

THE Falcon Flyer

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Sgt. Maj. of the Army Visits Task Force Falcon

Story and photo by Sgt. Luke Rollins, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Sergeant Major of the Army Raymond F. Chandler III visited Soldiers from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, holding a town hall meeting March 26 to address the Army’s future challenges and touring the task force’s maintenance facilities.

“The only way this works is if we have a discussion,” Sgt. Maj. of the Army Chandler said. “[Soldiers’] feedback helps the Chief of the Staff of the Army [Gen. Raymond Odierno]...make well-informed decisions about the future of the force.”

More than 100 Soldiers crowded into a Task Force Falcon hangar to hear Chandler speak on issues ranging from budget constraints to Soldier resilience.

One of the Army’s foremost priorities for the future of the force is the elimination of sexual harassment, he said. Chandler repeatedly engaged Falcon Soldiers with questions of how the Army could improve awareness and combat misconduct.

“Inappropriate actions, conversations – this is not professional, this does not belong in our workplace,” said Chandler. “Commitment, character and competence are what we say define us as professionals. Apply those three things in everything you do.”

After he spoke, Chandler held a question-and-answer session with the audience and awarded coins to 10 outstanding Falcon Soldiers.

Private Matthew Herrin, a human

resources specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, said he appreciated the chance to meet Chandler.

“I was glad he talked about educational benefits, because I’m looking to take classes while I’m here,” said Herrin.

Chandler then took a brief tour of a Task Force Falcon maintenance bay, where Soldiers from the 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment and the 603rd Aviation Support Battalion demonstrated the work that sustains aviation operations in southern Afghanistan.

Chandler said the resilience of Task Force Falcon Soldiers in the wake of tragedy was an Army-wide inspiration.

“I can’t thank you enough for what you guys do,” said Chandler. “Your ability to continue the mission after so much personal sacrifice is the highest example of what it means to be a Soldier.”

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Capt. Sara M. Knutson, 27, of Eldersburg, Md., died March 11 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, during aviation operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Captain Knutson was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. She graduated in 2007 from the U.S. Military Academy and began active duty service as a UH-60 "Black Hawk" pilot at Fort Wainwright, Alaska in May the same year. She arrived to Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., in Dec. 2012 and deployed shortly thereafter. She is survived by her husband, Christopher Cullen, and her parents, William and Lynn Knutson. •



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Curtis S. Reagan, 43, of Summerville, S.C., died March 29 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, of a non-combat related illness. Chief Warrant Officer 5 Reagan was assigned to Bravo Company, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. He enlisted in the Army in 1989. Reagan became a Warrant Officer in 1991 and an AH-64 "Apache" helicopter pilot in 1993. He arrived at B Co., 603rd ASB, in 2011. He deployed three times to Afghanistan and twice to Iraq. He is survived by his wife Tanna, his daughter Brianna and son Tyler. •



Chief Warrant Officer 3 James E. Groves III, 37, of Kettering, Ohio, died March 16 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, during aviation operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Groves was assigned to Bravo Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. He enlisted in the Army in 1994 and became a Warrant Officer in 2001. He arrived at 3/17 CAV in 2003 at Fort Drum, N.Y. He served twice in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and had one prior OEF deployment, all with 3/17 CAV. He is survived by his wife, Katie, and their two sons, James and Shane. •



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brian J. Henderson, 27, of Franklin, La., died March 11 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, during aviation operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Henderson was assigned to Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. He graduated from the University of Louisiana-Monroe in 2007. He entered active duty service that same year and arrived at Fort Hood, Texas, as a UH-60 "Black Hawk" pilot in 2009. He arrived at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., in Aug. 2012. He is survived by his wife, Trista, his stepdaughter, Aria, and his parents, James and Karen Henderson. •



Staff Sgt. Marc A. Scialdo, 31, of Naples, Fla., died March 11 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, during aviation operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Staff Sgt. Scialdo was assigned to Bravo Company, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. He enlisted in the Army in 2003 as a UH-60 "Black Hawk" helicopter repairer and deployed to Iraq in June 2006 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He joined the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade in Jan. 2012. He is survived by his wife Kara Ann, and his mother Susan Scialdo. •



Staff Sgt. Steven P. Blass, 27, of Estherville, Iowa, died March 11 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, during aviation operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Staff Sgt. Blass was assigned to Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. He enlisted in the Army in 2006 as a UH-60 "Black Hawk" helicopter crew member and deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 in support of OEF. He arrived at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., in Aug. 2011. He is survived by his wife, Tricia, his son, Hayden, and his parents, Randy and Carol Blass. •



Spc. Zachary L. Shannon, 21, of Dunedin, Fla., died March 11 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, during aviation operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Specialist Shannon was assigned to Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. He enlisted in the Army in 2010 as a UH-60 "Black Hawk" helicopter crew member after graduating from high school. He spent a year in Korea before arriving at Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., in April 2012. He is survived by his mother, Kimberly Allison, and stepfather, Raymond Allison. •



THE FALCON FLYER

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TASK FORCE FALCON

Commander - Col. Allan M. Pepin
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 Chief Warrant Officer of the Brigade - Chief Warrant Officer 5 Randy Godfrey

TASK FORCE FALCON PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TF FALCON PAO - Capt. Chad Ashe
 TF FALCON PA NCOIC, *Falcon Flyer* Editor - Sgt. Luke Rollins

"Captain Sara Knutson had a sense of humor that was second to none. She wouldn't want us to cry over her loss. If she wanted us to cry at all, it would be out of laughter at all the funny, hilarious, most ridiculous things she said." - Capt. Mike Nguyen, HHC, 3rd CAB



"No matter how good or bad, Spc. Zachary Shannon always found the positive side of things, at work and at home. He was a great comrade, friend, son, and boyfriend. His memory will become a part of us when we grow old." - Spc. Christopher Miller, B Co., 4/3 AVN



"If Chief Warrant Officer 3 James Groves was a Disney character, he'd be Mickey Mouse: an icon, a hero and a legend. He loved life. Everyone loved him, everyone looked up to him. He's like having a brother and father all wrapped into one. He'd be beside you for all sorts of shenanigans, but always made sure you upheld the highest moral values and standards." - Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mark Burrows, HHT, 3-17 CAV



"When you were around Staff Sgt. Marc Scialdo, he had a way to both motivate and relax you without you even knowing it. I've never seen one man have such a happy and positive effect on a group of people. Above all, Marc was a patriot. But his patriotism was not only grounded in service. It was grounded in friendship." - Capt. Nick Kanakis, B Co., 603rd ASB

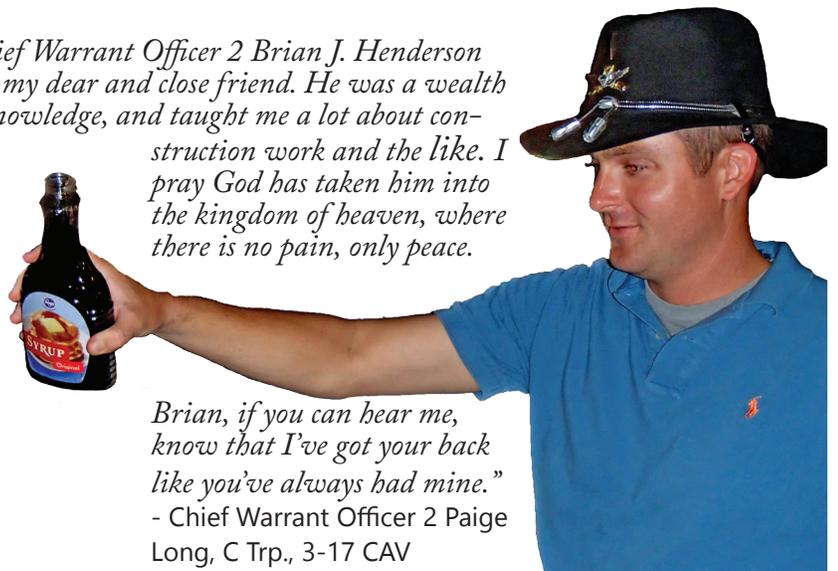
"Chief Warrant Officer 5 Curtis Scott Reagan, as we knew him, was larger than life. Not just respected for his wealth of knowledge and experience, but also loved for his kindness and decency. A true mentor and friend to everyone, his work ethic was unparalleled, and the result was an [outstanding] career of accomplishments in service to the nation." - Chief Warrant Officer 5 Anthony Born, HHC, 3rd CAB

"Unique doesn't even begin to describe him... He had a levelheadedness that seemed to project an air of confidence not found in most men. People say you can sum up a man's life by the mark he leaves on the world. I can tell you Staff Sgt. Steve Blass left his mark on me. Things will never be the same without him."



- Sgt. Anthony Desender, B Co., 4/3 AVN

"Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brian J. Henderson was my dear and close friend. He was a wealth of knowledge, and taught me a lot about construction work and the like. I pray God has taken him into the kingdom of heaven, where there is no pain, only peace."



Brian, if you can hear me, know that I've got your back like you've always had mine."
- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Paige Long, C Trp., 3-17 CAV



MARNE AIR WARRIOR of the month



Specialist Joe Modlin of Delta Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, has consistently proven himself as a Task Force Viper aircraft maintainer during this deployment. Modlin has set himself apart from his peers with exceptional work ethic and the ability to learn from previous experiences during aircraft trouble shooting. Over the last month he has been instrumental in unscheduled maintenance by successfully troubleshooting and repairing a malfunctioning AH-64D ammo handling system, a pilot night vision system displaying numerous faults upon completion of a built in test, and a transmission wiring harness causing erroneous torque readings. His technical knowledge has directly contributed to maintaining Task Force Viper's operational readiness rate of 85 percent.

Specialist Modlin has also consistently improved his competence in Soldier tasks. Modlin was among the first to volunteer for a recent range at which he qualified expert. He can always be found studying for Soldier of the Month Boards or diligently completing correspondence courses. Modlin was one of the first two Delta Soldiers to earn his way into FOB Wolverine's "1,000 Pound Club," cementing his place in the avant-garde of company esprit-de-corps.

Specialist Joe Modlin has demonstrated himself as an emerging leader in the Armament Platoon and a Soldier for others in the brigade to emulate. •



A CH-47F "Chinook" helicopter with 2nd Battalion, 104th Regiment, Connecticut National Guard, Task Force Brawler, sling loads a ground vehicle March 20 at Multinational Base Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. Scott Tant)

Marne Air Social Media

To read more stories and see the photos that go with them, as well as some videos, check out the links below. Read and share what you see and pass along the Soldiers' stories.

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