



Volume 2, Issue 7

“WINGS OF VICTORY!”

JULY 2008



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Soldiers from Company B, 412th Aviation Support Battalion work with Airmen from the 9th Airlift Squadron, to load a UH-60 Black Hawk from 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment onto a C5 Galaxy July 21. The departing 2-147th heads home after nearly a year in country (see story on page 4).

TF XII troops make major moves in country

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – After a seven-month absence, Task Force XII resumed command of aviation elements



supporting Multi-National Corps – Iraq during a ceremony here July 12.

Task Force XII headquarters replaces Headquarters and Headquarters Company Task Force 49, which transfers to Baghdad International Airport to spearhead aviation support for Multi-National Division – Center.

After five months in service to MNC-I, Task Force XII received a change of mission sending them to Camp Taji, working directly for Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

The seven-month separation saw a spike in violence in Basrah and Sadr City which caused pilots of both units

to increase operational tempo, flying a record number of missions, and drawing praise from leaders at all levels within the region.

Task Force XII Soldiers who are assigned to US Army Europe’s 12th Combat Aviation Brigade will finish their deployment early this fall.

“I have every confidence that we will continue to accomplish this mission in the same manner that has made us so successful thus far,” said Col. Timothy Edens, the commander of Task Force XII. “We must go all the way through the tape, and we will not let up until we are mission complete.”

Check out
what’s
inside ...



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COIN CEREMONY, Page 11

Griffin 06 Sends ... focusing on tasks at hand

Soldiers and Families of Task Force XII

Walking around Joint Base Balad’s Task Force XII headquarters again, I was thrilled to see our old “T wall”, bearing the TF XII logo, already back in place in front of the building. Our brothers in Task Force 49 went to the trouble of putting it right back where we left it - though now seven months older and battered by blowing sands and a hot desert sun... just a bit like us! Battered perhaps, but better as well.

As I’ve settled back into the daily routine here, I’ve found the wall now represents more than just our colors. Seven months ago our headquarters left a relatively fresh group of aviators adjusting to the Multi-National Corps – Iraq mission. We returned to find a battle-hardened group of combat veterans who, like our wall, have proudly stood up to the tests of this extended deployment. Stood up in magnificent style I might add, in fact, I’d go as far as to say, you’ve triumphed over every adversity and whipped every challenge.

I do want to say thanks to Task Force 49, and to all of the Soldiers throughout both of our organizations who have made this intertwining relationship so seamless, and so highly successful. Soldiers from our formations have been asked to operate at bases throughout Iraq, from Taji to Tallil, and from BIAP to Basra ... and they’ve done it efficiently and professionally.

Now that the final major muscle moves



are completed, we turn our planning attentions to home. The Dust Devils of 2-147th AHB have departed after a proud tour of duty; their relief is 1-244th AHB, out of Louisiana. Task Force “Voodoo,” is already hard at work flying senior-leader battlefield circulation missions and air assaults. They are very well trained and will add many achievements to their own proud combat heritage.

By this time next month, most of 2-159th ARB will be reuniting with their Families back in Storck Barracks, and their sister battalion, 3-159th ARB has already begun showing up here to pick

up where the Gunslingers left off. I fully expect Lt. Col. Brian Dillon, Command Sgt. Maj. John Sundermann and the great Soldiers of the Quick Strike battalion to continue a distinguished record of attack helicopter support to our ground brothers-in-arms.

Soldiers, I know that you are all anxious to get home to your Families in Germany. More than 1,000 Soldiers are even preparing to leave the 12th CAB by the end of January; they are already looking even further ahead beyond reintegration, and planning for new assignments. Relish those feelings, and indeed make solid plans. Take heart in the fact that the finish line is in sight ... BUT, please remember the race is not over. My mantra has been simply this – run through the tape. Keep your mind on this important mission, and continue to build on your well-deserved reputation of excellence. That is the surest way to the bright futures you are planning.

Finally, I want to thank our Family members and Rear Detachment Soldiers for your continued support. I’ve already heard some of the exciting plans for reintegration. I can’t wait to see how it all comes together. Sometimes the final months can be the toughest. Hang in there ... you’re almost done!

It is my continued honor to serve with all of you. God Bless!

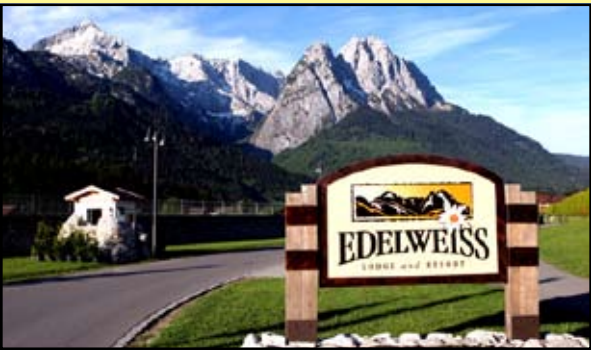
“Wings of Victory!”
Col. Timothy Edens
Commander, Task Force XII

12th CAB Vacation Raffle

Want to win a dream vacation? Enter the Welcome Home Vacation Raffle, and you could win one of three special vacations for you and your Family. Tickets are now available for purchase.

The winning raffle tickets will be announced during the Welcome Home Ceremony scheduled for Nov. 14 at Katterbach Kaserne. All Soldiers, Family members and friends of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade are encouraged to attend the ceremony.

Edelweiss (Green Ticket) = \$5



- Two nights for two guests
- Two Swedish full body massages
- A \$500 value
- Transportation not included
- Booking based on winners discretion and availability
- Children can be added for a small additional fee.

Greece (Blue Ticket) = \$5



- Two nights/three days for two guests
- Accommodations for two
- All inclusive (flight, hotel, food)
- A \$650 value
- Trip must occur between October to mid-November or between April to mid-May

EuroDisney (Purple Ticket) = \$10



- Accommodations for up to two adults and two children
- One night hotel stay and two days in the park (park admission, and hotel fee, breakfast provided)
- A \$1000 value
- Transportation not included
- Booking based on winners discretion and availability

The proceeds from the raffle will go toward covering the costs of the Welcome Home/Holiday Ball. Winners do not have to be present at the ceremony. Remember, you can’t win without buying a ticket. Contact your unit representative today for ticket information.

Leaving MND-B for BIAP, Balad

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – It started as a contingency plan ... an aviation brigade built in a combat zone. Multi-National Division - Baghdad's version of Task Force XII was born of necessity.

The task force originally stood up at Camp Taji in December, 2007. It was comprised of about 700 Soldiers from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, including the brigade's headquarters, most of 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, and a forward logistics element from 412th Aviation Support Battalion.

They were joined by 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, deployed from Fort Hood, Texas, and an air traffic services company from 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment at Fort Campbell, Ky.

"This has been the finest performance by an aviation unit I've ever seen," said Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, Commander

of MND-B during a small ceremony to recognize the accomplishments of some of the Soldiers.

"If I had my way, you wouldn't be going anywhere," he joked.

Besides an already heavy flight sched-



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, Commander of Multi-National Division – Baghdad (left), presents an Air Medal to Capt. Brian Schlesier, an AH-64 Apache pilot assigned to 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, Task Force XII June 27.

ule taken on by the task force to support passenger travel and air assault missions of the brigade combat teams within MND-B, Hammond credited TF XII with playing an integral role during a spike in violence in Baghdad's Sadr City during late March and most of April.

"Sadr City will go down in history as a turning point in this war," said Hammond. "You were a big part of that."

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF XII has returned to Joint Base Balad.

The remaining elements of MND-B's TF XII moved to Baghdad International Airport in support of Multi-National Division – Central where they became part of TF 49.

Hammond left one piece of advice to the aviators as they prepared to move on to other missions: "Be brave, bold, aggressive and smart," he said. "Then get a little rest and start it all back up again."

2-147th 'Dust Devils' pass torch to TF Voodoo troops

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – After nearly a year in combat, the Minnesota Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment transferred authority to 1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment of the Louisiana National Guard July 19.

During their time here, the 2-147th flew nearly 18,500 flight hours, moving 77,422 passengers and 1.9 million pounds of cargo. They also flew 131 air assault missions in just over seven months.

"It's been a long haul and the mission accomplishment speaks for itself," said 2-147th Commander, Lt. Col. Gregory Thingvold. "Of course it's the Soldiers who are behind (the accolades), and they deserve every bit of praise."

The incoming 1-244th "Task Force Voodoo", commanded by Lt. Col. Patrick Bossetta, returns to Joint Base Balad for their second tour of duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit deployed here in December, 2003 in support of OIF II.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Col. Timothy Edens, Commander of Multi-National Corps - Iraq's Task Force XII prepares to lead the official party entrance before a Transfer of Authority Ceremony July 19. Edens is followed by Lt. Col. Gregory Thingvold and Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Mueller of 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, and Lt. Col. Patrick Bossetta and Command Sgt. Maj. Myron Creecy of 1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment.

TOA in Taji with 4th CAB

Iron Eagles become MND-B's primary aviation asset

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt, 4th CAB PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The 4th Combat Aviation Brigade officially assumed responsibility of aviation support operations from Task Force XII at a Transfer of Authority Ceremony held here July 15.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to serve Task Force XII over the last seven months," said Col. Timothy Edens, commander of the brigade. "Everyone has come together magnificently in support of MND-B."

With more than 2,700 Soldiers deployed to the



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Col. Timothy Edens and Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, command team for Task Force XII, furl the brigade colors during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony held at Camp Taji July 15.

region, 4th CAB has completed the relief in place with Task Force XII and is set to continue full-spectrum combat aviation operations.

"To all the Soldiers of

Task Force XII, thanks for supporting MND-B while we were preparing for this rotation back at (Fort) Hood," said Col. Pat Tierney, commander of the 4th CAB.

TOA Ceremonies welcome commanders to new posts

(Right): Col. Patrick Tierney and Command Sgt. Maj. Archie Davis unfurl the 4th CAB colors at a Transfer of Authority Ceremony held on Camp Taji July 15. (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt)

(Bottom Right): Col. Chandler Sherrell and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Mitchel case the TF 49 colors for the move to Multi-National Division Central. (photo by Sgt. Brandon Little)

(Below): Col. Timothy Edens and Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy unfurl the TF XII colors at Balad July 12. (photo by Sgt. Brandon Little)





Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Soldiers from Company B, 412th Aviation Support Battalion work with Airmen from the 9th Airlift Squadron, to load a UH-60 Black Hawk from 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment onto a C5 Galaxy July 21.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Sgt. Jason Fixico, a Soldier from Task Force Hawk, helps load a pallet holding the personal gear and equipment of Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment onto a C-23 Sherpa July 18.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

The flight crew of a C-23 Sherpa, from Task Force Hawk, taxis toward the runway to fly redeploying Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment to Kuwait July 18. The departing 2-147th heads home after nearly a year in country.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Soldiers from Company B, 412th Aviation Support Battalion work with Airmen from the 9th Airlift Squadron, to load a UH-60 Black Hawk from 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment onto a C5 Galaxy July 21.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Sgt. Jason Fixico, a Soldier from Task Force Hawk, closes the rear door of a C-23 Sherpa after loading a pallet holding the personal gear and equipment of Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment July 18.

Gunslinger crew chiefs get ready for one final move

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – A quick stroll through the hangars and company areas of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment belies the experience of the unit. Fourteen months into a 15-month deployment, you’d expect to see weathered company mascots and fading slogans adorning the makeshift plywood walls.

The company, after all, was among the first groups of Task Force XII Soldiers to inhabit the Army side of Joint Base Balad’s airfield when the deployment began last June. But, like much of the battalion, if they hung their hat and called it home when they got here, they didn’t leave it hung for long.

“The battalion’s had Soldiers in Basra off and on from the time we’ve been here, same with Tallil,” said Co. C 1st Sgt. Wil-

liam Anthony. “We started in Basra, moved to Tallil and jumped four times after that.”

Flexibility has been the story of the deployment thus far for the flight companies of the 2-159th. The battalion flies the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter mission for Multi-National Corps – Iraq. It’s a role that has kept them busy – not to mention mobile.

“We had some guys from ‘Bravo’ Company go to Kal-su, and we started off with half our company in Basra,” said Spc. Jeremy Freeman, an Apache crew chief from Los Angeles.

And while it’s not exactly conducive to setting up house, it’s a role they’ve gotten used to. Currently the battalion has two of three flight companies, Company A and B, operating from Basra; giving Company C the lead on missions at Balad.

“Sometimes we’d move with 24 hours notice,” said Anthony, who hails from Wahiawa, Hawaii. “Guys would be getting ready to come to work for the day and I’d go tell them to pack their stuff and get ready to go.”

The Soldiers say they understand the mission, so they don’t mind the moves.

“There’s a lot of pride in the fact that we’ve been all over the country and have supported missions all over the place,” said Sgt. Brandon Otter, a New Almelo, Kan. native. “Moving around from base to base is actually kind of a nice break.”

It seems like a lot to ask from the crew chiefs of ‘Charlie Company.’ The group is made up of 16, mostly first-time deployers, whose average age is about 23. Even



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq - Spc. Jeremy Freeman, an AH-64 Apache crew chief, raises the tail end of an Apache helicopter July 20. Freeman and his fellow ‘Gunslingers’ are preparing for the end of their 15-month deployment.

without the moves, their leaders freely admit the job is grueling.

“On the average we do 14 hours of maintenance for every one hour of flight time,” said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Cordle, a platoon sergeant. “They come out here and work in 120 degree heat, and they don’t get to fly with the aircraft.”

The Soldiers insist that the multiple moves didn’t affect the learning curve.

“It’s a different place and a different parking pad but, as far as maintenance goes, it’s the same wherever we go,” said Otter.

The deployment is nearly over for the Gunslingers. As their replacements start to filter in, the crew chiefs can’t help but smile as they talk about the last in a series of moves ... the one that takes them back to Illesheim, Germany.

“I saw a lot come out of these guys that you wouldn’t expect,” said Cordle. “We came in a little green, but we’re coming out of here with a lot of guys who are ready to be NCO’s.”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq - Sgt. Schedrick Wheelings, an AH-64 Apache crew chief for Company C, works on the tail of an Apache helicopter. He and his battalion will redeploy to Illesheim, Germany in the coming weeks.

12th CAB’s 3-159 ‘Quick Strike’ Battalion heads to Iraq

Story by Ronald H. Toland Jr.
USAG Ansbach PAO

ILLESHEIM, Germany – While many community Families and Soldiers see a light at

the end of the tunnel, other units are just beginning their tours.

The Ansbach community’s latest to head for Iraq is the 3rd

“Quick Strike” Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, who held a deployment ceremony July 11 at the airfield on Storck Barracks.

“Our minds will be at peace knowing that our Families will be supported by a strong rear detachment, our redeploying brigade headquarters and sister battalion (2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment),” said the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Brian Dillon, during his speech to the unit and Families at the ceremony.

Being part of the current rotation to Iraq, the unit is placed out of the deployment cycle with its parent brigade for the next year and a half. Thus the battalion faced some more unique challenges and advantages.

“The unit has had its train

up without higher headquarters. They had been able to pull all of this together with the rear detachments without having the staff of the normal brigade...and they’ve been able to do it absolutely to standard to meet all the training requirements.

“I have no doubt they will succeed in Iraq,” he added.

However, the confidence in his battalion’s readiness does not cause Dillon to forget about precautions and the Soldiers and Family members’ safety.

“I want to assure each Family member today that while deployed we will approach each task with caution, mindful of the risk we take. We ask that you do the same in your daily activities wherever you are during the time that we are away,” added Dillon.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

ILLESHEIM, Germany – Lt. Col. Brian Dillon, Commander of 3rd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, and Command Sgt. Maj. John Sundermann, case their unit’s colors as part of the battalion’s deployment ceremony July 11.

Preparing tomorrow's leaders

TF Ready gives newly promoted NCOs tools for success

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – No one is more professional than I. I am a noncommissioned officer, a leader of Soldiers. As a noncommissioned officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as “the Backbone of the Army.”

These are the first sentences in the NCO Creed – an oath taken by every noncommissioned officer in the Army from the freshly promoted corporal to the Sergeant Major of the Army.

The origination of the NCO Creed can be traced back to the post-Vietnam efforts of a group of sergeants at Fort Benning, Ga. These Soldiers came together to create what is now considered the basic leadership blueprint for all noncommissioned officers in the Army.

Several enlisted Soldiers in Task Force Ready were given the necessary tools, from other experienced noncommissioned officers, to create their own leadership blueprint during an NCO Professional Development Course.

“Many of our junior noncommissioned officers are getting promoted without the formal training that would be equivalent to their rank,” said Task Force Ready Command Sgt. Maj. John Moore. “Since these Soldiers didn’t get that basic knowledge, from WLC, it doesn’t pay us any dividends if we have them (in charge of Soldiers here) without teaching it to them. We designed this course to provide them with a base knowledge of things that



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Soldiers from Task Force Ready raise their right hands for the reading of the NCO Charge during a Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony July 30.

young NCOs need to know.”

The course covers a wide range of NCO duties and responsibilities from how to properly administer an Army Physical Fitness Test to counseling Soldiers.

“Many of the classes we teach in this course are also taught in WLC, so it gives them an idea of what to expect when they get to WLC,” said Staff Sgt. Ronald Harding, one of the course instructors and the Task Force Ready flight operations noncommissioned officer in charge.

“Most people going through WLC get taught by a staff sergeant, who is competent in that subject-matter, but I have senior NCOs who have been to WLC, the basic noncommissioned officer course, and all those other noncommissioned officer education system courses,” said Moore, who hails from Saginaw, Mich.

There are a total of 10 classes that make up this course, and each class is given once during the day and once in the evening to coincide with the Soldiers’ schedules.

“These classes aren’t just PowerPoint presentations; all of our classes are inter-

active and we try to keep the Soldiers involved,” said Harding, who hails from San Diego. “While we are going over the material, we also take time to help them fill out counseling forms and composite risk management worksheets.”

This is actually the second professional development course Task Force Ready Soldiers have given during their deployment.

“I went through this course back in March; I had a great time taking the classes and I really learned a lot,” said Cpl. Clint Hagans, a recent graduate of the course and a native of Utica, Kan. “I learned how to treat people, how to get Soldiers to work for you, and how to earn their respect.”

Hagans, a radio communications repairer in Company E, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, is one of several graduates of this professional development course now in a leadership position.

“I have two Soldiers working for me, so I get to use a lot of the leadership skills I learned in the course,” he said. “I also feel more confident about my ability to lead Soldiers, and I feel that it has made me a better NCO.”

Although the course is geared toward molding Soldiers who have not been to WLC, there are quite a few participants who have graduated WLC.

“The Soldiers who have

graduated WLC but haven’t had the opportunity to lead Soldiers tend to get more out of this course than the graduates in leadership positions already,” said Harding. “Every person is different and they understand the information differently; having other experienced Soldiers there to help the instructors give examples just makes the course that much stronger.”

After the conclusion of this two-week long course, there is a ceremony to formally induct these Soldiers into the NCO Corps.

“I always wanted to have an induction ceremony here, but I didn’t want to have a ceremony for a group of Soldiers who made sergeant without having the knowledge from the (primary) noncommissioned officer course,” said Moore.

Providing these Soldiers with the basic tools to train and lead Soldiers is mission that, Harding says, makes the NCO Corps and the military stronger.

“Once the Soldiers learn the things we do, as NCOs, they take more initiative and they understand what it means to put your signature on any mission that you do,” said Harding. “Even though most of our Soldiers are very professional, after taking this course, you can see that they take a lot more pride in their job and they want to be better Soldiers and leaders.”



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Command Sgt. Maj. John Moore, Task Force Ready’s top enlisted Soldier, speaks to junior NCOs during a Noncommissioned Officer Induction Ceremony July 30.

A moment with the Chaplain



Dealing with changes in our Family, ourselves

By Chaplain (Maj.) David Waweru

Have you ever thought of how a snake has the ability to change drastically but still stay the same? A snake will shed its old rugged skin, get a completely new look but inside it's the same animal it was. Internally, not much changes. The snake only gets wiser with age - thus increasing its survival skills.

The 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, like a snake, has shed its skins several times in the last 13 months. We now have a brand new shiny skin in Balad and Baghdad International Airport as well as Basra and other locations. Despite those changes, we are the same people inside. We have the same mission and we are dealing with day to day stress levels of operation, challenges along with the difficulty of being separated from our loved ones. We have learned to live through the heartaches and challenges of life, and we have come this far. God has given us success and safety in all our missions.

Positive Change

Change is a part of life but most of the time we don't envy change. It's easier to do the things that we are used to doing, than to learn a new way of doing things.



It's easier to speak the language we know than to start learning a new language. It is however an inevitable fact that so much has changed in the last 13 months. Those who had kids in the 11th grade will find high school graduates at home; some will be already in college.

A baby that was just four months old is now an 18-month-old talking and walking young person.

Your teenage son's voice have may cracked and deepened, and your teenage daughter is now a young lady. Each one of us has also changed ... I have less hair

on my head.

Negative change

Inevitably, some of our relationships were challenged; some of us have seen negative effects of changes. Some may have to deal with situations where spouses have grown apart, or even Families have been left broken. Life has to go on; we have to get the pieces together, stand up and move on. If you find yourself in these shoes, help is available. Talk to the chaplain, a good friend, or the chain of command. Get all the facts and seek technical help from the professionals.

I would like to offer some encouragement as we get closer to the finish line; we can now see the light at the end of the tunnel and it's quite bright. As the apostle Paul got closer to the end of his life, he wrote these words to the people of Philippi: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, I press on ... forgetting what I have left behind, and straining towards what is ahead. I press on towards the goal."

The prophet Isaiah said long ago that if we trust God with our lives, we will run and not be weary, we will road-march and not faint, we will soar like the eagle. Let us all press on towards the finish line! With God's help, we can.

Ask the JAG ... about political events

By The Task Force XII Legal Office

This year, the people of the United States will elect the next president. There are strict rules that govern the types of political activities in which active duty Soldiers may participate.

Soldiers on active duty may:

1. Register, vote, and express their opinions on political candidates and issues, but not as representatives of the Armed Forces;
2. Attend partisan and nonpartisan political meetings or rallies as spectators, however, they may not attend in uniform, during duty hours, when violence is likely to result, or when their activities constitute a breach of law and order;
3. In general, make monetary contributions to a political organization, but not to other members of the Armed Forces on active duty or employees of the Federal Government.
4. May encourage other military members to vote;
5. Serve as an election official, if such service is not in uniform, does not interfere with military duties, and has the prior approval of the installation commander;
6. Sign a petition for legislative action or to place a candidate's name on the ballot, but only in the Soldier's personal capacity;
7. Write a letter to the editor expressing personal views, and place bumper stickers on cars (but not large banners or posters).

Soldiers on active duty may not:

1. Use their official authority or influence for interfering with an election, soliciting votes for a particular candidate or issue, or requiring or soliciting political contributions from others;
2. Participate in partisan political management, campaigns, or conventions;
3. Write and publish partisan political articles that solicit votes for or against a partisan political party or candidate, speak before partisan political gatherings, or participate in partisan political radio or television shows;
4. Serve in any capacity or be listed as a sponsor of a partisan political club;
5. Distribute partisan political literature or conduct a political opinion survey under the auspices of a partisan political group;
6. Use contemptuous words against the President, Vice President, Congress, the Secretaries of the military departments, Defense, or Transportation, and the Governors or legislatures of any state or territory where the Soldier is on duty;
7. Engage in fund-raising activities for partisan political causes on military reservations or in Federal offices or facilities;
8. Attend partisan political events as official representatives of the Armed Forces.

Please feel free to stop by the Task Force XII Legal Office and we would be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Got a photo you want to share?
How about a story you wrote or
a great idea for a story? If so,
please let us know!



Product submissions by Soldiers and Family members of Task Force XII are always welcome. If you have a story, photo or even a story idea you'd like to see in The Griffin, contact the Task Force XII Public Affairs Office.

TF Storm moves troops, equipment to BIAP

Battalion relocates for 3rd time during tour

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – It started with a few letters and cards; next, a box stuffed with snacks and candy.

Pretty soon there was a constant stream of care packages, from loved ones and friends, jam-packed with everything from home-made cookies to electric fly-swatters.

In the span of a few months, these trinkets, and those must-have items from the PX, had grown into mountainous piles. When Soldiers and equipment must relocate, because of a mission change, something must be done with these accumulated items.

For the Soldiers of Task Force Storm, who moved to their third location in the last 12 months, this was a situation they knew all too well.

As these Soldiers began to shift their operations to Baghdad International Airport (BIAP), they had to coordinate to move their equipment and personal items; all while training the units coming to replace them and continuing to perform their regular mission.

“In-theater moves, between posts in Iraq, are fairly easy when compared to moves in and out of theater,” said Sgt. 1st Class Derrick Mims, the Task Force Storm movement noncommissioned officer. “There’s not as much paperwork and planning because all you have to do is fill out a couple of forms, and then they just put the equipment containers on a trailer and convoy

them where they need to go.”

Even though the original move, from Logistics Support Area Anaconda to Taji, might have been an inconvenient experience for the Soldiers; it was definitely a learning experience that helped them with this move, said Mims, who hails from Shreveport, La.

“The biggest problem we had during our first move was making sure that identification tags on each piece of equipment were for that particular piece of equipment,” he said. “Some ID tags for the equipment had either been put on the wrong piece of equipment or had fallen off, and there were pieces of equipment being tracked as still in LSA Anaconda when they were actually at Taji.”

Working closely with each company’s movement control officer is why, Mims says, this move has gone a lot smoother than the previous one.

As for their personal items, many Soldiers decided to mail them either to BIAP or back to Germany; other things, such as televisions and refrigerators, ended up

“I think everybody’s pretty excited about getting down there and doing something new; and before we know it, it’ll be time to pack up and go home.”

1st Lt. Nathan Greer,
a platoon leader in Company C,
3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment



Photo by Staff Sgt. Derrick L. Mims

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Sgt. Raymond Speed, the unit movement noncommissioned officer for Company D, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, carries pieces of wood that an equipment container will be placed on before it is shipped to Baghdad International Airport.

with the incoming Soldiers.

While equipment and personal items were being transported to BIAP, these Soldiers were also performing a Relief in Place with the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, from Fort Hood, Texas.

“This move is a little different from the first one, because when (Task Force Storm) left LSA Anaconda there was no unit to replace us,” said 1st Lt. Nathan Greer, a platoon leader in Company C, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation

Regiment. “We have an entire brigade coming in behind (Task Force XII) with twice as many people, and that makes things cramped for a few weeks.”

These situations may be a little unpleasant for some, but ensuring their replacements are properly trained outweighs the comfort-ability factor, say Greer, a native of Owasso, Okla.

During transition periods like this, it can be easy for morale to lower and frustrations to build; so the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers representative for Task Force Storm, Spc. Marc Walton, tries to help organize events and activities for the Soldiers.

“It’s been a little rough trying to plan things because we’ve been so busy, but it’s hard to tell the Soldiers that we don’t have anything planned,” said Walton, who hails from Lisbon, Ohio. “I’m trying to get a few barbecues organized before

we go, to try and keep everybody active so they won’t sit around in their rooms and think about how much time they have left.”

While stationed at BIAP, Task Force Storm will be part of Task Force 49 and they will fall under Multi-National Division – Central.

Moving a few times has really helped the time pass and it’s also kept the Soldiers from getting complacent, said Mims, who is on his third deployment.

Even though this was their third move, during this deployment, every tunnel has a light at the end and Task Force Storm Soldiers say they can definitely see that light.

“Going to BIAP, hopefully we’ll be doing more air assaults and more night missions; we want to go out with a bang,” said Greer. “I think everybody’s pretty excited about getting down there and doing something new; and before we know it, it’ll be time to pack up and go home.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Derrick L. Mims

Sgt. Roberto Rivera, a Soldier in 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, operates one of the forklifts that are being used to move the battalion’s equipment containers in position to be transported to their new home on Baghdad International Airport.

12th CAB top priorities for next 4 months

From the 12th CAB Command Group

The next 120 days are crucial; they are the 60 days before we go home and 60 days after we get there. Historically this time period is among the most dangerous of any deployment.

We still have a lot to do here. Our safety record here is second to none. You have earned the reputation of being the best aviation brigade in Iraq; for the next 120 days we will all need to take some vital steps to protect that reputation:

1. Focus on the mission here in Iraq – your mission is not complete until your replacements are fully trained.
2. Focus on safety – think before you act, and do everything in your power to take back every member of your team.
3. Actively seek out and share information with fellow Soldiers. Make sure your unit schedule is posted, and make sure you read it.

4. Be prepared to protect yourself and your fellow Soldiers from common mistakes when you get home. Use the on call designated driver program. Use the unit taxi fund. Spending all your money isn't a valid excuse for driving drunk.

5. Never lower your standards of conduct; Understand that your actions in Iraq, while commendable, will not excuse you from questionable or foolish behavior in Germany.

You are the "A-team," the best of the best, and we expect you to act like it. There will certainly be issues that arise over the next 120 days – let's make it a point to tackle them as a team and help each other every step of the way.

Upcoming events:

1. 12th CAB Welcome Home Raffle (see page 2) – Three great trips being raffled to help defray the costs of the upcoming brigade Welcome Home/Holiday

Ball. Tickets are on sale now through unit reps.

2. The Task Force XII OIF commemorative print, "Launch, Recover, Launch" by James Dietz. There are still 100 copies of the print available at \$70 per copy. Boyd's Framing and Art will be on hand at the Welcome Home Ceremony to offer a variety of framing options for you.

3. 12th CAB Welcome Home ceremony and celebration, Friday Nov. 14 at Katterbach Kaserne. The event will include the formal Welcome Home ceremony, the unveiling of the OIF painting, "Launch, Recover, Launch," and signing of prints by the artist. There will be live music and we'll recognize some of the "Heroes of the Deployment," both Soldiers and Family members in our community.

4. 12th CAB Welcome Home/Holiday Ball – Thursday, Nov. 20 at the Furth Stadthalle.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Task Force XII command group, Col. Timothy Edens (standing left) and Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, take the opportunity to address issues and concerns leading up to redeployment for task force Soldiers in a town hall-style meeting at the MWR center on Joint Base Balad July 12. Edens and Kennedy held several of these briefings per day for a week to get a chance to talk to every Soldier in TF XII. During the briefings, they thanked the Soldiers for what they've done so far, and talked about rumors and upcoming events.

Do you have questions about your reenlistment options, or any retention questions in general? If so, please contact your unit Career Counselor or Retention NCO, listed below, for more information.

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------|
| Task Force XII Senior Career Counselor | SGT Bercher | 483-2444 |
| SFC Organ | 1-244th AVN | |
| 483-4161 | SFC Howard | 483-2601 |
| HHC Task Force XII | 3-159th AVN | |
| SSG Ruffin | SGT Warren | 483-2444 |
| 483-4071 | 1-214th AVN | |
| 412th ASB | SGT Leon | 382-4415 |
| SGT Britton | 3-58th AOD | |
| 483-7072 | SGT Wacker | 467-4983 |
| 5-158th AVN | 12th CAB Rear Detachment | |
| SSG Lemon | Career Counselor | |
| 483-2687 | SFC Britton | 467-4869 |
| 3-158th AVN | | |
| SSG Olivo | | |
| 822-7581 | | |
| 2-159th AVN | | |

Got a photo or story you want to share? Let us know!



Task Force XII PAO is in the process of putting together the OIF 07-09 end of tour video. We're looking for photos showing Task Force XII Soldiers hard at work or at play. Action, emotion, animation ... if you think it's cool, get it to us!

PAO Contact:

SIPR - 242-9267
DSN - 483-2079
We'll make you famous!

Reenlisted 'Professionals' take part in special ceremony

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Each year thousands of Soldiers are faced with the decision of whether or not they should continue their service in the military. Many factors, like providing for their Families and patriotism, helped to influence the decision to raise their right hands and renew their pledge to defend the Constitution and the United States.

Several hundred Soldiers from 412th Aviation Support Battalion received coins and a special thank you for making the decision to stay “Army Strong” from their battalion commander, Lt. Col. Sam Hamontree, during a ceremony held here July 2.

“While talking with some of the Soldiers in Kuwait, at the beginning of our deployment, they told me it would be a great idea to give Soldiers a coin for reenlisting; but as a commander I’m only authorized to purchase a certain number of coins,” said Hamontree, who hails from Canyon, Texas. “Soon after arriving in Iraq, we had a lot of Soldiers reenlisting and it quickly took out the entire supply of coins I had.”

A few months into the deployment, Hamontree says, some of his friends and Family, in Ohio, asked if they could help get coins for the Soldiers.

The coins, presented during the ceremony, display the 412th “Professionals” crest on the front, and the back is

inscribed with the “Reenlistment Oath.”

“I think having these coins presented during a ceremony like this really lets us know that the people back home really support us,” said Staff Sgt. Steven Prockish, a motor sergeant in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 412th ASB and a native of Wichita, Kan. “It’s good to see, somewhere other than on the Armed Forces Network, that people are supporting what we’re doing over here.”

There are 277 Soldiers in 412th ASB who chose to reenlist so far, and in total

the retention noncommissioned officers have given out more than \$2.96 million in reenlistment bonuses.

“It wasn’t difficult getting Soldiers to reenlist because our office is usually filled with Soldiers who love being in the Army and want to continue their service to their country,” said Sgt. Percy Britton, the 412th ASB retention NCO. “We talk to the Soldiers about more than just reenlisting in the Army; we talk to them about their career in the Army and after the Army.”

The 412th ASB has Soldiers located from here all the way down to Basra, and each of them receives the same attention and dedication when they want to discuss their future in the military, said Britton, who hails from Fayetteville, N.C.

“I’m in awe with the decision these Soldiers have made to continue to serve their country while we are at war,” said Hamontree. “It’s humbling to hear their stories and motivation for staying in – these aren’t Soldiers without hope or no other means of making a living – they’re patriots and dedicated warriors ... it’s just humbling.”

Whether they chose to reenlist out of patriotism, or because they feel the Army can help them continue to provide a good life for their Families, the coins presented to them were small mementos to thank them for their choice to “Stay Army Strong.”



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Capt. Casey Haines, the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, presents coins to Soldiers in his company, who reenlisted since they arrived in theater, during a ceremony held here July 2.

TF XII, TF 49 Soldiers adjust to mission changes

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Since the Soldiers in Task Force XII and Task Force 49 arrived in Iraq, their deployments have been a bit different from that of most aviation brigades.

The intertwining relationship between these two headquarters is a byproduct of the draw-down of troops brought in during last year’s surge.

Both of the units, due to a mission change, simultaneously performed a Relief in Place (RIP) with each other and a different unit in three different places.

Confused? Well, you should be.

After the Transfer of Authority (TOA) was complete, in December, Task Force 49 inherited 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment; 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment; 412th Aviation Support Bat-

talion; 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment – a battalion of National Guard Soldiers from Minnesota, Hawaii and Washington; and Task Force Hawk – a fixed wing battalion from the Army Reserve’s 244th Aviation Brigade.

Once Task Force XII moved to Camp Taji, it was comprised of the 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment – also known as “Task Force Storm;” the 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment – from Fort Hood Texas; Company F, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment – an air traffic control unit from Fort Campbell, Ky.; and a Forward Logistics Element (FLE) from the 412th ASB.

The moves were only a temporary plan of action until 4th Combat Aviation Brigade deployment to Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Army leaders have decided that Task Force

XII should return to Joint Base Balad and that Task Force 49 move to Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) to replace the redeploying 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. This means that Task Force XII must RIP with 4th CAB and Task Force 49; and while Task Force 49 is transferring authority to Task Force XII here, they must begin their RIP with 3rd CAB in BIAP.

Still Confused?

After the TOA, Task Force XII assumed command of all the units that were once under Task Force 49 here. In BIAP, Task Force 49 took charge of all the units under Task Force XII had in Taji, except for the redeploying Company F, 7th Bn., 101st Avn. Reg., and move to BIAP.

“It was a little (difficult) with so many moving pieces and so

many teams out trying to set the conditions at the next location,” said Maj. James Jones, the Task Force 49 operations officer and a native of Sultan, Wash.

Moving hundreds of Soldiers from one place to another, while conducting operations in two different locations, was a task that both units accomplished in conjunction with training their replacements and learning new roles.

Performing three different RIPs in three different locations may have seemed like a confusing and difficult assignment, but each task force worked together to make this unusual task successful.

“We made it work and I think things went really well,” said Jones. “Everyone worked together, and everybody did the best they could to make those simultaneous operations successful.”



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Sgt. Myra Diaz (right), a human resources specialist in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force 49, shows Task Force XII’s Spc. Ana Gomez how she tracks personnel actions during a Relief in Place.

On the Home Front



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Judith Vazquez, Ansbach High School graduate, cuts a cake celebrating her recently awarded \$1,500 scholarship from the Defense Commissary Agency at the Katterbach Commissary. She received four different scholarships and plans to attend the University of Central Florida.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Scott “Ping-Pong man” Preiss, a U.S. National Table Tennis coach and trainer, entertained and conducted a ping-pong clinic to teach the community’s youth how to play and develop skills in playing ping-pong at the Von Steuben Club in Katterbach June 26.



Courtesy photo

HHC 12th CAB Family members, Libby Seaton (left) and Jordan Chatelain enjoy a jump in the ball pit during a Family Readiness Group meeting in Gunzenhausen.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Sgt. Aaron Simeraro, a paralegal specialist in the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, gets a hug from his wife, Jackie, when he returned to Katterbach Jul. 22 after a year-long deployment to Iraq.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Children participate in the under ten children’s pie eating competition category at the Independence Day celebration events at Katterbach airfield July 4. The event featured various contests and competitions, like beautiful baby and rock band; and it ended with a fireworks show.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Buddy Lee, Olympic Wrestler, demonstrates the essentials of jump roping to a group of children during a sports clinic he conducted at the Katterbach School Age Services June 26. Nearly 100 children participated in the clinic.

The Griffin Brigade Chronicles

History of USAREUR's 12th CAB (Part 12)

Story by Lt. Col. Charles R. Bowery Jr.,
Executive Officer for Task Force XII

In this next-to-last installment of our history of the 12th Aviation Brigade, we will discuss the OIF II deployment of 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, from January 2004 to February 2005. The Big Red One was originally scheduled to enter Iraq from the north, via Turkey, during late 2003, but when the Turkish government refused entry to U.S. forces, all of the division's assets and personnel were rerouted to Kuwait. The headquarters and battalions of 4th Brigade- 1-1 Aviation (Attack) "Gunfighters," 2-1 Aviation (General Support) "Eagles," and the 601st Aviation Support Battalion "Typhoons," then part of the Division Support Command, conducted a ground convoy movement all the way from northern Kuwait to northern Iraq, ending up at FOB Speicher in Tikrit in February 2004. SFC David Sweitzer, the TFXII Brigade Aviation Maintenance NCOIC, remembers the convoy:

"It was 36 hours straight with only minimal rest at the Convoy Support Centers (CSC). We were ambushed at Checkpoint 23, just north of Baghdad - what happened in that instant is not clear now but the bond with the Soldiers that I am still stationed with and the ones that I have run into in my travels in the Army still remain."



Sgt. Maj. Richard Crane at Forward Operating Base Speicher, Iraq in 2004.



At Speicher the Dragon Brigade, commanded at the time by Colonel Walter Golden, replaced the 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. For the remainder of 2004 and the first few weeks of 2005, 4th Brigade provided aviation support across all of Iraq north of Baghdad. The Gunfighters moved their C Company to Balad Air Base, where they worked in the southern portion of the 1st ID area of operations; the Ghostriders remained at Balad until October of that year, when they rejoined the battalion at FOB Speicher. 1LT Mike Harmison, now a platoon leader in 2-159 ARB, was a CW2 in this company during OIF II.

The Gunfighters flew over 13,000 hours in their AH-64A Apaches, supporting numerous ground operations, including Operation BATON ROUGE to clear the city of Samarra of insurgent forces in October 2004, and the coalition offensive to retake Fallujah in November of that same year. They also conducted the first-ever OIF joint Apache helicopter – Predator UAV Hellfire engagement during a training event north of Tikrit, a precursor to our current operations in Sadr City. As the first Iraqi National Elections approached in January 2005, 4th Brigade's deployment was extended for thirty days to provide support to friendly ground forces in Ninevah Province, around the city of Mosul. Gunfighter crews, including yours truly, then the battalion S3, flew daily missions to Mosul, Tal Afar, Irbil, and Sinjar in the northern reaches of the country.

The 2-1 GSAB Eagles focused mainly on support to the 1st ID Command Group as they commanded and controlled operations all over northern Iraq and provided the only combat support aviation in the area. They transported numerous distinguished visitors and senior military and civilian leaders with safety and efficiency in the most dangerous flight environment on earth. Several of the se-

nior aviators in TF Ready were key members of the Fighting Eagles team at that time.

Of all of the 4th Brigade units, the battalion that actually saw the most enemy contact was the support battalion! The 601st ASB was responsible for supplying numerous Division operating bases between Balad and Tikrit, including FOB McKenzie near Ad Duluyiah, the birthplace of Saddam Hussein just north of Balad. This area was the heartland of the Sunni insurgency, and enemy fighters routinely attacked 601st convoys as they moved through urban areas. The weekly "Dragon Express" rolled through constant enemy RPG fire as it provided critical fuel, ammunition, and spare parts to the OH-58D Kiowa Warriors of 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry at FOB McKenzie. At Speicher, the 601st Intermediate Maintenance company pulled phase maintenance inspections on Apaches and Blackhawks, keeping those airframes in the fight. MSG Jef Fisher, the TFXII Safety NCO, was a platoon sergeant in 601st ASB during the deployment:

"In addition to my Platoon Sergeant duties I was charged with conducting numerous Combat Logistics Patrols (CLPs). We traveled to and from Tikrit, Balad and BIAP on many different occasions moving parts and equipment for the Brigade. I will never forget the camaraderie and professionalism we had throughout the deployment."

Keeping watch over the Brigade's aviation maintenance posture from the Division Support Command was SGM Richard Crane, now a member of the 412th ASB staff and our chief aviation parts manager.

Although it was the smallest aviation brigade in the Army at the time, the 4th Brigade packed a big punch, and was known as a capable, lethal, and disciplined organization during OIF II.

See you next month!



Task Force XII Commander
Col. Timothy J. Edens

Task Force XII Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy

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