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EYE OF THE FALCON

May 2011

Falcon Flyer is published in the interest of the servicemembers of the 10th Mountain Infantry (LI) Division's Combat Aviation Brigade. The Falcon Flyer is an Army-funded newsletter authorized for members of the U.S. Army, under the provision of AR 360-1. Contents of the Falcon Flyer are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, or Department of the Army.

10th Mountain Division Commander
Maj. Gen. James Terry

10th CAB Commander
Col. Pedro Almeida

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

10th CAB PAO
Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams

10th CAB PAO NCOIC
Staff Sergeant Todd Pouliot

Editor
Pfc. Michael Syner

CONTACT
481.6597

TASK FORCE TIGERSHARK
FOB Salerno
Lt. Col. David Kramer
Command Sgt. Maj. Nicolas Carter

TASK FORCE KNIGHTHAWK
FOB Shank
Lt. Col. Lars Wendt
Command Sgt. Maj. Carlos Escalara

TASK FORCE PHOENIX
Bagram Airfield
Lt. Col. Dennis McKernan
Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Dvorsky

TASK FORCE SHOOTER
FOB Fenty
Lt. Col. Christopher Downey
Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick McGuire

TASK FORCE EAGLE
Bagram Airfield
Lt. Col. Albert Stiller
Command Sgt. Maj. Zacchaeus Hurst

TASK FORCE ODIN-A
Bagram Airfield
Lt. Col. Kevin Diermeier
Command Sgt. Maj. Marion Travis

TASK FORCE GAMBLER
FOB Sharana
Lt. Col. Jeffrey Thompson
Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Grumbach

TASK FORCE TAEGUEK
Bagram Airfield
Lt. Col. Myoungcho Choi

TASK FORCE HIPPO
FOB Sharana
Lt. Col. Karel Krejcirik



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Falcon, Soldiers drag a casualty during the practical exercise phase of Combat Life Saver training. The class of 45 Soldiers was the largest conducted here since the beginning of the deployment, said Maj. Jaime Torres, TF Falcon flight surgeon. TF Falcon medics provide a wide range of medical support throughout the task force. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, TF Falcon)

From Falcon 6:

Families, Friends, and Soldiers of Task Force Falcon and 10th CAB,

This month, we sadly mourn the loss of a member of Task Force Falcon. CW2 Christopher Thibodeau was an Aviation, a Soldier, a Friend, a Husband, and a soon-to-be Father. I attended Chris' memorial service at Task Force Gambler along with many of the leaders across our brigade, and I could not help but note the tremendous impact he had on so many members of his team, as clearly seen in the outpouring of grief and sense of loss.

Our hearts go out to the Task Force Gambler team in particular and we extend to them our greatest support in this time of loss. For our Families at home, at Fort Drum, Fort Hood, or wherever they may be, please keep all of our Soldiers and Families in your thoughts and prayers. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies go out to Chris Thibodeau's family and loved ones in this very difficult time.

In the face of great adversity, our Soldiers and Leaders performed heroically in our efforts to recover our fallen hero. Members of our task force constantly demonstrate tremendous resiliency and continue to execute the fight against enemies of Afghanistan, freedom, and human rights.

At this point in our deployment, we not only fight a determined enemy in challenging terrain, but we also must fight complacency. Now is not the time to ignore basic standards. We all must be vigilant in enforcing standards and not allow the little things, which have made us successful in the fight, slip by.

Lt. Col. David McGurk has been my executive officer for the past year. It's my position that the people who surround you are crucial. And I count myself very fortunate to have the people I have around me. He is a tremendously effective leader and our success is due to his efforts. We wish him all the best as he progresses in his career. We welcome Maj. Ryan Miedema and wish him well as he becomes our new executive officer.

Each and every member of the task force is doing a great job across the board. I am proud of the work that our Soldiers are performing each day. Their families can be proud as well. It won't be long before members of this task force will begin redeploying home to our loved ones. As we look forward to that, we continue to remain focused on our mission here. The support from those back home has been essential to our focus here. Know that you are all appreciated very much for your contributions in supporting us as we fulfill our tasks here.

Fly to Glory!
Col. Pedro Almeida
10th Combat Aviation Brigade
Falcon 6



From Falcon 7:

Families, Friends, and Soldiers of TF Falcon,

As we mourn the loss of CW2 Christopher Thibodeau, a pilot with TF Gambler, we consider the courage of those who go out and carry out their duties honorably despite the inherent dangers. Thibodeau is now among a great list of heroes that have made the ultimate sacrifice fighting to help others on behalf of their nation. We are honored greatly to have served with him and he will always be a part of our history.

Our Soldiers displayed great resiliency continuing to focus on their missions while honoring the service of our fallen hero. It is imperative to our success and safety that we remain vigilant in our operations; staying focused on standards and safety measures. As we pass the half way point in our deployment, complacency becomes a dangerous adversary and we must not allow it to defeat us. We must pay attention to even the smallest detail to ensure our operations are conducted effectively and safely.

For those of you back home, you can be very proud of the efforts and successes of our Soldiers. Thank you for your continued support. Your support allows us all to remain focused on our mission here.

Fly to Glory!
Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton
10th Combat Aviation Brigade
Falcon 7



Helicopter maintainer carries on family aviation tradition

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



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Wayne Montgomery, Company C “Blue Max”, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter maintainer, works on a transmission April 16. Montgomery is a native of Sahuarita, Ariz. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The 23-year-old OH-58 Kiowa helicopter maintainer from Sahuarita, Ariz., grew up with aviation heritage coursing through his veins. His grandfather retired in the Air Force, his father served with the Air Force for five years, and his grandmother worked on Rolls-Royce helicopter engines.

U.S. Army Spc. Wayne Montgomery, Company C “Blue Max”, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Avia-

tion Brigade/TF Falcon, said he followed his family tradition with enthusiasm.

Montgomery said he cannot imagine doing anything but aviation; it was only natural when he began his Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Aeronautical Management Technology at Arizona State University in August 2005.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Joseph King, from York, Pa., Montgomery’s platoon sergeant in Company C, reflected on his Soldier’s interest in

aviation.

“He wanted to be both (a pilot and mechanic),” said King, “He went to school to become a pilot before joining the military and then took up the wrench (in the Army) to understand certain fundamentals of the field.”

Montgomery said his deep rooted passion for the aviation field keeps him motivated.

“Just about everyone loves flying,” said Montgomery, “It’s a very rewarding job.

Plus, not everyone can say they work on helicopters.”

As he’s turning wrenches on his assigned aircraft, Montgomery said he feels satisfied knowing he is doing everything to standard - providing each pilot with a dependable aircraft.

Montgomery said he enjoys the friendly competition among his fellow mechanics on whose aircraft is the best.

“You wouldn’t send your child to T-ball and dislike them when they don’t do well,” said Montgomery with a laugh. “You would take pride in them and support

them. It’s the same for our aircraft.”

Montgomery’s unit is the only one in the task force that fully supports two different airframes. This has provided him an opportunity to learn how to maintain the AH-64 Apache helicopter as well.

“Learning how to work on a different airframe breaks up the monotony,” said Montgomery, “It is also good cross-training.”

King said he knows that Montgomery will make a great Army leader in the field of aviation.

“I think that he put it best

when he went in front of the promotion board,” said King, “Montgomery was asked by 1st Sgt. Howard, why is it that with his high test scores did he want to come in as a mechanic? Montgomery simply stated that he did it because the best male role models of his life – his father and grandfather - were aircraft mechanics. That told me right there, that he (is in the Army) to learn what he can from any and every body and then to be able to pass it along to those who will be working under him soon - exactly what an NCO should do.”

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Wayne Montgomery, Company C “Blue Max”, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/Task Force Falcon, stands before an OH-58 Kiowa that he maintains April 16. Montgomery is a native of Sahuarita, Ariz. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)



TF Falcon Soldier ushers fellow Soldiers to spiritual fitness

By Army Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams
Task Force Falcon



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Turquoise Dawson grabs some chairs to provide more seating for fellow Soldiers and civilians attending Baptist services at Enduring Faith chapel on Bagram Airfield, April 10. Dawson, a property book clerk for Task Force Falcon, 10th Mountain Division and native of Philadelphia, serves as an usher during her deployment to Afghanistan to aid in the spirit worshipping. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon PAO)

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – “When people come to the chapel, I show them a happy face,” explains U.S. Army Spc. Turquoise Dawson. “The first thing they see is a smile that says, ‘Let’s get church started with some fellowship and love. You came to the right place!’”

The bubbly property book office clerk for Task Force Falcon, 10th Mountain Division serves as an usher every Sunday for the Baptist services held at Enduring Faith

chapel on Bagram Airfield.

“I started duties as an usher in January. I always enjoy the services, but when I first got here (in October) it looked like they had too many ushers,” Dawson said before continuing, “But, then people moved on and so I thought, why not do a good thing while I’m here?”

The Philadelphia native’s desire to serve in a spiritual role during her deployment speaks not just to her faith, but to a larger approach

to her well-being. As the Army launches the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, decisions like Dawson’s illustrate some of the behaviors and strategies that help one adapt and cope with challenges - behaviors and strategies Army officials hope to pass on to other Soldiers.

According to the CSF home page, the program develops the “whole person,” and gives the same emphasis to emotional strength given to physical strength. This

holistic approach focuses on enabling Soldiers, family members and Army civilians to better manage various physical and psychological challenges in their personal and professional lives along five specific dimensions of strength.

“CSF strengthens Soldiers, civilians, and families by making the most of

five dimensions of strength through assessment and education. These are Physical, Emotional, Social, Spiritual, and Family,” said Chaplain (Maj.) Bill Scritchfield, who serves as the TF Falcon, 10th

Mountain Division Chaplain.

Scritchfield, of Waynesburg, Pa., believes Gen. George Marshall explained the significance of Soldier spirituality best, “The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him, he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his country in the end.”

Dawson’s “good thing” not only strengthens her own spiritual fitness, the smile she offers every Sunday plays a small role in strengthening the shared beliefs of those who join her each week.

“It does make me feel better to see her there smiling,” said Sgt. Derek Sherrill, a paralegal non-commissioned officer with TF Falcon, 10th Mountain Division and a native of Carbondale, Ill. “You can tell she is genuinely happy. It gets things going in the right direction.”

As for Dawson, she says the fellowship not only allows her to aid in the spirit worshipping, it also brings her some peace. “It’s a good refresher for the start of the week. I show thanks for getting through the week and gain strength to get through the next one.”

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Turquoise Dawson (center), a property book clerk for Task Force Falcon, 10th Mountain Division and native of Philadelphia, takes a moment to pray with fellow ushers prior to services held at Enduring Faith chapel, April 10. Dawson serves as an usher during her deployment to Afghanistan and says the fellowship brings her a measure of peace. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon PAO)



10th CAB Soldiers commemorate fallen aviators

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

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – May 5th marked five years since the crew aboard a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, call sign Colossal 31, were killed when their aircraft went down in Kunar province while conducting combat operations in 2006.

The six aviators were

all members of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th Mountain Division (LI), of Fort Drum, N.Y.

Since the original Co. B, 3rd Bn., 10th Avn. Regt., was transferred and attached to another task force in March, Co. B, 1st Bn., 168th Avn. Regt., a National Guard unit

from Washington state, attached to 3rd Bn., 10th Avn. Regt., Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon, was asked if they would dedicate a flight May 5 from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, to honor those who gave their lives five years ago.

The six aviators who were lost that day were U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Eric W. Totten, U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher B. Donaldson, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Christopher T. Howick, U.S. Army Sgt. Bryan A. Brewster, U.S. Army Sgt. John C. Griffith, and U.S. Army

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Robert Hearon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon, conducted a moment of silence in front of the CH-47 Chinook helicopter whose crew dedicated their flight May 5 to Colossal 31, the call sign of the crew of six who were killed May 5, 2006. Hearon is a native of Greenville, S.C. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)



Sgt. Jeffery S. Wiekamp.

U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Robert Hearon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Bn., 10th Avn. Regt., TF Phoenix, 10th CAB, 10th Mtn. Div., TF Falcon, conducted a moment of silence in front of the CH-47 conducting the Colossal 31 dedication flight.

“I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the men of Colossal 31,” said U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Robert Hearon, TF Phoenix chaplain from Greenville, S.C., “Their unfortunate passing is a reminder to us all of the price that’s paid for freedom. May their memories live on forever, and may their families be blessed!”

Those who were in 10th CAB during the event expressed varying emotions. Many who were close to those on Colossal 31 found it difficult to find the words to express themselves.

“I find myself trying not to think of the loss that was sustained five years ago,” said U.S. Army First Sgt. William Howard, the current first sergeant of Co. B “Colossal”, 3rd Battalion, 10th Avn. Regt., which is currently attached to TF Shooter, 10th CAB, 10th Mtn. Div., TF Falcon, “For those of us who knew them we’ll remember them in our own way.”

Co. B, 3rd Bn., 10th Avn. Regt. does some-

thing each year to honor those who have fallen, said Howard. This year, the unit is providing a tribute to each fallen aviator by painting each name on a Chinook.

“If you were to walk the “Colossal” flight line here at (Forward Operating Base) Fenty, you (would) find that every aircraft is emblazoned with the red and white of the U.S. Cavalry flag,” said Howard, “By (May 5), each flag will have (the name of) one of the six Soldiers from Colossal 31 painted in the white portion of the flag on every aircraft.”

Memorial ceremonies are meant to honor the sacrifices of the fallen and their Families, said

U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Dvorsky, command sergeant major of TF Phoenix, 10th CAB, 10th Mtn. Div., TF Falcon.

“This year, not unlike each year since the event, we honor those Soldiers and Families who provided the ultimate sacrifice to their country,” said Dvorsky, of Trumbull, Conn., “The least we can do to recognize our fallen aviators is take a few moments out of our day to remember those who have given their lives to the unit and country.”



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Company B, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, a National Guard unit from Washington State, attached to 3rd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, TF Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon, begin a CH-47 Chinook helicopter flight from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, May 5. The flight was dedicated in honor of six Soldiers who lost their lives five years ago. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)

TF ODIN pilot recalls two decades of overcoming obstacles, experiencing unique opportunities as a female aviator

By U.S. Army Spc. Morgan McAfee
Task Force ODIN

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Growing up in Myrtle Beach, S.C., in a home with two brothers, U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kelley Caudle's father never held her back because she was his only daughter.

"He would say, don't give up before you try, and my mom always said I couldn't do it because I was a girl." Said Caudle, currently a C-12 aircraft pilot with Task Force ODIN-A, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon.

Caudle cites her father for giving her the determination and values she has today. He challenged her to soar to new heights on her sweet sixteen.

"My dad got me a few flight lessons at a flight school in Conway, S.C., for my 16th birthday, but I was still in high school playing softball and doing teenage stuff, so I wasn't sure if I wanted to do this for a career."

Following high school, she attended the University of South Carolina and earned a history degree in 1988.

"I had a few jobs after college, and I wasn't happy being an office manager, so I went back to the same flight school in Conway," Caudle said.

She called a former boyfriend from high school, who had since become an aviation warrant officer, and began asking questions about how to become a pilot in the Army. He tried to convince her to go into the Air Force but the wait list to go to the board was a year long.

With her mind set, she headed off to the recruiter's office, and they tried to persuade her to become a lieutenant because she had a degree, but there was no guarantee of getting into flight school, she said.

"I joined so I could fly, so I applied for Warrant Officer Flight School," said Caudle.

The path to become a warrant officer in 1990 was much different from current day procedures. Caudle went to basic training with enlisted soldiers as a private first class, and on graduation day, she was given a conditional promotion to sergeant on the condition that she graduates Warrant Officer Candidate School.

She attended Warrant Officer Candidate School, and graduated flight school with a certification to fly the UH-1H Huey helicopter.

"It was challenging going through WOC and flight school, I felt like the fifth wheel," Caudle recalled. "You knew some of the females that were in classes in front or behind you, but you didn't spend any time with them. The guys were stand-offish, no one wanted to be the first to be your stickman and fly with you until you could prove you knew what you were doing".

After eight months, Caudle graduated flight school in 1991. As part of the three-day graduation festivities, she was discharged for one day, pinned Warrant Officer 1 the second day, and received her aviation wings the final day.

"The Gulf War was just starting, so everyone in my class got a transition to the OH-58D Kiowa helicopter," she explained. "At the time the 58D was still considered for combat only, so only males could fly it. I had a choice between a Black Hawk and a Chinook, so I picked the Black Hawk."

Even through the trials and hardships in Warrant Officer Candidate and Flight Schools, she says she has always thought of those for whom she paved the way.

"What about the girl behind me? I have to do my best to make it better for her," Caudle said.

At every unit she goes to, she tries to lay the groundwork for a successful tour for the next woman to follow.

In 1999 she returned to Fort Rucker to work at Warrant Officer Candidate School as a training advisory council officer, which is similar to a drill sergeant for warrant officers. Caudle said she has been to Korea twice, Bosnia, Kosovo, Germany, and Japan. This is her first tour to Afghanistan.

Caudle recalls several memorable experiences as a pilot, but two stand out: an assignment to the Golden Knights Parachute Team as a pilot, during which she had the honor of flying former President George Bush Sr. on his 80th birthday, and his son, President George Bush Jr.; and an assignment in 2009 to U.S.

Army Priority Air Transport at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., during which she flew Gen. George Casey, Army Chief of Staff, to Afghanistan, and frequently transported then Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston.

With almost 22 years in the service, Caudle has become certified to fly a variety of aircraft: the UH-1H Huey and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, the C-12 King Air, the twin-engine Otter, the Fokker, the UC-35 and the GV5 transport aircraft.

Caudle said the GV5 aircraft took the longest to learn to fly.

"The GV5 has the nicest Army cooks," she said. "They usually come from Ft. Hood where the culinary school is, and they make some awesome food with real silverware and garnish the meals. These are the planes used to fly the secretary of the Army, vice chief of staff and generals"

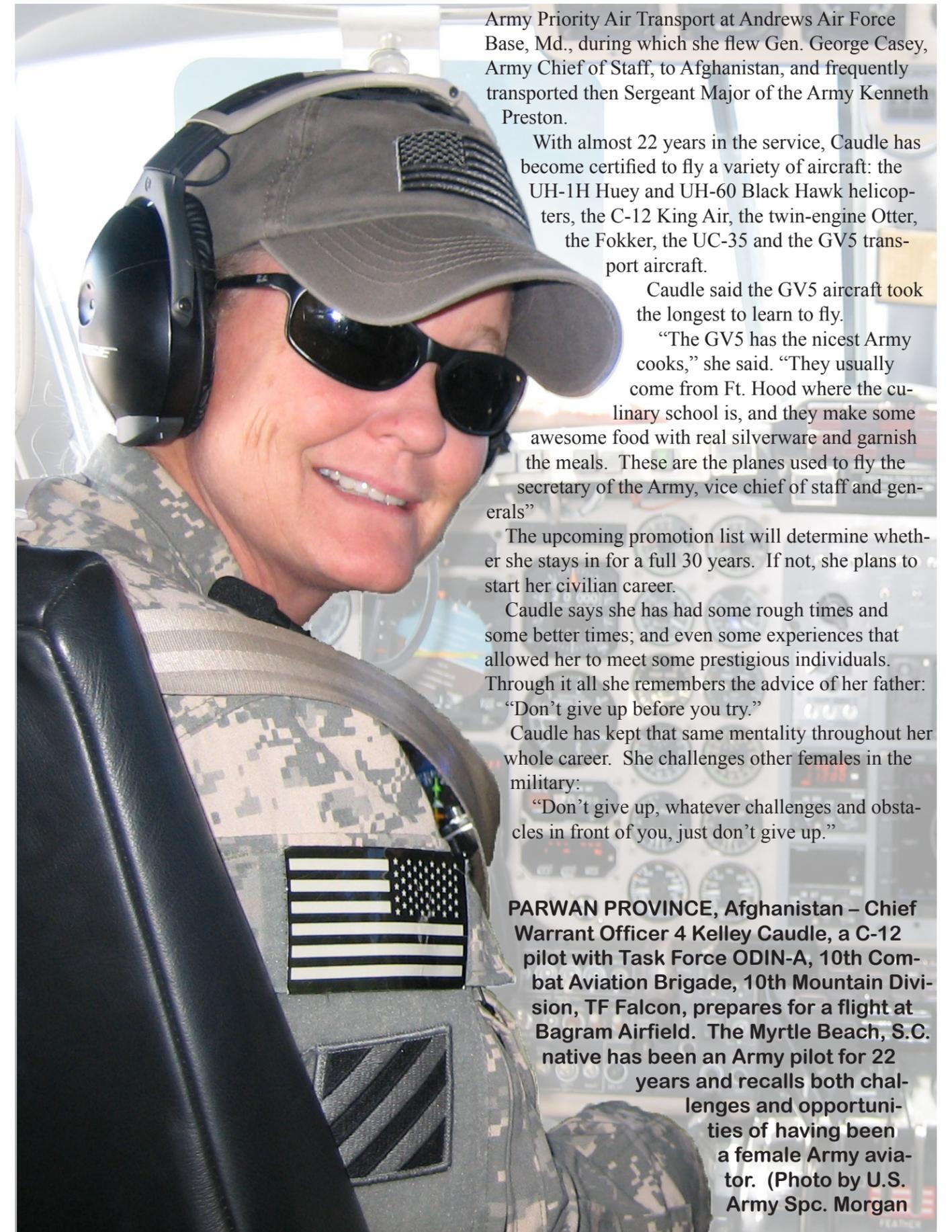
The upcoming promotion list will determine whether she stays in for a full 30 years. If not, she plans to start her civilian career.

Caudle says she has had some rough times and some better times; and even some experiences that allowed her to meet some prestigious individuals. Through it all she remembers the advice of her father: "Don't give up before you try."

Caudle has kept that same mentality throughout her whole career. She challenges other females in the military:

"Don't give up, whatever challenges and obstacles in front of you, just don't give up."

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kelley Caudle, a C-12 pilot with Task Force ODIN-A, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon, prepares for a flight at Bagram Airfield. The Myrtle Beach, S.C. native has been an Army pilot for 22 years and recalls both challenges and opportunities of having been a female Army aviator. (Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Morgan



TF Shooter's TOC monitors the battle space on the ground, in the air

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

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – With U.S. Army Task Force Shooter's flying mission, Soldier's in the TF's tactical operation center must stay on task around the clock to ensure mission success in their battle space – something they do well according to the unit's executive officer.

"The Soldiers working in the tactical operations center are hidden heroes. They won't earn a combat action badge or an air medal for what they do, but they make sure that everyone receives the information they need to survive on the battlefield," said 1st Lt. Katherine Robinson, executive officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Shooter, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Falcon.

The chemical officer from Liverpool, N.Y., knows all about TOC operations. Robinson served as the battle captain during the squadron's year-long deployment to Iraq in 2008-2009 and served as the battle captain for the current deployment before moving to her new duty position in April as the XO.

"It's a job that needs complete focus," said Robinson. "You're tracking so many different sources of information. You have to track what's going on in several dif-

ferent areas simultaneously, but you also have to understand and verify that information before passing it on."

Nearly 30 Soldiers make up the TF Shooter tactical operations center. The TOC of any unit requires continuous observation, coordination and management. Each subsection within the TOC monitors an element of the mission, providing information to the Soldiers in the field while keeping the rest of the TOC updated on progress. Basically, these Soldiers guide their fellow Soldiers on the battlefield through a mission.

The TF Shooter's flying mission adds another dimension to the job because the Soldiers who receive the information from the TOC fly in helicopters above the battlefield.

"You have to really understand the missions our pilots do, their mission briefs, how to translate information from the ground to the air," said U.S. Army Sgt. David Agosto, battle noncommissioned officer for TF Shooter. "Then, you have to keep track of all the different moving pieces."

The battle captain maintains line-of-sight communications for each section, provides the overall battle picture for the team and offers input on the fluid tempo

of operations. The battle NCO assists the battle captain by managing shifts, schedules, equipment, details and maintaining that clear picture of the battlefield. As U.S. Army Spc. Brian Sanchez of El Paso, Texas, discovered, you have to learn your role quickly to keep up.

"It's behind the scenes work, but we're really the first responders," said Sanchez, who works one of the battle NCO shifts. "We immediately go into action mode to figure out how we can help."

Not only does the action take place behind the scenes, it often goes on for hours. The TF Shooter TOC Soldiers agree there's no such thing as a regular shift.

"Even at the end of a normal shift, it takes at least 20 minutes to brief the next battle NCO," said Agosto. "Sometimes, most times, there's too much going on to just hand off, so you hang around to make sure everyone knows what's going on. When I feel that they're ready to completely take over, then I go."

Sanchez agreed.

"You can easily work more than 14 hours on a shift," said Sanchez. "You have to make sure your replacement knows what's going on in the fight."

"We don't even leave to eat. A runner brings back to-go boxes from the chow hall for everyone. So, we eat around each other and you become a family," said Robinson. "But, that's what makes it so great!"

Pilots who interact with the TF Shooter TOC realize its importance.

"I cannot understate the importance of the effective TOC operations in this dynamic environment," said

U.S. Army Maj. Jaysen Yochim of Newhall, Calif., an AH-64D Apache helicopter pilot who also serves as the operations section officer-in-charge. "Whether it is responding to a troops-in-contact, coordinating for a MEDEVAC that requires armed escort, or re-synchronizing a VIPs mission itinerary, the TOC does it all."

Due to the sensitive nature of the work, the TOC is mostly self-contained. Few Soldiers outside of the section come through the work area, even if they belong to the unit. The dimensions of the work space also keep everyone working in close proximity.

"When you spend all that time in a 6-by-6 space, and you have to learn to communicate with each other, you kind of become family - my TOC family," said Sanchez.

According to Agosto, the outcome for the people of Afghanistan makes the long hours and demanding responsibilities worthwhile.

"In my personal opinion ... (the Afghan people) need our help. The democracy we enjoy back home doesn't exist here. Almost everything here is settled with violence. (The TOC is) not an easy job, but if it changes things, it's worth it," said Agosto.

Robinson said the satisfaction at the end of the day comes from the humble Soldiers she works with during those long hours.

"These guys work so hard to make sure that everyone gets what they need. Even if you praise them for what they do they shrug it off as just doing their job," Robinson. "But they're the heartbeat of the squadron."



JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. Army 1st Lt. Katherine Robinson fields a question from her work station. Robinson, the executive officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, Task Force Shooter, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, TF Falcon, and a native of Liverpool, N.Y., spent the majority of her time with the squadron as a battle captain in the tactical operations center. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)



JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Brian Sanchez and Sgt. David Agosto discuss possible courses of action to take based on information they received in the tactical operations center of Task Force Shooter, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. Sanchez, of El Paso, Texas, works one shift as the battle noncommissioned officer and says he is learning the intricacies of the battle NCO position from Agosto, a native of Vega Baja, Puerto Rico. Both Soldiers serve as battle NCOs in the TF Shooter TOC. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)

Task Force Eagle Soldiers Aids FOB Bostic Communication



Pfc. Arnold Smith with Charlie Company, 277th Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Re-directs communication lines under a main traffic route at FOB Bostick, Kunar Province, Afghanistan on April 24, 2011 (Photo Pfc. Justin Espada, Task Force Eagle)



Pfc. Matthew Smith with Charlie Company, 277th Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Clears debris to ensure an unhindered cable run at FOB Bostick, Kunar Province, Afghanistan on April 24, 2011 (Photo Pfc. Justin Espada)

1Lt. Ibrahima Diallo and Sgt. William Crismon with Charlie Company, 277th Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Ascend rooftops to repair communication links at FOB Bostick, Kunar Province, Afghanistan on April 21, 2011 (Photo Pfc. Justin Espada)



Task Force Shooter Changes Leaders, Recognizes Troops



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, Task Force Shooter commander, passes the Alpha Troop guidon to Capt. Thomas Jones, incoming commander of Alpha Troop, during the Change of Command ceremony May 9, on Jalalabad Airfield. (Photo Courtesy of Spc. Eric Carson)



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Capt. Michael Farrell, outgoing Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, Task Force Six Shooter, commander, a native of Seattle, passes the guidon to Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, Task Force Shooter commander, for the last time relinquishing command May 8 on Jalalabad Airfield.

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Capt. Michael Farrell, Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, Task Force Shooter, commander, receives his golden deployment spurs from Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, TF Shooter commander, before the Bravo Company Change of Command Ceremony May 8 on Jalalabad Airfield.



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Before relinquishing command of Task Force Six Shooter's Alpha Troop, Capt. Scott Wohlford of Watertown, N.Y., receives his golden deployment spurs from Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, TF Shooter commander and 1st. Sgt. David Barrett, Alpha Troop first sergeant.



TF Falcon Aviation Consolidated Aid Station continues to expand and evolve

By U.S Army Sgt. Mary Jones and Sgt. 1st Class James West
Task Force Mountain Eagle

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – While the Task Force Falcon Aviation Consolidated Aid Station may be small and only have the capabilities of a Role I aid station, it is continually growing and expanding. Medics from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Falcon, as well as medics from TF Falcon’s subordinate task forces, TF Mountain Eagle, TF Phoenix, and TF ODIN run two aid stations at Bagram Airfield. They have a 24-hour aid station at Camp Albert and have expanded to the east side of the airfield where they are currently running a second aid station on the flight line, which is operational from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily.

The TF Falcon Aid Station sets itself apart from other aid stations by having audiology testing capabilities which allows the aid station to complete flight physicals, school physicals (Airborne and Special Forces), and commissioning physicals. The TF Falcon Aid Station has the only hearing booth in a Role I medical facility in Regional Command-East, Afghanistan, and administers over 40 hearing tests every week. This is an asset that allows Soldiers to continue their mission with as little disruption as possible.

The medics of the TF Falcon Aid Station teach non medical Soldiers



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Falcon, Soldiers drag a casualty during the practical exercise phase of Combat Life Saver training. The class of 45 Soldiers was the largest conducted here since the beginning of the deployment, said Maj. Jaime Torres, TF Falcon flight surgeon. TF Falcon medics provide a wide range of medical support throughout the task force. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, TF Falcon)

from the task force the skills to become certified combat lifesavers. Under the supervision of U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Shareef Stokely, a treatment non-commissioned officer with HSC, TF Mountain Eagle, Soldiers of 10th CAB undergo rigorous training on how to

treat casualties on the battle field. This training includes how to keep an airway open by using a nasal pharyngeal airway, proper application of a tourniquet, stopping bleeding and how to load patients into evacuation vehicles. The class ends with a written exam and

hands-on lane training where the students take turns being patients and treating injuries.

“This is one of the most important ways we can assist Soldiers, by making sure that they can take care of each other in an emergency” said Stokely, a native of Eastover, S.C.

The medics of TF Mountain Eagle participate in Mass Casualty (MASCAL) exercises to maintain and improve readiness. During one recent joint exercise with TF Red Bull, the east side medics were notified of several patients that TF Red Bull could not evacuate. The medics of TF Mountain Eagle responded to the scene and were able to triage, treat and evacuate four patients from Camp Warrior to the Warrior Aid Station. This exercise was not only challenging but educational for the medics. It allowed them to practice treating patients in an adverse setting. This cooperation and mutual sharing of

resources were tested in the hopes that it would never have to be used.

The members of the TF Mountain Eagle evacuation squad work with the other companies of the task force. When Company A has a convoy logistic patrol, it is a requirement to take a medic on the mission. U.S. Army Spc. Ryan Gurtner of Palaski, Pa., and U.S. Army Spc. Wesley O’Connor of Kinsey, Ala., ambulance aid/drivers with HHC, TF Mountain Eagle, have worked extensively with Co. A’s transportation platoon for these missions. They have taught the members of the company how to provide self-aid, buddy-aid, and how to load a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected ambulance. In addition, when Co. A conducts live-fire exercises; they provide medical coverage for them.

“The training puts our skills to the test,” said Gurtner, a native of Palaski, Pa. “I hope we never have to use these skills on real patients.”

The evacuation squad is also tasked to take part in aircraft recovery operations. When personnel of Co. B go to recover an aircraft, they take members of the evacuation squad to provide medical care to the Soldiers who are working on the broken aircraft. They have also taught the members of Co. B about altitude sickness, high altitude pulmonary edema and high altitude cerebral edema.

The TF Falcon Aid Station is continuously growing and changing. The medics continue to grow and improve their medical skill each and every week with lectures, classes, and presentations from the doctors and physician assistants. The doctors take extra time from their busy schedule and give one on one instruction to the medics to help them grow professionally. This allows for a complete and improved experience for all patients seen at the TF Falcon Aid Station.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Falcon, Soldiers prepare to load a casualty into an ambulance during the practical exercise phase of Combat Life Saver training. The class of 45 Soldiers was the largest conducted here since the beginning of the deployment, said Maj. Jaime Torres, TF Falcon flight surgeon. TF Falcon medics provide a wide range of medical support throughout the task force. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, TF Falcon)

TF Gambler pilot remembered at FOB Sharana

OPERATING BASE SHARANA, Afghanistan – Soldiers and Friends of Task Force Gambler held a memorial ceremony here in remembrance of a fallen pilot May 28.

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Thibodeau, an AH-64 Apache helicopter pilot with Company C “Sidewinders”, TF Gambler, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Infantry Division, attached to TF Falcon, 10th CAB,

10th Mountain Div., died May 26 during a mission in Paktika province.

The memorial was held just outside of the TF Gambler tactical operations center here with the Chesterland, Ohio, native’s photo, rifle, boots, helmet, and
(continued pg. 24)

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHARANA, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Lt. Col. Charles Bowery, the commander of Task Force Dragon, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, pays his respects here May 28, to U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Thibodeau, an AH-64 Apache helicopter pilot who was killed while conducting a mission in Paktika province May 26. Bowery was Thibodeau’s commander before the pilot was assigned to fly with TF Gambler, 4th CAB, 4th ID, attached to TF Falcon, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Div. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, TF Falcon Public Affairs)



identification tags prominently displayed.

“Chris died doing what he loved doing and what he volunteered to do, flying. Just like all of us he signed up to serve this great country,” said U.S. Army Capt. Casey Rumpfelt of Bolivar, Mo., the commander of Co. C “Sidewinders”. “The biggest compliment he gave to me about the Sidewinders was how he

wanted to stay one of us when we got back to Hood and on to Bliss. He looked me right in the eye and said ‘Sir, fight for me...’ with that I guaranteed him that I would; and I’ll never stop. Chris will always and forever be a Sidewinder, even after the colors have been cased.”

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Charles Bowery of Quinton, Va., the commander of Task Force Dragon and

Thibodeau’s former commander, highlighted the fallen pilot’s professional skills.

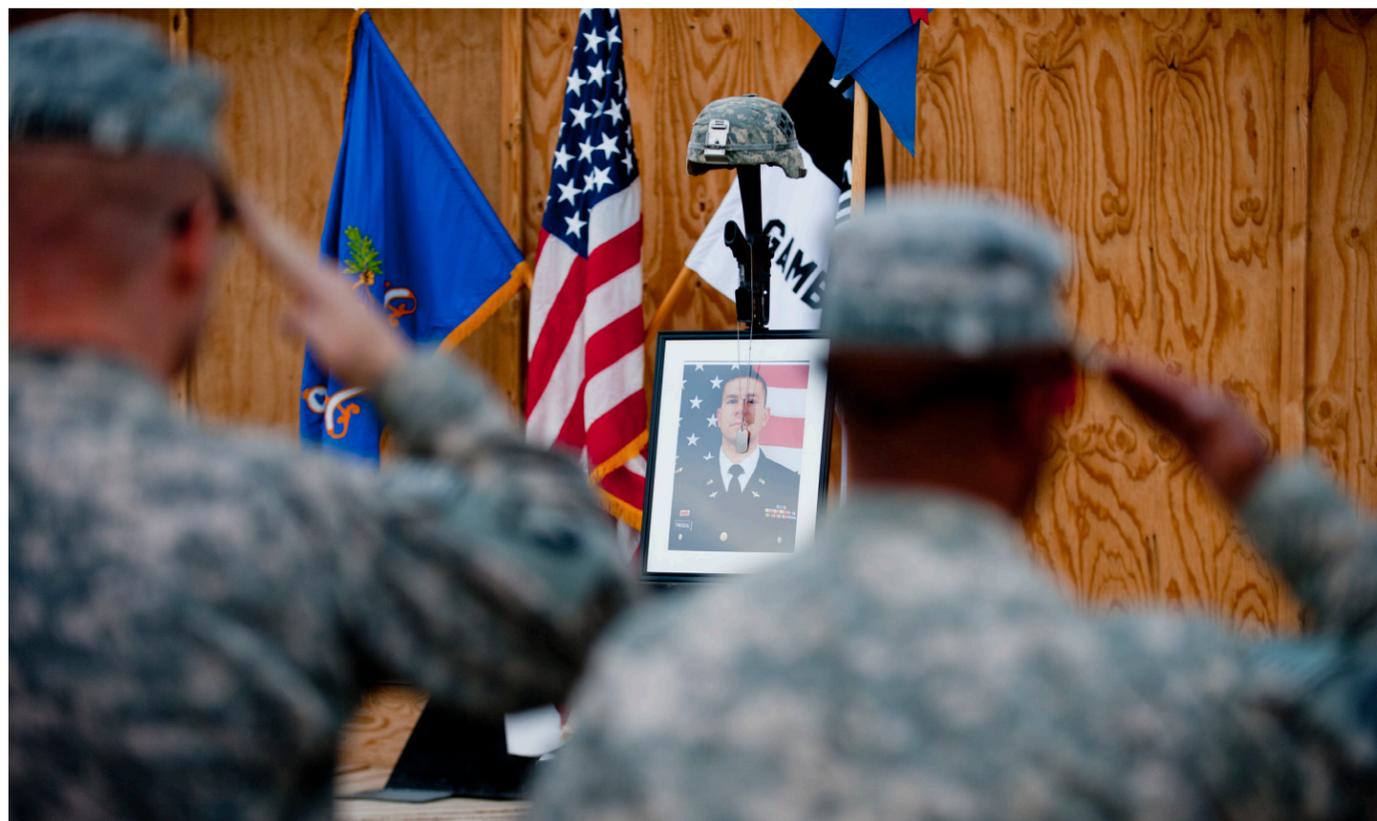
“Chris impressed me with one salient character trait- enthusiasm and a willingness to pitch in to any task,” said Bowery. “He worked hard at learning his trade as a pilot.”

Thibodeau is survived by his wife, Leesandra Thibodeau, and parents, Bob and Do-

reen Thibodeau.

Thibodeau’s awards include the Air Medal, two Army Achievement Medals, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Non-commissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon and the Army Service Ribbon.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHARANA, Afghanistan – Soldiers with Task Force Gambler, an aviation unit from 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, attached to TF Falcon, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Division, pay their final respects here May 28 to U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Thibodeau, an AH-64 Apache helicopter pilot. Thibodeau died two days prior while conducting a mission in Paktika province. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, TF Falcon Public Affairs)



FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHARANA, Afghanistan – Soldiers with Task Force Gambler, an aviation unit from 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, attached to TF Falcon, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Division, pay their final respects here May 28 to U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Thibodeau, an AH-64 Apache helicopter pilot with TF Gamber. Thibodeau died two days prior while conducting a mission in Paktika province. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, TF Falcon Public Affairs)





In Memory of Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Thibodeau



October 3, 1982 - May 26, 2011

Eye of the Falcon

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Capt. Sean Pearl of Dover, N.H., checks equipment after his night shift aboard a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. The CH-47 pilot of Company B, 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment, Task Force Knighthawk, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade has been working with the National Guard units since his arrival on Forward Operating Base, Shank. The 1-168th has since redeployed to the U.S. (Photo by Sgt. Janell Emerson, Task Force Knighthawk)

