

THE Falcon Flyer

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“Marne Air!”

February 1, 2013



COMMANDER'S CORNER

I remain honored to serve with, alongside and for the professional Soldiers of Task Force FALCON. Although the 3rd CAB HQs officially assumed responsibilities for Army rotary wing aviation operations in Regional Commands South, Southwest, and West

on Jan. 9, some Marne Air Soldiers arrived on our torch flight in late November. The collective efforts of Task Force FALCON Soldiers have already made a direct positive impact in our mission. Whether providing MEDEVAC, air assault, air movement, reconnaissance, attack, maintenance or sustainment support, the team is proving it is a learning organization and committed to the Afghan people, the ground forces we support and each other.

“Soldiers must remain focused on discipline, standards and safety to accomplish the mission.”

They are building upon the great legacy of those Soldiers who have served before them here in Afghanistan.

We operate in an area slightly smaller than the state of Montana, and this task force has Soldiers performing duties in various locations throughout the region. It is no easy environment to operate in, but that does not deter us from our collective contributions toward the goal of Afghan National Security Force independence, security for the Afghan people and good governance. The partner-

See CORNER, pg. 2

INSIDE

- KAW Medics 3
- Warrior of the Month 4



Colonel Allan M. Pepin, right, commander of Task Force Falcon, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Command Sgt. Maj. James P. Snyder, left, command sergeant major of Task Force Falcon, 3rd CAB, and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Randy Godfrey, center, chief warrant officer of the brigade, Task Force Falcon, 3rd CAB, unsheathe the Task Force Falcon colors during a transfer of authority ceremony Jan. 9 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Chad Ashe)

Task Force Falcon Takes Command

Story by Capt. Chad Ashe, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The responsibility of aviation operations in Regional Commands South, Southwest, and West was officially passed from Task Force Wings, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, to Task Force Falcon, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade Jan. 9 on the flight line of Kandahar Airfield, in southern Afghanistan.

Maj. Gen. Robert “Abe” Abrams and Command Sgt. Maj. Edd Watson, the senior commander and command sergeant major in RC-South and the Third Infantry Division, were in attendance along with senior leaders from the Kandahar Air Wing, who have in recent weeks made strides toward Afghan independence through strengthening the partnership with Task Force Falcon.

The airfield was a fitting backdrop

for the aviation task forces’ ceremony where aircraft depart daily to support ground forces in an area slightly smaller than the state of Montana.

“Today we mark the transition of two of the most unappreciated and overextended formations in our Army during the past decade plus in persistent conflict,” said Maj. Gen. Abrams, speaking on the high operation tempo of the combat aviation brigade.

Strong words from Maj. Gen. Abrams reinforced Task Force Wings’ job well done and welcomed the familiar Dog Face Soldiers deploying from Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.

“While I’m sad to see the 25th CAB leave, I’m heartened to know that there are Dog Face Soldiers at the controls and dominating the airspace,” said Maj. Gen. Abrams. “Your reputation precedes you. We all know you very,

See TOA, pg. 2



TOA, cont'd from pg. 1

very well.”

The Task Force Falcon commander, Col. Allan Pepin is familiar with the high standards of the Marne Division and recognizes the key to this mission being Afghan independence.

“The Falcon brigade is proud to support Afghan independence and is proud to do so shohna ba shohna [shoulder by shoulder] with our Afghan partners and the ground forces we support,” said Col. Pepin. •



Above: Col. Allan Pepin, left, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Snyder salute the Task Force Falcon standard during a transfer of authority ceremony Jan. 9 at Kandahar Airfield. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Luke Rollins)

Right: Col. Allan M. Pepin pins the Third Infantry Division patch on the sleeve of Capt. Adam Bet, commander, Task Force Talon, during a patch ceremony Jan. 19 at Kandahar Airfield. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Luke Rollins)



CORNER, cont'd from pg. 1

ships we are building upon with Afghan units are both a unique opportunity to increase our understanding of their culture and enhance their ability for independence.

Soldiers must remain focused on discipline, standards and safety to accomplish the mission. We also must continue to improve our resiliency (physical, mental, spiritual, family and social) to find the balance and handle the stresses of life, military and deployment. This is not a sprint, it is a marathon, and we

all need to find the pace that we can sustain with the ability to surge when required. Leader engagement and battle buddies are key to successfully of taking care of each other. We all must have a common focus to maintain a positive work environment where all are treated with dignity and respect.

Stay engaged with your leadership and those at home. Our Rear-Detachment has the critical task of taking care of the health of the force while setting conditions for

post-deployment operations. Our collective efforts are key to this success. Soldiers must continue to stay engaged with their loved ones and assist in resolving issues that develop during this deployment. Our Rear-Detachment teams remain ready to support.

To the Families and friends of Task Force FALCON, thank you for your support.

Marne Air! Rock of the Marne! •

THE FALCON FLYER

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TASK FORCE FALCON

Commander - Col. Allan M. Pepin

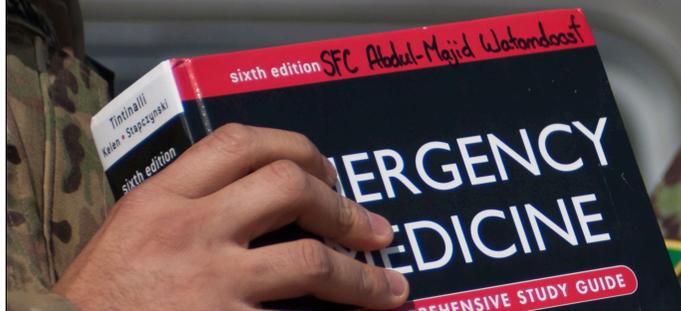
Command Sergeant Major - Command Sgt. Maj. James Snyder
Chief Warrant Officer of the Brigade - Chief Warrant Officer 5 Randy Godfrey

TASK FORCE FALCON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TF FALCON PAO - Capt. Chad Ashe
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KAW Gains New MEDEVAC Trainers

by Sgt. Luke Rollins,
Task Force Falcon Public Affairs



Sergeant 1st Class Abdul Majid Watandoost, above, a senior medical instructor at the Kandahar Air Wing, receives an emergency medicine reference book after the culminating exercise of a four-week tactical combat casualty care and basic life support training course Jan. 4 at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Luke Rollins)

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan

– The Kandahar Air Wing added two trainers to its team of flight medics after a culminating exercise and graduation ceremony Jan. 16 at Kandahar Airfield, marking the completion of a four-week course administered by their partners in Task Force Knighthawk, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment.

Sergeant 1st Class Abdul Majid Watandoost, a senior medical instructor at the KAW, and Soldier Raza Hosainy, a KAW flight medic, both earned certifications in Basic Life Support Training and Tactical Combat Casualty Care Training, allowing them to train their fellow flight medics in the KAW.

During the culminating exercise, Sgt. 1st Class Watandoost and Soldier Hosainy performed in flight patient evaluation and basic life support procedures, and demonstrated aircraft familiarization in a simulated MEDEVAC scenario.

Captain Clint Lowe, the area support medical team platoon leader of Charlie Company 2/3 AVN, said he was impressed with the professionalism the trainees displayed during the exercise.

“They performed flawlessly when it came to following the basic life support steps to sustain a patient in flight,” said Capt. Lowe.

After a UH-60 “Black Hawk” transported the simulated patient from the point of injury to a site for further medical evaluation, the Knighthawk trainers presented the graduates with their training certifications in a flight line ceremony.

Sergeant 1st Class Watandoost, who has trained with International Security Assistance Force counterparts for more than four years, said he was grateful for the valuable training he received during the course.

“We’ve learned a lot from this training: how to operate and use the MEDEVAC methods and machinery, patient treatment, the whole combat medic philosophy – these life saving techniques are very important to us,” said Watandoost.

Captain Rich Davis, an enroute critical care nurse with Task Force MED-Afghanistan, said he enjoyed seeing four weeks of training come together during the exercise, and was excited about the graduates’ future prospects.

“They have a solid knowledge base, so we wanted to do everything we could to expand their knowledge boundaries,” said Capt. Davis. “They’re all about transitioning, and they’ve been good about asking for reference books and training guides so they can train their guys in the future.”

For now, Capt. Lowe said they’ll stand at the KAW medics’ side, both

as mentors and fellows-in-arms.

“We’ll continue to train flight medics, make our medical trainers available to them, and dedicate any resources we can so that they can stand on their own two feet and sustain the fight on their own,” said Lowe.

A goal Sgt. 1st Class Watandoost said was his motivation during the past four weeks.

“Much of what I’ve learned from our mentors here I plan to share with the KAW medics under me, so that they can share it with other Afghan medics, so that in the future, we can take care of ourselves.” •



Flight medics from Task Force Knighthawk and the Kandahar Air Wing lift a simulated casualty into a UH-60 “Black Hawk” helicopter during the culminating exercise of a four-week tactical combat casualty care and basic life support training course. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Chad Ashe)

MARNE AIR WARRIOR of the month



Pfc. Andrew Riggs
AH-64D Repairer
A/1-285
Task Force BRAWLER

Pfc. Andrew Riggs continuously performs at a level of professionalism much higher than his rank would lend. Less than two years in the Army, Pfc. Riggs actively engages senior noncommissioned officers and constantly seeks to improve his skill set as an AH-64D maintainer, a quality he displayed in actions he took Dec. 12, 2012. During post-maintenance operational checks, Pfc. Riggs conducted a walk around and general inspection of his aircraft. Upon reaching the vertical stabilizer, Pfc. Riggs noticed that the four each vertical stabilizer elastomeric mounts did not look quite right. Enlisting the guidance of his squad leader, both crew chiefs verified that indeed all four elastomeric mounts had been installed incorrectly. Under extremely high operations environment and with impending weather rolling in, there was pressure to get the aircraft up and on its way. With pilots already in the aircraft and the APU on, Pfc. Riggs maintained a "Safety First" attitude and used knowledge he gained from a squad leader on proper vertical stabilizer mount installations to prevent a possible Class A accident. All four elastomeric mount barrel nut assemblies had been installed upside down, a detail not outlined in the graphics of the IETM. Pfc. Andrew Riggs' maturity, attention to detail, and daily work ethic resemble those of a seasoned and experienced NCO. His actions are a great credit upon himself, Alpha Company, 1-285th ARB, Task Force BRAWLER, and the United States Army. •



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