

THE CONDOR

Skies of Iraq to be CAB Territory

Story by 1st Lt. Jason Sweeney, Photos by Spc. Darriel Swatts



40th CAB soldiers line up to board a plane bound for Fort Hood, Texas for additional training in preparation for their deployment in support of Operation New Dawn.

The news cameras were rolling as 136 Fresno-based National Guardsmen prepared to board a Texas-bound plane and head off on a yearlong mission in support of Operation New Dawn. "It's going to be tough," a choked up Jeremy Cates told a KSEE 24

news crew as he said goodbye to his wife of three months, Sgt. 1st Class Renee Cates. Sgt. 1st Class Cates and her fellow Soldiers of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade's headquarters company landed Dec. 1 at Fort Hood, Texas where they and four

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The Condor Command Staff

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A Generous Heart *Story and Photos by Spc. Darriel Swatts*

Growing up is hard enough; but, growing up in an impoverished nation without the majority of the necessities of life, is harder. Such was the upbringing of Lt. Col. Pierre Saint-Fleur, Brigade Chaplain for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (40th CAB); who was born and raised in Haiti, a small country located in the western part of the Caribbean.

"Growing up in Haiti was challenging in many ways. My parents didn't have much but they were hard workers," said Saint-Fleur. "My father was a farmer and raised cattle; my mother was a merchant who made a living by buying and selling grain."

Saint-Fleur, born in the 1950's, was raised in a

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FROM THE COMMANDER, COL. MITCHELL MEDIGOVICH

Season's greetings to the soldiers of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade,

We the members of Task Force Condor have come together from 12 States in this historic mobilization. You are all to be commended on your energy and laser focus in preparing our force for future operations.



The training accomplished in our individual and collective events has been at a furious pace. The flying, maintenance and support operation has been at an accelerated optempo and I want you all to keep taking care of one another and mitigate risk whenever you see it. The

port operations conducted by three battalions went flawlessly and the air movement of personnel, equipment is going to be another hurdle for each of you to overcome. Each of you has met this challenge directly and I am very

proud of you. Maintain this warrior focus and there is little doubt that we will be successful in Iraq.

We are all anxious to enjoy the holiday pass and I want each of you to give thanks for all the blessings we enjoy and know that the sacrifices endured by you and your families is both noticed and appreciated.

Upon your return we will be aggressively focused on the Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE) and Aviation Training Exercise (ATX). These two exercises are the culminating training events for the validation of the Brigade and will have tremendous scrutiny and review. Don't worry, you will all do fine. I have seen what each of you is capable of and there is little doubt that we will pass with glowing recognition.

Some of you will be absent as members of the Torch Party and Advance Party moving into Kuwait early. Your presence there and setting the stage for our main body arrival will be critical to our follow-on success.

COL Mitchell Medigovich
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"Wings of the Sun"

FROM THE COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR, CSM DAVID MCFERRIN



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from the Great Place! It's been 21 days since we arrived here at Fort Hood. From our first day HHC 40th CAB and our Soldiers felt welcomed receiving a warm reception. We were met at the airport by buses then ushered off to our barracks where we spent the night settling in. The next morning we started the day by traveling 45 minutes to South Fort Hood. We

started in-processing with briefings and records review then further reviews with medical, finance, dental, JAG (legal), ID cards, and immunizations...yes our shots,

several for most. This took most of us couple of days. After the in-processing and reviews we received our new gear, Rapid Fielding Initiative Equipment, RFI, i.e. cold weather clothing, sleeping system, flight gear, newest Army Combat Uniform (ACU), and other needed items. For our training requirements we have been completing the remaining Army Warrior Task and Battle Drills.

I am very proud of HHC Soldiers and what they have accomplished. They are building a positive reputation, setting a high bar of standards and will be a tough act to follow.

With the holiday pass most of the Soldiers will be traveling home or elsewhere. I know that this will be a bittersweet time for all. When we return to the "Great Place" it will again be full speed.

Enjoy the Holidays, best wishes and Merry Christmas!

HHC COMMANDER, CAPT. EALEY SETO

Happy Holidays HHC, 40th CAB!

Leaders at all levels have proven throughout the year that teamwork and dedication to job success is our priority in the CAB. I have also seen Soldiers help each other out when they need it, regardless of what section or unit they belong to. This is what will make us successful on our deployment.

We have all worked long hours in the past 3 weeks. Leaders, please ensure your Soldiers are getting enough time off to care for themselves. This deployment is not a sprint but a marathon. With the 4 day pass coming up, we need to keep safety in mind and watch out for each other. Call each

other up to wish them a Happy Holiday season.

As always, I am proud to be your commander during this deployment. You have all pulled your weight and then some!

CPT Seto



HHC FIRST SERGEANT, 1ST SGT. REGGIE JONES



Condors, high motivation leads to good training. Good training makes good Soldiers. We have accomplished much in the way of training over the last 20 days: weapons qualifications, combatives, MRAP rollover training and every kind of briefing you can think of. But we've got more to do prior to reaching our final Area of Operations (AOR).

I know everyone is headed home and your minds are turning to other things, but remain conjunct of General Order #1 and the brief you all received, so make smart decisions as you enjoy this holiday break with family and friends. Keep your head in the game, keep your motivation level high for your return, because we are ramping up

for a mission that is going to require you to be at your best. Your training here might save your life and/or battle buddy when we get over there. Remember, stay safe and stay motivated. Have a Happy Holiday.

HOOAH!

1SG



A GENEROUS HEART STORY BY SPC. DARRIEL SWATTS CONT.

household with three other siblings, one sister and two brothers, and was the youngest of the four.

“When I was born, my sister was already married and had children of her own and my brothers had already dropped out of school and were working.”

Finishing school wasn't always a common thing in Haiti. The majority of the students dropped out either because it was too hard, they lost interest, didn't see why it was important, or had to leave because their families needed them to work and help the family make money, Saint-Fleur explained.

“I got discouraged in primary school because I didn't see a good path to go in life,” said Saint-Fleur. “I didn't see why pursuing an education was important; but, by the grace of God, my brother-in-law was a Baptist preacher and he took me under his wing.”

His brother-in-law gave him hope and encouragement to stay in school. So he did, finishing his primary, secondary schools and even went on to complete college thanks to the undying support offered by his brother-in-law.

“Through my brother-in-law's influence I joined the Baptist church and found even more hope and encouragement. I knew that was my path in life. I knew that this was my calling,” said Saint-Fleur. “I even became a Sunday school teacher.”

Saint-Fleur didn't stay long at his brother-in-law's church; after completing college he eventually moved to the Evangelical Church of Haiti, where he was asked to go to Florida.

“I moved to Florida to be a pastor for the growing community of Haitians there. The church there needed someone who knew the Haitian language and also knew the culture,” said Saint-Fleur.

While in Florida, Saint-Fleur decided to further his education by going to a local Seminary Graduate School. After graduating there he felt led by the Lord to continue his ministry elsewhere, where people needed him more. So he packed up his bags again and moved to Fresno, Calif.

“Upon arriving in Fresno, I started to work as the hospital chaplain at the Fresno Community Hospital, as part of a training program called the Clinical Pastoral Education Program,” said Saint-Fleur.

While working as the hospital chaplain he would often visit and pray with the sick and dying, and pray with and talk to their families.



“I am grateful that God led me there to help those people. I was truly blessed to be of service to those people who needed help,” said

Saint-Fleur.

Although he was happy where he was and with what he was doing, it would seem God had more plans for Saint-Fleur. One day when he was praying at the bedside of a sick woman, her son walked into the room and saw them. Her son, who was an Army recruiter, was moved by what he saw and wanted to talk to the man he saw praying with his mother.

“Through talking with him and helping that Soldier through the emotional time he was going through, I got to find out more about that Soldier and saw how much he loved his job and I wanted to be a part of it,” said Saint-Fleur. “I asked him how I can join, so he put me in contact with a local Army Chaplain. I

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A GENEROUS HEART STORY BY SPC. DARRIEL SWATTS CONT.

knew this was an opportunity laid in front of me by God, so I went for it”

Saint-Fleur soon after enlisted in the Army Reserve as a chaplain in the 2nd Battalion of the 3rd Infantry Brigade at Fort Ord, Calif. But, like his life, moving around place to place, the Army had the same thing in store for him. He would soon go to two more reserve units and then transfer to the California Army National Guard. His first duty station while in the Guard would be the 115th Area Support Group in Roseville, Calif., where he would be sent to Chenginola, Panama to help rebuild the town after Operation Just Cause. Then he'd be sent to two more units before landing in Camp Roberts, Calif. as the post Chaplain where he stayed for almost seven years.

“While stationed at Camp Roberts, I got activated to go to Iraq in October of 2004 with the 155th Brigade Combat Team,” said Saint-Fleur. “While I was there I got promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. I was extremely happy, but it meant I was going to have to leave Camp Roberts when I got back.”

Upon coming home from his tour of duty in late 2006, he quickly got reactivated to go back to Iraq with the 169th Fire Support Brigade (169th FSB) out of Colorado.

“When I got back from my first tour, the National Guard Bureau asked me if I wanted to go back with another unit,” said Saint-Fleur. “Of course I was very happy to oblige, so I repacked my bags and went back.”

“It was truly a blessing to have served with those Soldiers from both my tours in Iraq,” proudly stated Saint-Fleur. “I do miss them and wish them the best in everything they do.”

Once he was finished with his second tour in Iraq, Saint-Fleur went to Southern Calif. to help support

the troops on the Border Mission for an additional eight months.

“Chaplain Saint-Fleur is someone Soldiers can turn to when they need help,” said Capt. Diosdado Quinton, Chaplain, 640th Aviation Support Battalion. “He always has an open ear and an open heart.”

Once he got back from the border mission, Saint-Fleur transferred to the 40th CAB, and is now getting ready for his third deployment to Iraq; but, instead of Operation Iraqi Freedom, this time he is preparing for Operation New Dawn. But he sees every mission the same, “just another opportunity to help support the troops.”



“Chaplain Saint-Fleur is the embodiment of selfless service,” said Staff Sgt. Donald Dow, Chaplains Assistant, 40th CAB. “I always see him giving to the Soldiers and their families and he never asks for anything in return.”

Even though Saint-Fleur had a rough childhood and almost lost his way, thanks to a caring brother-in-law, he was able to find his calling in life and has helped thousands of Soldiers and civilians to this point in his life and career. This upcoming deployment to Iraq is just another chance for him to do what he does best; share the gospel and help Soldiers and their families through the deployment.

General Visits North Fort

Story by and Photos by Spc. Matthew Wright.

Brigadier General Charlotte Miller, Deputy Commanding General-Support for the California National Guard, visited both the 749th Combat Sustainment Support Brigade from Benicia, California and the 640th Air Support Battalion from the Los Angeles area, to check out the training and to get briefed on the mission at hand on the battalion's deployment coming up next year.

General Miller's visit was to see how the battalion was coming along with its tactical training and its mobilization for its upcoming mission. The 640th ASB is one of multiple units that are deploying to Iraq under the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade from California. The 40th CAB is taking over the entire air support and the U.S. Army's aviation component of that country for the next year.

General Miller came to see, not only how the training was going, but also to meet the troops who will be working this mission. Her objective was to check and see how their morale was holding up and observe the progress on their training.

General Miller said she wanted to see the soldiers and witness the training they are going through.

She visited several sites where the battalion trained on equipment, such as Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle familiarization, where soldiers learned how to operate and use the protected vehicle for convoys. She also saw the day to day operations the troops did to make the battalion run smoothly.

General Miller visited the battalion's Tactical Operation Center for a briefing by the 640th's Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel



Louis E. Carmona, on what that unit did to support of the 40th CAB on the airfield. She saw the fuelers and the coordinators performing their jobs of fueling helicopters and running the airfield itself.



Her visit concluded with a tour of the 40th CAB headquarters and a meeting with the Brigade and Battalion Commanders where she expressed her confidence in the capabilities of our Soldiers.

SKIES OF IRAQ STORY
CONTINUED

aviation battalions have commenced pre-deployment training. The units are expected to complete the training in late January when they will depart for Iraq.

Once in theater, the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) will coalesce into an aerial force of more than 200 aircraft and more than 3,000 Soldiers hailing from 22 states. The brigade consists of seven battalions, two of which—the 640th Aviation Support Battalion and the 1-140th Aviation (Air Assault)—call California home. It will be the largest National Guard combat aviation brigade ever assembled in a combat environment, with forces operating throughout the entire theater.

The 40th CAB—call sign Task Force Condor—is set to provide full-spectrum aviation operations over the skies of Iraq for much of 2011. Air assets include AH-64 Apaches, CH-47 Chinooks, UH-60 Blackhawks, OH-58 Kiowas, unmanned aerial systems and fixed wing aircraft that will do everything from medevac to transport to force protection for the duration of the deployment.

The Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, based out of Fort Riley, Kan., is handing off the mission to the 40th CAB.

“The deployment of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Condor, has tremendous significance as it is the first mobilization of the CAB HQ since its activation 25 years ago,” said Col. Mitchell Medigovich, commander of the 40th CAB. “Mobilizing nearly 1,100-

plus California Army National Guard Soldiers simultaneously from company to brigade level required tremendous energy and cooperation of all entities.”

Some have called the 40th CAB’s deployment historic due to the enormity of the mission and the fact that the brigade will be responsible for air operations during a crucial drawdown phase that is expected to close the book on seven years of hard-fought warfare. Also notable is the unique make-up of the CAB, which brings together National Guard, Army Reserve and active duty units.

“Overseeing hundreds of helicopters and thousands of soldiers and undertaking some of the most critical mission sets today is daunting, challenging and very rewarding,” Medigovich said. “Task Force Condor has aggressively trained for the mission and is up to the challenge.”

Before the 40th CAB’s headquarters company left Fresno for Texas, a Yellow Ribbon farewell ceremony was held Nov. 28 at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Building in Clovis, Calif. At the event, the band played, the colors were cased and the berets worn in garrison were replaced with patrol caps. Sgt. 1st Class David Coss, the 40th CAB’s readiness noncommissioned officer, thanked family and friends in attendance for their support.

“You have stood shoulder to shoulder with us during these difficult and often trying times, and in many cases shouldered burdens that would normally have been ours alone,” Coss said.

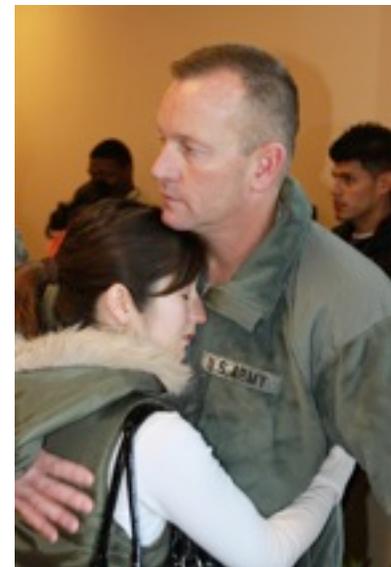
Maj. Gen. John Harrel, deputy adjutant general, California Army

National Guard, set the tone for the mission by recalling the accomplishments of Baron Friedrich Von Steuben who transformed a ragtag collection of Revolutionary War militiamen into a professional fighting force.

“We’re there to do what he did here,” Harrel said.

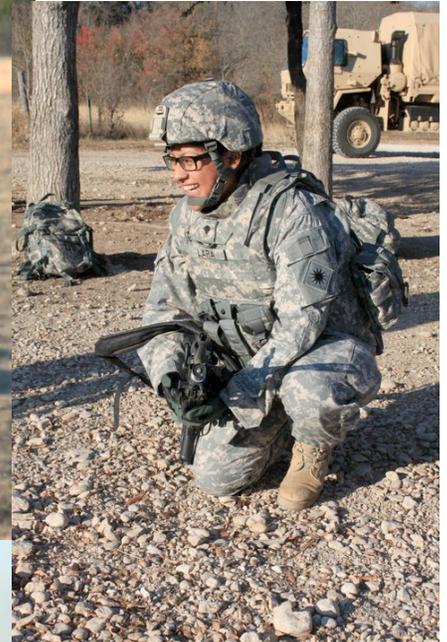


Col. Mitchell Medigovich and CSM David McFerrin ‘case the colors’ at the Yellow Ribbon event in Clovis, CA.



CW5 Richard Huber says goodbye to his wife Lisanne, prior to boarding a plane to Fort Hood Texas for training.

OUR SOLDIERS *ATA GLANCE*



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Calendar

January 1st, 2011
 New Year's Day

January 17th, 2011
 Martin Luther King Day

February 14, 2011
 Valentine's Day

February 21st, 2011
 Washington's Birthday

April 3rd, 2011
 Easter

May 8th, 2011
 Mother's Day

Chaplain's Word of the Day:

The task ahead of us, is never as great as the power behind us. ... Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

EPHESIANS 6:10

SICK CALL
 NORTH FORT HOOD TMC
 M-F 0700-1600 (Lunch 12-1300)
 (254) 287-5307
 THURS 0700-1200
 SAT & SUN South FT Hood BLDG 2245
 0800-1000
 (254) 285-6269

* Must pick-up Sick Call Slip at HHC.

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The Family Readiness Group Website

<http://40thcab.ning.com>

