



Volume 2, Issue 5

“WINGS OF VICTORY!”

MAY 2008

# Task Force XII on the move again

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Multi-National Division – Baghdad’s current aviation brigade, Task Force XII, will move again to support a realignment of aviation assets in Iraq beginning in early summer.

According to the plan, approved by MNC-I Commander, Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin III, the moves will occur in late June and into July as 4th Infantry Division’s Combat Aviation Brigade moves into Camp Taji to assume the role as the MND-B aviation brigade.

12th Combat Aviation Brigade was originally deployed to Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Balad in the summer of 2007, and was subsequently ordered to relocate elements of the CAB to Camp Taji in December, 2007.

Task Force XII at Taji is comprised of about 700 Soldiers from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade at Balad, 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, which deployed in November, 2007 from Fort Hood, Texas, and Company F, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment from Fort. Campbell, Ky.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF XII will return to Balad airbase to reassume the role of command element for MNC-I aviation assets.

Other elements of TF XII, currently assigned to Camp Taji, including 4/3 ACR, much of 3-158th AHB and the forward logistics element from 412th ASB will relocate to Baghdad International Airport to support Multi-National Division-Central.

They will replace 3rd Infantry Division’s Combat Aviation Brigade, which deployed in May, 2007 as part of a highly publicized surge.

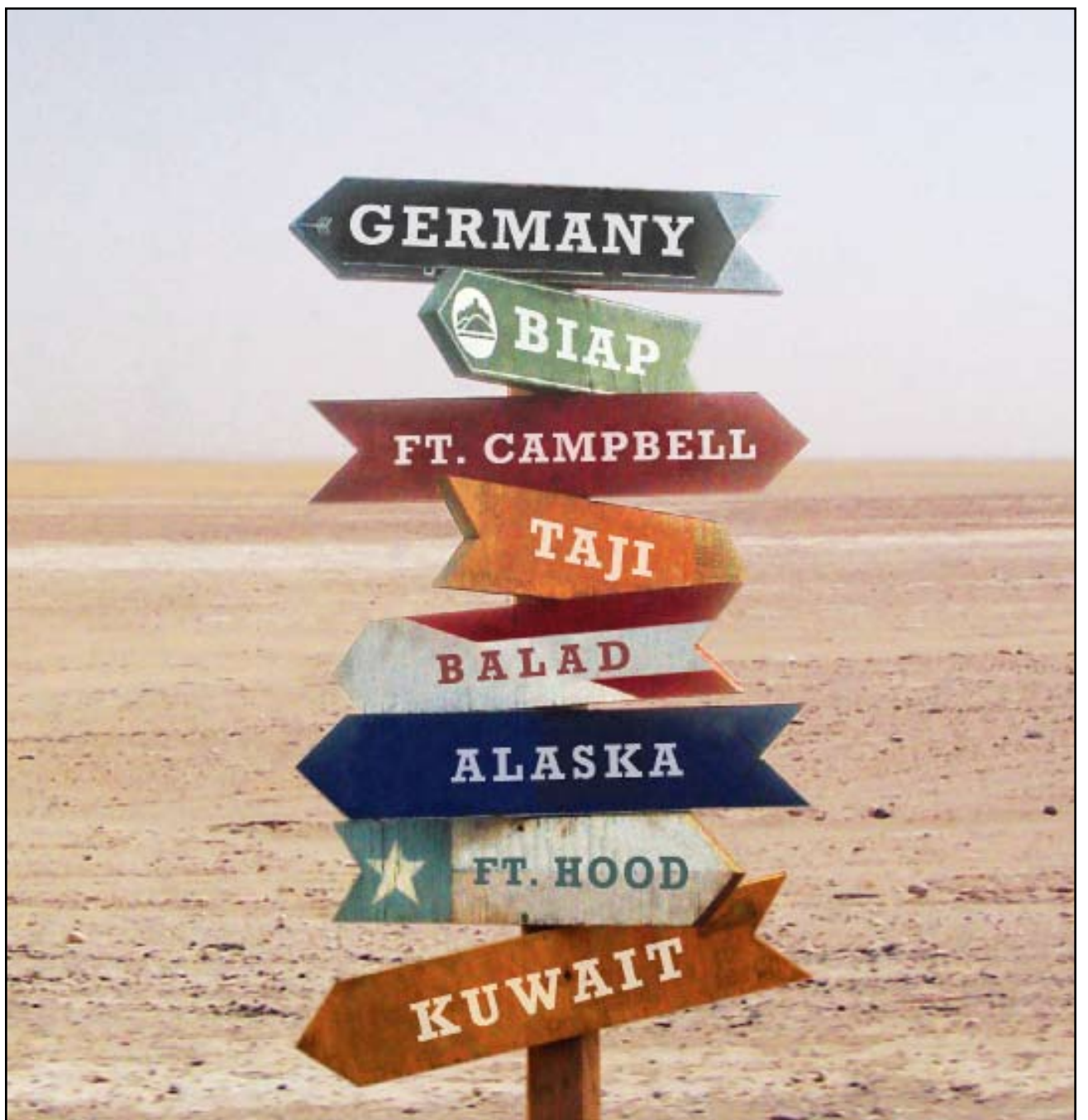


Illustration by Cpl. Travis Turner

**Task Force XII will move again to support a realignment of aviation assets in Iraq beginning in early summer. This will be the third move for many Soldiers just months prior to redeployment.**

Also joining those Soldiers in MND-C will be HHC, Task Force 49, currently serving as the aviation command element at LSA Anaconda, Balad.

The task force air traffic services company, Co. F, 7-101st Aviation Regiment, will return to Fort Campbell, and 12th CAB Soldiers assigned to the task force tactical unmanned aerial vehicle

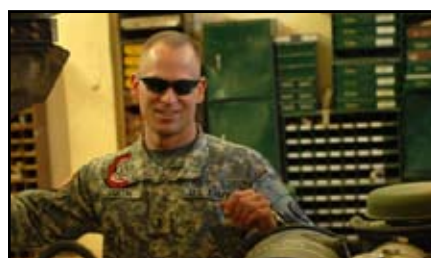
company, Co. G, TF XII, will remain at Camp Taji until August, when they will move into Kuwait.

All units assigned to U.S. Army Europe’s 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, regardless of location in theater, are currently scheduled to return to Europe early this fall, at the end of their 15-month tours in Iraq.

## Check out what’s inside ...



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ARE YOU REGISTERED?, Page 7



# Griffin 06 Sends ... chapter three begins

Soldiers and Families of Task Force XII

The front page of this month’s Griffin says it all; Task Force XII is on the move again. For many of you, including 3-158th AHB, HHC/12th CAB and the Forward Logistics Element of the 412th ASB who moved with us to Taji, this will be your third stop in Iraq during this very fluid deployment.

I have heard some equate our time in Iraq to chapters of a book, where each new move begins a new chapter.

While this is certainly not the ideal storyline for those who know the strains of moving to a new location, it is reassuring to begin what will likely be the final chapter in our combat deployment.

You can all be rightfully proud of the track record of safety and achievement now behind us, as you continue to focus and remain committed to the missions yet to come.

Clearly it is not yet time for reflection and celebration as there is still much to be done in our service to Multi-National Division-Baghdad and Multi-National Corps-Iraq.

If you continue the high standard you have set thus far, we will look back on this final chapter of the deployment with a great sense of accomplishment. If we get caught looking too far ahead, at the expense of the mission at hand, we risk failure.

That failure could not only be in the mission in support of our brothers and sisters on the ground, but in the mission we have to each other to insure we’ve



done all in our power to return safely to our Families back home.

Complacency and lack of respect for the dangers inherent in all we are doing is still a greater threat to that mission, than our elusive enemies here in Iraq.

If you are among the majority of the current TF XII Soldiers at Taji, who will move to BIAP, I assure you that you will be in good hands.

COL Skip Sherrell and the staff of Task Force 49 have their own impressive set of achievements leading Griffin Soldiers at Balad, and that will surely continue at BIAP.

For those same Griffin Soldiers at

Balad, we look forward to rejoining the 12th CAB “Griffin” Family.

For those of you who will move back to Balad, you already know the challenges we face. I’m confident that you’ll continue to do well during your 4th, 5th and finally 6th relief in place processes to close out this deployment.

With that said, I want to stress one more message to you: We will do everything in our power to set up our successors at Taji for success.

As the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade moves in to take on this vital mission, I want them to have every opportunity to succeed immediately.

Ensure that what we are passing along to them is the best system, facility, or product that we can give them. Their success here will become our legacy with MND-B.

Finally, to the Families at Fort Hood, Fort Campbell and in Germany – I again ask for your continued patience and support. If you’ve been through a move already, you know the stress of changing battle rhythms, phone and internet access and yet another mailing address.

With each new challenge comes yet another opportunity for success that I am certain these great Soldiers and Families will conquer together.

Thank you again for all that you do for our country and our Army.

“Wings of Victory!”

Col. Timothy Edens  
Commander, Task Force XII

## Command Sergeant Major’s Corner

Hello Griffin Families and friends,

It’s great to be back amongst the barrel-chested, steely-eyed killers of Task Force XII. I won’t lie to you, I enjoyed every minute of my R&R leave this month (though my wife says I spent more time at work than I should have), but there’s something about being with these Soldiers that just feels right.

I want to thank Command Sgt. Maj. Cuomo for filling in for me while I was gone. To be honest with you, I was kind of worried about leaving back in early May. CSM Cuomo kept me in the loop during my absence, and did a great job.

If you haven’t been home for a while, you should know that your Families are doing great back in Germany, and they can’t wait to see you. While I was there, they broke a world record for support. Almost 1400 Griffin Families and friends showed up in Illesheim to make the World’s largest yellow ribbon formation. I couldn’t be prouder.

Also, while I was home, I was stopped by a few wives who all had the same question: “Are you taking care of my husband?”

I usually told them that I was trying my hardest. The real answer, though,

is that these guys are taking care of me, and more importantly they’re taking care of each other. We have achieved some really amazing things down here, and most of it is because of the quality of the Soldiers assembled in this brigade and in this Task Force.

No matter how many missions we’ve flown, or how many insurgents we’ve stopped, my favorite statistic is the number of major accidents we’ve seen: Zero.

We’re the first aviation brigade to come down here and not have a major mishap in the first six months. Amazing!

As we get ready to move again, I want to challenge you all to keep up the great work - here in Iraq and back at home. Four months doesn’t sound like much time, but I’m here to tell you, the last four months can sometimes be the longest.

The last weekend in May is Memorial Day. I hope that you take the time to recognize this as more than just another holiday. This is YOUR holiday. It honors Soldiers and Families, just like you, who have sacrificed over the years, and have endured the wars of our nations to keep our great country free. Each and every one of you is part of that legacy.



Keep sending care packages, keep talking on the phone, and keep loving each other. We’ll all be back together soon enough, but there’s still some work to do. After 11 months of being deployed with this group, I know you can do it.

Wings of Victory!  
CSM H. Lee Kennedy,  
Command Sgt. Maj., Task Force XII



# 12th CAB supporters break record with ‘largest yellow ribbon’

Story by Rabia Nombamba, USAG Ansbach PAO

ILLESHEIM, Germany - Friends and Families of Soldiers deployed with the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade have provided record-breaking support.

On the evening of May 14, 1,385 Soldiers, Family members, civilians and local nationals of the Ansbach military community came together to set the unofficial armed forces record for the largest yellow ribbon formation.

The previous record of approximately 800 people was set by the Marines at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., in October 2005. The unofficial record is not registered with Guinness World Record.

Set up by the U.S. Army Garrison Ansbach, the Yellow Ribbon formation event featured a concert by country and western performer Granger Smith, prize drawings, children activities and food sales.

Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (FMWR) staff handed out free yellow T-shirts to Soldiers, Family members

and friends, civilians and local nationals as they lined up at approximately 5:45 p.m. to set up for the large yellow ribbon formation.

According to Dan Riley, Ansbach’s director of FMWR, the event is a way to thank the military Families for their commitment and increasing sacrifices as their Soldiers continue to perform their varied missions in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

“It’s about the community, getting the community together and of course about the soldiers who are deployed and are getting deployed,” added Case Malloy, FMWR recreation division chief.

The opportunity to come together and show unified support to their soldiers deployed in harms way was enthusiastically embraced by the entire community.

“The Yellow Ribbon event sort of gives us an opportunity to get together and show our support, not only of our spouses down range, but also of each other. That we’re here for each other, we come together when



ILLESHEIM, Germany – On the evening of May 14, 1,385 Soldiers, Family members, civilians and local national of the Ansbach military community set the armed forces record for the largest yellow ribbon formation at Storck Barracks.

we need to, and we help take care of each other. This is one of the big events that brings us together. It’s like one more milestone towards getting through the end of deployment. It was great, I loved it! I think it’s fantastic,” said Leeann Swartz, whose husband is currently deployed with 5-158th Aviation Regiment.

“This is amazing. About 1,400 people come out from one community. This is the biggest thing in our life ... people are here about the troops who are downrange right now. We support them 100 percent in any way and form that we can,” said Cpl. Ryan Cimbalevich, of Company D, 412th Aviation Support Battalion.

## Task Force Storm fuel handlers pass the one million gallon mark

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – To the untrained eye, pumping fuel seems like a relatively harmless activity. But pumping a million gallons in under four months, without accident, is a pretty big deal.

The Soldiers of the distribution platoon, Company E. 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment took over the mission Dec. 19, and by early April, had already pumped a million gallons of fuel.

Their commanders say they’ve done it without spilling a drop.

“It’s just a tremendous effort out here, and I’d say the most impressive

part of all is that they’ve done it safely,” said battalion commander, Lt. Col. Jay Macklin of Macon, Ga. “These guys are out here, usually before the blades stop spinning, ready to fuel ... This is a very mission-focused group and I’m real proud of them.”

The platoon is responsible for “cold-refueling.” While aircraft often fuel at forward arming and refuel points (FARP) with the rotors spinning - known as “hot-refueling,” much of the fuel is distributed with the engines turned off.

“A lot of times it’s more efficient to come and shut down and get ‘cold gas’



CAMP TAJI, Iraq – TF Storm Commander, Lt. Col. Jay Macklin congratulates Soldiers of distribution platoon, Co. E, 3-158th AHB. The Soldiers have pumped more than a million gallons of fuel since arriving at Camp Taji in December.

as opposed to burning more blade hours sitting on a hot FARP if you’re finished with your mission,” said Macklin.

“It’s a constant hustle out here,” said distribution platoon sergeant, and Columbia S.C. native, Sgt. 1st Class Dorian Green. “We work 12-hour shifts, 24 hours per day. In a typical day, we’ll fill anywhere from 80 to 110 aircraft.”

In a ceremony to recognize the one million gallon mark, Task Force XII Commander, Col. Timothy Edens honored the Soldiers and passed out Task Force XII commemorative coins to four of the best.

He thanked them for their efforts, reminding them of just how important their work is to the brigade.

Without these guys, said Edens, all the aircraft on Taji would be nothing but a huge static display.

## Task Force Storm photographer wins top honors



Staff Sgt. Derrick Mims of Company D, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment took first place in the 2007 Army Aviation Association of America photo contest for his photo of two Co. A, 3-158 Soldiers fireguarding their aircraft. Placing third was 1st Lt. Jeff Gaines of 12th CAB’s Co. A, 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment at Balad.





Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Sgt. Enrique Ramos-Melendez, a member of HHC, TF XII, addresses his fellow Soldiers prior to reenlisting May 16. Ramos-Melendez was joined, via video teleconference, by his wife Dalila and son Lael from Katterbach, Germany.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Col. Michael Bills, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment Commander (right), pins a master aviator badge on the chest of 4th "Longknife" Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Todd Royar May 4.



Photo by Master Sgt. Jef Fisher

Capt. Wes Nall, the Task Force XII automations officer, entertains Soldiers on the roof of the brigade ALOC during the weekly Karaoke night May 24.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Gen. Benjamin Griffin, the Army Materiel Commander (left) presents an Army Achievement Medal to Spc. Rudolfo Vasquez, a member of Co. E, 3-158th AHB May 22.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Capt. Ronald Brown, incoming Commander of Troop S, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment addresses a crowd at a change of command ceremony May 16.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Pfc. Sialei Tapusini, a member of HHC, Task Force XII participates in a Samoan dance as part of an Asian Pacific American Heritage celebration sponsored by Hawaiian-based 2nd SBCT, 25th Infantry Division May 23.



Photo by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flies over a rural area west of Baghdad on its way to Camp Taji May 14. The helicopter is assigned to Task Force Storm, and flies throughout Multi-National Division - Baghdad.



# Soldier fought to deploy to Iraq

## Longknife Squadron maintenance tech deploys despite his medical condition and regular treatment schedule

Story by Sgt. 1st Class  
Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – “Chief, what the heck are you doing?”

Chief Warrant Officer Christian Smith, a maintenance technician who had just tripped and fallen to the ground, looked up at his confused motor sergeant.

Smith, who hails from Villa Grove, Ill., but was on a deployment to Iraq, had fallen a lot lately. Something was wrong with his left leg, and he didn’t know what – all he knew was that it made him fall.

“I don’t know,” said Smith. “I just fell. It happens all the time.”

“Well next time, yell ‘incoming’ and I’ll go down with you,” said the sergeant.

The year was 2003. Smith was deployed with a military police brigade; and over the course of the deployment, he noticed his muscles growing alarmingly weaker.

“It was very humbling to say the least,” said Smith. “There wasn’t much I could do about it then, but I knew that once I got back from (Iraq) I was going to have to go see a doctor and find out what was going on.”

In February, 2005, after multiple visits to doctors, Smith underwent surgery for a herniated disc in his back to help relieve pressure on what his doctor thought was a pinched nerve. It didn’t help. By this time, he couldn’t move the toes of his left foot, and he continued to grow weaker.

Still more visits to more doctors led him to a neurologist. Late September, 2005, he was diagnosed with multifocal motor neuropathy.

“It’s a condition where my body thinks there’s something wrong with the nerves,” said Smith. “It’s attacking my nerves, and it doesn’t allow good conduction for

the signals that tell the muscles to move. But there’s treatment for it.”

He began treatments right away. Every three weeks, he got an intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG) treatment, administered at a local hospital. By this time, Smith’s unit was on mobilization orders for deployment, but he was scheduled to stay with the rear detachment.

“Within four or five days, I started noticing a lot more strength, and by 10 days after that, I could wiggle my toes and keep my left foot up,” he said. “I went back to the unit and told them the treatment was working. At that point it was a matter of how the Army medical system was going

to handle this.”

The unit deployed. Despite his objections, Smith stayed at Fort Hood.

“The doc said, when he diagnosed me, that this is a legitimate medical condition that would definitely keep me from deploying,” he said. “He asked me why I’d want to deploy if I didn’t have to.

“It’s one of those things where, having grown up playing sports, you spend all that time practicing with a team and all of a sudden they go to an away game, out of town, and you’re stuck at home,” he added. “It’s not a good feeling.”

A year and a half later, Smith found himself facing the same situation, this time with a new team. He was newly assigned to Troop R, 4th Squadron 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, once again on orders for Iraq.

The treatments were working and Smith says he was determined not to get left behind again. He began what he called a very frustrating process to make himself deployable.

Once again, the doctors said no. Despite a medical evaluation board that found him fit for duty, a chain of emails revealed one medical professional after another who believed he had no business deploying. They cited the risk for contamination with possible secondary effects of anaphylaxis or renal failure. They said his understanding of the condition was “oversimplified.”

“My response to those emails was rather lengthy,” he said. “They thought I was oversimplifying the condition and I thought they were over exaggerating it.”

In his response he outlined his own research - discussing the shelf life of the medication, and a plan that he and unit



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Christian Smith checks over a parts tracking list for ground vehicles May 16. Smith is the squadron maintenance technician for 4th Squadron, 3d ACR. He fought for the opportunity to deploy to Iraq in November despite being diagnosed with multifocal motor neuropathy.

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# Soldier deploys despite medical condition

Continued from page 5

physician assistant, Capt. Felipe Galvan, had devised to make sure he got the treatment he needed.

“The Army is attempting and perfecting new things in the theater of operation every day,” he wrote. “Why not this?”

“I didn’t think he’d get to go based on seeing the email traffic from the doctors in theater,” said troop commander, Capt. Jeffery Hernandez. “I never tried to talk him out of it though. He had such a desire to be with the troops and support the mission.”

“You have to understand Chief,” added 1st Lt. Larry Burney, the squadron maintenance officer. “He’s the type of person who doesn’t take no for an answer when it comes to anything.”

The fight for Smith to deploy became personal for Troop R. In a situation where some would look for excuses not to go, he was fighting for a chance to serve.

Then, in August, 2007, incoming squadron surgeon, Maj. Sean Hollonbeck advised that they should cease all emails

with people who weren’t interested in a solution.

“If we couldn’t get assistance with the treatments we would do it ourselves,” said Hollonbeck. “With careful testing, we found that we could successfully administer the treatment, and recommended that he could deploy if the procedure was done in a controlled environment, and the supply was solid.”

The Army finally relented. Smith deployed to Camp Taji as part of Task Force XII, in November, 2007.

“I know it motivates me,” said Sgt. Nelson Dawson, a Soldier in Smith’s troop. “Even though he has this condition and could have stayed home with his Family, he chose to come here and be with his Soldiers. He said ‘you know what ... I can still do my job. Why can’t I go?’”

He continues his 4.5 hour treatments every third week at the aviation clinic on Camp Taji and, according to Hollonbeck, is one of the clinic’s favorite patients. So far, he says, everything has gone as planned.

“At one point during the process, I

had a doctor ask me what I wanted to get from all this,” Smith recalled. “I said ‘I want to be able to run and play basketball and do all the things I could do before.’ He said ‘you mean you plan on staying in the military?’

“I said, well yeah, if I can do all those other things, of course I want to stay in the military,” he went on. “If I wanted to get out I would have done it a long time ago, but that’s just not me.”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Chief Warrant Officer 3 Christian Smith checks on a Soldier working on a humvee May 16. Smith is the squadron maintenance technician for 4/3 ACR.**

## Medics help out on the ground

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment loads up as many medications, stuffed animals and bags of candy as they can fit into a Stryker vehicle and head out into some remote village.

They’re going on a cooperative medical engagement. Older Soldiers used to know them as medical civilian aid programs but, as with the rest of the operations in Iraq, the medics aren’t there to single-handedly rescue the civilians. Their role is to help the Iraqi doctors, already in the communities -- hence the term

“cooperative.”

Today’s mission is special for two of the medics. Despite having been in the country for several months, it’s the first time either has ventured outside the wire on their current deployment.

They work for Task Force XII. And while their mission is vital and their experience rivals that of any of their contemporaries, their job descriptions don’t often call for them to leave the base, at least not on the ground.

Task Force XII physician assistant, Capt. Joe Dominguez helped to arrange their involvement. He and the 1-27th Physician Assistant went

to school together, and saw it as a great opportunity, not only to broaden the horizons for Dominguez’s medics, but to lighten the load for the infantry medics.

“It’s an awesome opportunity for us,” said Dominguez, a native of Amarillo, Texas. “And it’s a great chance for us to help build the confidence of the Iraqi people.”

“I think it’s fun to get off the FOB,” said Spc. Holly Jackson, a medic from Task Force XII’s 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. “Instead of looking at Soldiers all the time, we actually get to see kids. If it wasn’t for this, I’d still be sitting on the FOB working sick call.”

Dominguez has participated in exercises like these before in previous deployments to Iraq. This mission though, he said, was a contrast to those he’d seen before. As Iraqi medical personnel have taken on a more active role, the missions themselves have changed.

“(Iraqi doctors) know their people,” he said. “They know what they’re

### 12th CAB docs among Army’s best in 2007

Three 12th Combat Aviation Brigade medical officers were recognized by the Society of U.S. Army Flight Surgeons as being among the best for 2007.

Capt. Joe Dominguez of HHC, Task Force XII (pictured) is the 2007 Spurgeon H. Neel U.S. Army Distinguished Flight Surgeon; Capt. Abigail Raez of 412th ASB won honors as the Theodore Lyster Flight Surgeon of the Year; and Capt. Eric Jacobsen of 5-158th GSAB won the Outstanding Achievement Award.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

**Spc. Holly Jackson gives candy to a family of Iraqis at a cooperative medical engagement April 21. Jackson is a medic in Task Force XII, but volunteered to help with the engagement. Her role was especially important to female patients.**

used to and what is okay to give them and how to approach the individuals, so they help out a lot.”

One of the lessons learned over time has been the value of bringing female medics, says Jackson, a native of Elma, Wash. Most of the women who visit the impromptu clinics consider it taboo to be examined by men, she added.

“I get to play an important role because the women want a female provider or a female medic,” she said. “If they feel like they can

actually tell us what’s wrong, we’re more likely to give them the proper treatment.”

The medical engagements have proven to be a huge force multiplier, not only helping the locals get much needed medical attention, but also providing an outlet for the infantry Soldiers who regularly patrol the areas to talk to the locals, and find out how else they can be effective in the communities.

And the medics from Task Force XII say they hope their first opportunity to help out is not their last.



# Longknife Soldier encourages others to vote

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – You get the feeling he’s done this before. Perhaps, in his past endeavors, he was soliciting votes for student body president – or even selling lemonade. Whatever the case, he was determined to get his fellow Soldiers to the polls.

On a warm day in May, 18-year-old Pfc. Nicholas Howard sat, strategically placed, at a squadron entry control point. From his position, Soldiers had to make it through him to get anywhere on the compound.

He vigorously questioned any brave passersby with enough courage to look him in the eye – “Are you registered to vote?”

“I think they picked me because I talk to anybody I see,” said Howard, a Belleville, Mich., native, and member of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, which is based out of Fort Hood,



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton  
**CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Pfc. Nicholas Howard (left), a native of Belleville, Mich., helps Staff Sgt. Jose Ramon, from San Antonio, fill out an absentee ballot request May 7. The two Soldiers are assigned to 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, which will still be serving in Iraq during the November 4 general election.**

Texas. “I’m trying to get people to sign up to vote so we can elect a great President.”

Although he said it wasn’t necessarily his idea to meet with his fellow Soldiers about their voting opportunities, he was the right person at the right place, for providing the motivation.

The leaders of the squadron recognized the need to encourage their Soldiers to sign up for their absentee ballots early so they wouldn’t miss the opportunity to play their part in this year’s general election.

Howard just happened to be the right man for the job.

“I think it’s a great idea,” said Staff Sgt. Richard Roff, a native of Morristown, N.J., who was one of several Soldiers to stop in and submit his absentee-voter packet. “He’s definitely in the right spot. Everybody who walks through here sees him.”

It’s a fairly simple process, said Howard. Any citizen stationed overseas can fill out the Standard Form 76, which is also available online at [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov).

They merely mail in the form and will get their ballot in the mail in time to vote in the Nov. 4 election.

But, he added, there’s a difference between knowing you can do it and actually getting it done.

“We can explain the process and have all the rules,” said Howard, referring to his copy of the absentee ballot guide – or what he affectionately termed his “big book of knowledge.”

“We even mail it in for them,” he added. “But if they don’t register, they can’t vote.”

As for Howard, he said he intends for his first vote, in any election, to count. In the mean time, he’ll help out the rest of the squadron voters as long as they’ll listen to him.

## Got a favorite photo or video? Let us know!

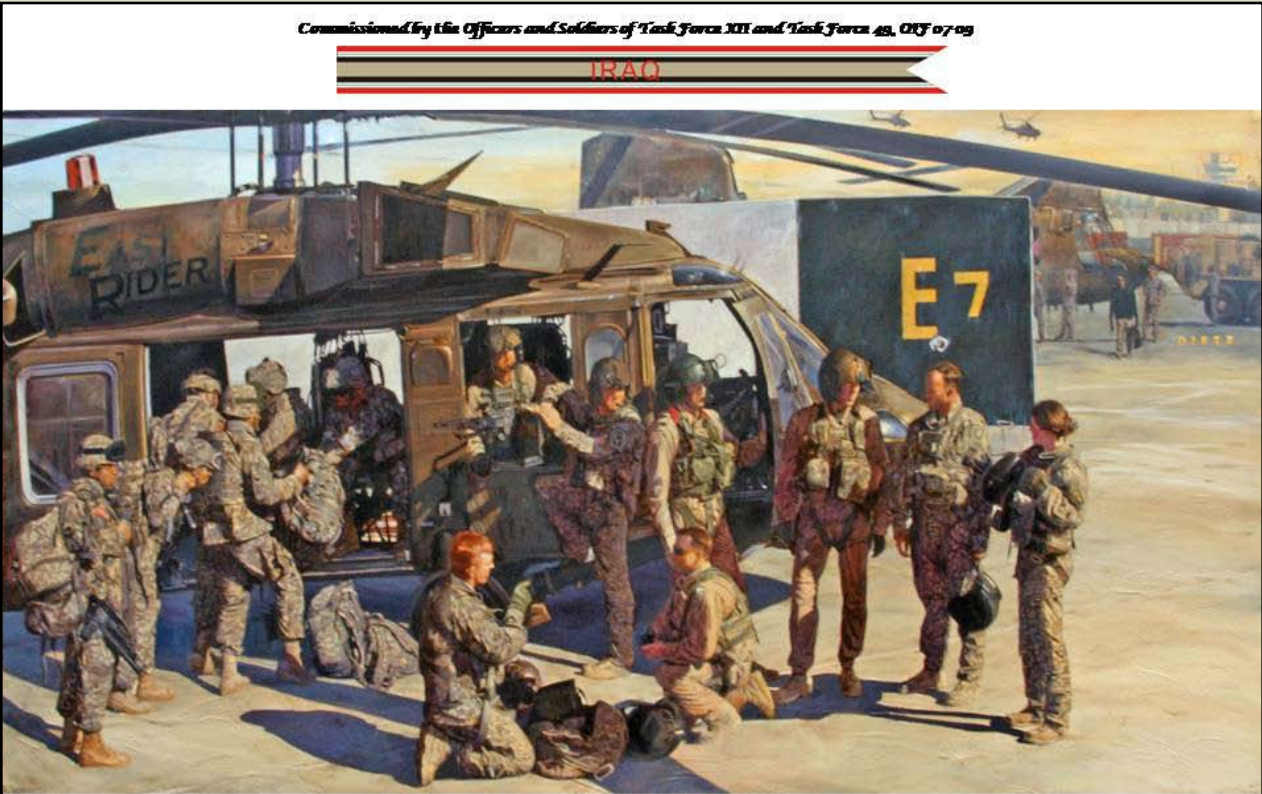


**Task Force XII PAO is in the process of putting together the OIF 07-09 end of tour video. We’re looking for photos and videos showing Task Force XII Soldiers at work or at play.**

**Action, emotion, animation ... if you think it’s cool, get it to us!**

**PAO Contact:  
SIPR - 242-6426  
DSN - 843-5320  
We’ll make you famous!**

# The TF XII Commemorative OIF Print!!



**Launch, Recover, Launch**  
The 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd Cavalry Division, 3rd Cavalry Division, 4th Cavalry Division, 5th Cavalry Division, 6th Cavalry Division, 7th Cavalry Division, 8th Cavalry Division, 9th Cavalry Division, 10th Cavalry Division, 11th Cavalry Division, 12th Cavalry Division, 13th Cavalry Division, 14th Cavalry Division, 15th Cavalry Division, 16th Cavalry Division, 17th Cavalry Division, 18th Cavalry Division, 19th Cavalry Division, 20th Cavalry Division, 21st Cavalry Division, 22nd Cavalry Division, 23rd Cavalry Division, 24th Cavalry Division, 25th Cavalry Division, 26th Cavalry Division, 27th Cavalry Division, 28th Cavalry Division, 29th Cavalry Division, 30th Cavalry Division, 31st Cavalry Division, 32nd Cavalry Division, 33rd Cavalry Division, 34th Cavalry Division, 35th Cavalry Division, 36th Cavalry Division, 37th Cavalry Division, 38th Cavalry Division, 39th Cavalry Division, 40th Cavalry Division, 41st Cavalry Division, 42nd Cavalry Division, 43rd Cavalry Division, 44th Cavalry Division, 45th Cavalry Division, 46th Cavalry Division, 47th Cavalry Division, 48th Cavalry Division, 49th Cavalry Division, 50th Cavalry Division, 51st Cavalry Division, 52nd Cavalry Division, 53rd Cavalry Division, 54th Cavalry Division, 55th Cavalry Division, 56th Cavalry Division, 57th Cavalry Division, 58th Cavalry Division, 59th Cavalry Division, 60th Cavalry Division, 61st Cavalry Division, 62nd Cavalry Division, 63rd Cavalry Division, 64th Cavalry Division, 65th Cavalry Division, 66th Cavalry Division, 67th Cavalry Division, 68th Cavalry Division, 69th Cavalry Division, 70th Cavalry Division, 71st Cavalry Division, 72nd Cavalry Division, 73rd Cavalry Division, 74th Cavalry Division, 75th Cavalry Division, 76th Cavalry Division, 77th Cavalry Division, 78th Cavalry Division, 79th Cavalry Division, 80th Cavalry Division, 81st Cavalry Division, 82nd Cavalry Division, 83rd Cavalry Division, 84th Cavalry Division, 85th Cavalry Division, 86th Cavalry Division, 87th Cavalry Division, 88th Cavalry Division, 89th Cavalry Division, 90th Cavalry Division, 91st Cavalry Division, 92nd Cavalry Division, 93rd Cavalry Division, 94th Cavalry Division, 95th Cavalry Division, 96th Cavalry Division, 97th Cavalry Division, 98th Cavalry Division, 99th Cavalry Division, 100th Cavalry Division.  
BY JAMES DIETZ

Artist Signature

TF XII has commissioned Jim Dietz, world-famous military / aviation artist, to produce a limited edition print honoring our OIF 07-09 deployment. The final resolution on the layout is TBP, but this is pretty close. Only 500 signed, serial-numbered prints will be available, for the price of only \$70, or \$80 with a reserved number! Jim Dietz will travel to Germany, and other locations TBD, to personally deliver and sign our prints. Contact your unit representative (below) now to reserve your copies because once they’re gone ... they’re gone!

**HHC, 12th CAB / FLE- SGT Diaz-Xiong, LTC Bowery**  
**4/3 ACR- LTC Bowery**  
**2-159 ARB- LT Vega**  
**3-158 AHB (Taji)- MAJ Rodesky; (Balad) LT Connors**  
**5-158 GSAB- CPT Hawkins**  
**412 ASB- MAJ Bartlett**  
**2-147 AHB- CPT Husnik**  
**TF Hawk- MAJ Kelly**  
**Rear Detachment- CPT Stickney**



# TF XII Safety minute - Sacrificing sounds for safety

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

Of all the cool inventions over the last decade or so, I think one of the coolest is the portable MP3 player. An iPod can be a deployed Soldier's best friend. You put all your photos and thousands of your favorite songs and videos on there, and off to Iraq you go; armed with 160 GB of pure unadulterated memories, movies and music.

The Army, in its infinite wisdom, even saw fit to give us these nice iPod-sized pockets on our shoulders to carry them around!

But then, we get here and we're told not to use them. Can't run with them, can't listen to them at work ... can't even walk down the sidewalk with them. And it's all in the name of ... you guessed it – safety.

Now, being the safety guys, we've seen plenty of Soldiers walking around with little iPod buds sticking out of their ears.



Usually it's the guys coming out of the gym. Just couldn't bear to hit pause in the middle of their favorite Justin Timberlake jam before they walked out the door. As professional safety gurus, we always stop them and show them the error of their ways.

But it's more of an overdone goofy rule than anything right? Unfortunately, no

... statistics show that injuries caused by people wearing headphones are drastically on the rise.

Just this month, a 19-year-old Soldier in Georgia was killed while out for a run. He was running with headphones and got hit by a train.

Now, we're not in favor of any rules banning MP3 players – I'd be lost without mine. But like anything else, we just want to make sure you're using them safely and in areas where they are authorized. If you can't hear a train with headphones, you probably can't hear a Stryker, a Humvee or a WAVE alarm either.

So enjoy your music! Take every opportunity to make yourself comfortable here in Iraq.

But if you're outside or at work, take off the headphones and pay attention to your surroundings. After all, what song could be better than the soothing sounds of safety?

## Why I Serve: Veteran Apache pilot, master gunner, still going strong

**Story by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Part of the success of Multi-National Division – Baghdad's efforts throughout the greater Baghdad area has been attributed to the precision attacks on our enemies from thousands of feet above ground in Task Force XII's AH-64 Apache helicopters.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Dennis Seymour, a native of Hattiesburg, Miss., who serves as the brigade master gunner for all aircraft and the standardization pilot for AH-64 Apache helicopters, brings a vast supply of knowledge and skill to the battlefield in support of ground operations in and around Baghdad.

Seymour first joined the military in 1980, where he spent nine years as an electrician in the Air Force. His passion for flight brought him to the Army as a rotary wing

aviator, flying Apaches.

Seymour's superior skills have not gone unnoticed by his commander, who has flown with him in the majority of his missions this tour in Iraq.

"Mr. Seymour is an absolute expert when it comes to flying and fighting Apache helicopters," said Col. Tim Edens, a native of Fruitland, Idaho, who serves as the commander of Task Force XII. "He is a former instructor pilot at the Fort Rucker Apache Course so he knows the ins and outs of the aircraft."

Edens went on to say Seymour is not just a "TRADOCian," where he only knows the basic skills taught in the schoolhouse. He has spent most of his career in tactical units, so he knows several tricks that are not yet in the training manual, which makes him a very dangerous weapon against the enemy, he said.

Seymour has a daily ritual before every mission, which includes doing his preflight checks, putting on his yellow "Southern Miss" hat and preparing the aircraft before he even climbs into the cockpit.

After the mission briefing, Seymour usually straps into the bird with Edens and takes off for their mission.

"Some people



Photo by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans

**CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – Col. Timothy Edens (front seat) and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Dennis Seymour (back seat) prepare to take off for a mission over Multi-National Division - Baghdad May 14.**

think it's all excitement as an Apache pilot," Seymour said. "Really, what ends up happening is we fly around for five hours for only three minutes of excitement. In fact, flying six or seven days per week wears you out. There's a lot of mental strain involved with flying the helicopter and targeting bad guys on the ground."

When it comes time for Seymour to engage enemy forces, he said he thinks of the process as more of a video game than a real life situation.

"The reality of it is I'm taking somebody's life away every time I pull that trigger," he said. "That's a hard thing to think about. What makes it easier is the fact that every enemy I take out is one less bad guy my son has to worry about."

Seymour's son followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Army as well. He serves in

a psychological operations unit and is currently attending the Defense Language Institute at the Presidio of Monterey, Calif.

After the mission is complete, Seymour's job could be done for the night; however, ground crew members said he provides a helping hand with post-mission checks when he can.

"He is one of those pilots who goes above and beyond with the checks and maintenance, which makes our job much easier on the ground," said Cpl. Jimmy Duenas, a native of Guam, who serves as an Apache mechanic and crew chief with Outlaw Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Even with so many years in the military, Seymour said he still plans on staying in until the Army decides it's time for him to leave.



Photo by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq – CW4 Dennis Seymour performs preflight checks on an AH-64 Apache helicopter May 14. Seymour is TF XII's master gunner and an AH-64 standardization pilot.**



# Flying UAV's not a game for TF XII Soldiers

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Flying an unmanned aerial vehicle sounds like a video gamer's dream.

Games, like the popular "Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon - Advanced Warfighter," even let players fly a simulated UAV through a digital battlefield; discovering the pending threats before they discover you.

And, according to the actual UAV operators, the virtual video versions are pretty realistic. Those who've played them say they get the eerie feeling that they're back at work.

"Operating the UAV, you're not in the aircraft, so you're looking at the computer and you're opening menus and putting in numbers, it is kind of like a video game," said Cloverdale, Ind. native, Spc. Samuel McKamey. "It's more serious than that though."

McKamey is a UAV operator for 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. For now, he's attached to Company G, Task Force XII. Comprised of operators from six brigade combat teams, his company launches and recovers the Army's Shadow UAV for units throughout Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

"With video games, you always push it 'till you crash and have to restart the game," he laughed. "Out here we try to make it a point not to crash the airplanes."

The 23-year-old McKamey says he's never really considered himself a gamer though.

"I hit up the arcade at the mall a few times when I was a kid," he said. "Once I got my car, though, video games were pretty much out the window."

Still, with only a year and a half in the career field, McKamey's chain of command says he has done well for himself. After only seven months in Iraq, he was given the added responsibility of being in charge of company standardization.

"He picks up on stuff so fast, and has been able to adapt to what we're doing quickly," said Company G 1st Sgt. Todd Venema, who hails from Grand Rapids, Minn. "Honestly, he's the expert out here, that's why we made him the standards officer."

So, while the propensity for gaming may be relative, McKamey says that his attention to detail far outweighs his technological aptitude.

"I don't think this job is technically outside the limits of most people who currently serve," he said. "A lot of guys will sit in the shelter for 12 hours straight looking at that camera. They take it very seriously, and if they don't find something at the end of the day, they're disappointed. Those are the guys who find a lot of stuff and help out the most."

The most attentive UAV operators have proven especially useful in the current fight in Sadr City, says Task Force XII



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton  
CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Spc. Samuel McKamey sits at the controls of a Shadow unmanned aerial vehicle May 7. McKamey is a UAV operator for 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, currently assigned to Company G, TF XII.

deputy commander, Lt. Col. Scott Williams.

Williams, also an AH-64 Apache pilot, says the extra eyes are crucial on a very cluttered battlefield.

"The Soldiers on the ground can't see what's around the next corner," he said. "With a UAV, they don't have to be able to see it, because these guys see it for them, and they can react accordingly."

Operators at the sight say potential pilots show up at the gates all the time wanting more information about the career field ... but gamers beware, says McKamey.

"This is a great job," he says. "But they wouldn't sell a lot of games if all you could do was (fly around) and take pictures."

**Got a photo you want to share? How about a story you wrote or an idea for a story? If so, we need you!**



**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.**

## Ask the JAG ... about jury duty

By The Task Force XII Legal Office

### The general rule.

According to Army Regulation (AR) 27-40, chapter 10, "Active duty Soldiers should fulfill their civic responsibility by serving on State and local juries, so long as it does not interfere with military duties."

### Who is exempt from complying with a summons to serve on State and local juries?

The following active duty Soldiers are exempt: general officers; commanders; Soldiers stationed outside the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands; Soldiers in a training status; and Soldiers assigned to forces engaged in operations.

Other active duty Soldiers may be exempted from serving on local juries if their jury service would either interfere unreasonably with the performance of the Soldier's military duties or adversely affect the readiness of a summoned Soldier's unit, command, or activity.

### What should you do if you receive a summons?

Generally, the brigade commander has the authority to determine whether a Soldier in his unit, who has been served with a summons, is exempt from serving on a State or local jury.

Soldiers who receive a summons to serve on a civilian jury should immediately inform their commander and provide the commander with copies of pertinent documents.

The commander will evaluate the effect of jury service on the Soldier's duties or unit readiness.

If the commander determines that the Soldier is not exempt, the commander will process the Soldier for permissive temporary duty.

If the commander determines that the Soldier is exempt, the unit must inform responsible State or local officials of the federal exemption.

In processing exemptions, contact your servicing legal office to ensure that the proper paperwork is submitted.

### Contact the legal office if you have any questions about serving on a civilian jury.



# A moment with the Chaplain

## The importance of resisting negativity

By Chaplain (Maj.) David G. Waweru

A couple of decades ago, Dr. Norman-Vincent Peale wrote a book called *The Power of Positive Thinking*. In the book, Dr. Peale says that even though we, as individuals, encounter some circumstances in life that we cannot change, our response to those circumstances, in most cases, shapes how we see life.

My conversations with a few local nationals and people native to this region confirm what many of us have learned of the Arab culture - according to them, things happen within the will of God (Insha Allah).

This philosophy attributes daily life experiences to a divine pre-destination which channels us to accept the outcome ... whether we like it or not. This view takes away our ability to shape our response - taking away both the control and responsibility of the outcome.

We become helpless victims. Personally, I think that, like Dr. Peale says, although there are circumstances beyond our control that get in our way, we can control our response.

Negativity is pretty contagious. Like the saying goes, “when mom is unhappy, nobody’s happy - including the dog.” Likewise, when the boss is mad, every-

### TF XII Worship Schedule

**Friday**  
1200 Islamic Jummah - Tigris River  
1900 Jewish Service -Tigris River  
1900 Joy Night - Min. Center

**Saturday**  
1030 Non-denom. - Tigris River  
1800 Catholic Mass - Tigris River

**Sunday**  
0930 Traditional Prot. - Tigris River  
1000 Gospel - Min. Center  
1130 Contemporary Prot. - Tigris River  
1800 Episcopal -Tigris River

body feels the wrath ... and perhaps soaks some of it in.

It’s important to develop some sort of “negativity resistance” We can’t let the guy who is having a bad day ruin everybody else’s day too.

An old African proverb says “you can’t prevent birds from flying over your head, but you can certainly prevent one from building a nest on your head.”

Next time someone dumps some garbage on you, think about this story someone sent me recently:

“One day I hopped in a taxi and we took off for the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car jumped out of a parking space right

in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded, and missed the other car by just inches!

The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy. And, I mean, he was really friendly.

So I asked, ‘Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and sent us to the hospital!’ This is when my taxi driver taught me what I now call, ‘The Law of the Garbage Truck.’

He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment.

As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes they’ll dump it on you. Don’t take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on.

Don’t take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, or on the streets.

The bottom line is that successful people do not let garbage trucks take over their day. Life’s too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so.... ‘Love the people who treat you right. Pray for the ones who don’t.’



## Task Force Storm crew chief takes pride in his work

Story by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans  
MND-B PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — The UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter is the Army’s primary form of air transportation – and also one of its fastest vehicles on, or above, the battlefield.

In order for these helicopters to successfully conduct air missions, they need good crew chiefs to watch over passengers, maintain the aircraft and watch for threats from the sky.

Such is the mission of Multi-National Division – Baghdad’s

Spc. Matthew Mahoney, a native of Sweet Valley, Pa., who said he never gets bored while he is flying because he has enough responsibilities to keep him busy.

Mahoney, who serves as a Black Hawk crew chief with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, said he loves his job because it keeps him constantly engaged.

“When we’re flying, we’re continually monitoring the cockpit to back up the pilots,” he said. “We’re also on the

lookout for towers and other aircraft flying around Baghdad. On top of all that, we manage all the passengers in the back, and we are constantly on the lookout for any threats.”

Mahoney’s leadership greatly values his technical expertise when it comes to the helicopters. They say he’s the first Soldier they talk to when they have specific questions about the inner workings of their Black Hawks. “Mahoney is one of the best and brightest Soldiers I’ve ever worked with,” said Sgt. Brett Babin, a native of New Orleans, who serves as a squad leader and crew chief with Co. A. “He has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to these helicopters, so he is a great resource to have on my team. If any of

us have any questions about something, he is always there to help us out.”

For his future, Mahoney is still unsure whether or not he is going to stay in the military, but said he knows he will continue to work with helicopters even if he decides to join the civilian workforce after his deployment.

“I plan on dropping my warrant officer packet if I decide to stay in the military after this deployment,” he said. “If not, I still want to continue working with helicopters.”

No matter what he decides to do with the rest of his career, Babin said he will support him every step of the way.

“I think he likes the maintenance side more than the flight side,” he said. “I know he’s been talking about getting out of the military and working as a civilian contractor, but I’d still like to see him stay in. I know he’ll be successful with whatever he does.”

Until then, Mahoney will be crewing the “Death Dealer” as it carries cargo and passengers from place to place around Baghdad.



CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Spc. Matthew Mahoney, a native of Sweet Valley, Pa., washes a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter after maintenance May 14. Mahoney is a crew chief in TF Storm.



# Soldier-led classes help raise aptitude scores

Story and photos by  
Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Those who know 21-year-old Spc. Michael McCann say he's always been a pretty smart guy. After graduating Bixby, Okla. High School with a 3.85 grade point average, he

joined the Army as an AH-64 Apache crew chief. He's enrolled in online classes as a biochemistry major at the University of Oklahoma,

and wants to reclassify as an X-Ray Technician ... he's even thinking about becoming a doctor. There was only one problem – his GT score wasn't high enough.

The GT score (general technical) is the Army's measuring stick for technical aptitude. It's one of 10 line scores provided by the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery to assess a Soldier's potential. Technical career fields, like X-Ray Technician, require a 110. McCann scored a 106.

"I don't really know what I was doing wrong," he said. "I just needed a little reminder."

McCann became one of several Soldiers in Task Force XII to get that reminder, courtesy of fellow Soldiers in 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment who organized a functional academic skills test (FAST) class.

"We have people working shifts

24/7 at all ends of the flight line so it can be a little tough for them to make it (to the education center)," said squadron retention noncommissioned officer, Sgt. Andrew Erford. "The education center allowed us to start the program. They offer one here, but it caps out at 20 (students) per class, plus it's a little far away."

The class focuses on two specific areas – math and English. Erford, who hails from Batavia, Ill. teaches the English portion.

"Test taking strategies are the biggest things we teach," he said. "A lot of Soldiers just have problems with multiple choice tests ... that's pretty common everywhere, from high school on up."

The Soldier-led



versions of the classes haven't been around for long, but Erford says so far, they've raised the score of every Soldier who has taken part. The word has spread, and more Soldiers seem interested in participating.

So far, of the five Soldiers who have finished the class and braved the GT score improvement test, four have passed the requisite mark of 110.

As for McCann, it didn't take long to prove he has the aptitude to match his attitude. He raised his score to a 112 ... six points higher, and one important step closer to a very big dream.

Photos - Sgt. Shawn Kennedy, Co. G, TF XII (left) listens to Sgt. Andrew Erford, HHT, 4/3 ACR (above) explain the nuances of vocabulary during an afternoon class May 13.

## Radio operators play vital role in aviation missions

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – It's not exactly what he had in mind when he joined. West Fargo, N.D. native, Spc. Randall Griffeth came into the Army in February, 2006 to be an aviator. His dream was to become a pilot, but the job he picked, aviation operations specialist, was close enough for now.

Two years later Griffeth, now a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, found himself watching the skies over Baghdad – on a black and white screen, behind a desk in a tactical operations center.

It's a busy and important job, say the Soldiers who do it, but not quite as exciting as flying the helicopters, and certainly not as glamorous.

April 21 was just another day for Griffeth. Halfway through a 12-hour shift, an AH-64 Apache helicopter crew had reported some military-aged males who looked like they were up to no good. The crew watched for a while, but couldn't positively identify any hostile intentions. Soon enough, they were called to another sight.

But Griffeth kept watching.

A video feed from an unmanned aerial vehicle in the area finally confirmed the pilots' suspicions.

"It looked like they were taking pot shots at a ground convoy," Griffeth said.

He quickly called the air crews to the scene; all the while watching as the men moved weapons in and out of a vehicle, resupplying attackers on the ground and shooting at Coalition forces when they had the chance.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little  
CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Spc. Randall Griffeth stands outside the 4th Squadron, 3d ACR headquarters building April 25. Griffeth is an aviation operations specialist assigned as a radio transmitter operator.

Within moments, Griffeth found himself controlling a potentially deadly situation. It was up to him to talk the pilots onto a relatively small target in a very busy city.

"When the pilots are up there, they don't always see what we see because they're so far out," he said. "I had to explain one small area in a city where everything looks the same."

Minutes later, with the help of another pilot in the TOC, he and the pilots in the air had confirmed that they were looking at the same thing; the shooters on the ground became the target and, courtesy of a precision shot from the lethal attack helicopter, the situation was summarily resolved.

"It felt good," said Griffeth. "It's always

good when you can help the ground guys. They're out there getting shot at and I'm sitting her in an air-conditioned building. I didn't do anything different than what all the operators do every day."

But the difference between monitoring a feed and doing something about it is crucial, said the senior aviation operations non-commissioned officer, Sgt. 1st Class Marde Stephens.

"It's a huge step for a guy to be able to identify something and then feel empowered enough to make the call and fol-

low through," said Stephens, a native of Killeen, Texas. "Of course it's part of the job, but he grew as a Soldier that day; determining he had to take the initiative was huge."

Like many of his fellow Soldiers, Griffeth still has the dream of one day becoming a pilot.

"There's a few guys, like Griff, who want to be pilots," said Stephens. "We encourage them to get it done. But I want them to know how important their current jobs are. These guys may be (young Soldiers), but they're making vital decisions every day ... just like any of the pilots."

"I like what I do," said Griffeth. "It's pretty important to the pilots, but more importantly to me, I feel like we're really helping with the fight on the ground."



# On the Home Front



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Kindergartners of the child development center in Katterbach parade through the Katterbach housing area April 30. The parade marked the end of the one-month long festivities, at the Ansbach and Illesheim community observing the Month of the Military Child.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Ansbach and Illesheim elementary school students were treated to a forest excursion in a nearby forest as part of Earth Day April 22. The environmental office hooked the students up with German forestry and environmental officials to teach them how to be good stewards of Mother Earth.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Children of School Age Services parade through the Katterbach housing area.. The parade marked the end of the one-month long festivities, at the Ansbach and Illesheim community observing the Month of the Military Child.



Photo by Jim Hughes

Jake Hodges, 6, son of Spc. Kevin Galik, puts his racing skills to the test while operating the ultimate racing video game controller during the USAG Ansbach Morale, Welfare and Recreation Month of the Military Child celebration.



Photo by Jim Hughes

Saquilla Kent, 14, goes for a ride at the USAG Ansbach Morale, Welfare and Recreation Month of the Military Child celebration April 26 on Katterbach Kaserne. Hundreds of community youth showed up for the celebration.



Photo by Jim Hughes

Martina Fullen helps her son, Jeremiah, 28 months, maneuver a go-kart through a track set up at the USAG Ansbach Morale, Welfare and Recreation Month of the Military Child celebration April 26 on Katterbach Kaserne.



# The Griffin Brigade Chronicles:

## History of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade (part 10)

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

The decade of the 1990s saw tremendous change in the Army Aviation footprint in Germany, and in our branch overall.

The Aviation Restructure Initiative, and the three brigade-size elements that eventually provided units of the current 12th CAB – the 12th Aviation Brigade from Giebelstadt Army Airfield (AAF); the 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division from Katterbach AAF; and the 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment from Illesheim AAF- all played significant roles in America’s peacekeeping operations during this time as well.

It is impossible to tell the story of the 12th CAB without covering some of the recent history of these storied units.

During the post-Desert Storm Army draw-down, the 12th Brigade, then headquartered in Wiesbaden, inactivated 5-6 Cavavalry, but gained 3-58 Air Traffic Services (now 3-58 AOB located at Illesheim) and the famous (or infamous!) “Big Windy,” the Chinooks of Company B, 159th Aviation.

From September 1991 through August 1999, elements of the Griffin Brigade were almost continuously deployed to various locations in eastern Europe and the Mediterranean - Turkey, Cyprus, Hungary, Bosnia, and Kosovo to name a few.

Operations ALLIED FORCE and JOINT GUARD in Kosovo capped off an active decade for the Griffins, and they rang in 2000 by moving the Brigade Headquarters and all battalions from Wiesbaden to Giebelstadt.

The 12th CAB headquarters at Katterbach has seen a variety of unit colors floating over the VIP pad, to include those of the 1st U.S. Cavalry, 1st Armored Division, 3rd Infantry Division and, until August 2006, the 1st Infantry Division.

In 1988, Katterbach, then the headquarters for 4th Brigade, 1st Armored

Division, became was the home of Germany’s first-ever Divisional Apache battalion, the 3-1 AVN “Night Eagles,” followed in 1989 by 2-1 AVN “Strike Eagles.”

A few years later, 2-1 became a General Support Battalion - the forerunner of our current “Mission Ready” 5-158th GSAB. In 1996 the 4th Brigade, 1st Infantry Division “Dragon Brigade” colors moved from Ft. Riley and replaced the “Iron Eagles” colors flying over our Franconian home.

The 601st Aviation Support Battalion stood up at Bismarck Kaserne, beginning a long support relationship with our brigade culminating in re-flagging as the current 412th ASB in 2006.

The “Dragon Brigade” served in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1997 and Kosovo in 1999.

Our current Brigade TA-COPS officer, CW5 Harmon, remembers those days well, as he served in the old Gunfighter Battalion, 1-1 ATK.

Also, back in the “Roaring Eighties,” the 11th Regiment stood up the first-ever European Apache battalion.

The 2-6 CAV “Fighting Sixth” formed and went through the AH-64 Unit Training Program at Ft. Hood, Texas, and moved to Illesheim in 1988.

The 4-229 ATK “Flying Tigers” and 6-6 CAV “Six Shooters” joined the Regiment during, and immediately after, Desert Shield/Storm.

From 1996 through 1999, units of the 11th participated in the various Balkans operations, frequently task-organized with elements of the 12th Brigade and

4th Brigade, 1st ID.

In 1999, the 11th Regimental Headquarters and both squadrons served as the main effort of Task Force Hawk, based in Tirana, Albania. The Regiment redeployed to Illesheim in August of that year.

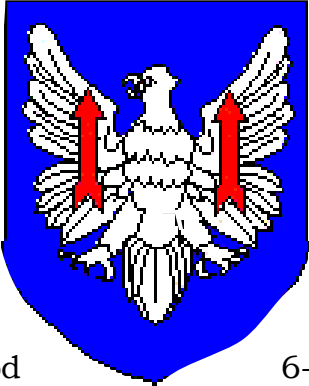
Some other current faces on the Brigade staff are not really so new. Katterbach was the stomping ground in the mid-90s for Lieutenants Bryan Hoff and Scott Williams, of 2-1 and 3-1 ATK, respectively.

During the TF Hawk days, an AH-64 instructor pilot by the name of Dennis “Big Bird” Seymour was honing his unique team-building skills in 6-6 CAV.

Finally, as the 21st Century kicked off, Illesheim and 6-6 CAV greeted a young Lieutenant Colonel who would go on to lead the Griffin Brigade in combat, as Lt. Col. Timothy J. Edens and his better half, Leslie, arrived to take command of the Six Shooters. A short 12 years before, Capt. Edens served at Katterbach in the 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division. It’s a small world, and a smaller branch!

Wings of Victory! See you next month.

LTC Charles R. Bowery Jr.,  
“Griffin 5”



### IMCOM website answers questions about fuel cards

By the time you return to Germany, fuel coupons will be a thing of the past. Ansbach and Illesheim will begin using fuel ration cards in July. To get one, you’ll need an updated vehicle registration. Find out more about updating registrations during or after deployment at the Installation Management Command website.

[www.imcom-europe.army.mil/sites/news/fuelcard.asp](http://www.imcom-europe.army.mil/sites/news/fuelcard.asp)

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