



Volume 2, Issue 4

“WINGS OF VICTORY!”

APRIL 2008

# Task Force XII aviators help prevent attacks by tracking down, engaging enemy forces

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – A group of men crouch in the darkness, with semi-automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades in hand, waiting to viciously attack an approaching convoy.

On the other side of Baghdad another group of men, also operating under the shield of darkness, sets up mortar tubes and rocket rails for an attack on Coalition forces.

As the convoy approaches and day shift workers on Coalition bases settle in for the night, the men grow tense with anticipation of the destruction their attacks will soon cause.

Little do they know that, even in the thick of darkness, they too are being watched.

Whoosh ... boom! A skillfully fired “Hellfire” missile quickly spoils a carefully laid out ambush.

In the last month, AH-64 Apache crews in Task Force XII engaged more insurgents, executing attacks like these, than they have in the last three months combined.

“Enemy engagements used to happen about once every two weeks; but right now it’s (numerous times each day),” said Iowa native, Lt. Col. Todd Royar, the commander of 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment and an Apache pilot. “These insurgent forces have decided to become more visible and more deliberate in their attacks.”

Nearly all of these Apache engagements have occurred as a result of either observing enemy activities while patrolling the Baghdad region or by responding to aerial support requests from ground forces.

“This is what we all expected, but the initial calmness when we got here took us by surprise,” said Lt. Col. Charles



Illustration by Spc. Royce Shepard

**Task Force XII AH-64D Apache Longbow flight crews have engaged more enemy combatants in the last month than they have in the last three months combined.**

Bowery Jr., the Task Force XII executive officer and also an Apache pilot from Quinton, Va.

The dramatic increase in violence was a little unexpected, but the number of attacks hasn’t taken the pilots by surprise, said Bowery.

“We have crews who are skilled (to handle these situations) and this is what they came here to do,” he said. “Our individual op tempo, or the number of hours each crew flies, has stayed relatively constant; so it has only been a little increase

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Check out  
what’s  
inside ...



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# Griffin 06 Sends ... exceeding the standard

Soldiers and Families of Task Force XII:

I'm as proud of this task force as I've ever been. The past month saw a spike in violence in Baghdad that has greatly affected the Soldiers here at Taji as well as our Soldiers in Balad.

The "Longknife" Soldiers of 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment have been the very epitome of professionalism and selfless service. During a time in which the operational tempo has increased dramatically, the Apache pilots in 4/3 ACR as well as those on the brigade staff have stepped up and made a huge difference in the kinetic fight on the ground in Baghdad.

Of course increased flight hours have led to increased maintenance. Our maintainers have taken on this fight as their own, ensuring that every aircraft that leaves Camp Taji is combat ready. As a commander, and as a pilot, I offer you my heartfelt appreciation for the splendid work you've done. Of course, as you all know by now, I only ask that you continue to deliver.

The mark never lowers; it seems only to crawl higher and higher up the wall. You are all disciplined, proud and well trained warriors who understand this fact of war, so I will continue to demand the very best of you with unwavering confidence and pride.

Task Force Storm Soldiers have also proudly continued to set the example in flying the skies over Baghdad. They take a back seat to no unit or any group of Soldiers anywhere. At a point in our deployment when, historically, complacency has been at its worst, I constantly see Soldiers hustling to make their mission happen.

The dedicated and hard working Soldiers of HHC/TF XII, G/TF XII, F/7-101 ATS and FLE/412 ASB continue to do all the work behind the scenes that set the foundation for all the achievements of the flight battalions of this awesome task force. Doing everything from ordering and coordinating transport of critical parts and components; through the creation, coordination and execution of de-



tailed and dynamic air mission requests; through the daily launch-recover-launch of more than 20 unmanned aerial vehicle missions in support of the BCTs on the ground; through the safe handling of hundreds of aircraft movements in and out of Taji airspace 24 hours a day; and even to the mundane but essential conduct of tower guard.

These heroes have worked ceaselessly and professionally with no fanfare, driven only by their internal sense of professionalism, pride and insistence on doing every job right; incredible, and again essential. Thank you and keep at it!

What makes me proudest is that during this time, with the highest operational tempo of any aviation unit in theater now or ever, we've seen no Class A mishaps or accidents due to negligence. If it were anyone else, what you've done to this point would strike me as truly amazing, but knowing you as I do, it is simply what I expect; you are simply that good. I constantly hear from commanders at all levels, what a great organization we've assembled here at Camp Taji.

I already knew that, but it's always nice to hear and I pass on to you accolades from MG Hammond, BG Milano and

CSM Gioia as well as praise and thanks from our comrades in all the BCTs within MND-B. Well done!

I would be remiss, if I did not also remark on what our brother and sister GRIFFINS still at Balad are also achieving. Like all here at Taji, the recent increase in enemy activity has demanded more from the great Soldiers of 2-159 ARB, 5-158 GSAB, 2-147 AHB and 412th ASB as well as TF HAWK. They now operate not only from Balad, but once again have pushed task organized support forward to Basrah as they continue to raise the standard for aviation mission execution in support of MNC-I.

I challenge each and every one of you to continue your tradition of excellence. I've been around long enough to know that the more praise you get, the more you can start to believe it, and consequently, the more likely you are to lose sight of just how challenging this mission truly is.

Never take your eyes off the ball, stay focused on the mission every minute just as you have to now. As the temperatures rise, the high operational tempo continues and we as a task force start looking forward to the next in a series of major changes, don't lose the drive and focus on the things we can influence and control that's made us successful thus far.

I returned from my R & R late in March, and while I was home in Germany, I spoke to the Ansbach High School student body one afternoon. My talk was short and very uninspiring, but the look in the kids faces as I mentioned your accomplishments and how important what you are doing here is to our Army and the people of Iraq, was very inspiring. Their only message, "Tell my Dad/Mom I love them." They and all members of your Families are very proud of you, as am I.

Let's insure we do everything in our power to give them what they all really want and deserve: Your safe and healthy return home.

**"Wings of Victory!"**  
COL Timothy Edens  
Commander, Task Force XII



TASK FORCE XII  
WINGS OF VICTORY

For the latest news and photos...

Photo by  
SPC Khanh Quach



[www.12cab.army.mil](http://www.12cab.army.mil)

**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.**

<b>Task Force XII Senior Career Counselor</b>	SGT Bercher	483-2444
SFC Organ	<b>2-147th AVN</b>	
<b>HHC Task Force XII</b>	SFC Wahlberg	483-2446
SSG Ruffin	<b>3-159th AVN</b>	
<b>412th ASB</b>	SGT Warren	467-4869
SFC Britton	<b>1-214th AVN</b>	
<b>5-158th AVN</b>	SGT Leon	382-4415
SSG Lemon	<b>3-58th AOD</b>	
<b>3-158th AVN</b>	SGT Wacker	467-4983
SSG Olivo	<b>12th CAB Rear Detachment Career Counselor</b>	
<b>2-159th AVN</b>	SSG Simmons	467-4869







# Troop helps others through ‘Pay It Forward’ philosophy

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Throughout his life, Staff Sgt. Steven Atlas has tried to live by one philosophy ... Pay It Forward. The basic principle of this creed is simple; if he helps you, then in return, you should try to help someone else.

The exact title of this philosophy may have come from a movie made a few years ago, but his actions and the people they impact are real.

Atlas grew up in a single-parent home and at an early age he was forced to become an adult faster than many of his friends.

“My mom and dad separated when I was really young, so my mom had to raise me and my three sisters without any help,” said Atlas, a computer systems maintainer in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 412th Aviation Support Battalion. “Being brought up in a predominantly female household meant that I had to play the role of big brother, and sometimes dad, to my sisters. This was something that a lot of my friends didn’t have to experience and helped me to mature at an early age.”

Being forced into this role wasn’t the biggest obstacle that he would face as a young man; he was also forced to watch as two of his sisters lost battles with cancer.

“My older sister passed away when I was in junior high, and my younger sister passed away when I was going into my freshman year of high school,” said Atlas, a native of Chicago.

“Having to help take care of my sisters while they were dealing with the chemotherapy, and being hospitalized so much, forced me to look at things in a more adult perspective. I was never that kid who was just able to sit back and play video games, or just go outside and play whenever I wanted.”

Taking care of his sisters, he said, was something that motivated him to do better in life instead of getting sucked into the trouble found throughout his neighborhood.

After graduating from high school, he chose to put his goal of joining the military on hold to help support his Family while his mother went back to school to get a degree. He got a job working in a restaurant owned by his uncle to help support his mother and youngest sister.

“Once she completed her degree, I went to her and said ‘this is my time, I want to join the Army and I feel this is my time to do it,’” said Atlas. “She didn’t want me joining at that time because it was (during the peak) of Desert Shield/Desert Storm; I told her that there was never a ‘good time’ to join because the Army’s job is to fight wars and if you’re not fighting you’re training to fight.”

His mother received a bachelor’s degree in sociology and worked as counselor helping unwed teenage mothers in Chicago for many years ... paying it forward.

When Atlas joined the Army, he first joined as a laboratory technician and a few years

later became a signal Soldier.

Through his 16 years in the military, he has tried to continue to live by his “pay it forward” principle. He tries to provide Soldiers with not only knowledge from his career, but also from his religion.

“I’ve had some ups and downs being a of Islam faith, especially during 9/11, because many people tried to categorize all Muslims with the ones who carried out those attacks,” said Atlas, who is now married with three children. “I think I’ve been able to change those beliefs and thoughts in many of the people I have come across by giving Islamic cultural awareness classes and letting them know what we do and what we believe as opposed to what they have seen on TV.”

“After I found out about his religious background, I asked him to give a class to the Soldiers and he was really excited about doing it,” said Task Force XII Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, who is also one of Atlas’ mentors.

The Soldiers who attended that class got more information about Islamic cultures and are able tell their friend the difference between a regular person of Islamic faith and an



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Steven Atlas, a computer systems maintainer in Company C, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, works on his computer to check the status of the systems he must keep up and running.

Islamic extremist ... paying it forward.

In addition to Kennedy, Atlas also considers his roommate, Sgt. Archie Martin, to be a mentor and close friend.

“(Atlas) is an outstanding noncommissioned officer who is very knowledgeable and caring,” said Martin, also a computer systems maintainer in Company C and a native of Montgomery, Ala. “He has really helped me learn more about my job and how to be a better Soldier.”

Martin, an AH-64D Longbow Apache maintainer by Military Occupational Specialty, uses his spare time to help Soldiers who work long hours fixing Apaches ... paying it forward.

“If I do something good for one or two people, it will let them see that there are still people out there doing good things; and in turn maybe they’ll do good thing,” said Atlas.

## Pilots take fight to enemy, help make streets of Baghdad safer

Continued from Page 1

in frequency in which you fly.”

In addition to Bowery and Royar, all the qualified Apache pilots, including senior leaders such as Col. Timothy Edens, the Task Force XII commander, and Lt. Col. Scott Williams, the Task Force XII deputy commanding officer, have in-

creased their flying hours to shoulder some of the burden.

“Everyone’s coping with the (increase in flying hours) well, but the most difficult thing to keep up with is maintenance,” said Bowery.

To keep these aircraft mission ready, Apache maintainers must work tirelessly throughout the day and night to fix any deficiencies on the helicopter.

It’s a real challenge to keep these aircraft ready to fight, but it’s a job that must be done, said Spc. Tom Belew, an AH-64D Apache Longbow maintainer in 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment and a native of Beeville, Texas.

Engaging the enemy can also be a two-way occurrence, so Task Force XII aviators must also take special precautions when pursuing combatants.

“We’re more aware of the threat (against us) and we’re ensuring that we

take actions to protect ourselves,” said Bowery.

Pilots must achieve positive identification of hostile actions and carefully apply the rules of engagement (ROE) before taking action against a suspected combatant.

With the use of hi-tech equipment inside every Apache, flight crews can fulfill all of these requirements ... even through the blanket of night.

“I am extremely proud of the fact that our pilots have exercised and applied ROE appropriately; we have not had a case where we have engaged where we should not have,” said Royar. “Our role here is important because we help provide (ground units) with a third dimension. They can only see to the next corner; we can not only see to the next corner, but around the next corner and on top of it.”



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – An AH-64D Apache crew chief in 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, salutes a flight crew as they prepare to take off on a mission.



# Task Force XII MWR



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Capt. Clinton Woody works on his swing with a bat donated by the Katterbach, Germany Morale Welfare and Recreation Center.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Spc. Anthony Smith shows off an AH-64 Apache helicopter to actress and dancer, Kristine May, a member of the 'Purrfect Angelz' April 15.



Photo by Capt. Melissa Comiskey

CW2 Paul Jordan, a pilot in 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, tries to relax while trying to improving his "Guitar Hero" skills whenever he's not flying.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

The performance group "The Purrfect Angelz" poses for a picture holding a Certificate of Appreciation and a wooden propeller from Company G, Task Force XII Soldiers during their visit April 15.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Spc. Nicholas Croka, a UH-60 Black Hawk maintainer in Troop T, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, takes a short break from a busy maintenance schedule to focus on a ping pong ball served by Spc. Steven Joyner.



Courtesy Photo

A Soldier in 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment plays a game of darts while taking a short break from the busy maintenance schedule that keeps Task Force XII AH-64D Apaches patrolling the skies.



# Leaders take flights for Soldiers

*Task Force XII CSMs fly regularly to help reduce strain on crew chiefs, door gunners from increased optempo*

**Story by Sgt. Brandon Little**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – “Be Know Do” has been a part of the Army leadership doctrine for more than a decade and many leaders have interpreted it in many different ways.

For two of Task Force XII’s most senior noncommissioned officers, this leadership mantra takes them miles away from the safety of their offices and into a more mobile work station. It’s an alternate work environment that puts them in some potentially dangerous situations ... but still, they say, the view here is a whole lot cooler than any corner office on Camp Taji.

Task Force XII Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy and Task Force Storm Command Sgt. Maj. Chad Cuomo help shoulder the workload of UH-60 Black Hawk crew members in Task Force XII by serving as crew chiefs and door gunners on missions each week.

Just as the task force senior officers, all pilots, are called on to take to the skies regularly, the senior enlisted leaders must also don the flight gear and mount up for missions. But flying a helicopter, as a pilot, rarely means washing windows or loading a passenger’s bags for them. Door gunners, regardless of rank, have to be ready for any mission.

“I believe, as a leader, that I should lead from the front and that I should not ask my Soldiers to do something that I wouldn’t do myself,” said Cuomo. “If we were doing ground convoys, I’d be in those too.”

“I think it’s great that they get out here and help us with the mission,” said Sgt. Ian McDougal, a crew chief in Company A, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regi-



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

**Command Sgt. Maj. Chad Cuomo, Task Force Storm’s top enlisted Soldier, inspects his flight gear before heading out on a mission. Cuomo, a native of Troy, N.Y., tries to fly once a week; performing the duty of crew chief and door gunner for Task Force XII UH-60 Black Hawks.**

ment. “Seeing higher ranking Soldiers doing the same job as us really means a lot to the younger Soldiers.”

Both Cuomo and Kennedy are crew chiefs by profession. Combined, the two leaders have more than 50 years of Army aviation experience.

“When a young 19 or 20-year-old Soldier sees a 50-year-old sergeant major wandering around they say ‘that old man doesn’t know anything about the Army today ... what he knew 20 or 30 years ago is obsolete;’ but it’s not,” said Kennedy. “We still use those same tactics and procedures from back then, because all those things are standard.”

And like their officer counterparts, the command sergeants major don’t just fly once and a while to get flight-pay, Kennedy and Cuomo are incorporated in the flight schedule and act as replacements when an additional crew chief or door gunner is needed for a mission.

“If a Soldier gets medically grounded, or can’t fly for whatever reason, they come to (us) to fill-in for them; we do that on a regular basis,” said Cuomo.

Even though he outranks all the crew chiefs and door gunners he works with, Kennedy says, he doesn’t expect to be treated any differently when it comes to the mission.

“(As leaders), we should follow the standard harder and set the example truer,” he said. “If I’m cut some slack on any section, or piece of that mission, then the other Soldiers should be cut slack too.”

“When you’re part of an aircrew, you all have the same level of responsibility and if one member of the crew starts to slack it puts everyone’s life at risk,” said Cuomo.

Being such a “seasoned aviator” has its advantages and disadvantages, said Kennedy.

“I guess rumor has it, that since I’m 51, I’m a little slower getting in and out of the window,” he said. “That may be true, but as far as (scanning my sector) and getting out there doing preflight checks and maintenance, I’m right up there with the 19-year-olds.”

Even though their “Be Know Do” leadership technique may take a little more effort than it used to, Kennedy and Cuomo say they hope to motivate Soldiers by helping shoulder the workload and letting them know the standards must be kept; regardless of the Soldier’s rank.



# Do your part to stop complacency from spreading

Story by Master Sgt. Jef Fisher and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Curtis Bell

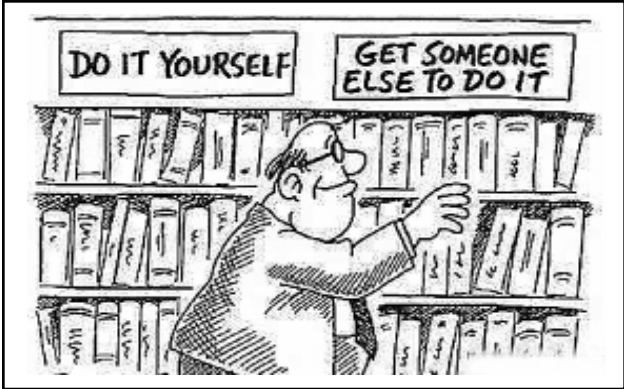
Here’s a little sociology experiment you can try on your own. Walk up to any given group of people and proclaim “It sure is hot!” Chances are, somebody’s going to tell you “Wait a while, it’ll get hotter.”

Fact is, 10 months into a deployment to a country Americans have been in for five years, and counting, means most of us have experienced an Iraqi summer.

We’ve seen all the seasons and done all the drills; that experience has made us into battle-hardened veterans who know how to handle a tough situation and who barely flinch at the sight of a camel spider.

Unfortunately, it’s also caused us to be a little less cautious. I’m sure you’ve been warned about complacency so many times, the word has lost its meaning. It’s somehow morphed from a concept to some intangible disease.

“What happened to Johnson?”



“He got complacent ... poor guy never even saw it coming.”

And as much as we talk about it and try to avoid it, inevitably it affects all of us. For example, when’s the last time you cleaned your weapon? Go ahead, pull your bolt back and see what you find.

For that matter, when’s the last time you backed a vehicle without a ground guide, or drove a little faster than you were supposed to on the flight line? And while we’re on the subject, when’s the last time you saw somebody else doing

those things, and ignored it?

Safety’s easy ... or at least in theory it’s easy. The trouble is, as the deployment drags by and we start to feel like we’ve got it all under control, sometimes the safest way to do something yields to the most convenient way.

Things just seem different now than when we first got here. Used to be eye protection on the flight line seemed crucial. We wouldn’t even dream of stepping out without it. Camel spiders and scorpions use to be kind of scary. Now people are trying to teach them tricks.

Let’s not make too much out of it; so far our safety record has been very good. It’s not exactly an epidemic, but it only takes one rock in the eye, or one nasty bite from a camel spider to change your life forever ... and it happens just that quickly.

Just remember, if it was important when we got here, it’s important now. Stay cool, stay hydrated and stay safe!

## Why I Serve: Teacher enlists in Army to provide better life for Family

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – More than 10 years ago, Staff Sgt. Maranata Temese was an elementary school teacher living in American Samoa with his wife, Leaiseaiga, and their three children. Wanting to provide a better life for his Family, he decided to join the military but there was one problem ... he was not a U.S. citizen.

American Samoa is a U.S. territory and its natives have the same U.S. rights and privileges as natives of Guam and Puerto Rico; Temese, however, was born in the independent country of Samoa but his wife and children were born in American Samoa.

“When I walked into the recruiting office, to ask if I could join the Army, I even told them my wife was a U.S. citizen,” said Temese, a platoon sergeant in Company G, Task Force XII. “The recruiter, knowing that I

was from Samoa, told me no, I cannot join the Army; it was because of (biased views) held by some people born in American Samoa against people born in Samoa.”

His desire to provide a better life for his Family through service in the military was now fueled by a determination to prove his recruiter wrong, he said.

Temese’s next step was to write a letter to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and find out what he needed to do to join the Army.

“The USCIS wrote me back and told me the process I needed to follow (to get a Visa) since I was married to a U.S. citizen,” he said. “After I filled out all the paperwork, and they accepted my application, I received a quota number and I was now able to move to the U.S. and live.”

Instead of moving to the U.S., Temese took his paperwork and went back to that same recruiting station to see the recruiter who told him he couldn’t join the Army because he wasn’t a citizen.

“Now that I had a (Visa) they wanted to help me,” said Temese. “After (the recruiter) made a few phone calls, he said ‘you can join the military’ and I

told him I’d be more than happy to join.”

He enlisted as a light wheeled vehicle mechanic and deployed a few years later in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. By then his Family had grown from three children to six children, and he had provided a better life for his Family, but he was still not a citizen.

“Every time we went to the airport I got stopped because of my island passport,” he said. “My wife got tired of waiting with the kids while I got checked, and she finally said “this has got to stop; you need to get your citizenship and a U.S. passport.”

To make this happen, Temese contacted the Immigration and Nationalization Services but they told him he needed to travel to New York to process his request. This was a difficult task considering he had just begun his second deployment; so he decided to talk to his chain of command and Task Force XII’s top enlisted Soldier, Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, to get help.

“While I was in Kuwait, waiting to enter Iraq, I saw (Kennedy) and explained my situation to him,” he said. “As soon as I asked for his help, he took out a piece of paper and pen and promised he



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

**CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Maranata Temese, a platoon sergeant in Company G, Task Force XII, waits to receive his Certificate of Naturalization during a Multi-National Corps – Iraq Naturalization Ceremony held on Camp Victory April 12.**

would help make this happen for me; he was really on top of things.”

With a little persistence, and a lot of help from Soldiers working the Task Force XII Legal Office, Kennedy kept his promise. Temese was one of several Soldiers in Task Force XII to become a citizen during a Multi-National Corps – Iraq Naturalization Ceremony held on Camp Victory April 12. (see Page 12)

“(Temese) is a very special Soldier and it was a real privilege to watch him walk across that stage and become a U.S. citizen,” said Kennedy.

“I know that by (serving in the Army) I am helping my country of Samoa be a better place because the U.S. always tries to fight for little people who get overlooked; just like my tiny island,” said Temese.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Maranata Temese, a platoon sergeant in Company G, Task Force XII, poses for a picture near his company’s sign.**





Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Sgt. Courtney Canterbury (front seat) raises his right hand while he is administered the reenlistment oath by Lt. Col. Todd Royar, the 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment commander.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Pfc. Andrew McMinn (center) and Sgt. Jesse Williamson, pose with senior enlisted leaders in Task Force XII after winning the brigade's Noncommissioned Officer/Soldier of the Quarter Board.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Spc. Sang Huynh, a cable systems installer and maintainer in Company C, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, works with civilian contractors remove the twisted and unused telephone lines.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Lt. Col. Scott Williams, the Task Force XII deputy commander, holds a cake made to help celebrate his promotion. Williams also received the Master Aviator Badge minutes before his promotion.



Courtesy Photo

Sgt. Misty Coggins, the supply noncommissioned officer for Headquarter and Headquarter Company, Task Force XII, sits on an artillery gun before her reenlistment ceremony.



Courtesy Photo

Two UH-60 Black Hawk flight crews pass each other near Baghdad's famed "Crossed Sabers," which are located inside the International Zone. These sabers are one of the most recognized structures in the country.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Spc. Tom Belew, an AH-64D Apache Longbow maintainer in 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, conducts critical nighttime maintenance on an Apache that recently returned from a mission.



# A moment with the Chaplain

## Prioritizing how we spend our time

By Chaplain (Maj.) David G. Waweru

I want to share some insights from an excerpt of an article written by Col. Mark Blum for a publication on Fort Sill, Okla., a few years ago talking about some of the things he'd have done different.

Blum was a regular at my weekly worship services at Old Post Chapel; he helped us to look at the important things in our lives as we balance careers in arms and raising a Family. I cannot put it better than he did:

*I'd leave work every day by 1800, if at all possible, and earlier if I could. We work from before our children go to school until after they go to bed at night sometimes when they're small. How many hours might I have spent with them in the evening if I'd realized the chance doesn't come around again?*

*I'd save less money and have more fun. I think I'd take more long summer vacations to really memorable places with the kids instead of making the PCS move part of the vacation. I'd make it a priority for them to see their grandparents more often, regardless of where we lived.*

*I'd be more selective about the social engagements I accepted, even if it was "expected" that I attend. My kids "expected" that I'd be with them too, and I don't*



*recall any banquets where my presence determined the outcome of the evening. Sometimes I made the wrong choice.*

*I would pay more attention to which teachers my children had and less attention to the grades they made. I'd be more help on school projects and less irritated when they brought one to me for help at the last minute. I get things every day at work at the last minute, for a lot of reasons. I would be more understanding that*

*it happens to kids too.*

*I'd go to all the PTA meetings, not just some, and every sports game they played. In retrospect, I missed a few games for poor reasons, and I wish I hadn't. They won't ever occur again.*

*I'd leave more of my problems at work, and when I walked through the door at night I'd be more absorbed in their worlds. I could have thought about most of those problems after they went to bed.*

*I'd throw a Frisbee more often with the kids and do less yard work. I can rake leaves anytime. We'd clean the house less and spend more time messing it up doing fun stuff. I'd never again lose a day of annual leave. One year I lost 24 days – what a waste.*

Blum goes on to list three rules to determine the difference between "important" and "urgent." To him, an event is important if:

1. It is important to someone who's important to you.
2. Your personal presence makes a difference.
3. The opportunity is not going to come around again.

I hope that we all can learn the difference between "important" and "urgent" as we spend time with our own Families. If deployment teaches us anything, it's that our time together is precious. Use it wisely.

## Apache mechanics crank up aircraft maintenance

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - It's a domino effect of sorts. A sudden spike in violence in Basra and Baghdad meant more Soldiers on the ground quickly found themselves involved in kinetic operations.

Kinetic operations on the ground meant more AH-64 attack helicopter pilots in the air. For a two week period, the pilots of Task Force XII found themselves engaging enemy fighters with precision lethal force, and pushing their aircraft to the limits in the process.

"It's what we all expected coming to Iraq," said brigade executive officer, Lt. Col. Charles Bowery, an Apache pilot who, like many other pilots, was pressed into flying more hours to sustain the increase in tempo. "I think the greatest strain (with the increased number of

aircraft flying) is on the maintenance side of the house."

The maintainers, working quietly in the shadows of a highly publicized flurry of activity, say they definitely feel the effects. And while the violence in the streets has quelled considerably, the effects of increased flight hours still linger in the aircraft hangars.

"We work two 12-hour shifts," said Columbia, S.C. native, Pfc. Jemario Laurie, an aircraft maintainer working with Troop T, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. "Usually, either in the morning or at night, the shifts kind of merge while we get caught up."

Most of the increased maintenance is routine for the aircraft. All helicopters have scheduled maintenance, but as the hours increase, so does the frequency of the schedule.

But like any vehicle, the more you fly a helicopter, the more likely it is that a part is going to need replacement.

"It's a different kind of maintenance," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Gunderson, a maintenance supervisor from Pasco, Wash. "These guys are used to preventive maintenance. It's changed some to actually fixing stuff."

Gunderson, also part of Troop T., 4/3 ACR, is on his third deployment to Iraq. He says he's used to the aircraft he's worked on seeing more action. The challenge for him has been getting the newer Soldiers ready during the relative calm in the months leading up to this spike of activity.

"The busier you get, the less time you have to talk to them about the importance of the work they do and the impact of what's happening," he said. "That's

when we hope that what we've said before actually sank in."

The maintainers do take the time to look at the big picture. Every week, the troop commander and first sergeant brief the Soldiers to ensure they let the wrench-turners know exactly where these aircraft have been and what they've been doing. A quick glance at a dry-erase board in the hangar lets any mem-

ber of the ground crews know how many missions their aircraft have flown, and how many enemies were destroyed as a result.

"I'm very proud to have a part in the impact of these Apaches," said Laurie.

The dominos haven't stopped falling yet. For the time being, the tempo remains high as air weapons teams continue to patrol the skies over Baghdad.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Aviation maintainer, Pfc. Jemario Laurie begins to reassemble a portion of an AH-64 Apache Longbow attack helicopter after replacing a transmission.



# Brothers reunite after years of separation

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Throughout their military careers, Staff Sgt. Shane Hansen and his brother, Sgt. 1st Class Zane Hansen, have always been on opposite sides of the world.

Over the years, the combination of both brothers getting married, having children and being stationed in different places has reduced the number of chances they saw one another. But an unexpected mission change, combined with a little good fortune, brought these brothers together in Iraq.

Shane, who is stationed in Katterbach, Germany, deployed to Logistical Support Area Anaconda in July; Zane, who is stationed in Fort Hood, Texas, learned his unit would also deploy to Iraq in November.

When Task Force XII received the mission of becoming the aviation task force

for Multi-National Division – Baghdad, in November, the Hansen brothers found their first opportunity to be stationed together.

“I was excited when I found out we would be here together because the last time I saw (Zane), before this deployment, was at our parents’ house in August of 2004,” said Shane, a section sergeant in Company D, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. “We usually get to see each other about once every five years.”

Even though the brothers, natives of Wichita, Kan., live and work less than a half a mile away from each other, they still remain worlds apart.

“Right now I’m working night shift and (Shane) works day shift; it seems like every time my shift changes so does his,” said Zane, a platoon sergeant in Troop T, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. “Since we’ve been stationed here together, we’ve only seen each other about three or four times.”

Their Families have mixed feelings about them being stationed together.

“Our wives are happy that we are stationed here together because they feel we have someone to talk to,” said Shane, a UH-60 Black Hawk maintainer. “Our parents don’t like the idea of us being here together because if something happens, it might happen to both of us; but our older sister isn’t too worried about us being here.”

Both brothers are on their second deployment; Zane previously deployed to Bosnia and Shane to Afghanistan. Zane, being the oldest, joined the Army a little more than a year before Shane, and since then they have always been on opposite

sides of the world.

“When I joined the Army, in 1994, I got stationed in Korea,” said Zane, an AH-64D Apache Longbow maintainer. “When he joined the Army and got stationed in Hawaii, I was stationed in the states.”

Communicating with each other was difficult for the first couple of years because there was not internet; but now it’s definitely gotten a lot better, said Shane.

Zane has always been in aviation, but Shane started his military career as a signal Soldier.

“I really didn’t like that job, and Zane would always tell me about his job and all of the cool things he did,” said Shane.

Their grandfathers were also in the military and both served during World War II. Their father also served in the Army; he joined shortly after the Vietnam War.

Growing up, they say, they had plenty of good times mixed with a little bit of mischief. Although they try to stay professional, and call each other “Sergeant Hansen” when around other Soldiers, childhood memories sometimes resurface.

“All of (Zane’s) Soldiers want to know about him,” said Shane. “Every once and a while one of them will come up to me and ask me questions about him and I’ll give them a tidbit of information about some of the things he did growing up.”

Shane has been selected for promotion to sergeant first class and, he says, in the future he would like to be stationed back in the U.S.; and, of course, Zane says he and his wife are discussing the idea of asking to go to Europe.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Shane Hansen (left), a section sergeant in Company D, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, poses for a picture with his older brother, Sgt. 1st Class Zane Hansen, a platoon sergeant in Troop T, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.

## Ask the JAG ... how to change your name

By The Task Force XII Legal Office

Have you ever thought about changing your name? Any person may change his or her name as long as the change is not for a fraudulent purpose.

Reasons for a name change are varied and personal. However, if you want to make it “legal” you will have to go through a court in the U.S. and file a formal petition for name change.

You must determine which court has jurisdiction for the name change petition. Generally this is determined by your legal residency. If you are in Germany, you still must go through the appropriate state court.

You can represent yourself or you can retain an attorney in the U.S. If you decide to represent yourself, you can write to the Clerk of Court where you want to file your petition and request sample pleadings and requirements.

**Many Soldiers wonder whether or not they can revert to their maiden name after going through a divorce.** It is a simple matter, during your divorce proceedings, to request the court to restore your maiden name. The court can

include such an order in your divorce decree. If you are divorced and did not get such an order, you must go back to the court where you were divorced and ask for the divorce decree to be amended or file a petition for name change in the appropriate court of your state of residence.

**You can collect government benefits under your new name.** Many government benefit programs, like Social Security, require a court order approving the name change or require the change complies with the applicable state law (such as an administrative procedure).

**The Army has special requirements for changing your name.** These requirements are outlined and can be found in Army Regulation 600-8-104 Military Personnel Information Management/Records. These requirements are in addition to the requirement to have your name changed through marriage, divorce decree, or court order. After you have had your name changed by marriage, divorce decree, or court order, you will have to bring a properly filled out DA Form 4187 and marriage certificate, divorce decree,

or court order to your PAC or S1 Office in order for the Army to change your name within the EMILPO system.

**You can find more information regarding the name change laws for your state at:**

<http://namechangelaw.com/states.htm> - Contains information on name change law by state.

<http://www.ssa.gov/online/ss-5.html> - Contains information on changing the name on your Social Security Card.

As always, if you have any questions or need further advice, feel free to contact the Legal Office.



The staff of the Task Force XII Legal Office.



# On the Home Front



Courtesy Photo  
Rear-Detachment Soldiers for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, Spc. Claudette Gonzalez and Pfc. Edmund Molina, package one of the 20 boxes filled with recreational equipment and games that were sent to deployed Soldiers in 12th CAB.



Photo by Jim Hughes  
The Ansbach High School students who attended the Department of Defense Dependent Schools-Europe Future Business Leaders of America conference, in Garmisch in late February, watch as Janet Cook, teacher and Ansbach FBLA chapter adviser, works on a computer.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.  
Jennifer Hansen (center), a third grade teacher at Ansbach Elementary School, leads her students in an exercise program as part of the community's Walk to Iraq and Back program.



Photo by Rabia Nombamba  
Sgt. Fred Campbell, lab technician with the Armed Service Blood Bank Center Europe, fills out paperwork as Sgt. Leonora Taygart, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, gives blood at the community's blood drive in Katterbach.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.  
The Illesheim Army health care providers hosted a dinner April 3 on Storck Barracks to show appreciation to their local national counterparts who help form a team to ensure Storck Barracks Soldiers and Families get topnotch health care.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.  
Juergen Stoehr, USAG Ansbach Environmental Office, explains the container SORT game rules to Kayla Hilliard and Allexys Simerly, fifth graders at Illesheim Elementary School before the recycling competition begins.



# Task Force XII Soldiers officially become U.S. citizens after MNCI Naturalization Ceremony

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The dream of becoming a U.S. citizen finally became a reality for several Task Force XII Soldiers after a Multi-National Corps – Iraq Naturalization Ceremony held on Camp Victory April 12.

The ceremony was conducted in the lavish Al-Faw Palace and allowed 259 service members, from all branches of the military, to become U.S. citizens.

“I can’t think of a better use of the Al-Faw Palace than to naturalize fellow servicemen and women fighting in support of the United States of America,” said Lt. Gen Lloyd Austin III, the commander of MNC-I. “Saddam Hussein built this palace to celebrate his victory over Iran in regaining the Faw Peninsula; and today we use it to celebrate our brothers and sisters gaining their citizenship.”

The Oath of Citizenship was administered to these service members, who came from 71 different countries, by

John Lafferty, the director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Thanks to all the hard work and effort put forth by the USCIS team, this was the largest naturalization ceremony ever held outside the U.S., said Austin.

Staff Sgt. Maranata Temese, who was born in Samoa, was one of the Soldiers in Task Force XII who became a citizen during the ceremony. (see Page 7)

“The feeling you get when they call your name, and you become a citizen, just makes everything we’re doing (here in Iraq) worth fighting for; especially when you turn around and look at the faces of your fellow (service members) standing there to support you,” said Temese, a platoon sergeant in Company G, Task Force XII.

Before the ceremony concluded, the new U.S. citizens recited the Pledge of Allegiance and listened to a message from President George W. Bush.

“For all of you, the Oath of Citizenship is more than a formality and today America is more than your home; it’s your country,” said Bush. “This is one of the things that makes our country so unique; with a single oath, all at once you become as fully American as the most direct descendant of a founding father.”



CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – Lt. Gen Lloyd Austin III, the commander of Multi-National Corps – Iraq, address service member during a Multi-National Corps – Iraq Naturalization Ceremony held on Camp Victory April 12.

## The Griffin Brigade Chronicles: History of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade (Part 9)

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



The 12th Aviation Brigade and its subordinate battalions are no strangers to operations in the Middle East - they played a big part in our first operations in the region, during Operations Desert

Shield / Desert Storm in 1990-1991.

The Griffin Brigade, which deployed to Saudi Arabia in August 1990, was composed of its Headquarters Company, 5-6 Cavalry, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation, and a battalion-sized element known as Task Force Warrior, composed of several general support and assault helicopter companies.

The Griffins departed Germany soon

after they received an alert message Aug. 13. They were joined in theater by an Air Force Tactical Air Control Party (TACP), an Aviation Intermediate Maintenance element, and a ground maintenance element. Initially attached to the 101st Airborne Division for the defense of Kuwait, these aviators became a separate brigade under XVIII Airborne Corps for the ground offensive, Operation Desert Storm. During the 100-hour ground war, the Griffin Brigade flew more than 400 hours in support of coalition forces on the far western flank of the Allied advance, the famous “left hook.”

They participated in Operation Stalker, the insertion of special operations forces over 150 miles behind enemy lines. Brigade elements also conducted hasty and deliberate attacks while moving hundreds of tons of supplies and hundreds of personnel around the battlefield.

Other current elements of the 12th

CAB participated in the Gulf War as well. Our two Attack Reconnaissance Battalions, 2-159th and 3-159th, formerly 6-6 Cavalry and 2-6 Cavalry respectively, deployed to the Gulf region at separate times.

The 2-6 Cavalry “Fighting Sixth” flew three combat missions during the ground war, earning a Valorous Unit Award in the process. The 6-6 Cavalry “Six Shooters” deployed to Northern Iraq after the cease-fire as part of Operation Provide Comfort, and conducted an unprecedented self-deployment of more than 3,000 miles from Illesheim to Kurdistan.

They helped provide aviation support to humanitarian assistance operations against Saddam Hussein. Overall, the period August 1990-October 1991 added more evidence of the skill, combat readiness, and flexibility of Griffin Brigade Soldiers and their Families.

See you next month!



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