



Volume 2, Issue 3

“WINGS OF VICTORY!”

MARCH 2008

Task Force Storm troops achieve milestone, get first-hand view of Iraq’s improvement

Story by 1st Sgt. Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The halfway point came and went quietly somewhere around March 1. Most of the members of Task Force Storm were too busy to notice.

Task Force Storm is Multi-National Division - Baghdad’s Assault Helicopter Battalion.

While other units’ helicopters frequently transit the area, the Black Hawk mission in Baghdad belongs solely to the Storm Riders.

The task force, made up primarily of Soldiers and aircraft from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade’s 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, and augmented by Troop S, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, performs multiple missions for the division.

“We do all types of general support missions as well as the air assault missions, all within the confines of MND-B,” said the unit’s commander, Lt. Col. Jay Macklin, a native of Macon, Ga. “We pretty much run the full gamut of support with those types of missions, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

During the battalion’s first few months of the deployment they performed, almost exclusively, air assault missions while working for Multi-National Corps - Iraq.

The Soldiers moved to Camp Taji, in early December, where they expanded their horizons in aviation operations with a mission dedicated to Baghdad’s operational environment.

“The first half of the deployment went pretty quick,” said Sgt. Orales Stroud, a Brooklyn, N.Y., native assigned to Company A, 3rd Bn. 158th Avn. Reg. “The tempo was really high, and we were always on the move.”

“I’m particularly proud of the bravery of the flight crews (during the first half),” said Macklin. “We’ve been in some



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Sgt. Orales Stroud, an aircraft maintainer and crew chief for Company A, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, scans the countryside while serving as a door gunner in a UH-60 Black Hawk. Stroud is one of dozens of door gunners assigned to protect aircraft during missions.

(tough) situations here, and the ability of the crews to complete their missions, no matter what, has amazed me. We’ve really made a difference in the battlefield here.”

The difference Coalition forces have made here since most of the task force

arrived in July is very discernible, and he and his Soldiers see it from a unique vantage point, says Macklin, also an active pilot in the battalion.

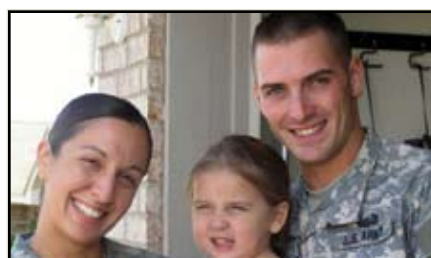
“As we’ve continued to fly over Baghdad, we’ve really noticed a resurgence of

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what’s
inside ...



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Griffin 06 Sends ... Light at end of the tunnel

Soldiers and Families of Task Force XII:

I recently came from beautiful, snowy Katterbach, Germany, where I enjoyed my R&R leave with my Family and friends. Those of you who've already been on R&R can attest to how nice it was seeing Family and friends after several months' absence. For those of you who haven't been yet, let me tell you, it's great.

I'm so proud of our community in Germany. They have come together during our deployment, just as we have come together in Iraq. This Griffin Family is strong wherever we are.

I want to thank Lt. Col. Todd Royar who stepped up in my absence, and continued to lead our Task Force forward as we've now crested the hill and are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

The rumors are still going strong in Iraq as well as back in Germany. The future of this task force in theater remains in flux and depends on several moving pieces.

The leaders of this organization, both within the battalion/squadron and separate companies, all have a good understanding of what we're planning at any given point. It is not our intention to keep the plans for the unit a secret, but rather to avoid any undue anxiety by get-



ting people worried about all the various possibilities that are discussed. If you feel like you don't have all the information you should, just ask your chain of command.

The same goes for Family members. As I've said before, your Family Readiness Groups and Rear Detachment leaders are there for you. Use them!

Now, of course, that all comes with

the caveat that things change. We try to plan for anything. My promises to you are that we'll do our level best to get you all home in one piece and keep you as well informed as possible on the facts not rumors.

Above all else, please remember that while talking about moving or planning for redeployment can be fun, don't let it take your focus away from what you're here to do. This mission is still vitally important and it demands our fullest attention. Additionally, remember we all have an operational security (OPSEC) obligation to protect information that could be used by our enemies against us or our allies and friends.

At the end of the day, we all have several months left in Iraq. Make the most of that time, and do everything you can to get yourselves and your battle buddies home safe. If going home for R&R feels this good, I can only imagine how great it will feel to go home for good. Let's make it our goal to go home knowing we did the best we could for the entire tour. You've made us proud thus far; please keep up the great work.

Thanks for all that you do!

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

Command Sergeant Major's Corner

Hello Griffin Families and friends,

Here's an inspirational story I think you all will enjoy:

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. She was getting her things "in order" and she contacted her pastor to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes.

She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in.

"There's one more thing," she said excitedly. "This is very important; I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand."

The pastor stood looking at the young woman, not knowing quite what to say.

"That surprises you, doesn't it?" the young woman asked.

"Well, to be honest, I'm puzzled by the request," said the pastor.

"My grandmother once told me this story, and after that, I have always done so," she said. "I also try to pass along its message to those I love and those who are in need of encouragement.

"In all my years of attending church, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, 'Keep your fork,'" she said. "It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming, like velvety

chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie ... something wonderful!

"So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder 'What's with the fork?'" Then I want you to tell them: "Keep your fork ... the best is yet to come."

The pastor's eyes welled up with tears of joy as he hugged her good-bye.

At the funeral people were walking by the young woman's casket and they saw the pretty dress she was wearing and the fork placed in her right hand.

Over and over, the pastor heard the question "What's with the fork?" And over and over he smiled.

During his message, the pastor told the people of the conversation he had with the young woman shortly before she died. He also told them about the fork and about what it symbolized to her.

The pastor told the people how he could not stop thinking about the fork and told them that they probably would not be able to stop thinking about it either ... he was right.

So the next time you reach down for your fork, let it remind you ever so gently, that the best is yet to come.

Friends are a very rare jewel, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share a word of praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us.

Show your friends how much you



care. Remember to always be there for them, even when you need them more. For you never know when it may be their time to "Keep your fork."

Cherish the time you have, and the memories you share. Being with loved one is not an opportunity but a sweet responsibility.

The guys and gals here are really busy and working hard, they send their love.

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

A moment with the Chaplain

Preparing for a reunion with Family

By Chaplain (Maj.) David G. Waweru

Adjusting to deployment is something we normally don't have a choice but to confront head on. When we receive orders we get ready, pack and go. During that time, emotions are high as Families and loved ones reluctantly part.

Then we get to our new location and get a new mission, learn from our predecessors and take over.

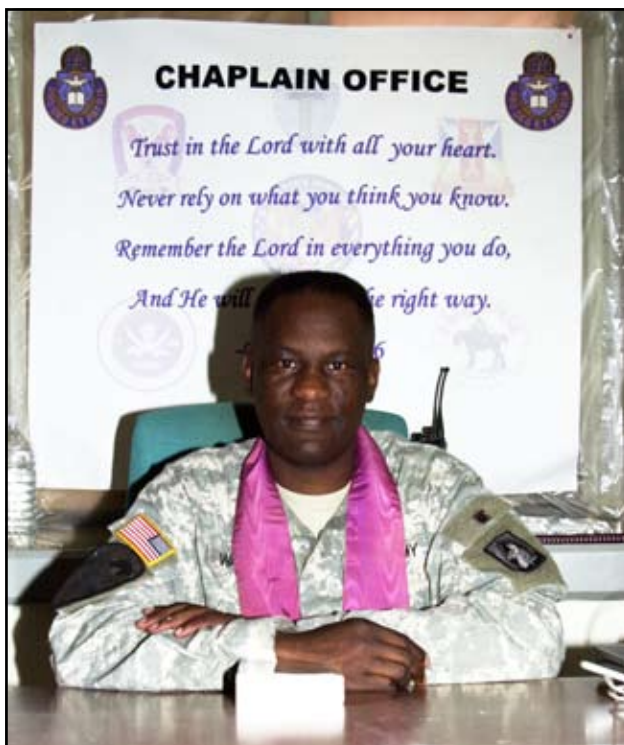
Our Families and loved ones also go through the same motions. When we leave, they adjust and learn new ways of doing business. For those who are married, spouses have taken over the roles you've vacated and your children learned how to help keep the Family operating the best they can.

This separation, due to deployment, now creates two parallel entities operating on different missions concurrently. This is where we need to make sure there is constant communication so our Families know how we are doing and we know what's going on back home.

A lack of communication, on both sides, affects our relationships and will make our reunion and reintegration very difficult. Although this applies more to married people, their spouses and children, the dynamics and effects of change is the same for everyone whether you are single or married.

The quality of our reunion depends so much on the quality of our communication with loved ones during our absence; you can't drop a relationship upon shipping out and expect to pick up right where you left off when you get back.

For those of you who haven't made it



home for R&R, and the rest of you looking forward to redeployment, here are a few things we need to keep in mind to ensure a healthy reunion.

Change is a part of life

Though deployments are a normal part of military life, they have disruptive effects on all Soldiers and Families.

Everyone needs to decompress

Think "healthy decompression." You may be "tighter" with your buddies than you are with your Family and friends back at home station. Make a deliberate effort to be aware of this tension.

Impulsive actions can be dangerous

Guard against impulsive acts - think hard before any celebrations, major purchases, changes in relationships, career decisions, etc. Think things out.

You are home again

You're no longer in a field environment. Conduct and manners must be refined for your home station, your Family and friends.

Go easy on the kids

Especially with discipline; your spouse's rules remain in effect. You're not Mr. Heavy ... yet. Parents, act like a team in front of the kids.

Financial matters

Don't change all the financial affairs on day one. Compliment a lot! Pay them off with a special gift: dinner & a movie, a new outfit, etc. No crazy spending sprees; celebrate within a budget.

Quality time

Invest quality time with each Family member individually, and quality time with everybody else later. By the second or third day, YOU take the kid(s) and let the spouse go out. No baby-sitters for the first week.

Driving Crazy

You may not have driven much lately so let your spouse or friends drive for awhile. Don't spoil it with a ticket or a wreck.

Your spouse

They have experienced a new level of confidence, leadership, knowledge and aggressiveness in your absence. That's terrific! Don't feel threatened. It will make the next deployment easier to swallow. Be proud of her or him.

Intimacy

Sexual reunion may happen quickly but emotional reunion takes longer. Be gentle. Talk openly about it. Flirt and make it memorable.

I pray that your lives may be full of the expectation that brings hope and fulfillment. Let us continue running this marathon, with God on our side, we will all finish.

Ask the JAG ... about being financially liable

By The Task Force XII Legal Office

When government property is lost, damaged, or destroyed, a Financial Liability Investigation of Property Loss (FLIPL) is usually initiated; Army Regulation 735-5 governs this process.

Sometimes a FLIPL results in a Soldier being notified that the government intends to hold him financially liable for the loss, damage or destruction to the property.

Generally, a Soldier will not be held liable for more than one month's base pay if the FLIPL officer determines that a Soldier's simple negligence caused the loss, damage, or destruction.

A Soldier can be held liable for the full cost to the Government when they lose, damage, or destroy personal arms or equipment.

In addition, any person assigned government quarters can be fully liable for damage to quarters, or furnishings, as a result of the gross negligence of the responsible individual, their guests or

pets.

The government can only hold a Soldier financially liable if he was both negligent and his negligence was the proximate cause of the loss.

Simple negligence is the absence of due care, by act or omission, that a person of reasonable judgment would have taken under similar circumstances to avoid the loss, damage or destruction of government property.

Gross negligence is an extreme act of carelessness by a person of reasonable judgment who is accountable, or responsible, for government property resulting in loss, damage or destruction of the property.

The proximate cause of the loss means that person's acts or omissions produced the loss, damage or destruction of the property; without those actions the loss, damage or destruction would not have occurred.

If a Soldier is notified that the government intends to hold him financially li-

able, he has the right to make a rebuttal statement. A Soldier usually has seven calendar days from the date of receipt to reply with a rebuttal statement or other additional evidence. If you find yourself in this situation, you should seek legal counseling immediately.

If you have any questions, or need more information, please feel free to stop by the Task Force XII Legal Office and we would be more than happy to assist you.



The staff of the Task Force XII Legal Office.

Task Force XII Soldiers help others get better understanding of Islamic cultures, practices

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Military leaders say that putting faces with the monstrous machines patrolling the roads and skies of Iraq is essential to coalition success. American forces go out of their way to interact with the locals, and help them get a better understanding of our missions and our cultures, and ultimately to gain their confidence.

But the training doesn't stop with the Iraqi people. Knowing that cultural understanding has to work both ways, the military continues to provide its service members with training on Islamic cultures and way of life. But what happens after all the training ends and Soldiers still have questions?

Soldiers in Task Force XII, who practice Islam, are always eager to answer questions about their religion and help fellow Soldiers put a familiar face with an unfamiliar culture.

"I've known the Soldiers I work with for a long time and they don't treat me any different just because I'm from a different culture," said Spc. Emadeldeen Elboctorcy, a UH-60 Black Hawk maintainer in Company D, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. "They're pretty considerate of my religion; for example, when some of the Soldiers go to get food for everybody, they always make sure there is a plate without pork."

Elboctorcy, who is now a U.S. citizen, was born and raised as a devout Muslim in Alexandria, Egypt. He moved to the U.S. in 1995 and has been answering the questions of those curious about his religion ever since.

"When you get cultural awareness training, they only give you so much information, and many of the Soldiers, to include myself, still had questions," said Company D 1st Sgt. Ronald Pickens, a



Photo by 1st Sgt. Ronald Pickens

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Spc. Emadeldeen Elboctorcy (right), a UH-60 Black Hawk maintainer in Company D, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, talks about aircraft maintenance with Sgt. Brett Knerr.

native of Abilene, Texas. "Instead of asking their question in front of everybody, they felt more comfortable asking Elboctorcy and he would explain his point of view. He's a very tolerant person and willing to answer those questions."

Spc. Asad Khan, a New York, N.Y. resident for nearly 30 years, was born in a small town near of Lahore, Pakistan, and is often asked about his religion and his country's culture.

"Some people think that everyone who is a Muslim is a radical, but that's not the case," said Khan, an air traffic control systems maintainer in Company F, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment. "There are a few, just like in every religion, who are extremist but I was definitely not brought up that way."

Having cultural awareness training, and a Soldier in the unit who practices Islam, has helped the other Soldiers understand that different doesn't mean good or bad; it just means different, said Pickens.

"I joined the Army because I wanted to make a difference in the war using my language, but at that time there was no Military Occupational Specialty for Arabic linguist," said Elboctorcy, a native of Citrus Heights, Calif. "I guess in a sense I am making a difference, because even though I'm not out there talking to Iraqis, I'm still providing information to the Soldiers who want to know more about Arabic cultures."

"He doesn't explain how the cultures are different; he explains how the cultures are similar," said Pickens.

Islam, just like most other religions, teaches people they should love and respect one another, said Elboctorcy.

Having been born in the Middle East, Khan and Elboctorcy say, they feel a connection to people who live in this region, but living in the U.S. for so many years has made them appreciate both cultures.

"I feel a strong connection to Iraqis who have dual citizenship with a country like the U.S. or Great Britain," said Elboctorcy. "We can share experiences we've had in living in both cultures and speaking both languages."

Although Khan is not yet a U.S. citizen, he has begun the naturalization process and will more than likely become a citizen before the end of his deployment.

Whether it's learning from cultural awareness training, or a Soldier who has lived in a certain region of the world, Task Force XII Soldiers have plenty of options to educate themselves on unfamiliar cultures and ways of life.

Black Hawk battalion proud of achievements during deployment

Continued from Page 1

life down on the street," he said. "You can see things like children playing in parks, markets that weren't there before are now open, and people are out in the streets."

"When you see a normal Iraqi family here just wanting to live in peace, it makes you feel like you're really making a difference here and they're living their lives the way they want to," he said. "I feel honored to have served, and continue to serve here. It's utterly amazing to watch a city coming to life as you fly over it."

The next step for the Soldiers is looking ahead to the second half of their 15-month adventure.

While they all focus on passing the time quickly so they can get home to their Families and lives back in Germany, most continue to pursue the goals they brought with them to Iraq.

"I still want to get promoted to staff sergeant," said Stroud. "I'm taking college classes, and just became a squad leader, so I want to lead my Soldiers the best I can, and continue to learn and grow here in my first deployment."

And though, halfway through, the battalion's had no serious incidents or mishaps, they are reminded every day not to get complacent.

"I think we're doing a pretty good job, but that's something you have to stay on constantly," said Macklin. "It's a very dynamic environment here in Iraq, and it can change very quickly. We try not to take anything for granted when we fly."

"It can go really good one day; and then bad the next," he said. "So far though, our guys have been good at doing things efficiently as well as safely. That's what every commander wants."



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

BAGHDAD, Iraq – A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew, from Task Force Storm, flies along a river bank in Baghdad. Task Force Storm is responsible for air assault and general support aviation missions in Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

Task Force XII Visitors



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Diamond Dallas Page and other “Ambassadors of Hollywood” sign autographs for Soldiers in CSM Cooke Dining Facility during their visit March 14.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Bonnie-Jill Laflin, an “Ambassador of Hollywood,” speaks with Soldiers and signs autographs in CSM Cooke Dining Facility during a visit March 14.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Capt. Benjamin Hester examines a Congressional Medal of Honor belonging to Retired Marine Capt. John J. McGinty. The Medal of Honor recipients visited several units in the area.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Medal of Honor recipient, Col. (Retired) Robert L. Howard addresses Soldiers in the Task Force XII Brigade Conference Room during a visit to Soldiers stationed on Camp Taji March 25.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Spec. Garrett Stacy, a medic in 412th Aviation Support Battalion, poses for a picture with members of the “Ambassadors of Hollywood” in CSM Cooke Dining Facility during their visit March 14.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Medal of Honor recipients, Col. (Retired) Robert L. Howard (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. (Retired) Gary L. Littrell (right), took pictures with Soldiers in the Task Force XII Brigade Conference Room during their visit March 25.

Don't forget to drink plenty of water, stay hydrated

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

When we arrived in theater, it was like a mantra. We heard it so often it could have been our slogan. Two words were emblazoned in our minds after months and months of preparing to come to Iraq: "Drink Water!"

And, for the most part, we did. We walked around in Kuwait carrying water bottles and wearing Camelbacks full of the stuff. We drank it until we were tired of the taste, then started flavoring the water with beverage powder and drank some more.

That was last year. We did a great job of staying safe through hydration. Of all the things we did safely, that was among the best.

Of course, as it got cooler, the need for water tapered off. We don't lose as much water, so consequently we don't drink as much either.

It's time to get back in the habit. While



we haven't made it into the 100's yet, the temperatures are rising quickly. Those of you who spend all day on the flight line have already felt the heat this year, with temperatures in the high 80's reflecting off the pavement. Most of you know all too well that by July, 90 degrees will feel

like spring.

When we got here, we took the time to acclimate in Kuwait. We worked of course, but among our main missions was getting used to the temperatures.

This year, the pace of the mission allows us no such luxury. If you're not hydrating now, the first really hot day is going to hurt.

In addition to drinking water, make sure you're eating well, and resting when you need to. Wear sunscreen and watch for signs of potential heat casualties in your fellow Soldiers.

Do us a favor ... heck, do yourselves a favor. Get back in the spirit of good high quality H2O. Watch your buddies and make sure they do the same.

And the next time you're taking a break from the 120 degree heat, pondering the merits of safety in all that you do, sit back, relax, and pop open a cold one (bottle of water that is) on us.

Stay safe.

Why I Serve: Soldier strives to motivate others by challenging himself

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Throughout his childhood, Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Branchetti and his two brothers loved to build forts and pretend they were soldiers in opposing armies; they would battle each other to become the leader of a dangerous, yet familiar, territory known as their backyard.

Branchetti, being the oldest, always played the "good guy" during these backyard skirmishes, and welcomed the challenge whenever his brothers would team up against him.

Now the noncommissioned officer in charge of Task Force XII's Air Defense Airspace Management (ADAM) Cell, Branchetti continues to look for challenges in his daily life and tries to motivate other Soldiers in the process.

"Since I arrived to Task Force XII, I have been working outside of my Military Occupational Specialty," said Branchetti, a patriot missile launching station operator and maintainer. "A few months ago I didn't know anything about aviation, but now I can tell you all about aircraft and operations. I try to learn everything

about the job I'm doing, and then I ask myself 'what's next?'"

ADAM Cell Soldiers keep track of the locations and altitudes of "No Fly Zones" for Task Force XII aviators.

"Fly zones can be closed off for several reasons like qualification ranges, artillery test firing or for special operations," said Branchetti, who hails from Cape Coral, Fla. "When 'No Fly Zone' information comes out, we put it into a tracking system and push it out to the units."

Not all "No Fly Zones" mean no flying, some zones just have limitations on what times and altitudes they can be traveled.

Working with patriot missile launch systems has given him a clearer understanding of the altitudes at which different objects travel, but his experiences working with a Special Police Transition Team (SPTT), in Iraq, have given him an uncanny knowledge of the roads and terrain in the Baghdad area, he said.

"In 2006, I worked side-by-side with the Iraqi Commandos and with an Operational Detachment Alpha Team; most of our missions consisted of locating and capturing high value targets and items in the Baghdad area," said Branchetti, who has been in the military for more than 14 years. "My wife, Mercedes, and my daughter, Vittoria, weren't exactly pleased that I volunteered for this assignment, but I felt it wasn't right for me to continue to stay behind."

Branchetti gained a vast knowledge of convoy routes in the area, as well as the Combat Action Badge for his involvement in numerous firefights with al-Qaeda in Iraq operatives.

"My tour with the Iraqis was awesome because I got to learn so much about Iraqi people, their military and myself," he said.

Branchetti is a real asset to Task



Courtesy Photo

Baghdad, Iraq – Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Branchetti, the noncommissioned officer in charge of Task Force XII's Air Defense Airspace Management Cell, poses for a picture at an Iraqi National Police training camp in 2006.

Force XII because he has been in the area before, and knows the terrain, but more importantly he knows the air above the terrain, said Lt. Col. Bryan Hoff, the operations officer for Task Force XII and a native of Felton, Minn.

In addition to being a combat veteran, his accolades also include being airborne and air assault qualified; and he is currently cross-training to become a UH-60 Black Hawk door gunner.

"Seeing someone who is so multi-tasked, as (Branchetti), really makes me want to push myself and seek challenges in life," said Stockton, Calif., native, Sgt. Juan Haninger, a flight instructor in Company A, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment.

"I try to challenge myself everyday and motivate the Soldiers around me to challenge themselves to become not just better Soldiers, but better people," said Branchetti. "I feel extremely proud of myself and my military career because I accepted each challenge ... and I succeeded."



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Branchetti (right), the noncommissioned officer in charge of Task Force XII's Air Defense Airspace Management Cell, receives lessons on how to clean night vision goggles from Sgt. Juan Haninger.

Dual military Family watches child grow up through videos, photos taken by relatives

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Sgt. Lindsey Souza and Staff Sgt. Stephen Kelley, a married couple in Troop R, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, spent the morning of their deployment, with Family and friends, trying to keep their moods upbeat and not think about what awaited them in the next few hours.

As the time for them to leave grew near, they said their goodbyes and prepared to leave, but they knew they would be leaving a part of themselves behind; that part was a three-year-old little girl named Taylor.

Souza and Kelley are just one of several deployed couples who have to rely on Family members back home to take care of little ones they had to leave behind.

“Leaving her was the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” said Souza, the training and operations noncommissioned officer for Troop R and a native of Kailua, Hawaii. “We decided it would be best if we said our goodbyes to Taylor at our house, instead of on post right before we left.”

As they made their way to the airport, they had to mentally prepare

themselves for not only their first deployment, but for all the time and memories they would miss with their little girl, said Kelley, a maintenance section sergeant in Troop R and a native of Clark Summit, Pa.

“My father was visiting from Hawaii, and we had to take him to the airport before we went to post,” said Souza. “I got pretty emotional along the way and I cried a lot; but once we got to the airport the mood got lighter and we were able to say our goodbyes.”

Kelley’s father, David, took them to their unit staging area and then he told them goodbye and stay safe. David and his wife Rene live in Fort Worth, Texas, and have custody of Taylor while the couple is deployed.

Souza and Kelley had a lot of things to take care of during the pre-deployment process. In addition to deciding who should take care of Taylor, they also had to close out bills, sell a car and figure out who would watch over their newly purchased house.

“I think it would have been a little easier if one of us stayed behind, but that was never an option we wanted to take,” said Souza. “We

really appreciate all the help our Families have given us and we realize how much pressure it would have been for the spouse left behind.”

“It’s difficult for any parent to be separated from their children, but I know it’s extremely difficult for troops, like (Souza and Kelley), who have to leave their children with other Family members,” said Capt. Jeffrey Hernandez, the Troop R commander and a proud father. “A deployment can be especially difficult for the parents of young children because they miss so much of the child’s life.”

Hernandez, who is on his second deployment, says his three children are handling his deployment very well so far.

Since Souza and Kelley began their deployment, they have missed Taylor’s third birthday and the entire holiday season, but their Family tries to keep them involved.

“Being away for the holidays was really hard because this is the first Christmas she really understood Christmas gifts,” said Kelley. “Our Families took plenty of pictures and sent us videos but it’s not as good as being there.”

“I know sometimes



Photos by Sgt. Brandon Little

Top: Staff Sgt. Stephen Kelley, a section sergeant for Troop R, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, points to his favorite picture of his daughter, Taylor.

Bottom: Sgt. Lindsey Souza, the training and operations noncommissioned officer for Troop R, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, points to her favorite picture of her daughter.

are more difficult for them than others,” said Hernandez, who hails from McAllen, Texas. “Sometimes when they call their daughter she might not want to talk or might want to talk with one of them more than the other.”

This deployment isn’t the first time they have had to leave their daughter behind, but it will definitely be the longest.

“We’d spent about a month away from her (for deployment training) last year, but that was nothing compared to right now,” said Kelley. “Last year, when we got back from training, it took a while for her to get use to being around us again.”

Being deployed together has allowed them to help each cope with missing their daughter, said Souza.

“When I’ve had a bad day at work, and I really miss Taylor, my husband can tell by the look

on my face when I’m looking at pictures,” said Souza. “He helps me get through the rough times and I try to do the same for him.”

Souza and Kelley go on leave in April but they both say leaving little Taylor will probably be harder this time than it was at the beginning of the deployment.

When both parents are deployed, they must rely on help from close Family and friends to take care of their children, but they must rely on each other to get through the difficult days.

“So far I’m enjoying my deployment, especially since I have my husband here with me,” said Souza. “I miss my daughter a lot, but I know what we’re doing here is really important. I’m really excited about the idea of getting back home after the deployment and having our Family back together again.”



Courtesy Photo

Staff Sgt. Stephen Kelley and Sgt. Lindsey Souza hug their daughter, Taylor, one last time before leaving for the deployment.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeff Harford, an AH-64D Apache Longbow pilot in 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, is jokingly wheeled off the airfield, wearing an oxygen tank, after completing 5,000 accident-free flying hours.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Pfc. Brian Smith struggles to loosen a pin that holds the blade of an AH-64 Apache Longbow helicopter in place. Smith is an aviation maintainer and a member of Nomad Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

A Soldier in Company A, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment scans the Iraq countryside while serving as a door gunner in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Maj. Don Stoner, the Task Force XII S-1, takes a minute to talk with an Iraqi child while patrolling with Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Spc. James Astesana watches the lights over Iraq, through night vision goggles, during a night mission with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment,



Photo by Staff Sgt. Kristine Erb

Several Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Battalion pose for a picture in front of the "Task Force Storm" logo holding gifts from care packages sent by Family members and friends.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Lt. Gen. John Cooper (center), incoming Deputy Commanding General for Multi-National Forces – Iraq, discusses aviation operations in Multi-National Division – Baghdad with Task Force XII leaders.

Task Force XII Attorney teaches Iraqis laws of war

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Teaching law to brand new military officers can get pretty complicated. Various nuances and “what if” scenarios can be so confusing, they might as well be written in Arabic.

For a U.S. Army staff judge advocate, teaching those laws to Iraqi Air Force Cadets, the best way to clear up the confusion was to do just that.

Maj. James Teixeira, an attorney in Task Force XII, has been teaching the law of armed conflict and military justice classes for years. They are required classes for the Army; and Soldiers get at least some version of the training about every six months.

Teaching it to the Iraqis, using Arabic language text, was something he wasn’t quite accustomed to.

“Most of the (U.S.)

Soldiers have had the class before so it’s not particularly new to them,” said Teixeira, a native of Green Valley, Ariz. “With the Iraqi cadets, my impression was that this was all new to them, so they had a lot more questions.”

The cadets are students at the Iraqi Air Force Training School at Camp Taji. The school has been training future Air Force Officers, using American curriculum, since April 2007.

The instructors are U.S. Airmen, assigned to the 370th Expeditionary Training Squadron. Most of them were selected because of their previous experience as instructors at more traditional Air Force schools.

“The language barrier is a challenge,” said Capt. Alisa Thomas, a former Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor at the University of Ohio. “You

have to learn how to say things several different ways, and ask the right questions to make sure they actually understand what you’re saying.”

This academy and its sister school, the Iraqi Military Academy in Rustamiyah, are responsible for equipping a new generation of Iraqi military officers with the skills to lead their quickly growing services into the future.

These students are recent college graduates, most with engineering degrees, who will soon be pilots; flying the skies of Iraq they will face the same decisions Coalition pilots have been facing since the beginning of the war.

“They like things they believe they can use right away; law of armed conflict is one of those things” said Thomas.

“The goal is to minimize the risk to civilians,” said Teixeira.

“That’s really the key (point) whether I’m giving the class to Americans or Iraqis. I think they got that, and there was no push back.

“Sometimes when you’re teaching this stuff you get some (resistance), but I think the Iraqis got it in terms of the real goal, regardless of the type of conflict, is to protect the civilian populace,” he said.

The law of armed conflict is the same for both

the U.S. and Iraq; it’s based on international law found in the Geneva and Hague conventions, said Teixeira.

“They haven’t adopted our system, and we haven’t tried to give them our system,” said Teixeira. “The students had a lot of questions, which showed that they were thinking about it, and they cared about what was the right thing to do and what was the wrong thing to do.”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Maj. James Teixeira, an attorney in Task Force XII Legal Office and a native of Green Valley, Ariz., explains proportionality analysis to a class of Iraqi cadets.

Flight equipment maintainers help aviators fly comfortably

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Have you ever been walking and had a small rock get inside your shoe? Remember that sharp, and annoying, discomfort you felt with every step you took? Now imagine having to walk around for hours with that rock in your shoe and not being able to remove it.

An aviator can experience a similar type of pain during a mission if a piece of equipment – such as a helmet – needs to be fixed or just doesn’t fit properly.

The Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE) shop is responsible for inspecting and repairing this equipment for aviators, in 12th Combat Aviation Brigade,



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Sgt. David Shafer (left), the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE) shop for Company D, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, shows a Soldier the proper way to inspect his helmet.

that could help save their lives during a mission.

“The ALSE shop takes care of personal equipment that a flight crew member, regardless whether or not they are rated, will use in the performance of their duties on the aircraft,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Long, the quality assurance and production control noncommissioned officer for Company D, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. “This also includes the survival equipment that might be needed if the aircraft had to make an emergency landing.”

In addition to servicing their flight gear, the ALSE shop is also responsible for inspecting safety equipment such as seatbelts, fire extinguishers and first aid kits, said Sgt. David Shafer, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the ALSE shop for Company D.

Just like most equipment in the military, flight gear and safety equipment must be inspected on a regular basis to ensure that it is working properly. The ALSE shops in Logistical Support Area Anaconda and Taji are responsible for maintaining this equipment for nearly 500 aviators.

“We usually check the seatbelts and fire extinguisher every 60 to 90 days, and we usually do scheduled maintenance on the helmets and vest every 180 days,” said Shafer, a native of Zion, Ill. “But in the event something (unexpectedly)

breaks, or needs to be serviced immediately, we’ll take the item and try to have it ready to go as soon as possible.”

“Without the ALSE shop, we couldn’t continue to fly the way we do and be safe,” said Sgt. Christopher Zedan, a crew chief in Company A, 5th Bn., 158th Avn. Reg. “They do a great job keeping our equipment up to standard and working the way it should.”

Not only does the ALSE shop service their flight gear, and safety equipment, they also show the crew members the proper way to use the gear.

“This is especially helpful to those Soldiers who have been recently cross-trained as door gunners, because many of them have had little interaction with aviation equipment,” said Shafer.

During those classes, Shafer also tries to give them some basic lessons in survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE) tactics.

Keeping these aviators flying safely and their equipment working properly is a job that the ALSE shop Soldiers must constantly perform in their office and on the flight line.

“It’s our job to provide these aviators equipment that is up-to-date and can save their life in an emergency,” said Shafer. “I know maintaining their equipment is, by far, the most important part of my job, but my favorite part of my job is definitely dealing the SERE training.”

Married couple reenlists

Story by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam, TF 49 PAO

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Army life isn’t for everyone, but for some Soldiers, it’s the only life that makes sense.

On March 5, married Soldiers Staff Sgt. Tyrrell Terrell, 412th Aviation Support Battalion and Sgt. Elicia Terrell, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment extended their commitment to the Army together.

The two originally didn’t plan to reenlist together.

“I decided to reenlist because both of our parents aren’t getting any younger and we’ll be better off financially to take care of our kids and help our parents,” Elicia Terrell said.

By reenlisting, the Terrells truly demonstrated their commitment to the country. Tyrrell Terrell has deployed three times prior to this tour in Iraq, and Elicia Terrell has already deployed twice.

Despite all the deployments, the couple says they felt the Army was the best life for the Family.

The Terrells left their children, three girls and one boy ages 7, 10, 11 and 12, with relatives in the states; but the couple tries to stay close to their children.

“I speak to the kids at least twice a week for about 10 minutes each,” Tyrrell Terrell said. “We also send them cards



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Married Soldiers Staff Sgt. Tyrrell Terrell, 412th Aviation Support Battalion and Sgt. Elicia Terrell, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment reenlist together during a ceremony on March 5.

weekly and monthly to let them know that they are always in our prayers and thoughts.”

Elicia says she misses her children, but she knows how lucky she is to share her deployment with her husband.

“It would have been a lot harder being away from the kids and being away from each other,” she said.

The Terrells were originally scheduled to take leave in July, but Elicia Terrell said since it was so close to their unit’s redeployment, they decided to pass on the opportunity and just load up on 45 days of leave when they get back to their home station.

When the couple returns to their home station in Germany, they will have not seen their children for 15 months; they will have missed multiple birthdays, a full year of school and

countless holidays.

Despite all of these sacrifices, they chose to continue to wear the uniform and continue to defend their country during a time of war.

“I am proud to have served my country, and I will continue to serve with pride, and continue to uphold the Army values now and in life after the military,” Tyrrell Terrell said.

Both Terrells said they understand the strain deployments put on their Family, but they are convinced their children will grow up stronger individuals having dealt with sacrifice and loss early in life.

“We want them to always choose the right over the wrong, the good over the bad,” Tyrrell Terrell said. “Sometimes you have to make personal sacrifices for others, and know the easy way is not always the best way.

Keeping 12th CAB Families informed

Story by Maj. Don Stoner, TF XII S-1

Why is it that people love to see flattering pictures of themselves, yet most don’t seem to want their picture taken?

Ironically the Iraqi Soldiers and children we have come in contact with since our arrival at Camp Taji flock to the camera, while the U.S. Soldiers seem to shy away. This has not discouraged the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade public affairs team from capturing the images and stories of this deployment.

Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton, a native of Kingfisher, Okla., and Sgt. Brandon Little, of Washington, N.C., have created their own legacy as the first public affairs team assigned to the 12th CAB.

After eight months in Iraq, they are credited with providing a vital lifeline between deployed Soldiers and thousands of Family members in Germany. They have captured thousands of photographic images, published almost one hundred print stories, along with multiple broadcast stories and created the first TV commercial for the 12th CAB.

“Having public affairs Soldiers has significantly increased unit morale and pride,” said Lt. Col. Bryan Hoff, the Task Force XII operations officer.

The 12th CAB Faces of Freedom broadcast, is scheduled to air at 1950 CET, Apr. 10, on the American Forces Network Prime Atlantic. Additional stories on 12th CAB Soldiers can be accessed at the public website; www.12cab.army.mil.



Photos by Maj. Don Stoner

Left: Sgt. Brandon Little (center) enjoys a rare opportunity to become the subject of the photo while covering a story on the Iraqi Air Force.

Right: Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton (center) is surrounded by Iraqi youth as he provides broadcast coverage of Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment.

TASK FORCE XII

WINGS OF VICTORY

For the latest news and photos...

Photo by SFC Khanh Quach

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.

Task Force XII Senior Career Counselor	SGT Bercher	483-2444
SFC Organ	483-4161	2-147th AVN
HHC Task Force XII	SFC Wahlberg	483-2446
SSG Ruffin	483-4071	3-159th AVN
412th ASB	SGT Warren	467-4869
SFC Britton	483-7072	1-214th AVN
5-158th AVN	SGT Leon	382-4415
SSG Lemon	483-2687	3-58th AOD
3-158th AVN	SGT Wacker	467-4983
SSG Olivo	483-2487	12th CAB Rear Detachment Career Counselor
2-159th AVN	SSG Simmons	467-4869

Thank you for reenlisting, keeping us ‘Army Strong’

1st Battalion, 214th Aviation Regiment

PFC CLEVELAND, MICHAEL L.
PFC KEEN, MICKEY B.
SPC DOUGLASSGUSTINE, MICHAEL
SPC RIVERA, JOSE R.
SPC RIVERA, EDGAR O.
SPC ALANIZ, JEROME
SPC COLBERT, KENNETH L.
SGT CENTORANI, RANDY C.
SGT CAMPBELL, JOSEPH S.
SGT BEAL, WILLIAM L.
SGT ATHERTON, GREGORY F. II
SGT STRAND, JUDITH A.
SGT BENITEZ, ARIEL JR.
SGT QUINTERO, EDWARD
SSG STRAND, WAYNE H.

412th Aviation Support Battalion

SPC CLOUD, JAMES L. JR.
SPC HESTER, RANDY H.
SPC FERNANDEZCONTES, JOSE A.
SPC GUZMANRIVERA, MIGUEL A.
SPC DOOLIN, STUART F.
SPC BURKS, CALVIN L.
SPC EBERLING, JAMIE D.
SPC MILLER, COLLEEN H.
SPC KEMPTON, ROBIN G.
SPC PETTIT, JASON B.
SPC COLEMAN, ROBERT H. JR.
SPC CRAFT, KRISTOPHER D.
SPC MOORE, CARL J.
SPC ESPAILLAT, STEVEN
SPC ROBINSON, STEPHANIE L.
SPC SAUNDERS, ANTONIO D.
SPC HARLESS, DAVID T.
SPC PRUNA, RICARDO JR.
SPC BAKER, KEVIN J.
SGT CUNNINGHAM, LEWIS B.
SGT GARRISON, STEPHEN B.
SGT WILLIAMS, CHRYSTAFER D.
SGT MARTINEZ, RAMON J.
SGT MCCARTY, KENNETH T.
SGT DAVIDS, CASSIEM M.
SGT WILKINS, JOHN M. JR.
SGT MOWDY, JAMES M.
SGT DYLEWSKI, JOHN C.
SGT SMITH, BERKLEY C. IV
SGT DUBOIS, BRIAN T.
SGT MARTIN, ARCHIE L.
SSG BAUER, KAIUWE
SSG TERRELL, TYRRELL
SSG BRANNEN, MITCHELL T.
SSG BARELA, ERNEST T.
SSG ANDERSON, CURTIS A.
SSG MCCLURE, ANDREW J.
SSG MUSSER, JASON M.
SSG BROWN, DASHEA O.

3th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment

PFC RUMMEL, JONATHAN D.
SPC ILK, MICHAEL
SPC MILLER, DAVID R.
SSG LEONARD, HICKBIE I.

2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment

PFC EMEHISER, FORREST G.
SPC SURANYI, WESLY T.
SPC MILLER, NATHAN A.
SPC LONG, GARRISON W.
SPC HAYLOCK, PRESTON E.
SPC REYNOLDS, JASON T.
SPC COLLINGWOOD, KERRY D.
SPC VANZANT, TIMOTHY R.
SPC LUGO, ARGENIS R.
SPC RUIZ, LUIS S.
SPC NEALEY, JAMES S. JR.
SPC ROACH, JESSE C.
SPC ATMOSPORA, RICHARD
SPC FOSTER, REBEKAH K.
SPC WU, TONY T.
SPC PODRECCA, TYLER M.
SGT CARLSON, SCOTT W.
SGT JONES, LAVARIS D.
SGT GATES, JOSEPH A.
SGT FOUNTAIN, STEVEN L.
SGT MEJIA, WILLIAM O.
SGT GAGE, MARVIN B.
SGT GRAYMAN, JASON A.
SGT WILSON, WILLIAM E.
SGT KNOPIK, MICHAEL A.
SGT BAILEY, WILLIAM R.
SGT WRIEDT, JAROD B.
SSG TWIGGS, TODD E.
SSG LOBO, ALFREDO
SFC SEATON, RONNIE J. JR.

4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment

PFC LINDOW, BRITTNEY N.
PFC SCHUETTE, SCOTT H.
PFC PRINCE, KATRINA M.
PFC TAYLOR, SOPHIA E.
PFC SIMMONS, BENJAMIN B. II
SPC DUENAS, JIMMY M.
SPC ALLEN, DESTRA J.
SPC DOWNER, BRANDEN B.
SPC WICKER, JASON L.
SPC FINONA, FRANK E.
SPC LUBBOCK, MICHAEL J.
SPC GRIFFETH, RANDALL S.
SPC PEDRO, MARVIN F.
SPC CHITARADHIRA, ROONGNAPA
SPC MOORE, SIR A.
SPC ANDRUS, JAMES S.
SPC WASHBURN, BOBBIE L.
SPC HALL, JAMELL E.
SPC REEVES, SEAN D.
SPC HILL, TERRY R.
SPC WASHINGTON, WILLIAM M.
SPC CROKA, NICHOLAS R.
SGT BRADLEY, ALICIA Y.
SGT WHITNEY, MARVIN
SGT CLACKLER, MICHAEL W.
SGT ERFORD, ANDREW T.
SGT RUSSELL, JOEY D.
SGT MAXWELL, JUSTIN V.

SGT ATKINSON, EVAN J.
SGT HOOEY, JOHN L.
SGT GRUBER, JOEY M.
SSG POWELL, LUTHER C. JR.
SSG ROSS, MATTHEW R.
SSG WHITE, DAVID L.
SSG BOOTS, DUSTON A.
SSG CUDE, ELBERT D.
SSG RIVERAROBLES, EDGARDO
5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment
PFC WILLIAMS, THOMAS W.
PFC LINEAR, CLARENCE M.
PFC MORNING, LATOYA S.
PFC JONES, MARTY R. JR.
SPC TESCHNER, ERIC M.
SPC BYRD, MICHAEL F.
SPC BLUNDELL, JIMMY L.
SPC SMILEY, HAROLD T. JR.
SPC SCHOFIELD, NATHAN E.
SPC ALCORN, MICHAEL P.
SPC HARDY, JERRY J.
SPC REICHARDT, MICHAEL P.
SPC HAGEN, ERIC T.
SPC LIDDLELOW, DWANE J.
SPC JEFFERY, KENDALL A.
SPC MORRISON, RICKEY D.
SPC HARTSFIELD, MARSHALL T.
SGT PETERSEN, ERIC J.
SGT MCCLAIN, SHANDELL L.
SGT MURPH, ROBERT W. II
SGT CABATINGAN, JEREMY A.
SGT ENGEL, JASON M.
SGT MOORE, CHRISTOPHER W.
SGT TERRELL, ELICIA
SGT OLIVASANTIAGO, ELINOR E.
SGT REA, JACOB A.
SSG SCOTT, MICHAEL D.
SSG HURLEY, JACOB R.
SSG MARTIN, GREGORY L.
3th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment
PFC DHAENE, CARL E.
SPC SMITH, PATRICK R.
SPC STURTZ, JAMES A.
SPC UBALDO, EDGARDO B. JR.
SPC MARANO, AMY E.
SPC MINTON, KELVIN R.
SPC REITER, BRYAN P.
SGT CALLAHAN, JONATHAN A.
SGT WHITE, THOMAS T.
SGT SPEED, RAYMOND D.
SGT URBANIAK, BENJAMIN R.
SGT JONES, ROBERT W.
SGT SANDERS, KEVIN L.
SGT KING, BRIAN K.
SGT SPAIN, JAMIE D.
SSG SANABRIA, LUIS A. JR.
SSG MILAM, BYRON E.
HHC Task Force XII
PFC NGIRDIMAU, HELLTON L.
SPC LOLLEY, KALEB K.
SPC GOMEZ, ANA R.
SSG REGEC, TRACEY L.

Dad watches sons excel from Iraq

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Staff Sgt. Ernesto Rosario, the avionics section sergeant for Company D, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, is a very proud father. He's got every reason to be; his two sons, Giancarlo, a junior at Ansbach American High School in Germany, and Melvin, a freshman, are by all accounts model students.

Giancarlo is an honor student and a member of the National Honor Society. He's a baritone player for the school's advanced band, an assistant soccer coach, and volunteers as a math tutor. He even helps his classmates who are learning English as a second language (ESL) - he himself an ESL student since moving from Bayamon, Puerto Rico at age seven.

Despite being deployed to Iraq, Ernesto says he has everything he wants in a Family ... it wasn't always that simple for the Rosarios.

As Giancarlo grew up, his parents be-

gan to worry about him. They wondered about his coordination, and his social skills.

"He was totally clumsy," said Ernesto. "He couldn't run five steps without tripping over his own shoes on a regular basis. And social interaction was very difficult for him. We thought it was just a coordination problem, so we took him to different things like swimming practice or Tae Kwon Do hoping it would help him."

As time went on, and his condition didn't get better, they sought the help of professionals. A doctor at Fort Bragg, N.C. told them what they didn't want to hear; Giancarlo was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome - a form of Autism.

"It was shocking, but the more we found out about Asperger, the more we were like 'well, let's take it one day at a time,'" he said.

The Rosarios enrolled Giancarlo in support groups, and began researching his condition using internet searches, books and by talking to whomever they could to find out how they could help him.

Through patience and support, Giancarlo has grown up very well, say his parents. Now 16, he is active in his class and has succeeded in most things he's tried.

Last year, he was asked to talk about his good and bad experiences to a group of 50 teachers and professionals in Katterbach.

"All those teachers, they know (about Autism) in theory, and they can read about it in books, but until that day they didn't know what Asperger was," said Ernesto. "I was surprised when he went



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

LSAANACONDA, Iraq - Staff Sgt. Ernesto Rosario, an avionics maintenance technician for Company D, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment works on equipment under the front hatch of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter

and talked to them, and told them 'this is who I am, and this is what I feel.'"

"When people think about Autism, they think about limitations," added his mother, Grace Diaz. "For Giancarlo it is something inside him that helps him see the world in a different way than anybody else can."

Giancarlo's parents attribute much of his success to his younger brother Melvin. While Giancarlo helps Melvin in academics, Melvin has complemented his older brother in social skills.

The Rosario brothers both recently placed in competition at a Junior Science and Humanities Symposium.

Giancarlo's project placed first, and will go on to the national symposium in April. Melvin finished fourth.

"I'm so proud of my kids," said Ernesto. "Whether they win things or not has nothing to do with it. I don't expect a lot of things; be nice to each other and support each other and I'm happy."



Courtesy Photo

Bayamon, Puerto Rico native Staff Sgt. Ernesto Rosario (center) poses with his sons Melvin (left) and Giancarlo (right) at a theme park in Germany while on R&R leave in January.

**Got a photo you want to share?
How about a story 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.



ANNOUNCING.... THE TF XII COMMEMORATIVE OIF PRINT!!



TF XII HAS COMMISSIONED JIM DIETZ, WORLD-FAMOUS MILITARY / AVIATION ARTIST, TO PRODUCE A LIMITED EDITION PRINT HONORING OUR OIF 07-09 DEPLOYMENT. THE PRINT WILL DEPICT THE SOLDIERS AND AIRCRAFT OF TF XII IN ACTION.

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HQ, TF 4B: MAJ JONES, TF 4B XO
12TH CAB REAR DETACHMENT: LT NIELSEN, BDE S1
2-15B: LT VEGA
2-147: CPT HOSNIK
3-15B: LT CONNORS
5-15B: CPT HAWKINS
412: CPT STEWART
OGACOM / 244TH: MAJ DEBOON**

Retention Corner

By Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Organ

First, let me congratulate all the Soldiers and Families in the Combat Aviation Brigade who have reenlisted in the past month. Over 150 Soldiers raised their right hands and chose to keep us “Army Strong;” congratulations to everyone.

As everyone knows there are constant changes to the retention program and to the bonus program.

Many of you already know that a new bonus message was recently released, reducing the number of critical skill MOS’s and the bonus amounts. For the latest bonus information please check out MILPER Message 08-068.

A great tool for Soldiers and Families to use is www.armyreenlistment.com. This website is up to date with all the

current reenlistment information and is a great tool for the unit retention NCOs.

As 12th CAB gets further into the deployment, Soldiers will start seeing more assignments but the current station stabilization option will go away.

Here are some reenlistment options currently available:

1. Regular Army
2. Current Station Stabilization (12 months from current DEROS)
3. Army Training (MOS changes and ASI’s)
4. Overseas Assignment
5. Conus Station of Choice

If you have questions about your reenlistment options, or any retention questions in general, I encourage you to contact your servicing Career Counselor



The 12th CAB Retention Team
or unit Retention NCO for information.

The Griffin Brigade Chronicles: History of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade (Part 8)

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



The last elements of the 12th Aviation Group left Vietnam in March 1973, just as U.S. involvement there was ending.

While some portions of the Group moved immediately to Germany, the Group headquarters and most of its subordinate elements moved to Fort Bragg, N.C., where the Group served as the aviation element for XVIII Airborne Corps. This arrangement lasted for six years until 1979, when the 12th Group conducted another unit move, this time to Germany for good.

Our first German home was at Lindsey Air Station in Wiesbaden and, for the first time, the Griffins served as a major subordinate command of V Corps. In April 1984, the Group’s headquarters company moved to Wiesbaden Air Base; now Wiesbaden Army Airfield, home of Headquarters, 1st Armored Division.

In 1987, the 12th Group became the 12th Aviation Brigade and completely moved to this installation. Some of the

current 12th CAB formations trace their origins in the brigade to this period.

The 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment “Mission Ready Battalion” formed during this period, and other elements of the 6th and 7th battalions also joined the brigade. In 1988, the brigade received its first AH-64 Apaches in the form of the 5th Squadron, 6th Cavalry.

A young warrant officer named Ted Tomczyk, our current Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 12th CAB Rear Detachment commander, served with 5-6

CAV and forever entered gun pilot lore by digging the barrel of his helicopter’s 30mm gun into the runway at Weisbaden during a takeoff. This ensured Ted a permanent place in the Apache Operator’s Manual. Ask him about it sometime!!

The 15 years following Vietnam saw the 12th Aviation Brigade take much of its current form, and the Griffins became thereafter connected with Army Aviation in Germany.

Wings of Victory! See you next month.



Photo from <http://1stmob.com/coppermine/thumbnails.php?album=21>

The front gate of Lindsey Air Station, Wiesbaden, Germany.

Task Force XII Commander
Col. Timothy J. Edens

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

Task Force XII Public Affairs Officer
Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

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