharana decorated for the holidays. The apache belongs to Task Force Gambler of 4th Battalion, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, which is attached to Task Force Falcon of 10th CAB. TF Gambler is the first aviation unit to be based at FOB Sharana.

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Sexual Assault is incompatible with the Armed Services Values and Warrior Ethos



The DOD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SAPRP)

For more information or to report an incident, contact your TF Falcon Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) at:

VOIP: (318)481-6541 or SVOIP (318)431-5156

24-HOUR Hotline: 079-317-3772, 078-912-8075

By Sgt. 1st Class James L. Slinger

Equal Opportunity (EO): It comes down to trying to find out what makes up workplace harassment or equal opportunity issues. If it relates to the five protected categories of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin then it directly correlates to an Equal Opportunity Issue. If you aren't sure if your issue of concern falls into one of the five protected categories then it could quite possibly be something else. So this is where the Equal Opportunity Advisors can get you on the right track.

How do we prevent or deal with these issues is what matters most to the United States Army and its Servicemembers. In order to help our senior leaders and Soldiers work to find a way through the fog of these confusing issues, the Equal Opportunity Team works to explain the regulation of AR600-20 the Army Command Policy. This is where Equal Opportunity Advisors directs command teams who may have questions concerning guidelines and or steps, which need to be taken to prevent and or correct equal opportunity and harassment issues.

Almost everyone in the United

States Army knows they should work with one another and treat each other with dignity and respect. Sometimes Soldiers cross the line and exhibit bias sexist behavior or discrimination in which they need to be made aware of. Today the United States Army is so diverse that equal opportunity leaders are working day and night to ensure command policies are followed. Soldiers shall be treated equally, fair, and ethical in accordance with the Army Command Policy and that's what makes Equal Opportunity an important part of our everyday lives.

Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day—January 17

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a visionary at his finest. He helped further the freedom of the black community and brought hope to hundreds of thousands of African Americans. His inspiration lives on to this day with the observation of Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday being celebrated on 17 January 2011. Help celebrate this glorious day by enjoying this fun word search puzzle, to foster the mood in remembrance of diversity and kindness towards one another.

Martin Luther King Jr. Word Search

F	A	L	K	C	G	V	D	C	H	O	S	F	W	P	M
R	M	A	T	X	O	R	I	A	H	E	C	A	G	A	S
E	A	I	V	T	E	R	R	O	H	U	S	J	R	S	K
E	B	R	T	A	O	M	E	C	L	H	R	T	R	S	R
D	A	O	M	S	O	C	E	T	I	E	I	C	E	A	A
O	L	M	H	N	I	E	Y	N	T	N	N	V	H	S	P
M	A	E	Y	T	P	T	G	O	L	A	O	C	X	S	A
C	W	M	F	S	I	T	P	U	B	L	S	H	E	I	S
A	E	N	Y	Y	O	A	T	A	P	S	Q	C	V	N	O
R	V	L	U	N	V	H	F	Y	B	B	U	R	O	A	R
I	A	O	D	P	E	G	A	R	U	O	C	B	O	T	W
N	R	C	V	R	M	I	N	I	S	T	E	R	X	E	T
G	B	N	K	G	E	O	R	G	I	A	R	L	H	D	B
E	Z	I	R	P	E	C	A	E	P	L	E	B	O	N	T
R	N	L	B	L	A	C	K	A	N	D	W	H	I	T	E
G	S	T	H	G	I	R	L	I	V	I	C	I	W	S	W

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| ALABAMA | ASSASSINATED | BAPTIST |
| BLACK AND WHITE | BRAVE | BUS BOYCOTT |
| CARING | CHURCH | CIVIL RIGHTS |
| CORETTA SCOTT | COURAGE | DREAM |
| FAITH | FREEDOM | GEORGIA |
| HARMONY | LINCOLN MEMORIAL | LOVE |
| MARTIN LUTHER KING | MINISTER | NOBEL PEACE PRIZE |
| ROSA PARKS | SPEECHES | VIOLENCE |



FALCON FLYER

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COVER PHOTO

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – 1st Lt. Jeffery Shadwick of Albany, N.Y., and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Justin Popp of Houston, conduct a run-up before flying out for a mission early in December. Both officers are OH-58D Kiowa pilots with Task Force Shooter at Jalalabad Army Airfield here. (Photo contributed by TF Shooter)



Sgt. George Edward Tucker III, Task Force Mountain Eagle

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Capt. Miranda Hulse of Dover, Del., an officer-in-charge of logistics, Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, expresses her holiday spirit at Bagram Airfield Dec. 25.

FROM FALCON 6...

Col. Pedro Almeida
10th CAB Commander

To the Families, Soldiers and Civilians of Task Force Falcon and 10th Combat Aviation Brigade: Happy Holidays to each of you!

With the transition into theater behind us and the Holiday Season upon us, I felt that this is a good time to drop a brief note to you. I spent Christmas today with Command Sergeant Major Patton, first serving meals in our dining facility (where TF Falcon Soldiers had prepared an absolutely phenomenal meal for our Soldiers, to include roast pig, turkey, ham, and all the fixin's you would want), then walking the flight line, hangars and offices in Bagram where our Phoenix, Mountain Eagle, and HHC Renegade Soldiers were hard at work, supporting a high pace of operations throughout Regional Command-East even on this special holiday. And now, I am sitting at my desk, typing this on Christmas Day and reflecting on what we asked our Soldiers and Families to do, what they have already done, and what they will do.

First and foremost, we have accomplished a staggering number of milestones already, with the deployment just beginning. Amongst these was the successful deployment from Fort Drum to Regional Command-East (RC-E) in Afghanistan (albeit with some losses due to pilferage while our gear was in transit); the seamless addition of a number of outstanding units into our task force (to include the Battalion Task Force Gambler from 4th CAB at Fort Hood, the Battalion Task Force Odin, one and a half CH-47D companies, a UH-60 company and a MEDEVAC section); and a smooth transition to full operations at a truly incredible pace in support of the thousands of US and Coalition forces in RC-E under the command of the 101st Airborne Division command team. It is hard to believe that a year ago, 10th CAB was on block leave and barely starting the preparation for this mission, and now we are in

truly doing fantastic. I have the enviable job of traveling and getting to see them all at work on their respective FOB's. In the last few weeks, I traveled and spent time on FOB Salerno with Tiger-sharks, FOB Sharana with Gambler, FOB Shank with Knighthawk, and FOB Fenty with Six Shooters. This is in addition to seeing HHC's Renegades and Task Forces Odin, Phoenix and Mountain Eagle at work here in Bagram. In addition to Task Forces Gambler and Odin, our attachments include B Co, 1-168th from Oregon and Washington, part of B Co, 1-171st from Hawaii, A Co, 1-169th from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and C Co, 2/104th from West Virginia: they all have a wealth of motivated Soldiers that we are proud to have along our side in combat. I speak from the heart when I tell our Families that your Soldiers are accomplishing amazing tasks, every single day. And that they are making a difference for US and Coalition forces and Afghan citizens alike.

Our Soldiers made it all seem effortless on the surface, but it was not. We accomplished what we have so far, both in the US and here in Afghanistan, through the sheer will, professionalism, determination and grit of our leaders and Soldiers. They combined their technical and tactical abilities with outstanding leadership and care for Soldiers to get to where we are today. And they were only able to do it with the support and love of our Families, both during the train up and now during the deployment.

Our Nation owes each of you a debt of gratitude for the sacrifices you have made and will make in the months ahead. Your Service is humbling in its scope and its depth. I know I speak for myself and Command Sergeant Major Patton when I say that we remain completely honored to serve as the Task Force Falcon commander and command sergeant major, alongside each of you and your Families. In spite of the sacrifices in separation that you may be enduring now from your loved ones, I hope that you have an enjoyable and rewarding Holiday Season.

Fly to Glory!
Happy New Year!



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

Col. Pedro G. Almeida, Task Force Falcon and 10th Combat Aviation Brigade commander, wishes Soldiers a Happy New Year as 2010 became 2011 at a party at the Aviation Dining Facility at Bagram Airfield.

never had before.

His entire six month trip consisted of beginning in Brazil and then travelling through Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru before arriving back to the border of Brazil and Bolivia. He accomplished the feat of backpacking from the Atlantic Ocean to Pacific Ocean.

"I loved the backpacking," said Yoon, "Every time I travel it's a new adventure."

Yoon sought out a more permanent job when he returned from his experience in South America. He began his search and ultimately found the one he had been looking for in December 2006.

"I decided to go Active [Army] for better opportunity for a stable job," said Yoon.

Once again, Yoon raised his right hand, but this time he joined the Active Army ranks as an 89B ammunition specialist. His first duty station was at Fort Riley, Kan. He spent a year with 1st Infantry Division before he had a permanent change of station to Korea. Yoon was excited to be able to travel and visit his Family who live there. He was first assigned to 1st Battalion, 2nd Attack Regiment at Camp Eagle. The unit dispersed south a year after his arrival, where he was then attached to 4th Battalion, 2nd Attack Regiment in Camp Humphries, Korea.

A year later, Yoon received another permanent change of station, but this time he found himself as far from his home in California as he could possibly be. He was reassigned to 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th Combat

Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division in Fort Drum, N.Y.

Immediately arriving to his new unit, Yoon became eager to be there after he learned that he would be deploying with the unit to Afghanistan in the fall of 2010.

"I was so excited. I couldn't wait to get on the plane," said Yoon.

He knew deploying meant that he would really be able to do his military occupational specialty, since civilians run the ammunition point stateside.

Being able to work with ammunition is a thrill for him. He stated that many boys grow up wanting to work with things that go 'boom.'"

When the day came that he walked up the stairs to the plane he was elated. Being a Soldier in Afghanistan became his newest adventure; one that he

says he thoroughly enjoys. He particularly admires the other six Soldiers who work with him in the shop.

"The other Soldiers who are in my shop work extremely hard and they are a very colorful team," said Yoon, "They make me wake up in the morning wanting to work hard."

Being in Afghanistan is his newest journey in his life; a new experience with new stories to tell. The biggest challenge he feels Soldiers face in his job in Afghanistan is making sure the paperwork is kept straight. This means that the Soldiers have to ensure all ammunition is accounted for and on record.

"There are a lot of adventures I have not done," he said. "Until I am satisfied, I will keep travelling,"



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — U.S. Army Spc. Suk Bum Yoon, a native of Santa Clara, Calif., counts 7.76mm rounds in his office recently. Yoon is an ammunition specialist from E Company, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

An adventurer finds another journey

TF Phoenix Soldier living a life of unique experiences

Story and photos by Sgt. Amanda Brown, Task Force Phoenix

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — “Adventure is not outside man; it is within,” said David Grayson, an American journalist.

This is true for a Soldier in E Company, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, who always ventures into new experiences to better himself. U.S. Army Spc. Suk Bum Yoon has accomplished things some people dream about their entire lives, but never seek out to achieve. He is an adventurer at heart.

“I am a very unpredictable person when it comes to my travels. I do it because it’s fun – I want to see as much as I can before I die,” said Yoon.

Yoon, a native of Santa Clara, Calif., is a 39 year old who thrives off of life’s adventures. He graduated high school in 1990 and began coaching volleyball for high school and junior college girls. After four years of coaching, Yoon picked up a couple more jobs, joining the Army Reserves as a 63B light-wheeled mechanic and starting a job as a short order cook.

While he was in the Reserves he could not find it within himself to live in one location. The adventurer came out of him and he moved from one area to another. Because of his dynamic lifestyle, he spent his six years in the Army Reserve serving with three different units: 347th General Hospital

in Sunnyvale, Calif., 352nd Evacuation Hospital in Oakland, Calif., and 14th Psychological Operations in Moffett Field, Calif.

Yoon loves to try new things and it shows in the jobs that he has held over the years. He has held a job as a welder, a dishwasher, an office manager in a warehouse, and even worked at his family’s gas station during his time in the Reserve. Seeking other adventures after his time in the Reserve was complete, Yoon separated and began going to college to improve his life.

He attended college where he earned an associate’s degree in Computer Science - eager to do something he would enjoy. During the time he spent in college, he made plans to travel to Europe. During his visit he discovered that the foreign countries had a plethora of views on the world. He spent a week touring France and two weeks in the Netherlands. Even though

it was an expensive trip, Yoon felt it was an experience that was priceless.

When he graduated with his degree and attempted to get into the computer science field in California, there were far too many people with the same degree and he could not find a place to work. Running into this road block did not stop him from exploring the world further. Where he found a dead end in his job search he found a door opening for him elsewhere.

He decided to explore the world and travel to South America. He caught a flight into Bolivia to begin his adventure. Yoon backpacked across South America where he saw and experienced things he



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — U.S. Army Spc. Suk Bum Yoon, a native of Santa Clara, Calif., works on his daily paperwork. Yoon is an ammunition specialist from E Company, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

FROM FALCON 7...

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton
10th CAB Command Sergeant Major

Soldiers, Friends and Families of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade;

We are heading into our third month of our deployment and we are doing an outstanding job providing aviation support to the thousands of warriors who are fighting on the ground to protect the population and support the government of Afghanistan. Whether we are actually flying missions, or supporting the aviators through planning or maintaining, Task Force Falcon Soldiers are giving their all for the Falcon team to succeed.

Soldiers, as we head into the heart of our deployment, stay vigilant to avoid accidents and injuries. Be alert at all times, whether it’s for aircraft, vehicles or personal awareness. Continue to follow the standards and policies we’ve implemented since our arrival.

A long deployment can be emotionally difficult for many

Soldiers. Look out for one another and don’t let feelings of loneliness and despair affect well-being. Take care of yourselves physically as well as emotionally. In addition to our master resiliency trainer, we have chaplains and medical personnel who can help keep us fit.

I mentioned last month that deployments are a fantastic opportunity to set new personal goals. How many of you are spending more time exercising? How many of you have lost a few pounds? How many of you are taking a college class? It’s not too late to get started if you haven’t already. The first step is setting a goal. What would you like to improve?

To our Families, your support has been tremendous. The care packages and letters help so much to keep us connected. Staying connected is the most important thing for our morale. We wish we were back with you to endure the cold and snow of The North Country together. We look forward to next year.

We must continue to stay focused on the mission. We each have an important role in the task force. We can all be proud of the successes that TF Falcon is achieving in eastern Afghanistan due to hard work and initiative of each and every one of us.

Fly to Glory!
Falcon 7



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, Task Force Falcon and 10th Combat Aviation Brigade command sergeant major, flies to Forward Operating Base Sharana recently for a battlefield circulation visit. During the visit, Command Sgt. Maj. Patton and TF Falcon commander, Col. Almeida presented TF Hippo combat patches and NATO Medals.

Renegades receive combat patches

Ceremony recognizes first-time 10th Mountain Div. deployers

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — High winds and blowing sand did not stop Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, who have deployed for the first time with the 10th Mountain Division, from receiving the 10th Mountain Division patch in a ceremony at Bagram Airfield Dec. 4.

For some Soldiers, this is their first deployment ever; while others have deployed before but with other units. Col. Pedro Almeida, TF Falcon, 10th CAB, commander, affixed the 10th Mountain Division patches on the right shoulder of nearly 40 Soldiers, marking their first deployment with the Fort Drum division.

Col. Almeida said he has worn the unit patch from his first deployment for over 20 years.

“The patch will remain with you for as long as you wear this uniform,” he said. “It is a permanent mark of the service you are performing, as well as the team you are here with. I still remember when I received it; and my team. You will as well,”



The shoulder sleeve insignia recognizes former wartime service and is frequently called a “combat patch”. Soldiers who wear the patch must have actively participated in, or supported ground combat operations against hostile forces in which they were exposed to the threat of enemy action or fire, either directly or indirectly.

10th Mountain Soldiers have worn the 10th Mountain Division patch since World War II down through Operations Desert Storm, Restore Hope, Iraqi Freedom and, now, Enduring Freedom.

“Despite the fact that so many have the combat patch today, do not underestimate its importance,” said Col. Almeida. “The combat patch is a mark of experience, expertise, and service.”

Spc. William Bristow, HHC, a human resources specialist from Mesa, Ariz., spent his first three years in the Army at Fort Riley, Kan. and is currently on his first deployment.

“I’m excited to be a part of the 10th CAB and 10th Mountain Division,” said Spc. Bristow, after receiving his first combat patch. “For three years, I processed thousands of Soldiers deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan to train Iraqi and Afghan forces. Now I can experience a deployment myself.”

Regardless of future assignments, the combat patch is authorized to be worn throughout a Soldier’s Army career.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Col. Pedro Almeida, Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, attaches the 10th Mountain Division patch to the right shoulder of Spc. William Bristow, a human resource specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th CAB, during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield Dec. 4. Nearly 40 Soldiers of HHC, 10th CAB, who deployed for the first time with 10th Mountain Division received the patch to be worn on the right shoulder to signify the deployment to a combat zone.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Col. Pedro Almeida, Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, attaches the 10th Mountain Division patch to the right shoulder of Spc. Ruby Ramirez, a supply specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th CAB, during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield Dec. 4. Nearly 40 Soldiers of HHC, 10th CAB, who deployed for the first time with 10th Mountain Division received the patch that is worn on the right shoulder to signify the deployment to a combat zone.

Supply Soldier’s first deployment a challenging, satisfying experience

Story and photo by Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Keeping Soldiers armed for battle and supplied with the tools needed to accomplish their mission is U.S. Army Spc. Ruby Ramirez’s purpose during her first deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Ramirez, a native of San Diego, is a supply specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Div., a job she enlisted for a little over a year and a half ago, thinking the experience would be fun and exciting. So far, it has been.

“I figured it would be a challenge, and I’d get to try new things,” she said. “I was right; the Army’s a lot of fun.”

By her own admission, she was expecting the worst when it came to deploying to a combat zone.

“I don’t know, I thought it’d be a lot rougher,” she said. “But it’s been much easier than I thought it would be. The hardest part about this deployment has been being separated from my family.”

Her father ran the last business Ramirez worked for prior to enlisting in the Army.

“My dad owns a trucking company,” Ramirez said. “I was basically a secretary for him. I sometimes helped move trucks, and helped him do a lot of planning. I think I learned a lot (from working for my father), especially communication. He taught me a lot of skills that helped me get ready for the Army.”

One part of Ramirez’s job is to ensure Soldiers have the weapons and related equipment available to perform their mission. She is responsible for the care and tracking of hundreds of weapons. Not only that, but her job requires her to be able to report almost 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to carry out her duty.

“I’m kind of always on call,” she said. “I have to be available to issue items, especially if there’s a mission going on.”

In addition to weapons, Ramirez is responsible for many high-dollar items, including night vision goggles and other tactical equipment.

She’s responsible for a lot,” said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Doris K. Gulliford, the Headquarters and Headquarters Co. supply noncommissioned officer in charge and native of Logan, Ohio.

That responsibility didn’t come all at once. When Ramirez first arrived at the unit, the majority of the company was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“I didn’t know what was going on,” she joked. “I was fresh out of advanced individual training.”

When Gulliford returned with the

rest of the company in October 2009 from their Iraq deployment, she was introduced to Ramirez for the first time.

“She was inexperienced,” Gulliford said. “She had been working in a rear detachment, not doing supply for a full company.”

For the one year Gulliford and Ramirez had before the company’s deployment to Afghanistan, Gulliford made sure to train Ramirez on the finer points of her job.

“I taught her about the obstacles she would face in the Army, and how to overcome them,” said Gulliford. “I taught her how to be a Soldier. She’s a good one, too.”



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — U.S. Army Spc. Ruby Ramirez, a supply specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, places an M16 rifle into a secure weapons rack at Bagram Airfield after checking its serial number Nov. 30. Her mission during this, her first, deployment, is to maintain the company’s weapons; track equipment kept on the unit’s books; and procure supplies when needed.

Aviation life support shop ensures safety

Story and photos by Sgt. Amanda Brown, Task Force Phoenix



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Sgt. Anthony Jett, a noncommissioned officer working in aviation life support shop, modifies a helmet for the flight crews. Jett is a native of Warrensburg, Mich.

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Aviation Soldiers can perform their job on a daily basis without concern that their life saving equipment is fully functional thanks to Task Force Phoenix’s aviation life support equipment shop at Bagram Airfield.

“The best thing about our job is that in the end we save lives,” said Sgt. Buck Atkin, D Company, Task Force Phoenix, ALSE noncommissioned officer in charge.

All Soldiers who are selected to perform duties in an ALSE shop must first travel to Fort Rucker, Ala. to receive a six-week course on all the skills and knowledge they will need to properly manage all of the safety equipment. Soldiers learn how to sew; how to service flight helmets, vests, flotation equipment, and high altitude gear; learn about the survival kits; and much more.

Once Soldiers complete the course, they return to their unit as certified ALSE maintainers. It is their mission to ensure aviation Soldiers know how to properly utilize their equipment and make certain all equipment issued is inspected at their proper intervals. TF Phoenix’s ALSE Soldiers are extremely thorough with the maintenance of their gear because it is like holding a Soldier’s life in their hands.

“We hope the gear never gets used because it is the worst case scenario for an aviation crew - so we are paranoid about our gear,” said Atkin, a native of Loveland, Colo.

Atkin has been leading and perfecting ALSE office operations since 2007. The shop has an inspection every 120 days – all of them never receiving a score lower than 92% since he took con-

trol. The ALSE shop is responsible for knowing where to find information within 89 manuals, keeping track of six classes of supply items ordered, and inspection management of all aviation gear.

“Being subject matter experts is difficult,” said Sgt. Phillip Wiglesworth, an ALSE noncommissioned officer and a native of Lenexa, Kan. “We have to be confident we are giving the right information to Soldiers.”

At Bagram Airfield, the ALSE shop sustains 24-hour operations with four Soldiers rotating through shifts. Not only does TF Phoenix support non-Army service members, but they also support coalition aviation troops. They have already assisted Korean, British, Macedonian, and French aviators with their knowledge and tools. This unity of mission accomplishment emphasizes the Army’s old saying, “One team, one fight,” as TF Phoenix’s ALSE shop ensures aviators have the gear to complete their mission.

“We have not failed yet at completing our mission,” said Wiglesworth.

Wiglesworth created a database which allows the office to track expirations for the medications they issue, their inspections, and repairs. This allows the shop to complete quick reports to let TF Phoenix commanders know what is overdue within their unit. Wiglesworth has even included information in his database

that will allow the shop to know which Soldiers have specific items in the event of a product recall. There is no official database like this within ALSE just yet. Once perfected, Wiglesworth hopes to release it to other ALSE shops so they may have an efficient way of tracking their daily needs.

“When aviation Soldiers go on a mission, the only thing they have to ultimately keep them alive is their ALSE gear,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Dvorsky, TF Phoenix command sergeant major and native of Trumbull, Conn., “Our ALSE Soldiers ensure that the gear is properly serviced and that they are available whenever they are needed. I have seen an aviator have an issue with their helmet minutes before they were to go on a mission. Thanks to our ALSE shop Soldiers, they fixed the dilemma and were able to promptly get the aviator’s gear functional which allowed the crew to leave for their mission on time.”

The importance of ALSE’s well-maintained shop can only be seen during the event of a worst case scenario when Soldiers use the gear. All service members can be rest-assured when they utilize TF Phoenix’s ALSE shop that they will receive knowledgeable advice and properly maintained life saving equipment so they can complete their crucial mission here in Afghanistan.

Carrying on the tradition

TF Tigershark Soldiers receive combat patches

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Andrew Guffy, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



KWOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan — U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Nicolas Carter, the senior enlisted Soldier for Task Force Tigershark, from Corpus Christi Texas, awards a combat patch to U.S. Army Lt. Col. David Kramer, commander of TF Tigershark and a native of Arroyo Grande Calif., during the task force’s patch ceremony on FOB Salerno, Afghanistan Dec. 5.

KWOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Soldiers from Task Force Tigershark, 1st Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, received their combat patches during a brief ceremony at Forward Operating Base Salerno Dec. 5, marking their first 30 days serving in a war zone.

The combat patch was started by the Army during World War II and remains a time-honored tradition for Soldiers who have served in combat operations.

Task Force Commander U.S. Army Lt. Col. David Kramer, a native of Arroyo Grande Calif., has been planning this event for months.

“The way you make this ceremony can raise the morale of the troops and raise your mission capability,” he said. “There are a lot of combat veterans here today. For all the young troops to see you take off your old patch and put on the 10th Mountain patch shows you are part of the team.”

TF Tigershark also has two National Guard units attached to it: Company B, 1st Battalion, 68th Aviation Regiment, from Washington State, and C Co. 2nd Bn., 104th Aviation Regt., from West Virginia.

“It’s special if we all wear the same patch; it brings us to move towards one team, one fight, and gives the younger troops in the unit a sense of ownership,” said 1st Sgt. Charles Wagenbrenner, D Co., 1-10 AVN, a native of Carthage, N.Y.

Kramer also held a reenlistment ceremony for seven members of the brigade and had a flyover with one of each of the helicopters in their arsenal.



KWOST PROVINCE,, Afghanistan — Soldiers of Echo Company, TF Tigershark, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, award patches to each other during the TF Tigershark combat patch ceremony Dec. 5.

Cav. Soldiers don combat patch on anniversary of Pearl Harbor

Story and Photos by Spc. Kam Gerohimos, Task Force Shooter

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – December 7 was a significant day for the troops of Task Force Shooter of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Combined Joint Task Force 101. Not only was it the day they received their shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service, commonly known as the ‘combat patch’, but it was also the 69th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese, the catalyst for the United States entry into World War II.

“Today is a significant day for you,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, Squadron commander of TF Shooter. “Doing this today is especially significant; as we all know of the events on this very day Dec. 7, 1941.”

Over 220 TF Shooter Soldiers received the 10th Mountain Division unit patch.

This patch symbolizes not only serving with a specific unit during combat, but it also symbolizes Soldiers of the unit are now part of a legacy of fighting the global war on terrorism. This was especially visible bearing in mind the anniversary of the attacks on Pearl Harbor. The day after the attack, the United States declared war on Japan resulting in their entry of World War II. Many American’s lost their lives in Pearl Harbor and throughout World War II. The ceremony advocates the dedication all soldiers contribute to the United States Army as well as their country.

Combat patch ceremonies first began during the Revolutionary War under General George Washington. The unit patch worn on the uniform was based on a unit actively participating in or supporting ground combat operations against hostile forces during which they were exposed to the threat of enemy action or fire. The combat patch confirmed the Soldiers’ status as a combat veteran. Today, the Army is the only military service that authorizes a Soldier to wear the unit patch of a wartime element on the uniform.

“You are part of a unique division,” Lt. Col. Downey said, “The 10th Mountain Division is one the most deployed and decorated divisions in the modern United States Army.”

The lineage of the 10th Mountain dates back to the battles of World War II fighting in the mountains of Italy against tyranny and oppression. The division’s specialty is fighting under adverse weather and terrain conditions.

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NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – During the Task Force Shooter patch ceremony Dec. 7, Pfc. Anna Anderson of Helena, Mont., and 2nd Lt. John Panzer of Rochester, N.Y., receive their Shoulder Sleeve Insignia – Former Wartime Service, also known as the ‘combat patch’, from the task force commander Lt. Col. Christopher Downey and Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick McGuire. Pfc. Anderson and 2nd Lt. Panzer were the junior Officer and junior enlisted Soldier in the task force and first to be patched in the ceremony.



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Troopers from Task Force Shooter stand at attention as they prepare to receive their Shoulder Sleeve Insignia – Former Wartime Service, also known as the ‘combat patch’, during a patch ceremony Dec. 7. Approximately 220 Soldiers became part of the legacy of the 10th Mountain Division (LI) combat veterans.

THE FAMILY THAT CARES TOGETHER

Soldier sends donated items to comrades serving in remote locations

Story and photo by Sgt. George Edward Tucker III, Task Force Mountain Eagle

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Pope John Paul II once said that “As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.”

As a nation at war we ask a lot of our soldiers. One of the most difficult things that Soldiers are asked to do is to leave their families for up to a year, so Soldiers often rely upon their families and strangers to send them care packages to bring them joy in these

trying times. U.S. Army Pfc. Cody Smith, an intelligence analyst at Bagram Airfield, with Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, and his family have decided to contribute to Operation Enduring Freedom in their own way by sending care packages to the soldiers of Task Force Mountain Eagle who are located at various Forward Operating Bases and Contingency Operating Bases here in eastern Afghanistan. Pfc. Smith’s family, which has contributed to this endeavor, consists of his mother, Vickie Smith; father, Richard Smith; sister, Carly Smith; brother, Colin

Smith; and his fiancée, Kendra Martinez – all hailing from York, Pa.

The Smith family has sent over 30 packages to soldiers in the outlying FOBs and COBs. Although there are many churches and organizations that send packages to individual companies, platoons, or sections throughout the task force under the adopt-a-platoon program, Pfc. Smith and his family do not belong to these organizations. This family has gone one step further and instead of adopting a platoon, they have adopted the entire battalion.

When asked why her family decided to lend a hand, Pfc. Smith’s mother replied, “We want to send things to the soldiers because they are away from their families and friends for the holidays and we also miss them. It makes us feel like we are spreading a piece of home to all of [the Soldiers]. We have an empty space in our hearts and family and it makes us feel like we are sharing Christmas around the world.”

Pfc. Smith, with the help of his squad leader, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Randie Lewis, a senior intelligence analyst with HHC, TF Mountain Eagle, 10th CAB, has spent many hours putting together care packages and

sending them out to the Soldiers of the task force.

“It is a pleasure to assist my Soldier and his family to bring joy to the Soldiers of the unit,” said Staff Sgt. Lewis, a native of Watertown, N.Y.

Pfc. Smith also shared his thoughts about sending out the care packages, “I couldn’t have done this without my mom, brother, sister, dad, fiancée, and my mother’s friend, Darlene. They have sent me over 30 packages and they all contain things for the soldiers.

They are the ones who made this possible for me to send things to Soldiers. They took their money and all the donations of items and sent them to me so that I can give them to whoever needs them. I did this because I had the supplies and the time to package the boxes up and send them out with the help of Staff Sgt. Lewis.”

Pfc. Smith, his family, and Staff Sgt. Lewis, say they will continue to send care packages to the Soldiers in remote areas. And through one family’s compassion, the lives of these Soldiers have become better connected to the comforts of home.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — U.S. Army Pfc. Cody Smith, an intelligence analyst with Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, from York, Pa., and U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Randie Lewis, a senior intelligence analyst with HSC, TF Mountain Eagle, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Division, from Watertown, N.Y., pack care packages at Bagram Airfield, with items sent from Pfc. Smith’s family, also from York, Pa., to send out to Soldiers in remote areas of Regional Command – East, Afghanistan.

Pizza sale helps sick family member

TF Phoenix flight medic raises over \$1,000

Story and photo by Sgt. Amanda Brown, Task Force Phoenix

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Sgt. Andreas Buttner, a flight medic in Company C, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion of Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, displayed his selfless side; not during a combat medical mission, but for a fellow Soldier in Co. C Nov. 13.

U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Raymond Jugal was recently informed that his 6-year-old daughter, Johanna, had been diagnosed with Lymphoma, a disease that affects the body's lymphoid tissue.

Johanna's family was originally told that she had a bad case of mumps that would not go away. Her symptoms progressively got worse. Johanna suddenly fell into a coma due to the rapid spread of her undetected condition. The young girl was hospitalized in an isolation room with the hope that she would recover and come out of her coma.

Buttner, a native of Fulda, Germany, knew he wanted to help the family when he found out what had happened to Jugal's daughter, even though he did not know him personally. He decided to hold a fundraiser on Bagram Airfield by selling homemade pizzas to Soldiers in an attempt to help the family with the expenses that were already quickly accruing.

"I used to be a chef in a restaurant many years ago, and pizza was one of my biggest sales," said Buttner. "I used to sell between 300 and 600 pizzas a week made from scratch."

With ingredients his wife and family sent him, plus some helpful contributions from other people, Buttner and U.S. Army Capt. Melanie Sims, a flight nurse with Co. C,



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — U.S. Army Sgt. Andreas Buttner of Fulda, Germany, and U.S. Army Capt. Melanie Sims of Eureka, Calif., both from Company C, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion of Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, cooked homemade pizza Nov. 13 to raise money for a fellow Soldier whose daughter was recently diagnosed with Lymphoma.

and a native of Eureka, Calif., tackled the pizza-making with high hopes of raising enough money to help the Jugal family's pocketbook.

"The pizza fundraiser wasn't just an excuse to have great homemade pizza," said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nicholas Anderson from San Bernardino, Calif. "It was for a good cause. We hope the (Co. C) family was able to make a difference for Johanna and the Jugal Family. Sgt. Buttner had his heart in the right place. Not just for hosting an event that boosted morale, but for wanting to help out a fellow noncommissioned officer and his family."

After 9 1/2 hours of cooking pizza, Buttner and Sims made 40 pizzas, served about 33 people and raised \$1,180 in donations for Jugal's family.

"The suggestion that was made for a fundraiser by Sgt. Buttner rang out as an act of complete selflessness and kindness toward people he hardly knew," said Richardson, a native of Chicago, Ill., "I wanted to support him in any way I could. People came from all over (Bagram Airfield) to participate in something they knew would not only help change the life of a fellow Soldier not wounded by combat, but a father who was wounded by an enemy he couldn't see."

TF ODIN-A Soldiers receive combat patches

National Guardsmen from various states unite for Afghan mission

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Mobilized Guardsmen from numerous states who have come together to form B Company, 3rd Battalion, 214th Aviation Regiment, Task Force ODIN – A, received combat patches Dec. 28 during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield.

For some Soldiers, this is their first deployment ever; while others have deployed before but with other units.

U.S. Army Maj. Matthew Jordan, B Co., 3/214 Avn. Regt., TF ODIN – A, commander, affixed the combat patches on the right shoulder of nearly 30 Soldiers, marking their first deployment with the Fort Hood reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition task force, which is attached to TF Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Before the ceremony, Maj. Jordan, a native of Jonesboro, Ark., brought his pilots and Soldiers together to thank them for all their hard work and dedication.

"The relief in place process went very smoothly," he said. "We picked up the mission without missing a beat."

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Robert Fehrholz, an Active Guard Reserve National Guard recruiter from Springfield, Ill., and U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Adrian Guerrero of Byron, Ill., a member of the Illinois State Police Department, were two of the unit's Soldiers who received their first combat patches during the ceremony. Both senior noncommissioned officers welcomed the deployment as an opportunity to do their part.

"I did seven years active duty and never got that patch on my right arm," said Fehrholz. "The opportunity presented itself to deploy on this mission, I was very excited to get on board."

Sgt. 1st Class Guerrero, a former drill sergeant, was prepared to deploy to Iraq a year ago, but his unit was told to stand down a month prior to the deployment.



TOP, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Robert Fehrholz, an aerial sensor operator from Springfield, Ill., receives a combat patch from U.S. Army Maj. Matthew Jordan, B Company, 3rd Battalion, 214th Aviation Regiment, Task Force ODIN-A, commander, during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield Dec. 28.

BOTTOM, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Adrian Guerrero, an aerial sensor operator from Byron, Ill., receives a combat patch from U.S. Army Maj. Matthew Jordan, B Company, 3rd Battalion, 214th Aviation Regiment, Task Force ODIN-A, commander during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield Dec. 28.

"Having nearly 13 years of service under me with no deployment experience, I felt it was my duty to volunteer for any mission that came along," said Guerrero.

"The Illinois State Police, and command staff have been very supportive and helpful, said Sgt. 1st Class Guerrero.

Sgt. 1st Class Fehrholz said he is comforted to know that his wife has a great family that is very supportive and close to her.

"She is also a very strong woman and can handle anything thrown at her," he added.

Both noncommissioned officers said they are excited about the deployment and are proud to be serving their country and doing their part.

Task Force Phoenix combat patch ceremony



Sgt. Amanda Brown, Task Force Phoenix



Sgt. Amanda Brown, Task Force Phoenix

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Lt. Col. Dennis McKernan, Task Force Phoenix commander, places the 10th Mountain Division patch on E Company commander, Capt. Tim Davis, Dec. 11. The combat patch is traditionally placed on the Soldier's right arm to recognize combat experience.

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — First Sgt. Daniel Snyder places the 10th Mountain Division combat patch on the right shoulder of Pvt. Megan Hernandez. during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield Dec. 11.

U.S., South Korea fly together Republic's first deployed aviation unit receives 10th Mountain patch



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Col. Pedro Almeida, Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, commander, awarded TF Tae Guk, a Korean aviation unit, 10th Mountain Division patches to mark their partnership in aviation operations in a ceremony at Bagram Airfield Dec. 6. TF Tae Guk is the first aviation unit from the Republic of Korea to deploy to combat.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Col. Pedro Almeida, Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, TF Falcon, 10th CAB command sergeant major, stand with TF Tae Guk, the first Republic of Korea aviation unit to deploy to combat. Col. Almeida presented 10th Mountain Division patches for the ROK aviators to wear on their right shoulder to mark their tour with the 10th CAB during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield Dec. 6.



TF ODIN mechanics keep vehicles running

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Joseph Viverette,
21st Cavalry Brigade, Task Force ODIN-A

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — "The Pit" is where mechanics from the 21st Cavalry Brigade, Task Force Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize-Afghanistan (TF ODIN-A) Motor pool, keep vehicles from the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron mission ready. Mechanics keep the Air Force running by completing mission critical repairs and maintenance on more than six different types of vehicles supplied by the Army to the Air Force as part of a base defence agreement dating back to May of 2009. Upgrades to "The Pit" are steadily improving the capabilities of the Motor pool and increasing daily output.

"I am lucky to have the quality NCO's and Soldiers working here in "The Pit". They are motivated and are working very hard to keep the 455th Air Force Expeditionary Security Forces mission ready everyday here at Bagram Airfield," said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Luis M. Covarrubias, motor sergeant, 21st Cavalry Brigade, TF ODIN-A, from San Fernando, CA.

"The Pit is a unique element, we not only support our task force with maintenance and repairs and utilities requests, we also support the Air Force Security forces to keep their vehicles on the road while they defend the [base]," said U.S. Army Sgt. Justin D. Kitchen, a generator mechanic, 21st Cavalry Brigade, TF ODIN-A, from McComb, Ohio.

The current mechanics took over from the previous unit around the beginning of July 2010. Only from the hard work and sweat of the mechanics from "The Pit" they have been able to maintain an average vehicle readiness rate of 95%! The extent of hard work and dedication to duty from these mechanics has been so essential to the Air Force's mission that U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Kyle Beard has nominated multiple Soldiers for the Air Force Certificate of Achievement, an award that many Soldiers do not have.

"Without the Army maintenance personnel, our job of securing the base would not be achievable," said Beard, a vehicle control officer, 455th Expeditionary Security Forces, from Riverside, Calif. "Their countless acts of selflessness and dedication to the mission have always shown in their work ethic. They have supported security

forces with 24/7 operations and have always been prompt to recover and preserve our most valuable asset in the difficult mission we all face here in Afghanistan."

Since the mechanics have arrived they have not only raised the vehicle readiness rate but have also completed multiple upgrades to their facilities. One of the most essential upgrades has been the implementation of the Standard Army Maintenance System – Enhanced (SAMS-E) which enables them to connect with brigade higher elements to track man hours, cost, parts, and readiness rates. They also upgraded to the internet connectivity to include a Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) which enabled real time communications with Supply Support Activity (SSA) and the Brigade Senior Weather Officer (SWO). The most recent and currently ongoing upgrade to "The Pit" is the addition of a cement, level working area, which had been previously covered with rocks. The additional upgrade will allow the mechanics to work on vehicles outside of the standard bay areas and increase work output.

With the recent upgrades and hard work coming from the mechanics from "The Pit" the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron will be able to continue their mission and save lives here at Bagram Airfield. Improving and finding more efficient ways to accomplish the mission has always been a corner stone of the Army.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Two mechanics from 21st Cavalry Brigade, Task Force ODIN, work on the engine of a 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron vehicle at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

TF Falcon receives new state-of-the-art hangar at Bagram Airfield

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at Bagram Airfield Dec. 15 for an aircraft hangar build for the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. Maintenance Soldiers from Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th CAB, began working at the hangar around the beginning of December.

“I like it,” said U.S. Army Spc. Floyd Brown, an engine mechanic with B Company, TF Mountain Eagle, 10th CAB, and a native of Houston. “It’s a lot bigger than what we had last deployment. We didn’t have any of the cranes that we have here. This hangar has three bays. It’s almost as good as what we have in garrison.”

The construction of the state-of-the-art hangar benefits, not only the 10th CAB, but the Air Force, as well, which will be able to expand their aviation logistics capabilities.

“Because of this facility, we will be able to move the post office, DHL and Presidential Air to get them closer to their aircraft and increase efficiency,” said U.S. Air Force Col. Todd Canterbury, Vice Wing commander, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, and a native of Litchfield Park, Ariz. “This move will enable us to expand and create a cargo processing facility that will increase efficiency with all military cargo. Finally, this move will allow us to open up real estate to increase the passenger terminal footprint which will allow more throughput and cause less turbulence in Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, trying to get home.”

Michael Weinmuller, the project manager from CH2MHill, the company who managed the project and a native of Portland, Ore., thanked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Yuksel, the company that completed the construction.

“Thank you for building the best hangar in Afghanistan,” said Weinmuller. “Knowing that the men

and women of the military would be utilizing it, a lot of care went into every nut and bolt. I guarantee it.”

Before cutting the ribbon with Col. Canterbury, U.S. Army Col. Pedro Almeida, TF Falcon, 10th CAB, commander, and a native of New Bedford, Mass., expressed his appreciation for the hangar to be used by his Soldiers.

“The work you’ve done to build this hangar – it’s all tied to the Soldiers walking the beat on patrol,” said Col. Almeida. “Your hard work is greatly appreciated and I can assure you that we are going to put this facility to great use.”

The conclusion of Col. Almeida’s speech was the cue for the large hangar doors to open with the push of a button, opening to a ceremonial ribbon to be cut by the two colonels.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — U.S. Air Force Col. Todd Canterbury, 455th Air Expedition Wing vice wing commander, a native of Litchfield Park, Ariz., and U.S. Army Col. Pedro Almeida, Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, a native of New Bedford, Mass., cut the ceremonial ribbon to mark the completion of construction of a new state-of-the-art hangar built for the 10th CAB. The new hangar has three large bays and is equipped with cranes and electric doors. Flanking the colonels are from left, Michael Weinmuller, project manager from CH2MHill and a native of Portland Ore.; and U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Richard Sanders, officer in charge, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Bagram Area Office and a native of Coloma, Mich.



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Santa Claus dressed up as a 10th Combat Aviation Brigade major at Bagram Airfield Dec. 25.

Holidays in Afghanistan



Pfc. Justin Espada, Task Force Mountain Eagle

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Pfc. Arnold Smith of C Company 277th Aviation Support Battalion helps himself to dessert on Christmas day at Forward Operating Base Bostic.



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Soldiers from 10th Combat Aviation Brigade enjoyed holiday dinner at the Aviation Dining Facility at Bagram Airfield Dec. 25.



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Soldiers of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade had a few surprise visitors show up on Christmas day. Santa and his “Top” elf dropped by the offices of the brigade headquarters building to wish Soldiers a Merry Christmas and to remind them of the importance of safety. Santa and his elf both wore reflective belts during Christmas operations.



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Pfc. Curtis Palmer, a food specialist with Task Force Mountain Eagle of 277th Aviation Support Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, takes the mic at the New Year’s party at the Aviation Dining Facility late Dec. 31. Dozens of Soldiers attended the party where they could play cards, dominos, video games, board games or listen to music.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — President Barack Obama visited nearly 3,500 servicemembers at Bagram Airfield Dec. 3 to thank them for their service and asked them to pass on his gratitude to their families as well.

Commander in Chief visits 10th CAB Soldiers at Bagram Airfield

President spends time with Soldiers before holidays to thank them for making difference in Afghanistan

By Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — President Barack Obama surprised nearly 3,500 servicemembers gathered in a large aircraft hangar at Bagram Airfield late Friday night. The commander in chief, casually dressed, made his entrance around 10:30 p.m., and walked across the stage to the podium to a loud greeting from Service Members, after being introduced by International Security Assistance Force commander, General David Petraus.

“It’s great to be back,” said Obama. “And I apologize for keeping you guys up late, coming on such short notice. But I wanted to make sure that I could spend a little time this holiday with the men and women of the finest fighting force that the world has ever known, and that’s all of you.”

The president traveled nearly 13 hours to personally thank military personnel and civilians for their sacrifices and service.

“I know it’s not easy for all of you to be away from home, especially during the holidays,” he said.

“And I know it’s hard on your families. They’ve got an empty seat at the dinner table. As President of the United States, I have no greater responsibility than keeping the American people secure. I could not meet that responsibility, we could not protect the American people, we could not enjoy the blessings of our liberty without the extraordinary service that each and every one of you performs each and every day.”

The president thanked the service members on behalf of, not only himself, but on behalf of his family and more than 300 million Americans. He made a special point to express his gratitude for military families for all their support and sacrifices.

“We’re going to spare no effort to make sure that your families have the support that they deserve as well.”

President Obama shared some good news when he announced his plans to spare service members from future pay freezes.

“You may have noticed that during these tough budget times, I took the step of freezing pay for our federal workforce. But because of the service that you rendered, all who wear the uniform of the United States of America are exempt from that action.”

A year ago, Obama authorized a surge of an additional 30,000 troops in Afghanistan. Those troops are now in place and are making progress, he said.

“And because of the service of the men and women of the United States military, because of the progress you’re making, we look forward to a new phase next year, the beginning of a transition to Afghan responsibility,” he said. “As we do, we continue to forge a partnership with the Afghan people for the long term. And we will never let this country serve as a safe haven for terrorists who would attack the United States of America again. We said we were going to break the Taliban’s momentum, and that’s what you’re doing. You’re going on the offense, tired of playing defense, targeting their leaders, pushing them out of their strongholds. Today we can be proud that there are fewer areas under Taliban control and more Afghans have a chance to build a more hopeful



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Commander in Chief, President Barack Obama spoke to servicemembers and civilians stationed at Bagram Airfield about the progress they’re making in Afghanistan. “You are protecting your country. You are achieving your objectives. You will succeed in your mission.” Obama visited nearly 3,500 servicemembers and civilians at the base Dec 3.



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — President Barack Obama signs the colors of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade for Spc. Chad Ivy (not pictured), a native of Waldorf, Md. and member of the 10th CAB command group. Ivy was one of nearly 3,500 servicemembers who gathered at a hangar AT Bagram Airfield Dec. 3 to meet the Commander in Chief.

future.”

Before his visit with the large gathering of Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, Marines, and even Coast Guardsmen, Obama visited with injured personnel at a hospital here, and awarded five Purple Hearts. He also spent time with a platoon that lost six members when an Afghan Police Officer opened fire at a firing range in Nangarhar Province. That incident is under investigation.