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# THE Desert Talon



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## Snow blankets sands of Balad

By SGT. DALE SWEETNAM  
Task Force 49 PAO

Iraq's rainy season had not yielded much precipitation during the months of December and January at LSA Anaconda, but on Jan. 11, just as Soldiers and Airmen finished up their early morning workouts, snow fell onto sand and dirt that hadn't seen such weather in more than half a century.



Courtesy photo  
Soldiers built this snowman during the Jan. 11 snow.

"I was walking by myself from the gym and I had this crazy thought," Staff Sgt. James Thompson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force 49 said. "What if the snow stuck and we got to go sled riding? My wife and kids would never believe me."

The snow lightened moods not only in the streets of

Baghdad that hadn't seen snow in decades, but around post where Soldiers smiled and laughed and remembered home.

Many units of Task Force 49 hail from places like Alaska, Minnesota, Germany and Washington, so the snow was a sweet taste of home for hundreds of Soldiers.

Capt. David Holtz, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 147<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment, was on the flight line when it began to snow.

"There was quite a bit of excitement when the big fat snowflakes started falling and there were a lot of pictures taken," Holtz said. "I couldn't help but think, 'no one is going to believe this back home.'"

See Snow, page 14



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Reinhardt

### The big day in Balad

412th Aviation Support Battalion Chaplain (Capt.) Gabriel Mizerani guides Spc. Karma Savage and Sgt. Alhaji Savage in a candle-lighting ritual during the couple's Jan. 15 ceremony at the Freedom Chapel on LSA Anaconda, Iraq. STORY AND PHOTOS ON PAGE 4

## Artist draws inspiration from TF 49 Soldiers

By SGT. 1ST CLASS ERIC REINHARDT  
Task Force 49 PAO

The Task Force 49 flight line here at LSA Anaconda felt like a movie set Jan. 13.

Against the backdrop of a crisp, clear day, actors in full combat gear re-enacted the launch of an air-assault mission while a director choreographed their movements and poses.

The models were Soldiers from B Company, 412<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support

Battalion, arranged and photographed with a UH-60 Black Hawk and a Humvee for a painting by military and aviation artist James Dietz.

"My part is to be right behind the guy that's getting on the aircraft, just like I'm getting ready to get on," said Private 2 Andrew Fetz, B Company, 412<sup>th</sup> ASB. "I had no idea there would be this much work going into making a painting."

Dietz travelled to Balad and Taji to photograph Army aviation Soldiers in action for a limited-edition print

commissioned by Task Force 49 and the 12<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade. His military history scenes adorn the walls of U.S. Army offices and headquarters around the world. Military art collectors prize his work and Dietz prints often fetch hundreds of dollars after a few years.

"We chose Dietz because he is recognized as the best military and aviation artist working today, and his

See Dietz, page 14

# Talon 6 sends . . . One team, one fight

Greetings from a surprisingly chilly Iraq. Of course, it is certainly not comparable to the weather in Germany, the continental United States, or Alaska, where it was 35 degrees below zero this week, but it has been hovering around freezing here during the evening hours. Despite the change in weather, you can be proud of your Soldier, as the Soldiers of the Task Force continue to do great work in a very professional manner!

On a daily basis, Task Force 49 aircraft and crews are patrolling the skies day and night bringing peace and stability to this country. On average, our aircrews are flying nearly 2,000 hours a month. In fact, since the deployment began last year, they have flown more than 35,000 hours and have moved more than 100,000 Soldiers around the battlefield! What an incredible testimony to the entire team involved, from the 412<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support Battalion in preparing aircraft to launch, maintaining them to aircrews executing combat missions. The team has made the difficult seem routine and I am amazed at the skill and ability demonstrated in the most austere conditions.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 158 Aviation Regiment and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 147<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment continue to provide incredible medium and heavy lift, and casualty evacuation support to all the coalition forces in country as well as conduct the largest air assault missions in theater. If a Soldier is arriving or departing Iraq, he or she is probably moving about the battlefield courtesy of these two great formations. For those at home, watch for stories



highlighting 2-147, that recently hosted reporters from MinnPost.com and ABC affiliate station KSTP in Minneapolis.

The Gunslingers of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 159<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment remain committed to supporting a variety of coalition headquarters on the ground. Those who harm us know full well that at all hours of the day and night, a Gunslinger is close by to protect our forces on the ground and to provide support to other aircraft. Gun-tape footage of a Gunslinger in action taking the fight to the enemy is a thing of beauty!

Senior leaders continue to rely on Task Force Hawk for fixed-wing movement; not only within Iraq, but to neighboring countries in the region as well. I'm not sure how we would

manage day-to-day operations without dedicated fixed-wing assets to move leadership and cargo where we need them to influence the coalition's efforts.

Throughout combat operations the past month, we have continued to be visited by VIPs who continually sing the praises of your Soldiers; from the U.S. Army, Europe Commander, Gen. David D. McKiernan and Command Sgt. Maj. Iuniasolua T. Savusa; Maj. Gen. Larry W. Shellito, the Adjutant General of the Minnesota National Guard; to the Multi-National Corps-Iraq Commander, Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno and Deputy Commander Maj. Gen. James Simmons. In fact, this month we will say farewell to Maj. Gen. Simmons, who has been a stalwart supporter of Army Aviation and both Task Force XII and now Task Force 49. We will miss his leadership and mentorship to the Aviation force as well as the teamwork of the entire MNC-I S-3 air staff who worked closely with us during their rotation. We wish them all the best as they redeploy to Fort Hood.

In closing, we approach the month of February with the same determination to operate safely and professionally as we have every month. At home, the Minnesota National Guard's 34<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade, as well as 6<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 17 Cavalry Regiment in Alaska, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 159 Aviation Regiment in Germany are training to join us in the fight. God speed to each of you at home and thank you for your continued support.

**One Team! Arctic Talons!**  
Col. Chandler C. Sherrell  
Commander, Task Force 49

## Editor's note

## 'Point of View' provides forum for Soldiers-produced photos

When taking photos to e-mail home to family and friends detailing your time in Iraq, make sure to add *The Desert Talon* to the address list: the "Point of View" section is designed for exactly these kinds of photos.

The section runs each month in *The Desert Talon*. It's dedicated to

highlighting photos taken by Soldiers during their daily lives here in Iraq.

The Task Force 49 Public Affairs staff can't be everywhere at once, so that's where you, our readers, come in to play.

Take some time to snap a few shots and send them our way.

Candid shots are always best, so look at your job and daily life from the

outside looking in; what may seem ordinary to you may be a perspective very few have ever seen.

### Correction

In last month's Page 11 photo feature "Christmas Across the World" Then-Cpl. (now Sgt.) Vernon Smith was misidentified as "Matthew Smith."

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*This issue of the Desert Talon and back issues can be found on the Task Force 49 website at:*  
[http://www.waimwright.army.mil/49TF/BDE\\_WEB/](http://www.waimwright.army.mil/49TF/BDE_WEB/)

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# Talon 7 sends . . . Thanks for the support

Hello Soldiers and Families of Task Force 49:

Well, another holiday season has come and gone, I hope that everyone found peace and joy during the holiday season. The Soldiers of Task Force 49 have continued the important role of providing first-class aviation support to Multi-National Corps-Iraq. This support has contributed immensely to the overall success of past and current operations.

This month we held the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Brigade Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter board. I was overwhelmed by seeing first-hand the quality and professionalism of our young Soldiers and NCOs. The competition was very close in both categories, but unfortunately, there could only be one winner in each category. The Brigade Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter is Staff Sgt. Joker Botin from B Company, 412<sup>th</sup> ASB. The Brigade Soldier of the Quarter is Pfc. Joseph Vrechek, also from B Company, 412<sup>th</sup> ASB. Both the NCO and Soldier received Army Commendation Medals, certificates of achievement and \$50 gift certificates from the brigade family readiness group.

Col. Sherrell and I finally had the opportunity to visit with some of our Soldiers serving in various locations in Iraq. We had attempted to take this



journey many times over the past couple of months but due to either inclement weather or scheduling difficulties we were unable to travel. On Jan. 10 we started off by visiting our forward deployed Soldiers at Ar Ramadi. The Soldiers serving in Ramadi are part of the 412<sup>th</sup> ASB and their mission is to provide aviation re-arm and refuel support for rotary-wing aircraft. These Soldiers work in a remote area of Iraq and they don't have all the luxuries we enjoy here at Balad. Soldiers are rotated out each quarter so that they can get a break from the austere living conditions and the heavy work load they endure each and every

day. The Soldiers are doing a great job and are performing extremely well.

The next leg of our flight took us to Al Taqaddum, or "TQ" as it's usually called, where we visited with the Soldiers of Task Force Dragon (B Company, 1st 52 Aviation Regiment). The Soldiers assigned to TF Dragon are deployed to TQ and their primary mission is to provide medium-lift helicopter support to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Force. The Soldiers of Task Force Dragon are out of Fort Wainwright, Alaska and have been deployed since July 2007. During our visit we were able to present some items, courtesy of the Fort Wainwright BOSS Soldiers. The items included TVs, X-Boxes, and several X-Box games. The Soldiers were very surprised and excited to receive the gifts. I would like to personally thank Sgt. Laci Moore and the Fort Wainwright BOSS representatives who worked to raise the funds. Their care and concern for their fellow deployed Soldiers of Task Force 49 is greatly appreciated.

I would like to close by thanking all the families and friends of Task Force 49 for the support and devotion they give their warriors each and every day. We couldn't do what we do here in Iraq without your support. God Bless.

**Talon 7 Out!**  
**CSM Richard A. Mitchell**  
**Command Sgt. Major**  
**Task Force 49**

## Petroleum specialists respond to mass casualty

By SGT. DALE SWEETNAM  
 Task Force 49 PAO

The petroleum supply specialists of A. Co. 412<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support Battalion spend their days refueling Black Hawks, Chinooks and Apaches, but on an early December day, they put those duties aside and became pivotal players in a life-or-death situation.

On Dec. 6, a suicide bomber attacked a town just outside of Forward Operating Base Normandy, about 53 miles northeast of Baghdad.

The explosion injured dozens and within moments, ambulances carrying 13 local-national casualties were outside the gates of FOB Normandy.

The medical staff immediately realized they did not have enough personnel to handle the large number of casualties. They turned to the petroleum specialists for help.

"The intercom called for all medical personnel and then they started knocking on



Petroleum supply specialists of A. Co. 412<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support Battalion conduct daily operations at Forward Operating Base Normandy.

doors," said Sgt. Rachael Dillon, 412<sup>th</sup> ASB.

Dillon was one of the six 412<sup>th</sup> ASB Soldiers who came to the support of the medical staff.

While the 412<sup>th</sup> ASB Soldiers weren't medically trained, they were more than equipped to help download the casualties, keep them calm and run the radio.

Dillon immediately jumped on the radio where she called

in patient statistics.

Dillon said despite the gravity of the situation, the scene was surprisingly calm. She said the patients remained composed while the medics tended to their injuries. Although the scene was calmer than she expected, Dillon said she was still a little rattled while on the radio.

"I was nervous on the radio when giving their stats,"

Dillon said. "These were people's lives we were dealing with."

The scene lasted about 45 minutes before air transportation was prepared to move the casualties to Logistics Support Area Anaconda.

A few months before the December incident, Soldiers of A. Co. watched a medic Black Hawk on fire land on their FARP. The refueling team quickly extinguished the fire before any more damage to the FARP or the helicopter was sustained.

Platoon Leader, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Thomas Allen, said hearing his Soldiers were involved in another life-or-death situation was no shock.

"I really wasn't surprised when I heard," Allen said. "My guys are always doing great things."

Dillon, Spc. Michael Moody, Spc. Andrew Lavoie, Sgt. Kyle Ahart, Sgt. Sarun Chun and Sgt. Shawn Zandy have all been recommended for Army Commendation Medals.

# Couple celebrates in downrange ceremony

By SGT. 1ST CLASS ERIC REINHARDT  
Task Force 49 PAO

Sgt. Alhaji Savage and Spc. Karma Savage of the 412<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support Battalion were determined to get married, even when a deployment to Iraq intervened last summer.

When their unit arrived in Iraq in July, the two were assigned to separate locations: Alhaji at LSA Anaconda as a technical supply NCO, and Karma to Ar Ramadi, as an aircraft refueler.

Even that didn't stop them. Once in Iraq, the couple applied for a civil marriage by proxy. So technically, though living apart, they were married.

"We wanted the blessings of a formal wedding ceremony," Alhaji said.

The couple was reunited just days after Christmas when Karma was rotated to LSA Anaconda, and they started making plans for their ceremony.

Their Jan. 15 nuptials at the Freedom Chapel drew a packed house of well wishers from the 412<sup>th</sup> and other Task Force 49 units.

Like the Army itself, it was a crossroads of many cultures.

The 412<sup>th</sup> Chaplain, Capt. Gabriel Mizerani, raised in Italy and Israel, conducted the couple's Messianic Jewish ceremony. The faith combines Jewish rituals, beliefs and symbolism with Christian beliefs and traditions.

The Savages' Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Sam Hamontree, provided the music for the service, playing the bagpipes and dressed in a formal kilt.

Savage, a native of Sierra Leone, moved with his family to Blackwood, New Jersey in 1999 and joined the Army in April 2003.

Karma Savage was born and raised in Colon City, Panama, and moved to Lansing, Mich., in 1998.

She joined the Army Reserve in 1998 but transferred to the active-duty Army in 2006.

The two met when they were assigned to the 412<sup>th</sup> in Germany last year.

Alhaji said they had thought of waiting until they returned to their home base to have the wedding, but they're glad they had it here.

"The wedding was a very special occasion – it was a blessing," Savage said. "We got a lot of support from everybody – our friends and our whole chain of command."



photos by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Reinhardt



(Top) Sgt. Alhaji Savage and Spc. Karma Savage, both Soldiers in the 412<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support Battalion, exchange vows in a Jan. 15 wedding at the Freedom Chapel on LSA Anaconda.

(Above) Sgt. Alhaji Savage and Spc. Karma Savage share a piece of cake after their Jan. 15 wedding at the Freedom Chapel on LSA Anaconda.

(Left) Sgt. Alhaji Savage and Spc. Karma Savage pose for wedding snaps in front of a 412<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support Battalion fuel truck their fellow Soldiers decked out for the occasion.



# Project Care Giver connects with Iraqis

■ *Soldiers of 2-147 introduce Iraqi citizens to genuine 'Minnesota nice'*

By CAPT. RYAN CURL  
2-147 AHB PAO

With surf and turf night, a specialty coffee shop, and a host of other amenities available to them, it would be easy for the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment of St. Paul, Minn., to ignore the conditions that most Iraqi people live under day in and day out.

Instead, some Soldiers in the unit have formed Project Care Giver to collect items they can donate to local Iraqi children through LSA Anaconda's Civil Affairs Team.

Sgt. 1st Class Darrell Jones of E Company, 2-147 got the program going after he met Sgt. 1st Class Leona Propson of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Civil Affairs Office.

"When I met Sgt. 1st Class Propson and she showed me the program, I wanted to see what I could do to assist," said Jones, "She was just swamped by herself and I knew we had people who could help."

Jones introduced his chain of command to Propson, and soon Soldiers were spending a few hours a week requesting donations from back in the United States and helping to sort through the donations at the civil affairs building.

Most of the donations are school supplies and toys bundled together in one-gallon plastic bags to be given directly to local children.

"Civil affairs teams take the packages outside the installation and give them directly to local children," said Propson.

Giving directly to the children helps ensure that the donations stay in the hands of those for whom they were intended.

The group is mainly looking for school supplies, including erasers, small scissors, pencils, colored



Courtesy photos



## Giving back

Minnesota National Guard Soldiers have been participating in Project Care Giver, an ongoing program designed to collect items they can give to local Iraqi children through the LSA Anaconda's Civil Affairs Team. To donate contact Sgt. 1st Class Leona Propson at 433-2753.

(Top) A local Iraqi girl enjoys a homemade knit cap donated from Minnesota Soldiers.

(Left) Spc. Timothy Stocking shares a few soccer balls with a local sheik and his son.

pencils, markers, loose leaf paper, pencil pouches and folders.

"We're also in need of small girl and boy clothing, infant and toddler clothing and children's shows too," Propson said. "Also, we are always looking for diapers."

Propson noted that any items donated should not have any religious symbols or national flags, because such items could place Iraqi children at risk.

So far, the 2-147 Soldiers have donated several

truckloads of toys, schools supplies, candy, clothes and anything else they could get their hands on.

"We want to make sure that civil affairs doesn't become a dumping ground for things we don't want," said Battalion Chaplain Capt. Buddy Winn, "So we make sure we check ahead of time that they can find a home for the items we bring over."

Besides collecting items, the Soldiers have contributed more than 30

hours of work helping sort and organize donations. Some Soldiers have even had a chance to go off the installation with civil affairs to the Civil Military Operations Center where they handed out donations directly to local Iraqis, including soccer balls to a local sheik and his son.

Units interested in collecting donations can contact Propson at the Civil Affairs Office directly at (318) 433-2753 or at [leonardi.propson@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:leonardi.propson@iraq.centcom.mil).



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Roger Sorben, 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment takes a few swings at the 2-147 driving range. Soldiers of 2-147 designed and built the range in their company area to give Soldiers with a way to unwind.

## Driving range eases stress of deployment

By SGT. DALE SWEETNAM  
Task Force 49 PAO

The miniature driving range designed and built by 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 147<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment has been around for two months and even though it's situated in the sands of Iraq, it still draws avid golfers like the beautiful 18 holes of Pebble Beach.

"This thing is being used day and night," Chief Warrant Officer 3 Roger Sorben said. "I can hear people out here almost constantly."

The driving range was the brainchild of Sorben and the golfers of 2-147. They built the range in their company area and have managed to equip the tiny facility with clubs, golf balls and tees.

Hundreds of balls fly through the air on a daily basis; so naturally, the backdrop that's preventing the balls from flying toward the dining facility in front of it is constantly falling apart.

Sorben says replacing the backdrop often is not a bad problem to have; that means the range is getting good use. He said finding the right materials to catch the balls effectively is all a matter of trial and error. So far, plywood and nets have been containing the drives.

Sorben says for now, the range is there just for fun, but he doesn't rule out the possibility of running some instructional classes for inexperienced golfers in the future.

All that really matters, according to Sorben, is that the driving range helps people relax and that it continues to get good use, which at this point, doesn't seem to be a problem.

"I'd say we have about 500 balls hit here a day, if not more."

Sorben said he's seen interest in the range from all levels of golfers, and he hopes Soldiers continue to enjoy the little piece of home, even if it's not the grassy fairways of Augusta National.

## Answers from the XO

By MAJ. JAMES JONES  
Task Force 49 Executive Officer

Just a quick introduction of myself as I start down this road to helping others. I am the Executive Officer. Why is that important? Because as the XO I get to deal with the challenges of military life, personal life, and just about anything else that other people don't want to deal with themselves - hence the title of my column. Full title should read: "I don't know; go ask the XO." I am the bearer of bad news, the mediator of malcontent, the eradicator or irritants, the potentate of paperwork. You get the point. If you have a problem, I have an answer. I am the XO!



*Ask the XO*

**Dear XO,**

I am having a hard time coping with this deployment. You have all been gone for two months and it seems like eternity. I'm having a hard time sleeping at night. My work performance has been slacking. I can tell all of the people I work with have been making comments behind my back. It seems like every time I turn around someone is taking something from me. I want to take charge of my life, but am finding it's all just a hollow shell.

**- Scared and Alone**

Dear Lt. Col. Alford: It will be OK. As for the sleeping problems, Maj. Salvetti will continue to do the things he does - no reason to lose any sleep over it. Don't worry about the work performance; Col. Sherrell is over here with me and has no idea what is going on back there. You singlehandedly have been "providing the blanket of freedom which I and all others are privileged to enjoy. If it was not for your actions on a daily basis the world would have collapsed in on itself by now." That response works well for when you come home from work late and wife wants to know where you've been. As for things being taken away from you, it was only a Chinook company, a few enlisted soldiers, a couple of officers, and the ability to use a comb (the last is your fault).

**Dear XO,**

Your thoughts on boxers or briefs?

**- Commando**

Dear Commando: Obviously neither in your case. Boxers are a clear favorite for those lazing-around-the-house kind of days. However, those get-out-and-do-some-heavy-lifting types may want to go with tightie-whities. My favorite, the best of both worlds, the boxer brief - relaxing yet supportive.

**Dear XO,**

My fiancé and I are planning on getting married when I return from Iraq, any advice?

**- Crazy in Love**

Dear Crazy: Just one little bit of advice that will pay big dividends in the end. If you have any bad habits or "hobbies" now, double them. For instance if you smoke two packs a day, increase to four packs a day. If you golf once a week, go twice. If you go over to your bud's house and play poker and drink every Saturday night, throw Friday night in also. Once you get married your spouse is going to ask you to stop doing some of those things. So, when you cut back to two packs, one day of golf, one night of poker, you have appeased her and you're back to where you started. The chaplain does not recommend this plan, but I say; how many times have you seen the chaplain smoking two packs a day, golfing or playing poker and drinking? See, he had to give it all up. Point proven!

**Please send your questions to:**

**Maj. James Jones**

**"Ask the XO"**

**HHC TF 49**

**APO AE 09391**

**Or email them to: [hawktwosix@yahoo.com](mailto:hawktwosix@yahoo.com)**





Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Reinhardt

### Playin' at the talent show ...

Leave it to the Army to give fun an acronym. In this case it was an ACE, or "anti-complacency event," as 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 158<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment dubbed its Jan. 25 talent show at MWR West.

In an effort to help Soldiers banish the Balad blues, the unit is challenging its members to devise a morale event each month.

The talent on display included (above) a Soldier's-eye-view of the Iraq war in song by Pfc. Michele Gerometta, which won the show; (right) "Guitar Hero" game junkies from C Company, 101<sup>st</sup> MEDEVAC taking their addiction to the stage; and (the front-

page teaser photo that brought you here) Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brandon Durrett's deadpan, Andy Kaufmanesque dance routine to The Backstreet Boys' "I Want It That Way." Winners were picked by audience response and a judging panel of 5-158 Commander Lt. Col. Jack Bone, Command Sgt. Maj. John Moore and Executive Officer Maj. Daniel Ruiz.



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

## Firefighters school Soldiers on fire basics

By SGT. DALE SWEETNAM  
Task Force 49 PAO

Soldiers from 412<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support Battalion put their firefighting abilities to the test Jan. 12 during a fire extinguisher course taught by the Air Force fire fighters at the Balad West fire station.

The main focus of the instruction was to make sure the students knew which extinguisher to use when faced with a specific fire. The firefighters discussed fire extinguisher identification, the different classes of fires and explained how to properly use the extinguisher, using the acronym PASS: Pull, Aim, Squeeze and Sweep.

Following the in-class instruction, the group went outside and each individual put out a real fire under the supervision of the firefighters.

Staff Sgt. Gregory Austin, 412 safety noncommissioned officer, said that the class not only teaches the basics, it



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

Staff Sgt. Hal Herring, 412 Aviation Support Battalion, attacks a fire during the fire extinguisher class at the Balad west fire station Jan. 12.

gives Soldiers the confidence to grab the extinguisher and execute when faced with a fire.

"The big thing is being confident with the equipment and having previous use of it," Austin said. "That way, you're no longer a bystander, you're no longer a victim, you are

now part of the solution. You can act, you can act safely and you can act quickly without having that momentary hesitation due to the lack of experience."

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Charles Fische' said that when selecting Soldiers to attend the class, priority was given

to those who worked with aircraft, in motorpools and fuel points.

Staff Sgt. Hal Herring had taken the class before, but said it's always good to take the class again.

"It's a good refresher," Herring said. "I had forgotten the classifications of fires and what extinguishers you have to use. It's a good hands on class; you actually get to use the equipment."

The class instructor, Airman 1<sup>st</sup> Class Taylor Ketrang, said the important thing is deciding when to fight a fire and when to evacuate a building.

"Make sure you're safe first," Ketrang said. "Make sure you can handle the fire."

Fische' said the class gives people knowledge they can use anywhere.

"It's a good life skill," he said. "No matter where you go, if you have some knowledge of putting out fires, be it in your pod, or at you home in the rear, it's a good life skill to have."

# Take responsibility for happiness in 2008

BY CHAPLAIN (CAPT.) GABRIEL MIZERANI  
412th ASB Chaplain

There are three kinds of people in life: there are accusers, excusers and choosers. Accusers always blame everybody else for their problems. Their favorite phrase is, "It's all your fault." It's never my fault. It's all your fault. Excusers always have a rationale for where they are. The Bible says, "A lazy man is full of excuses." Accusers and excusers, people who blame others and people who excuse themselves, are losers. So you need to be a chooser.

Choosers say, "I choose to assume responsibility for my own happiness. I'm not dependent upon somebody else. I choose the direction of my life. I'm not depending upon the crowd. I am depending on God alone. I'm choosing to accept responsibility for my life." If you do that, you're already a jump ahead in 2008.

## How faith changed a life

The Bible is full of stories of people who changed because they believed that they could change after God talked to them. God once came to Gabriel Mizerani and told him, "Gabriel, I will shape you, and I will free you from self-pity and self-righteousness."

Gabriel's mother was born in Haifa, in an orthodox Jewish family. His father was born in Siracusa, Italy. Because of family interest, the marriage between his mother and father was arranged. They were practically kids at the time. His mother was 13, and his father was 17.

After the first month of marriage, she found out that his father had five mistresses, with 15 children. She confronted him, and he told her that was simply his way of life. He didn't realize that she had tried to explain she was also expecting a child for him. After eight months of enduring suffering and neglect while carrying a child she left him and had the baby alone in Ragusa.

After five days, she left for Israel. Her father ordered her to return to her husband, and that she was no longer welcome to stay with him. With no place to go, she slept under bridges, trees and around the government buildings in Haifa, with her baby alongside the entire time.

She was stuck in this routine until she found work in a Greek restaurant, where she kept the baby in a crib underneath the cash register. The chef made fruit shakes to feed the baby. That baby she raised grew into the man we know today as Gabriel Mizerani.

Gabriel and his mother went back to Sicily to live on the western side of the island. This was where Gabriel started working on a farm to buy the minimum amount of clothing required to attend school. The remainder of the money was used to help his mother sustain their household. He was growing up in a poor environment, where there sometimes wasn't any food to eat for many days.

Around the age of 12, Gabriel created a victim mentality

with a projection of anger resulting in depression, panic, resentment, aggressive behavior, identity confusion, blaming, guilt, feelings of obligation, isolation, anxiety and finally hate towards his life and especially his father.

At the age of 13, Gabriel became very sick with cancer. He had received his death sentence from the doctors. With no hope, Gabriel asked God for healing. A few days later, he met two missionaries at the hospital. 82-year-old Mrs. Margery was one of them. She told him that Yeshua (Jesus) was the Messiah/Christ, and that he was the savior of the entire universe. She even told him that Jesus had the power to bring healing to him. As a Jew, Gabriel was not able to believe that Jesus was the savior. With further explanation and research he was able to see past his religious boundaries and accepted that Yeshua Hamashiah, Jesus Christ, is truly the Lord and savior. He was healed after the missionaries anointed him with oil and prayed in Jesus' Name.

## Learning to forgive

After he was healed, Gabriel went back to school and studied the bible. But one thing was missing; he had to forgive his father and his family. We all have skeletons in our closets; some are visible and some are not visible to people, but God knows us so well. Gabriel had to learn to forgive and let go. He used to tell about his father's cruelty, and lack of consideration to all his friends. Deep inside, he hated his father very much. Gabriel was in pain all the time.

One night, God told Gabriel, "There are a lot of things I know about you that you do not want me to let others know. Stop using your tongue as a weapon to punish your father. You are trying to hurt his credibility and reputation in return for the past. The only thing you are doing is reflecting it on yourself. Gabriel, my son, you have to forgive your father..."

That day Gabriel was delivered from bitterness and self-pity. He learned in Corinthians 1:13 that "Love keeps no record of wrongs, love is not self-seeking..." Gabriel went to see his father and allow forgiveness to take place.

When meeting his father for the first time, he faced his father and told him, "Father I forgive you for all the past and I let it go in Jesus' name." His father asked, "How much do you want Gabriel?" Gabriel told his father God has already paid him for everything. Gabriel again told him, "Father I forgive you for all the past and I will pray for you always in Jesus' name."

Gabriel was free from all the emotional pain from the past, and his father changed his relationship with God and was also healed. Gabriel learned to become a chooser, and assumed responsibility for his own happiness. He chose to love God and allowed Him to bring forth the beautiful plan of redemption that restored his life and his family, by forgiving his father and all his past.

Life is a beautiful road when we are willing to make a partnership with God. It doesn't matter how many valleys, hills and mountains we have to cross, God will pave the way. He will lead us into green pastures and

quiet waters. He will provide for all of our needs, and sustain us through all situations.

The biggest lesson I learned in my life is that God will not take us around our problems, over them, or under them. He will take us right through them.

Jesus Christ changed my life, and everything I have today I owe to him. He can also change your life. If you want to be set free from the prison of unforgiveness, self-pity and self-righteousness, you like me, need Christ Jesus to trade your ashes for His beauty.



Chaplain Gabriel  
Mizerani

"God will not take us  
around our problems, over  
them or under them. He will  
take us right through them."

Chaplain Gabriel Mizerani



# TQ's lone Army medic holds down fort

By SGT. 1ST CLASS ERIC REINHARDT  
Task Force 49 PAO

AL TAQADDUM AIRBASE, Iraq - Task Force Dragon's headquarters here is equal parts wild west and "Mad Max."

Its weathered plywood shacks fend off the dustbowl gusts of Al Anbar province.

A strange and constant parade of outlandishly equipped trucks, jerry-rigged subcompacts and armored cars rumbles by the compound and kicks up even more of the desert floor.

Just in case there's a surface the dust hasn't touched, the massive rotors of the unit's UH-47 Chinooks finish the job.

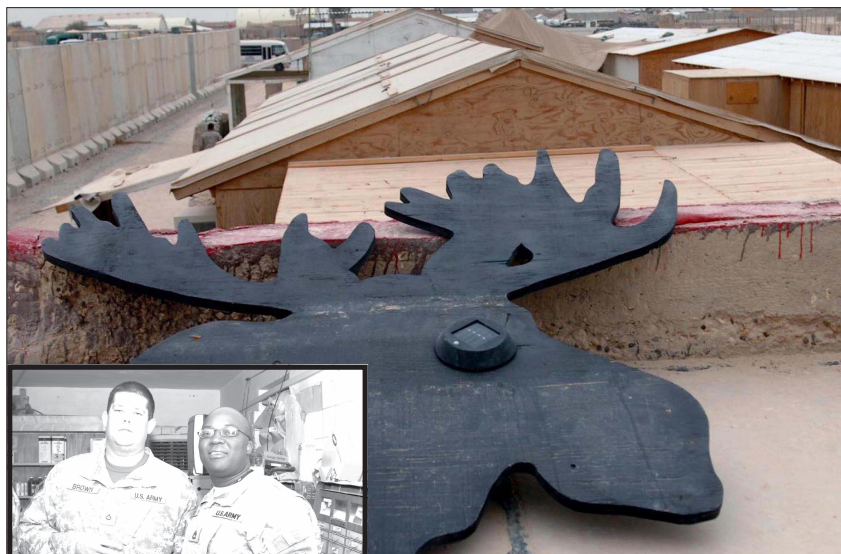
In one of Task Force Dragon's few concrete buildings, Combat Medic Pfc. Corey Brown works to keep the Soldiers of B Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 52<sup>nd</sup> Aviation Regiment healthy and fit to fly missions throughout western Iraq.

Brown has been with 1-52 Aviation since June 2005, when it moved to Fort Wainwright, Alaska from South Korea. He deployed with the unit to Al Taqaddum last July.

"What I do here is like a constant, all-day sick call," Brown said. "And if something happens while I'm sleeping in my can, they just come and get me."

When the Gordon, Ga., native arrived in Al Taqaddum with Task Force Dragon last Summer, he became the highest ranking Army medic on the U.S. Marine Corps installation and chief of his unit's aid station.

"Nothing was left for me except for a desk and computers," Brown said. "I



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Reinhardt

(Inset) Task Force Dragon Combat Medic Pfc. Corey Brown visits with Sgt. 1st Class Charlie Scott of Task Force 49 in Brown's aid station on Al Taqaddum Airbase. (Above) A reminder of Task Force Dragon's Alaskan home station adorns the roof of the aid station.

brought everything I needed with me and then some, so it didn't take long to set up. Getting resupply was an issue I had to work, but it has all worked itself out now and is flowing very well."

He can send anyone who needs more advanced care than he is able to provide to the doctors at the base clinic. After a few months, Brown got some help from three Navy Corpsmen, but their tours have ended.

"The first two months here were the biggest struggle," Brown said. "I had to

find a doc and find out where I could take my people for a higher level of care. It was a new experience dealing with the Navy Corpsmen and docs by myself."

Until he returns to Fort Wainwright and his wife, Lanisha, Brown said he takes a day-by-day approach to cope with life in the sands of Al Anbar province.

"I go to my can and sleep and wake up and live my life beside this flightline," he said.

## Tax season has arrived; start planning now

By CAPT. MARY ANN BOWERY  
Task Force 49  
Brigade Judge Advocate

*"In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."*

**Benjamin Franklin**

This quotation is true for all of us and this year is no exception. However, there are some benefits that our deployed status grants us that can both delay payment and drastically reduce what we have to pay when tax time comes.

Most of us know that some or all of our military income earned while deployed is tax free for federal tax and for most state tax.

Depending on how much other income you have or your spouse earns, it is likely that you will owe far less for 2007 than in past years, or maybe owe nothing at all.

### If I owe, when do I pay?

Because you are deployed, you, and your spouse (if you are filing a joint return) are entitled to a combat-zone extension to file your 2007 taxes. The combat-zone extension grants you 180



**Capt. Mary Ann Bowery**

days from the date of return, plus one day for every day you were in the combat zone between Jan. 1, 2008 and April 15 2008. R&R leave is not considered your date of return because it is not a permanent redeployment.

### I'm getting money back and want to file. Can I?

You do not have to wait to file. You can file your taxes at any point after Dec. 31, 2007, but you will likely not be able to file until you have received your W-2 and other documents. Deployed Soldiers will be able to receive assistance in filing their taxes here at LSA Anaconda through the Legal Assistance Office starting in February and spouses in Germany or the United States will be able to receive

assistance at the legal office tax centers at home stations.

assistance at the legal office tax centers at home stations.

### What can I do to prepare now?

If you are married and wish to file a joint return with your spouse before you redeploy you must arrange to either have your spouse complete and send you the IRS's power of attorney form to you so you can file from Iraq, or you must complete the same and send it to her or him so that she or he can file from Germany or the United States. If you have already given your spouse a general power of attorney or a special power of attorney that permits them to file taxes on your behalf you do not need to execute the separate IRS form.

If you decide you wish to file from Iraq, you should also start thinking about what receipts and documents you will need sent from home so you do not have to wait any longer than necessary to file. Your W-2 should be available now for download from the My Pay website.

If you have questions about taxes or other legal assistance matters contact the Task Force 49 Legal Office at 483-4156.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Reinhardt

## Home on the range

Pfc. Parris Mathis, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force 49, familiarizes himself with a M9 pistol Jan. 25 on LSA Anaconda's Smith Range. The Soldiers of HHC, Task Force 49 spent the day reinforcing their marksmanship skills.

# 5-158 leaders lighten load for tower guards

By SGT. DALE SWEETNAM  
Task Force 49 PAO

The tower guards of E Company 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 158<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment received a different kind of gift this Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Officers and senior noncommissioned officers of 5-158 took to the towers from Nov. 26 to 27 and Dec. 24 to 26 so that E Co. guards could take some much needed time to enjoy the holidays and call their families.

"Leaders really show the Soldiers how much they care when they're willing to place themselves in their shoes and tell them that they can share the burden," said Capt. Eunice Sorrell, E Co. Commander.

When Soldiers heard about the opportunity to cover down for the guards, 32 of them came forward to answer the call.

Lt. Col. Jack Bone, 5-158 commander, and battalion Command Sgt. Major John Moore led a team of volunteers, with representatives ranging from chief warrant officers all the way down to two junior enlisted volunteers.

**The tower guards** were not notified that the senior leaders would be taking their shifts. Soldiers like Spc. Cade Gibson and Pfc. Corlieus Moss went to the towers like it was just any other day.

"I was pretty surprised," Gibson said. "I really didn't expect it. It definitely put me in a better mood."

Moss said it was not only nice to get the extra time to relax, but the Soldier

who relieved him was also his platoon sergeant.

"It helped morale a lot," Moss said. "It was real good to have my platoon sergeant take over the hardest shift for me."

Bone not only participated in the event, but insisted he take the first watch on both Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

"It was an eye-opening experience for the majority of [the Soldiers], to include me," Bone said.

A few individuals, like Capt. Joshua Hawkins, took as many as three shifts, the normal workday for a regular tower guard.

**Leaders who** were not accustomed to the conditions and nature of the work found out that pulling tower guard shifts was considerably harder than they expected, according to Hawkins.

"I can't imagine having that duty daily," Hawkins said. "Complacency, exhaustion, and boredom are your greatest battles. It's the perfect opportunity for leaders to see the execution of policy at the lowest level and the results of their guidance and hopefully inspires them to make improvements."

Staff Sgt. Michael Wischnack, 5-158 Force Protection Noncommissioned Officer, was there at the beginning and end of every shift change to sign equipment over. He also made sure the volunteers completed all the necessary training.

Wischnack explained that, on a normal day, Soldiers pull three four-

hour shifts, so it was a logistical challenge to change out so many different volunteer Soldiers during a 24-hour period.

"It'd be quite a headache if I had to do it everyday," Wischnack said.

**Despite the challenge**, Wischnack said it was important to give the guard Soldiers some downtime and, as a whole, the operation went as well as planned.

"Considering some of these senior leaders had never pulled tower guard duty before, I'd say it went smoothly," he said.

Bone said he makes it a point as a commander to get out there and see his Soldiers in action so he can better understand what they're experiencing. In this instance he not only got to see what they were dealing with to accomplish the mission, but he got to experience it. Pulling guard duty gave Bone the opportunity to evaluate what was going right and what could be improved in the towers.

"It was a dual-purpose mission," Bone said. "The overall intent was to give the Soldiers a break during the holidays, but any time I can kill two birds with one stone, it's a good day."

Sorrell said she was pleased with the event and is very proud of what the leaders contributed.

"The holidays could have been a lonely and challenging time for our Soldiers due to being away from loved ones," she said. "But our leaders gave the gift of comfort, and made them feel a little closer to home."





Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reinhardt

### MNC-I deputy commander bids farewell to Task Force 49

Task Force 49 Commander Col. Chandler C. Sherrell greets Maj. Gen. James Simmons, Multi-National Corps-Iraq deputy commander, during the general's last visit to Balad before redeploying to Fort Hood, Texas this month and retirement later this year. Simmons has spent more than 31 months in Iraq and, as the senior Army aviator in theater, has logged more than 361.4 hours. He has more than 4,300 total flight hours in his 32 years as a rated aviator.

## NHL's Wild sends pucks and decals to Iraq

By CAPT. RYAN CURL  
2-147 AHB PAO

A lack of ice may prevent local fans from showing their appreciation for hockey, but it hasn't stopped hockey from showing its appreciation for the deployed fan.

Soldiers from E Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 147 Aviation Regiment were the proud recipients of Christmas gifts from the Minnesota Wild professional hockey team. Their care packages included Minnesota Wild hockey pucks, decals and a Minnesota "State of Hockey" flag.

As it turns out, a staff member with the Minnesota Wild recently returned from a deployment to Iraq with the 1st Brigade Combat Team. While deployed, office members constantly worked together to send care packages to their own citizen/soldier. Now that he has returned, team management still wanted to continue supporting local troops deployed overseas.

A member of the arena management team for the Minnesota Wild is also a friend of Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jim Mastenbrook, battalion maintenance officer for 2-147.

"I received an e-mail from her asking if we would like some Minnesota Wild gifts," Mastenbrook said. "Knowing how



Courtesy photo

E Company, 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment maintenance platoon proudly displays a Minnesota "State of Hockey" flag donated by the Minnesota Wild.

many hockey fans we have, I could hardly say no."

It gave Wild fans in the company a big morale boost during the holidays "I can honestly say, it was the best Christmas gift I received this year," said Pfc. Amanda Junkans, food service specialist, adding an enthusiast "Go Wild, Woooo!"

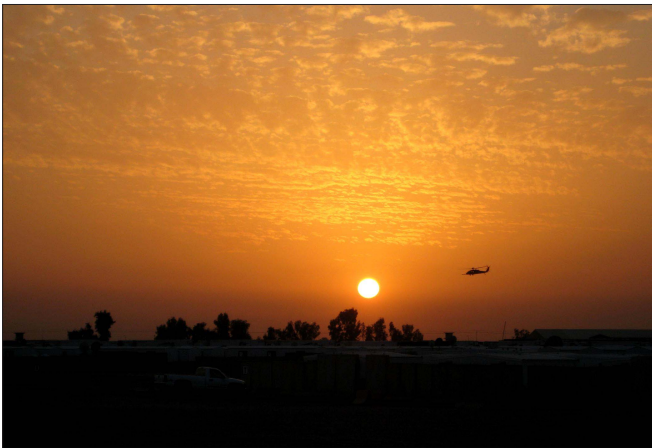
Thanks to support from local organizations and friends and family, members of E Company, 2-147 AHB were reminded of how much they are appreciated back home.

Now they're looking forward to next winter when they'll be able to cheer on the Minnesota Wild in person.



# Point of View

Your images of Task Force 49



Dusk at LSA Anaconda, January 2008

Courtesy photo



Courtesy photo



Courtesy photo

Task Force 49 and 12th Combat Aviation Brigade officers take charge during last November's relief in place.

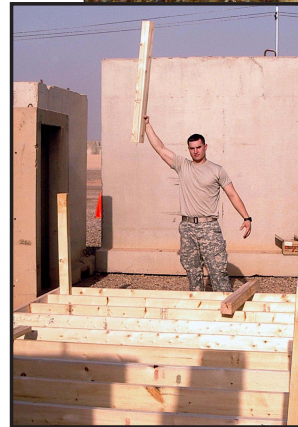


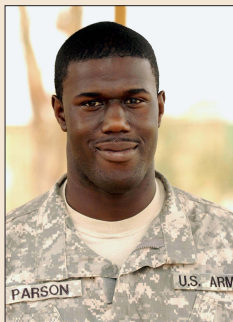
Photo by Capt. Ross Mathies

(Above) Spc. Justin Snyder, Headquarters and Headquarters Company Task Force 49, frolics in the flurries that fell on LSA Anaconda Jan. 11.

(Left) Sgt. Timothy Garrison, Headquarters and Headquarters Company Task Force 49, helps build a patio in the housing area.

**Point of View** is a regular feature of *The Desert Talon*, highlighting reader-submitted photos. Send them to: [eric.reinhardt@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:eric.reinhardt@iraq.centcom.mil)

## what's on your iPod?

**Spc. Stefan Parson**

HHC, Task Force 49

**Jay-Z - "What More Can I Say"** He uses a sample from "Gladiator" - when Russell Crowe asks the crowd in the coliseum "Are you not entertained? Is this not why you are here?" and they start chanting "Spaniard!" And Jay-Z just tells you why he is the greatest rapper ever.

**DJ Khaled, T-pain, Rick Ross, Plies - "I'm So Hood"** This song is just like an anthem. It gets me pumped when I'm in the gym.

**AC/DC - "Big Balls"** It's just funny and I know the words.

**AudioSlave - "Cochise"** The intro is great. It reminds me of when I was in ALT at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. It's in a county called Cochise.

**Stone Temple Pilots - "Dead and Bloated"** It's just a great song and the intro is hot.

**Sgt. Jerry Anderson**

HHC, 2-147 AHB

**Marvin Gaye - "Abraham, John & Martin"** Reminds me of three special people in my life who have passed in the last two years.

**Jimi Hendrix - "All Along the Watchtower"** Reflects my feelings about unnecessary wars past and present.

**ZZ Top - "La Grange"** Makes me feel good and gives me the power to keep on going.

**Jim Croce - "I've Got a Name"** Reminds me of my heritage and family ties.

**Tina Turner - "Proud Mary"** Great concert I attended in Ludwigsburg, Germany in 1975.

**Pfc. Rahkeia Barfield**

HHC, Task Force 49

**India Arie - "Slow Down"** Because this song describes me.

**Lyfe Jennings - "Made Up My Mind"** Because it's making a point about a problem today in society.

**Mary Mary - "There Will Be Mountains"** Because it gives me motivation not to give up, 'cause god will never leave nor forsake you.

**Yolanda Adams - "Don't Give Up"** An inspirational song to me.

**Brian McKnight - "Home"** Just a very beautiful song.



## AWARDS

### Purple Heart

SSG Anthony Cox 5-158 AVN

### Air Medal

CW4 Daniel Ayers 244 AVN  
PFC Luke Backes 3-158 AVN  
CW4 Jesse Baxter 244 AVN  
CW2 Rachel Bertrand 3-158 AVN  
CW3 Eugene Bishop 244 AVN  
CW2 Joshua Brock 5-158 AVN  
PFC Daniel Brown 3-158 AVN  
SGT Brian Brown 244 AVN  
CW2 Eugene Caballero 3-158 AVN  
CW4 Jonathan Case 2-228 AVN  
SPC Grayson Colby 3-158 AVN  
SGT Christian Crear 2-147 AHB  
PFC John Crisafulli 3-158 AVN  
CW2 Timothy Davis 5-158 AVN  
CW3 Tony Dohse 244 AVN  
MAJ David Doran 244 AVN  
CW3 James Dowdy 5-158 AVN  
SPC Eleuterio Duarte 3-158 AVN  
CW4 Michael Eddings 244 AVN  
CW2 Harold Eggleston 5-158 AVN  
CW3 Jessie Eismann 5-158 AVN  
PFC Timothy Feist 5-158 AVN  
MAJ Gregory Fix 2-147 AHB  
CPT Jarat Ford 2-159 ARB  
CPT Kyle Gaylor 3-158 AVN  
SSG Duane Gendreau 2-147 AHB  
CW4 Hector Gonzalez 2-228 AVN  
SPC Joseph Grabrick 2-147 AHB  
1LT Nathan Greer 3-158 AVN  
SGT Richard Gregor 2-147 AHB  
SGT Scott Gustafson 244 AVN  
SGT Todd Hacker 2-147 AHB  
SGT Anthony Hammond 3-158 AVN  
LTC George Hamontree 412 ASB  
CW2 Tyler Hartstock 5-158 AVN  
CW2 Brandon Heller 5-158 AVN  
CW4 Geoffrey Hennig 2-228 AVN  
CW2 Jessica Henry 5-158 AVN  
CW4 Kerry Holder 2-147 AHB  
PFC Derek Holen 5-158 AVN  
SFC Thomas Imm 2-147 AHB  
CPT Phoebe Inigo 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Joshua Jacobsen 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Sean Johnson 3-158 AVN  
1LT Meagan Kelley 3-158 AVN  
2LT Andrew Kelly 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Andre Kidd 5-158 AVN  
CW4 Mark Knigge 3-158 ARB  
SPC Devin Kral 2-147 AHB  
SPC Angel Kramp 3-158 AVN  
SPC Keith Lajoie 3-158 AVN  
1LT Andrew Lang 2-147 AHB  
CW3 Justin Larson 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Blake Leibach 5-158 AVN  
1SG Mark Logan 244 AVN  
CW3 Fred Loofbourov 244 AVN  
CW2 Ricky Maldonado 3-158 AVN  
CPT Christian Mariani 5-158 AVN  
SGT Christopher Marks 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Cort Mcallister 5-158 AVN  
CPT Adam McCarthy 244 AVN  
CPT Danielle Medaglia 3-158 AVN  
SPC Joseph Moreno-Solarte 3-158 AVN  
CW3 Damon Nicolas 244 AVN  
SSG Jarod Odum 5-158 AVN  
CW2 Sean Omara 5-158 AVN  
PFC Tyrone Owens 3-158 AVN  
SGT Christopher Pacheco 2-147 AHB  
CW3 Timothy Paopao 2-147 AHB  
SPC Marcus Paprzycki 3-158 AVN  
CPT Marc Ressler 2-147 AHB  
CW4 Timmy Richards 2-147 AHB  
WO1 Aaron Richards 3-158 AVN  
SPC David Robinson 3-158 AVN  
CW2 Mary Rone 5-158 AVN  
SG4 Timothy Sanders 244 AVN  
CW4 Douglas Schuebel 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Anthony Shaw 3-158 AVN



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Reinhardt

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloessler, 101st Airborne Division commander, presents the Air Medal to members of C Company, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment (MEDEVAC) during a Jan. 30 visit to the unit.

SSG Michelle Smith 2-147 AHB  
CW4 James Soltani 244 AVN  
1LT Sean Spencer 2-147 AHB  
SGT Shad Stenersen 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Micheal Tucker 3-158 AVN  
1LT Andrew Ueland 2-147 AHB  
CW3 Dirk Vandermeiden 244 AVN  
SPC Hilde Vega 5-158 AVN  
CW4 Darrell Wagner 2-228 AVN  
SSG Terry Walls B/1-52 AVN  
CW3 Robert Walthouse 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Sean Whitfield 3-158 AVN  
MAJ Scott Williams 2-159 ARB  
CW2 Joshua Williams 5-158 AVN  
MAJ Scott Williamson 2-159 ARB  
CPT Johnny Wong 2-159 ARB  
CPT Clinton Woody 3-158 AVN  
SPC Tyson Yee 5-158 AVN  
SPC Andrew Zwack 3-158 AVN

### Army Commendation Medal

SGT Cheryl Bolden 412 ASB  
SSG Terry Bottin B/1-52 AVN  
PFC Mathew Bowles 412 ASB  
SPC Fred Carson 412 ASB  
SSG Rogelio Cortez 412 ASB  
SPC Luke Darnauer 412 ASB  
CW2 Galen Durbin HHC, TF 49  
SPC Joel Ellis 412 ASB  
SPC Kristy Fonfield 5-158 AVN  
SPC Elmus Frazier 412 ASB  
SGT Jeremy Gearhart 412 ASB  
SGT Marc Hickman 412 ASB  
SGT Jason Hutchinson 412 ASB  
SPC Donato Isa 2-147 AHB  
PV2 Amanda Junkans 412 ASB  
SGT Jean Lesperance 412 ASB  
PFC Jason Livermore 412 ASB  
SGT John Lloyd 5-158 AVN  
SPC Donato Magallanes 2-147 AHB  
CW4 Daniel Mariscal 5-158 AVN  
PFC Jaime Medina 412 ASB  
SPC Cho Monroe-Warren 412 ASB  
SG4 Brian Mumford 2-147 AHB  
SFC Shunnie Nuniss 412 ASB  
SPC David Olson 412 ASB

SGT Stephanie Owens 5-158 AVN  
PFC Damaris Rivera-Chaparro 412 ASB  
SGT Issac Rodgers 412 ASB  
SPC Tiffany Ruff 412 ASB  
SPC Mirinda Singmanichanh 5-158 AVN  
SPC Tony Spencer 412 ASB  
SSG Mark Stallings 412 ASB  
SSG Gregory Sullivan 2-147 AHB  
SPC Kailey Thornton 412 ASB  
SGT Tyrone Thorpe 412 ASB  
SPC Alfred Van Damme 412 ASB  
SPC Joseph Vrechek HHC, TF 49  
SGT Mandy Wiegert 412 ASB  
SSG Dedrick Williams 412 ASB  
SGT Marc Williams 412 ASB

### Combat Action Badge

SPC Jason Abe 5-158 AVN  
SGT Brendan Anderson 2-147 AHB  
PFC Skyler Bieber 2-159 ARB  
SSG Nelson Chanquin 2-147 AHB  
CPT Jeremy Chiglo 2-147 AHB  
PV1 Gavin Coplin 5-158 AVN  
SSG Anthony Cox 5-158 AVN  
SSG Damon Cropp 412 ASB  
SGT David David 2-147 AHB  
CW3 James Dowdy 3-158 AVN  
SPC Christopher Freeman 2-159 ARB  
SSG Duane Gendreau 2-147 AHB  
SPC Eric Gerber 412 ASB  
SGT Craig Gocho 2-147 AHB  
SPC Joseph Grabrick 2-147 AHB  
SPC Tammye Grimes-Hill 2-147 AHB  
SPC Suzette Guarino 2-147 AHB  
SSG Michael Gunderson 2-147 AHB  
SSG Craig Hackett 2-147 AHB  
SSG Gerald Hatcher 5-158 AVN  
WO1 Matthew Hicklin 3-158 AVN  
PFC Adam Hite 2-147 AHB  
SPC Donato Isa 2-147 AHB  
SSG Trevor Johnstin 5-158 AVN  
SPC Daniel Kaleohano 2-147 AHB  
PFC Thomas Kirsch 2-147 AHB  
SPC Kody Klimek 2-147 AHB  
SPC Daniel Knapp 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Brian Kokesh 2-147 AHB  
PFC Christopher Krajcek 5-158 AVN

CW2 Blake Leibach 3-158 AVN  
SPC Michael Magallanes 2-147 AHB  
CPT Dylan Malcomb 5-158 AVN  
SGT Erik Malenke 2-147 AHB  
SPC Brandon Marko 2-147 AHB  
SPC Kupono Matson 2-147 AHB  
SPC Kenda Mayfield 5-158 AVN  
SPC Christopher Mazzara 2-147 AHB  
SGT Brian Mcfarland 5-158 AVN  
SPC Isaac Mcfarland 3-158 AVN  
CW5 Edward McIntyre 2-147 AHB  
CW2 Bradley Moore 5-158 AVN  
PFC Stalin Mosquera 5-158 AVN  
SGT Brian Mumford 2-147 AHB  
SGT Robert Murph 5-158 AVN  
CW2 Gary Ng 2-147 AHB  
CW4 Kelvin Nokes 2-147 AHB  
SPC Jason Nowling 5-158 AVN  
CW2 Brian Pardue 5-158 AVN  
1LT John Penshorn 2-147 AHB  
SPC Christopher Peters 2-147 AHB  
SGT Matthew Ragasa 2-147 AHB  
PFC Bobby Ramsey 412 ASB  
SPC David Robinson 3-158 AVN  
SSG Alejandro Rodriguez 2-147 AHB  
SPC Gerald Sadler 2-147 AHB  
SPC Darin Sakarias 2-147 AHB  
SPC Chantel Sakarias 2-147 AHB  
CPT Benjamin Selzer 5-158 AVN  
CW2 Anthony Shaw 3-158 AVN  
CW2 Brian Spotts 2-147 AHB  
SGT Michael St. John 3-158 AVN  
SPC Justin Stalmer 2-147 AHB  
SPC Jennifer Stiglet 2-147 AHB  
SGT Mike Stribling 2-147 AHB  
SPC Nichole Twedt 2-147 AHB  
SGT Jesse Wandling 5-158 AVN  
SPC Chantel Weaver 2-147 AHB  
SGT Mike Wendover 2-147 AHB  
SPC Lee Werhan 5-158 AVN  
SPC Craig Wernimont 2-147 AHB  
SSG Jeremy Whittaker 3-158 AVN  
SFC Charles Winchell 5-158 AVN  
CPT Johnny Wong 2-159 ARB  
SGT Xue Xiong 2-147 AHB  
SPC Tyson Yee 5-158 AVN  
SGT Daniel Zerbis 2-147 AHB

## Dietz

Continued from Page 1

work is both highly realistic and highly collectible," said Task Force 12 Executive Officer Lt. Col. Charles Bowery. "His limited-edition prints always sell out and increase very rapidly in value."

Bowery met Dietz in 2004 when the artist was commissioned to do a print for Bowery's Command and General Staff College class. Bowery was committee chair for the project.

"Out of that process I formed a good friendship and working relationship with Jim," Bowery said.

Rotary-wing aviation is a relatively new subject for Dietz.

His last brush with the subject was depicting the Soldiers and helicopters of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), or "Night Stalkers," as they're also known.

"The difficulty level is having a vision that matches the vision of the people that want the painting done," Dietz said. "I've done this for 35 years, and have a pretty good idea of how to accomplish that. The easiest way I can say it is that you create one scene from a movie ... and have the people you're working with cooperate with that vision."

Dietz uses a rough sketch as a storyboard to place and photograph his models.

When the scene is set, he directs them in various poses that might seem unnatural, or even uncomfortable, to an onlooker, but they allow him to accurately capture facial features, body movements and details of the aircraft.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Reinhardt

Artist James Dietz poses Black Hawk crew members from 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment and the 412th Aviation Support Battalion during a Jan. 13 photo shoot. The photos will be used to draft a limited-edition print for Task Force 49 and the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade.

While he directed the photo shoot, he reminded his models to put a little of themselves into the scene, and to let him know if anything about the scene "doesn't seem right" or accurate.

"He does a very good job showing the Soldiers in action and the hard work we do out here," said Spc. Justin Duh, B Company, 412th ASB. "He had me helping a soldier onto the Black Hawk, showing us getting ready to go out on a mission."

After visiting units in Afghanistan, Dietz will return to his studio in Seattle and draft four proposed scenes for his Task Force 49 and 12th CAB clients to consider. The

top pick will become an oil-on-canvas painting used as the master for the print series.

"We decided on the scenes by taking proposals done by each of the battalions in the brigade, plus the brigade staff," Bowery said. "The command groups of [Task Force 49 and Task Force 12] met and narrowed the proposals down to two main candidates. When Jim arrived, he looked at both proposals and provided input as to which he thought would make the most compelling scene."

Not every airframe type, vehicle type, equipment type, or military occupational specialty will be depicted in the print, according to Bowery.

The chosen scene will be a representation of both task forces' collective effort in Iraq.

"I hope this print will portray the Soldiers of our two task forces at a typical 'moment in time' that represents what we are doing 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for 15 months, and that we do it professionally, safely and with consummate skill and discipline," he said.

Private 2 Andrew Fetz of the 412th said just being part of the project was satisfying enough for the time being.

"It feels pretty good knowing that I'll be in a painting that a lot of people will hang on their walls."

## Snow

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It is hard to convince people that it's not over 100 degrees all the time."

While the snow fell, Soldiers became kids again. They looked to the sky with their mouths open and some tried to make snowballs with the few flakes sticking to sandbags and aircraft.

"Everyone was a little more shiny-happy and there were more than a few snow balls exchanged," Holtz said. "It was probably just a refreshing change to see something out of the ordinary."

The snow lasted only through the morning, but it left a lasting impression. According to Associated Press

reports, no violence was reported in the streets of Baghdad as the thick snow blanketed neighborhoods all too familiar with small arms fire and perpetual mortar attacks.

Once the snow stopped falling, all that was left were puddles and miles of mud, but the few hours of snow brought a new sense of hope and a brief window of peace.

According to some media reports, many Iraqis viewed the snow as a sign of good things to come, a promise of peace in their country.

"I saw on CNN that the people of Iraq saw it as an omen, and a new peace," Thompson said. "I was hoping at that time that they would thank the American military and their allies for possibly bringing that peace."



Photo by Eric Bowen/MinnPost.com

Minnesota Army National Guard Capt. Andrea Ourada, 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, revels in the brief Jan. 11 snowfall on LSA Anaconda. Ourada was escorting reporters from Minneapolis that day, one of whom captured this image on the flight line.