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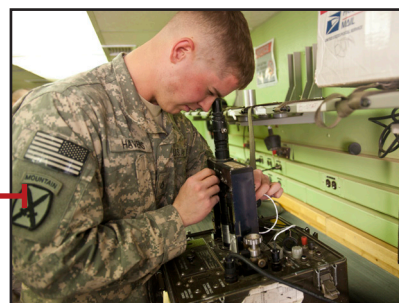


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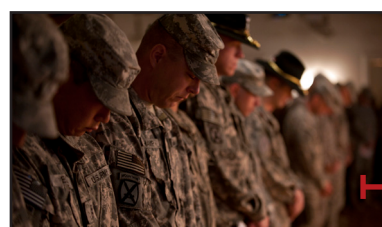
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EYE OF THE FALCON

February 2011

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PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ryan Wallace, Company C, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Edward Smith, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Phoenix, pose in front of an AH-64 Apache helicopter April 8. Both are pilots in TF Phoenix providing air support in Regional Command – East. Wallace is a native of Monticello, Minnesota. Smith is a native of Elkins, West Virginia.

From Falcon 6:

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

This month, we sadly mourn the loss of one of our own. CW2 Terry L. Varnadore II was an Aviator, a Soldier, a Friend, a Father and a Husband. For those of us who served with Terry, we will never forget him: the outpouring of support for Terry has been overwhelming and is a mark of the impact he had on others. From across the 10th CAB and from international aviation units in Afghanistan, co-workers, friends and fellow warriors have personally mentioned to me Terry's great attitude, professionalism, and contributions. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies go out to his Family and loved ones in this difficult time.

Even after enduring this loss, our Aviation Task Force did and will continue to press on in the face of a determined enemy and a challenging environment. Our Aviation support to our coalition partners remains one of the most crucial enablers in this strategic fight for Afghanistan's future. Last month we supported a major ground operation with air movement for a large air assault, aerial battlefield surveillance, and air weapons support. Operation Strong Eagle III resulted in the destruction of an insurgent stronghold and was a major operation for Regional Command – East. Our role in this operation reflects the capabilities and courage the Task Force Falcon brings to the fight, whether they are 10th Mountain Soldiers, Gamblers from Fort Hood, or any of our National Guard outstanding Soldiers from Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, North Carolina, Wyoming, Kansas, or anywhere else in the Union.

For those of us from Fort Drum, we are over half way through our 12-month deployment. To mark the mid-tour milestone, 10th CAB held a 5/10k run here at Bagram and at our outlying bases, where many 10th CAB Soldiers took the opportunity to mark the occasion. Participation was excellent and it was wonderful to see

senior leaders running alongside junior Soldiers. (Speaking personally, I thought they said 1 km... imagine my surprise when they said it was 10) While happy that we crossed that halfway milestone, we all know that we must continue to stay focused on the mission that we have been sent here to do. That is exactly what we do each day and our Soldiers and Leaders are doing fantastic in doing just that: staying focused. You can be very proud of the accomplishments of your Task Force Falcon Soldiers. As always, I thank you for your continued support and encouragement: your support at home is our strength down range.

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



From Falcon 7:

Families, Friends, and Soldiers of TF Falcon,

This month we paid our respects to a fallen aviator, CW2 Terry Varnadore II. The 10th CAB will be forever proud to have had him in its ranks and he will always be remembered in the brigade's history.

We've passed the midway point of our deployment this month and I am pleased with the hard work and discipline our Soldiers display each day in the important work they do keeping our aviation assets flying.

Soldiers are excelling at their jobs, but there is always room to improve as Soldiers. I encourage leaders to look for ways to make time to develop your Soldiers; share your knowledge and experience so they are prepared to take over in your absence. Make time to train your Soldiers on not only job related tasks but common Soldier tasks as well. Maintaining physical fitness promotes optimum health and readiness. Being healthy will make everything else easier to handle. Encourage your Soldiers to complete correspondence courses as well as civilian education.

Families and Friends, thank you so much for all your support. It truly does make things easier on us while we're deployed. We realize that it's not just those who are deployed who are making sacrifices, spouses and family members are covering down and taking care of household tasks in the absence of their Soldier. If you have not been reminded of how much your support is appreciated, on behalf of the Soldiers of Task Force Falcon, I say thank you.



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

Mountain Eagle avionics keeps helicopters flying

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

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Pfc. Robert McAlister, an aircraft electrician with the avionics section, Company D, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon, Combined Joint Task Force – 101, and a native of Pontiac, Ill., works on an airframe searchlight. The avionics section ensures the helicopters they service have working electrical, communication, navigational, and night vision systems. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon)

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan— Being able to fly is great, sure; but where would a helicopter pilot be without navigational aids? Or, if said pilot has navigational aids, is unable to determine who around him is an ally or an enemy? What about something as simple as being able to see outside the aircraft in the dark?

Piloting a helicopter would be much more difficult, that's for certain. Fortunately, the avionics team with Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Combined Joint Task Force-101, keeps those systems running.

Avionics is a broad field, encompassing standard electrical systems, navigation aids, identification systems, night vision, global positioning systems, and communication.

"We service over 170 aircraft," said U.S. Army Sgt. Joseph Stodola, an avionics non-commissioned officer from Iowa City, Iowa. "We keep everything from the lights to the radar running."

The avionics team is responsible

for the maintenance of several different systems across four different aircraft; the OH-58 Kiowa, AH-64 Apache, UH-60 Blackhawk, and CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

One section of the team is devoted to working on just a Kiowa-specific part, a removable computer of sorts that communicates with all the other parts of the helicopter.

U.S. Army Spc. William Monroe, of Toronto, is an Integrated Family of Test Equipment operator/maintainer and sums up the device as, "the brains of the helicopter."

The team is also responsible for the maintenance of night vision capabilities on the aircraft.

"We have to service (night vision goggles) at least every six months," said Stodola, "We usually see them long before that, though."

The goggles used by aviators are different from NVGs used by ground troops, however, and require different methods for repairing them.

"The NVGs we repair are made to be used with the (pilot) helmets," Stodola said.

All of the helicopters they ser-

vice have radar capabilities, and their work keeps those systems running reliably.

The team's mission keeps them busy, especially since they must be ready to respond to a grounded aircraft at a moment's notice.

"If a helicopter is stuck on the airfield and due to perform a mission, we have to scramble to either fix the issue or replace the part," Stodola said.

The avionics crew keeps extra components on hand to replace malfunctioning equipment, allowing missions to continue as scheduled. The old equipment will be serviced and kept on hand for when it is needed next.

In addition to the last-minute reactionary work, the team is responsible for regularly scheduled maintenance.

"I'd guess that we've performed something like 800 service orders," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Adrian Garib, an electrical systems non-commissioned officer, and a native of Queens, N.Y.

"We keep the birds in the air," said Stodola. 🇺🇸



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Pfc. Jonathan Havens, an avionics and survivability equipment repairer with the avionics section, Company D, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon, Combined Joint Task Force – 101, and a native of Alpharetta, Ga., services night vision goggles, ensuring that they are calibrated properly. The avionics section ensures the helicopters they service have working electrical, communication, radar, global positioning, and night vision systems. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon)

Half-Marathon a week; a Warrant Officer's quest to create a path for others

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

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bob Cuyler is on a quest. The tactical operations officer for Task Force Falcon, 10th Mountain Division, runs a half-marathon every single week. That's 13.1 miles in a single outing every seven days. By the end of the year, Cuyler hopes to add those distances to a total of 681.2 miles run.

For avid runners, a half-marathon a week might not seem like much. However, Cuyler runs his weekly 13.1 while deployed to Afghanistan- not an easy task given the operations tempo, altitude, and rugged terrain. Yet, Cuyler remains committed to his mileage despite the obstacles of schedule and environment. You see, the miles only make up a tiny part of a larger, personal quest.

"My plan is to raise awareness of the United Ostomy Association of America Veterans Outreach Program," said Cuyler.

The UOAA is a national network for bowel and urinary diversion support groups in the United States. According to the UOAA, ostomies are "lifesaving surgeries performed for . . . many different diseases, injuries, and conditions." The veterans outreach program came about to help military veterans, both young and old, live with their ostomies.

"Unfortunately, many people limit their activities because of the fear of the unknown when dealing with their ostomy," explained Cuyler, "and others just need to know that they are not alone with this condition."

The Hannibal, N.Y. native personally knows all about living with an ostomy. In July 2007, following a seven-year battle with ulcerative colitis, doctors re-

moved his entire colon. The surgery left him with a stoma; an opening through his abdomen, with an appliance bag attached. It also marked the start of Cuyler's quest for understanding.

"My first thought following the surgery was just shock," recalled Cuyler. "I remember looking down and seeing I was cut open and this appliance was attached to me. I just couldn't believe this was happening to me."

At the time, this type of surgery meant a discharge from the military.

"I came back to work with the mindset that I was getting out- that it was over for me. Then, my nurse gave me this book, 'Great Comebacks' by Rolf Benirschke, a professional football player who continued his NFL career after his ostomy surgery," Cuyler said.

Benirschke's book details the inspirational achievements and accomplishments of individuals following their ostomy surgeries. The stories encouraged Cuyler during that initial recovery period. Still, he thought the end of the road was near.

"My first day back to work was 30 days after the surgery," said Cuyler. "I could only do one push up and one sit up. That's it."

Yet, each day following that first physical training session, the warrant officer discovered he could do a little bit more.

"After a couple of months, I was getting back to my old self," said Cuyler.

The book began to plant a seed in his mind.

"One day, I was working out at the gym and the brigade commander at that time, Col. Erik Peterson, gave me a funny look and asked, 'Are you really disabled?' And I started to wonder the

same thing," Cuyler explained.

Cuyler set his sights on continuing his Army aviation career. He focused on regaining his strength and proving he could still serve as a Soldier and pilot.

"Col. Peterson said he would support me to fight the system. He took a risk," Cuyler recalled. "I'll never forget that."

According to Col. Erik Peterson, now serving as the 10th Mountain Division Chief of Staff in Regional Command-South, it was apparent from the outset that Cuyler needed to stay in the Army. "Bob was an exceptionally valuable member of the Falcon Brigade team, but what was most compelling was his determination. He had a clearly defined goal. He understood the physical and bureaucratic obstacles to that goal, and he endeavored to overcome them. The rules said "no," but in Bob's case they made no sense. He was clearly capable of serving and contributing, without limitation."

The brigade surgeon at that time, Lt. Col. Edward Bailey of Sackets Harbor, N.Y., agreed.

"Bob is one of the most gratifying patients I have ever had the privilege to work with. The words no, won't, and can't aren't in his vocabulary. He overcame every hurdle to return to the cockpit. A thirty day, summer rotation at JRTC convinced us that he was more than capable of returning to the fight."

Instead of ending, it appeared the road ahead for the pilot was merely bending.

"You know, the Warrior Transition Units sometimes get a bad rap," Cuyler pointed out. "But in my case, the Fort Drum WTU did exactly what it was supposed to do. The (organization) gave me a chance to get well. It was the best thing for me and the Army."

Fifteen months after surgery, Cuyler hit his first milestone when a medical board cleared him to remain on active duty- with flight status.

"It was incredible. You know, I actually went to the board. I wasn't allowed in the room during the panel, but they all saw me waiting outside the room. It was important to me, and to Col. Peterson and Lt. Col. Bailey, for the members of the board to see me for themselves, to wonder if I looked disabled," said Cuyler.

The next benchmark immediately followed the board with a 12-month deployment to Iraq.

"A year in Iraq confirmed that his medical condition is an inconvenience, not an impediment," said Bailey, now the 10th Mountain Division Surgeon.

The deployment not only proved that Cuyler could handle the rigors of combat with an ostomy, it marked the first time any U.S. Soldier ever deployed with an ostomy. Or, for that matter, the first time any aviator ever flew into combat with an ostomy. Yet, the path to understanding continued after his return from Iraq.

"During the deployment to Iraq, I was awarded the Tony Snow Public Service Award from the Great Comebacks program," explained Cuyler. "Receiving that award changed things for me. Before, everything was for me. Now, I feel what it means."

The exposure Cuyler received fol-

lowing the award inspired a new turn in the road.

"People hide (the disease). They're embarrassed. A month or two after I received the award, people around the world contacted me for advice," Cuyler said.

As each person contacted Cuyler, he shared everything he could to help: medical records, experiences, advice, hope.

"There was a pilot from India who was fighting to keep his job after his ostomy. Using my medical records as an example, he was able to prove that flying with an ostomy was possible- and done. So, he's still flying."

While helping a fellow pilot brought some satisfaction, Cuyler's latest milestone impacted him a little more deeply. At the end of April, CW4 Cuyler will welcome a fellow ostomate-- and Soldier-- to Afghanistan.

"Lt. Col. William O'Brien first learned of my struggle to stay in the military after ostomy surgery by speaking with Lisa Becker, a Great Comebacks Award recipient. He then found me by doing the same thing I had done; did a search for "military" and "ostomy." But, instead of finding discharge stories, he found mine."

Down-to-earth and humble, Cuyler does not consider himself a trailblazer.

"That's the big thing- the gratitude I feel that my despair was able to help someone else," said Cuyler.

Realizing how his fight helped another Soldier, Cuyler decided to continue down the path toward educating others about the surgery and what to expect afterward.

"I was contacted by the UOAA about a new program, the Veterans

Outreach Program, involving other Great Comeback vets to assist fellow ostomates through their recovery at Veteran Administration hospitals. Very few VA hospitals have support groups," explained Cuyler.

Besides sharing his experiences and advice with the VOP, Cuyler raises awareness of the program doing the one thing he once thought he'd never do again- long distance running.

"I've been running a half-marathon every week since January," explained Cuyler. "It's a challenge, but it's a challenge that helps others. For every sponsor who pledges a dollar per half-marathon or any amount really, that's another dollar towards helping someone else."

To date, Chief Cuyler has run 15 half-marathons. That adds up to 196.5 miles for the man who once could only perform one push up and one sit up. They also pave the start of the path toward understanding life after an ostomy.

"Bob personifies our Army Values of duty, selfless service and personal courage," stated Peterson, who calls Watertown, N.Y. home. "It doesn't surprise me that he's, once again, accomplishing something very difficult in order to benefit others and call attention to something important."

Sponsors can send donations directly to the VOP at: UOAA - Veterans Outreach Program, PO Box 512, Northfield, MN 55057. Or, they can donate online by going to www.ostomy.org and selecting "VA Program" on the donation page. Soldiers or Veterans with questions about ostomies can reach the UOAA by calling 1-800-826-0826.



Wyoming Army National Guard medical evacuation unit begins operations in eastern Afghanistan

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan — Soldiers of the Wyoming National Guard officially took over medical evacuation missions in Khost Province, Afghanistan March 25.

“Cowboy Dustoff,” Company C, 5th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, replaced Co. C, 2nd Bn, 104th Avn. Regt., a West Virginia National Guard MEDEVAC company, who com-

pleted a year-long deployment.

The Wyoming guardsmen are providing helicopter medical evacuation support to Task Force Tigershark, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, which provides aviation support throughout the Khost province and surrounding areas in eastern Afghanistan.

This is not the first time the unit has deployed to Afghanistan, accord-

ing to U.S. Army Maj. Dane E. Rodgers, commander of the Cheyenne-based MEDEVAC company, which is making it’s third deployment to Afghanistan.

The company, made up of pilots, flight surgeons, flight medics, crew chiefs, communication specialists, and helicopter mechanics, has already performed several medical evacuations, and expects to do many more as the weather warms

up, said Rodgers.

“We’re here to save lives,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Adam Roberts, a communications non-commissioned officer and native of Cheyenne. “When our helicopters go out, they come back with patients.”



Falcon Soldiers learn life-saving skills

Photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot
Task Force Falcon Public Affairs



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -Task Force Soldiers drag a casualty during the practical exercise phase of Combat Life Saver training here April 13. The class of 45 Soldiers was the largest conducted here since the beginning of the deployment, said Maj. Jaime Torres, TF Falcon flight surgeon. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, TF Falcon)

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -Task Force Soldiers drag a casualty during the practical exercise phase of Combat Life Saver training here April 13. The class of 45 Soldiers was the largest conducted here since the beginning of the deployment, said Maj. Jaime Torres, TF Falcon flight surgeon. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, TF Falcon)



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -Task Force Falcon Soldiers load a casualty into a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected ambulance while others provide perimeter security during the practical exercise phase of Combat Life Saver training here April 13. The class of 45 Soldiers was the largest conducted here since the beginning of the deployment, said Maj. Jaime Torres, TF Falcon flight surgeon. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, TF Falcon)

Operation Bull Whip: View from the Ground



(Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Erick Saks)



(Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Erick Saks)



(Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Erick Saks)



(Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Erick Saks)



(Photo by U.S. Air Force Capt. Erick Saks)



(Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Kristina Gupton)

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flown by Lt. Col. David McGurk, Task Force Falcon Executive Officer, flies away after dropping off U.S. Army Maj. Gen. John F. Campbell, 101st Airborne Division and Regional Command-East commander, and other members, at observation post two in the Galush Valley during Operation Bull Whip March 28. Campbell visited the mountain top to check on the status of the largest air assault mission ever conducted by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, Task Force Red Bulls. This air assault mission also had the distinction of being the largest conducted by the Combined Joint Task Force-101 during its current rotation in Afghanistan.

New Army Chief of Staff presents valor awards to 10th CAB Soldiers

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



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey congratulates Soldiers from the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade after presenting them with valor awards at a ceremony held at 101st Airborne Division Headquarters. Gen. Dempsey presented the awards during a visit to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, April 21. (Photo by Army Pfc. Michael Syner, TF Falcon PAO)

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan— U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey awarded nine Task Force Falcon, Combined Joint Task Force-101, Soldiers Air Medals with Valor devices here April 21.

“I’m honored to recognize these Soldiers today,” Dempsey said during the brief ceremony. “This is an aviation-centric battle; without our aviation assets, we wouldn’t be able to complete the mission.”

Staff Sgt. Brian Cammack of West Bend, Wis., a flight medic with Company C, Task Force

Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, CJTF-101, earned the medal for his actions Sept. 18. Cammack and his team were performing a medical evacuation mission when they received the call to pick up a patient in Pech Valley, in an area which required the MEDEVAC teams to use a hoist from the helicopter to retrieve patients. As the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter hovered over the patient’s location, with Cammack beginning the hoist down, the aircraft started to take accurate small arms fire.

Cammack was quickly brought back on board as the MEDEVAC team withdrew to allow another aircraft to provide fire support.

The crew landed their Black Hawk at a nearby forward operating base to assess the damage. They determined that the aircraft was still capable of flying, and returned to complete the mission, which meant Cammack climbing back onto the hoist to be lowered to the patient.

As they returned to their position, the commander of the Soldiers on the ground deter-

mined that the patient was stable, and could be evacuated on the ground. When the MEDEVAC team returned to FOB Fenty, they realized that their aircraft had taken much more damage than they had originally thought, so they switched to another helicopter and resumed their mission. Eventually, the ground commander determined he wouldn’t be able to extract the patient on the ground, and requested another hoist attempt.

Cammack was lowered from the hoist to the patient and was able to secure and bring him up to

the Black Hawk. During the course of the night, Cammack retrieved, treated, and transferred three more patients.

U.S. Army Sgt. Elena Romero of Vernon, N.J., a flight medic with Co. C, TF Phoenix, received the Air Medal with valor for her actions during an urgent medical evacuation mission in Konar Valley. She was wounded while the crew was trying to land the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to pick up injured Soldiers Nov. 7. Throughout the mission, the aircraft took small-arms fire. Despite the danger and the wounds she suffered, Romero pulled the injured Soldier on board the helicopter and managed to stabilize the Soldier to transport him to Jalabad Airfield, where the Soldier received life-saving medical care.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Richard Ernst of Islip, N.Y., also with Co. C, TF Phoenix, was one of the pilots on Romero’s aircraft. There was no suitable place to land the aircraft. Despite being shot at, he was able to perform a delicate hover, using a nearby tree to keep the helicopter oriented while the patient was pulled on board the Black Hawk. For his flying skills, he was awarded the Air Medal with valor.

Six Soldiers from Co. B, TF Gambler, 10th CAB, CJTF-101, also received Air Medals with valor: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brooks Mouton, a native of Orange, Texas; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason Allman of Georgetown, Texas; Chief Warrant Officer 2 William Myers, a native of Toledo, Ohio, Spc. Jeffrey Anderson of Salinas, Calif.; Spc. John Beer of New Orleans; and Sgt. Aaron Maldonado of Carolina, Puerto Rico.

These Gambler Soldiers were called on to provide supplies and surveillance to Combat Outpost Margah Oct. 30. The Black Hawk team brought over 5,000 pounds of supplies to troops fighting on the ground while evacuating a total of six wounded Soldiers.

During the course of their mission, they were under fire, and frequently had to land in dusty, low-visibility areas. “Soldiers who earn a valor award have committed a selfless act by putting themselves in harm’s way to save someone else’s life,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. David McGurk, 10th CAB executive officer. “For these Soldiers, it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to have the Chief of Staff pin these awards on their chest. It’s something they will always remember.”

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey shakes hands with Chief Warrant Officer 3 Richard Ernst, a native of Islip, N.Y., after pinning an Army Commendation medal next to an air medal with valor device during an award ceremony held at 101st Airborne Division Headquarters. Dempsey presented valor awards to Soldiers of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade during a visit to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, April 21. (Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, TF Falcon PAO)



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey pins an air medal with valor device on the uniform of Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason Allman, a native of Georgetown, Texas, before a gathering of service members at 101st Airborne Division Headquarters. Dempsey presented valor awards to Soldiers of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade during a visit to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, April 21. (Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, TF Falcon PAO)



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey shakes hands with Chief Warrant Officer 3 Richard Ernst, a native of Islip, N.Y., after pinning an Army Commendation medal next to an air medal with valor device during an award ceremony held at 101st Airborne Division Headquarters. Dempsey presented valor awards to Soldiers of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade during a visit to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, April 21. (Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, TF Falcon PAO)

TF Mountain Eagle Soldiers' initiative saves money and time in constructing needed facilities

By U.S. Army Maj. Ryan Guthrie
Task Force Mountain Eagle

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan—Soldiers of Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, have the mission to maintain the Brigade's fleet of helicopters, rolling stock and ground support equipment, with field level maintenance support. They are the combat support/combat service support task force. So, who supports the support task force when there are major projects to undertake?

Recently, TF Mountain Eagle moved from the west side to the east side of Bagram Airfield, inheriting several major, uncompleted projects. When the Soldiers of the Aviation Support Company, TF Mountain Eagle, occupied a desolate Camp Avenger, they needed a morale, welfare and recreation center, and when the task force's Headquarters Support Company motor pool relocated to a barren concrete pad, they needed a place to work.

The unit queried the Bagram joint contracting office about a contract to erect a Large Area Maintenance Shelter on the concrete pad for the motor pool to work in. Contracting required approximately \$200,000 and funding approval, which takes approximately three months. The



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers of Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, are constructing a Large Area Maintenance Shelter which will be used by the TF Mountain Eagle motor pool upon completion. (Photo by Sgt. George Tucker, TF Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division)

unit then queried the Bagram Logistics Civil Augmentation Program for assistance. LOGCAP was developed to assist with logistics, engineering, and construction projects during contingency operations. LOGCAP could not erect the LAMS for another five months.

Rather than waiting for contracted civilian assistance, the Soldiers of TF Mountain Eagle's motor pool decided to live up to the adage to "improve the foxhole." The Soldiers erected the LAMS themselves. Within one week and zero dollars spent, TF Mountain Eagle had a LAMS to conduct ground maintenance on the east side of Bagram.

"There are multiple methods to getting a job like this done, said U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Kurt Palmer, TF Mountain Eagle battalion motor officer and a native of Ontario, Oregon. "All the common ones mandate mounds of paperwork, a lot of money, and a lot of time. This project is a reminder that with a few good Soldiers and a little initiative we can cut a lot of red tape and do more with less."

Camp Avenger was constructed to house over 800 Soldiers and civilians and when it was initially completed in June 2010, there were no phones, no internet, no MWR, no flushing toilets, and no hot water. Since that time, the units occupying Camp Avenger established an internet cafe, petitioned for and received multiple latrine, shower, shaving units, and received boilers for continuous hot water.

The latest endeavour was to create an MWR from nothing. The Soldiers of the ASC, TF Mountain Eagle, planned and self-resourced buildings, construction materials, a phone room, an internet room, gaming consoles, an outdoor horseshoe pit; an archery range, and a pool table.

The Soldiers constructing this MWR building dubbed it, "The Rats Nest."

Staff Sgt. Ric Turner, project coordinator and Camp Avenger Mayor, stated, "This MWR facility was built by Soldiers for Soldiers."

In current contingency operations, the U.S. Forces are increasingly dependent on a logistics plan predicated upon civilian support. The Soldiers of TF Mountain Eagle have shown that all combat support and combat service support functions can still be executed through purely organic assets with pride and a sense of purpose. 🇺🇸

Blue Max Change of Command

Photos by U.S. Army Spc. Amanda Brown



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Col. Pedro Almeida, Task Force Falcon commander, speaks to Company C "Blue Max," Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, during Capt. Jeremy Duff's change of command ceremony April 8. Duff is a native of Tulsa, Okla.



IMG 4848 – PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Capt. Jeremy Duff, outgoing commander, Company C "Blue Max," Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, speaks at his change of command ceremony April 8. Duff is a native of Tulsa, Okla.



IMG 4822 – PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – 1st Sgt. Tim Clay, Company C "Blue Max," Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, first sergeant, bows his head in reverence during the chaplain's benediction at the unit's change of command ceremony April 8.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Col. Pedro Almeida, Task Force Falcon commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, the TF Falcon senior enlisted advisor, attend the Company C "Blue Max," Task Force Phoenix, change of command ceremony April 8. 🇺🇸

New Army Chief of Staff recognizes Task Force Falcon MEDEVAC Soldiers for deploying with short dwell time

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

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- The new Army Chief of Staff Gen. Dempsey, visited medical evacuation Soldiers of Company C, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, April 22 at the company's hanger here. Dempsey wanted to know by a show of hands, how many MEDEVAC Soldiers deployed with 10 months or less dwell time. Several Soldiers raised their hands to which the Chief of Staff presented them with commemorative coins. "I want to thank you for what you're doing here," Dempsey told the MEDEVAC Soldiers. "I want

to thank your families for their service, too." The multiple tours issue is on the minds of Soldiers and families across the military. The Chief of Staff said he hopes that within the next year, the Army will be able to give Soldiers two years in garrison for every year deployed. Ultimately, he said he would like to see three years in garrison for each year deployed. "I'm in awe of the Soldiers I've met," said the Dempsey. "They've done multiple tours over the past 9 years and have displayed great courage, perseverance, and resolve."

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rachel Hall, a MEDEVAC pilot with Co. C, TF Phoenix, is one of several Soldiers of the unit who have deployed with 10 months or less dwell time -- in fact, this is her third deployment with 10 months or less dwell time. The Great Falls, Mont., native is on her fifth deployment since she first entered the Army 10 years ago. "The longest period between deployments for me was when I went to Flight School which is a year long," said Hall. "It's nice to know that our mission is respected and that our time and energy is not wasted or forgotten." 🇺🇸



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Martin E. Dempsey asks for a show of hands of who deployed with less than 10 months dwell time on his visit with Company C, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, April 22 at the medical evacuation unit's hanger. Several MEDEVAC Soldiers returned with the unit just 10 months prior to their most recent deployment. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, TF Falcon PAO)

Task Force Falcon 5 & 10 Kilometer Fun Run

April 30 saw the Task Force Falcon family run the Halfway 5 & 10k. Soldiers spread across eastern Afghanistan, as well as family members in the states, ran in celebration of reaching the half-way mark of the task force's one year deployment.

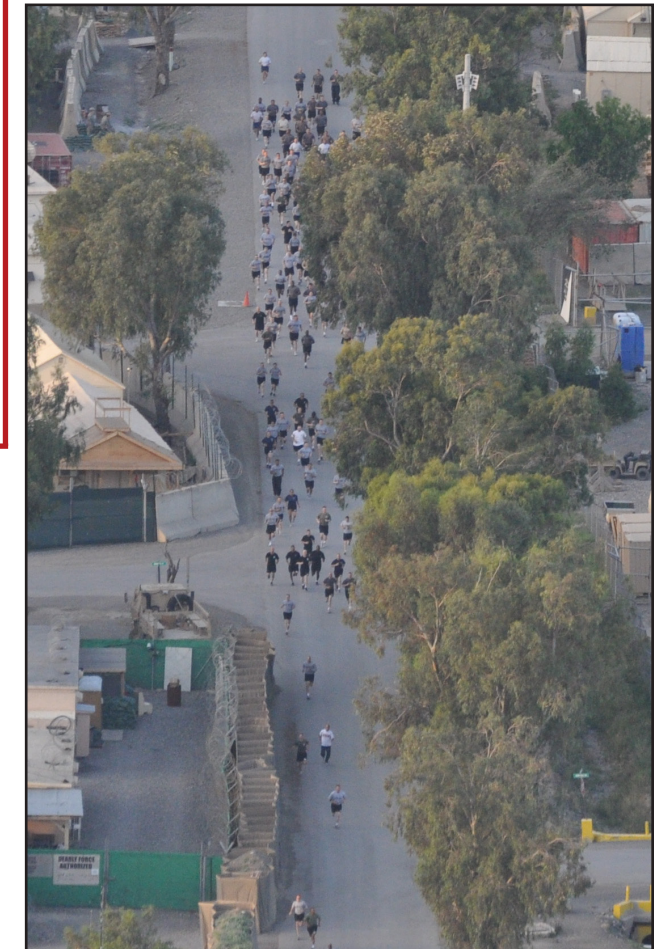


BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- The Soldiers of Task Force Falcon deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, start the race April 30. Col. Pedro Almeida, the commander of TF Falcon, and Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton lead the start of the Halfway 5 & 10 kilometer run here.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHANK, Afghanistan -- Falcon Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Shank begin the run during the Halfway 5 & 10k held April 30.



FORWARD OPERATING BASE FENTY, Afghanistan -- Task Force Six Shooters Soldier Cpl. Kam Gerohimos of Harrison, Ark. assists a soldier in signing up for the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade Halfway Run on Jalalabad Airfield.



FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan -- About 130 runners gathered for the Half-Way 5&10 kilometer run at Forward Operating Base Salerno April 30 for the Halfway 5 & 10k. 🇺🇸

Operation Strong Eagle

Photos by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Michael Fuemmeler
Task Force Bastogne

A Task Force Shooter Soldier mans a M240H machine gun in an UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter as it prepares to land during Operation Strong Eagle III in Marawara District with Task Force No Slack soldiers, assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Bastogne, in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province April 2. Insurgents have been using the area to stage attacks on International Security Assistance Forces and civilians.



Soldiers from Task Force No Slack, assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Bastogne, exit an UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flown by Task Force Shooter troops as it lands during Operation Strong Eagle III in Marawara District in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province April 2.



A Task Force Shooter UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter takes off after depositing Task Force No Slack soldiers, assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Bastogne, during Operation Strong Eagle III in Marawara District in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province April 2. The operation is ongoing.



A Task Force Shooter UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter lands during Operation Strong Eagle III in Marawara District with Task Force No Slack soldiers, assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Bastogne, in eastern Afghanistan's Kunar province April 1. Dozens of insurgents have been engaged during the ongoing offensive operations that are taking place near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. 🇺🇸

Air traffic services control Logar province skies

By Sgt. Cooper Cash
Task Force Patriot

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Atop stacked shipping containers, radio chatter reverberated in a glass-enclosed room. The air traffic control operator gave instructions through a black hand-held microphone. Then, over the metallic speakers, a pilot acknowledged and began his descent into Forward Operating Base Shank, April 26.

Soldiers assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Task Force Knighthawk provide safe, orderly and expeditious control of air traffic as they cross the airspace of FOB Shank, said U.S. Army 1st Sgt. William E. Haddon, Fox Company's first sergeant from Lancaster, Pa.

When the unit arrived in theater, there was no radar system in place, which presented problems for aircraft crews. Their first two months in theater, Fox Company Soldiers worked feverishly to diagnose and repair the existing, but non-operational, radar system, said U.S. Army Sgt. Brandon K. Parnell, the senior air traffic control equipment repairer and Lexington Park, Md. native.

"In the past medevacs have been a little hesitant to go out when the weather was bad, because they worried about getting back

to Shank safely," said U.S. Army Sgt. Brandon D. Woodson, an air traffic control operator. "Now if the weather is a little iffy, they don't have to worry about getting back with their casualty, because we are going to be able to talk to them and control them down safely since our radar is working perfectly."

Every Soldier focuses on the three basic skills of shooting, moving and communicating, but air traffic controllers are especially focused on one.

"Communication is a must. If we are not communicating well, we could be trying to land an aircraft while the radar team is trying to land another," said Atlanta native Woodson. "Effective communication is essential for our overall goal of the safe operation of aircraft."

Woodson said pilots need precision and expedient guidance to navigate through airspace to stay a safe distance from other aircraft and to manage their fuel. This is especially true when operating where aircraft converge, as they do near airports. To provide this assistance, air traffic controllers are constantly mapping out and keeping track of planes in the area.

"It's very challenging; you have to be able to think on your feet," said Woodson. "Situations have arisen where a decision has to

made in a second, and it can affect the lives of people in the air."

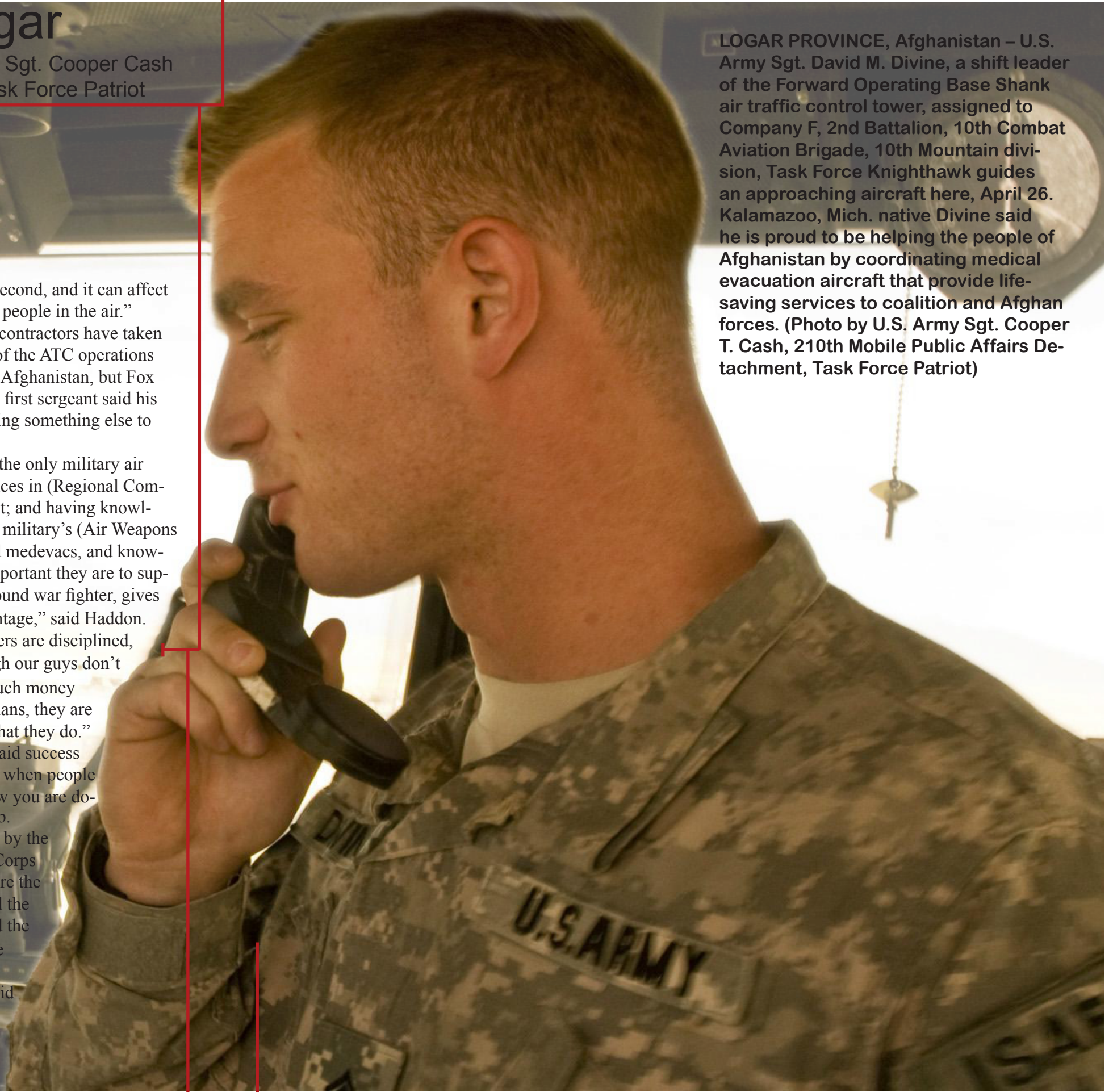
Civilian contractors have taken over most of the ATC operations throughout Afghanistan, but Fox Company's first sergeant said his Soldiers bring something else to the table.

"We are the only military air traffic services in (Regional Command) -East; and having knowledge of the military's (Air Weapons Teams) and medevacs, and knowing how important they are to support the ground war fighter, gives us an advantage," said Haddon. "Our Soldiers are disciplined, and although our guys don't make as much money as the civilians, they are proud of what they do."

Parnell said success is achieved when people do not know you are doing your job.

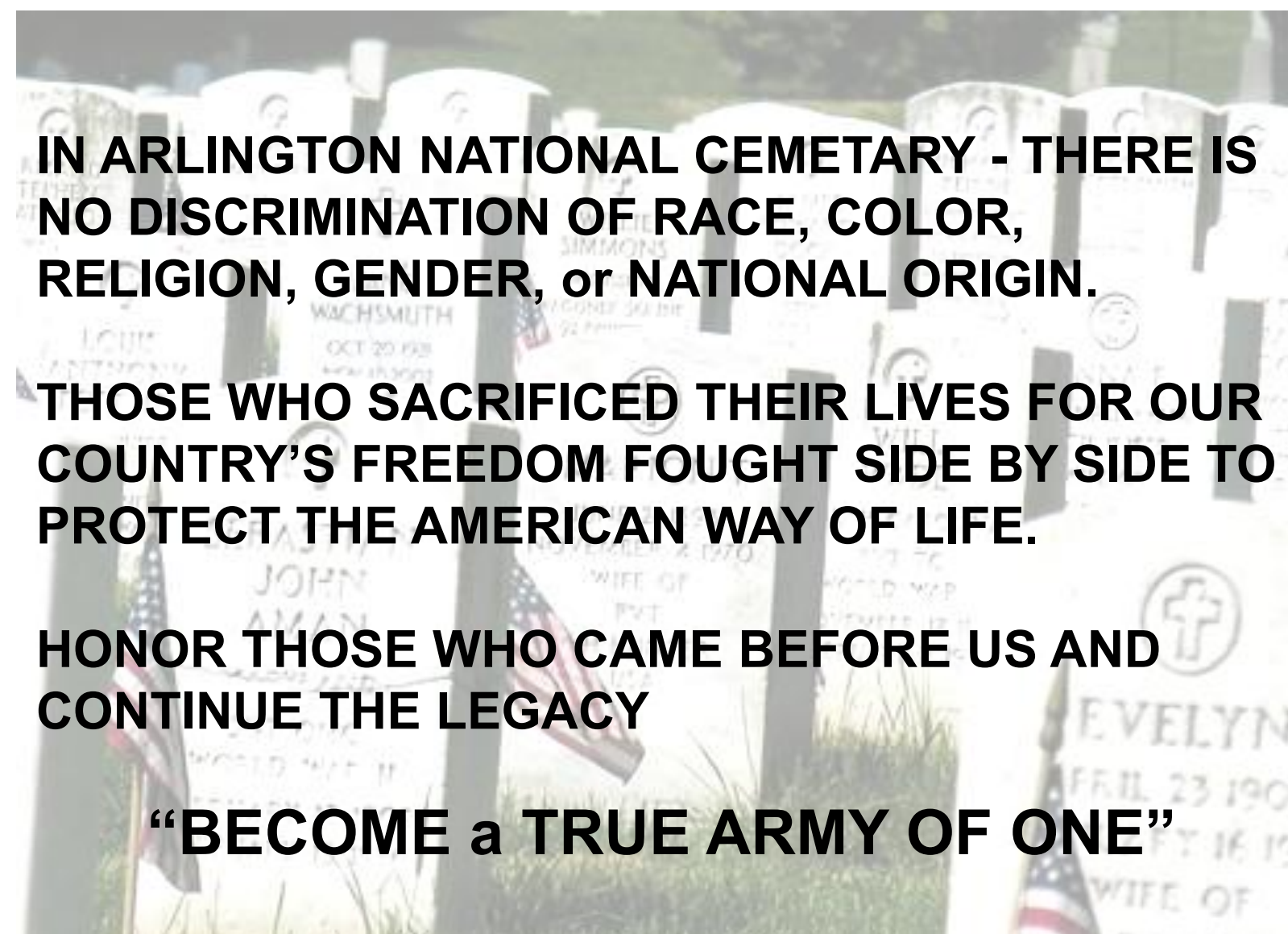
"We live by the Ordnance Corps creed; we are the men behind the man behind the gun. We are the people unseen," said Parnell.

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Sgt. David M. Divine, a shift leader of the Forward Operating Base Shank air traffic control tower, assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain division, Task Force Knighthawk guides an approaching aircraft here, April 26. Kalamazoo, Mich. native Divine said he is proud to be helping the people of Afghanistan by coordinating medical evacuation aircraft that provide life-saving services to coalition and Afghan forces. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Cooper T. Cash, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, Task Force Patriot)



Equal Opportunity: Deployable Sexual Assault Response Coordinator Monthly Poster Contest

Every month, a contest is held within Task Force Falcon to challenge Soldiers to create a poster to bring attention to equal opportunity issues. The winner for the month of April is Staff Sgt. Marcio Sequeira, representing Task Force Tigershark. Congratulations!



Task Force Mountain Eagle: Accomplishing the Mission



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan—Command Sgt. Maj. Zacchaeus Hurst, the senior enlisted advisor of Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, addresses Soldiers during a promotion ceremony about the importance of being a noncommissioned officer April 1 (Photo by SPC. Roldan Chandler, TF Mountain Eagle).



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – A soldier of Company B, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, performs maintenance on a UH-60 Blackhawk at Bagram Airfield.

Fill 'er up! Fuelers keep birds in the sky

By U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson
Task Force Red Bulls



LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan - U.S. Army Spc. Brian McCarthy, a petroleum supply specialist from West Infield, Maine, with Company E, 310th Task Force Phoenix, gives the "fuel on" hand signal as he fuels a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter April 9 at the Forward Area Refueling Point at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson, Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs Office)

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Being an Army petroleum supply specialist, or fueler, is a bit like working at an old-time gas station.

A vehicle pulls up to the pumps, and the crew runs out to fill it up. The only difference for the Army fuelers of Company E, 310th Task Force Phoenix, is that some of the vehicles are helicopters, and they are in Afghanistan.

"Most of what we do is ground fuel for vehicles, but our priority mission is for the birds (Army helicopters)," said U.S. Army Sgt. Matthew Lauilefue, a shift leader of the petroleum supply specialist team from Co. E. "We fill up Chinooks, Apaches, Kiowas, and a whole bunch of civilian birds. We also issue out ammunition. So our daily routine is usually issuing a lot of ground fuel, and the birds usually come in whenever they come in."

Lauilefue, from Honolulu, Hawaii, and his team of fellow fuelers from Fort Drum, N.Y., who run the Forward Area Refueling Point at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, here in support of the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry

Regiment, Task Force Ironman, are coming off a very busy week. They provided the fuel for every bird participating in Operation Bull Whip, which was the largest air assault mission conducted by the 101st Airborne Division during their year-long deployment to Afghanistan.

During Bull Whip, Co. E's fuelers pumped more aircraft fuel than at any other time all year. They refueled 40 helicopters in a single day. 20 per each of the 12-hour shifts the fuel teams run during their 24-hour operations.

"We pumped 10,000 gallons of aircraft fuel alone in one day during that mission," said U.S. Army Sgt. Christian Grabowski, the other shift leader for the petroleum supply specialist team from Co. E, and a native of Hinsdale, N.Y.

The fuel team is not nearly as busy in a normal day, Grabowski said. The fuelers usually pump around 4,000 gallons of fuel in a typical day. When no helicopters or trucks are coming in to be fueled, such as days when it's raining, the members of the fuel team are a lot like firemen in a fire station. They are on standby.

"That's when they bond with their fellow Soldiers," said U.S. Army Sgt. Rockieve Givian, the fuel team's non-commissioned officer-in-charge from



LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan - U.S. Army Spc. Christopher Lemoine, left, a petroleum supply specialist from Tulare, Calif., and U.S. Army Sgt. Christian Grabowski, a shift leader for the petroleum supply specialist team from Hinsdale, N.Y., both with Company E, 310th Task Force Phoenix, prepare to arm an OH-58 Kiowa Warrior with a missile at the Forward Area Refueling Point, Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, here April 9. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson, Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs)

Atlanta, Ga.

“Or call your girl-friend,” another Soldier chipped in.

On this day, April 9, with clear skies, the fuelers were having a fairly busy day. A couple Blackhawks came in for fuel, and the fuelers, hearing the helicopters in the distance grabbed their helmets, gloves and eye protection. They were waiting by the fuel points when the helicopters landed. As soon as the Soldiers got back to the shack and removed their gear, they had to put it back on, this time it was a team of Kiowas.

Another responsibility of the fuelers at the Mehtar Lam FARP is re-arming the helicopters. They are trained to put missiles, rockets and ammunition on Kiowa Warriors, but do not handle Apaches.

The fuelers do what is known as a “hot” refuel, meaning they are refueling the birds with the rotors turning and engines still on. They do this for speed, said Givian.

The fuelers do not know the situation behind the aircraft they are refuelling. While that helicopter may just be delivering some equipment from one base to another, it could also be en route to a medical evacuation or a situation with troops in contact and need fuel to get there.

This means that time is of the essence, so the goal is to get the helicopters refuelled as quickly as possible while still being safe, said Givian.

Doing this successfully is how the fuelers are able to make an impact on the battlefield, the fuelers said.

“We know that we’re a support element, but at the same time we know when birds are coming in hot that we need to get them loaded, get them moved and get them back in the fight,” said Grabowski. “Time on ground is time lost for an infantry unit who may need them.”

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan - U.S. Army Spc. Brian McCarthy, right, a petroleum supply specialist from West Infield, Maine, with Company E, 310th Task Force Phoenix, fuels a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter at the Forward Area Refueling Point, Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, here April 9. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson, Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs)



Falcon family mourns fallen aviator

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



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers bow their heads during a memorial ceremony for a fallen Soldier from Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, April 26. U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Terry L. Varnadore, of Hendersonville, N.C., was killed when his OH-58 Kiowa helicopter went down in Kapisa province April 23. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon)

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers and friends of Task Force Falcon, 10th Mountain Division, mourned the loss of one of their own during a memorial at Enduring Faith Chapel here April 26.

U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Terry L. Varnadore II, an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter pilot in command assigned to Company C “Blue Max,” TF Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, was killed April 23 when his aircraft went

down during a night mission in Kapisa province.

“As we sit in this chapel on this unforgettable evening reflecting upon the life of Terry Varnadore, we realize that we have lost a great American hero,”

said U.S. Army Chaplain (Capt.) Robert Hearon, of Greenville, S.C., during his invocation.

As the memorial began, there was a mixture of somber faces and soft smiles as stories were told by Soldiers who were close

to him.

U.S. Army Lt. Col. Dennis McKernan, TF Phoenix commander, spoke highly of the young pilot as Blue Max Soldiers looked upon the stand holding up his rifle, flight helmet, boots and dog tags that stood proudly under a bright ray of light in front of an American flag.

“Chief Warrant Officer 2 Terry Varnadore was a selfless, positive warrior and honorable man,” said McKernan, of Haddon Township, N.J., “He was

extremely competent, smart and very serious about preparing his company for combat and keeping them trained as Blue Max took the fight to the enemy.”

As McKernan stood before a room full of solemn faces, he noted that while mourning is the start of the healing process, aviation Soldiers must stay focused on the mission.

“We are Soldiers, we are still in the fight and we know that we don’t have the luxury to grieve very long. We must move on because that’s what we do,” said McKernan, “That’s our mission and that’s what our country, our Families, and our loved ones

need us to do.”

US Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Steven Badgley, of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., considered Varnadore to be one of his closest friends. The two young pilots arrived at Ft. Drum in 2007 where their journey together began. They deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom together in 2008; even though they were stationed at two separate locations Badgley looked forward to flying with Varnadore.

Upon their return, their wives and children became inseparable which made their friendship grow even more.

“Our families were one in the

same,” said Badgley, “We made sure we never missed our weekly get-togethers where we chased the kids, played darts, and watched plenty of Wipeout.”

Varnadore’s positive personality and helpful nature changed Badgley. He spoke with sincere tears in his eyes as he said goodbye to a friend and colleague.

“He helped me as a pilot and friend,” said Badgley, “Watching him with Casey made you want to be a better husband; watching him with Eva made you want to be a better father. I will always remember Terry with the giant smile that he always wore from cheek to cheek; even in the worst

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Capt. Sean Reeves of Shalimar, Fla., Company C, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, commander, speaks during a memorial ceremony here for U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Terry L. Varnadore II April 26. Varnadore, of Hendersonville, N.C., was killed after his OH-58 Kiowa helicopter went down in Kapisa province April 23. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon)



of times.”

Chaplain Hearon acknowledged the difficulty of accepting the loss of a comrade and reminded the Soldiers of the great service Varnadore performed as a pilot.

“We don’t always understand why life happens the way it does. Many times we don’t have answers to life’s difficult questions. One thing we can be certain of is that because of men like Terry, millions back home can sleep safely every night.”

Close friend, flight school classmate and fellow pilot, US Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Sean Hennessy could not make it to Varnadore’s memorial, but

shared with other Soldiers Varnadore’s passion in life.

“Terry loved flying,” said Hennessy, of Bakersfield, Calif., “But it was obvious that his family was his life. On the weekends, or when he had time off from work, it wasn’t unusual for Terry to take his family on an outdoor adventure or road trip.”

Blue Max commander, US Army Capt. Sean Reeves of Shalimar, Fla., emphasized Varnadore’s love of his Family.

“Terry deployed to Afghanistan with his wife pregnant with their second child,” said Reeves, “He would show everyone the pictures of the ultrasounds and

would talk at great lengths about his daughter’s upcoming birthday. His family was his life and his motivation.”

Varnadore, 29, a native of Hendersonville, N.C., deployed with his unit in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2010.

His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal, Army Meritorious Unit Commendation, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon, NATO Medal, and Combat Action Badge. 🇺🇸

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers from Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, render a 21-gun salute in honor of U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Terry L. Varnadore II, of Hendersonville, N.C., who was killed when his OH-58 Kiowa went down in Kapisa province April 23. The memorial ceremony was held at the Enduring Faith Chapel April 26. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon)



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers pay their respects to U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Terry L. Varnadore II, of Hendersonville, N.C. during a memorial ceremony at Enduring Faith Chapel here April 26. Varnadore was killed when his OH-58 Kiowa helicopter went down in Kapisa province April 23. (Photo by US Army Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon)

In Memory of Chief Warrant Officer 2 Terry Varnadore



October 16, 1981 - April 23, 2011

Halfway down the trail to Hell,
In a shady meadow green
Are the Souls of all dead troopers
camped,
Near a good old-time canteen.
And this eternal resting place
Is known as Fiddlers' Green.
Marching past, straight through to
Hell

The Infantry are seen.
Accompanied by the Engineers,
Artillery and Marines,
For none but the shades of Cavalry-
men

Dismount at Fiddlers' Green.
Though some go curving down the
trail

To seek a warmer scene.
No trooper ever gets to Hell
Ere he's emptied his canteen.
And so rides back to drink again
With friends at Fiddlers' Green.
And so when man and horse go down
Beneath a saber keen,
Or in a roaring charge of fierce melee
You stop a bullet clean,
And the hostiles come to get your
scalp,

Just empty your canteen,
And put your pistol to your head
And go to Fiddlers' Green.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- An OH-58 Kiowa helicopter flies over a mountain range as the sun sets. (Photo by Maj. Richard Tucker)