

159TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE

# THUNDER ENLIGHTENING



## *Inside this issue:*

Jump-FARPs extend reconnaissance reach

TF Thunder continues partnerships with Afghan forces

Military appreciation: role reversal

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# Commander's Corner

## Col. Kenneth T. Royar

### Brigade Commander

Three months into the rotation and going strong.

Last month as a Nation we officially recognized those who give of their time and talents during National Volunteer Week from April 19-25. Consequently, this month I'd like to highlight our volunteers, the great work they do on a daily basis, and how invaluable they are to helping us accomplish the mission.

While I have no empirical evidence to prove it, I'm willing to bet that the military community has a significantly higher rate of individuals

who freely volunteer their time and efforts than almost any other segment of our society. My reference to the "military community," also includes all former members of the armed forces and their Families.

Volunteers are so critical to what we do. Many of our volunteers are involved in the Family Readiness Group of their respective unit. They play an invaluable role in helping to disseminate information to all Family members on behalf of the command.

However, many of our Soldiers and Family members also volunteer their time and efforts elsewhere in the community.

Whether helping to refurbish a local park, contributing in your place of worship, or leading groups to teach our children, all volunteer efforts are appreciated and make us an important part of our community.

Our volunteers represent our Army Values – it is their selfless service that assists others in need. To those who freely serve, we can never begin to say thank you enough. Your efforts make an incalculable impact and



lead to the strength of the nation.

In addition to the volunteers inside of our formation, there are many who have gone out of their way to assist our Soldiers and Families during the deployment. Groups like the Military Officers Association of America and even specific individuals (like the Weinshel Family) have gone out of their way to support the Brigade. We are forever indebted to them, and the many more like them, for all they have done and continue to do.

When you have the opportunity, please take the time to thank those who volunteer their services and consider how you can share your time and talents with others.

Air Assault!

COL Todd Royar

A word from

## Brigade Command Sergeant Major

# *Eric C. Thom*

May brought us warmer temps and our first battlefield promotions. Yes, we had four members of the Thunder team receive battlefield promotions - the newly promoted Sgt. Dean L. Cole from Task Force Fighting and Spcs. Raymond Errthum, William Lane and John Sparks from TF Lift. When you see these outstanding Soldiers passing by, congratulate them for their hard work and dedication to the Army and its values.

It is important we all live the Army Values, as they are the common standard for all of us now that we are all members of this profession of arms, the United States Army.

My focus in this edition is on living up to these values. I will not waste your time reciting the values themselves, as all of you are familiar with them. I will give you my perspective, however.

We all came from different backgrounds and have different life experiences, so it is only natural that our value systems prior to the Army were different as well.

The Army Values are the shared community values for everyone in the Army, Soldiers and civilians alike. They are our moral, ethical and professional attributes of character. The heart and soul of this great Army, through them we place the welfare of the nation, the mission and each other before our individual interests.

We do this by exhibiting absolute honesty and courage to stand up for what is right. We build a sense of obligation and support between ourselves. We strive to maintain these high standards both on and off duty, demonstrating adherence to the spirit and letter of the law.

We have all made a commitment to the Army and by doing so made a commitment to live by these val-



ues. As long as we serve, we must adhere to these ethical standards. It is our duty not only to learn and live these standards, but to teach them to our subordinates.

None of us is without flaw, and at some point we may all fall below these standards, but more important than slipping below the standard is what you do when that happens.

FM 6-22 will tell you that doing the right thing is important, but doing the right thing for the right reason and with the right goal is better. Everyone wants to succeed. Unfortunately, not everyone wants to pay the price of success.

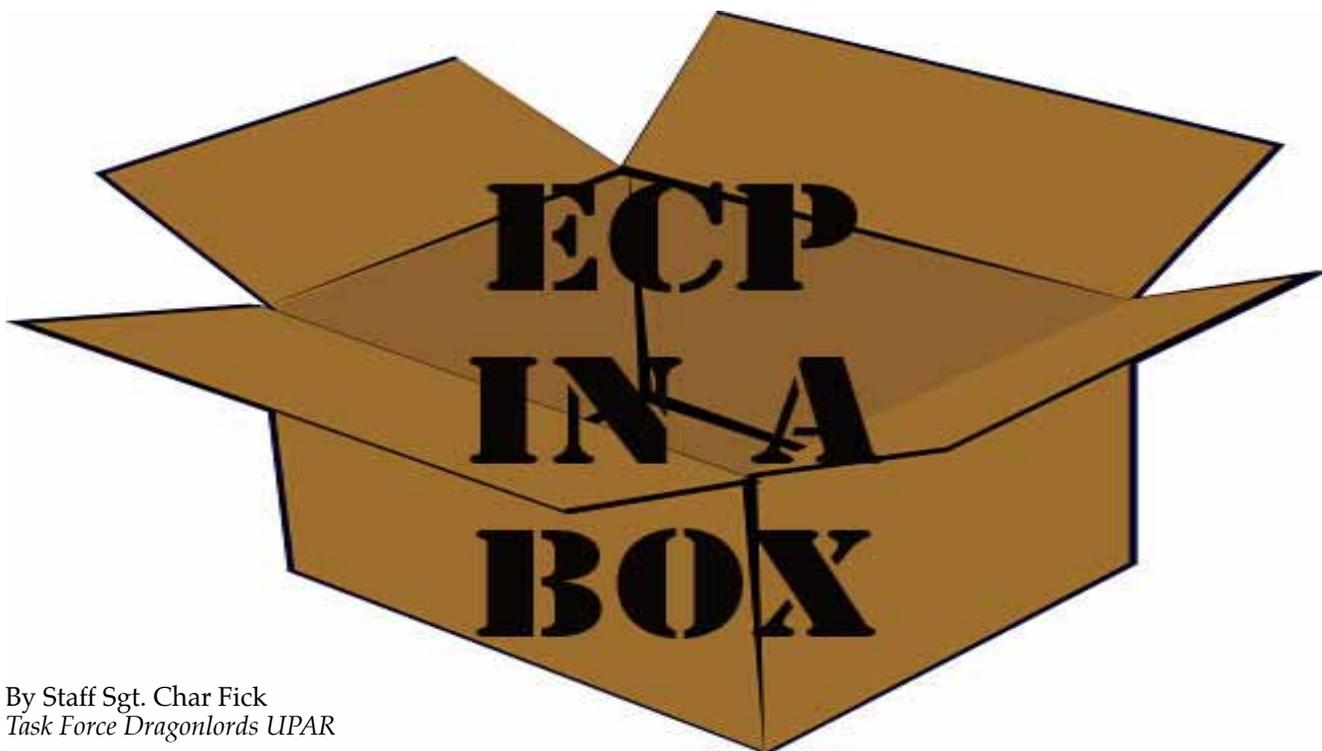
If no one has told you before, let me tell you now. The road to success is a toll road, and where you find success you find sacrifice.

I would recommend that each of us find the time to read (or reread) Chapter 4 of FM 6-22, as it applies to each and every one of us.

CSM Thom

# First line of defense:

*Task Force Wings ECP crew maintains vigilance*



By Staff Sgt. Char Fick  
*Task Force Dragonlords UPAR*

One of the most important aspects of any forward operating base is the entry control point. At forward operating base Wolverine, the Soldiers of Task Force Wings' forward support company take their job manning the ECP very seriously.

The ECP defines how personnel, vehicles, and materials enter the FOB.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Mason, the day shift ECP NCOIC, is responsible for aspects of the ECP and running all the different components.

With separate parts to control vehicular and human access, the ECP at FOB Wolverine is unique. It's one of less than 100 of its kind in Afghanistan.

"ECP in a box" is the nickname given to the equipment that arrived in seven 40 foot containers. These containers consist of about \$3 million worth of equipment, to include, but not limited to, vehicle-arresting barriers, drop-arm bars, turnstiles, metal detectors, search wands, spike strips, vehicle-arresting nets, cameras, armor shelters, phrasalaters, mirrors, and many other vehicle- and personnel-searching equipment.

"The ECP equipment has been very helpful with our mission," Mason said.

One section of the ECP is the Biometrics Center, also known as the the "Bat Cave." The Soldiers in the Bat Cave know just how important their mission is. They enroll everyone who comes onto the FOB, completing scans and fingerprints, then issuing identification cards.

To facilitate cooperation from the local nationals coming onto the FOB, the ECP crew is also learning Pashtu and Dari – they attempt to speak the languages to the local nationals who come into the Bat Cave in order to support the Afghan-U.S. partnership.

Outside of the Bat Cave, there is a guard shack that

houses another secret weapon of the ECP – man's best friend.

A civilian company based out of Texas provides canines capable of detecting both narcotics and explosives. These canines are thoroughly conditioned to conduct searches in buildings and vehicles, and support route clearance on roadways. The dogs search every vehicle that comes onto the FOB. Two dogs and two handlers are assigned to the ECP every day. The narcotics dogs also walk through the bazaar to search for drugs.

The key to any successful canine team is predicated upon the canine's obedience and the handler's ability to read their canine's behavioral changes accurately.

These canine teams are an important part of the ECP in that they ensure that both narcotics and explosives are not allowed onto the FOB.

Out to the edge of the FOB, parked on the perimeter, sits the military mobile vehicle and cargo inspection system. This truck allows the Soldiers to search vehicles and cargo for contraband and other suspicious items that may pose a threat.

Mounted on an up-armored high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle, the system captures images of the contents of vehicles in hostile environments and over difficult terrain.

"This vehicle is designed to "scan the vehicles prior to coming on to Wolverine to ensure security," said Spc. Devin Rogers as he and Spc. Christopher Micheals stand vigilantly next to their X-Ray truck.

"Our job is the most important because we are the first line of defense" Rogers says.

All of the sections of the ECP play a very important role in the security of the FOB. The Soldiers take their jobs seriously, because they know what is on the line – the lives of their fellow Soldiers.

# Pathfinders, 2nd ANCOP train together in air assault SWAT team exercise

By Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Gay  
Navy Public Affairs

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan – (May 12, 2011), Members of the 2nd Afghan National Civil Order Patrol SWAT team have completed three weeks of grueling training with the Kandahar Pathfinder Detachment of Task Force Palehorse, and are ready to take their place as the newest elite Afghan security force.

The members of the ANCOP SWAT air assault team went through weeks of intense training that spanned from IED recognition training to conducting full mock air assaults in the sweltering Red Desert.

“Today was the culminating event of a three week training program that we designed to form a permanent partnership with the Pathfinder detachment at KAF (Kandahar Air Field) and the 2nd ANCOP SWAT,” said Capt. Thomas Buller, Pathfinder Detachment commander, as he walked through the deep sand of the Red Desert to greet the newest members of the partnership. “What today’s event showed

is that we, as partners, can conduct an air assault, shoot, move and communicate together, and incorporate air to ground integration to clear any objective.

Each ANCOP member was paired with a Pathfinder during the training and their resolve to learn the skills taught was evident as Pathfinder and ANCOP moved as one unit to assault a position. AH-64D Apache and OH-58D Kiowa helicopters unleashed rounds and missiles



Photo by Sgt. Chris Hargreaves  
A member of the ANCOP listens during a de-brief of the day's training mission in Kandahar Province May 12.

into the target area, adding realism to the exercise and making the trainees more cognizant of their surroundings.

Incorporating air assault capabilities into the ANCOP arsenal has long been a priority for the 2nd ANCOP.

“I’m very happy to work with the Pathfinders, and they helped us reach a goal we really wanted to complete,” said 1st Lt. Sultan Aziz, the 2nd ANCOP SWAT commander. “We have met our goals at every turn and I could not be happier for my guys and the results they have achieved.”

Buller said the training conducted on the final day was a high-risk operation, but it showed that with dedication from both the Pathfinders and the ANCOP, the two can fight together.

“The training we did today showed that we can work and execute an operation together, but the overall training was extremely important because it built a personal relationship between my guys and Lieutenant Aziz’s guys,” Buller said with his arm around Aziz’s shoulder. “The personal relationship in this kind of operation is everything. We are going to be fighting together very soon here in Kandahar province. I have to rely

on Lieutenant Aziz, and he has to rely on me and that goes for every one of our soldiers. The personal relationship that we built forms that bond of trust that we demonstrated today. These guys are shooting live weapons right next to each other and have complete confidence in each other.”

Aziz said the members of his team echo the trust the Pathfinders have shown in them, and the bond they have formed together will continue to grow in the future as they fight and work shoulder to shoulder. It will be valuable even when the ANCOP begin to operate air assault teams on their own.

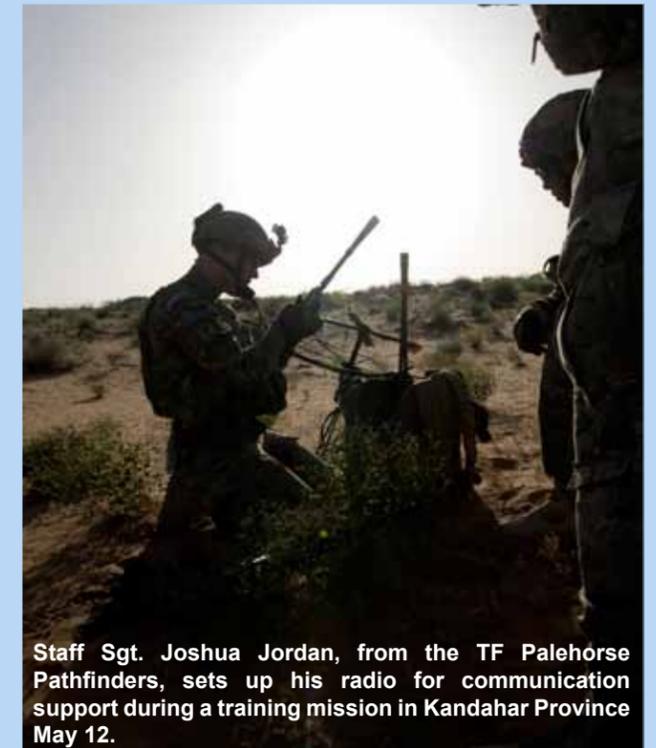
“We created this partnership because we wanted to bring air assault capabilities to the ANCOP SWAT team,” said Buller. “They are already an elite unit and every one of them has volunteered to be ANCOP, be SWAT and now to be air assault.”

The creation of the ANCOP air assault team is one more step to help provide sustained security for the people of the Kandahar. The members of the new team are ready and willing to learn everything they can to prepare for the future transition.

“Our main goal is to free our country from the insurgents, and we are using all the training from the American and coalition forces to meet that goal,” said Aziz. “We hope that one day soon we will no longer need their help, and we will be able to maintain security for our people with Afghan security forces.” Aziz said as the heat of the desert beat down on Afghan and American alike.

Aziz’s goal is coming ever closer as the next phase of training and integration will be creation of an all Afghan air assault team.

“We anticipate that the next evolution in this training



Staff Sgt. Joshua Jordan, from the TF Palehorse Pathfinders, sets up his radio for communication support during a training mission in Kandahar Province May 12.

Photo by Sgt. Chris Hargreaves

will be integration with the Afghan air force, and our goal before we leave is to see a fully Afghan-led air assault.” said Buller.

As Aziz and Buller both watched the last team stream off the helicopter and form up in the near-blinding conditions created by the sand of the desert and the rotor wash of the helos, the only way to distinguish the ANCOP from Pathfinder by noticing the shape of the ANCOP AK-47 versus the sleeker shape of the American M-4, Buller and Aziz echoed each other’s sentiment - “We are ready to fight together.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl  
Afghans from the 2nd Afghan National Civil Order Police SWAT team and Pathfinders from the Kandahar Pathfinder Detachment use a bounding overwatch to move to contact during a live-fire training exercise in Kandahar province May 12. The training was designed to increase their interoperability on missions throughout southern Afghanistan.



Two members of the Task Force Palehorse Pathfinders provide overwatch as a Blackhawk flies over head in Afghanistan's Red Desert May 12. The training was carried out in the Red Desert in excess of 105 degrees.

Photo by Sgt. Chris Hargreaves

# Sounds of Thunder

What do you do to combat stress during deployment?



**"I enjoyed going to Salsa Night. It took my mind off everything. It feels like I'm not deployed when I'm dancing."**

**Spc. Lisa Beard,  
Orderly Room Clerk,  
HHC, TF Dragonlords**

**"I like to write short stories, watch movies, hang out with firends, talk to my mom and take classes online."**

**Pfc. Jazmin Hamilton,  
Paralegal Specialist,  
HHC, TF Wings**



**"We work 12-15 hours a day. To keep from stressing, I like to do word searches and color in my coloring books. That relaxes me."**

**Spc. Sarah-Ann Hughes,  
Aviation Operations Specialist,  
HHC, TF Dragon**



**"I just like to relax, play my guitar and go to the gym after work."**

**Pfc. Justin Stone,  
Aviation Maintenance,  
Co. D, TF Lift**



**"I enjoy talking to my wife and staying involved in Church activities, such as Bible study and Sunday night services."**

**1st Lt. Mark Kopanda,  
Executive Officer,  
Co. A, TF Wings**

**"It's imperative to take time for yourself... Just remember, it's ok to ask for an extended deadline, miss a soccer practice or have TV dinners for the kids."**

*And from  
our  
facebook  
page...*

**Stacy Stinson Barry**

# TF Thunder, Afghan Air Force partner to train crew chiefs

Story and photos by  
SpC. Jennifer Andersson  
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (May 9, 2011) – Soldiers with Task Force Thunder, (159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division), offered the first of a series of classes to train the Kandahar Air Wing of the Afghan Air Force here May 9 as part of the ongoing partnership between the two.

The Aircrew Coordination Training-Enhanced initial qualifications were designed to increase the effectiveness of the aircrews and facilitate better crew coordination.

“The goal is to train up the Afghan Air Wing to be non-rated crewmembers ... to the effect they’ll be able to crew the aircraft and perform all crew coordination actions along with their pilots the way we do with ours,” said Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Bruce of Norco, Calif., the enlisted standardization instructor for TF Thunder.

“The Afghans are not new to flying helicopters,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Tony Soto of Bronx, N.Y., TF Thunder’s standardization officer. “They have a carry-over from a generation that flew Mi-17s and Mi-8s back in the ‘80’s and ‘90’s. That generation is few and far between.

“Now they are filling up their ranks with a younger generation that doesn’t have the experience or the robust training they once had. We’re here to make sure they have that capability to support their forces on the ground and also to perform medevac missions in support of the Afghan government.”

The Afghans use the newest model, the Mi-17V5 helicopter, a very capable aircraft for this area, Soto said.

Though the U.S. flies different helicopters than the Afghans, there is little difference in the procedures



An airman with the Afghan Air Force’s Kandahar Air Wing (right) ponders Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Bruce’s question about ambiguous language problems during a class to improve crew coordination.

for a successful flight.

“It’s all the same stuff, airspace surveillance – looking out of your sector, looking where you’re going, making a maneuver – clearing the aircraft, air crew coordination is all the same,” Bruce said. “The biggest difference in what they’ve been doing and what we do is involving the crewmembers. So far, it’s all been the pilots running the show. We’re teaching the crew chiefs they are important and need to be assertive to make the mission happen.”

“They’re the new kids on the block,” Soto said. “They’re motivated to learn; they’re like sponges. As long as we teach them to assert themselves, to be advocates for themselves - open communication – those are the things we have to foster for them to participate effectively as a crew.”

Crew coordination is the communication between crewmembers and actions necessary for tasks to be performed efficiently, effectively

and safely, Bruce said.

“If crew coordination doesn’t happen, something like this could happen,” Bruce said to the class as he presented a photo of aircraft wreckage. “What you will get out of this is a line of thinking – a strategy to get through your flight efficiently.”

The Afghans are most excited about learning to increase communication between the crews, one Afghan airman said. This class helped them review the practical things they’ve learned so far, he said.

Bruce said the most challenging part of conducting the class was wanting (but not being able) to say what he would naturally say while teaching this class, but having to pause as his statements were interpreted.

Soto, whose second language is English, knew how important it was to give real-life examples to help the Afghans understand concepts better. When describing proper sequence, he explained that

when he gets dressed in the morning, he knows that socks go on first and then shoes.

“If I did it the other way, I would be wearing my socks outside my shoes,” he said. The class responded with a unanimous exclamation of understanding.

“In English, ‘right’ means so many different things,” Soto told the class. “It could be a direction, it could mean you are correct, it could mean a privilege you’ve earned. That’s why, in aviation, there is a need for standardization. To make sure no one gets confused, we use

the manual to determine that ‘right’ can only be a direction.”

In fact, to prove the importance of communication, one student was required to describe to the rest of the class how to draw an image he was given. After the exercise, the students showed their work. They compared what they thought the student described to the original image.

Exercises – rather than explanations – help convey concepts to learners in a more concrete way.

Soto said when he was coming up as a young instructor pilot, crew

coordination was being taught in theory – in the abstract.

“One day, an instructor said, ‘We’re going to put our faith in our crewmembers,’” Soto said. “He blindfolded me and told my (pilot-in-command) to guide me through the room with obstacles, using only words, without me falling over something. It was up to the three of them, and they all wanted to talk, and they all wanted to guide. It was a good practical exercise because it showed how to work as a team so that someone didn’t get hurt.

“It’s a matter of trusting in your crewmembers,” he said. “I think it showed the Afghans that you have to build trust in each other.”

But the coalition between the Afghan Air Wing and TF Thunder is about more than just crew chiefs building trust with each other – it’s about building a rapport between the U.S. and Afghanistan.

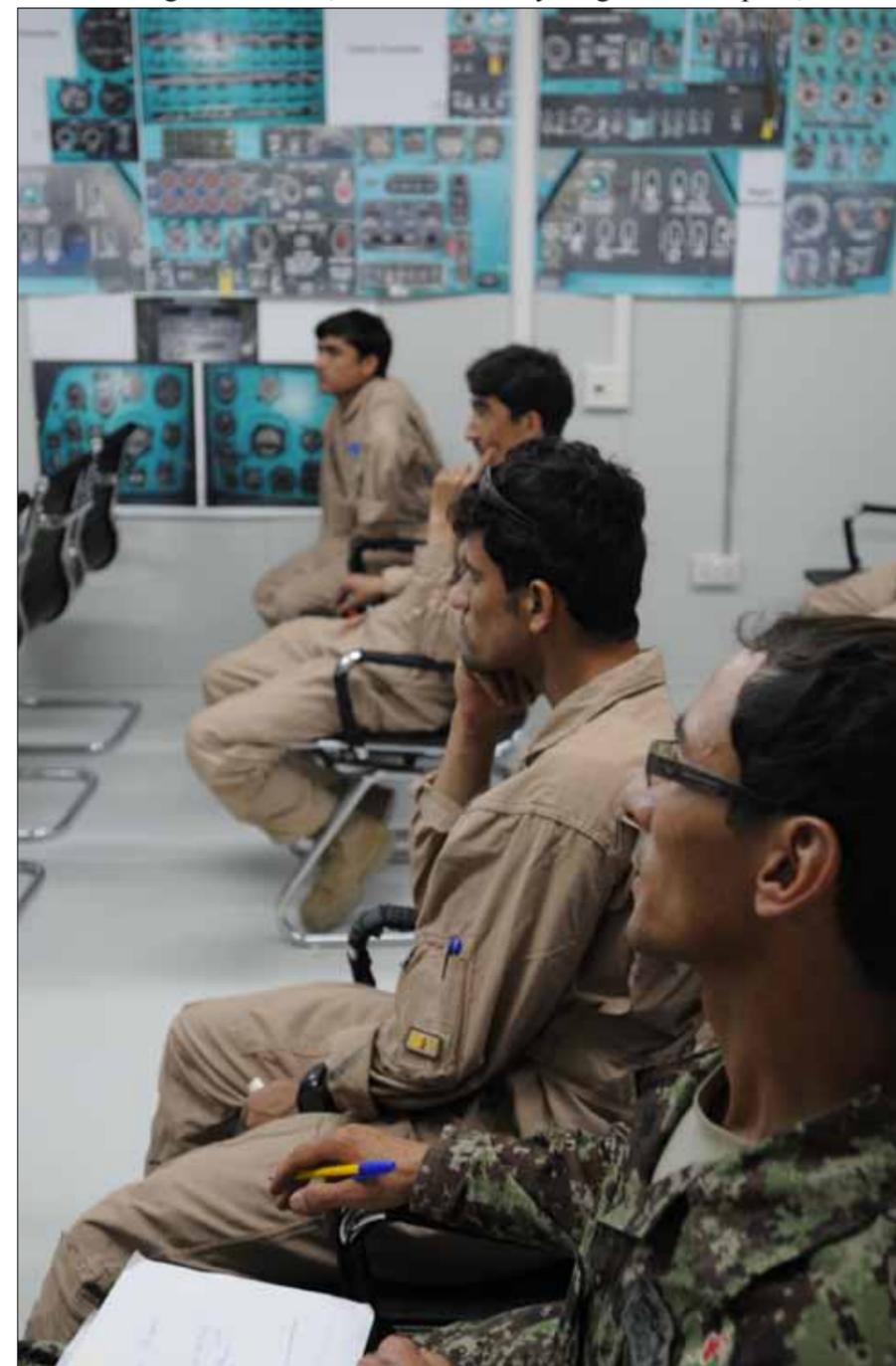
“Major General Sherzai sees a need for his non-rated crewmember corps to be developed to the point where they become a professional entity in their unit, Soto said. “Our primary focus is to start that partnership.”

Like all solid relationships, this partnership is something that has been developing for some time now, and will be for some time to come. Fortunately, that gives TF Thunder and Kandahar Air Wing time to learn, practice and hone skills.

“This is definitely something they are going to have to build on,” Bruce said. “One of the challenges for today was to put it into any kind of experience they can relate to, which would further define it for them. In that respect, I think we did get some points across, but to get them to use these (concepts we’re teaching), it’s going to take a while of them actually being in the aircraft.”

“We’ve planted a seed,” Soto said. “What we need now is to reinforce and reiterate: to reinforce the training and reiterate those key topics so they can apply all the things they learned, which will make them better crew chiefs.”

**Airmen with the Kandahar Air Wing, Afghan Air Force, listen intently during their first day of Aircrew Coordination Training-Enhanced initial qualifications May 9.**



# Role Reversal: *Appreciation from both sides*

By Spc. Jennifer Andersson  
*Task Force Thunder Public Affairs and  
former Navy spouse*

May is Military Appreciation Month, and May 6 was Military Spouse Day. This year I have a different appreciation for the military than I've ever had in my life.

I became a dependent wife to not just any military man – a Navy submariner. Like many military couples, our wedding date was decided upon based on Daniel's deployment schedule.

It was a real lifestyle change for me, not having my husband with me every day, like other newlyweds.

However, we had to build a solid marriage quickly and use every moment he was in port to bolster that relationship.

To say communication was limited is an understatement. At the time, we had only Family-grams, only 30 words each, and we were permitted only one per month.

Because of operational security and the type of submarine he was on, I never knew when he would deploy, or for how long. I only ever knew he was to deploy in the next 24 hours when I saw him packing his sea bag. He always wanted me to help, but I never could. I always felt like if I helped him pack, then I was aiding and abetting his leaving. I did not wish to participate in his missing birthdays, anniversaries and family holidays, so I refused. He acted differently before deployments. I was tolerant, but could not understand it.

Fast forward 15 years.

He'd been out of the service some seven years. I was teaching at a very small, budget-limited school. Not bad pay for a starting teacher, but no insurance. He was working as a driver for a vehicle distribution center for northeast Florida and southeast Georgia. Excellent insurance, but not much pay.

Then, toward the end of my first school year, we found out his company would be undergoing a large number of lay-offs. It was his decision to go voluntarily or take the chance of being laid off. He took the severance package. That lasted us through the summer.

Instead of renewing a contract at the school, I decided to join the Army.

We planned out the next year. He was running out of time to use his G.I. Bill, and if I finished training and

reported to my first duty station alone, the kids could finish out the school year in the Florida school where they'd really blossomed. They would join me after the school year and Daniel's semester ended.

I left for Basic Training on his birthday, just weeks after I'd turned 41 years old. He finally understood what it was like for me every time he'd been away on my birthday.

He had to get the kids' Halloween costumes on a shoe-string budget, like I'd done so many times before.

He had to do Thanksgiving dinner on his own. (Fortunately, he was a cook in the Navy, so I knew he would be fine. I only wished I could be there instead of a dining facility.)

I was blessed to have enough time on the books to take leave during Christmas Exodus, and I happily returned home in time for my family's favorite holiday. The morning of our 15th wedding anniversary, he dropped me off once again to return to my place of duty.

I could tell just how deeply he now understood my plight as a dependent spouse.

With two pre-teens, his life as a military dependent was somewhat different than mine was with two pre-schoolers, but somehow it was much the same.

I am the one who now has to worry about operational security, and he is the one who must know when to stop asking questions. He is the one who wonders what time to start making dinner, and I am the one who calls home to say, "I'll be late tonight. Eat without me."

I am the one who now knows what sacrifices one must make to be a veteran, and he is the one who now beams with pride as his other half stands in a formation during a ceremony.

We both know the sadness of leaving the family behind as we must deploy, and soon – but never soon enough – will both know the joy of being reunited after what sometimes feels like forever apart.

By Daniel Andersson  
*Former Submariner and  
current Army spouse*

The Submarine Service promised danger, adventure, and mystery – everything that appealed to my 19-year-old mind. I volunteered and was not let down. After a very exciting year, my life was forever changed April 28, 1994, when I met my future wife, Jennifer. My more experienced shipmates warned, "There is an 80 percent divorce rate on subs," reinforcing the statistic taught at our Basic Enlisted Submarine School.

So, I proposed in August, gave her three months' pay to move to Virginia and left two weeks later for a four-month deployment. We were married Dec. 31, 1994, one week after I returned.

Submarine deployments are very different than the current year-long deployments of the Army. First, it is secret, so family members found out only days before we left. There is no prep time, no pre-deployment

briefs, and no military ball. We didn't gather with our families before we left. My wife dropped me off at the pier at "Checkpoint Charlie" and that was it.

Another difference is the nature of sub life. We had no weather, no sunrise or sunset, no indication that time was passing. This left a lot of time for thinking, worrying, and speculating about what was happening at home. This, of course, would lead to an abundance of emotions: anger for being away; jealousy of not being able to go out with friends to see a movie. I was stuck in a "can" in the middle of the ocean with only 5 square feet of living space per person.

One of the most effective ways of dealing with these emotional "hardships" was to

forget that the outside world existed. It didn't always work and there would always be bouts of homesickness, but it helped.

On subs, deployments were sporadic and varied in duration. We would be deployed for about 250 non-consecutive days out of each year. I was gone so much that we were married for 8 years before our time together equaled our time apart.

Despite me being the primary breadwinner, I was not really the "head of household". I never had time to help out with the chores, let alone to deal with the finances.

Today, I find myself in a much different situation. I'm the one doing the chores, paying the bills, going to college, and arguing with my pre-teen daughter about appropriate attire for school. My wife is on a deployment for a full year and I'm the one holding down the fort.

I am experiencing many of the emotions I dealt with before, but from a different perspective – the one she had for years.

There are only two saving graces I have to call upon.

The Internet is – by far – "the greatest thing since sliced bread." I can now write e-mails or chat on-line and even talk and see her on the occasional video conference call. It is almost as if she isn't really gone, just in another room. I can ask her questions and get responses with almost no time in between. On the sub, a response within the month would be considered fast.

Another great help is the FRG. This is a group of individuals going through the same thing that I am and the "Spouses Night Out" is a real treat. It is awkward at times as I am the only male that shows up at these functions, but at least I can talk to adults for a while, swap stories and advice, and remind myself that the deployment won't last forever. It also gives me the opportunity to help out with the morale of my wife's unit overseas.

I became used to having my wife around for holidays, and this year I found myself taking the kids to Florida to spend Easter with my wife's family without her. This was a real change for me, but it gave me the opportunity to tell her family how proud I am of what she is doing and how supportive I am of her.

There is not a moment that goes by that I don't think of her, but because of these resources and my past experiences, I am better able to deal with it.



# 159th CAB deploys with psychologist, behavioral health specialist for first time

By Spc. Jennifer Andersson  
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (April 28, 2011) – Pvt. Jimmy Woody, a native of Hickory, N.C., had every intention of joining the Army as a computer repair specialist, though much to his dismay, issues prevented him from entering the Army on his scheduled date, he said.

Woody said he was on the phone to his recruiter the day of the Fort Hood shootings, discouraged he'd lost his appointment to his desired advanced individual training, but as serendipity would have it, the recruiter offered Woody a newly opened position, behavioral health specialist.

"The shootings made me realize there are people out there who need help getting through difficult times," he said.

Capt. Michell Griffith, of Huntington, Ind., Task Force Thunder's brigade psychologist, who entered the Army Psychology Scholarship Program in 2007 as a Master's level psychologist, completed her doctorate degree in 2009, when she went active duty.

This is the first time Task Force Thunder, (159th Combat Aviation Brigade), has deployed with either a psychologist or behavioral health specialist.

"The Army is beginning to recognize a psychologist can have a good impact on keeping the Soldiers in the fight and coming back with less baggage, so when they're coming back to their families, they're not having so many difficulties," said Griffith. "We're trying to reduce the amount of combat stress, so when we get home, it's not full-blown PTSD or anxiety disorder."

Behavioral health and psychology go hand-in-hand.

"In order to do this job, you have to be able to talk, listen and be empathetic, just because I have to be able to relate to people and to understand them," Woody said.

"We're a good team," Griffith, a former Navy corpsman, said. "Private Woody has been trained to do intakes to see what the core issues

are, make treatment recommendations based on what he thinks is going on with the patient, and running groups. There are things that we hand off to each other."

"If I have issues, concerns or questions in my job, she's the person I go to and she explains stuff to me. She introduces me to a lot of new tools I've never heard of," Woody said.

Woody conducts mental triage, in a way, in order to assist Griffith.

"If someone else comes in while she's with a patient, I try to find out what issues they're having. We work hand-in-hand by staffing with each other and give her a quick run-down about what's going on with the new patient. We can discuss a treatment plan and come up with some kind of solution. It helps her out because she doesn't have to require the patient to wait or have to go through all the issues again. I also do the fliers and help out when we go outside the office to see patients."

Unlike in the civilian realm, the patients don't always have to come to them. In fact, Griffith and Woody often travel to the patients, for both therapy and classes.

"Every other Thursday, we go with Role 2 to Mustang Ramp to teach them what we do," said Woody. "We are going to start doing anger management and stress management classes," he said.

"I have been to (Forward Operating Base) Wolverine once in my short time in theater," Griffith said. "There are combat stress teams at the FOBs. They do, basically, anxiety-type stuff – immediate issues of daily living. These combat stress teams are active duty, some Army, some Navy, some Air Force, but they make up a team. They will refer a patient to us if it is a little more complicated than they can handle."

"We are in charge of the entire Task Force Thunder, so everyone who has a hand in this helps me to make decisions on what I need to do to help the Soldier," she said.

It is imperative to get a Soldier help and to return the Soldier to duty as quickly as possible. This will have the least amount of negative impact

on both the Soldier and the mission.

"Our job is to get people to stay in theater and get through the difficulties they're going through," Griffith said. "We want to take care of things here as much as we can. Sending a Soldier home is the last (resort)."

"I think when you're part of a unit, you want to stay with the unit," she said. "Many times, the issues can be treated here."

"A lot of issues we've been treating so far are sleep issues," Woody said. "Those are issues we can deal with in theater instead of having to send someone home to get therapy at home for that. We have different things that we can use to help them here."

"Sleep, relationship issues, nightmares – things that people are merging past experiences with their deployments now – anxiety stuff is what we're seeing now," Griffith said.

"But this is par for the course at this point," she said.

Though this is her first deployment, Griffith said she expects to see a cycle, as others have seen in past deployments.

"Around the third or fourth month, people are getting frustrated, angry or annoyed, and conflict issues are going on," she said. "By understanding those cycles, we've put together some anger management classes – relationship-type classes."

"Around R&R, people don't want to come back, they're jet lagged," she said. "Around eight to ten months, people are just done – they want to go home; they begin to experience apathy."

The two are already prepared, with the help of the Combat Stress Team at Role 2, to tackle these issues by offering classes to those who need them, Woody said.

Unlike anywhere else in the military, rank does not seem to be a barrier when it comes to working with mental health issues, said Woody.

"You have to respect the rank, but it doesn't mean a lot when you're in our office," he said. "When people come here, rank comes off. Even in group, you take your rank off be-

cause we're all human beings there."

"We're all human, so I think we can all relate to people coming in and sharing a story with us," Griffith said. "We've either been there or know someone who's been there. I think people genuinely want to get better. If they are guarded and defensive, they won't come in the first place."

The number of times they see a patient depends on the patient's life experiences.

No two people who witness a traumatic event will experience it the same way, said Griffith.

"We all have our own resiliencies and coping skills," she said. "People who go outside the wire (may be) exposed to more traumatic events. How they deal with that depends on their resiliency, how they grew up, what their coping skills are."

"In the community outside the military, there is not much of a stigma about going to mental health providers," she said. "It's confidential, your boss doesn't know about it, you can go before work, after work, or at lunchtime. It's pretty much an individual decision that you make."

"With Soldiers, though, it seems there's a stigma that once they go to mental health, once they walk in the door, they're labeled and their commands are going to know about it," she said. "Part of the training we received is how to de-stigmatize mental health. When you don't come and you need to, that's when people notice there are issues."

When someone is in a crisis, they have a hard time trying to look at their problems objectively, and look to someone else to help with a situation, Griffith said.

"When people talk about what they can do, that's an indication that they are moving forward," said Griffith. "That's when we know they are coming out of their crisis."

"The focus of our job is for the Soldier to come home healthy and happy," she said.

"Basically, (we want the Soldiers) to leave Afghanistan in Afghanistan," said Woody. "When they come home, it's done, it's over with. They don't have to worry about what happened back there."

"Deployment challenges everyone," Griffith said. "We learn things about ourselves, and sometimes we struggle with things, but we need to leave those things here."

## Top 10 survival tips for deployment

By Capt. Michell Griffith, Task Force Thunder brigade psychologist

1. When feeling stressed- take a deep breath: well, if you're on KAF, let the Poo pond smells determine how deep of a breath you take at that moment- but don't forget to breathe.
2. Try to challenge yourself mentally, physically, and spiritually. Set realistic goals and try something new. Be it a college class, taking a spin class at the gym, learning a new language, learning how to play chess, reading or listening to music of a different genre. Dedicate time to yourself for discovery and growth. Don't become stagnate.
3. Leave work at work. Don't take it back to the RLBs. Work in the work environment, relax in your living environment. Be mindful of your roommates- treat them as you would want to be treated and hopefully they will do the same.
4. Don't isolate yourself- you are not an island. Go to dinner with friends. Plan game nights – the USO has ample games to borrow. If you're at KAF meet at the Boardwalk for a fruit shake or even try out the Dutch restaurant (behind the Boardwalk).
5. Try to find something positive in each day. If this is a challenge, just smile and say good morning to everyone you pass while walking to work.
6. Try to get a routine down for sleep and eating. Anger and irritability sneak in if we are not taking care of ourselves. If you are having difficulties with sleep, stop by and we can help put you to sleep- I have a really comfortable chair and an awesome air conditioner.
7. Humor- every day try to laugh at least 3 times. Studies have shown that laughter helps decrease stress levels and it feels good... and besides, there are a lot of funny things to laugh at here.
8. Journal your experiences- this is a great stress reducer and it will allow you to look back and see your growth over the year.
9. Don't let anyone talk you into paying for scuba lessons while you are at KAF.
10. Don't forget we are always here and value your experiences and needs. Point of contact number: 841-1528 (Role 1)

# Airframe shop: *Working* hard

Story and photos by Spc. Shanika L. Futrell  
*Task Force Thunder Public Affairs*

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (March 22, 2011) - Every airframe shop in Task Force Thunder, (159th Combat Aviation Brigade), has one very important mission, and that's putting aircraft back in the fight quickly.

"We conduct minor maintenance on the aircraft daily, since we have quite a few OH-58 Kiowa helicopters



Cpl. Roy Gorris, a structural aviation repairer for the airframe shop, Company B, 563rd Aviation Support Battalion, sands down the rivets on the wear patch for the lower cargo track for the UH-60A Blackhawk helicopter here March 22.

and AH-64 Apache helicopters in our battalion," said Spc. Chris Moore, a structural aviation repairer with Troop D, TF Palehorse, (7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment).

Structural aviation repairers are responsible for maintaining all of the aircraft parts that are composed of sheet metal, fiberglass or Plexiglas. These materials make the structural part of maintenance more challenging than many of the other components.

"Out of all the maintenance shops within the brigade, our part is the most time consuming," said Spc. Miguel Peralta, the daytime production control representative for the airframe shop with Company B, 563rd Aviation Support Battalion, (TF Fighting). "We use certain chemicals on our parts that have to dry before we continue to work on them."

Sometimes, it's not just the chemicals that can hold up the process. Structural aviation repairers try to use manufactured parts to fix the aircraft, but if parts aren't available they have the capabilities to fabricate their own parts.

"Because of certain damages not being able to be repaired, we have to often fabricate a part, which takes time as well," said Spc. Greg Villagomez, a structural aviation repairer with Company D, TF Lift, (7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment).

"What seems to be a 10-minute job on the outside could very well turn into a couple of days worth of tasks," said Staff Sgt. Michael Haynes, the hydraulics and airframes NCO, Co. D, TF Lift. "Once you tear the aircraft down and assess the battle damages you will find out the exact maintenance that needs to be done for the aircraft to be mission-ready."

When aircraft come in for assessments, if the damage exceeds the aviation unit level of maintenance, then the Soldiers of TF Fighting take on the responsibility.

"As the aviation intermediate level of maintenance, we conduct all of the maintenance that any of the battal-

ions or attached units cannot conduct at the unit level of maintenance," said Pfc. Kenneth Hicks, a TF Fighting structural aviation repairer from Big Sandy, Tenn. The TF Fighting airframe shop maintains 24-hour operations to meet its mission.

"To provide the aircraft in a timely manner, we work all day on the day shift, and then pass the duties to the night shift, and when we return in the morning, we take back over," said Peralta. "We know how important an aviation mission is to the ground forces, so we intend to keep them effective by providing a timely service every day and every night."

Since their February arrival in theater, TF Thunder airframe shops have spent countless hours conducting airframe maintenance on a variety of aircraft here.

"But because we know that we cannot afford to have a bird down for too long, we ensure that we stay on top of everything giving equal coverage to all airframes," said Villagomez.

Some tasks are more difficult than others when it

comes to maintaining an aircraft, but the airframe Soldiers say they are up for the tasks at hand.

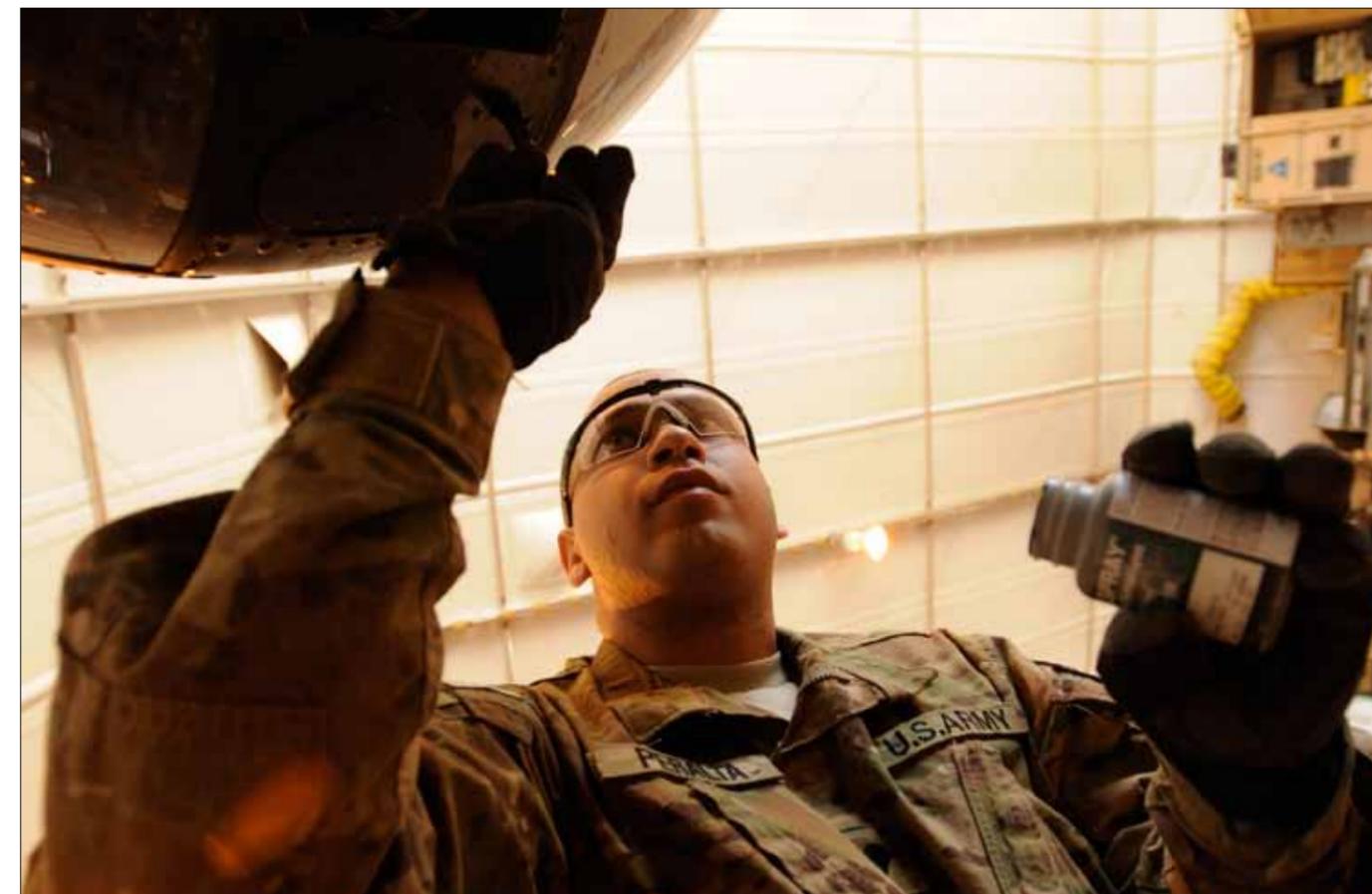
"Working underneath the aircraft is difficult because of the angle we have to work in," said Villagomez.

Despite the awkwardness required in accomplishing the task, it's critical that all parts are fixed and properly positioned back in their places, ensuring there is no damage to any of the equipment or other parts.

The airframe shop plays a critical role in the brigade's mission, and the Soldiers know that by working diligently, but hastily, they are making the difference in several lives.

"Our mission is the same as many other shops here behind the scenes, and that is to keep our air crews supporting our troops out there on the ground," said Peralta. "I know that the faster we get things done, the more lives that are being saved out there in the fight. I am proud to do what little I can to share in that mission, and my team will continue to do our job to bring the troops back home."

*to help bring troops home*



Spc. Miguel Peralta, the daytime production control representative for the airframe shop, Company B, 563rd Aviation Support Battalion, touches the paint up on an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter here March 22.

# Well-conducted FARPs require orchestration

Story and photos by  
Spc. Jennifer Andersson  
*Task Force Thunder Public Affairs*

After the cool morning had yielded to the heat of the day, a group of Soldiers dressed in oppressive full battle rattle waited the “10 more minutes until the bird is ready.”

This was at least the third time they’d received the 10-minute warning.

“The mission will be over by the time we get there,” one Soldier joked.

“No, they need us,” was the answer.

True enough.

The mission required aviators of the 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, (Task Force Palehorse), 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, (Task Force Thunder), 101st Airborne Division, to fly farther south than usual to observe activity in the area. In order to do that for an extended period of time, they need a refueling point nearby.

The aviators need the forward arming and refueling points to sustain themselves during long-term operations, said Master Sgt. Dave Schaul

of Dubuque, Iowa, the operations NCOIC for TF Palehorse.

Enter the fuel blivets.

The bladders of fuel looked like gargantuan drag racing tires dangling from the CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

The Pathfinders and fuelers, already on the ground, had secured the area and prepared the landing zone for the blivets. The Chinook set them gently on the ground, and the fuelers unhooked them. Once the helicopter was free of its load, it landed nearby so the Soldiers could unload the refueling equipment inside.

This symphony of activity on the ground did not occur spontaneously - it was well-orchestrated weeks in advance.

Once the Pathfinders have identified what they believe is a suitable area, the intelligence section verifies the threat level and briefs the command as to the risk lev-



(Above) A CH-47 Chinook helicopter carries a set of bladders to equip a forward arming and refueling point in support of a mission in southern Afghanistan April 13. Jump FARPs enable aircraft to rearm and refuel without having to return to their point of origin, allowing them to conduct longer missions.



Soldiers of Task Force Palehorse, (7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment), under Task Force Thunder, (159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division), discuss a plan of action to unload materials necessary for moving the fuel blivets in the foreground during a forward arming and refueling point mission in southern Afghanistan April 13. Aircraft can conduct longer missions thanks to the jump FARPs ability to rearm and refuel the aircraft without having to return to its point of origin.

el for the mission, said Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Cooke of Mountain Home, Idaho, the distribution platoon sergeant for Troop E, TF Palehorse.

The command then determines whether the mission is worth the risk.

“We feel confident enough in our leadership to make the right choices,” Cooke said.

Due to the inherent risk of operating in a combat zone, there’s always the possibility of a hostile situation arising, but the Soldiers have planned ahead.

“If a situation was to evolve, there is a predetermined level of risk at which we cut sling and get out of there,” said Sgt. 1st Class Cameron H. Cook of Seneca Falls, N.Y., the Pathfinder detachment operations platoon sergeant for Co. F, 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment (a TF Palehorse element). “There are some scenarios that S-2 puts together that tell us when it’s time to get out.

There are permanent FARPs located on installations, but the turnaround time for resupply using these facilities cuts precious minutes off of the time the aviators are in the air. Therefore, the refueling supplies and people are brought closer to the area of operation: a jump-FARP.

“Where we want to recon is too far away from an established FARP,” said 2nd Lt. William Reber of Mount Kisco, N.Y., the distribution platoon leader for Troop E, TF Palehorse.

“We have to place fuel closer to where they want to recon. In order to give them enough time to do a proper reconnaissance, and a thorough one, we have to put gas down there,” he said. “Otherwise, they would have maybe 10 or 15 minutes before they’d have to come back for gas.”

Certainly, these mobile gas stations take some time to set up and break down, but the recon teams’ expanded reach is worth the extra work.

“AAFARS - advanced aviation forward aircraft refueling system - is a system the Army has developed for going out to the site to set up a mobile refueling and rearming site,” Reber said. “Everything goes in a (portable container), which can be sling loaded, but this time we were able to put the tricon in the bird and the blivets were slung.”

“These guys are allowing the birds to do longer reconnaissance without having to fly all the way back to refuel,” said Cook.

There are more challenges to setting up a jump-FARP in the mountainous environment of Afghanistan than there are in Fort Campbell.

“The main restriction for a jump-FARP is the weight of the fuel,” said Cook. “It’s about seven pounds a gallon. Just getting it on a Chinook is more difficult out here. Chinooks can usually carry about 20,000 pounds, but at this elevation, they can’t do that.”

“The lift capability is affected greatly,” said Reber.

Several sections must coordinate to have a successful mission.

“It’s a consolidation of resources from each of the key players to make the mission happen,” Reber said.

“You don’t know how much gas you need until you figure out what they want to do or how long they want to fly,” said Schaul.

While the important part of a jump-FARP is refueling the aircraft, the fuelers are not the only ones on the ground. The Pathfinders literally have the fuelers’ backs. In fact, they have everyone’s backs during the mission.

They determine whether an area is suitable for a jump-FARP, Reber said.

The Pathfinders supply the majority of the security, but in the event



Spc. John P. Hall (left), a fueler with 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, (Task Force Palehorse), 159th Combat Aviation Brigade (Task Force Thunder), 101st Airborne Division, receives help preparing a fuel blivet for movement at a forward arming and refueling point during a mission in southern Afghanistan April 13. Jump FARPs are crucial when aviators must conduct missions farther than their fuel supplies allow.

they need backup, the unit is prepared.

The FARP team is augmented with internal snipers, various small arms and has heavy capabilities for backup security, Cooke said.

“We have medevac on standby,” said Reber. “They can cut down response time, if need be.”

The members of TF Palehorse’s jump-FARP knew they could not wind down from the day until they broke down their equipment and stored it once again on the bird to return to Kandahar Airfield.

The wearied orchestra packed away their instruments. This concert was over.



# THE GROUND UP

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Richard Carreon  
*Task Force Dragon UPAR*

Before the notice to move from building 329A to 407E, staff officers and NCOs made a floor plan for the new Task Force Dragon tactical operations center.

They knew that new offices, a conference room, and an operations center had to be built.

It was an enormous undertaking that would have taken contractors weeks to complete. It took Task Force Dragon only a few days.

Spc. Carlos Nieves, a native of Fajardo, Puerto Rico, and a flight operations specialist for TF Dragon, (1st Battalion, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade), needed much less time, thanks to his skills as a carpenter. He has a talent to build. It used to be his livelihood and now it's his hobby.

"I didn't know he was good at building," said Maj. James Yastrzemsky, the battalion operations officer in charge for TF Dragon. "He just helped me with a couple of small

projects, and I noticed that he had a skill. He works fast, and it shows when it only took two days to build office space needed to run operations."

Unlike the time it took for him to build the TOC, Nieves' skills did not develop within a few days' time.

As a young boy, he started as a carpenter's apprentice, assisting two people very important to him with a number of projects at home building rooms and furniture.

"I started helping my father and grandfather when I was a kid when they built stuff at home," he said. "I handed them tools, and it went on from there."

His first major project was building the awning for his father-in-law. Next, he helped his friend build rooms for a clothing store, his first solo project. Then, after learning some tricks of the trade, he worked construction on three major projects.

"I didn't have a lot of challenges when I was learning how to build," Nieves said. "I enjoyed working just about everything."

After some time, he decided to get out of the business.

"I got tired of building all the time and wanted to do something different," he said "I enjoy doing it now that I do it as a hobby."

Nieves said even though carpentry comes naturally to

him, he looks for new ways to expand his horizons in woodworking. "I did find it challenging to work with both wood and cement which was a part of the three projects I had worked on (when he worked construction)."

Yastrzemsky was incredibly impressed with the speed the TOC came together. When everything was completed, Yastrzemsky presented Spc. Nieves with a "lunch pail" award to recognize his hard work.

"He is a craftsman and takes pride in his work" said Master Sgt. Reyes, TF Dragon Operations NCO.

"He doesn't ask for recognition and gets the job done" said Yastrzemsky.

Nieves said he takes pride on every project he has done for the Task Force Dragon and enjoys it.

"I like seeing the end of what I do; it gives me a sense of accomplishment," Nieves said.

**Spc. Carlos Nieves, flight operations specialist for TF Dragon, constructs TF Dragon's new headquarters. Formerly a full-time carpenter, he enjoys doing construction more now that it's a hobby, he said.**



# FROM SEWING TO SOLDIERING, SHE'S ONE-OF-A-KIND

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Richard Carreon  
*Task Force Dragon UPAR*

Skills and hobbies make up a lot of what we do in our spare time. Some of them we stumble upon as we PCS from one location to the next.

Then there are those we pick up from the examples of others or we saw growing up.

Spc. Dianne Demeuse, tactical operations NCO for 1st Battalion, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade (Task Force Dragon), picked up her love for sewing from her stepmother and grandmother when she was young.

"I started out with cross stitching when I was about 8 years old I think," she said. "Since then, I've tried all kinds of arts and crafts, such as weaving, crocheting, knitting, embroidery, latch hook, macramé and sewing. Sewing is still my favorite."

She perfected her craft by watching, learning and doing.

"My grandmother used to sew dresses for me," she said. "She made the same dress for my doll. She would make dresses and send them to me when we moved away."

She was born in Korea to an Army UH-1 Huey helicopter pilot, then raised in the United States and Germany.

"I really didn't help my stepmom or grandmother do anything because making stuff was a one-person job. I just watched them and learned from what they did," she said. "My stepmom made a dress for me, and out of the leftover fabric, I made a dress for my doll."

Demeuse said her stepmom, an elementary school teacher, taught her how to sew ruffles, using a treadle machine, an old-fashioned mechanical sewing machine powered by foot. Today, she uses a top-of-the-line sewing machine professional seamstresses use.

She moved on to a number of other projects from stitching to making vests for two boys in her friend's wedding in Germany.

The bride hired a professional seamstress to make the groom's vest, Demeuse said.

"In Germany, you have to study for three years to be a professional seamstress," she said. "It turned out, my vests were better than the seamstress'

vests because she used cheaper materials. The boys were (very young) and they moved around a lot. My vests stayed together better than the one the seamstress made. The seamstress was pretty upset."

When she enlisted in the Army five years ago, she had to stop because she couldn't take her mechanically-



driven sewing machine to basic training or advanced individual training.

She resumed her craft when she got to her first assignment in Korea. She sewed patches on her battle buddies' uniforms.

Since she deployed to Afghanistan in June 2010, she has created a number of handmade pillows to give out during Christmas to coworkers.

"I made one of those no-sew fleece blankets for my best friend, who

is currently deployed to Mazar-e Sherif (in Regional Command-North) with another part of our battalion," she said. "There was next to no space to make it in my RLB room so I made it at work. I used the pilots' planning table one night during a power outage. It turned out looking

pretty good. I hand sewed all of the Christmas pillow cases at work and filled them in my room, where I also closed them."

Sewing downrange does present some challenges.

"I would say the biggest challenges with sewing downrange are keeping things clean and having enough space," she said. "Thread breaks when it gets dusty and sometimes you just have to spread out."

"Ordering fabric or supplies downrange isn't that difficult," she continued. "I mostly order from (a fabric store) online. They ship to APO addresses. That's where I ordered the fleece fabric and pillow inserts to make pillows as Christmas gifts."

While she is most proud of the clothes she's made, not all of her work is designed to be worn.

She has created embroidered tags for the pilot's bags, and has repaired a strap on a weapon holster. She said her next project is making covers for the aircraft radios to increase their durability.

Demeuse even takes requests.

"(A friend) wants me to make her an (Army combat uniform-pattern) cosmetic bag," she said.

Sewing is an escape for her, she said. She has been known to spend an entire weekend working on a project.

"I don't ever keep anything (I make). A lot of what I make, I give away as a present. Everything is unique and one-of-a-kind."

One of her goals is to make her own patterns, she said.

"I thought it would be cool to one day make my hobby my job, but I think I would rather just keep it a hobby," she said.





## Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month celebrates diversity

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Charles Cartwright  
Task Force Lift UPAR

May is Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, and it's an opportunity to recognize the diversity and unique characteristics of those Soldiers who hail from the Pacific region.

Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division) has a number of Soldiers from the islands, including Company B, 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, a Hawaii National Guard unit of CH-47 Chinooks that is task organized under the 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, Task Force Eagle Lift, which belongs to the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade.

The unit is currently made up of 70 percent Asian-Pacific Soldiers. Capt. John Wandasan and 1st Sgt. James Burkhart lead the multicultural unit that was established in 1994. The unit's Asian-Pacific Soldiers' include backgrounds of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Pacific Islanders.

"Our unit is known as the Voyagers, which represents the ancient Hawaiian canoe voyagers and their ability

to navigate the seas using only the stars," Burkhart said.

Burkhart said his favorite part of being in a multicultural unit is all the different types of food he gets to try. Back in their home state of Hawaii, the Voyagers celebrate these cultures throughout the year. The larger festivals in Hawaii focus on Samoan, Tahiti, Tonga, and Polynesian celebrations.

One festival, May Day, is accompanied by the motto "Every May Day, is Lei day." The "lei" is a traditional flower necklace that once symbolized a peace agreement between opposing chiefs – the necklace is now a symbol of friendship in the Hawaiian Islands.

The Soldiers in Co. B live the Army values every day, but at the same time keep their heritage close to their hearts.

"I am very proud of my Vietnamese roots, and my family is very proud that I am an American soldier," said Sgt. Phuc Huynh, a Chinook crew chief with the unit.

If the Soldiers of Co. B could leave one thing for everyone to think about during Asian-Pacific Heritage Month, it would definitely be the spirit of "Aloha" - or love and respect for everyone equally.

**Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month**

環太平洋系アメリカ人伝統文化月間

Pagkakaiba Pamumuno Pagbibigay ng Kapangyarihan at Lampas Pa-keanekaragaman kepemimpinan pemberdayaan dan luar

विविधता नेतृत्व सशक्तकिरण और पेरे

ĐA DẠNG TIÊN PHONG CHỦ ĐỘNG VA HƠN THỂ NỮA

เดือนที่ระลึกชาวอเมริกันเชื้อสายเอเชียแปซิฟิก

다양성 지도력 역량상화 그리고 그 이상

O tapava soifua una wa saoloto la latou fananai mai, ma e utusa o latou ulaga aloaia faapea a latou aia vavao

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

**Diversity  
Leadership  
Empowerment  
and Beyond**

# Nations come together to help build school

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Michael Tellier  
*Task Force Wings UPAR*

Soldiers from Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division) took part in an operation to help support a local Afghan school April 24.

Soldiers from the Forward Support Company, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, and the Pathfinder Company convoyed to a school not far from the base to build an outside storage area and a guard shack. The school provides education to approximately 300 children.

A few children who were present during the construction received candy from the Soldiers. The principal and school teachers in attendance were also very excited to receive the support from the Soldiers.

1st Sgt. John Carlston of Co. D, led the project, and the Task Force Commander, Lt. Col. Christopher Albus was also on hand to help swing a hammer. Elements from the Romanian Army, Afghan National Army, and Afghan National Police also participated in this joint effort.

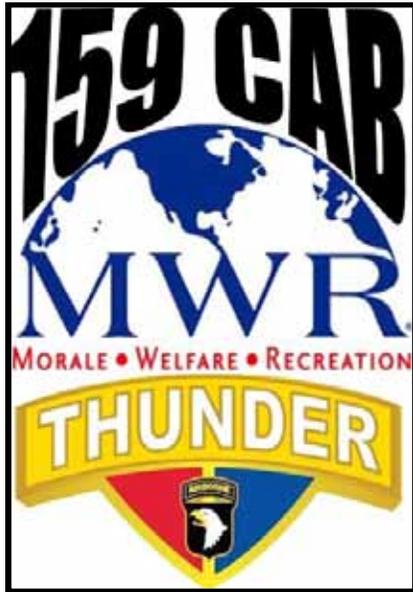


**Lt. Col. Christopher Albus (far right) commander of Task Force Wings, speaks with the principal and teachers of a local school outside of FOB Wolverine, Zabul Province. The school provides education for 300 children in the area.**

**(Right) 1st Lt. Kyle Ryman of the Pathfinder Company, TF Wings, pulls security for the construction team April 24. Soldiers of Task Force Wings, the Romanian and Afghan National armies and the Afghan National Police were at the school to build a storage shed and guard tower.**



**(Left) Soldiers from TF Wings, along with Soldiers from the Romanian Army and the Afghan National Army take part in the construction of a guard tower and storage shed for a school just outside of FOB Wolverine, Zabul Province, April 24. Company D's 1st Sgt. John Carlston led the team. The construction was a joint venture between the armies, as well as Afghan National Police.**



**BASKETBALL SEASON IN**  
every night



at the KAF MWR  
B-ball court.

**PLEASE CONTACT  
SSG FICK FOR  
ANY MWR Questions!!  
841-2525**

**KARAOKE** Every Monday from  
2000—2330 at the MWR

**NOW ON FACEBOOK**

“LIKE US” to get info on upcoming events and to participate in the weekly photo caption contest!!!

**5K RUN  
22 MAY  
@ KAF**

**WOUNDED WARRIOR  
PROJECT**

**Texas  
Hold 'em**  
Every Tue in May  
@ 2000 @ KAF USO

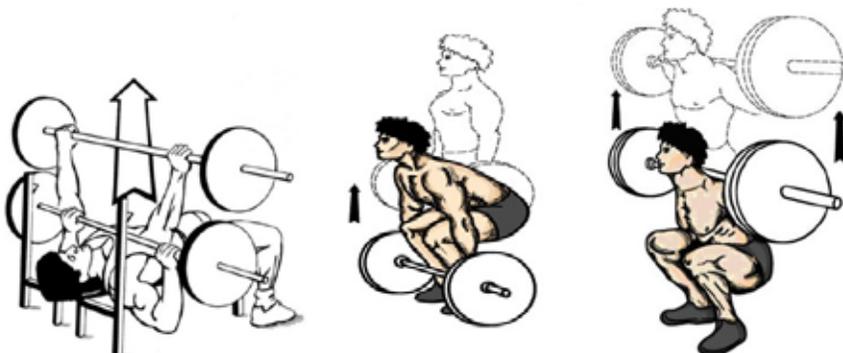
USO Center located in the RSOI Compound



**KAF GYM  
1000 lb CLUB**

**SEE GYM STAFF  
FOR DETAILS**

**Bench Press  
Dead Lift  
Squats**



**ANY OF THE 3 TO  
GET 1000LBS**



**TF THUNDER**  
**Command**  
**Retention Officer**  
 Col Kenneth T. Royar

**TF THUNDER**  
**Command**  
**Retention NCO**  
 CSM Eric C. Thom

**TF THUNDER**  
**Senior Career**  
**Counselor**  
 MSG Jose Urbaz  
 DSN 318-481-2522

**TF FIGHTING**  
 SFC Middleton  
 DSN: 318-431-2841

**TF ATACK**  
 SFC DEPONTEE  
 DSN: 318-431-2841

**TF WINGS**  
**SSG HOLMES**  
 DSN:318-431-2841

**TF LIFT**  
**SSG CARTWRIGHT**  
 DSN:318-431-2841

**TF PALEHORSE**  
**SSG SCRUGGS**  
 DSN:318-431-2841

**159<sup>TH</sup> CAB REAR DET**  
**SSG GORDON**  
 DSN 312-431-2841



# TF THUNDER RETENTION

## *What's Happening in Retention !*

### MOS Administrative Retention Review (MAR2) Program

In a 2009 study of the MOS Medical Retention Board (MMRB) GEN (Ret) Franks identified there were numerous problems with the MMRB as it is currently organized. He recommended an "administrative review" prior to MEB/PEB. The outcome of this review is an enhanced process called the MOS Administrative Retention Review Program (MAR2).

The MAR2 program, which has been used as a pilot program since August of 2010 at military bases including: Fort Drum, NY, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo, and Fort Bliss, Texas. **The MAR2 program officially became effective at Fort Campbell May 1.**

The MAR2 provides commanders a process to identify Soldiers who have medical limitations and require an administrative review to determine if the Soldier meets his/her MOS standards.

### Comparison between the MMRB and MAR2

MMRB	MAR2
-P3/P4 Profile Issued	-P3/P4 Profile Issued
-MPD updates records/schedules board/notifies/gathers records and recommendations	-Installation Retention receives profile
-Conducts boards	-Career Counselor counsels Soldier and prepares standard packet (14 day suspense)
-Renders decision of: Retain in MOS/Reclassify/Refer to MEB-PED/Probation	-Forwards packet to HRC
-MEDPROS and EMILPO updated separately by Medical & HR personnel	-RRB reviews packet and renders decision: Retain in MOS/Reclassify/Refer to MEB-PEB (14 day suspense)
-Reclassification decision referred to Career Counselor for MOS screening	-Schedules training and assignment for reclass decisions
-Reclass request sent to HRC for review	-RRB updates MEDPROS and EMLIPO
-HRC schedules Training and Assignment for reclass decisions	
-Returns decision to installation	

For additional information see your servicing career counselor



# May is National Barbecue Month

## Barbecue Safety Fact Sheet

Many grillers say they like to barbecue because they consider it a healthy and convenient way to cook. A Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA) survey found that nearly half of Americans (45 percent) say grilling is a great way to make a healthy meal while 34 percent say it's a quick and easy way to make a meal during the week. To ensure that outdoor grilling is even easier, HPBA offers the following tips for your pre, during and post grilling activities:

### Before You Grill

- Read the manufacturer's instructions before using your grill. If you have any questions, be sure to call the "help line" to assist you with anything you may need.
- Position your grill in an open area away from buildings and high traffic areas.
- Check to make sure all parts of your grill are firmly in place and the grill is stable

### When Grilling

- BEFORE lighting the grill, apply non-stick spray on the grates. The protective spray cuts down the clean-up time afterwards.
- For charcoal grills, line the bowl with aluminum foil (for easy clean-up).
- Wear clothes that do not have hanging shirt tails, frills or apron strings.
- Never leave a grill unattended once lit.
- Use barbecue utensils with long handles (forks, tongs, etc.) to avoid burns.
- Use baking soda to control a grease fire and have a fire extinguisher handy. If you don't have a commercial extinguisher, keep a bucket of sand or a garden hose nearby. Consider placing a grill pad or splatter mat beneath your grill to protect your deck or patio from any grease that misses the drip pan.
- Never attempt to move a hot grill. It's easy to stumble or drop it and serious burns could result.

### After you Grill

- If using a gas grill, be sure to turn off the fuel supply and then turn burners to "off."
- Use a wire brush or even crumbled aluminum foil to scrub away buildup on the grates once the grill has cooled.
- To clean grate, remove grate and squirt grease-cutting dishwashing detergent (once cool). Scrub with brush or abrasive pad, then rinse. A repeat may be necessary.
- For charcoal grills lined with aluminum foil: After grilling, and once the grill and coals are cool (as a rule of thumb, always allow coals to burn out completely and let ashes cool\* at least 48 hours before disposing), simply discard the foil with the coals and ash, then wash and reline with foil for next time.

*\*If you must dispose of coals and ashes before completely cooled, place them in heavy duty foil and soak with water completely before disposing in a non-combustible container.*

[www.hpba.org](http://www.hpba.org)

# Red Cross serves as hotline to Soldiers in

## Emergencies



By Spc. Jennifer Andersson  
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Batman had a red telephone that directly accessed the Commissioner's office, just as combatant commanders have a red phone that links them directly with senior leaders in Washington, D.C.

While military families don't exactly have that hotline, a Red Cross message is the next best thing to keep Soldiers informed in the event of an emergency.

The volunteer-led American Red Cross, established in 1881, provides emergency and non-emergency services to the U.S. military, the most notable of which is the Red Cross message.

As simple as it may sound, the work involved from the time an initial call reaches the Red Cross and the time a Soldier steps over the threshold at home is complex.

The first step for the family is not to contact the Soldier, but to call the Red Cross number, which can be found online or in the phone book, and notify the Red Cross of the emergency.

The message can reach the Soldier more quickly if the family member sending the message has the following information prior to calling the Red Cross: service member's full name, rank or rating, branch of service, social security number, military address and information about the deployed unit and the home base unit (if deployed).

"Unfortunately, a number of Red Cross messages are delayed due to family members not knowing all this information," said Staff Sgt. Daryn W. Purcell, the Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division) NCOIC of human resources. "They

say, 'He's in Bravo Company,' but don't know the Soldier's battalion. They need to know the Soldier's company and battalion."

Once a medical provider confirms the emergency, the Red Cross sends the message to the Soldier's unit.

To support the Soldier better, the Red Cross message is distributed to an orchestra of administrators, including the personnel office, ministry team, medical, battle captain and battle NCO.

"At brigade level, we make sure the Soldier is notified through his chain of command," said Purcell.

Due to the fact that Red Cross messages declare a family emergency situation, time is of the essence when it comes to Red Cross messages.

"Emergency leaves are treated within the 24-hour window," said Staff Sgt. Jose F. Davila, an operations NCO for Task Force Fighting (563rd Aviation Support Battalion). "In 24 hours, that Soldier should be on a plane home. If the message says the person has 72 hours to live, then we try to get them home faster than we would if it says they have a week to live."

Spc. Sandie R. De Los Reyes, from Los Angeles, Calif., a wheeled vehicle mechanic for TF Fighting, currently tasked out as a night shift customer service attendant at The First Cup, received a Red Cross message during off-post training in October at McGregor Base Camp, N.M.

"Major Peterson (the executive officer of 563rd) came to me personally at the motor pool, knew exactly who I was and said, 'I just got your Red Cross message. We're going to give you time to go to your family,'" she said.

But taking care of the Soldier in a family emergency situation doesn't stop with telling the Soldier he can take emergency leave.

"When a Soldier receives a Red Cross message down-range, and it meets the criteria for emergency leave, the Soldier gets a leave packet," said Sgt. James Crisp, a brigade human resource NCO. "The leave packet gets signed off by the battalion commander. The brigade commander must sign a release from theater memorandum, and then the Soldier is on the next thing smoking to Kuwait or Manas. The (liaison) there will get them a Red Cross ticket on a commercial flight back to the States as quickly as possible."



"The Soldier will get about 10 days' leave, depending on the circumstances," Crisp said.

The Soldier is still charged for leave, but it is processed differently than regular leave. Soldiers are normally required to request leave at least two weeks in advance to ensure it doesn't conflict with mission requirements or training schedules, but for emergencies, the leave form is processed immediately, assuming mission requirements allow for the Soldier to be released from theater.

"You're not just taking leave for recreation," Purcell said. "You're taking leave to take care of a family emergency. Of course, if there was a mission going on and you wanted to take leave for leisure, the mission will come first. If there's an emergency, the Army will try to allow you to go home, because we want the Soldiers to know that family is important."

While the personnel section is processing the Soldier's

leave, there are other people helping the Soldier coordinate transportation as needed.

If additional travel is required of the Soldier, or the Soldier's family must accompany the Soldier, those expenses must be funded at a personal expense, said Crisp.

If the Soldier is not financially prepared for such an emergency, the Army Emergency Relief Fund is available.

According to the AER official website, the funds could be delivered to the Soldier as early as the same day.

The logistical aspects of processing leave are only one component of helping Soldiers through family emergencies.

In addition to the Soldier's chain of command, the chaplain is notified of the Red Cross message as well and is there to provide spiritual support if the Soldier needs it.

"I'll ask a Soldier if I could pray for him," said Capt. Todd Cheney, of Northridge, Calif., the chaplain for TF Fighting. "If that Soldier is not a part of my organic unit, then I make contact with that organic chaplain and ask him to track this Soldier, just to ensure that the Soldier is doing OK."

"It seems that the more geographically separated the Soldier is from his fam-

ily, the harder it seems to be," he said. "When I was in Iraq, the Soldiers (who received Red Cross messages) would really want to talk to a chaplain."

Geographic separation was not an issue for De Los Reyes.

In fact, De Los Reyes' family requested her presence in – of all places – El Paso, Texas, only a 20-minute drive from the area she was doing off-post training. She said if she had been in garrison when she received the message, she would not have been able to travel from Fort Campbell to El Paso and still arrived in time.

De Los Reyes received her notification within two hours of it being sent.

"From the time that I received the message to the time I got out there, we had time to do a last rites ceremony and say our goodbyes," said De Los Reyes. "Mission first – I got it. But to be there with my family was priceless."

# Through your eyes



# A Day in the life





# THUNDER LEGAL



## WHAT'S GOING ON?

**NIPR: 841-2525/SIPR: 841-2031/CENTRIX: 265-0418**

**LEADERS.....BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE LEGAL NIPR PORTAL:**

**<http://portal.rcsouth.afghan.centcom.mil/tfthunder/SpecialStaff/Legal/default.aspx>**

### Shared Documents

Type	Name
Folder	TF Thunder 15-6 IO Toolkit
Folder	ROE
Folder	RoL
Folder	FLIPLs
Folder	TDS
Folder	LEADERS LEGAL TOOLS

**YOU WILL FIND ALL OF THIS!!!**

Hello, I am PFC Hamilton "dash" Horton, and I am the Paralegal for Task Force Wings. Please let me know if you need a Power of Attorney! I am located in Bldg # 4 in the Legal Office.

**KAF TRIAL DEFENSE SERVICE (TDS)**  
**BLDG# 241, Room 10**  
**NIPR: 841-2449/2457**  
**Article 15 Briefings: Tues, Thurs @ 0900**  
**Chapter Briefings: Tues, Thurs @ 1000**  
**All other needs (Rights Advisement; Reprimand Rebuttals) are Mon—Sat/ 0900—1800**

CPT Habley, I am so glad you are here. Please help me! I need to get custody of my tiger blood so I can keep winning!



Sorry Charlie, you are going to have to go to the KAF Legal Assistance Office. They are located in Building # 245, next to the Education Center. They are open Monday—Saturday 0730—1800 and Sunday 1200—1800. Give them a call at 841-1163, I am sure they will be able to help you!



## ATTENTION COMMAND TEAMS:

**CPT Brent Habley, the TF Thunder Trial Counsel, is now in theater and prepared to assist you with all of your UCMJ issues. You can reach him at the TF Thunder Legal Office, or on global.**

## Chaplain's Message

# Successful Fishing

*It is summertime and that means a lot of people in the Fort Campbell area will be fishing. I'm not much of a fisherman, but I did grow up learning how to fish. I grew up thinking fishing was putting a worm on a hook and dropping it in the water.*

*However, fishing has come a long way since I was a boy. The fishing industry in the US is a \$45 billion industry and is more popular than golf as a hobby. You don't have to talk long to an experienced fisherman to understand the billions of dollars include money spent on research. Fishermen love to talk about the different types of material used in reels to the scientifically researched artificial bait they own.*

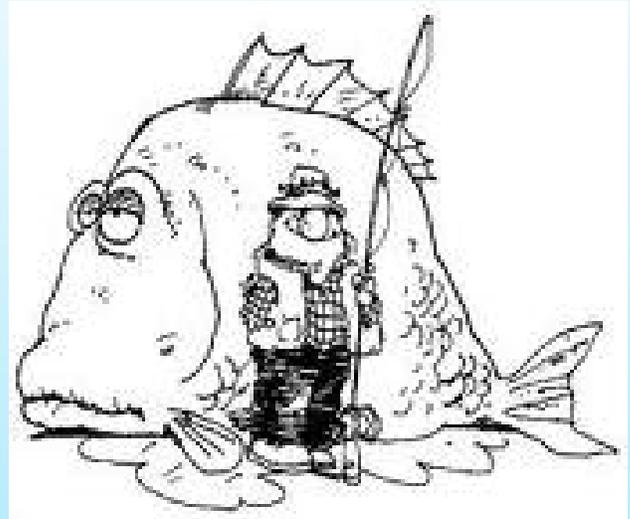
*Who knew, right?*

*I learned recently that even something as basic as fishing line is not really just plastic line. Different types of line have different weight classes and some are even made with material used by NASA. Wow!*

*There are a lot of life lessons that can be taught from fishing. One lesson I learned as a kid was no matter how strong the fishing line is, it can break if you don't know how to reel in the big catch. My dad taught me that once you hook the fish you have to reel it in, while giving the pole and line a little release, or you might break the line and lose your fish.*

*In the same way, I've learned in life that when the stresses of life pull on you and you feel your about to break, it is at that point that you need to let go a little and release some things that may be stressing you out. Too many times we try to accomplish too much while we are going through a deployment and not realizing that we are often our own worst enemy when it comes to stress.*

*If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed and that your line is about to break, then take an inventory of what stresses you the*



*most this week. After you determine what stresses you, then figure out what you can let go and what you need to keep.*

*For example, when I was home, I loved to work in the yard and edge the driveway and sidewalk. Now that I'm deployed, my wife and kids mow the lawn, but they don't edge our lawn. That is what I'm talking about: letting go of those things that in the end really don't matter. It really does help to make a list so you can visually see what is important.*

*The Bible tells a story of Jesus' disciples fishing all night and they hadn't caught any fish. Because of their faith they listened to Jesus call out from the shore to throw their nets on the other side of the boat. They obeyed and could hardly pull in their catch. My faith in God helps me to put things in proper perspective and balance. Prioritizing and making changes in your life so your line doesn't break is important.*

*This year I hope to reel in that big catch. The big catch for me is a successful deployment where I not only survive but I thrive.*

*Helping You Fish,*

*CH (MAJ) Brian Curry*

# FRSA Notes:

## TOWN HALL:

June 9, 2011 at 6pm at the FRC, 159th CAB has scheduled a VTC Town Hall, where forward and rear detachment command teams will be available to answer questions and give updates on the great things our Soldiers have been doing.

Please **\*\*everyone\*\*** RSVP (that means call us and tell us whether OR not you are planning to come), so that we can make sure that we have enough available seating!

If you have a question you would like to ask, please send it in an email with your RSVP to your Task Force FRSA.

Childcare is provided on a first come first serve basis. Children must be CYS registered. Please include names, ages, and any special needs of children. Please note that we are requesting no children be present at the Town Hall...due to the nature of the event.

Please send **no later than May 26** all RSVP's and Childcare Requests to:

- HHC 159th - pam.mcfarland@us.army.mil
- 3-101 Task Force Attack – jennifer.l.cornelius@conus.army.mil
- 4-101 Task Force Wings – deb.bush@us.army.mil
- 563D Task Force Fighting – crystal.akc.jones@conus.army.mil
- 7-101 Task Force Lift – julie.franklin1@us.army.mil
- 7-17 Task Force Palehorse – deidra.d.davis@us.army.mil

## RESOURCE OF THE MONTH:

Here is a great resource of the Month. Fort Campbell MWR website is a great place to find out what is going on weekly, monthly on Fort Campbell. The link is: <http://www.fortcampbellmwr.com/index.html>

Please take a look to see the flyers for all upcoming events, it has the links to Child and Youth Services for registration forms and more, and it also has the links to the Leisure Travel services too.

## PROGRAMS FOR KIDS & TEENS:

### Edge! & Hired! Programs

**The EDGE! Program** <http://www.fortcampbellmwr.com/CYS/EDGE/index.html>

The EDGE! Program offers after school opportunities for children and youth ages 6-18 to experience, develop, grow and excel by participating in “cutting edge” programs. Free for grades 6-12.

### The HIRED! Apprentice Program

<http://www.fortcampbellmwr.com/CYS/HIRED/index.html>

This program provides 15-18 year old youth with meaningful, professionally-managed career-exploration opportunities in Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) operations. Participants receive valuable paid work experience and training to equip them better with the skills needed in a highly-competitive job market.

### A Backpack Journalist- [www.abackpackjournalist.com/](http://www.abackpackjournalist.com/)

Helping military youth find their voice - through writing, songwriting and photography! It is all about creative expression and allowing youth between the ages of 12-18 to use the latest, greatest tech tools and their own talents!

### Youth Sports-

<http://www.fortcampbellmwr.com/CYS/YouthSports/index.html>

Fort Campbell's Youth Sports offers opportunity to participate in various sports throughout the year to children Kindergarten to 8th grade.



**Adventure Camps** - <http://militaryfamilies.extension.org/military-teen-adventure-camps>

More than **1700** military teens (14–18 years old) will have an opportunity to participate (at little to no cost) in adventure camps scheduled April 2011 through April 2012. These high energy, high adventure, and high experience camps are planned across the United States from Alaska to Maine and from Colorado to Georgia as well as states in between.

**SKIES Unlimited Program** - [www.fortcampbellmwr.com/CYS/SKIES/index.html](http://www.fortcampbellmwr.com/CYS/SKIES/index.html)

The name SKIESUnlimited is an acronym for “School

of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration, and Skills” with the word “Unlimited” representing the unlimited possibilities this program can offer Army children and youth. SKIESUnlimited encompasses instructional programs for children and youth ranging from four weeks old to adolescence. Through SKIESUnlimited, children and youth in Child Development Services (CDS), School Age Services (SAS), Middle School, Teens, and Outreach Services (OS) Programs, as well as home-schooled children all have equal access to opportunities that expand their knowledge, inspire them, allow them to explore, and acquire new skills. SKIESUnlimited has a four-school system. The four schools are: School of Sports, School of Arts, School of Life Skills and School.

We hope all of our Military Spouses enjoyed a great Military Spouse Appreciation Day on May 6. We definitely appreciate all of our 159th CAB Spouses, you guys are great! Thanks,  
159th FRSA Team!

# Runs boost morale

Story and photos by  
Spc. Jennifer Andersson  
*Task Force Thunder Public Affairs*

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- It was still dark at 5:30 a.m., but the Boardwalk was beginning to bustle with activity April 16. Volunteers set up sign-up tables, t-shirts and traffic cones in preparation for the 4.2-mile Pat Tillman Run. Runners lined up to get numbers.

Just six days earlier, many of the same people participated in the 5K Equal Opportunity Sexual Assault Awareness Run and will try to run in every race to follow.

While these runs aren't mandatory, they still see a significant turnout. Each runner has his own reason for participating.

"The fact that I'm here for an entire year makes me want to get out and do some kind of organized event once in a while," said Capt. Ben Seipel of Maryville, Mo., commander of Company A, Task Force

Lift, (7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) of TF Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division).

Some people get friends and coworkers together to go running, just to bond.

"I'll choose option number three - the social aspect," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Tom Parker of Clarksville, Tenn., an aviation maintenance technician for Troop D, Task Force Palehorse (7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment). "It's important to get out there and show your fitness for the troops. It's important to be out there with senior leadership."

"It does bring about unit cohesion," said Seipel. It's good to get out with a group of people."

Some do the runs for the cause. A 24-hour super-run even let the participants choose what cause they wanted to support. Participants solicited sponsorship for their cause, receiving donations based

on the number of kilometers they ran. Task Force Thunder had three teams participate in the run, including the winning team, Thunder Runners, which ran nearly 250 miles combined.

Capt. Paul Rickmeyer, a native of Hicksville, N.Y., an intelligence officer for TF Thunder, and a runner in the 24-hour run, said his run offered an opportunity to raise money for a good cause close to his heart.

"The HHC Dragonlords gave to the Wounded Warrior project," he said. "Any additional funds that I raised would go to the Tom Martin Memorial Foundation. Tom was a good friend of mine who was killed in Iraq in 2007."

Martin's high school in Alabama established the scholarship fund, to which Rickmeyer donated more than \$200, thanks to the people who supported his 24-hour run.

"I e-mailed some people information on the foundation," he said.



Hundreds of runners and walkers take off from the start line during the Sexual Assault Awareness Run April 10. Some people participate in morale runs to support a cause.



Members of the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade (Task Force Thunder) pose for a group photo before the Pat Tillman Run April 16. Some people participate in morale events to build unit cohesion.

"Once they knew what (the cause) was, they were more willing to sponsor it."

Learning what the run is about sometimes motivates a person to participate, said Staff Sgt. Char Fick, of Grand Rapids, Mich., the senior paralegal for TF Thunder and the brigade MWR NCO.

"If you hear, 'Hey, I'm going to pay \$15 so that I can run 4.2 miles,' it totally is a turn-off," she said. "But if you get a little more knowledge about what the run is for... it tends to make people a little more interested."

Entry fees for runs rarely exceed \$15, and usually include the cost of a T-shirt, Fick said.

"You're on deployment," Rick-

meyer said. "You're not spending money on anything else, so why not contribute to a good cause and get something out of it, too?"

Runs held on Kandahar this year have included breast cancer awareness runs, Seabee runs, and Christmas runs. There have been runs to support different issues or functions throughout the world, or even here on Kandahar Airfield. Upcoming runs include Nurse and Medic Appreciation and Wounded Warrior runs.

Some people participate in runs because of peer pressure.

"We're supporting one of our Soldiers who went and signed up," said 1st Sgt. Grace Wood, first sergeant for Troop D, TF Palehorse.

"He bought me a shirt, and a bunch of other people said, 'Hey, I'll go, too,'" she said.

For other Soldiers, the races bring them a little closer to loved ones.

"It makes you feel a little bit normal because there are races like this back home, pretty much wherever you live," said Seipel. "My wife and I do things like this occasionally back home."

Regardless of the personal reasons for running in organized events while deployed, there are always physical benefits.

"It's an opportunity to set a goal for yourself and to do it," Rickmeyer said. "If you're not a good runner, then you create a goal and you train for it. It's a sense of accomplishment. It helps keep your mind off your job. It helps keep you centered and focused. It gives you a chance to improve yourself."

With that many reasons to participate in a run, the question isn't, "Why?" but rather, "Why not?"

"I have no desire to run. I hate running, but I do it because there are no real disadvantages to it," said Fick.

"Whatever runs are out there, I know I'd like to get involved, just because it's something other than work," Rickmeyer said. "It's a nice distraction from work."



Runners and walkers alike participate in the Pat Tillman Run here April 16. Some people take part in morale runs for the exercise.

## Find us online:

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E-mail:

159cabpao@gmail.com

DVIDS:

[www.dvidshub.net/publication/373/thunder-enlightening](http://www.dvidshub.net/publication/373/thunder-enlightening)

