



NORMANDY NOW

29th Combat Aviation Brigade – Task Force Normandy

DESERT BLADES. CAMP BUEHRING, KUWAIT.

DESERT HAWKS SOAR



By Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington,
29th CAB Public Affairs

The 29th Combat Aviation Brigade recently conducted the first bilateral Army Aviation event between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

The 29th Combat Aviation Brigade deployed a mix of UH-60 Blackhawks and AH-64 Apaches, during Exercise Desert Hawk, to train with the Saudi 1st Aviation Group.

“We wanted to provide the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade the opportunity to work with other nations,” said Col. George E. Cone Jr., assistant chief of staff for training and exercises, U.S. Army Central Command.

Task Force Quickstrike, commanded by Lt. Col. Stephen Murphy, 3rd Attack

Reconnaissance Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, included AH-64 Apache helicopters and UH-60 Blackhawks from the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment. The task force included more than 100 Soldiers including pilots and maintainers, as well as support and command staff. The 3-159th is one of the newest elements under the 29th CAB and among four Active Duty units to have served under the 29th CAB during this deployment.

“[The idea for the exercise] came about when Col. George Cone and I sat down and discussed ways to better train our forces and better ways for us to engage our allies and friends in the theater,” said Col. David Carey, commander of the 29th CAB. “We will be able to set the stage for our follow-on unit, the 35th CAB out of

Missouri. Normally, it would take a year to set something like this exercise up; we did it in only 90 days.”

The exercise began with an opening ceremony featuring introductions from participant commanders and a Soldier’s promotion to specialist. The task force conducted day and night operations, convoy

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NORMANDY NOW

Commander:

~Col. David Carey

Command Sergeant Major:

~Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard

Public Affairs Officer:

~1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner

Design:

~Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington

Contributors:

~Chaplain (Maj.) William Butler

~1st. Lt. Carley Salmon

~Spc. Matthew Magreta

COMMANDER'S CORNER



It may seem tempting to start winding down our workload as we prepare to redeploy. On the contrary! We are still going stronger than ever. In June, we participated in Exercise Desert Hawk. This exercise was the first bilateral Army Aviation event between the United States and the Royal Saudi Army Aviation Forces in the last 20 years. Our brigade deployed a mix of Blackhawks and Apaches to train with the Saudi 1st Aviation Group.

We are still pushing forward with the Navy in getting as many aviators as possible deck landing qualified. Our units are training in sling-load and Unit Maintenance Aerial Recovery Kit employment, and we are all completing the periodic Soldier tasks to keep us qualified in physical fitness and marksmanship when we return home.

The amazing thing is that we are accomplishing this training all while

working diligently to move three battalions and the brigade headquarters back to the states. It is absolutely vital that we maintain continuity in our operations and set the conditions for a successful transfer of authority to the 35th CAB.

In football terms, much of the brigade is in the fourth quarter of a tied game. We have been working hard throughout the game, but now is the time when we have to step up and give that extra effort to bring it home. We may be in field goal range, but this team is going to push through to the goal line.

As always, I am extremely proud of all of you and the incredible jobs you are doing. Keep it up, and we will all come home with a deep sense of accomplishment from a job well-done.

Thank you all.

“29, Let’s Go!”

David Carey
“Normandy 6”

Many of us are nearing the end of this historic deployment, but we are still working hard to ensure the success of this mission and our legacy in the history books. Every day, this brigade is reaching new heights, and our successes in the face of adversity are staggering.

COMMAND SGT. MAJ.



The 29th CAB’s mission was the most challenging mission that could be asked of a unit: deploy the brigade to Taji, Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn, while simultaneously re-posturing the entire brigade to Kuwait. At the height of our deployment, the 29th CAB had command and control of more than 3,000 Soldiers and 240 aircraft. The work of our Soldiers at the end of OND will be written about in the history books.

As OND ended, one of units, Company B, 1-111th, was sent to Afghanistan. Consider this: on December 18, 2011, the Chinooks of Company B were the last aircraft to fly out of Iraq. Within 45 days, many of those same Chinooks and aircrews were in Afghanistan flying combat missions. This was no easy feat, as our maintainers had to rebuild bank time through phase maintenance, and our movement personnel had to get the aircraft and Soldiers to Kandahar.

After arriving at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, we received our new ARCENT mission. Our AH-64D Apache battalion became the first in the U.S. Army to become qualified to land on Navy ship decks. We worked with our infantry brothers on air assaults and related actions. We worked on improving both crew and maintainer training to increase combat power. We undertook engagements with our regional partners to improve working relationships and increase interoperability. We did not “take a knee”, but to the contrary, we were poised to execute a variety of missions.

I can’t thank you, your Families and loved ones enough for your support. I am proud to be your brigade CSM, and I know I will never forget our times together. Continue your outstanding professionalism and let us work together to make sure we all return safely home.

29, Let’s Go!

Thomas Beyard
“Normandy 7”

I was reflecting last week on the accomplishments of the 29th CAB since we mobilized last year. I could not be more proud of the work of our Soldiers. Working in a climate of constant change, our Soldiers overcame the challenges and persevered. We are the best trained aviation brigade in the U.S. Army.

. . . *DESERT HAWK From Front*

security in support of ground movements, UH-60 simulator training, a joint combined arms simulated air assault, site reconnaissance, sling load and cordon and search missions. The exercise scenarios were designed to portray realistic, modern-day security challenges.

The combined-arms air assault was the culminating event. It combined all the other missions executed on previous days. The U.S. and Saudi Arabian militaries produced a joint operations order and mission analysis brief.

Soldiers conducted classes on Aviation Support to Counter Insurgency Operations, M-240B machine gun marksmanship, aviation ground support equipment and combat life saving techniques. All service members conducted briefings to show how the two nations can refine interoperability among operations, equipment and procedures. Soldiers from the two nations even gathered for an evening basketball game.

Task Force Quickstrike Soldiers experienced the partner nation culture first-hand during a dedicated cultural day. The Soldiers participated in traditional dances and rituals while eating traditional food like tea, coffee and dates.



Soldiers even wore traditional Arab clothing. military relationships and promote regional stability.

“If you look at where we were and where we are now, by all accounts we’ve been very successful. Our hosts are extremely grateful for everything this task force accomplished in a short period of time,” said Murphy. “I’m leaving here very grateful for the way I was received and grateful for the opportunity to share time with our host.”

Exercises like Desert Hawk are designed to improve military interoperability. These exercises strengthen the units’ capabilities in planning and conducting combat operations to combat terrorism and irregular threats. In addition, the exercise sought to strengthen military-to-

Desert Hawk was a Theater Support Cooperation exercise. The United States routinely conducts TSC missions with its partners in the USARCENT Area of Responsibility in order to establish or enhance relationships with friendly regional militaries.

“We never know what the future will hold. We don’t know if we’ll have to fight tomorrow, next month or next year. The time we spend together training makes us ready to fight together tomorrow,” said Maj. Gen. Gary Cheek, the deputy commanding general of USARCENT. “We look forward to future exercises, opportunities and growing this into a bigger exercise.”



GENERALS LAND AT NORMANDY

By Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington,
29th CAB Public Affairs

Top officers from Maryland, Rhode Island and Kansas saw excellence in action recently while visiting Task Force Normandy Soldiers in the hot Kuwaiti sun.

Maj. Gen. Kevin McBride, the adjutant general of Rhode Island, Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas, and Maj. Gen. James Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland, saw Task Force Normandy's hard work and dedication first hand at Camp Buering, Kuwait, July 11-12, 2012.

The general officers and their senior enlisted leaders met with Soldiers from their respective states in order to gauge morale and preparedness.

"Because of the strategic importance of this region and the resources that are here, we never know what mission-set this unit (Kansas-based 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment) is going to have to be called upon to do," said Tafanelli. "When you can put years worth of training opportunities in an 11-month

period, that's phenomenal from a unit readiness standpoint."

Many of the brigade's battalions consist of units from multiple states, so the generals saw the wide range of operations their Soldiers conduct.

Adkins visited a number of Maryland units including F Co., 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, an air traffic control company, C Co. 1204th Aviation Support Battalion, a communications unit, and Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, which provides command and control for the brigade.

"I'm proud of what the troops are doing, and they should be proud of what they are doing," said Adkins. "They've picked up the torch from the greatest generation, are serving their nation well and making history."

The Rhode Island-based 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, flies UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters as well as the C-12 Huron and the UC-35 Citation fixed-wing aircraft.

McBride, a former commander of the 1-126th,

commented on the number of new faces in the unit, but remarked that bringing in new Soldiers is good for the organization.

The Joint Monthly Access to Reserve Components program is a U.S. Central Command-sponsored program. It serves as the primary mechanism for the Reserve Components, both Reserve and National Guard, General/Flag Officers and their senior enlisted leaders to visit Reserve and National Guard Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines serving in Afghanistan and Kuwait.

The JMARC's primary goal is to enable leaders to see, first hand, the contributions of their brave men and women, who are serving on the cutting edge of freedom. This allows a senior officer perspective of the challenges and progress of not only their warriors serving in uniform, but also the progress of the coalition effort.

"It's great to get here and see the organization perform its wartime mission and seeing them do it successfully. It's good to see the partnership with the different units that make up the aviation brigade," said McBride.



Maj. Gen. James Adkins, the adjutant general of Maryland receives token of appreciation from the 29th CAB.



Maj. Gen. Lee Tafanelli, the adjutant general of Kansas chats with troops working on the flight line.



Maj. Gen. Kevin McBride, the adjutant general of Rhode Island speaks with brigade staff after a briefing.

NEW TRICKS FOR DEVIL DOGS

By 1st Lt. Carley Salmon,
1-126th GSAB
Unit Public Affairs Representative

Task Force Liberty Soldiers taught a group of Devil Dogs new tricks, during a recent joint training exercise here in the Kuwaiti desert.

Earlier this month, Mechanized Marines of A Co., 1st Battalion, 2nd Regiment, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, rode in their first Black Hawks with A Co. 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment.

During the passenger brief, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Gunderson, A Co. 2-147th platoon sergeant and crew chief, gave the Marines the proper air sickness procedures, but these Marines were no strangers to bumpy rides. The Marines operate Amphibious Assault Vehicles. They drop off the back of a ship into the water and make their way to shore, so they were not swayed by rough air.

Battalion Commander, Marine Lt. Col. David Sosa, expressed how the majority of his Marines had never been in an Army Black Hawk.



For some, it was their first helicopter ride period.

The battalion has had the opportunity to work with coalition forces from Morocco and Jordan so far this tour, and this is their first time working with US Army. Even at home-station that opportunity is scarce.

The training was an opportunity for Marines to execute urban patrols while using alternate assets for insertion and extraction. Each platoon went through “cold load” training and familiarized themselves with the aircraft prior to the operation. Marines practiced getting in and out of the helicopter, with all their gear, in a matter of seconds.

The 2-147th inserted the Marines into the dusty landing zone, during the execution phase, . During patrol operations, the Marines simulated medical evacuation scenarios, and C Co., 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, extracted patients.

Different services use different terminology, so the aerial aspect of the training was a great opportunity to work on the ground to air communications.

“This was a great opportunity for Marines to build confidence on the radio talking to pilots,” said Marine Sgt. Jared Green. He was the unfortunate “victim” for the first MEDEVAC scenario.

Task Force Liberty aircraft later extracted the Marines from the LZ back to base under night conditions.

“Training like this is not complete and fulfilling if you do not get both aspects –day and NVG (night-vision goggles)-executed,” said Capt. Shannon Gregory, A Co. 2-147th commander.

The 24th MEU Marines will continue joint force training with the Black Hawks and AH-64 Apache assets during their time here.



NORMANDY SOLDIERS ‘KNOCK-OUT’ COMPETITION



By Spc. Matthew Magretta,
1-111th GSAB
Unit Public Affairs Representative

Two Soldiers from the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade are headed to Fort Hood, not for demobilization, but to represent United States Army Central Command in the All-Army Combatives Championship.

Maj. Kirk Black and Capt. Michael Jenkins, both from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, will be competing against the best combative fighters the Army has to offer July 26-28. Each Army installation is allowed to send their top athletes as long as they have their post's approval.

“Both Soldiers instruct classes and are great athletes,” Lt. Col. James Lord, 29th CAB executive officer. “They both have an extensive background in combative fighting.”

The bracket-style, double elimination tournament will cover three days with three separate events.

Jujitsu, Pankration, and Mixed Martial Arts are scheduled for the hundreds of competitors. Each event is a different fighting style but combines grappling, wrestling, and open-hand boxing.

“(Jenkins) has an advantage because of his high level of Jujitsu training which is what Army Combatives is based on,” said Black.

Black and Jenkins, entering the cruiser weight division and light heavy weight division respectively, are competing as individuals. One of the biggest challenges they have faced during their deployment has been maintaining a healthy diet.

After training three times a day for several months, both Soldiers anticipate a great experience. However, they are at a disadvantage as their opponents may be better-conditioned at the tournament.

“We are on deployment and have full-time duties,” said Jenkins. “We don’t

have the luxury to practice all day as our challengers do.”

Jenkins won two Modern Army Combative tournaments at Camp Arifjan in April and June. The 28-year-old Maryland native forced his opponents to submit the bout in less than two minutes every round.

Jenkins works as a logistics officer during the day, and he instructs Jujitsu and MMA at Camp Buehring in his free time. He is skilled in the fighting styles of American Kickboxing, Sambo, and Mui-Tay and has been training for over four years.

“I started Jujitsu and MMA as a way to stay in shape, and it just snowballed,” said Jenkins. “Broken toes, broken fingers and torn ACL (anterior cruciate ligaments) are all the result of combatives.”

Jenkins is an amateur fighter back home and hopes to enter the professional

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circuit in the near future. With three “sanctioned” amateur fights, sponsors, and a promoter he would be eligible for a professional match.

“It’s a full-time job and (I have) a lot of hours invested,” remarked Jenkins. “Combatives is violent by nature, and you get bruised up. But it’s one of the most fun things I’ve ever done.”

Black is an Army Combatives instructor and is skilled in the hand-to-

hand technique of Krav Maga. A stand-up fighter by nature, he just wants to get past the first stage of the tournament.

“My strength is to throw strikes at the face that are needed to submit an opponent. I am not trained in grappling, and that will hurt me,” said Black.

The 39-year-old Maryland native wants to be a Level 3 Army Combatives Instructor following his deployment. He wants to organize the program and teach other Soldiers the basics.

“There are only a couple Level 3 instructors in the whole state of Maryland, so it’s important for someone else to step up,” said Black.

Both officers encourage Soldiers to get involved in Army Combatives and learn the basics.

“As a form of training and exercise, it’s great,” said Jenkins. “However, as a sport, it’s rough as you are locked in a cage, and one guy wants to kill you.”

FROM THE CHAPLAIN



By Chaplain (Maj.) William Butler,
29th CAB chaplain

If you’re like me, it’s difficult to maintain focus when you’re thinking about food, or someone that you’re very fond of, or what’s on everyone’s mind now--home. I’m confident that we can finish this deployment successfully if we stay on target not move to the left or to the right.

We have some of the most gifted and talented people in our unit who are working hard to get us back home to our Families safely. However, we must work together to stay focused. Staying focused is like driving on a highway. You are expected to choose one lane to drive in, though there may be lanes to your left and right.

You are expected to stay in your lane and not swerve into other lanes, because if you start to swerve to the left or to the right, you’re an accident waiting to happen. Just thinking about home should motivate us to stay in the right lane. There’s an appropriate time to change lanes, but now is not the time.

Home is where we long to be, the place where we get back to living life again. Home is the place where a loving spouse deserves a big hug and a kiss for doing a great job; or better yet, the place where our school-aged children or grandchildren can’t wait to play with us again.

There are a few of us that have friends or adult children that will be relieved to see us home for good. Let’s help each other stay focus by staying on track and I believe God will bless us to hit the target—Home Sweet Home.

Peace.

INDEPENDENCE DAY ON U.S. SOIL

By Spc. Matthew Magretta,
1-111th GSAB

Unit Public Affairs Representative

Soldiers from the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade were able to relax on Independence Day and spend a few hours on U.S. soil—literally.

Dozens of Normandy troops were among the 250 military personnel invited to celebrate America's birthday at the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait City.

"I have been to many July 4th celebrations overseas, and it's a great thing to bring our troops here and thank them for all they have done," said U.S. Ambassador Matthew Tueller.

Soldiers, sailors, and Airmen of Area Support Group-Kuwait joined hundreds of U.S. civilians in attendance. Everyone enjoyed food, drink, camel rides, water games, party

favorites and music during the late-afternoon event.

With 50 percent of the attendees classified as "military personnel", the Association of the United States Army was in charge of organizing the festivities.

"Our goal is to get the troops off the base and raise their morale," said AUSA Chapter President Randy Williams. "The American Employees Welfare Association provides the volunteers, but we have some great sponsors."

Nine sponsors contributed everything from financial support to dessert trays. American firms and local businesses such as United Airlines, Nestle, and Chili's all took part.

"This is basically a way to say 'thank you' to the troops," said United Airlines Sales Manager Eric Miller. "The Department of Defense is our number one

customer, so you can bet the relationship is very close."

Each water activity was a rare opportunity for the service members to get wet. "Sud Soccer", played on an enclosed plastic field filled with soap and water, was very popular.

"The water felt great as that kid sprayed me with the hose," said Capt. Patrick Rogers, Headquarters Support Co., 1204th Aviation Support Battalion. "It was hard to stand up straight, but I wasn't really trying."

Most brigade Soldiers believed the food was the highlight of the trip. Catered by a local Chili's restaurant, the meal was regional cuisine you would find in the Middle East.

"Humus and shish-kabob was definitely the best part. The chicken fajitas were fantastic. A huge improve-

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ment over the DFAC (dining facility),” said Spc. Julie Otero, D Co., 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment.

Most Soldiers were surprised by the environment, as this was their first visit to the U.S. Embassy.

“I was expecting something different. It’s very cozy in the courtyard, and there is grass, which is nice,” said Sgt. 1st Class William Komma, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment. “It’s strange to see kids running around.”

Others felt the U.S. Embassy, as a structure, was perplexing and slightly unusual.

“I was expecting a simple

large office building,” said Otero. “I suppose it depends on the host nation, but there are no Soldiers with guns like in the movies.”

Despite a weather warning and the chance of high winds, the event went on as scheduled.

“We wanted everyone to enjoy themselves, but we were concerned about the sandstorms,” said AEWA Coordinator Claire Quirke.

The U.S. Embassy hosts this event every Fourth of July. With participation from the AUSA and ASG-KU, every

deployed Soldier has an opportunity to celebrate the nation’s birthday on U.S. Soil.

“I came here to wish the Soldiers a happy Fourth of July and thank the embassy,” said Deputy Commander of ASG-KU Maj. Gen. Gary Cheek. “This is a great annual event, and that will continue into the future.”



RECOGNIZING SOLDIERS



(From left) Staff Sgt. John Bartram, A Co. 1204th ASB, Sgt. James Higdon, Headquarters Support Co. 1204th ASB, Sgt. 1st Class Lani Garcia, 2-58th AOB and others receive certificates of Achievement for their efforts in coordinating the recent 29th CAB Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony. (see more photos at www.flickr.com/29thcab)



Spc. Peter Hollands, HHC 29th CAB and several other 29th CAB Soldiers receive certificates of achievement from Task Force 3.1 Commander, Col. John Rogers for their hard work in setting up Task Force 3.1's operations. (see more photos at www.flickr.com/29thcab)



Capt. Peter Goff, 29th CAB intelligence officer, is promoted to major during a ceremony at Camp Buehring, Kuwait June 5, 2012.



Spc. Alexis Scott receives a certificate of achievement in recognition of her outstanding performance as a member of Camp Arifjan's basketball team that was crowned runner-up in the female standings during ARCENT's recent tournament.



Maj. Gen. Gary Cheek, United States Army Central Command deputy commanding general, presents several 29th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers with his coin on June 20, 2012. The Soldiers received the coins for recent achievements including winning Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year and exemplary accomplishments during recent multi-national exercises. (see more photos at www.flickr.com/29thcab)

ARCENT 'HEROS' FROM THE 29TH CAB



March 3, 2012 - Sgt. Andrew Shropshire, Sgt. Jamiyah Lawson and Spc. Howard Brooks, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 29th CAB



March 24, 2012 - Spc. Clifford Cannedy, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 29th CAB



April 14, 2012 - Spc. Lauren Olvera, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1-108th AHB



April 28, 2012 - Sgt. Ut Nguyen, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 29th CAB



May 12, 2012 - Spc. Peter Hollands, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 29th CAB



May 26, 2012 - Sgt. Delvon Anderson, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 29th CAB, and Spc. Jonathan Foster, B Co., 1204th ASB



June 9, 2012 - Staff Sgt. Charles Dockery, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 29th CAB



June 23, 2012 - Spc. Elton Jeffcoat, B Co., 3-159th ARB



July 7, 2012 - Sgt. Onica Moewilliams, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 1-111th GSAB



Service Member of the Week

Spc. Kevin Fultz A Co., 1204th ASB

Spc. Fultz' impeccable work ethic has been put on display numerous times throughout the deployment and has contributed greatly to the overall success of the Lab section, the Fuel Platoon and A Company.

Spc. Fultz played a vital role in the set up of the PQAS-E lab working countless hours, often contributing free time to ensure that the Lab meets regulatory specifications. In the absence of his Section Sergeant, Spc. Fultz worked diligently with various agencies, senior leadership and joint services in the pursuit of achieving lab certification.

Spc. Fultz displays an innate ability to lead keeping in tradition with the Army Values. His tireless efforts and unquestionable intangibles have allowed him to perform his job to the standard becoming of a Non-Commissioned Officer. He is an invaluable asset to his unit.

Spc. Micah Heathcock A Co., 3-159th ARB

Spc. Heathcock's passion and dedication to his work has allowed him to learn and train outside and beyond the scope of his assigned duty position and responsibilities as a 15Y Armament Technician.

He has not only completed armament assigned scheduled maintenance, but also assisted in supporting mission success by cross-training in seven 15R Apache Helicopter Repairer crew-chief tasks.

His positive attitude and work ethic add capability and are vital to the completion of the A Co. "Misfits" mission.

Sgt. Keith Livesay F Co., 1-111th GSAB

Sgt. Livesay's efforts ensure that F Co. provides the highest standard of air traffic services to aviators in the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Livesay deployed as part of the advanced party Air Traffic Control tower team to Iraq. He served as one of the last ATCs in Iraq.

His knowledge and experience ensured the safe and expeditious transfer of control tower operations. Recently, he completed the Warrior Leader Course and earned Distinguish Honor Graduate recognition for class 705—a class of 128 Soldiers.

His hard work and dedication to duty helped his team to successfully complete a Forward Area Refueling Point mission, Joint Precision Air Drop mission and ATC support for Operation Golden Lances.

Sgt. Devin Kral A Co., 2-147th AHB

Sgt. Kral is a true team player who brings experience to the table and a work ethic that is second to none. He mentors new crew chiefs, keeping them focused on the job at hand, while instilling a can-do mission-first attitude.

As a seasoned crew chief capable of completing any flight or maintenance task assigned without supervision, Kral ensures the junior Soldiers working with him complete the task to standard. He has flown 139 accident- and incident-free hours since the battalion mobilized.

Sgt. Kral is consistently on-time and on-target for all missions assigned, resulting in a positive reflection of the battalion's mission accomplishments.

His dedication to duty and mission accomplishment is second to none.