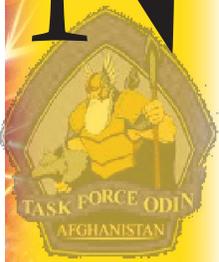


EYE

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FALLACON

FEBRUARY
2011



MANIFEST

4 From the Leaders



6 Falcon Soldiers bring communication to east side



Stetsons in the Cockpit

8

Ammo tech manages bullets, budget

9



Aviation crew's selfless service saves lives

10

12 TF Shooter, TF Panther commemorate collaboration

13 Cavalry Soldiers recognized as leaders



Chaplain teaches course Develops Soldiers' understanding, tolerance

14

TF Falcon strives for 100% trained to save lives

16

10th CAB pilot reaches 5,000 flight hours

18



20 Phoenix crew chief earns U.S. citizenship

22 Korean-American serves in search of American dream

24 Task Force ODIN NCO frocked

25 TF Mountain Eagle communications Soldiers improve internet access at COP Carwhile

26 10th CAB family members' symbolic 'Walk to Afghanistan' inspires recovering accident victim



TF Falcon focuses on resiliency

27

Opinions: Soldiers' Voices

28

Equal Opportunity

34



EYE OF THE FALCON

February 2011

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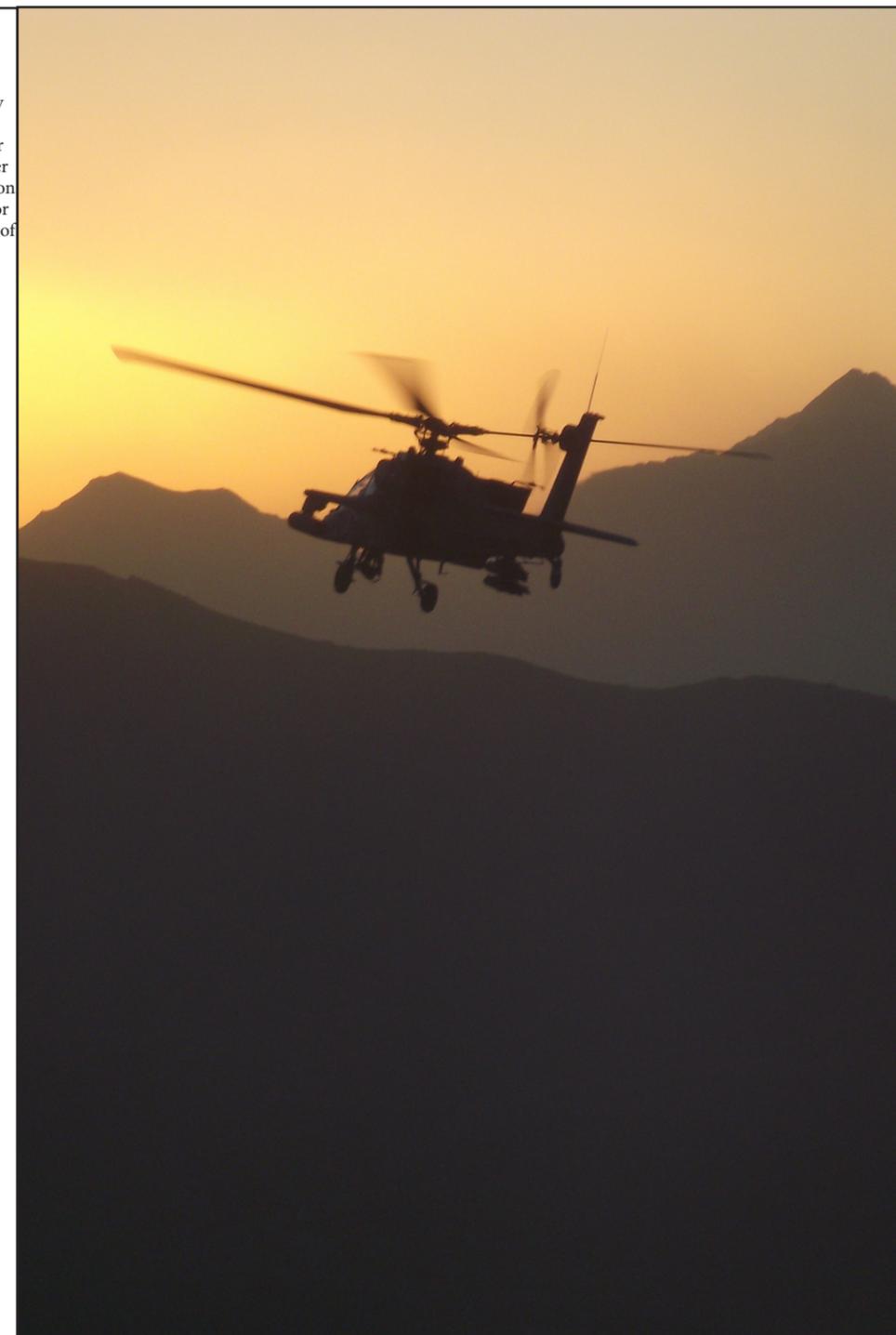
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KABUL PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- An AH-64 Apache aircraft returns from a combat mission in eastern Afghanistan Dec. 31. Piloting the aircraft was Chief Warrant Officer 4 Pat Bolken, a native of Stillwater, Minn., and Chief Warrant Officer Dan Reinhardt, a native of Wayne, Neb., both are Soldiers in Company C, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade. As they concluded their mission, they flew into the sunset which provided the perfect opportunity for a snapshot of the helicopter in action.

(Photo by CW3 Edward Smith, Task Force Phoenix)

From Falcon 6:

Soldiers, Families and Friends of Task Force Falcon,

It is now March as I type this short note... the winter is nearly past us here in Afghanistan. Time continues to march on (no pun intended). While it is neither a Fort Drum frozen winter, nor a Fort Hood warm winter, we have had our share of weather challenges in recent weeks. As I am certain many of our family members back home heard, the weather phenomena we saw in recent months was quite interesting, to put it mildly. During my impromptu "vacation" in Sharana (I was stuck there for 5 days, unable to return to Bagram due to snowy conditions), I literally saw blue skies, blowing snow to the point of low visibility, followed by blue skies again... all in the course of one hour.

The challenges associated with the winter weather is a small metaphor for our entire mission set here... constantly changing conditions that we have to watch for and anticipate the impacts for. The units we support constantly change. Weather shifts unexpectedly. The status of our aircraft, equipment, and people change, requiring us to react. And, of course, there is a changing and adaptive insurgent threat force that we have to always work to counter. Fortunately, our Soldiers are the best at what they do, and they continue to handle these changes and others with professionalism, expertise, and conviction; our success continues to ride on these qualities. You can all be proud!

The other half of that equation is the help provided by our families and friends, who continue to provide the support our Soldiers thrive on to carry on and succeed. I cannot stress it enough: everyone has a role to play in the successful execution and completion of this deployment. The Valentine's Day cards make a difference. The holiday and birthday gifts make a difference. The emails, phone calls, letters, and encouragement make a difference. The Soldiers here remain an extension of what happens at home, which is why the support of our families and friends is so critical. I cannot count the number of times I see a Soldier who is in a good mood, and when you ask about their family, they have a new story to relate with pride in their eyes, of what their son or daughter did this week in sports, or school, or some activity.

The reverse is also true: at times a Soldier seems sad, and discussion leads to the revelation that their spouse or child is having a bad day because of the flu or other event. Even over the miles, we remain closely linked with our loved ones for the good and the bad. That is why the overwhelming support our Soldiers receive from home is such an enabler for us here.

This month's Eye of the Falcon has a number of stories where Soldiers are making a difference, in their own way. I personally feel that every single one of you: Soldiers, families and friends, make a difference. That is why our Soldiers have done as well as they have, and that is why they will continue to have a huge impact in this operation.

Thanks to all of you! Keep on making a difference!

Fly to Glory!
Col. Pedro Almeida
Falcon 06



From Falcon 7:

Soldiers, Families and Friends of Task Force Falcon,

We're getting closer to the midway point of our deployment. Soon we will be making preparations for our redeployment.

The commander and I have traveled multiple times to visit with our Soldiers at our several forward operating bases and combat outposts. I could not be more proud of the hard work and dedication our Soldiers show each day. Many of our Soldiers have come up with innovative solutions when the need arises. Soldiers of Company E, Task Force Shooter, saw that they did not have an effective way to clear ice from the airfield at FOB Shank. These Soldiers converted a water trailer into a de-icer. Soldiers have performed construction projects which have improved efficiency as well as improve comfort and morale.

More Soldiers have been able to take advantage of environmental morale leave and I'm proud of how our Soldiers have conducted themselves both here in theater, as well as back home. As we continue operations here in Afghanistan, we must remain focused on our mission as well as on safety. We must never get complacent.

Soldiers are finding creative and constructive ways to make use of their deployment down time. They're getting fit in the task force gym, taking college classes, or just taking time to do what they enjoy during their precious free time.

We just recently concluded a two-week visit with the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade pre-deployment site survey team. The 82nd CAB will be replacing us in the Fall and our goal was to give them all the information they need to train and prepare for their upcoming deployment.

Families and friends back home, I cannot thank you enough for all the support you've given us. Your supportive words and generous gifts remind us that we are not forgotten. It makes our jobs here easier to know that all is well back home.

Fly to Glory!
Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton
10th Combat Aviation Brigade
Falcon 07





PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan—U.S. Army Spc. Raheem Stewart, an automations specialist with Task Force Phoenix, carefully steps along the rafters of the building his team helped wire for communications. Spc. Stewart, who hails from Dallas, was one of many 10th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers who joined together to complete the project. (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. David Edwards, Task Force Phoenix)



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan—U.S. Army Warrant Officer 1 James Ellington, a network management technician for the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, climbs down into a man-hole system to help run a half-mile length of fiber cable to buildings in Bagram's east side. The Orlando, Fla. native was one of many communications Soldiers from the 10th CAB who joined together to complete the project. (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. David Edwards, Task Force Phoenix)

10th CAB Soldiers bring communications to Bagram's east side

By U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class J.R. Williams
Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Modern communication seems to work like magic for the end-user; the press of a power button, the click of a mouse, or the strike of a key and messages send or receive in an instant. Even in areas as austere as Afghanistan, instant communication exists, in part, due to the Soldiers who run the cables.

In Bagram, the freshly-developed east side boasts state-of-the-art communications technology, thanks to a collaborative effort of communications Soldiers from the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade.

“It starts with an idea, a plan, and a lot of manual labor,” says U.S. Army Maj. Scott Herzog, brigade communications officer-in-charge.

According to Herzog, who hails from Auburn Hills, Mich., the idea began with Soldiers learning to splice fiber optics cable.

“Fiber cable is made of glass, so you have to know what you’re doing in order to run lines from the main fiber,” explains Herzog, “From there, you splice from the main cable, to connectors, to switches, to ports.”

Picture the human circulatory system: arteries carry the main flow of blood to veins; veins carry blood to the capil-

laries; capillaries then divide and bring the parts of the blood needed in the body. The cable lines work in a similar fashion.

“When you splice into the main line, you connect to a switch,” Herzog continues, “The switch converts glass cable to copper wire. The wire sends messages to specific ports. Your computer plugs into a port and that’s how you get your information.”

The plan for the east side involves wiring a total of 33 buildings. Of those 33, 18 now possess instant communications with the remaining 15 still in progress.

However, the most daunting portion of the plan meant running the main fiber cables through man-hole systems.

“Since the man-hole systems only went so far, we were looking at digging two trenches, splicing into the main cable for wiring, running wires into the buildings, wiring the buildings and establishing ports,” says U.S. Army Capt. David Edwards, the communications officer-in-charge for Task Force Phoenix.

Capt. Edwards asserts that a project of this magnitude occurs with the assistance of communications Soldiers, lending their skills and experience. The Dallas native credits the collaboration of the different shops with the over-all success.

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan—U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Abram, the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of communications for Task Force Phoenix, runs a half-mile length of fiber cable through a trench to a building on Bagram's east side. The San Diego, Calif., native battled the elements, to include knee-deep mud, while completing the project. (Photo by U.S. Army Capt. David Edwards, Task Force Phoenix)



“We had the brigade S6, himself, out in the bad weather with us, climbing down into cold, muddy water to run cable. You know, that really says something; it means a lot,” emphasizes Edwards.

While Herzog’s team from brigade headquarters assisted with the manual labor, Edwards readily admits that U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Jason Maldonado’s team from Task Force Mountain Eagle took on the brunt of it.

“They really had an interesting time,” said Edwards laughing.

Since the winter months in Bagram bring cold, wet weather, running the cables meant climbing down into cold, wet man-holes. In at least one case, the water in the man-hole came up to the Soldiers’ chest.

“We ran two lines of fiber cable through three man-holes, which were all about a half-mile apart from each other,” explains Staff Sgt. Maldonado, who hails from Toa Baja, Puerto Rico.

“It was not an ideal situation,” Maldonado concedes.

In four days, the team waded through cold water and mud to: run the cables through the man-hole systems; dig two

trenches, each a half-mile long; cover the lines in the trenches; and run the wires into the building.

Once indoors, the work proved just as harrowing at moments.

“We had to run wires throughout the building, so we had to walk along the rafters in the ceilings sometimes to make that happen. So, if you don’t step in the right spot, you risk falling right through the ceiling,” explains Maldonado.

Wiring a single building includes running the lines inside and terminating the ends to add connections to run to the switch. In this case, Maldonado’s four-man team ran 375 lines to ports, put on the faceplates, terminated the ends, tested the lines, and then labelled the ports.

U.S. Army Spc. Danny Griffin, a cable system installer from Knoxville, Tenn. and member of Maldonado’s team, puts the meticulous work into perspective, “My motivation is to just get it done; getting to the next mission.”

“Definitely a lot of work goes into it,” stresses Spc. Griffin, “At the start, when you think about everything that needs to happen, it seems mind-boggling. So you just have to keep working and get it done.”

Ultimately, it took the team 10 days to complete the project - just 11 days shy of their original projection of three weeks.

“The reason we finished this project so early,” Edwards maintains, “and why it meant so much is because the whole S6 community came together. We had my shop (TF Phoenix), Staff Sgt. Maldonado’s team (TF Mountain Eagle), and even the Soldiers at brigade all pulling together.”

With a good system in place, the teams expect to finish wiring the east side buildings by the end of the deployment, just in time for the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade - and subsequent units - to enjoy the magic of full spectrum communications.

“Just remember,” reminds Herzog, “every time you pick up a phone, receive an email on NIPR, SIPR or Centrix or check out Facebook- the S6 has touched your life.”

Stetsons in the Cockpit

By U.S. Army Cpl. Kam Gerohimos
Task Force Shooter



KHOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Pilots from Alpha Troop, Task Force Shooter don their Stetsons before pre-flight to remember the pilots of Adversary 11 and Adversary 22, who died January 25th 2009, in Kirkuk Province, Iraq. From left, U.S. Army Capt. Scott Wohlford of Watertown, N.Y.; U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Justin Popp of New Albany, Ind.; Chief Warrant Officer 3 Filip Dziembowski of Warsaw, Poland; Chief Warrant Officer 5 Timothy French of Pittsburgh; and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Sascha Wellenreuther of Las Cruces, N.M.

(Photo by U.S. Army Cpl. Kam Gerohimos, TF Shooter)

KHOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan – It was a solemn day at Forward Operating Base Salerno Jan. 25 for cavalrymen of Task Force Shooter. As aviators climbed into their cockpits, they placed their Stetsons on the dashboard of their aircraft to commemorate the memory of the cavalry troopers of call signs Adversary 11 and Adversary 22 who lost their lives in Kirkuk, Iraq, January 25th, 2009.

“One side of my brain feels it happened two years ago while the other side seems to think it happened only yesterday,” said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 5 Timothy French of Pittsburgh, the senior OH-58D Standardization Instructor Pilot of TF Shooter. “I really miss them.”

In the early morning hours of that tragic day, Adversary 11 and Adversary 22 were shot down during a combat operation. The four aviators who lost their lives were U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Phillip

Windorski, U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Joshua Tillery, U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Benjamin Todd, and U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Matthew Kelley. All were OH-58D Kiowa pilots of Bravo Troop, 6th Squadron 6th Cavalry Regiment.

Commemorating the two-year anniversary of their loss brings many memories to the minds of those who served with them.

One of the fallen pilots made a lasting impression on a young officer and new pilot.

“Phil was one of the first instructor pilots I met as well as the first I flew with, when arriving to the unit,” said U.S. Army Capt. Zachary Valentine of Cleveland. “He was a professional in and out of the cockpit. He was a very hard worker and most importantly, was a family man.”

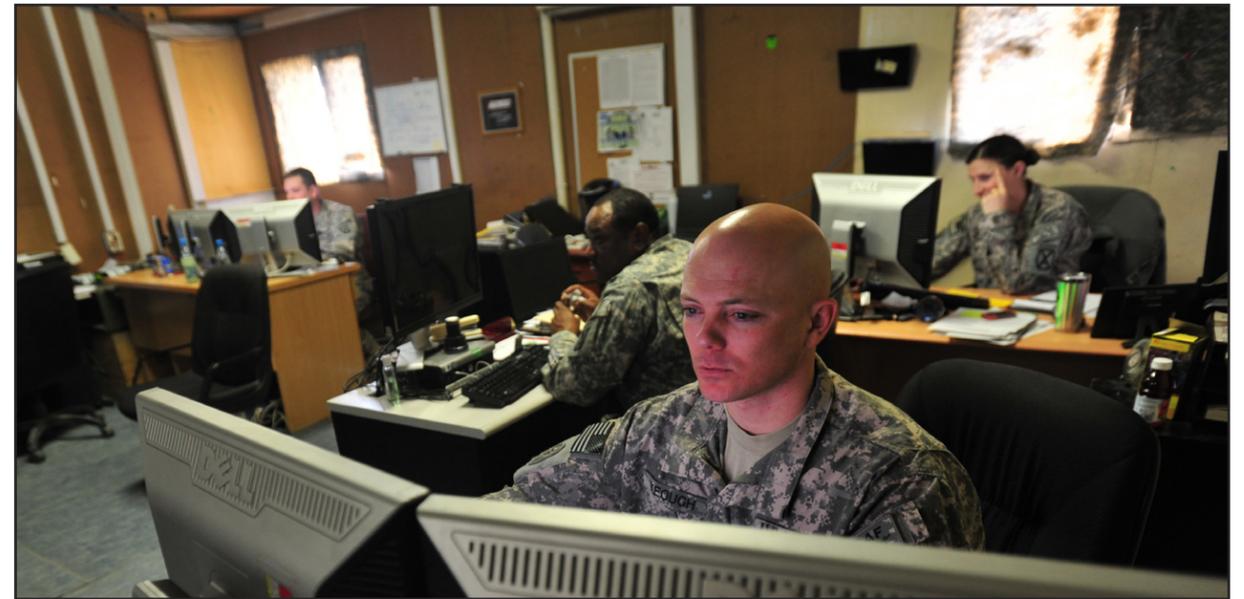
To others, each of them had unique attributes which benefitted the unit.

The loss of which was very difficult to rebound from.

“A tragedy that massive was almost impossible to deal with,” said U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bobby Guffey of Scottsboro, Ala., a Kiowa pilot with Bravo Troop. “With Phil’s leadership, the troop was strong. With Josh’s comedy, we all found good memories. With Ben’s quiet professionalism, we held it together. And with Matt’s faith, we found God.”

The current Bravo Troop commander highlighted the heroic legacy the fallen pilots left behind.

“Remembering our fallen comrades is difficult,” said U.S. Army Maj. Luke Schmidt, the current Bravo Troop commander and a native of Humphrey, Neb., “but it is important to never forget the blood, sweat, and tears they shed for our country and the ultimate sacrifice they made in maintaining our freedom and a better way of life for the Iraqi people.”



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Zachary Keough, an ammunition technician with Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, checks the reports of all ammunition owned by the brigade. Keough tracks the ammunition and ensures units receive enough ammo to perform their missions. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade)

Ammo tech. manages bullets, budget

By U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner
Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Troops on the ground are great, but unless they possess John Rambo’s ability to take on hordes of enemies with little else besides a knife, they need ammunition.

That’s where U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Zachary Keough, an ammunition technician with Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, comes in. He’s responsible for tracking, replenishment and reorganization ammunition for the brigade.

Keough is responsible for more than just small-arms ammunition. He is also in charge of ensuring the unit’s helicopters have the missiles and larger caliber rounds needed for their arsenal.

“We make sure everyone has what they need; from bullets to missiles,”

said Keough.

Keough and his team, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Nealie Pearson of High Point, N.C., and U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Josie McLean of Spokane, Wash., have to keep tabs a variety of ammunition for each task force falling under the 10th CAB. They also have the inconvenience of being separated from many of the units by miles of mountains and dirt.

“We regularly visit the ammunition supply points and the people who run them,” he said. “We have to check up on the numbers we receive from the units.”

The team frequently receives reports on the stockpiles of ammunition units have and the rates the units expend it. The team then determines the average consumption rate and ensures the unit has the ammo they need

- without sending them too much.

“We are constantly shifting ammo,” Keough said. “We have to balance making sure units have enough without having too much.”

In addition to keeping the units supplied, Keough and his team are responsible for keeping costs down.

“He developed and enforced the brigade’s Hydra-70 Rocket Recoverability program saving the U.S. Army more than 800 damaged rockets worth over \$836,000,” said U.S. Army Maj. Louis Barraza, the support operations officer for Task Force Eagle, 10th CAB and native of Clifton, N.J.

Despite his large responsibility, Keough’s job is to support everyone else.

“We support the Combined Joint Task Force-101 and coalition ground forces so that they can eliminate the enemy,” said Keough.

Aviation crew's selfless service saves lives

By U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown
Task Force Phoenix

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers in C Company DUSTOFF, Task Force Phoenix, 10TH Combat Aviation Brigade, make the most of their extensive training to rescue wounded Soldiers in some of the most challenging situations.

The DUSTOFF Association's motto is "dedicated unhesitating support to our fighting forces." This TF Phoenix MEDEVAC Company displays this each and every day in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

One crew had the opportunity to display their duty, selfless service, and personal courage during a particular mission when, as often is the case, not everything unfolded without having to react to unexpected conditions.

"Without hesitation, the crew launched into a known engagement area to retrieve a fallen comrade," said U.S. Army Capt. Andrew Wilson, a native of Edmond, Okla., the pilot that day. "In talking to the crew after the incident, each of us identified having a sense of fear seeing the battle unfold and knowing we would have to fly into the heart of it to retrieve the soldier. However, the second we were cleared in for extraction, we all pushed aside those feelings and were focused on the task at hand."

The MEDEVAC crew assessed the situation before extracting U.S. Army Spc. Ronnie Vargas, a wounded ground force Soldier with

C Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry, Task Force No Slack, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. Vargas and his unit had been bogged down by enemy fire on top of a ridgeline that day. As the battle continued, the MEDEVAC crew found themselves making difficult decisions.

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Richard Ernst, a native of Islip, N.Y., was the pilot in command. He received guidance from the ground force where to land to pick up Vargas; however, he was unable to land on the confirmed area due to the difficult terrain.

The crew remained in the air and was able to identify another suitable location where Ernst could land. After confirming the location with the ground troops, Ernst attempted to land once more. As they approached the new landing area, the aircraft began taking rounds. Ernst immediately broke off to reassess the situation once more to try to get Vargas into the aircraft.

U.S. Army Sgt. Elena Romero, a flight medic from Vernon, N.J., said she began to feel a burning sensation. After completing a self-assessment, she found that she had received minor shrapnel wounds on her left arm and near her left knee.

"While we continually asked about her status/condition, she adamantly reiterated that she was OK," said Wilson.

The crew maintained good communications with the ground troops

and received confirmation that the original landing zone had been cleared for their landing. Ernst flew in a second time to the original landing zone. Observing the area, he knew that he would be unable to do a complete landing and employing the risky high hover for a hoist rescue was not worth the risk. The crew decided to improvise and attempt to extract Vargas at a low hover. This required Ernst to hover approximately five feet from the ground and maintain that level.

"We do not normally hover to pick up anybody, but it was the only option to get the patient and not sustain loss of aircraft or injury to the flight crew," said U.S. Army Sgt. Abe Cutsinger, a 24-year-old UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief.

U.S. Army Spc. Brit Jacobs, a combat medic with TF No Slack, was the Soldier who had been caring for Vargas while they waited for Dustoff MEDEVAC to arrive. Jacobs recalls how good Vargas' morale was as he gave him aid.

"He was just so happy [when the aircraft arrived]," said Jacobs, a native of Sarasota, Fla. "He was joking around and stuff. He was really calm for the situation."

When Dustoff arrived at the final extraction point, Jacobs helped Vargas up to the aircraft.

"I could hear rounds pingping off of the aircraft," said Jacobs. "I had it in my mind that I was going to get hit."

After getting Vargas to the air-



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers in C Company DUSTOFF, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, download a patient from a UH-60 Blackhawk MEDEVAC helicopter at Jalalabad Airfield recently. DUSTOFF Soldiers are well accustomed to going into harm's way to extract those wounded.

(Photo by U.S. Army Capt. Andrew Wilson, Task Force Phoenix)

craft, the wind caused by the helicopter's rotors caused Jacobs to slip away from Vargas. Jacobs made his way back to the aircraft as Cutsinger and Romero struggled to pull Vargas into the aircraft by his hands. The task was difficult because all Soldiers involved were wearing all of their gear. Vargas dangled, fighting to get into the aircraft for at least a minute.

"You could see him giving everything he had to get into the aircraft," said Jacobs. "He never gave up and was determined to get in there."

When Jacobs made it back to Vargas he boosted him up by his boots giving the Dustoff team enough height to pull him inside. Ernst took flight as soon as the crew communicated that Vargas was inside and the area was clear.

"[Vargas] was very thankful and

in high spirits once on board the helicopter," said Cutsinger, a native of Copperas Cove, Texas.

Romero, despite her own unattended wounds, immediately began to administer aid to the urgent patient. She summoned up all of her training and knowledge and bandaged up the wound to stop the bleeding. Within a short period of time, she had determined that Vargas was stable enough to make the flight to Jalalabad Airfield, whose medical facility was deemed the most convenient option.

"Sgt. Romero had the capability and supplies to stabilize him enough to return him to JAF," said Wilson. "If she, or any other flight medic, is unable to sustain a wounded soldier/person, we will fly [the casualty] to the nearest forward surgical team."

The DUSTOFF crew took Vargas out of the hostile area and got him safely to Jalalabad Airfield. Romero accompanied Vargas to the forward surgical team where he received further care for his wounds. After ensuring Vargas was properly cared for, she finally took the time to care for her own wounds and saw a doctor. She had x-rays taken and a flight surgeon performed a medical assessment. Romero was cleared by the flight surgeon and was back with her crew within an hour. Despite her injuries, she served on two additional urgent care missions that day.

"The MEDEVAC team was very professional," said Jacobs, "They were trying everything possible to get to him. They were pretty brave and didn't back out - even under fire. They were heroes."

TF Shooter, TF Panther commemorate collaboration

By U.S. Army Cpl. Kam Gerohimos
Task Force Shooter

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, Task Force Shooter, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon, commander, along with a few of his pilots, visited U.S. Army Lt. Col. Will Johnson, TF Panther, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, commander, Jan. 29 to present him a gift to commemorate the recent collaboration of their units.

The task forces worked together during Operation Black Panther in western Nangarhar Province Dec. 27. With constant coordination, TF Shooter performed infills and exfills of ground cavalry troops while also providing reconnaissance and aerial support throughout the operational area.

“We enjoyed working with TF Panther,” said Downey. “(The operation) was highly successful, and (it was) an honor to work with our fellow cavalymen on the battlefield.”

Johnson opened a small wooden box which made a vicious panther growl and leaked a quite pungent and formidable scent of “panther cologne”; the gift inspired by a scene from the movie “Anchorman.”

“I think Lt. Col. Johnson got a kick out of it,” said Downey, a native of Philadelphia. “We enjoyed ambushing him during his morning stand up for the presentation.”

The panther cologne gift capped off an operation between two groups that, in the past, always fought together. Though modern cavalry units no longer integrate air and ground elements, a history of the units working together goes back decades.

During the Vietnam conflict, combined air cavalry forces, consisting of Kiowa and Cobra helicopters, worked together with their ground cavalry counterparts who travelled by tanks and armored cavalry assault vehicles.

“I’m extremely happy how the panther box was received by Lt. Col. Johnson,” said U.S. Army Capt. Scott Wohlford, an OH-58 Kiowa pilot with TF Shooter, 10th CAB, TF Falcon and a resident of Fort Drum, N.Y. “It really shows how the tradition of the cavalry brotherhood is alive and well in the air and on the ground.”



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Lt. Col. Will Johnson, commander of Task Force Panther, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, receives “panther cologne” from Task Force Shooter pilots Capt. Scott Wohlford of Watertown, N.Y., and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Mark Smith of New Orleans. (Photo by Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Dave Ratcliffe, Task Force Shooter, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon)

Cavalry Soldiers recognized as leaders

Photos by U.S. Army Cpl. Kam Gerohimos
Task Force Shooter



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Task Force Shooter Cavalry trooper, Sgt. Nova Maul of Lakeside, Ariz., is officially inducted into the non-commissioned officer corp during a ceremony at Jalalabad, Afghanistan. Maul works at the squadron Aid Station as a combat medic.

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The Task Force Phoenix senior enlisted advisor, Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Dvorsky of Trumbull, Conn., and guest speaker of the Task Force Shooter non-commissioned officer induction ceremony, shakes the hand of cavalry trooper Sgt. Regina Sportsman, a native of Texarkana, Ark. Sportsman, of Company A, TF Knighthawk, is attached to TF Shooter at Jalalabad, Afghanistan.



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – During a Task Force Shooter non-commissioned officer induction ceremony, Staff Sgt. Dante Defoor of Youngstown, Ohio, recites the second paragraph of the NCO Creed as part of a skit for the ceremony Feb. 10. Defoor wore full combat gear to represent the combat arms NCO.



TF Knighthawk chaplain teaches course to develop understanding, tolerance of others

By U.S. Army Sgt. Janell Emerson
Task Force Knighthawk

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- When U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Jerry Johnson, Task Force Knighthawk chaplain, received his orders to leave the basic trainees after two years at Fort Jackson for the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade in the spring of 2010, he began to prepare a World Religions class for a new kind of audience; deployed Soldiers in Afghanistan.

Ricardo Turpin, the University of Maryland Europe field representative at Forward Operating Base Shank, responded enthusiastically to Johnson's early e-mail proposals. After learning of Johnson's previous

success with the class he taught at FOB Salerno with 3rd Brigade Combat Team in 2006, Turpin, a native of Charlotte, N.C., began the chain of events that has led to the course now being offered for the third time at FOB Shank.

"Chaplain Johnson's class was the very first University of Maryland University College class to run on FOB Shank; outstanding," Turpin said.

Johnson, a native of Lowville, N.Y., wasted no time getting started on instructing World Religions. Class began the day after his arrival

at FOB Shank.

Johnson's motivation for the educational push is simple.

"It's an extension of the chaplain ministry to educate Soldiers on religions and the impact religion has within the operational environment; and it helps Soldiers with their college credits," said Johnson.

The first iteration consisted of 12 students from the Navy, Army and Air Force. Only one Soldier represented 10th Mountain Division due to their limited time on FOB Shank. The second iteration held 24 students, most of which were from 10th

Mountain Combat Aviation Brigade. Mr. Turpin, realizing the potential of the class, organized plans for a special winter intersession iteration.

"I have sat in many of his sessions; his instruction style is more lecture with a twist of the Socratic method of teaching," said Turpin. "I would highly recommend Chaplain Johnson's class to everyone. He is flexible and

his classes are a great way to wind down from the high tempo of the day's work. UMUC Europe is proud to have the chaplain as a faculty member and will continue to work with him for so long as possible."

World Religions is a basic introduction to the concept of studying faith with a specific focus on seven designated religions. Part one of Johnson's class covers the Eastern religions of

Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism; along with a short summary of indigenous religions found in Australia, Africa, and the Americas. Part two emphasizes the concepts found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Students take a 50-question multiple choice mid-term that evaluates their ability to understand the terminology involving these unfamiliar faiths. They also get involved in a class project on a historical religious figure that is not covered in the class and ethical issues pertaining to religion.

In keeping with Johnson's style of instruction, the students' final exams are a little more unique than your typical university essay. Students are instructed to write a comparison paper on Judaism, Christianity and Islam. They are compiled on to a compact disc and handed out to each student.

"They all receive a CD with the

papers from the other participants, in a sense giving the whole class an archive of material to use in their own careers, said Johnson. "My main goal is to offer them an appreciation of all of the contributions across the religious spectrum regardless of preconceived ideas."

In catering to the situation, Johnson closes out his class with discussion on extremism and terrorism as they relate to the Afghanistan operational environment.

Each of Johnson's students expresses different reasons for taking World Religions.

"I wanted to understand the world around me, and what the foundations of other nationalities are," said U.S. Army Spc. Courtney Pool of Springfield, Mo., 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment chaplain's assistant. "I wanted to study a subject that would help me relate to and compare with people of different

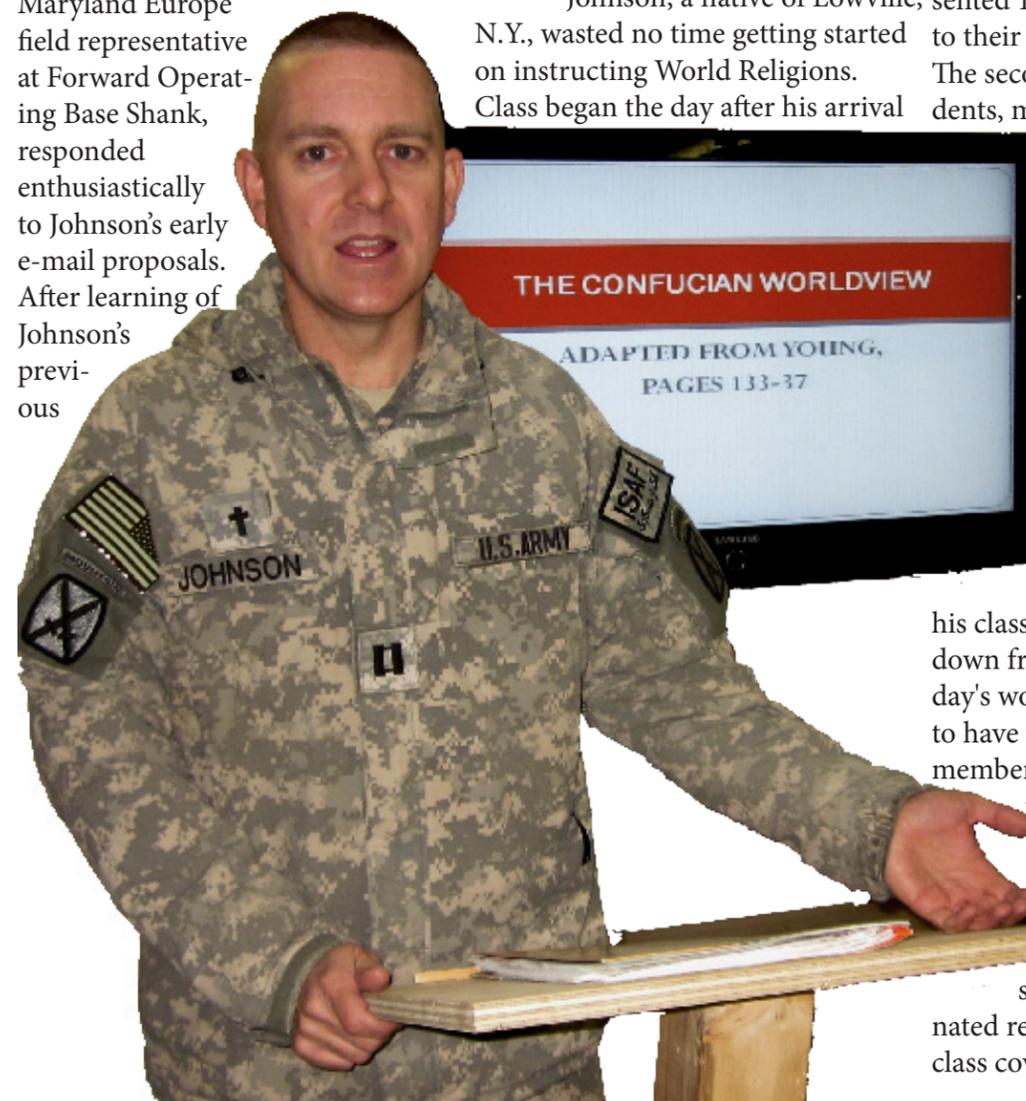
backgrounds and belief systems than

mine."

Many of the others stated that they were taking the class in order to fulfill requirements for their degree. U.S. Army Pfc. Osie Rolle-Cook of Lake City, Fla., D Company TF Knighthawk, 10th CAB, said she was especially impressed by Buddhism.

The senior ranking participant, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Leroy Madison of Odenton, Md., also of TF Knighthawk, felt the class was surprisingly courteous in tone even though many of the students voiced strong convictions in faith within the various discussions. He added that debate was civil, something he did not expect.

World Religions is more than a class to the students enrolled. Although three semester hours are offered, it is an important part of the operational environment in Afghanistan; one that develops understanding and tolerance toward others with different backgrounds.



Soldiers on the move



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers of Fox Company (Pathfinders), Task Force Knighthawk, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, move toward a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter which had just arrived to pick them up from a sling load training mission Feb. 1. (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Kaylee Laakso, TF Knighthawk)



KHOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Christopher Hixon of Longmont, Colo., a combat medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Tigershark, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, instructs U.S. Army Lt. Col. David Kramer, TF Tigershark, 10th CAB, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Nick Carter, TF Tigershark, 10th CAB/TF Falcon, command sergeant major, how to apply a pressure dressing. “Task Force Tigershark at Salerno is a model for the Army and the brigade,” said Maj. Jaimie Torres, the flight surgeon for 10th CAB/TF Falcon. “They’re at 99%.” (Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jennifer Bales, TF Tigershark, 10th CAB)

Task Force Falcon trains to save lives

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot
Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers of task force Mountain Eagle had just begun moving into their new digs on the opposite side of the airfield when they experienced an indirect fire attack Dec. 20. Soldiers who had recently completed combat life saver qualification, immediately responded and treated the wounded until medical personnel arrived. “Our people did a great job,” said Maj. Jamie Torres, TF Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, flight surgeon. “Due to the IDF on the east side in Camp Avenger, the need and importance of the CLS was highlighted by the rapid medical response of our 277 Soldiers living there who were CLS qualified and who were able to apply buddy aid to their fellow injured Soliders. It was from their quick reactions that those injured were able to make it to higher level of care and that none died.”

As soon as Col. Pedro Almeida took command of 10th CAB, he set a goal for the brigade to achieve 100% of its Soldiers to be CLS certified, said Maj. Torres, a native of Pulaski, N.Y. The doctrinal

requirement is one per crew or 25% of an Army unit. “It’s important because everybody is a combat life saver,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, command sergeant major. “Everyone needs the ability to save a Soldier’s life.” To reach this goal, task force medics are conducting CLS training twice a month. “TF Tigershark at Salerno is a model for the Army and the brigade,” said Maj. Torres. “They’re at 99%. Prior to leaving Ft Drum we had trained 1,222 Soldiers across the brigade. Since arriving in theater we’ve trained another 500 Soldiers and are sitting at 56%.”

In one such class, early in February, taught by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Shareef Stokely of Eastover, S.C., Soldiers were practicing a procedure to ensure a casualty’s airway remains open. Stokely explained that the nasal pharyngeal tube is used when a casualty is having difficulty breathing or if it can be anticipated that he or she may have difficulty later,

such as with an unconscious victim.

“Which nostril do we insert the tube?” asked Stokely, who has been a medic for 16 years and is currently assigned to Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle.

Most of the Soldiers remembered from previous training that it was the right nostril since it’s usually larger.

“Make sure that the bevel is facing the septum,” he added.

Although one Soldier was able to insert the NPT into his own nose, it was an uncomfortable procedure for the nearly dozen Soldiers of the class.

“It’s not happening,” said one Soldier coughing as he frantically reached to pull the tube out of his nose.

“It’s a lot easier to do on someone unconscious,” said Stokely with a smile.

The previous day, Stokely taught the Soldiers how to apply bandages; and when

necessary, tourniquets. Following the hands-on NPT session, the class was shown the supplies they will find in a combat life saver bag, which they may be responsible for once CLS qualified, and then moved to treating chest wounds.

Stokely says he feels very strongly about the importance of training Soldiers life saving techniques.

“It’s important because medics can’t be everywhere all the time,” he said. “It’s nice to have other people know the skills. It’s all about extra hands and saving the most lives.”

The medical personnel of TF Falcon are prepared to conduct the classes necessary to train each Soldier.

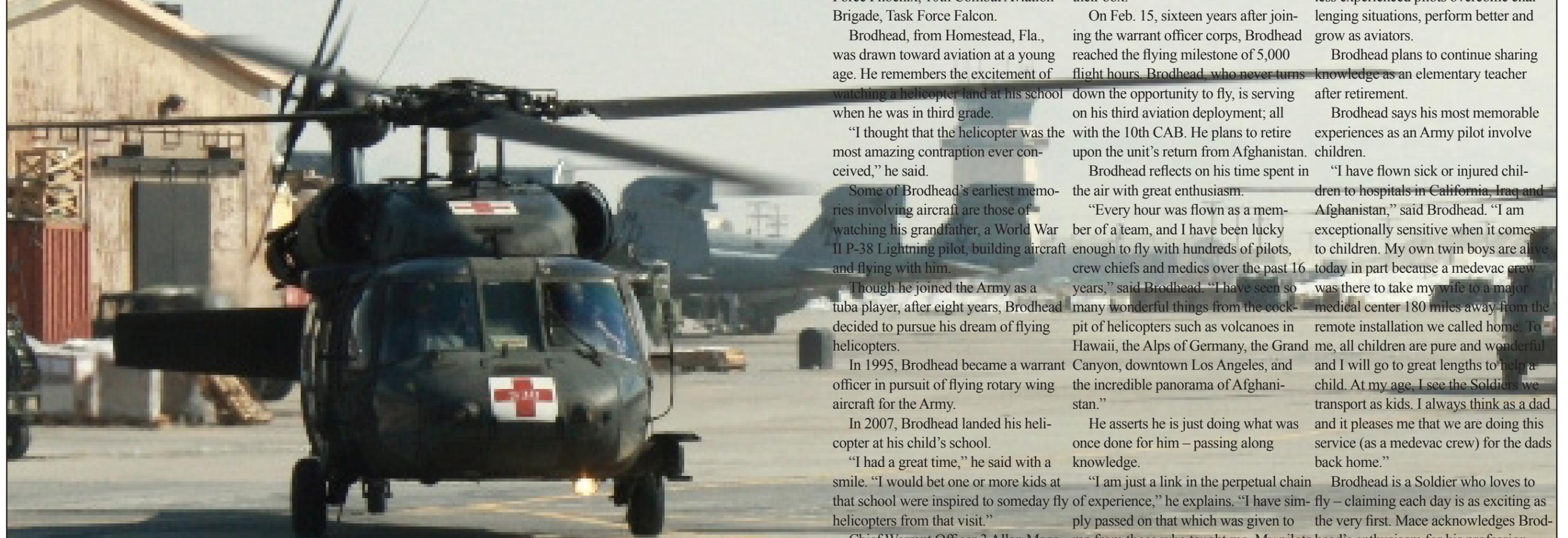
“CLS training affords every Soldier the ability to respond to a medical emergency,” said Maj. Torres.

“It’s the Army’s attempt to get every Soldier to be able to provide self-aid and buddy-aid in combat.”



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Shareef Stokely, Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, instructs U.S. Army Spc. Jamie Yanas, a motor transport operator with E Company, TF Mountain Eagle, 10th CAB/TF Falcon, how to insert a nasal pharyngeal tube as his training partner, U.S. Army Spc. Ethan Cass, also a motor transport operator with E Co., TF Mountain Eagle, 10th CAB/TF Falcon, remains still. 10th CAB/TF Falcon has a goal to certify 100% of its Soldiers as combat life savers. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon)

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Warrant Officer 4 Kenneth Brodhead, an instructor pilot in Company C Dustoff, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, lands a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter Feb. 15 after obtaining 5,000 flight hours. Brodhead, a native of Homestead, Fla., has been in the Army for more than 24 years – 10 as an instructor pilot. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)



10th CAB pilot reaches 5,000 flight hours

By U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown
Task Force Phoenix



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Warrant Officer 4 Kenneth Brodhead, a helicopter instructor pilot with Company C Dustoff, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon, receives a plaque and certificate of recognition from his unit after obtaining 5,000 flight hours Feb 15. Brodhead, a native of Homestead, Fla., has been in the Army more than 24 years and plans to retire upon his unit's return from Afghanistan. (Courtesy photo)

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kenneth Brodhead, an instructor pilot, reached the 5,000 flight hour milestone Feb. 15 while flying a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter with Company C Dustoff, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon.

Brodhead, from Homestead, Fla., was drawn toward aviation at a young age. He remembers the excitement of watching a helicopter land at his school when he was in third grade.

“I thought that the helicopter was the most amazing contraption ever conceived,” he said.

Some of Brodhead's earliest memories involving aircraft are those of watching his grandfather, a World War II P-38 Lightning pilot, building aircraft and flying with him.

Though he joined the Army as a tuba player, after eight years, Brodhead decided to pursue his dream of flying helicopters.

In 1995, Brodhead became a warrant officer in pursuit of flying rotary wing aircraft for the Army.

In 2007, Brodhead landed his helicopter at his child's school.

“I had a great time,” he said with a smile. “I would bet one or more kids at that school were inspired to someday fly helicopters from that visit.”

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Allan Mace, maintenance test pilot in Co. C Dustoff, TF Phoenix, 10th CAB, TF Falcon, has known Brodhead since their 2007 deployment to Bagram. He characterizes Brodhead as a man who stays calm, is exact and patient.

“When someone asks me about Kenny; about his personality, his experience, and his accomplishments, I can only think of one thing – unique,” said Mace, a native of Sacramento, Calif. “At first glance, you see a hardened aviator who probably would not stand for a lot of nonsense, who could be uncompromising, and only focused on the

mission. I would honestly submit he's far from that tough exterior. His teaching style not only increased the unit's ability to become mission focused, he also allowed junior and senior aviators alike to think and act beyond the confines of their box.”

On Feb. 15, sixteen years after joining the warrant officer corps, Brodhead reached the flying milestone of 5,000 flight hours. Brodhead, who never turns down the opportunity to fly, is serving on his third aviation deployment; all with the 10th CAB. He plans to retire upon the unit's return from Afghanistan.

Brodhead reflects on his time spent in the air with great enthusiasm.

“Every hour was flown as a member of a team, and I have been lucky enough to fly with hundreds of pilots, crew chiefs and medics over the past 16 years,” said Brodhead. “I have seen so many wonderful things from the cockpit of helicopters such as volcanoes in Hawaii, the Alps of Germany, the Grand Canyon, downtown Los Angeles, and the incredible panorama of Afghanistan.”

He asserts he is just doing what was once done for him – passing along knowledge.

“I am just a link in the perpetual chain of experience,” he explains. “I have simply passed on that which was given to me from those who taught me. My pilots in this company are smart and skilled, and I will be able to retire with confidence, knowing that they will prepare the next generation of pilots, continuing that chain.”

He said he has learned a lot over his 16 years as a pilot from how to approach Soldiers when giving instruction to knowing his own personal limitations.

“Teaching adults can be real tricky,” said Brodhead, “An effective instructor pilot needs to be, among other things, a bit of a practical psychologist. Every person learns differently. I learned what I can and cannot expect from myself. I

also learned that though the world can sometimes be ugly up close, it is always beautiful when you step back a few hundred feet.”

Brodhead says he is proud to know he has passed along information that helped less experienced pilots overcome challenging situations, perform better and grow as aviators.

Brodhead plans to continue sharing knowledge as an elementary teacher after retirement.

Brodhead says his most memorable experiences as an Army pilot involve children.

“I have flown sick or injured children to hospitals in California, Iraq and Afghanistan,” said Brodhead. “I am exceptionally sensitive when it comes to children. My own twin boys are alive today in part because a medevac crew was there to take my wife to a major medical center 180 miles away from the remote installation we called home. To me, all children are pure and wonderful and I will go to great lengths to help a child. At my age, I see the Soldiers we transport as kids. I always think as a dad and it pleases me that we are doing this service (as a medevac crew) for the dads back home.”

Brodhead is a Soldier who loves to fly – claiming each day is as exciting as the very first. Mace acknowledges Brodhead's enthusiasm for his profession.

“With a touch of sarcasm and a twist of humor, people look beyond the superficial shell of the seasoned aviator and learn and love to fly just as he does,” said Mace. “It is this love of flying that has allowed him to fly more than 5,000 hours, equating to over 208 days sitting in one position, manipulating his mechanical beast, commanding it to do his will. It's the passion and the sense of freedom that has allowed him to strive beyond what most aviators only wish they could accomplish in their career.”

TF Phoenix crew chief earns US citizenship

By U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown
Task Force Phoenix

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Sgt. Andreas Buttner (right), a 34-year-old crew chief with Company C, “Dustoff”, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Falcon, proudly displays his certificate of citizenship as he stands next to his escort, U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Allan Mace, also with Co. C, TF Phoenix, at Kandahar Airfield Jan. 29. Buttner is originally from Fulda, Germany. Mace is a native of Sacramento, Calif.



KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – After months of research and dedication, U.S. Army Sgt. Andreas Buttner took the oath of citizenship with more than 100 other service members at the Combined Joint Task Force-10 naturalization ceremony at Kandahar Airfield Jan. 29.

Buttner, a 34-year-old crew chief in Company C, “Dustoff”, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Falcon, began the process of obtaining his citizenship after arriving in theater the first week of September.

Originally from Fulda, Germany, he deployed to Afghanistan prepared with all of the paperwork he would need to begin his naturalization packet. Buttner was anxious about the process even though he had been extremely thorough.

“I was nervous and excited; nervous that I was missing any documents (and) excited that I was on track for citizenship,” he said.

Buttner mailed the completed packet back to the United States to begin the review process. At the same time, immigration services began his background check.

Four months after dropping his naturalization packet, Buttner and his escort, U.S. Army Chief Warrant Of-

ficer 3 Allan Mace of Sacramento, Calif., also from Co. C, TF Phoenix, flew to Kandahar to finish the immigration process, which included completing an interview.

“The interview took about one and a half hours, and I was very nervous because the decision for citizenship approval or disapproval is made right then and there,” said Buttner. “Of course, the thought of missing any paperwork or supporting documents was on my mind.”

Prior to his interview, Buttner was required to study 100 questions for an exam that covered American history and government. He passed with flying colors.

Mace, who has known Butter for more than four years, said Buttner sacrificed and invested himself in the United States. “It is people like him who tell the world that with hard work, diligence, dedication and love for a nation that the United States continues to be a country of opportunity and compassion.”

Buttner recommends that Soldiers looking to gaining US citizenship take advantage of the support the military offers.

“I am extremely proud to be a citizen and to continue to fight alongside my fellow citizens for the stabilization of Afghanistan and to ensure the freedom and liberty of all back home,” said Buttner. “God bless the U.S.A.”

Falcon Chaplains



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- The chaplains of Task Force Falcon gather for a group photo after completing resiliency training here Feb. 25. The training improves their ability to cope with the stresses of being deployed. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot)

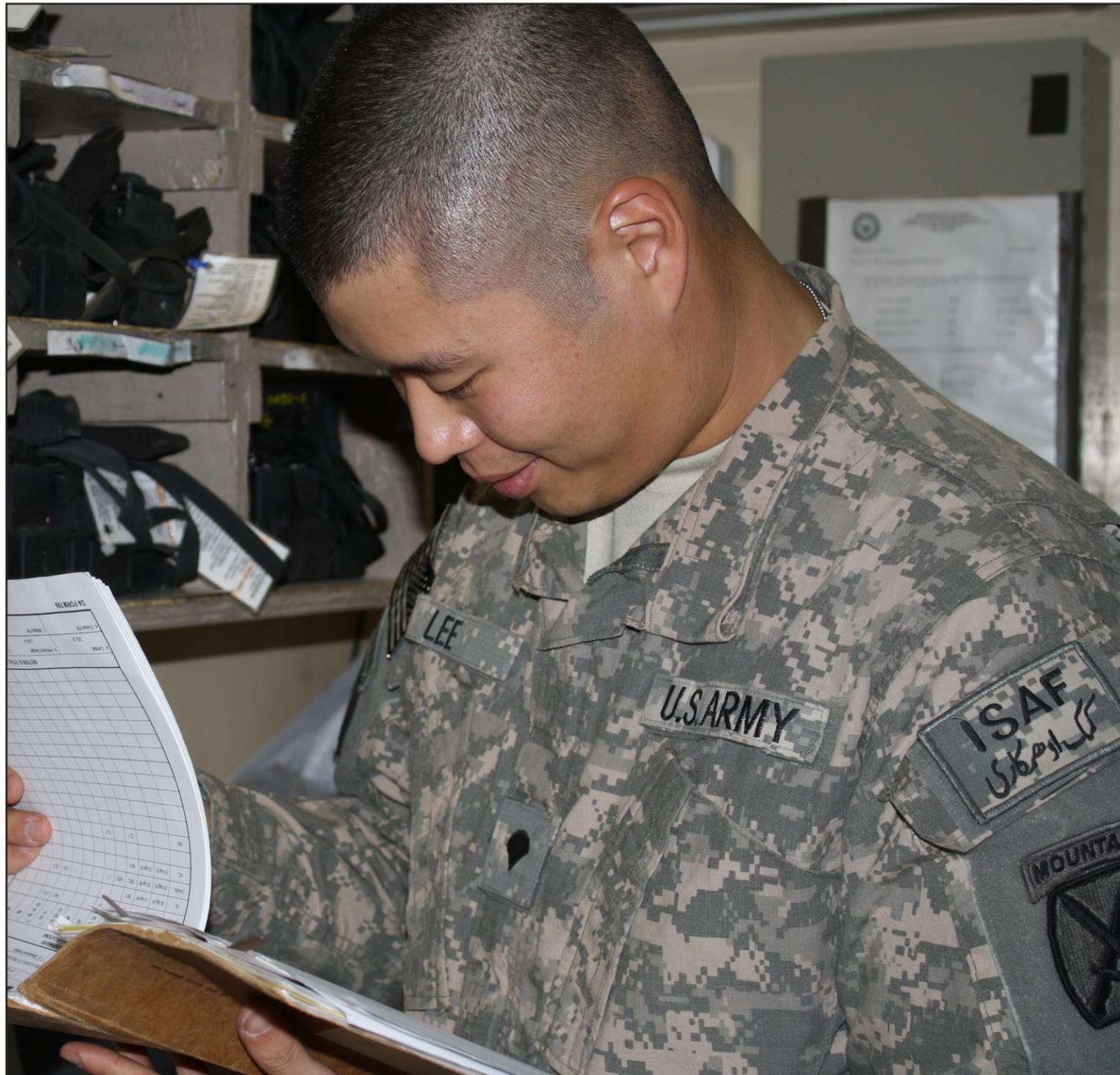
Phoenix Soldier and NCO of the month

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Spc. Richard Goldsberry, a UH-60 blackhawk helicopter mechanic, and Sgt. Carlos Ferrer, an AH-64 Apache helicopter armament non-commissioned officer, both from Company D, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, won the Soldier and NCO of the month board Feb. 18. Goldsberry is a native of Lancaster, Ohio, while Ferrer is from Bayamon, Puerto Rico



Korean-American serves in search of American dream

By Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown
Task Force Phoenix



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Jayson Lee is a unique Soldier serving in the United States Army. The 29-year-old currently serves in the U.S. Army in support of Operation Enduring Freedom XI, but unlike most Soldiers, he has also had the opportunity to serve in the Republic of Korea Army.

“I joined because I want to go [into the] aviation [field],” said Lee, “I desire to learn [more] English, then go to college to get a master’s degree - kind of American dream.”

Lee was born in Texas in 1981 where he lived with his father; who worked in a management position in the Daewoo Corporation; his mother, and older sister. He lived there for only five years so he doesn’t remember much from that time. Lee’s Family lived in Texas until 1985, when they decided to move back to South Korea to be closer to relatives who live in Seoul.

Lee graduated high school in 2000 and there was no debate when he decided to attend Myung-Ji College in Korea for four years where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Advanced Science and Material. He also took on a minor degree in Mechanics. While he was working on his degree, Lee joined the ROK Army to serve his mandatory two years of service.

In 2002 he left for basic training, which consists of tasks very similar to those of the U.S. Army. Some of the tasks that have to be completed are chemical training, marching tasks, a combat life saver course, and weapon qualification with the Korean K-2 rifle. The Soldiers complete all of their necessary tasks in six weeks before they are assigned to their first unit.

The first unit Lee was assigned to was 2nd Division, near the Korean Demilitarized Zone. His job consisted of providing surveillance for his artillery unit. They trained for threats by climbing nearby mountains to survey the area beyond the DMZ.

“One of the most interesting things I saw was North Korean Soldiers – young, maybe 14 or 15. They carried weapons as big as them,” said Lee with a smile.

A story that Lee gloomily shared was when he was

pulling guard duty near the DMZ for civilians who were trying to build a road. As they were constructing the road, Lee witnessed a few of the civilians come into contact with an unmarked mine that detonated.

After just a couple short years he completed his service with the ROK Army in 2005 and continued working on his college education. When he completed his bachelor’s degree, Lee contemplated what he was going to do with his future. That’s when he decided to go after his dream and raised his right hand to join the ranks of the U.S. Army.

Lee joined the U.S. Army as an air traffic control operator while he was still living in South Korea in 2009. He reflected on some of the enjoyable things he would leave behind in South Korea such as reliable public transportation, convenient Internet, camping in the valley, and the affection South Koreans show to one another. However, his desire for the American dream was very strong. After going through another basic training and technical school, Lee was sent to Fort Drum, N.Y., for his first duty station.

When Lee raised his right hand to join, he was well-aware that it would be likely that he would deploy to either Iraq or Afghanistan – especially in the aviation field.

“I really worried about deploying,” he said. “U.S. Soldiers are going to deploy to hazardous area[s]. I felt a little bit afraid of it.”

However, his ambition to obtain his dreams dominated any fear he had about deploying, he said. It’s one of Lee’s goals to make a career out of the Army since his ambition is to take the aviation experience he is gaining and transfer it to a civilian job after serving 20 years.

Lee says he enjoys just about everything in the Army and is proud to be serving in Afghanistan. He plans on reenlisting as soon as his window opens.

“I am proud of what I am doing in support of Operation Enduring Freedom because in the 1950 Korean War, if there were not U.S. military support, [South] Korea might be [communist],” said Lee. “Now, we are living and enjoying [democracy].”

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Jayson Lee, an air traffic controller with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, reviews a Soldier’s flight record. Lee, a native of Seoul, Korea, has served two years with the Republic of Korea Army and is currently serving a three-year enlistment with Task Force Phoenix in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, TF Phoenix)

Task Force ODIN NCO frocked

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Joseph Viverette
Task Force ODIN-A



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- U.S. Army Maj. Douglas KN Fullerton, Headquarters Support Company, 306TH Military Intelligence Battalion (AE), Task Force ODIN-A, from Alameda, Calif., congratulates newly frocked 1st Sgt. Hector J. Benitez of Ponce, Puerto Rico, Jan. 31 at Bagram Airfield.

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – 1st Sgt. Hector J. Benitez “1st Sgt. Benitez has been an incredible asset to HSC and TF ODIN-A from the organizational standup at Fort Hood, Texas, through the entire deployment. I rely on him as an experienced sounding board to help me lead and manage our diverse company. I am thankful to work with him and am proud of his well-deserved promotable status.” said U.S. Army Maj. Douglas KN Fullerton, HSC Commander, 306TH MI BN (AE), TF ODIN-A, from Alameda, Calif. On January 31st this well experienced Soldier was one of only 7 percent Army-wide to be selected for promotion to E-8. “I was very happy to be a part of 1st Sgt. Benitez’ promotion,” said U.S. Army Warrant Officer Mariana L. Cruz, a property book officer with 306TH MI BN (AE), TF ODIN-A, from Oswego, Ill. “I’ve met a lot of first sergeants and 1st Sgt. Benitez is one of the few that I can really say is a true leader. He’s one of the good ones and I consider myself fortunate to have met

him during my Army career.” 1st Sgt. Sergeant Benitez’ military education includes the Combat Lifesaver Course, Primary Leadership Development Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer’s Course, Airborne School, Advanced Noncommissioned Officer’s Course, and the First Sergeant Course. 1st Sgt. Benitez also successfully completed the Army Parachute Team Assessment and Selection Program in 2009. His awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal (5th OLC), Army Achievement Medal (3rd OLC), Presidential Unit Citation Award, and Army Superior Unit award (1st OLC), Army Achievement Medal (3rd OLC) Army Good Conduct Medal (6th Award). 1st Sgt. Benitez has also been awarded the Senior Aviation Badge, Parachutist Badge, and the Netherland Freefall Parachutist Badge. 1st Sgt. Benitez is currently in a relationship with Beatriz Torres and has one son 16 years old Hector Jose, who lives in Savannah, Ga. ODIN STRONG!

TF Mountain Eagle communications Soldiers improve internet access at COP Carwhile

By U.S Army 1st Lt. Matthew Radman
Task Force Mountain Eagle



WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Members of Command Post Node Team 536 gather in front of the Line of Sight panel they set up to receive signal from the nearest communication hub. From left, U.S. Army Spc. Steven Brownstein of West Palm, Fla.; U.S. Army Spc. Velazquez of Ponce, Puerto Rico; U.S. Army Pfc. Adela Lira of Sacramento, Calif.; U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Allen of Brooklyn, N.Y.; and U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Michael Beiting.

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- On a small desolate hillside in Wardak Province sits Combat Outpost Carwhile; home to the Warriors of 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Carwhile is also home to Command Post Node Team 536 of Task Force Mountain Eagle.

As a tactical command post team, CPN 536 is responsible for providing reliable satellite communication to COP Carwhile’s commander. In addition to their specific mission, this team of four, led by U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Allen of Brooklyn, N.Y., have their work cut out for them assisting in all communication needs for the soldiers of the COP. Handling everything from issues with computers to loading radios and running phone lines, Allen’s team is a multi-faceted group of soldiers who are cross trained in different communication fields. As the on- ground subject matter experts for all things communication related, a unique and very important mission was given to Allen’s team recently by the Warriors of 2-4 IN.

One of the most common scenes you’ll find in any MWR center throughout Regional Command - East is a line of soldiers waiting for a chance to call home to their loved ones or chat with friends on sites like Facebook, Twitter, or Skype. Challenges arise in these MWR centers though, ranging from a limited number of computers to limited allotted bandwidth for each computer user at any given time.

As the major airfield servicing RC- East, Bagram has multiple MWR facilities, a Red Cross Center, and a major internet service provider for personal computers that soldiers can choose to sign up for on a monthly basis. As you move away from the epicenter of RC-East however, the options available to soldiers decrease drastically.

Like many small combat outposts, Carwhile does not have a great number of resources available for soldier morale. With less than 20 computers and only 8 SPAWAR phones avail-

able to soldiers for communicating back home to their friends and loved ones, morale was limited by bandwidth restrictions, long lines, and 20 minute time restrictions. While the Warriors of 2-4 IN wanted more internet options available for soldiers, they didn’t have anyone on hand to assist them in coordinating and setting up their local network. Cue CPN 536.

According to Sgt. Allen, the ability to see his infant son on webcam in his room rather than wait in line for an hour at a packed MWR was motivation enough to assist in getting an alternative source of communication to the Warriors of 2-4 IN.

After being given the authorization by the COP Mayor Cell in January, Allen’s team contacted a local area satellite internet service provider and told them what the COP was looking for. Team 536’s experience in communication networking allowed for them to quickly conduct a site survey of the COP to ensure that all of its 42 buildings would receive equal signal strength. Within three weeks of the survey, Team 536 had received their newest array of satellite equipment and had established a communication link with their hub site at Sayed-Abad.

With this link established, Soldiers on Carwhile can now avoid waiting in line at the MWR to get on Skype and other internet based phone services; instead, they can relax in their rooms updating their Facebook statuses while typing emails home. While this service can cost more than the “free” MWR provided services, Soldiers are guaranteed bandwidth within the privacy of their rooms, allowing them to relax and wind down at the end of a long hard day. Although this type of task is not CPN 536’s primary mission, team members saw it as an opportunity to improve morale for the entire COP as expressed by team member, “I’m glad to be helping people not feel so [miserable] out here all the way in Afghanistan so far from home,” said Spc. Steven Brownstein of West Palm, Fla., summarizing the motivation of his team.

10th CAB family members' symbolic 'Walk to Afghanistan' inspires recovering accident victim

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot
Task Force Falcon

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The 10th Combat Aviation Brigade's Family Readiness Group created a program for each task force's families to join together and symbolically walk the 6,526 miles from Fort Drum, N.Y., to Afghanistan.

"The FRG members of Task Force Shooter have really taken this challenge to heart," said U.S. Army 2nd Lt. John Panzer, a human resource officer with TF Shooter, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Division. "Currently, TF Shooter is leading the pack at 2,652 miles."

Family members have various reasons for participating and for Barb Tyson, the mother-in-law of a pilot from TF Shooter, walking is an activity she uses to show support for her son-in-law. At the same time, walking aids in her recovery from an accident that left her with injuries that made her wonder if she would ever walk again.

"I guess I have always enjoyed the calming effects of a long walk," said Tyson, a native of Mankato, Minn. "It not only provides good exercise, but I love smelling the freshly cut grass and seeing the way the sun can shine on a building or the trees, and the wind blowing through my hair."

However, it was during one of her walks when she was struck by a van, breaking both arms and fracturing her pelvic bone.

"It hurt so much to stand on it that I didn't think I'd ever get out walking again," she recalled. But, with support and encouragement, she was out walking again within four months.

This year her leg began cramping during walks and it became an excuse not to go out as often.

"Then my daughter told me about the Walk to Afghanistan," said Tyson. "I'm very proud of what my son-in-law Andy is doing and this is a way I can show that I support



MOUNT ST. HELENS, Washington – Barb Tyson, of Mankato, Minn., sits with her granddaughter, Edna, at Mount St. Helens, Wash. Despite an accident which left her doubting she would walk again, Tyson has walked more than 106 miles to show her support for U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Erp, a pilot with Task Force Shooter, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, and a native of Jordan, Minn. Walking has also helped with Tyson's recovery from the accident. (Courtesy photo)

him." Tyson goes to great lengths to let her son-in-law know that he is not forgotten and that she supports what he's doing.

"I knew my mom would really want to contribute to the Walk to Afghanistan because she has been very good at showing support for my husband while he has been deployed," said Katie Erp, whose husband is U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Andrew Erp, a native of Jordan, Minn. "She writes him letters and prays for him."

Katie, also of Mankato, Minn., said her mother tries to walk at least two miles a day and has walked 106.5 miles so far since November. Although her legs still occasionally cramp up, it's getting better the more she walks.

"She feels better when she's walking now, so it is her favorite part of the day," said Erp.

TF Falcon focuses on RESILIENCY

By U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner
Task Force Falcon

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Staff Sgt. David J. Boyle of Phoenix, the Master Resiliency Trainer for 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, "hunts the good stuff" with Sgt. Nicole Trevino of Vail, Ariz., a paralegal noncommissioned officer with the brigade. Hunting the good stuff is a skill taught during the master resiliency course where individuals review their day and reflect on the best parts and why they enjoyed it. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon)



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers, like all people, are exposed to stress. Unlike the average American civilian, Soldiers are often taken from their home, required to stay in a foreign country for a year, and then crammed back into the world they left. The Army has deduced that this is a jarring experience and developed a method of giving Soldiers tools to deal with the stress. Master Resiliency Training was adopted.

"MRT is a system designed to help Soldiers become more self-aware and optimistic," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. David J. Boyle of Phoenix, the Master Resiliency Trainer for 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon.

Boyle travels to all the units that fall under TF Falcon and instructs Soldiers on the four modules of MRT; the goal, to make Soldiers more mentally resilient.

"I teach for two days; each day for six hours," Boyle said. "MRT gives Soldiers the tools to be able to better cope with their environment."

The course covers 11 skill sets, all of which are intended to make Soldiers better able to deal with stress, both in the long term and in day-to-day events. Topics covered include identifying thoughts and "mind traps."

"Mind traps are the thoughts that a person usually has about something," Boyle explained. "An example of a mind trap would be to fall into the routine of con-

stantly finding the worst thing about an idea or conversation."

Boyle helps Soldiers identify their own mind traps, so they may be more aware of their usual patterns of thought. In doing so, he said, Soldiers are able to determine if their reactions are healthy responses.

One key skill that's taught is to review the day each evening. Boyle said the trick is to find at least one positive event that occurred and to reflect on why it was positive for the individual.

"This makes it easier to look for the good things," he said. "The target is to make remaining optimistic easier."

Boyle isn't just regurgitating what he learned during the MRT course, he applies the course's principles in his personal life.

"I try to follow everything that's taught in the course," said Boyle. "I'm pretty confident that things would have gone a lot better for me, as far as my relationships, if I had known then what I know now."

His students have expressed similar sentiments, and he often speaks with people who voice their appreciation of the course.

"It's hard to be optimistic," said U.S. Army Spc. Daniel Nelson, a legal assistance specialist with the task force and native of Hampshire, Ill. "If you're not, it's hard to lead a good life. If you can't stay positive while deployed, you'll go crazy."

Opinions: Soldiers' Voices

Relax, keep everything in perspective

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. David Boyle
Master Resiliency Trainer, TF Falcon



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Travis Vreeland of Ventura, Calif., a MEDEVAC pilot with Company C, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, waits for his Environmental Morale Leave flight Feb. 15 at the Bagram Airfield passenger terminal. EML is a benefit for deployed Soldiers which takes them out of the combat zone for 15 days of non-chargeable leave plus travel time (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade)

When I was a child, everything seemed so large and monumental. The highest number I could fathom was 100. Wow! You can count to one hundred?! When I played the counting game, you could pretty much count on my response:

“Bubble gum, Bubble gum in a dish how many pieces do you wish? One hundred!”

A mile was a long way, an hour a long time, a day seemed like a week, a week seemed like a year, and a year? Well, when I was five and my

mother told me Dec. 26 that Christmas was now an entire year away, I cried; because to me, that was an eternity.

Now that I'm older and a little wiser, I learned 100 is not such a big number after all. Nowadays, a hundred bucks won't cover the cost for a family of four to go out to dinner and a movie. Now, as I've recently learned, I can fit 100 pieces of gum in my mouth. It was a challenge from Sgt. 1st Class Vito Powers- I had to accept.

A mile; well, I have to run two miles for a physical training test, and I can do that in less than 17 minutes. At least, I'd better if I want to pass.

A week seems to fly by, even over here in Afghanistan. Especially, if you work in the brigade tactical operations center!

And a year, well, before you know it, it's going to be October and time for the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade to come home! Think about how many years you have been in the Army. When you look back, I bet most of you will say, “Wow, has it really been that long?”

When you put things into perspective, a year is not that much time at all; 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days. Some can even break it down to the hours, minutes and seconds. It's all the same amount of time, no matter how it's broken down.

Time is relative to how it is spent. The best part of this year is the two weeks of Environmental Morale Leave, also known as rest and recuperation; the 15 days Soldiers get to spend away from the combat mission.

I recently came back from my EML, and I can tell you it went faster than a dozen jelly donuts at a police station. I can say that because I was a military policeman a dozen years ago. Wow, has it really been that long? See?

Anyhow, I had a lot of big plans for my 15 days of vacation. I was going to do it all. I was going to see all of my friends and family - not only in my home state of Florida, but New York, Georgia, Arizona, and oh yeah, spend a few days in Las Vegas, too!

You see, I was a child again, and 15 days was a long time. However, once I was home, I quickly realized 15 days was not all that long.

At first, I was frantically looking at dates and times and calling this person and that person to nail down my plan and maximize my time. I was becoming frazzled- how was I going to do every-

thing?

Then it happened; an song from childhood popped into my head: “Relax” by Frankie Goes to Hollywood.

I found myself singing, “Relax! Don't do it, when you want to go to it. Relax!”

After all, it is called rest and recuperation for a reason. Once I accepted the fact I was not going to be able to see everyone and go to all of those places in 15 days, I was able to do exactly that - relax!

Make realistic plans for your time off. Accept you're not going to be able to do everything you want to do in 15 days so you can maximize your time off. Remember what this time off is for - to recharge. Slow down. Spend time with your friends and family. Take comfort in the fact you don't have to have a million and one plans to enjoy your time off.

You don't want to be on a rigid timeline - that's what you do here. You don't have to wake up at zero-dark-thirty for physical training, shift change or some meeting. You can sit down and enjoy your meals with real cutlery. Sometimes, the best laid plan is to have no plan at all.

It will take a few days to become adjusted to not having to carry a weapon to Walmart or out to dinner. It will take time to adjust to being called by a first name or mommy or daddy.

EML is your time and that is important to keep in mind when making plans. It's not about the cruise, the beach or the weekend at a ski lodge; it's about being with friends or family; or alone if you want, for 15 days and enjoying that time wherever and however it's spent.

Remember, 15 days is not a long time. But, put into perspective, neither is a year. Before too long it will be time to make plans for an even happier moment - when you are once with your family upon completion of this tour of duty. A time when miles will not distance you and time will not have to be spent apart. An hour can once again seem like a day; a day like a week and a week like a year. Enjoy your EML and don't forget what Frankie said...RELAX.

Thank You

By Staff Sgt. Nathan Gregg
Task Force Falcon

It isn't often we hear the words "thank you" for the things we do every day. It is funny how the human brain can become conditioned when it comes to expectations. Let's take for example a trip to the dining facility. When you go to the dining facility you expect certain things. We expect there to be food, a place to sit and a clean environment in which to eat our food. If we were in the Air Force we may expect table side service, but let's face it, we ain't in the Air Force. The Soldiers and civilians that work in the dining facility work hard every day to prepare our meals and to ensure that we have a clean environment to in which to enjoy them. It is important that we take the time to thank those individuals who are responsible for providing such an excellent service each and every day. Everyone out here has bad days, we all have our ups and downs; but a hearty thank you when you receive your dollop of mashed potatoes or scoop of ice cream can go a long ways towards brightening somebody's day and showing appreciation for their efforts.

The same could be said about military service in general. We all joined the same volunteer military and we are all serving our nation. Back home when we're with friends and families we hear thank you for your service. What about from within our own ranks? It is important to recognize the service and sacrifice all Soldiers are making on a daily basis, and to be thankful for those to our left and right. For without the voluntary service of our fellow Soldiers, we would not be able to accomplish the mission.

The Army has recently changed its Stop-Loss policy and we will soon be saying farewell to those Soldiers whose separation date comes up during the deployment. Those Soldiers will not be getting the same welcome home fanfare as those of us who return this fall. It is imperative that we as leaders and fellow Soldiers extend the most sincere thank you to those Soldiers as they depart from theater, for service to their nation in a time of war. I wholeheartedly thank each and every one of the Soldiers from the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade for your extraordinary efforts.

What are you doing with your time?

By 1st Lt. Ben Shull
Task Force Mountain Eagle

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan - Charles Richards once wrote, "Don't be fooled by the calendar. There are only as many days in the year as you make use of. One man gets only a week's value out of a year while another man gets a full year's value out of a week."

Many Soldiers see deployments as a way to save some extra money and catch up on the latest TV series. For some Soldiers though, deployments are a time to improve themselves and their surroundings.

When Company A, Task Force Mountain Eagle first moved into their company command post, which doubles as the rotary wing Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group, it was nothing more than a large building with a few ramshackle offices and a large waiting area for transients. Over the course of three months of work, the night shift has begun to transform the CP, and the ADACG with it, into a headquarters the company is proud to work out of.

Building, rearranging, tearing down, and safety, are all key words in the minds of the night shift at the ADACG. Headed by U.S. Army Sgt. John Wayne Binney, and as-

sisted by U.S. Army Pfc. Arlyn Boboltz and U.S. Army Pfc. Douglas Webb, the crew's shift is from 1600 until 0400 and the quality of work they accomplish during that time is astounding. From restructuring the PAX terminal to building and wiring an additional office, there isn't a project that is beyond their reach.

Occasionally taking a break from improving the company CP, the crew also focuses on personal projects. Step stools, cross fit jump boxes, bed risers, desks, entertainment centers and a landing pad for remote controlled helicopters are just a few of their more unique undertakings.

U.S. Army Spc. Raquel Martinez has demonstrated one of the most successful uses of time. Before deployment, she had difficulty passing the Army fitness standards. During her deployment she has worked hard and now has the highest Army Physical Fitness Test score in the company; 291.

The Soldiers of Co. A, TF Mountain Eagle, have found creative and beneficial ways to make use of their deployment time. They are not only making the time seem to pass faster, but they are improving their areas and themselves as well.

Simple Things

By Pfc. Levi C. Morrow
Task Force Falcon

It's the simple things in life that keep us from going utterly insanely insane. You see, being a lowly private first class and coming from the junior enlisted side of the house, I work among the other sun-deprived Soldiers in the operations center. I usually have some free time when not monitoring a computer. When these small spurts of free time arise I look for simple pleasures, such as eating a Cow Tail (that is the "udderly" amazing caramel candy wrapped around cream), poking fun at our beloved noncommissioned officer, sketching comical images via Microsoft Paint, reading a page or two from some amazing American literature supplied by Spc.

Andrew Frampton, and occasionally a prank or two (Frampton knows what I mean). If it weren't for these small yet extremely enjoyable things, then the "Ground Hog's Day Effect" sets in, and that is bad! It's when everyday runs into another day, and the line blurs between Taco Tuesday and Meatloaf Monday. Because I appreciate the small things, I can sit back and say "yes, Tuesday I taped all of S-2's equipment to their desk," or "last Friday I taught good ol' Frampton a lesson in 'what's mine is mine,'" Getting packages, mail and letters is great and raises morale, these "small pleasures" make it possible to get through a long deployment.

After witnessing first ramp ceremony, airfield closures have deeper meaning for civilian

By Juan Perez, Task Force-ODIN-A

Working at a major military airfield in Afghanistan, I used to hate announcements for ramp closures (or freezes). A ramp closure announcement is a notice that a certain portion or all of the accesses to an airfield will be closed. They delay our aircraft from take offs and landings. If personnel are leaving or arriving at our base, we drop them off at the terminals. I even thought the ramp freezes were the Air Force's way to get at us because it seemed at times we were flying more aircraft than they were.

heroes walked toward the aircraft. A few of us were left behind. I slowly worked my way to our hangar and as I approached, I saw a soldier sitting where our mechanics normally work.

That all changed one morning when I went by our hangar to see if our aircraft got out before the scheduled ramp closure and came upon a ceremony for three fallen soldiers. Everything was conducted with military precision. Soldiers were paying their respects to the passing caskets. It was a rare silence in a normally very noisy place. The solemnity of the occasion kept me riveted where I stood. It felt as if everything surrounding the ceremony took on the solemnity of the moment, even the towering mountains stood at attention.

Coming closer I realized I didn't recognize this soldier. Why would he be in our area? Our mechanics could not drive our all-terrain vehicles to pick them up or weren't there. I thought I should check this guy out. I approached him and said, "hi". He was looking down and I thought he didn't hear me, so I spoke louder. "Hey, how are you?", I asked. That was when he looked up and softly said "I've been better, but what can you do." I noticed he was crying. I put together the rest of the story without any more words.

Into the belly of a big aircraft they went, one by one, with the flag of the country they loved; enough to give their lives; neatly draped over each casket. If what was before me didn't change how I felt about the ramp closures, what happened next definitely did.

I will never know exactly what a soldier feels when a buddy dies but I came closer to understanding it right then and there. I couldn't say a word and my vision started to get blurry as I gave this young man the space he needed to be with his thoughts. Our modest hangar became a chapel.

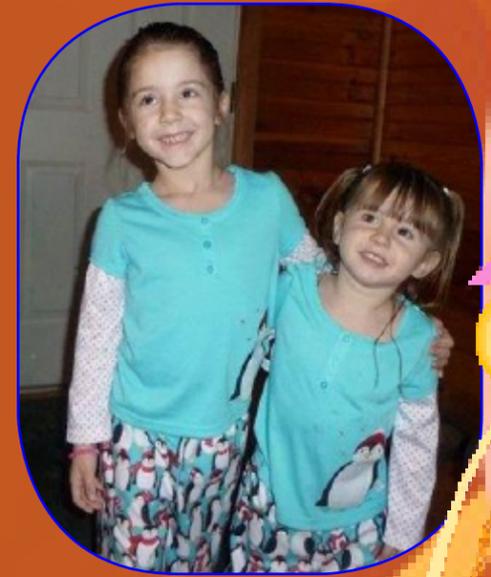
As the ceremony ended, many soldiers from the unit and other people who worked with these American

If that soldier reads this note, I want him to know that because of him, my appreciation of the brotherhood that units in combat form grew immensely. Every commander must be proud to have such soldiers in their units.

Although it's my wish that we have no more fallen soldier ceremonies, if there are any, for the time I have left on this deployment, I will appreciate the reasons for ramp closures. I want to do my part to honor these soldiers the way they deserve.

Images from Home:

Valentines for Troops



“FLY GIRLS” Observance of Women in History

Since the beginning of aeronautical history, women have been an ever present force as supporters, inventors and pioneers. See the timeline to trace the course of women and their impact on the field of aviation.

- 1784** - Elisabeth Thible becomes the first woman to fly in a hot air balloon
- 1908** - Madame Therese Peltier is the first woman to fly a solo flight in an airplane
- 1910** - Baroness Raymonde de la Roche becomes first woman in the world to earn her pilot's license
- 1921** - Bessie Coleman becomes the first African American, male or female, to earn a pilot's license
- 1929** - Amelia Earhart becomes first president of the Ninety-Nines, an organization of women pilots.
- 1932** - May 20-21 - Amelia Earhart is the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic
- 1936** - Louise Thaden and Blance Noyes beat male pilots also entered in the Bendix Trophy Race, the first victory of women over men in a race in which both men and women could enter
- 1938** - Hanna Reitsch becomes the first woman to fly a helicopter and the first woman to be licensed as a helicopter pilot
- 1939** - Willa Brown, first African American commercial pilot & officer in the Civil Air Patrol, helps form National Airmen's Association of America to open up U.S. Armed Forces to African American women
- 1939** - September 15 - Jacqueline Cochran sets an international speed record; the same year, she is the first woman to make a blind landing
- 1943** - Women make up more than 30% of the work force in the aviation industry
- 1943** - Love's and Cochran's units are merged into the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) and Jackie becomes Director of the women flying 60 million miles before program ended DEC 1944, with 1074 graduates. These pilots were civilians to be finally recognized as military personnel in 1977
- 1953** - Jacqueline (Jackie) Cochran becomes first woman to break the sound barrier
- 1964** - March 19 - Geraldine (Jerrie) Mock is the first woman to pilot a plane around the world
- 1974** - June 4 - Sally Murphy is the first woman to qualify as an aviator with the U.S. Army
- 1983** - June 18 - Dr. Sally Ride became the first American woman to fly in space.
- 1991** - Patty Wagstaff became the first woman to win the title of U.S. National Aerobatic Champion, a title she then defended in 1992 and 1993
- 1993** - April 29 - Congress repealed law prohibiting women from being assigned to combat aviation, Secretary of Defense Aspin ordered to drop restrictions preventing women from flying in combat
- 1994** - Vicki Van Meter, age 12, becomes youngest pilot to make transatlantic flight in a Cessna 210
- 1994** - April 21 - Jackie Parker becomes the first woman to qualify to fly an F-16 combat plane
- 1995** - February 3-11 - STS-63: Eileen Collins became the first woman Space Shuttle pilot.
- 1997** - August 4 - Jane Garvey becomes the first female administrator of the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration
- 2000** - September 6 - Jennifer Murray became the first woman to make a solo flight around the world in a helicopter. The journey took 99 days.
- 2006** - March - MAJ Nicole Malachowski is the first woman pilot selected to fly in any American military demonstration team, the Air Force Demo Squadron known as the Thunderbirds, flying F-16Cs
- 2008** - April 8 - Yi So-yeon becomes the first Korean female to go into space on the Soyuz TMA-12.
- 2010** - Apr 7 - All female crew of four women blazed their mark on Alaska aviation history when they flew the huge

Women's History Month

Expanded educational opportunities led to expanded rights for women



American women today are achieving unprecedented levels in education. According to the Department of Education, in 2006, nearly 60 percent of undergraduate degrees were earned by women and according to the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, girls graduate secondary schools at a higher rate than boys. This success is the result of incremental progress beginning in early American history when it was widely held, especially by men of power, that women were not suited for becoming well educated. Because of this, generations of women were denied the same opportunities as men. When villages began forming community schools as early as 1647, very few permitted girls. In some areas girls were allowed to attend but only during the summer season when the boys would help work on farms. Once grammar school was complete, so were further educational opportunities for girls since secondary education was not open to them for nearly a century.

In the 19th century, universal public education for both boys and girls developed across the nation – at least at the grammar school level. It was

the growth of public education that revealed a reason for girls to continue their own education past grammar school; more schools required more teachers. There were no longer enough men interested in teaching since they had so many other opportunities. Single, virtuous women were considered ideal, especially since they were considered to be naturally nurturing toward children.

This new opportunity came at a price which infringed on these teacher's personal freedoms. In order to maintain the virtue of its women teachers, even as late as 1922, schools required them to sign contracts that had clauses that greatly restricted women's freedom. A Pennsylvania contract had stipulations such as never getting married, no loitering at downtown ice cream parlors, not being allowed to dye their hair, and to wear at least two petticoats, among other restrictions.

Oberlin College, in 1833, was the first to allow girls to attend, although their curriculum included washing and sewing for the male students. In 1837, Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts

became the first college for women. By 1879, about half of all institutions for higher learning were coeducational. With advances in educational opportunities, women demanded greater opportunities in fields traditionally held by men; religion, medicine, law, and even the military.

These gains developed over many decades. Women in America today legally have the same rights as their male counterparts. One area where women remain restricted from, jobs in combat arms, are currently under consideration to be opened to them. Women make up more than 14 percent of the Armed Services and hold numerous leadership positions, to include generals and command sergeants major. Expanded opportunities for women have resulted in greater independence and freedom. These gains were the result of Americans standing up for what they believed in – the belief that all Americans should be equal when it comes to opportunities and rights. We must all remind ourselves of the struggles that led to these achievements and never forget to make good use of the rights won by those who fought for them.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- A CH-47F Chinook helicopter trails another Chinook and performs aerial movements over a snow-laden Afghanistan for embedded media personnel on the lead aircraft Feb. 16. The aircraft were piloted by Soldiers with Company B, Task Force Phoenix. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)