



Volume 2, Issue 2

“WINGS OF VICTORY!”

FEBRUARY 2008

Task Force XII Soldiers visited by Army’s outgoing vice chief of staff, master aviator

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Gen. Richard Cody, the Army’s vice chief of staff, made a special visit to the Task Force XII area of operations Feb. 12.

Cody, who is a master aviator with more than 5,000 hours of flight time, was briefed by Task Force XII Soldiers on current and future operations.

Since taking on the responsibility of providing aviation support to Multi-National Division – Baghdad, in December, Task Force XII Soldiers have adjusted to their new mission while continuing to improve operations each day, said Col. Timothy Edens, the commander of Task Force XII.

Cody was briefed on the tactics, techniques and procedures being used by Task Forces XII.

“Task Force Storm currently launches (nearly 75 percent) of our aircraft every day,” said Lt. Col. James Macklin Jr., the commander of Task Force Storm. “Due to the outstanding job of our (flight crews) and maintainers, I think we’re doing a great job of providing the division what they need.”

“Our unmanned aerial vehicle pilots are well-trained and our handoffs (with brigade combat teams) are going pretty good,” said Capt. Shirwen Separa, the commander of Company G, Task Force XII.

Cody commended “Griffin” Soldiers on their excellent safety record since they’ve been in theater.

“You’re the first combat aviation brigade to not have an accident within their first 90 days in theater,” he said. “You’re off to a tremendous start so please continue to do whatever you’re doing.”

Although Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno will replace him as the Army’s vice chief of staff in the next few months, Cody



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Col. Timothy Edens, the commander of Task Force XII, welcomes Gen. Richard Cody to the Task Force XII area of operation. Cody, the Army’s vice chief of staff and one of the Army’s most senior aviators, has been a mentor to numerous aviators throughout the Army.

says, the Army will continue to provide aviators the tools they need to complete their missions.

Cody concluded his visit by thanking the leaders of Task Force XII for a job well-done and reminded them to continue to look out for their Soldiers.

“Remember to take care of those wonderful maintainers and crew chiefs because they are just as important as the pilots,” said Cody. “This (task force) has shown great discipline and I’m awful proud of you and what you’ve been doing.”

Check out what’s inside ...



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Griffin 06 Sends ... Continuing to stay focused

Soldiers and Families of Task Force XII:

We are now officially past the halfway mark of our deployment, and I could not be more proud of the accomplishments and safety record to date.

Although we can all be justifiably proud of our accomplishments and excited about the fact we are halfway through our combat tour, there is still much work to be done, and we all must resist the tendency to get tunnel vision and focus on the finish line.

Leaders, it's your job to continue to motivate your Soldiers and keep their minds on the fight. All of you have come too far and done too many great things to lose focus on the important mission at hand. Focus here, now, that's what made you successful so far and it is what will keep you successful.

The great football coach, Vince Lombardi put it like this, *"You never win a game unless you beat the guy in front of you. The score on the board doesn't mean a thing. That's for the fans. You've got to win the war with the man in front of you. You've got to get your man."*

I can't tell you what our score will be in seven months, but I can tell you this: the only way to make sure it is in our favor is to get successfully through each day by beating the enemy in all its forms – Al Qaeda, the weather, the fatigue, the complacency, the frustration, or the urge to feel sorry for ourselves.

That's plenty to deal with, without worrying about what might or might not be in seven months.

When Lt. Gen. James Thurman paid us a visit back in June down in Kuwait, while many of us were waiting to enter Iraq, he said "enforcing safety and stan-



dards would bring all of us home."

So far we have preformed above and beyond the safety standard set forth by previous aviation brigades in theater. I want to commend you on going the extra mile to ensure your fellow Griffin Soldiers are doing the right things, taking care of one another and, in so doing, continuing to promote a positive, professional image for the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Remember that safety is as much your responsibility as it is mine, and I need your help to make sure we bring each and every one of these incredible Soldiers home.

Believe me, I miss my Family just as much as you miss yours, but staying focused on the mission of providing outstanding aviation support to our troops on the ground will make our homecoming

that much more rewarding.

Our Rear Detachment Soldiers continue doing an exceptional job of providing us with essential mission support and continuing to look out for our Families back in Germany.

I hear numerous stories of the great things you are doing and I want you to continue to drive on and know that I am just as proud of you as I am of our deployed Soldiers. Keep up the great work!

Griffin Families and friends, I know the last few months have been a little rough - particularly back in Germany where we have suffered some tragic family member losses - but the strength and courage you continue to exert is the driving force behind this deployment.

I can't express to you how much the letters and care packages you send to your husbands and wives continue to keep spirits high and boost morale. Stay strong and remember the FRGs are there to help if you have concerns or if you want to talk with someone who knows what you're going through.

I would like to thank all of you for the hard work you do, and again ask for your help to stop the spread of rumors throughout our units and FRGs.

Wishful thinking can only lead to frustration and heartache as the leaders in Iraq continue to assess the troop requirements for 2008 and beyond. As soon as more information is known, you will be the first to know. Keep up the great work, and continue to take care of one another!

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

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

A cartoon illustration of Uncle Sam wearing his iconic top hat with stars and stripes, a blue suit, and holding a vintage black and white camera up to his eye as if taking a picture.

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.

The logo for Task Force XII, featuring a stylized blue and orange flame or wing design.

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.

ONLY 500 SIGNED, SERIAL-NUMBERED PRINTS WILL BE AVAILABLE, FOR THE UNBELIEVABLE PRICE OF ONLY \$70, OR \$80 WITH A RESERVED NUMBER!

JIM DIETZ WILL TRAVEL TO GERMANY FOLLOWING OUR DEPLOYMENT TO PERSONALLY DELIVER AND SIGN OUR PRINTS.

**SEE YOUR UNIT PRINT REPRESENTATIVE NOW TO RESERVE YOUR COPIES! THEY ARE GOING FAST, AND ONCE THEY'RE GONE...
*THEY'RE GONE!***

HHC: LTC BOWEN (BDE XO) / SGT DIAZ (CATFISH AIR)
HQ, TF 4B: MAJ JONES, TF 4B XO
12TH CAB REAR DETACHMENT: LT NIELSEN, BDE S1
2-15B: LT VERA
2-14Z: CPT HOSNIK
3-15B: LT CONNORS
5-15B: CPT HAWKINS
412: CPT STEWART
OSACOM / 244TH: MAJ DEBOON

The logo for Task Force XII, featuring a stylized blue and orange flame or wing design.

Command Sergeant Major’s Corner

Hello my large and extended family,

I hope this note finds you happy and healthy. Some of you remember last month when I asked the question whether I should have a 50th Birthday party for Ms. Deborah. It was very important to me and I felt it was something very worthwhile to celebrate. I love this dear woman and I would do anything to make her happy ... let me tell you it back fired on me.

I guess the last thing a boneheaded husband should remind his wife of is how old she’s getting. She was madder than two Bobcats in a burlap sack. I’ll fist fight a chain saw, but I won’t mess around with Ms. Deborah. Now this brings me to my Topic of the Day, Forgiveness.

Marriage is a wonderful thing that’s based on trust, and trust enables us to be happy and grow as a person. Husbands and wives often do things to please their spouse and sometimes it doesn’t work out. We should look at the intent our loved one has made for us and not judge it in a negative light. Always forgive and try to understand your mate’s point of view. During long separations husbands and wives drive on with their lives; new cars are purchased, furniture is rearranged and hundreds of other little everyday items are accomplished. Don’t go home and be critical of anything, be part of the Family team. Your spouse did

the best job they could while you were deployed and you better appreciate it ... that love stuff is tough.

Presidential elections are coming gang, and all of you should vote. As Americans and Soldiers (The defenders of freedom) we owe it to each other to vote, to choose the person who we feel will best lead our country. Most of us have accidentally viewed enough political lectures to have an idea on who we would like to vote for. As a whole, the military has a huge voice in the process of presidential elections, and collectively we can highly influence the elections. Now is the time to do your research to find out where you get your ballots, because once your honey gets off the plane you guys are going to be a little too busy to think about voting then. If you don’t vote you can’t complain about the administration. Make your military vote count. The sooner these presidential wanna-be’s realize the military vote is important, the better life will be for the Soldier and his/her Family.

Here’s something I want you to consider with your spouse. Once the Brigade gets back we have a huge number of our Soldiers and Families leaving 12th CAB. Why not extend for a year or longer and spend your well earned dwell time in Germany? We are not on a patch chart for deployment to anywhere right now. Everyone knows the risk we take when we PCS to another unit, the chances of



another deployment are high. So far we have an extremely high approval rate for extensions right now due to our personnel strengths. If you have to leave Germany because you can’t stand it another minute, that’s okay too. God Bless you and the best of luck. The current deployment situation can not be maintained at this rate for much longer, and big Army knows this. Expect to see major changes in the near future.

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

Thank you for reenlisting, keeping us ‘Army Strong’

- 1st Battalion, 214th Aviation Regiment
SPC BOSCH, ROCKY P.
SPC ZERQUERA, JENNIFER E.
SPC LOY, PAUL E.
SGT JAYNES, WILLIAM J.
SGT WARREN, LEROY T.
SGT SAVOIE, BRANDON P.
SGT HOLT, ROBERT L.
SGT WISE, BRUCE E. JR.
SGT NAVARRO, DOMINIC F.
SGT LEBRETON, DAVID M.
SSG WITT, URIAH B.
SSG GALLOWAY, JESSE L.
SSG CROSE, FRED D.
SSG YOUNG, JOHN W. JR.
SSG MANZANO, JOSE L.
- 3th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment
SPC KULP, CHRISTOPHER A.
SPC DELGADO, CARLOS M.
SGT AUSTIN, TYRONE D.
SGT CHURCH, CALEB M.
SGT SWEET, CHRISTIAN O.
SSG ALIPIO, HARVEY C.
SSG RENNY, ROBERT L.
- 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment
SPC WICKER, JASON L.
SPC FINONA, FRANK E.
CPL DUENAS, JIMMY M.
SSG ROSS, MATTHEW R.
SPC ALLEN, DESTRA J.
SPC DOWNER, BRANDEN B.
SPC LUBBOCK, MICHAEL J.
SSG POWELL LUTHER C. JR.
SGT MARTIN, JOHN M.

- 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment
PFC HAYDEN, SARAH L.
SPC IGNACIO, RYAN W.
SPC BRAWLEY, BOBBY C. III
SPC MARTINEZMERCADO, JONATHAN
SPC PERNSLEY, LESLIE L.
SPC SOLIZ ,JUAN M.
SPC GALLOWAY, BRANDON D.
SPC CHACON, JONATHAN D.
SGT MILES, MATTHEW L.
SGT HERRERADURAN, DOUGLAS
SGT BILLIPS, LACARNO V.
SGT CRUZ, FRANK A.
SSG SCIMIA DEL CID, CARLOS E.
- 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment
PFC IGLINSKI, JONATHAN A.
PFC MEISEL, RALF H.
PFC HALLGARCIA, CRYSTAL M.
PFC STINSON, SHAWNA R.
SPC KROHN, CLIFTON A.
SPC BENEDETTI, FRANCINE
SPC RENTAS, PEDRO A.
SPC HOOKER, IRIS N.
SPC THOMAS, TROY P.
SPC BROUGHTON, DONNIE L.
SPC RAMIREZBERDECIA, BRIAN
SGT WATERS, GLEN A.
SGT RHODEN, LATOYA
SGT FILSAIME, SERGOT J.
SGT SIMULCIK, MICHAEL A.
SSG MADERASANTIAGO, MIGUEL A.
SSG BOYD, PARIS A.
- HHC Task Force XII
SPC PALACHUK, RONALD E. JR.
SGT BROTEN, JEROD R.

- 412th Aviation Support Battalion
PFC WARD, BRITTANY R.
SPC MOODY, MICHAEL R. JR.
SPC HERNANDEZ, YUSNIEL
SPC MILBOURNE, LAMONT T.
SPC SHROUT, ANTON F.
SPC JOHNSON, ASHLEY A.
SPC BOAZ, SHELBY A.
SPC PASCETTI, ANGELO L.
SPC MIRTH, BRIAN E.
SPC GATLIN, DARRELL L.
SPC GONGORA, ALEJANDRO
SPC HARRIS, JULIAN D.
SGT WILSON, ELENA M.
SGT WILSON, TYLER E.
SGT ZANDY, SHAWN A.
SGT HENRY, CAMILLE A.
SGT ROBBINS, PATRICK J.
SGT CHUN, SARUN
SGT SUAREZ, KEN D.
SGT NIEVESNIEVES, WALTER A.
SGT WEEKS, DAVID E.
SGT WILLIAMS, DANIEL G.
SGT BAZAAR, BRETT R.
SGT BROOKS, DONTÉ C.
SGT CONQUEST, BYRON A.
SGT CLONTZ, ERIC N.
SGT GUINN, SAMUEL B.
SGT MADDOX, FREDRIC L.
SGT YOUNG, JASON M.
SSG SARMIENTO, JESSE D.
SSG BRATHWAITE, ALBERT A.
SSG SCOGGINS, ERIK E.
SSG KOSKI, STEPHEN W.

A moment with the Chaplain

Taking a good look in the mirror

By Chaplain (Maj.) David G. Waweru

Looking at other people is more natural than looking at ourselves. In most cases we look out at others to see who they are or what they are doing.

Looking at ourselves requires extra effort because we have to reflect our image in a mirror in order to have a look at ourselves.

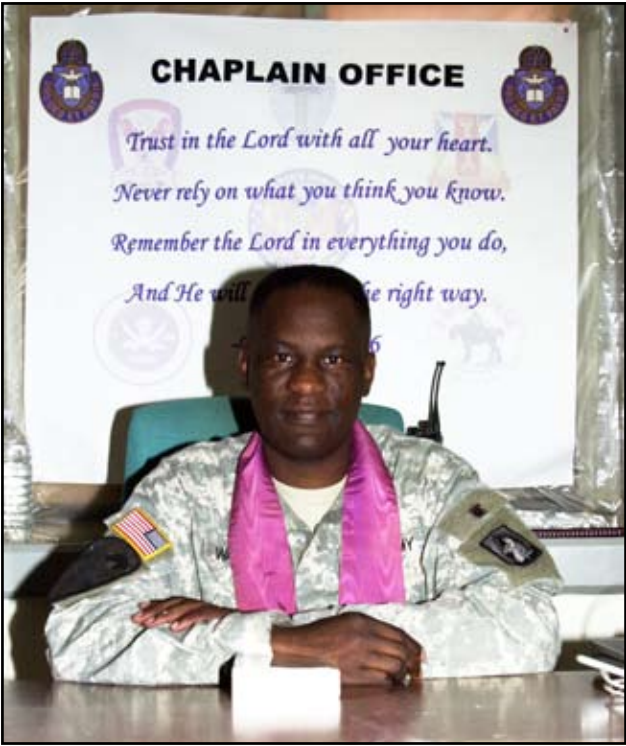
Professionally, we are forced to work at close proximity with others and therefore we have to share limited space with other people. Being in the military, we've learned to work with other people, as a team, standing next to each other ... shoulder to shoulder.

The same holds true in our personal lives because we must remain closely linked to our Family members and close friends.

When people work, or live, close to each other it's easy to notice our differences and see what others are doing wrong instead of what they are doing right.

A wise man once said *"that so long as we are human beings, we will make some mistakes."*

Noticing what others do right or wrong is not a problem, but we must also look at ourselves with same type of honesty.



Every one of us has an embedded belief that he or she is right and others are wrong.

Most problems in relationships occur when one person thinks his/her decision is right and the other person's opinion or position is wrong.

Lent in the Christian calendar provides a period of special focus on self examination. Churches in the sixth century set aside the forty days before Easter as a

time of intense self examination; this is a time to intentionally observe spiritual self awareness and our devotion to God.

This period commenced on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 6, and will continue to Mar. 15 and be followed by the "holy week."

Self examination is a spiritual exercise we are all encouraged to perform every day, but we are supposed to pay more attention to at this time of the year. This discipline has several benefits to your spirituality, your life and the lives of those around you.

I read an article in a magazine a long time ago that said *"when you are looking at mistakes, you don't use a magnifying glass."*

If you do that, it will magnify small mistakes into big problems that will appear unsolvable and unforgivable.

What you need is a mirror to look for mistakes, and this will give you the chance to see your mistakes and then you can have the opportunity to work on them.

Whether you observe lent, or not, we can all use this chance to have an honest look at ourselves, to identify our weaknesses and seek God's forgiveness.

Let us ask for the strength to be better Soldiers, better sons and daughters, better spouses and eventually better human beings.

'Big Windy' Soldiers don't mind working in darkness

Story by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam, Task Force 49 Public Affairs

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - Soon after kissing the lucky lady painted on the side of their aircraft, two CH-47 Chinook crews loaded up and took to the sky under the cover of night to complete a general-support mission over Baghdad.

The two five-Soldier flight crews belong to Company B, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, more commonly known as Big Windy. It's a small unit with a large mission to support and a massive aircraft to fly.

Big Windy has several Chinooks that fly nightly to conduct corps air-movement operations. The Chinook crews move people and equipment across the battle space, and support air assault missions on a regular basis.

"We pretty much take the fight to the enemy," said Capt. Howard Titzel, the commander of Company B.

Big Windy crews get the chance to see interesting loads that range from Hellfire missiles to Gatorade, said Spc. Cameron Randall, a door gunner augmented to Company B from 412th Aviation Support Battalion.

The Chinooks owned the night as they picked up and dropped off pallets, and Soldiers, at forward operating

bases around Baghdad. The mission went smoothly as the crew moved efficiently and successfully to get the mission accomplished ... just another night for Big Windy.

The missions are really intense, but it feels great to be able to fly one of the most protected aviation assets in the Army, said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Colt Galusha, a Chinook pilot in Company B.

"It's pretty unique," Galusha said. "We get a lot of different missions; we go out and do a variety of things. It's a lot of responsibility, but with our training and everything we've done, we're covered."

The flight crews consist of a pilot in charge, a co-pilot, a flight engineer, a crew chief and a door gunner.

Since this unit is pretty small, the Soldiers and crews are very close, and that results in excellent execution in the air, said Titzel.

The tight nature of the unit also allows the Soldiers to build a great deal of trust in one another, says Randall, who is relatively new to the unit but feels perfectly comfortable putting his life in the hands of his crew.

"I'm terrified of heights, but I have no problem being 1,000 feet up in an aircraft taken care of by Soldiers as professional and as competent as the crews and pilots of Company B," Randall said.



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - A CH-47 Chinook crew prepares to takeoff on a mission.

Big Windy used to be a company-sized element with about to 300 Soldiers and two flight platoons, but after its last deployment, the unit was reduced, said Titzel.

Now Company B reports to two different UH-60 Black Hawk battalions while in Iraq; for general-support missions, they work with 5th Bn., 158th Avn. Reg. but they work with 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment for air assault missions.

When most Soldiers are ending their day, Big Windy Soldiers are just getting started; they take to the sky at night which adds to the mystique of the aircraft and its missions.

Practice makes perfect for Apache pilots

Task Force XII pilots train in simulator to improve skills

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – “You’ve got half a tank of gas, and you have to get back to the airfield, but you have to fight your way (through enemy combatants) back to the airfield” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Ladd, the production control officer and maintenance examiner for 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. “It’s a challenge to see if you a can engage all of the targets before they get you, and make it back to the airfield before you run out of gas.”

Ladd is describing one of the possible scenarios provided for participants in, what has been called by many, the world’s most expensive video game.

The Longbow Crew Trainer (LCT), a multimillion dollar flight simulator, provides AH-64D Apache Longbow pilots the opportunity to maintain their proficiency in mission tasks and flight procedures.

“(The LCT) is classified as a full motion trainer; which means, when you sit in the seat, it’s going to feel and react like the real aircraft does,” said Brad Carter, an LCT program manager and a retired master aviator. “It gives the aviators a chance to practice emergency procedures that may not be safe to practice in the real aircraft, or in this environment, (like) shutdown and restart an engines in flight or lockup flight controls.”

Pilots going through flight school have to start out in a trainer, similar to this one, to familiarize them with the aircraft before they get in the real thing, said Ladd, a native of Brooksville, Maine.

“I’ve probably used the (Longbow simulator) more than 100 times, and as far as simulators go, it’s probably one of the most reliable and realistic ones I’ve used (since) I’ve been an aviator,” he said. “It allows us to get in some good training without having to go up and do it in the



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Ladd, the production control officer and maintenance examiner for 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, prepares to takeoff on a mission in a Longbow Crew Trainer (LCT).

aircraft, which could lead to problems.”

In the simulator, a programmer controls what scenarios the flight crew may experience during their training.

“This screen displays the actual environment (hazards such as) the sand and buildings; it’s the threat,” said Dan Smee, a LCT programmer and retire Apache pilot. “I can turn those threats on and off; I can make a new threat; or I can let the flight crews develop a scenario and add to or take away from the scenario to make it seem more realistic.”

The programmer also monitors the flight crew’s actions and communications during the scenarios to help them become more proficient pilots, said Smee.

The flight simulator is physically designed to resemble an Apache cockpit, with the use of actual parts from the aircraft, so certain steps must be taken to keep that equipment working and

functioning properly.

“Like every other piece of Army equipment, we have our normal preventive maintenance (checks and services) we do on daily basis,” said Carter. “We have a preoperational flight test, that the inspectors do to make sure everything works properly, and when the flight crews are done we have a post flight inspection; (it’s) just like the real aircraft.”

Communication between the crewmembers is also improved by the simulator because they are positioned on opposite sides of the room instead of being two feet away from each other, said Smee.

“This Longbow simulator also provides us an opportunity to train on gunnery engagements and tasks without actually having to go out and pull the trigger on real ammunition,” said Ladd. “We have full range of our different types of (weapons), from hellfire missiles to 30 mm rockets, to fire in the simulator.”

The crew can engage enemy forces generated by the simulator, which can vary from an individual person with a weapon to an entire army with tanks and helicopters.

There are 23 of these mobile simulators located all around the world and they can be easily loaded up and flown, or driven, to any location that has Apache pilots, said Carter.

Even though scenarios, like the one of fighting through enemy forces on the way to the airfield, are his favorite part of the simulator, Ladd says, it definitely feels more realistic than a video game and it provides beneficial training.

“Everybody benefits from this simulator because the more proficient the pilot is, the better they are at their job, which means their able to (successfully) support troops on the ground,” said Carter. “Sometimes I get the urge to go out there and fly the real thing, but I choose to come in here instead.”



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Capt. Chad Corrigan, an AH-64D Apache pilot and the commander of Tomahawk Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, practices maneuvers in a Longbow Crew Trainer.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Gen. Richard Cody (left), the Army’s vice chief of staff and one of the Army’s most senior aviators, talks with Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeff Hartford, an Apache pilot in 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Sgt. David Xiong, an information systems analyst in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force XII, gets cooled off by Sgt. Gale Bever while doing push-ups during his promotion ceremony Feb. 1.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Col. Timothy Edens shakes hands with Lt. Col. Mark Daley, the commander of 770th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron, after a Change of Command ceremony Feb. 15.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Pfc. Ana Gomez, a human resources clerk in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force XII, poses for a picture after winning the company’s Soldier of the Month Board.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Spc. Myisha Treadwell, a petroleum supply specialist in Renegade Troop, turns the handle that controls the fuel pumped to aircraft located on the Forward Arming and Refueling Point line.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Sgt. Dexter Nevels (left), a flight operations specialist in 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, dry-off after doing a few push-ups with Sgt. 1st Class George Kennedy after his promotion ceremony Feb. 1.



U.S. Army Photo

Spc. Adrian Orrostieta, a medic in 412th Aviation Support Battalion, poses for a quick picture after one of his matches in in the 2008 All-Army Boxing Championships at Fort Huachuca.

Medic knocks out competition

12th CAB Soldier wins All-Army Boxing Championship, then competes in Armed Forces Boxing Championship

Story by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam, Task Force 49 Public Affairs

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - Pound for pound, Spc. Adrian Orrostieta is now one of the best boxers in the Army.

Orrostieta, who just a few months ago was bandaging wounds and stabilizing sprains for Soldiers in Iraq as a combat medic in 412th Aviation Support Battalion, is now considered the best boxer in the Army's 141-pound weight class after winning his matches in the 2008 All-Army Boxing Championships at Fort Huachuca in January.

"Winning all Army was a great experience and an eye-opener for the skill level that I have," said Orrostieta.

Orrostieta fought his way through the Army championships and then continued on to the Armed Forces Boxing Championships at Camp Lejeune, N.C. from Feb. 4 to 7.

Orrostieta's dream of winning the tournament ended with a loss to one of the Marine competitors, but he wasn't fazed and, he says, he's already looking forward to the rematch.

"I am going to get my rematch from the loss I took in the Armed Forces Championship," he said. "He is ranked 10th in the nation, but I'm going to get my win against him in the national tournament in March."

Orrostieta may have lost his match, but the Army continued its dominance in armed forces by winning their 17th consecutive team championship at the Armed Forces Boxing Championship.

The team's dominant performance in the tournament illustrates the kind of Army boxing tradition that now includes Orrostieta.

He made his impression in Army box-

ing quickly, but his competitive boxing future didn't materialize until the last minute when a fellow Soldier walked in to his office and told him he should sign up.

Boxing for the Army had always been an aspiration of Orrostieta's, but being deployed made things a little more complicated at first, said Sgt. 1st Class Danielle Whitaker, his platoon sergeant.

"(Being a boxer) was his goal, but being that mission is first, the focus was not on sending him to All-Army boxing, but the command supported it and he was able to go," said Whitaker.

Orrostieta says he's grateful to all the

Soldiers in his unit who helped him every step of the way.

"My chain of command and fellow Soldiers have all been very supportive about me trying out for the team," he said.

After rushing his application, Orrostieta was in, and now, it looks like boxing will be his life for the next few years.

With his win in the All-Army Boxing Championships Orrostieta has secured a spot on the Army's World Class Athlete Program.

He's definitely ready for the rigorous training program he will be exposed to at Fort Carson, said Whitaker.

"He worked out twice a day (while in Iraq)," Whitaker said. "He would work out until he was about to pass out."

Following the national tournament in March, Orrostieta will return to his home station in Germany where his chain of command will sign the paperwork and send him to Fort Carson to train full time.

The transition to Army boxing will be an easy one for Orrostieta, says Whitaker, because he regularly scored higher than

350 on his Army physical fitness tests.

"He's a driven young man," he said. "He's focused and he's going to do well in Army boxing."

Boxing may be a dying sport in the civilian world, but in the Army, it's an institution and Orrostieta's passion for boxing will be a valuable asset to the team.

"I box for the excitement," Orrostieta said. "You see all the hard work you put into this sport paying off in the ring."

Boxing has been used to keep Soldiers fit for combat for many years, and boxers such as Leon Spinks and Ken Norton learned to box in the military.



U.S. Army Photo

Spc. Adrian Orrostieta, a medic in 412th Aviation Support Battalion, poses for a quick picture before one of his matches in the 2008 All-Army Boxing Championships at Fort Huachuca. Orrostieta was best boxer in the Army's 141-pound weight class and competed in Armed Forces Boxing tournament.

Why I Serve: Carwash owner rejoins Army after 10 year retirement

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Jeff Hartford, a native of Belfast, Maine, owned a small chain of carwashes and lived the life of a businessman with his wife, Janet, and son, Hunter; until the 9/11 attacks ignited the desire in him to serve his country.

“After the attacks, I became a military contractor working with the AH-64D Apache Longbow crew trainer in Fort Hood, Texas,” said Hartford. “My fingers were pushing buttons and I was staying in tune with the (modifications to the aircraft) over the years.”

So nearly four decades after he joined the military, and 10 years after he retired as a chief warrant officer 4, this 54-years-young pilot joined the Army again.

When Hartford began his military career in 1970, at the age of 17, he says his goals were simple; he joined for a few years to get job experience, earn some money and then go to college.

“When my wrestling scholarship (at the University of Maine) didn’t come through, and being one of (13 children) in my family, I knew I couldn’t afford to go to college,” he said. “I knew the Army would provide me with the opportunity to go to college with the Montgomery G.I. Bill.”

By the time he reached the rank of staff sergeant, he was a ranger and airborne

qualified and had performed numerous jumps from all types of aircraft.

“I put in my packet to go to flight school because I decided it looked like more fun to fly the airplanes and helicopters rather than jumping out of them,” said Hartford, a pilot in Nomad Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. “I always wanted to have a gun in my hands, so instead of flying something without guns, I applied to be an AH-1 Cobra pilot.”

Hartford flew Cobras for five years, and then transferred to flying Apaches until he retired in 1996. During that time, he deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield/ Desert Storm.

“Before I retired, I had the opportunity to go through the testing for the Apache Longbow, in 1994, and I became one of the first instructor pilots with the prototype,” he said. “My knowledge about this aircraft helped me get the contracting job after I retired.”

“I met (Hartford) eight years ago, when I first moved to Fort Hood, Texas, he was a contractor working with the Apache Longbow crew trainer,” said Maj. Scott Williams, the Task Force XII deputy commanding officer and an Apache pilot.

Williams worked with him for three years, but the two never saw each other again until Hartford deployed in November.

“When I saw him that day, wearing the



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jeff Hartford, an AH-64D Apache Longbow pilot in Nomad Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, poses for a picture next to his Apache.

green aviator suit, I knew we were going to win this war,” said Williams, a native of St. Cloud, Minn.

In addition to having 30 years in the military and flying an Apache Longbow in a combat zone, he will soon achieve the milestone of flying 5,000 accident free hours.

Hartford says when he retires, a little more than two years from now, he doesn’t plan to come back this time; but for right now he is focused on the mission of helping support ground personnel.

“Sure I get a few aches and pains, here and there,” said Hartford. “But I love my job and I know most people only dream about doing stuff like this.”

Why I Serve: Real estate agent joins Army to serve country, for self-improvement

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – A little more than two years ago, Juliana Rizzo was a real estate agent living in Long Island, N.Y., with her two children, Angelo and Amanda, when she decided it was time to fulfill her childhood dream.

That dream was to join the Army.

“As a little girl, I always wanted to join the Army because my father and grandfather spent several years in the military and served their country proudly,” said Rizzo, a supply specialist in Company E, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. “I don’t know if my father ever deployed, but my grandfather served in the Korean War and Vietnam; they’ve both become very successful (in jobs outside of the military) but they started their education in Army.”

Rizzo, the daughter of an airplane mechanic and granddaughter of a NASA radio communications transmitter, has also achieved plenty of her own success in the short time she’s been in the Army.

“When (Rizzo) arrived to unit, she was a private fresh out of advanced individual training and she had a hip problem that really bothered her,” said Company E 1st Sgt. Foy Dix. “I had a talk with her and told her that being in the Army means sometimes you have to overcome pain; within 60 days she nearly scored 300 points on her physical fitness test.”

In addition to overcoming physical adversity, she also had to learn her job



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Spc. Juliana Rizzo, a supply specialist in Company E, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, poses for a picture by the Company E colors minutes before her lateral promotion to corporal

quickly and with little supervision.

“Her supply sergeant went to the basic noncommissioned officer course while the unit was still being set up, so she had to set up the unit supply office by herself,” said Dix, a native of Ventura, Calif. “She also helped run a company that had no commander, just a first sergeant and three flight lieutenants.”

Even though her leaders were already impressed by her work ethic and determination, Rizzo’s most attention grabbing performance was yet to come.

“When we were in (Hohenfels, Germany), going through Iron Warrior training, she shocked everybody when she went up to the Iraqi role players and started talking to them in their own language,”

said 3rd Bn., 158th Avn. Reg. Command Sgt. Maj. Chad Cuomo, a native of Troy, N.Y.

“I’m not very fluent in Arabic, but I do know enough to communicate,” said Rizzo. I also speak Spanish and I know some phrases in Hindu.”

This multi-lingual Soldier does a lot than just handle unit supplies; she operates the company arms room, does public affairs for Company E and she takes time to listen to some of the issues her fellow Soldiers are having, said Dix.

Rizzo made such a strong impression throughout the battalion, that she was sent to the Warrior Leadership Course as a private first class; she graduate in the top 17 percent of her class, said Cuomo.

Rizzo was promoted to specialist shortly after arriving in Iraq, and went to the promotion board four months later. She received 150 points in the promotion board, and was recently laterally promoted to corporal.

This mother of two, and soon to be sergeant, is fulfilling her childhood dream of being in the Army and she is taking online classes to one day receive a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice. She says she hopes to one day be an Army career counselor or an Arabic linguist.

“If she continues to do what she’s doing now, I see her being a sergeant promotable before we leave Iraq,” said Dix. “I have no doubt that if I had five of her I could run an entire platoon.”

Black History Observance



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Sgt. Kimberly Williams sings the National Anthem during the Task Force XII Black History Observance Ceremony Feb. 25.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment Command Sgt. Maj. John Moore speaks during a Black History Observance Ceremony Feb. 25.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

The Task Force XII Chaplain, Maj. David Waweru, says the benediction during Black History Observance Ceremony Feb. 25.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Pfc. Sophia Taylor recites the famed Maya Angelou poem "Still I Rise" during the Task Force XII Black History Observance Ceremony Feb. 25.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Col. Timothy Edens shakes hands with 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment Command Sgt. Maj. John Moore after the Task Force XII Black History Observance Ceremony Feb. 25.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Col. Edens leads the audience in congratulating the who performed during the Task Force XII Black History Observance Ceremony Feb. 25. The Soldiers also received Certificates of Achievement for their participation.

Task Force XII topographic analysts help guide pilots in right direction with up-to-date maps

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – When it comes to Task Force XII operations, three Soldiers add an essential element to every aerial mission that takes place.

While aviators are providing “eyes in the sky” for ground personnel, these Soldiers are providing aviators with a clearer picture of the terrain they’re flying over and landing on.

Pfc. Todd Liebhart, Spc. Jay Mallison and Spc. Ramon Perez make up the Task Force XII topographic analyst team that constructs the up-to-date maps air-assault operations officers use to plan and pilots use to execute their missions.

“We compile data given to us from (several) sources into a map that shows the area of operation for each brigade combat team as well as any major terrain features,” said Liebhart, a native of Eugene, Ore. “The information we analyze and put together helps personnel to better plan their move-

ment from one place to another.”

Before flight crews take off, there are a number of things that must be taken into consideration.

The maps produced by this terrain team help the flight crews figure some of those things out, said Mallison, a native of Binghamton, N.Y.

“Pilots need to know what BCT zone they’re leaving and entering because different brigades are responsible for different areas,” he said. “If something happens, and that pilot needs help, he has to know which brigade call sign to use.”

In addition to showing BCT zones, the maps can also pinpoint objects on the ground that could impact aviation operations.

“Our maps can show vertical obstacles, such as power lines, tall towers and anything higher 50 feet,” said Perez, a native Coamo, Puerto Rico. “It all depends on what the customer requests because we can also put mosques and



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Pfc. Todd Liebhart, a topographic analyst in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force XII, looks over a map recently updated with a brigade combat team's area of operation. Liebhart, a native of Eugene, Ore., has been making terrain analysis for almost four years.

other religious structures on the map for them.”

These maps play a crucial role in planning routes and conducting air assaults, said Capt. Caleb Van Dyken, the air assault planner for Task Force Storm.

“Without the ability to go out and physically recon all the objectives, it’s important for us,

as aviators, to get a good map recon of the area prior to going in on an air assault,” said Van Dyken, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot. “(A terrain analysis) gives the aviators an idea of what they’re going to see coming inbound to each landing zones.”

Even though helicopters are equipped with global positioning systems and other high-tech devices, pilots still use maps for the old-fashioned reason – to let them know which direction to go.

“Even though our aircraft have GPS, we have to use maps to input data into the guidance system to get us where we’re going,” said Lt. Col. Charles Bowery Jr., the Task Force XII executive officer and an AH-64D Longbow Apache pilot. “These maps can come in handy if a pilot gets lost, or they can be used as a backup to guidance systems.”

Since moving to Camp Taji, the Task Force XII terrain team has printed more than 100 maps and completed more than 160 requests for information.

“When customers turn in an RFI, we go over it with them and let them know what information we already have; they let us know if they need more information,” said Perez. “These RFIs help us keep track of what the customers want, and they help us keep our maps as current as possible.”

“We are constantly communicating with other terrain teams and helping each other out,” said Liebhart. “So if there’s something we’re working on or information we have that the other teams don’t, we help them and vice versa.”

When it comes to how they feel about their jobs, these mapmakers say they love their jobs and they know pilots appreciate the services they provide.

“I think our topographic analyst team does a fantastic job of keeping us updated,” said Bowery. “These guys provide us with an invaluable service; they provide an essential product that goes on every mission flown by Task Force XII pilots.”



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Pfc. Todd Liebhart (right) and Spc. Jay Mallison, topographic analysts in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force XII, discuss information needed to update their terrain analysis. Liebhart and Mallison are two of three the Soldiers who make up the Task Force XII terrain analyst team.

Ask the JAG ... if you should prepare a will

By The Task Force XII Legal Office

To “will” or not to “will” that is the question? Understanding a little bit about the probate process and the legal implications of both having a will and not having a will should make this question a little easier to answer.

A will is a legal document you use to give away your estate at your death. It may also name people to do important jobs, such as administrator of your estate or guardians for your children. Your estate is everything you own; that is all of your personal property, such as cars, household goods, real estate and other assets such as bank balances and investments.

The Serviceman’s Group Life Insurance benefit is not transferred by will. Your SGLI benefit is given to the beneficiary you designate through your S1/Personnel Office. There is only one occasion in which your will can affect your SGLI benefit and that is when you designate minors, any individual under the age of 18, as your beneficiary.

Not everyone needs a will and there is no penalty for dying without one. Many

military members have a will prepared when: (1) they are married or have young children; (2) they want to leave specific items of property to named individuals; or (3) they want to exclude a close Family member from receiving any part of their estate.

The maker of the will is called the testator. If you die without a will you are considered intestate, and the intestacy laws of the state where you were domiciled at death will determine who should receive your property. In a way, the state’s intestacy laws write a will for you. This will result in your property going to your closest living relatives; normally this would be your spouse, your children, your parents, or your siblings.

Only if no surviving relatives can be found will property go to the state. You should execute a will if you want to distribute your property in a manner other than that provided by intestacy laws.

Care and guardianship of minor children is another matter your will may address.

When someone with children dies, the other parent will likely have full custody

of the children, even if the parents are divorced. If the other parent is dead and there is no will appointing a guardian, the court will appoint a guardian in accordance with the laws of the state where the children live.

We hope this helps clarify some of the issues surrounding your decision and helps you decide whether or not a will is needed in your situation.

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.

Commo troops keep aviators connected

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Communication has always played a vital part in war-fighting efforts, and as technology and the enemy continue to evolve, so has the demand for lines of communication.

The use of these lines of communication can vary from allowing ground forces to radio for aerial support, when they’re in a tight situation, to providing deployed parents with the opportunity to download emailed pictures from their Families back home.

When Soldiers in Task Force XII need these methods of correspondence established, fixed or even relocated, they turn to signal Soldiers to stay connected.

“Most people don’t recognize the necessity of automation in the support of combat missions,” said Maj. Ronald Cohen, the signal officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force XII. “Without these (Soldiers) behind the scene, connecting computers and tele-



Sgt. Manuela Fuentes, a data and information integrator for Task Force XII, performs a system check on a computer in the Task Force XII tax center.

phones, the missions don’t get planned and orders don’t get pushed out.”

Signal Soldiers also ensure that helicopter radios are functioning properly and they help generals, who travel in Task Force XII aircraft, stay connected to the battle by operating special radio consuls aboard the aircraft.

It has taken a combined effort between signal Soldiers working in S-6 sections, and in the Forward Logistical Element, to meet the

ing these systems. They have completed more than 72 minor system repairs, or trouble tickets, this month.

“We troubleshoot problems involving all (types of communications) from computer to radios; we also work with telephones and satellites,” said Sgt. David Xiong, a senior local area network manager for Task Force XII and a native of Arvada, Colo.

In the last month, these signal Soldiers have taken on projects that include relocating the brigade conference room and creating a tax center for Task Force XII Soldiers.

Without the hard work and dedication of these signal Soldiers, Task Force XII would literally have to operate in the dark, said Cohen.

“It’s amazing how reliant we are on automation, and when that goes down there are no phones, no email ... no communication,” said Cohen. “A lot of the time we know that people might not notice we’re here, but we all know they appreciate all we do for the mission.”

Task Force XII Tax Center



Open: Feb. 18 to Apr. 15

Location: the Task Force XII ALOC next to the Legal Office

Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday 0900 to 1200 and 1330 to 1800

DSN Number: 834-3135

This free online tax preparation assistance is available to all Task Force XII Soldiers with an adjusted gross income of \$54,000 or less.

For more information, or to find out what documents you need to bring with you, please contact the Task Force XII Legal Office.

On the Home Front



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Lynsey Justice receives a free massage from Samantha Lupo, massage therapist, while a member of Illesheim’s Black and Blue rugby team talks about the team in front of its information booth at the Bunch Fitness Center’s open house Jan. 31 at Storck Barracks.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

The Illesheim Elementary School Principal, Margaret Deatherage; Kristen Leikam, spelling bee organizer; Parker Leikam, first place winner and his father; and second place winner Alexxys Montalvo; and her mother after the local level of the Scripps National Spelling Bee at Storck Barracks.



Photo by Heather Stoner

Left to Right: Mitchell Stoner, Spencer Greene, James Cusic pose for a picture while taking a quick break from skiing during a trip to the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch.



Photo by Nicole Peterson

The spouses of Soldiers in 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment Family Readiness Group pose for a picture during a trip to the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Spc. Brent Foltz, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, and others enjoy a workout on some new fitness equipment at the Bunch Fitness Center’s open house Jan. 31 at Storck Barracks. The equipment alone cost a few hundred thousand dollars, and the price tag on the whole renovation is about \$700,000.



Photo by Jim Hughes

USAG Ansbach and City of Herrieden firefighters respond to a Jan. 24, fire at Rainbow Elementary School on Barton Barracks. No one was injured during the fire and the cause of the fire is still under investigation.

FARP Soldiers work around the clock to provide fuel, ammo for aircraft

Story by By Sgt. Brandon Little

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – As soon as the vehicle pulls in, and is safe to approach, a crew rushes out to do their job. They work together in a swift yet synchronized motion pumping gallons of fuel into the gas tank, air into the tires and refilling other crucial items.

They’re not a professional racing pit crew; they are Task Force XII Soldiers working at the Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) here.

Every day these FARP Soldiers transfer hundreds of gallons of fuel and thousands of pounds of ammunition into aircraft to keep them in the fight and the enemy on his heels.

An aircraft can land on the FARP, be refueled and reloaded with ammunition, and get back in the air to continue with its mission; all in the time it takes to microwave a bag of popcorn or listen to a song on the radio.

“We’re kind of like a NASCAR pit crew,” said Sgt. 1st Class Freddie Epting, the platoon sergeant for the Distribution Platoon in Renegade Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. “We average about three and a half minutes per aircraft; that includes loading ammo and giving fuel.”

Since assuming control of the FARP in December, Renegade Troop Soldiers have refueled more than 2,500 aircraft and pumped more than 500,000 gallons of fuel.

This is especially unique because this FARP pumps hundreds of gallons of fuel into Air Force, Marine and other Coalition Forces aircraft, said Epting, a native of Gulfport, Miss.

“We pride ourselves on making sure the aircraft (move through quickly) because the more time they spend on my pad, (equals) less time for them to fly



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers, from the Distribution Platoon in Renegade Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, prepare to attach a D1 nozzle to a UH-60 Black Hawk to begin fueling the aircraft. After the nozzle is connected, the Soldier will give the signal for the bag team to begin pumping fuel.

around and make sure the area’s safe,” he said. “Speed is important, but we always make sure safety’s first.”

In addition to dealing with highly flammable liquids, and explosive munitions, these Soldiers also have to constantly be aware of the spinning rotor blades on the aircraft they are refueling.

“There are cold refuels, but most of the time, (flight crews) are like ‘we have to go, and we have to go right now; and we need fuel,’” said Atlanta native, Spc. Myisha Treadwell, a petroleum supply specialist in Renegade Troop. “So (we provide aircraft) the opportunity to land, keep everything on, get fuel and get back out to their mission.”

Treadwell is part of the three-person bag team responsible for pumping fuel

out to the FARP line. After the fuel reaches the FARP line, and the aircraft has been connected to a grounding cable, Soldiers attach a special nozzle to the helicopter and begin fueling.

“We have to use a D1 nozzle for hot refuels for most aircraft in the military,” said Spc. Kyle Porteous, also a petroleum supply specialist in Renegade Troop and a native of Lawrenceburg, Ky. “The D1 is designed to prevent any vapors from escaping; this reduces the chances of a fire breaking out.”

Having a fire break out could be disastrous, especially while Soldiers are loading the aircraft with rockets and flares.

“These rockets have a (large amount) of explosives inside them, and if everyone’s not extremely careful, someone could get seriously injured or killed,” said Converse, La. native, Pvt. Tommy Walker, an AH-64D Apache Longbow armament and systems repairer in Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Having the Soldiers take their time to be safe and do things right, is more important than them racing through steps to get done faster, said Epting.

These Soldiers might not move vehicles out quite as fast as a racing pit crew, but they have developed a system to get aircraft back into the fight safely.

“We have a great system set up to quickly get aircraft refueled, rearmed and back in the sky; so when ground units are under attack, or going to on a very high risk convoy, they’ve got air power supporting them,” said Porteous. “I know that by us being here, doing what we’re doing, we’re helping to save lives ... and that’s what matters.”



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – A Soldier, from the Distribution Platoon in Renegade Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, approach a UH-60 Black Hawk to prepare the aircraft for fueling. The fueling process can begin once a grounding cable has been connected the aircraft.

Troops train to be door gunners

Soldier exchanges wrench for machine gun

Story by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam, Task Force 49 Public Affairs

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - Preparing food and repairing generators weren't close enough to the action for Spc. Cameron Randall and Sgt. Jason Hutchinson; they wanted to fly.

Randall and Hutchinson knew their jobs here in Iraq were important, but they both felt drawn to the door gunner position inside a CH-47 Chinook.

With the help of their parent units, both Soldiers volunteered to train and then act as door gunners for Company B 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment or "Big Windy".

"My father, being a Vietnam veteran and a retired sergeant first class, asked me to give him one enlistment as a non-combat Soldier," Randall said. "So I conceded and chose being a wrench turner over the Ranger contract I had wanted. I saw being a door gunner as a way to get off the FOB and (do good things)."

Randall and Hutchinson both trained for the position while here in Iraq, which is unusual, seeing as how most gunners

train at home before taking to hostile skies.

Chinook crews can do this because the gunners are not trained as crew chiefs like the gunners in Black Hawks, said Capt. Howard Titzel, the Big Windy commander

A Chinook flight crew consists of two pilots, a flight engineer and a crew chief; this arrangement leaves room for one more door gunner, and that's where Hutchinson and Randall come in to play.

Training gunners in theater is based on manpower requirements, said Titzel.

"We only have a certain amount of paid flight positions, otherwise we'd train as many as we could," Titzel said.

The Soldiers begin their training on the ground by getting familiar with the M240H machine gun. The prospective gunners then go through several classes on crew coordination, aviation terminology and rules of engagement. After that, they go up in the bird and begin engaging practice targets. Once they get familiar with firing the weapon while flying, they

get their gear and go on actual missions and perform under the supervision of a certified crewmember.

The training process is thorough, and they are not allowed to fly solo, as door gunners, until the flight instructor is convinced that the Soldiers are ready to execute without supervision.

While the Soldiers were well-trained before heading up on



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Spc. Cameron Randall, a door gunner for Company B, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, mounts his M240H machine gun on a CH-47 Chinook.

their own, Randall says, all the training in the world can't stop first-flight jitters.

"On my first mission, we were unloading pallets and my foot got tangled up in the cargo webbing, so, as the pallet slid out of the back of the bird, my feet flew out from under me," said Randall. "I was convinced that I had messed up so bad that I was going to be sent back to (my unit), but the flight engineer either didn't notice or took it in stride because nothing was said about it. After that, I stopped worrying about messing up and focused on doing my job."

Hutchinson, who recently spent three-weeks on a support mission in Kuwait, has been extremely impressive in his new role, said Titzel.

"I am very encouraged by his motivation, intellectual curiosity and energy as a door gunner," he said.

Randall and Hutchinson will be attached to Big Windy for the foreseeable future, and both Soldiers say they enjoy what they do so it seems safe to assume that going back to their old jobs will be a little bit of culture shock.

"It's not just the job I'm attached to or the excitement," Randall said. "It's the fact that I'm actually good at what I do here and I enjoy it."



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – A CH-47 Chinook flight crew, from Company B, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, performs a preflight briefing before taking off on a night mission.



TASK FORCE XII

WINGS OF VICTORY

For the latest news and photos...



Photo by SPC 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
2-159th AVN	Career Counselor
	SSG Simmons 467-4869

Retention Corner

By Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Organ

BONUSES ARE BACK!!!!

Contact your servicing career counselor to inquire about what bonus you might be entitled too.

As the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade gets further into the deployment Soldiers will start seeing more assignments. Most units are now within 12 months of the stop move end date and this will allow Soldiers to request those hard to get assignments.

Another option I would ask all Soldiers to take a look at is Current Station Stabilization. While you are deployed, all Soldiers under 10 years of active federal service are offered this option regardless of their reenlistment window.

One of the advantages of reenlisting to stay in 12th CAB is that you are on

an established deployment cycle, and the chances of being placed on orders to a CONUS based unit preparing to deploy is zero. Congratulations to the Soldiers that have reenlisted during the past 30 days.

Soldiers in 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, because of the Life Cycle restriction you will not be able to reenlist for movement or reclassification options until early spring. But, in the mean time, there are still Soldiers taking advantage of the Current Station Stabilization option and also opting to receive a bonus now as opposed to waiting until the spring when other options will open up.

If there are any questions about your reenlistment option or any questions in general I encourage you to contact your



The 12th CAB Retention Team
servicing Career Counselor or unit Retention NCO.

The Griffin Brigade Chronicles: History of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade (Part 7)

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



Just as it seems the task organization of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade is an ever-shifting target, the task organization of the 12th Combat

Aviation Group also changed constantly during its tour of duty in Vietnam.

There were fourteen different battalions, companies, and detachments serving in the Group at one time or another. None of these was as distinctive as the 135th Assault Helicopter Company "Emus." The 135th was designated an Experimental Military Unit (EMU, hence the nickname), composed of U.S. Army and Royal Australian Navy helicopters and crews, was the only multinational aviation unit to serve in Vietnam.

The 135th was a multifunctional aviation company that consisted of two assault helicopter platoons (UH-1 Huey slicks), one gunship platoon (the "Taipans," UH-1 Huey gunships), and a maintenance platoon.

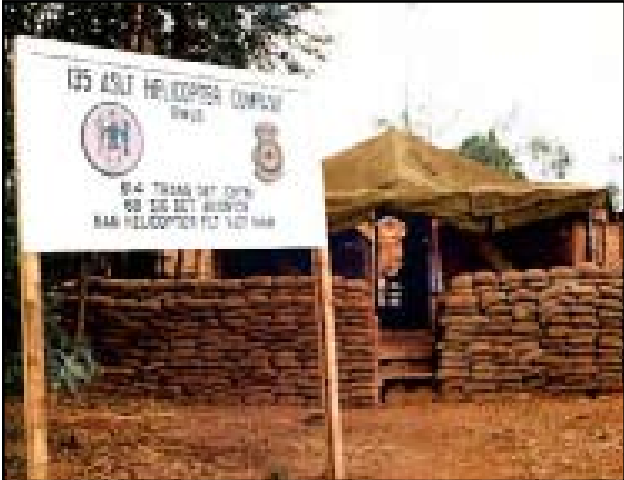


Photo from http://www.135ahc.com/scrap_book.htm
The home of the Experimental Military Unit.

The company stood up in 1967, at Fort Hood, Texas, and deployed to Vietnam that same year. In 1968, they received contingent of eleven Australian Navy officers and thirty-six enlisted men.

Moving several times to serve in various areas of operation, the Emus supported several different ground elements; this included the Australian Task

Force, carrying out combat assaults, air movements, and close combat attacks.

The Australian contingent departed in 1971, and the 135th stood down in early 1972 after over four years of capable service and thousands of flight hours. They consistently lived up to their motto, "GET THE BLOODY JOB DONE," or in the case of the Taipan Guns, "GET THE JOB DONE BLOODY."

The 135th Assault Helicopter Company served as yet another example of the flexibility and capability that U.S. Army Aviation, and the Griffin Brigade in particular, has displayed throughout its history.

See you next month!



Photo from http://www.135ahc.com/scrap_book.htm
A Taipan Gunship departing the Forward Arming and Refueling Point.

- 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
- The Griffin Editor**
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