



The Talon Times



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“Above Valor and Courage”

From The Top

As a professional military organization our focus is always directed to the mission-at-hand. Every day the Soldiers throughout the 185th TAB carry out our critical mission with distinction and unwavering dedication.

Since we have taken over this expansive and challenging mission we have improved our ability to conduct operations alongside our Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and multinational partners throughout the Middle East. We have enhanced existing partnerships and developed new relationships with countries throughout the US Army Central Area of Operations. The 1-137th AHB and 4-501st ARB conduct aviation operations on a regular basis in both Kuwait and Iraq in austere and sometimes dangerous conditions.

And the 351st ASB continues to provide top notch support to the brigade to keep our aircraft flying.

With our energy and focus directed to our mission sometimes we forget about the critical role played by those who support and enable us to serve in a deployed environment—our friends, families, and employers back home.

I want to personally thank all the families and friends of the Soldiers of the 185th Theater Aviation Brigade located throughout the nation that support our Soldiers while they are away from home. Undoubtedly, we could not perform our vital

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Colonel Ronald Beckham
185th TAB Commander



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The C-12 Mission

It’s not a typical aviation asset— in fact, its more than likely one of the best kept secrets in aviation. Within the 185th Theater Aviation Brigade, there is a small group of fixed wing pilots whose mission is to fly the C-12 aircraft. For those who don’t know, this aircraft is basically a small private plane, used for conveying VIP’s and other soldiers or equipment. Their mission is carrying troops throughout the

theater when seating is available. The motto— “If it fits, it ships” —is no understatement.

With seating for around five passengers and hardly any room for sizable amounts of cargo, transit flights are the primary mission for the C-12. According to Chief Warrant Officer 4 George Munson, “part of what’s unique for us is that we operate relatively independent from a lot of the

command over here, because our missions come directly from ARCENT.”

Based at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait, these pilots perform multiple missions to various places. “We go to Iraq, Oman, Egypt, and Jordan,” said CW4 Munson. With a limited crew of just two pilots, all C-12 pilots are very familiar with the aircraft, the maintenance, and what must be done before each

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Chief Warrant Officer 5 Joseph Sharp examines the propeller on the C-12 fixed wing aircraft before takeoff at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait. The C-12 pilots personally go out to inspect the aircraft before each flight.



What's happening with Task Force Talon...

Warrior Leader Course



Second from the right is SGT Ashely Kaiser of Detachment 1, Echo Company, 1st Battalion, 137th Aviation Regiment attending her graduation ceremony from the Warrior Leaders Course.

For three weeks a handful of junior enlisted soldiers and junior noncommissioned officers from the 185th Theater Aviation Brigade attended and completed the Warrior Leader Course at Camp Buehring. The course is designed to develop soldiers into future leaders for the Army. It entails learning Physical Readiness Training, Troop Leading Procedures, and how to help personally and professionally develop newly enlisted soldiers within their unit.

During the course soldiers are tested daily both mentally and physically, readying them to make decisions on their feet. "The Warrior Leader Course showed me the most effective and professional way to handle real word situations that leaders in today's Army are faced with," said Krystal Turnbow, 185th Theater Aviation Brigade.

Completing and graduating the Warrior Leader Course is just one of the key courses that makes sure the junior enlisted soldiers are

properly trained for their future roles in the Army. "It opens their eyes, and they understand more what is asked of them— it broadens their mind and their concept of being a leader," said Command Sergeant Major Willie Ross, 185th Theater Aviation Brigade.

With these soldiers getting the opportunity to attend and complete the Warrior Leader Course while deployed, they are not only helping their unit, they are also developing their military career.

— Sgt. Michael Needham, 185th TAB PAO



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www.facebook.com/185thTheaterAviationBrigade



Or DVIDs at:

www.dvidshub.net/unit/185-tab



Spc. Shannon Gainey and Spc. Krystal Turnbow complete and graduate the Warrior Leader Course at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, June 22, 2015. Gainey made the commandant's list, placing him in the top 20 percent of his graduating class.



From the Top (Continued from Page 1)

mission without your support and commitment to your Soldiers.

seeing you once our mission is complete!

— Talon 6

While we carryout our mission overseas, our families and friends provide emotional support to our Soldiers and they work twice as hard to fill the void that is created when there loved ones are gone. Once again, I am sincerely grateful for all that our families and friends are doing back home to make our mission here a success! I know I speak for all of our Soldiers when I say we look forward to



Cpt. Joshua Bishop renders a salute to Lt. Col Glen Flowers during his promotion ceremony at Udairi Landing Strip at Camp Buehring, Kuwait .



SSG Rebecca Holman, a UH-60 Blackhawk Crewchief from the 1-137th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 185th Theater Aviation Brigade, U.S. Army Central assists Major General William Hickman with fitting the Life Preserving Unit before the over water Gunnery Exercise June 16, 2015.



Chief of the National Guard Bureau visits 185 TAB

On June 5, 2015 Soldiers from throughout the 185th TAB had an opportunity to hear from and interact with the top leadership in the Pentagon representing the National Guard. Gen Frank Grass and Chief Master Sergeant Mitchell Brush stopped at Camp Buerling on a tour that spanned from Europe to the Middle East.

The stop included a town hall with the Chief of NGB and a brief visit with the bri-

gade's leadership. Commanders and staff of the 185th TAB had an opportunity to brief Gen Grass and Chief Brush on both operations that the 185th TAB is responsible for conducting as well as the composition of the brigade.

The visit served as an opportunity for leaders at the tactical and operational level to get a picture of the strategic vision for the National Guard as a component of the Total Force.

"It's extremely critical. It's very important to find out what their plans and goals are— what the way ahead is for the next five to ten years for the Guard," said Col Ronald Beckham, Commander, 185th Theater Aviation Brigade. In a recent article published on nationalguard.mil, Gen Grass said, "To see the Theater Aviation Brigade out of Mississippi - Army National Guard - with active, Guard and reserve assigned to them, to see them work there was truly tremen-

dous."

— Capt Allen Baxter,
185th TAB PAO



The "Chappy" makes me Happy!

The other night I was sitting at a table with a bunch of guys, watching them play dominoes. A quick glance around the table revealed that we were all basically middle aged men, all senior NCOs or Field Grade officers. But for that night, we were just a bunch of guys. The sound of dominoes hitting the table interrupted the quiet conversation and gentle laughter occasionally, but it never distracted from the reality of what was really happening. It was a bunch of guys engaged in...life.

It was simple. It was casual. It was...perfect. Some-

where in the midst of mission and desert, between responsibility and obligation, dwelt a quiet life. More than that, a second glance around that table would reveal something else - all of us recognized it. On the edges of a true friendship, a genuine camaraderie, and a warm acceptance of one another was the calm presence of... Life. It sounds simple, but there in the midst of routine it was a beautiful moment. No rank, no rancor, no routine - Just a simple moment of friends and few laughs.

As a Chaplain, I am the fortunate witness to a hun-

dred of those moments across the post and among small groups of friends and colleagues all the time. Moments of group realization, when everyone exchanges quick glances as if to say - "Hey, guys, this is... Good". It always produces smiles and chuckles. It is not rare, but it is special.

Life happens on mission. It reminds us of who we are, and what we are. And until we arrive back home, it is always welcome.

— Capt. Randy Wilson
185th TAB Chaplain



Don't Forget about the JAG...

Your non-military employment back home is protected while you are deployed, at Annual Training, or attending drill. The Uniformed Servicemembers Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) was developed to ensure Servicemembers that their civilian employment will not interfere with their military career and that they will maintain employment even while deployed.

Since you are now in a military status, most of you informed your employer of when you were leaving. Many employers are familiar with USERRA and always seek to comply. However, there are those who are not aware of the law, or

presume that the Servicemember will not enforce his or her rights.

Once you have informed your employer (preferably no less than 30 days prior) of your absence, you are entitled to time-off for the period of your military status. The law requires the employer to hold your position until you return. Once you return to a civilian status, you must then inform your employer of when you plan to return. There are statutory periods that are required. For instance, if you have been deployed for more than 181 days, you must apply for reinstatement within 90 days of your return. Failure to do so within the statutory period will count as a waiver of rights under

USERRA and will likely result in a loss of employment.

To further elaborate, an employer may not terminate employment due to your military service. There have been instances where employers will work with a Servicemember in order to accommodate their service. Unfortunately, after a period of time, the employer grows weary of the absences and terminates the employee, citing the burden of his or her service in the military. This is illegal and the employer could be liable for damages and other penalties.

If you have any questions about your employer's methods in addressing your military absence, please feel free to speak with your Brigade Legal Office.

185th TAB JAG Team:

Maj. Mark Lampton

Capt. Rob Mayhue

Capt. Andrew Lake

Staff Sgt. Adrian Young



The C-12 Mission (Continued from Page 1)

mission can begin. “You’re responsible for the conduct of the entire operation, and most of the time you are left with your own resources to make sure the mission happens,” said CW4 Munson. Just another component that makes the C-12 mission separate from traditional aviation operations.

— Sgt. Michael Needham, 185th TAB PAO NCO



A Soldier with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment guides a basket into the North Arabian Gulf to pull a Soldier out of the water during a search and rescue exercise June 16, 2015, at the North Arabian Gulf, Kuwait.

Editor’s Note:

“How did it get so late so soon? Its night before its afternoon. December is here before its June. My goodness how the time has flown. How did it get so late so soon?.” – Dr Seuss



(Left) Maj. Gen. William Hickman, U.S. Army Central deputy commanding general - operations, walks toward a UH-60 Black Hawk prior to the start of an over water gun exercise June 16, 2015.

As we are rapidly approaching the mid-point of our deployment I thought I would share a few words of encouragement this month. Having deployed a number of times to the Middle East I recall arriving in theater and thinking about the seemingly vast amount of time remaining until it was time to go home.

In speaking with Chaplain Wilson a few weeks ago I learned about the many creative ways that the Soldiers are measuring the time until they return home. Some Soldiers choose to count tooth paste tubes others choose the amount of pay periods until the end of the deployment.

On my first deployment to Iraq I remember asking my replacements, “Did your deployment go by fast?” They typically responded with the same answer: “Not really!” This

was not exactly the answer that I was looking for, however, looking back there is no question that the time went by faster than I would have expected or, in retrospect, even wanted.

Nearly a decade after my first deployment I would return to Iraq. This time with a completely different mindset forged mostly by experience . I decided early on that I was not going to focus on the amount of time that was left until I would return home. Instead, I would focus on my mission, the time that I had with my friends that were deployed with me, and staying in contact with my friends and family back home. Indeed, this made the time go by much faster than in times past. More importantly, it allowed me to focus on the things that I needed to focus on rather than wasting time wishing my life away.

Robert Frost said, “In three words I can sum up everything I’ve learned about life. It goes on.” The stresses of a deployment are undeniable by both the Soldiers and family members that send their Soldiers far away from home. Undoubtedly, the Soldiers miss their families and visa versa. Yet is critical that we remember that we use every minute of our time productively to support our critical mission, to improve ourselves, and strengthen our relationships with those we leave behind. In just a few short months we will reunite with our friends and families back home. Looking back on this time in the desert it is, at least, my hope to say that I used my time wisely to build new relationships, strengthen others, and contribute to a cause that will have timeless impacts on the security of our nation.

— Capt Allen Baxter,

185th TAB PAO



Lt. Col. Bruce Giamalva observes how the medical staff at the Camp Buchring TMC reacts to a MASCAL situation. The object of the MASCAL exercise was to determine how well the medical teams worked under