



Volume 1, Issue 7

"WINGS OF VICTORY!"

NOVEMBER 2007

'Storm Riders' troops help infantry Soldiers strike quickly during air assault missions

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

It's 2 a.m. on a brisk November morning in an Iraqi village.

The night skies are clear, and the insurgent fighters who've been operating out of the village are sleeping. In the distance, a guard on lookout hears what sounds like a helicopter.

Sounds in the desert can play tricks on the ears, especially at night; but within moments, that sound becomes deafening.

One faint helicopter heard in the distance becomes 10 menacing aircraft descending on the village.

Before the guard can roust his fellow insurgents, the aircraft have landed. Waves of Coalition infantrymen pour out of UH-60 Black Hawks and CH-47 Chinooks from all sides of the village.

A armor-clad warriors emerge from the massive dust clouds kicked up by helicopter rotors as even more aircraft, this time lethal AH-64 Apaches, hover overhead, practically begging enemy militias for an opportunity to fire the 30 mm gun.

The village is surrounded, and the battle is almost over before it began.

It's an air assault; a complex, joint and combined arms operation that involves infantrymen, attack helicopters, Air Force aircraft and the Soldiers and helicopters of Task Force Storm.

The "Storm Riders", an air assault battalion in Task Force XII, have successfully taken part in dozens of these missions since arriving in Iraq this summer.

"The mobility that helicopters give the infantry is amazing," said Lt. Col. Jay Macklin, Task Force Storm Commander. "We can arrive at anytime, day or night, and the enemy never knows how big a force is coming, where we're coming from, where we're going to land, or what we're going to do."



Photo by Capt. Jay Johnston

Several UH-60 Black Hawk crews, from 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, take off from Logistics Support Area Anaconda. These helicopters are loaded with infantry Soldiers conducting a late night air assault in Iraq.

Without the aircraft, the infantry would be forced to convoy. Soldiers on the ground, while just as efficient, face improvised explosive devices.

Trucks are slower, and arrive one at a time. Without the aircraft, the enemy is ready.

"The enemy is not stupid, and we know that," said Chief Warrant Officer 2

Clark Hall, a Task Force Storm pilot. "We bring the element of surprise they wouldn't have without us."

Even with the helicopters, the battle is very real; both for infantrymen and aviators.

"Their threat is our threat," said Capt. Samuel Redding, Company Com-

Continued Page 4

Check out
what's
inside ...



SUPPORT, Page 7



PILOT, Page 10



COMPETITION, Page 12

Griffin 06 Sends ... strength through adversity

Soldiers and Families of Task Force XII:

The last month has been one of tragic loss for Task Force XII and the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade Family. While much attention is focused on the safety of Soldiers here in Iraq, we have lost three of our own back in Europe.

Sheryl Siebrasse, wife of 2-159th ARB Sgt. Joe Siebrasse was killed in a traffic accident in Germany Oct. 30.

Capt. Christian Skoglund and Chief Warrant Officer 2 David Angelo Alvarez, both members of our 1-214th GSAB, were killed when their UH-60 Black Hawk crashed near Aviano, Italy Nov. 8.

Words cannot express the incredible grief that Command Sgt. Maj. Kennedy and I felt when we heard of these losses. Our hearts and minds are with their Families and friends during this time of loss and pain.

While I cannot be there personally, I assure you that our commanders, chaplains and Family Readiness Groups in Europe are there for you during your time of hardship. Whatever the need may be, please ensure that you inform them and request their assistance.

For those of us here in Iraq, our latest transitions are going smoothly. Task Force Hawk has been capably filling the fixed-wing role vacated by OSACOM for the past few weeks.

We are thrilled and honored to have them here on the Griffin Team! And to their Families back home in the United States, thanks, once again for your sacrifice, so that your Soldier-Spouse may ably serve our Nation.

We also recently welcomed Col. Skip Sherrell and the Soldiers of Task Force 49 to Balad. Soldiers from all over Alaska



came together in record time to deploy here and take on this important mission.

For those Griffin Soldiers - yes Dust Devils, I include you! - staying here in Balad, thank you for your outstanding service and awesome mission accomplishment under Task Force XII, and for your continued hard work as you make the transition under Task Force 49. I know you will build on your extraordinary accomplishments as the Multi-National Corps-Iraq aviation brigade.

For those of you who are heading to Taji; the past month of planning and packing has gone quickly. I couldn't be more proud of your efforts as you prepared to pick up and move, yet again. Your continued mission focus, upbeat and professional attitude and can-do spirit help make our Army the greatest on the planet.

We, and the Soldiers of 4th Squad-

ron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, inherit an equally important mission with Multinational Division-Baghdad.

The outgoing 1st Air Cavalry Brigade has done some amazing work in the past 15 months for Multi-National Division-Baghdad, and we will continue their tradition of success!

Again, thank you all, Soldiers and Family members, for all that you do to keep our country great.

In this month of Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving, during hard times and transition, I realize now, more than ever, how fortunate I am to be your commander.

As a nation we truly have much to be thankful for; and at the very top of that long list, is the dedication and sacrifice you and your Families make in order to be Soldiers.

Jack Kelly, a writer for The Post Gazette and The Blade of Toledo, Ohio wrote how I feel about you better than I could ever do myself:

"It is the Soldier, not the priest, who protects freedom of religion; the Soldier, not the journalist, who protects freedom of speech. History teaches that a society that does not value its warriors will be destroyed by a society that does."

I thank God for you and your dedication every day. At this time of year and in this place, that thanks is deeper than ever.

God Bless you all. Have a Happy Thanksgiving and go easy on the turkey gravy!

Wings of Victory!

Col. Timothy J. Edens
Commander, Task Force XII

Task Force XII gets new fixed-wing battalion

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

The Operational Support Airlift Command (OSACOM) concluded its mission in Iraq as the fixed-wing battalion for Task Force XII during a transfer of authority (TOA) ceremony on Logistics Support Area Anaconda Oct. 31.

OSACOM "Rock Stars" turned over

operations to Task Force Hawk, a fixed-wing battalion from the Army Reserve's 244th Aviation Brigade.

The outgoing fixed-wing battalion flew more than 10,000 hours, transported nearly 31,000 passengers and moved more than 11.2 million pounds of cargo.

"These statistics only tell half of the story," said Lt. Col. Pat Weber, the OSACOM commander. "We set a new standard for fixed-wing aviation."

Task Force Hawk, commanded by Lt. Col. David Resler, will have to live up to the standards which have earned OSACOM Soldiers



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Lt. Col. David Resler, the commander of Task Force Hawk, carefully unfurls his battalion colors during a Transfer of Authority ceremony held on Logistics Support Area Anaconda Oct. 31. Task Force Hawk is new fixed-wing battalion for Task Force XII.

multiple awards to include three Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Air Medals with V-Device and 23 Bronze Stars, said Col. Timothy J. Edens, the commander of Task Force XII.

"(Task Force Hawk) you have quite a challenge ahead to fill the shoes left by a great unit," said Edens. "I know that you will do great."



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Col. Timothy J. Edens, the commander of Task Force XII, says farewell to the Soldiers of Operational Support Airlift Command after their Transfer of Authority ceremony Oct. 31 on LSA Anaconda.

Command Sergeant Major's Corner

Dear Gang,

Somehow people have gotten the idea that Command Sgt. Maj. Kennedy is a sensitive guy. One of my Soldiers told me the other day that his wife thought the article I wrote last month was sweet.

I nearly had a heart attack over that; I put that poor Soldier on tower guard for the next two years. Of course I'm going to have to build a tower on the Katterbach Airfield now. Was that a sweet thing to do? Heck NO. Sergeant Majors aren't sweet people; just ask Mrs. Deborah what a pain I am to live with. Thirty years of Soldiering has made me mean, tough, down right ornery. Now that I have that out of the way, I can get to the topic of this month's article.

When you talk with your loved ones on the phone, you can hear the weariness and strain in their voices. Give them love and sympathy. Your husbands and wives are working their tails off to make the mission happen. Every day they save hundreds of lives and they don't even realize it.

Each and every job in this brigade is vital to the overall war effort in this country. We are making a difference that you can see here every day. The sound of our helicopters is the music of freedom to the Iraqi people; it means protection, help and support from their American friends. When our Soldiers in the field hear the roar of the rotors headed their way, they know they're going to be alright and all hell is about to be unleashed on

the enemy.

Every day some infantry officer and/or NCO expresses gratitude to this brigade for the job your Soldiers did for his battalion or company on the battlefield. Your husbands, wives, sons and daughters make this the most powerful aviation brigade in the Army. These men and women show more courage in one day than some people show in a lifetime. Be proud of your Soldier!

I want to thank everyone at home for the outstanding support you gave for the memorial service for beloved wife and mom, Sheryl Siebrasse. Her husband Joe stated that you came together like one big family and did a wonderful job taking care of him and his Family. This kind of care and compassion is what makes the Army so wonderful. I hope you're attending your Family Readiness Group meetings. The more support this group gains, the more effective it can be in the community. If you want something changed, sometimes you have to be the driving force behind the change.

Rumors haven't been too bad lately, but the big one about us coming home in July isn't true. My battle buddy Col. Edens and I would love for that to be true. If you want to know if something you have heard through the grapevine is true or not just ask the FRG leaders. These young ladies know everything we know - plus some things we don't. The brigade headquarters is preparing to move to Taji in the next few weeks; this should be transparent to most of the brigade. It should affect very few of the nor-



mal operations here in Balad. Col. Edens and his team are faced with building another brigade under combat conditions and assuming the fight very quickly.

Keep this great leader and his team in your prayers. The Army is a very complicated business, and it doesn't always make sense to most people. If anyone can make this future mission a success, it's this team of heroes. Love your Soldier and put some normal conversation in his/her life. If he or she is having a problem, ask them to come see me. These men and women make me very proud every day; you tell them you're proud of them also if you can. Well, I guess it's time for me to go out and do some more mean stuff.

Thank You and God Bless!

Wings of Victory!

CSM H. Lee Kennedy,
Command Sgt. Maj., Task Force XII

Ask the JAG ... about filing taxes after deploying

By The 12th CAB Legal Office

Benjamin Franklin once said: "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes."

This quotation is true for all of us and this year is no exception. However, there are some benefits that our deployed status grants us that can both delay payment and drastically reduce what we have to pay when the time comes.

Most of us know that some or all of our military income earned while deployed is tax free for federal tax and for most state tax. Depending on how much other income you have or your spouse earns, it is likely that you will owe far less in 2007 than in past years or maybe owe nothing at all.

If I owe, when do I pay?

Because you are deployed, you and your spouse, if you are filing a joint return, are entitled to a combat zone extension to file your 2007 taxes. The combat zone extension grants you 180 days from the date of return, plus 1 day for every day you were in the combat zone between 1 Jan 08 and 15 April 08. R&R leave is not considered your date of re-

turn because it is not a permanent redeployment. If you redeploy permanently, the date you return is the date from which the combat zone exclusion is calculated.

I am getting money back and I want to file now. Can I?

You do not have to wait to file. You can file your taxes at any point after Dec. 31, 2008 but you will likely not be able to file until you receive your W-2 and other documents towards the end of January. Deployed Soldiers will be able to receive assistance in filing their taxes here at LSA Anaconda through the Legal Assistance Office starting in February and spouses in Germany will be able to receive assistance at the tax center at the legal office in Katterbach.

What can I do to prepare now?

If you are married, and wish to file a joint return with your spouse before you redeploy, you must arrange to either have your spouse complete and send you the IRS's power of attorney form to you so that you can file from Iraq; or you must complete the form and send it to your spouse so they can complete the process from Germany. If you have already

given your spouse a general power of attorney, or a special power of attorney that permits them to file taxes on your behalf, you do not need to execute the separate IRS form. If you decide you wish to file from Iraq, you should also start thinking about what receipts and documents you will need sent from Germany so you do not have to wait any longer than necessary to file. Your W-2 should be available for download from the My Pay website towards the end of January 2008.

If you have questions about taxes or other legal assistance matters contact the Task Force XII -Legal Office or the Katterbach Legal Office.



The staff of the Task Force XII Legal Office.

Air assault catches bad guys off guard

Continued from Page 1

mander for A Co. 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment and a former infantryman. "If they're worried about IEDs, so are we. A lot of our door gunners tell me that if we're going in shooting they want to get off with the infantry guys and help."

The door gunners are trained to lay down suppressive fire and to help land the aircraft during a hostile landing.

For the few critical moments while the helicopter is on the ground and Soldiers are focused on safely exiting the aircraft, it's the door gunner's job to keep everyone safe.

"Sometimes when I'm flying with the ground Soldiers, it hits me," said Sgt. Steven Kellam, a Task Force Storm crew chief and door gunner.

"I look around at the infantry guys we're about to land with, and wonder how many of them are going to be riding back with us."

"The majority of my guys don't even think about it as being 'tip-of-the-spear' type of dangerous duty," said Redding. "They get to see the guys who are out there eating dirt. They see the guys who are really working."

The aviation side involves more than just the Soldiers in the helicopters though, said Macklin.

"These are very complex missions with a lot of moving pieces," he said. "During an assault, day or night, the entire battalion is at work on everything from planning the mission, tracking the battle in the tactical operations center, refueling aircraft or maintenance; it's one big collective effort."

The key though, said Macklin, is a



Photo by Capt. Melissa Comiskey

Infantry Soldiers quickly board a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, flown by a Task Force Storm flight crew, in preparation for an infiltration mission somewhere in Iraq.

habitual relationship with the ground commanders.

For an operation to run smoothly, the Soldiers in the air and on the ground have to be on the same page, he said.

"We play a big part, but we're just one piece of the operation," said Hall. "These guys on the ground are the ones doing the real work."

But when the pieces come together, Macklin said, the element of surprise, efficiency, and speed create a lethal

package.

"We've become a big part of the combined arms team," he said.

At 2:10 a.m. the cool air is still filled with dust, but the roar of the aircraft has once again given way to a distant sound of a single helicopter.

But the village itself is different. What was recently a militia stronghold is now quickly becoming a safe Iraqi village. And the insurgents never knew what hit them.

2-147th Soldiers, Families take part in NFL game

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment were honorary guests at the Metrodome in Minneapolis for a Minnesota Vikings game Nov. 18, and they didn't even have to be there.

Sgt. Willard Barnett, Sgt. Frank Degele and Spc. Jennifer Stiglet joined the ranks of music icons like Celine Dion and Stevie Wonder when they were featured singing the National Anthem, via satellite, to a stadium packed with nearly 63,000 fans.

"I was very honored to be able to sing (the National Anthem) for our home team, and our home fans, in our home dome," said Barnett, a 2-147th supply sergeant and native of Hinckley, Minn. "It's even more (special) to be over in Iraq singing it."

The Vikings organization also donated 100 tickets to the Soldiers and Families of this Minnesota National Guard unit.

At halftime, with Vikings and the Oakland Raiders tied at 19 each, a flag flown by this Task Force XII unit was pre-

sented by Brig. Gen. Joseph P. Kelly, the Assistant Adjutant General-Joint Staff of the Minnesota National Guard, to former Vikings player - and former Minnesota National Guardsman - Carl Eller.

"I feel proud that something our crew has done over here was presented to the

Vikings organization during such a huge event," said Capt. Andrea Ourada, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot who flew the flag around Iraq. "I also think it's awesome that the Families got to see a live-connection of us to know we're okay."

The flag was presented as a speech from Lt. Col. Greg Thingvold, the 2-147th commander, was played.

Events like this are mainly directed towards Family members back home, but the Soldiers here know everything they do is important and they enjoy it too, said Thingvold, a native of Stillwater, Minn.

In addition to being part of the game, these long distance fans and their Families were given something else to cheer about; their home team defeated the Raiders 29-22.

"It's been probably two years since I've been to a Vikings game, but my Family and a lot of the Families of many of our Soldiers were there," Thingvold said. "I was born and raised in Minnesota ... so it's a privilege for us to be involved in these types of activities."



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Sgt. Willard Barnett, Sgt. Frank Degele and Spc. Jennifer Stiglet sang the National Anthem, via satellite, to nearly 63,000 fans in the Metrodome in Minneapolis during a Minnesota Vikings game Nov. 18. Soldiers and Families of the 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment were honorary guests at the football game



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Pfc. Luke Schwein, a petroleum supply specialist from E Co. 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, mans the radio in a tower at the battalion's Forward Arming and Refueling Point on LSA Anaconda.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Col. Timothy J. Edens, the Task Force XII Commander, and Brig. Gen. William H. Forrester, the Director of Army Safety/Commanding General, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, sit in a briefing on LSA Anaconda.

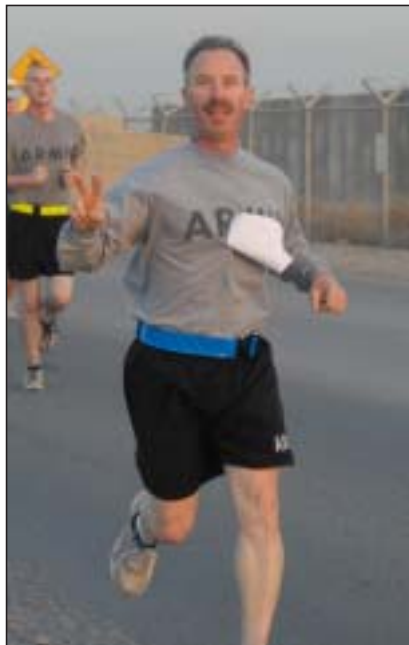


Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Chief Warrant Officer 3 John Shtofman cruises to the finish line during the Task Force XII sponsored Halloween 5-K Run Oct. 31.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

This Elvis impersonator was just one of the more than 500 personnel participating in the Task Force XII sponsored Halloween 5-K Run Oct. 31.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Derrick L. Mims

Task Force XII Executive Officer, Lt. Col. Charles R. Bowery Jr., paces himself for the final leg of the Halloween 5-K Run Oct. 31



Photo by Staff Sgt. Derrick L. Mims

A 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment UH-60 Black Hawk crew prepares for takeoff as a 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment AH-64 Apache passes in the distance on LSA Anaconda.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Derrick L. Mims

Soldiers from D Co. 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment relieve deployment stress by taking time to play a game of mush-ball on LSA Anaconda. The UH-60 Black Hawk maintenance platoon helps keep 3-158th aircraft running.

A moment with the Chaplain

Being homesick during the holiday

By Chaplain (Maj.) David G. Waweru

We all miss our Families and loved ones. The longer this deployment gets, the more separated we feel.

Besides your loved ones, what is it that you miss most? I don't know about you, but I miss the freedom: The freedom to go wherever I want; or the freedom to go home, change into civilian clothes and sit in my recliner.

About 3,000 years ago, there was another group of people who were in Iraq. Unlike you and me, they were here against their will. They had been forced from their land, transplanted in Babylon and forced to adapt to a new life.

Their captors mocked them and their spiritual songs. "Sing for us the Lord's song that you sang at home," the captors sarcastically said to them.

Here is what one of them wrote in his journal: "By the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept. When we remember Zion (Home), there on the poplars we hung our harps, for there our captors asked us for songs. Our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said to us, 'Sing for us one of the songs of Zion.' How can we sing the Lord's song while in the foreign land? If I forget you Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill."

For the rest of the story you can read Psalms 137.

It's natural to be homesick. It would be very abnormal not to feel homesick. But what can we do about it?

Homesickness is an indication of love



and concern for our loved ones. It validates that we are a part of others and others are a part of us.

Do not forget home

•The writer of the above passage vows not to forget home. If we forget our loved ones and start to feel OK without them, we open the window for potential separation and, therefore, breakdown of our Families.

•We have to dwell on the good memories we have created over time and stay connected with our loved ones no matter how we feel.

•We have to remember that love is a decision and not a feeling.

•We will have to overcome the feelings and decide every day to stay together.

Holiday Blues

•Holidays are the most depressing when we are apart from those that we love and care about.

•It's easy to stay isolated and feel sorry for yourself for being away alone. Especially if this is the first holiday season that you will spend away from your Family or loved ones.

Do not isolate yourself.

•Attach yourself to the community and share the warmth and strength of the larger team. Together we will make it through these tough times.

•Get involved in community activities.

MWR has a lot of activities to take our minds off the mission.

The chapel community also has prepared holiday activities that you can participate in.

You can even join with a friend and catch a movie, play a game or just hang out.

Do the things you would do during the holidays at home, like sending Christmas cards to friends. Listen to Holiday music that you normally listen to.

Unlike the people I mentioned earlier in the above passage, do not hang up your Harps; keep singing the Lord's song in this foreign land.

Together we will beat the Holiday blues and continue with our mission.

Thank you for reenlisting, keeping us 'Army Strong'

1st Battalion, 124th Aviation Regiment

SGT ADAMS, GARY A.
SPC ALKIRE, AARON R.
SGT BEEBE, JAMES D.
SGT LEON, PEDRO J.
SPC MARSAC, KEVIN J.
SGT RINCHER, DEMETRIUS
SGT SULLIVAN, AMPARO C.
SSG TRUETT, STEVEN D.
SGT WITT, URIAH B.

3th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment

SGT ALMAGUERACOSTA, LUIS A.
SPC ALVARADO, JOHN K.
SPC CHAVEZ, SALVADOR R.
SPC FLOYD, JEFFREY D.
SSG LANGWORTHY, YOLANDA N.
SGT LAWHORNE, ANTHONY J. JR.
SPC LEVIER, ALCON E. J.
SPC LUELLEN, JOSHUA R.
SGT MCFARLAND, ARGENTYLIZ
PFC MOUNCE, JOHN V.
SPC TATE, OSBORNE
SPC ANICETO, MARCOANTONIO T.
SSG FOUST, EDWARD W.
SPC MARTINEZ, ANTHONY M.

2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment

SGT ACEVEDOGUZMAN, ALBERTO
SSG BUNCH, JOHNNY JR.
SPC CARROLL, PATRICK R.
SSG CASASAGUAYO, OSCAR
SFC CIESLIKOWSKI, MICHAEL L.
SSG DELORIA, ROBERT P.
SPC ESTRADAESCOBAR, ERIK
SPC HODIWALA, LAURA
SPC JOHN, ASHELY N.
SPC LOWTHER, JERAMY J.
SGT MATHIS, WILLIAM R.
SPC RASDORF, AARON D.
SPC REGALADO, RAFAEL

5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment

PFC COOLEY, THOMAS J.
SGT GAETA, SALVADOR I. III
SGT HARDWICK, CHASTITY A.
SPC HERNANDEZ, CARLOS M. JR.
SPC LOPEZNICOLAS, EDDY C.
SPC MORTON, JOSHUA K.
SPC REYNOSO, YOCASTA
SPC SINGLETON, APRIL C.
SPC SMITH, LAMONT T.
PFC SZEKERES, ROBERT L.
SSG WISCHNACK, MICHAEL D.

HHC Task Force XII

SPC DONALDSON, DANTE M.
SFC FREEMAN, ROBERT J. III
SPC JIMENEZ, ZAIDA C.
SPC MARCUS, JERRY R.
PFC TAPUSINI, SIALEI C.

412th Aviation Support Battalion

SPC ARNOLD, DANNIE L. JR.
SPC BURCH, MATTHEW A.
SGT CAMP, JARED S.
SPC COFFEY, BRYAN W.
PFC FARMER, ESSIE M.
SGT GILL, JACOB W.
SPC HUTCHESON, MARY A.
SPC JONES, MELISSA D.
SPC LABELLA, DENISE
SPC LAND, HOWARD L. JR.
SPC MACFARLANE, IAN S.
SGT MIDDLETON, REEMAR
SSG MONJARES, JUAN L.
SPC SANTORE, JAMES A.
SPC SANTOSPORQUEZ, KENT D.
SGT SHEVLIN, JASON G.
SPC STOCKDALL, MATTHEW J.
SPC TELLEZMENDOZA, HUBER M.
SGT WHITE, BRADLY L.
SPC YOUNGBLOOD, ALPHONZO III

Even Aviators require support

Support Company Soldiers in Task Force XII help carry the weight of each mission by keeping things running

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

An aircraft without fuel makes a really nice static display. Just like a broken Humvee or a weapon without bullets; even the best pilot in the Army can't do his mission without support.

It's that support, provided by a battalion's Forward Support Company (FSC), that keeps the weapons loaded, the Humvees running, the Soldiers fed and the aircraft from becoming multi million dollar paperweights.

In Task Force XII battalions, they are the "Echo Companies," and they're part of a large maintenance machine that keeps operations flowing smoothly.

"These great Soldiers continually repair night vision goggles, weapons, trucks, forklifts and the list goes on," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 William Poole, the Task Force XII brigade maintenance officer. "They may not seem important because (they don't work on) aircraft; but without them, nothing can happen."

Maintenance is only the tip of the spear with the FSC's. The companies include the battalion's distribution platoons that transport everything from ice to ammunition. They also include the food service workers for each unit and, here in Iraq, they play a major part in running the Forward Arming and Refueling Points (FARP).

"We're maintenance, we're beans and bullets," said E Co. 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment (Attack) 1st Sgt. David Miles. "If it's support related, we do it."

Each of the flight battalions in Task Force XII have FSC's. Three of them are co-located on Logistics Support Area Anaconda, but all of them work together.

"I know all the motor sergeants from



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton
Spc. Christopher Rodriguez, a water treatment specialist from E Co. 5th Battalion 158th Aviation Regiment, unloads a case of flares used on the battalion's UH-60 Black Hawks.

the FSC's," said Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Mills from E Co. 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. "There are lots of times when we need a part, or they do; we always help each other."

The concept of Forward Support Companies is relatively new; brought about by the Army's recent transformation to a modular force. The idea was to take maintenance and support that was traditionally handled at several echelons and condense the capabilities into one company in each battalion.

The idea is not without its challenges though, said 1st Sgt. Miles.

"A big thing in our company is a lot of small career fields, like communications repair, are only slotted for junior Soldiers," he said. "So we have to be creative to find ways to get them trained

and developed in their jobs."

"I'm a mechanic," said Miles. "I didn't know how a FARP worked, or an ammunition holding area. I had to go learn how all this stuff worked."

It also allows the Soldiers to learn tasks outside their own jobs.

"We have a lot of generator mechanics, but not a lot of generators," he said. "We do have a lot of trucks though, so they get to learn those skills as well as their own. We cross train everybody to work on everything. I've learned a lot from these guys, and hopefully they've learned from each other."

Though the FSC's don't get a lot of glory, most of them seem to realize that not getting much attention usually means they're doing their jobs.

"The bottom line is if we're doing our job, the rest of the battalion can do theirs," said E Co., 5-158th's Staff Sgt. Scott Gaiski. "It takes a special breed

of person to come down here and turn wrenches all day."

"Everything starts on the ground; even in aviation," said, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Anthony Adams, 5-158th battalion maintenance officer. "Sometimes people forget just how important our jobs are, but our commanders do a good job of refocusing people when they lose sight of the importance of our maintenance."

And the support Soldiers know that, with or without the fanfare, they have to continue to do their jobs.

"Sometimes I feel like I'd rather be where the action is," said Pfc. Jonathan Hrachovina, an E Co. 5-158th wheeled vehicle mechanic. "But these guys need vehicles and supplies to go into action. That's where we come in. I'm proud of what we do."

Pictures You've taken



Photo by Sgt. Michelle LaDuke

E Co. 2-159th Soldier take part in a game of touch-football during their company barbecue.



Photo by Sgt. Michelle LaDuke

Pfc. Luke Schwein, from E Co. 2-159th plays a song on his guitar during a barbecue.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Daniel McGurk

FARP Soldiers refuel a OH-58D Kiowa as the pilot gets out to stretch his legs.



Photo by Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 4 David M. O'Brien

A 2-147th UH-60 Black Hawk crew chief maneuvers around the aircraft to conduct last-minute checks before taking off on a night mission from LSA Anaconda.



Photographer Unknown

B Co. 412th 1st Sgt. Ronald Schlangen and commander, Maj. H. Craig Demby, adjust their hats during their company's version of Oktoberfest.



Photo by Capt. Melissa Comiskey

A 'Big Windy' CH-47 Chinook from B Co. 5-158th spins up to takeoff on a late-night air assault mission.



Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 4 David M. O'Brien

Chief Warrant Officer 4 David M. O'Brien takes the opportunity to snap quick photo of himself before he and his flight crew takeoff.



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

'Big Windy' Soldiers recognized for actions that saved crew member's lives, equipment

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

The CH-47 Chinook plays a vital role in combat operations throughout Iraq; but it is not as fast as the jets, and it's definitely not the smallest. That can make the aircraft from "Big Windy" a big target.

In order to defend these aircraft from an enemy attack, Task Force XII has turned to Soldiers like Spc. Guadalupe Ortiz, a utilities equipment repairer in B Co. 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment.

He and several other Soldiers in 5-158th are among the first group of Soldiers in Task Force XII to be cross-trained as helicopter door-gunners, and they were awarded the Basic Aviation Badge during an award ceremony Oct. 31 on Logistics Support Area Anaconda.

Ortiz is just one of many, non-aviation Military Occupational Specialty (MOS), Soldiers who have been trained for the position of helicopter door-gunner.

"It was all voluntary," said Ortiz. "At first they told me I couldn't do it, but the more they told me I couldn't do it; the more I wanted to do it."

For a Soldier who has cross-trained to become a door-gunner to receive the Basic Aviation Badge, they must fly at least 15 combat missions as a door-gunner.

In the process of earning this badge, Ortiz and several other Soldiers on one particular mission, in September, earned another badge.

"I received the Combat Action Badge because during one mission we got fired on, with armor-piercing bullets, and we returned fire," he said. "We'd trained for this, so my mind was just focused ... I was ready for anything."

In addition to the Basic Aviation Badges and the Combat Action Badges, there was another award given out that day, Spc. Bradley King was awarded the Army Commendation Medal.

"Before a flight, I was (inspecting) one of our aircraft and I found some damage to one of our transmissions," said King, a crew chief in 5-158th. "If I hadn't found the (damage), basically that transmission would have overheated and caused itself to fail."

His actions saved the lives of everyone who was supposed to fly in that air-



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Capt. Matthew Warren, the commander of B Co. 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, pins the Combat Action Badge on Staff Sgt. Nicholas Sheffield during an award ceremony held on Logistics Support Area Anaconda Oct. 31. Sheffield, a flight engineer, is just one of several Soldiers presented an award during this ceremony.

craft, said Capt. Matthew Warren, the commander of B Co. 5-158th.

King and the other Soldiers in the ceremony are being awarded for their role in helping "Big Windy" play a vital role in combat operation throughout Iraq, said Warren.

"It's always good to be rewarded for something you do," said Ortiz. "And the fact that you're not that particular (MOS) makes it that much better."

Task Force Ready Soldiers help Iraqi woman get back on her feet

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

The crews of A Co. 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment are used to flying important people. In just a few months in Iraq, the 'VIP Company' has carried Coalition force military leaders, famous news reporters and more.

But on an otherwise normal day in October, they got the chance to carry someone whom they considered truly special; a 19-year-old Iraqi girl named Suham Hassan Ka-Naan.

"I read about her story in 'Stars and Stripes' about a month ago," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric Hildebrandt, an A Co. pilot. "I remember being very touched by the story, so it was a pleasure to get to meet her."

In 2004, Suham lived near the front gate of a U.S. base near Baghdad. She lived the life of a normal teenage girl; until one night an insurgent rocket fired at the base fell short and struck her family's home.

The blast took both of her legs.

In the years since the attack, Suham has learned to live without legs, and with the idea that she would never walk again. She's learned to rely on her brother to carry her around.

Aug. 4, the Soldiers of Assassin Troup, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment were clearing the village, searching for extremist militia members when they met Suham and decided to help.



Photo by Maj. Everett Spain

19-year-old Suham Hassan Ka-Naan sits with her brother and several Soldiers from Assassin Troup, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment in the back of a Task Force XII UH-60 Black Hawk. Soldiers from Task Force Ready's A Co. 5-158th Aviation Regiment flew the girl, a double amputee, to a prosthetics clinic in Baghdad where she was fitted for her new prosthetic limbs Oct. 21.

Over the past few months, with the help of the Assassin Troup Soldiers, she has started to receive the medical attention needed.

Oct. 21, she and her brother boarded a 'VIP Company' UH-60 Black Hawk which transported her to Forward Oper-

ating Base Washington in Baghdad, and the prosthetics clinic where she was to be fitted with her new legs.

"All the crew members were excited to be a part of it," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Richard Oros, pilot in command of the mission. "The crew chief (Spc. Chuck Broadwater) said she had a big smile on her face the whole flight. After living with tragedy like that, if you can bring a smile to somebody's face, everybody feels good." Though transporting an Iraqi girl to a hospital may seem like a small thing, its impact on the war on terrorism is huge, said Task Force Ready Commander, Lt. Col. Jack Bone.

"The lasting effects of what is being done for this girl will not only impact her, but also her family, her community and so on," he said. "The military aspect plays a tremendous role in (helping to win the support of the Iraqi people) and in my mind, we are winning that fight on a daily basis."

Though this is not the first time Task Force XII Soldiers have had the opportunity to directly impact the people of Iraq, the crews on board say this is one they'll always remember.

"I wish we could do more of these things," said Hildebrandt. "I don't really think of it as helping an Iraqi - citizenship doesn't play any part of it. For me it's about helping another human being."

Pilot in former-fixed wing battalion for Task Force XII receives medal honoring courage

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

"The whole flight was eight minutes out, eight minutes back," said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Terrance Lee, a C-23 Sherpa pilot. "You don't think about those things (while flying), it's only while you're lying in the bed in the hospital, that's when ... lots of things go through your head."

Lying in that hospital bed gave him plenty of time to think about his actions and the events that took place Jan. 4.

Lee's decision to take control of the airplane, and safely land on Logistics Support Area Anaconda after an enemy attack, earned him the Distinguished Flying Cross presented Oct. 25.

As an infantryman in Vietnam, he had been shot at before, but this is the first time he had ever been shot at during his 32 years of flying, said Lee.

"We work very hard on training our crews for emergencies," said Lt. Col. Pat Weber, the

commander of Operational Support Airlift Command. "We try to make training as realistic as possible just in case an emergency like this happens."

When the flight began, Lee's job as the right seat pilot was to help fly the plane and to assist the pilot in command, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Brett Krass.

"We got about 24 miles from here when we came across a hard-top road by a water canal," said Lee. "We saw a pick-up truck, and Mr. Krass tried to avoid it."

By the time the pilots saw the vehicle, it was too late. Their only choice was to make a hard right turn to maneuver away from it.

"Unfortunately, it exposed the left side of the aircraft and we took 14 rounds," he said. "I felt a whack in my leg, and I knew something had hit me but I didn't really feel any pain."

The rounds ripped through the aircraft and wounded Lee, Krass and



This is one of the many holes found on the left side of a C-23 Sherpa after it was attacked by enemy fire Jan. 4. Chief Warrant Officer 5 Terrance Lee was award the Distinguished Flying Cross for the action he took to land his plane safely on Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq

one of the two passengers on the plane.

"I was more concerned about Brett (the other pilot), than I was about myself," said Lee. "Luckily, we had a flight surgeon onboard and he took control of treating the wounded."

Sgt. Alex Johnston, the flight engineer for the aircraft, helped Krass out of the cockpit so he could receive medical attention.

"This was only my third time flying in country," said Lee. "Fortunately, Mr. Krass put

'direct to Balad' in the (navigation) box before he got out of his seat."

Since the plane had two injured pilots, and a broken radio, Johnston remained in the cockpit to aid Lee in returning to LSA Anaconda and landing the plane.

"We made a low-altitude, high-speed pass right between the runways, and then we made a hard turn and landed," he said. "That's when we discovered we had a blown tire."

Landing any air-

craft with a blown tire can have a tragic outcome; but luck, once again, showed favor on the disabled aircraft and its crew.

Flight engineers are trained in what to do just in case of an event like this, so Sgt. Johnston was very knowledgeable in steering an aircraft, said Lee.

After the plane landed safely, rescue crews and firefighters rushed toward the aircraft to evacuate the passengers.

"We are very proud of him and the rest of the crew on that plane," said Weber. "It took a real crew effort to land that plane, and they each had a crucial job to perform."

In addition to his role as a pilot, Lee is also the battalion safety officer, and he is responsible for the more than 10,000 hours of safe flying this battalion has done, said Weber.

Although he has helped his battalion fly thousands of safe hours, this 16 minute flight will be one that he says he will remember for many years to come.

"He displayed the same character in the airplane that day as he does at work every day," said Weber. "He is a real citizen Soldier, and a true professional."



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Terrance Lee, a C-23 Sherpa pilot in Task Force XII, was award the Distinguished Flying Cross for his action taken to land his plane after receiving an enemy attack Jan. 4.

On the Home Front



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Students at Ansbach Elementary School march in a parade to show their support for a drug-free lifestyle Oct. 26 as part of Red Ribbon Week. "Say No to Drugs," "Just Say No!" and "Hugs Not Drugs!" were some of the catch phrases heard as students took part in Red Ribbon Week activities.



Photo by Jim Hughes

Shane Williams, an Ansbach Cougars running back, barrels through defenders to reach the endzone during a victory against Vilseck Sept. 29. The Cougars were the only undefeated team in DODDS football and were in the championship game for the sixth straight year, winning their fifth title.



Photo by OC Kenneth R. Toole

Nearly 63,000 fans stand in the Metrodome in Minneapolis as a flag flown in Iraq, by 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, is presented during a Minnesota Vikings game Nov. 18. Soldiers and Families of the 2-147th were honorary guests at the football game.



Photo by Jim Hughes

Garrison fire and emergency services set up an accident scene on Katterbach Kaserne Oct. 15-17. The U.S. and German emergency responders all described the victims, played by Boy and Girl Scouts along with other Family members, as very realistic; some even said the scene gave them "goose bumps."



Photo by Jim Hughes

Ansbach Packer T.J. Propp crashes over Grafenwoehr defenders and the goal line to score a two-point conversion in the third quarter of the youth football game Oct. 20 at Katterbach. The Packers picked up their first win of the season with a 28-7 victory.



Photo by Jim Hughes

(Clockwise from Spiderman) Alex Santiago, best youth costume; Rachel White, overall youth winner; Keri Sadler, top adult female; and Jory Sadler, top adult male with their trophies from the Halloween Hustle 5-K Fun Run Oct. 27.

Beauty Queen in National Guard trades in crown for opportunity to deploy with unit

Story by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra, 302nd MPAD

Hear the word "Soldier" and images of flowing gowns and diamond crowns probably do not come to mind. Yet Spc. Jessica Chayer, a generator mechanic with 2nd Battalion, 147th Assault Helicopter Battalion (2-147), wears both a crown and a combat helmet proudly.

The 22-year-old Robbinsdale, Minn. native relinquished her Minneapolis Aquatennial Queen of the Lakes title earlier this year after learning her National Guard unit was deploying.

The competition Chayer won is an annual pageant and scholarship program that judges contestants on variety of criteria including poise, professionalism, public speaking ability, education, extra curricular activities and appearance.

"It was an honor to win, but I have to admit, I didn't really think I



Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Spc. Jessica Chayer, a generator mechanic with 2nd Battalion, 147th Assault Helicopter Battalion, repairs the engine of a utility vehicle on LSA Anaconda. Chayer relinquished her Minneapolis Aquatennial Queen of the Lakes title earlier this year after learning her unit was going to be deployed.

would," said Chayer. She competed against 49 other winners of city

pageants. She grew up playing sports and volunteering at nonprofit organizations including Habitat for Humanity. She decided to enter the competition after her sister had won similar competitions.

The scholarship money was also a motivation, said Chayer, a senior and sociology major at Augsburg College in Minneapolis.

Though Chayer has had to take a leave of absence from college, relinquish her title and leave her husband of nine months behind in Chamblin, Minn., she is content with her decision to serve.

"I made a commitment to being a Soldier. I am honoring that commitment by being here in Iraq," said Chayer as she repaired the engine on a utility vehicle.

"It was a natural choice to join the National Guard because I grew up with it," she said. Chayer's father served in the National Guard for more than 20

years.

Although her Army buddies sometimes tease her for having won Aquatennial Queen of the Lakes, it's all in good fun, said Sgt. Breanna Larson, also a generator mechanic with 2-147 from Brooklyn Park, Minn.

"It's easy to see why she won," said Larson. "She is an awesome person and has a great attitude. As a mechanic she is knowledgeable and when she doesn't know how to do something, she asks, 'how can I do it?' She's a motivated Soldier."

On being a Soldier and a queen of a pageant, Chayer said it just goes to show how diverse and multi-talented Soldiers are. Competing in pageants and Soldiering might seem like polar opposites, but they are really not, she said.

"Both offer excellent opportunities for personal growth, education and leadership development."

Support Battalion troops take part in 'Biggest Loser' contest

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

Being physically fit and in shape may come easy for some people, but others have to work hard at exercising and eating right.

In an effort to help, as they call it, "Bring Sexy Back," a group of Task Force XII Soldiers are participating in their own localized version of "The Biggest Loser" competition on Logistics Support Area Anaconda.

They are divided into two teams, just like the TV show, and the teams compete against each other to lose the most weight.

The goal of the competition is to help all 18 participants get in shape, but at the same time, help them create a healthier lifestyle, said Sgt. 1st Class Pamela Midgett, the competition's organizer.

"It's not my program; it's their program and it's designed to assist them in the areas they need help in," said Midgett. "Some people do it to advance their (physical training) and some people do it for weight loss."

She also instructs an aerobics and

toning class, called "Body by Midgett," to help the participants get in shape.

"I'm a complete (amateur) when comes to aerobics of any kind," said Chief Warrant Officer Charles Fishe, one of the Task Force XII's "Biggest Loser" contestants. "I can feel it energizing me. She's a great instructor."

These classes are open to all military and civilian personnel that wish to attend. A nutrition class is also available to inform them which foods are healthy and better for their diet.

"I understand how some of them feel because I used to be (overweight) and it's not a good feeling," said Midgett. "And I always said that if I could help somebody else I would."

The contestants will undergo a 60 day trial period before the exact length of the competition can be determined.

Although Fishe and the other contestants here don't weigh nearly as much as the people on the television show, they all share the goals of getting in shape and eating healthier.

"Since I joined the 'Biggest Loser' competition, I've already lost four



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Soldiers in the "Body by Midgett" class perform exercises to help strengthen their thigh muscles. A few of these Soldiers are contestants in the Task Force XII "Biggest Loser" competition.

pounds," said Fishe. "We were promised we would get our 'Sexy Back' ... and I'm working on it."

FARP Soldiers work hard to keep aircraft armed, dangerous

Story by 2nd Lt. Daniel J. McGurk

Some Soldiers who work here describe it as an Army gas station. But the Logistics Support Area Anaconda Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) is that and so much more.

The vehicles that make their way through this gas station aren't Humvees, Strykers, or even the new MRAPs. They are Apaches. They are Black Hawks, Chinooks and Kiowas.

They are highly mobile Army and Marine Aviation assets.

Currently, the E Co. 'Outlaws' of the 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment manage the fuel and ammunition for all attack aircraft that make their way here.

The E Co. 'Phoenix' of the 5th, Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment recently took over the fuel handling mission for the assault FARP from the 'Marauders' of the 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. Between these units, the Soldiers of Task Force XII expect to pump some four million gallons of fuel over the course of the current deployment.

"It's quite a rush going underneath the turning blades and getting hit by hurricane force winds with a fuel line in your hands," said Pfc. Luke Shweim from the 2-159th. "Especially with the Apaches and the Cobras and all that ammunition they've got hanging around them."

Pumping JP8 fuel into helicopters during a 'hot refuel' on a concrete pad

in the middle of a desert airport is only a small portion of the capabilities that these Soldiers have been trained for.

The Forward Support Companies of each battalion have the capability to push out a logistics package that, by necessity, has to match the mobility of its own aircraft.

Translation: if a helicopter can't make it to the nearest refuel point, we will take the fuel and ammunition to them. Hence the word 'Forward' in FARP.

"We perform a critical necessity at the FARP for Multinational Corps-Iraq by fueling any and all helicopters that fly in our airspace," said Lt. Col. Kevin J. Christenson, the commander 2-159th.

In the Forward Support Companies

short existence, aviation battalion commanders have placed their reliance in a tactically proficient, mobile, and reliable distribution platoon to take care of the fuel that makes our missions happen.

Meanwhile though, the Outlaws, the Phoenix, and the 412th attachments at the LSA Anaconda FARP, are constantly working to improve themselves and their "gas station."

So, if you are an aviator reading this, the next time you fly through your local gas station say "Thank You" to that Pfc. who just ran down to fuel your aircraft and got you off the ground as fast as he could. Tell the ammo dog or the armament guru who is lugging around cans of bullets the size of small grenades for you that they are doing a good job. Were

you handed a bottle of water, or if you are really lucky, a Gatorade? Remember this; most regular gas stations aren't full service anymore.

We are here for you and will do whatever it takes to get you quickly and safely back off the ground and into the fight.



Photo by 2nd Lt. Daniel McGurk
Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation and 412th Aviation Support Battalion team up to load rockets onto an AH-64 Apache on LSA Anaconda.

Vietnam veteran shares knowledge, experience with younger troops

By 1st Lt. Sean Spencer

If you stick around the military long enough, you'll become accustomed to change. Most Soldiers who have been in for just 10 years talk about "the good old days," and how they've seen everything from weapons to uniforms change drastically over the last decade.

If a lot has changed in 10 years in the military, it's difficult to imagine how much has changed in the past 40 years. There are Soldiers currently serving in Iraq who don't have to imagine; they've lived it.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Greg Dahn joined the Marine Corps in 1968 as an M14 rifle infantryman. By 1969, Dahn found himself deep in the jungles of Vietnam.

Mr. Dahn served a 19-month tour in Vietnam, and in late 1971 left the Marine Corps' active component to join the Marine Corps Reserve. After four years in the reserve component, he decided to leave the service entirely.

Four years later, duty called again, and Mr. Dahn joined the Minnesota Army National Guard in 1979. This is where he's served for the past 28 years, and is now a maintenance test pilot with Task Force XII's 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment.

He's become a technical adviser for the Soldiers of the 2-147th in more ways

than one. In addition to his ability to spot aircraft deficiencies as a maintenance test pilot, Dahn also provides a level of experience and perspective that is rare in today's wartime Army.

The Vietnam conflict is similar to the current Operation Iraqi Freedom, says Dahn, in that they are both "police ac-

tions." Those similarities extend to the aviation field.

"Helicopter tactics used in Iraq were adapted, and much improved, from those used in Vietnam," he said. "OIF is better managed (than the Vietnam conflict). There are more guidelines on how Soldiers should handle themselves."

And though the conflicts are similar, he says the enemy was different.

"We fought Communists in Vietnam, they were more disciplined," said Dahn. "Guerilla tactics and booby traps such as improvised explosive devices (IED) were used then and now. The Viet Cong were better at it than the Iraqis."

This tour in Iraq is not the first time he's been asked to call on his wealth of experience. Mr. Dahn has served in various other positions outside of his roles in Vietnam and Iraq. In 2003, he was deployed to Kosovo as a NATO liaison to the Kosovo Liberation Army, working for a Finnish Admiral.

As the years have turned into decades, and the military has changed, so too has Dahn. Aside from the now 58-year-old's gray hair and wrinkles, he says his goals for each conflict are very different.

"My goal in Iraq is to ensure the line companies have aircraft to complete their missions," he said. "My goal in Vietnam was just to survive."



Photo by 1st Lt. Sean Spencer
Chief Warrant Officer 5 Greg Dahn (right), a maintenance test pilot for Task Force XII's 2nd Battalion, 147th Aviation Regiment, talks to a fellow Soldier on Logistics Support Area Anaconda. Dahn is a Vietnam veteran and the Soldiers of 2-147th regularly call on his four decades of experience.

Thanksgiving Day Meal on LSA Anaconda



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Searcy, a platoon sergeant in D Co. 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, waits to receive his Thanksgiving Day meal.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Maj. H. Craig Demby, the commander of B. Co 412th Aviation Support Battalion, carves a steamship round for military and civilian personnel.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Task Force XII's Dining Facility 4 Soldiers created multiple decorative displays to include this one of a turkey on a cake.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Task Force XII's Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, along with other senior noncommissioned officers and officers, served food Thanksgiving Day.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Task Force XII's Dining Facility 4 Soldiers created multiple decorative displays to include this replica of a Native American tepee with a person inside.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Task Force XII Soldiers, Pfc. Damaris Rivera-Chaparro (left) and Cpl. Amy Marano, dress in costumes to greet personnel entering the Dining Facility 4.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Task Force XII's Dining Facility 4 Soldiers created multiple decorative displays to include this gigantic cake.

Soldiers take oath to become U.S. citizens

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

Spc. Osborne Tate was just one of 178 service members to be personally congratulated Veterans Day by keynote speaker, Mr. Michael Chertoff, the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Tate became the first Task Force XII Soldier to accomplish this major feat during this deployment.

He officially became a U.S. citizen during a Multinational Corps Iraq Naturalization Ceremony held on Logistics Support Area Anaconda Nov. 11.

Tate was born in Liberia, an African country founded in the 1820's by freed slaves from the U.S.

He and his family moved to the U.S. in February 1983, and he joined the Army in

March 2005.

Shortly after enlisting, he began the process of becoming a U.S. citizen.

"The whole process took about two years," said Tate, a power generation equipment repairer in E Co. 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. "I just got in contact with (the legal office) and they pretty much did the end product."

When Soldiers go to their legal office to start the process to become U.S. citizens, they must fill out several forms that will be sent to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in Nebraska said Sgt. Aaron Simeraro, a paralegal specialist in Task Force XII.

"Their (application) sits in at the USCIS for about three or four

months while they do background checks, and perform all of the other checks they need in order to forward it to Rome," said Simeraro. "Rome branch of the USCIS actually refers the individual seeking (U.S. citizenship) to an immigration officer."

After Tate was referred to an immigration officer, and told when he would have his citizenship interview, the legal office prepared him for the interview.

Tate and the other service members, who successfully completed the interview, became citizens during a ceremony held Veterans Day.

This ceremony, just like the cease-fire that ended World War I, began at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Spc. Osborne Tate, a power generation equipment repairer in 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, shakes hands with the 316th Sustainment Command's top enlisted Soldier, Command Sgt. Maj. Stacey Davis, during a Multinational Corps Iraq Naturalization Ceremony Nov. 11 on Logistics Support Area Anaconda.

"I thought it was a pretty good ceremony," said Tate. "I'm proud to say I can honestly call myself an American now. For the first time in my life, I'm doing something that's not just benefiting me, but benefiting the country as a whole."

"If a Soldier wants to become a citizen dur-

ing this deployment, then they need to get to their legal office and begin this process as soon as possible," said Simeraro. "The chances of them becoming a U.S. citizen while in Iraq significantly decreases the more they wait; and that could make this process take even longer to happen."

Task Force female Soldiers learn self-defense

Story by Sgt. Brandon Little

Pvt. Coinal Calderon struggled with every ounce of strength in her body to wiggle free from her attacker, who was much stronger and nearly twice her size.

She resisted his advances, for what seemed to her like an eternity, until he finally realized she would never submit.

Calderon was just one of several female Soldiers in Task Force XII trained to resist an attacker, in a three-day class on sexual assault prevention.

The class lasted three hours each day and was taught on Logistics Support Area Anaconda by a combatatives level 3 instructor, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Apollo Simmonds, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot in C Co. 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment.

"I organized this class because there was a report that said a female here escaped from her attacker because she had a knife," said Ridenhour, the commander of D Co. 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. "Since then, I've heard some of the female Soldiers carry around knives to defend themselves, and that could get them into a dangerous situation if they don't know how to use it."

The first two days of class, Simmonds provided the Soldiers with information and statistics on sexual assault.

"He really did his homework," said Ridenhour. "He provided us with a lot of knowledge; like the fact that the majority of the time victims knew their attackers"

Day two consisted of Simmonds and the class discussing different types of situations in which these attacks occurred.

"I thought it was really interesting," said Calderon, a supply clerk in D Co. 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment and, at 5 feet tall and about 115 pounds, the smallest Soldier in the class. "I got a little bit more knowledge about how to deal with different situations."

During the class, they also got information about the use of other self-

defense items such as a knife or a whistle.

He showed that carrying a knife doesn't guarantee safety by having the Soldiers attempt to pull a pen from their pocket while being attacked, said Ridenhour.

The final day combined the knowledge from the first days with a few defensive moves that can be used to resist attackers.

"It didn't teach them how to fight," she said. "It taught them how to maneuver away from an attacker."

The students learned to react in situations when they were attacked by someone they knew. They also practiced situations where the attacker was a stranger.

Even though Calderon is small, she was out there defending herself and throwing people around just like everybody else, said the 6-foot-1-inch Ridenhour.

"I really liked the throwing part, that was my favorite part of the class," said Calderon. "I've always been into that type of thing."

Although many of the Soldiers found the class fun and entertaining, the true purpose of this class was to teach them the skills needed to help prevent them from becoming a victim of sexual assault, said Ridenhour.

"I thought the class was successful, and the lessons the Soldiers learned will stick with them," she said. "We can't prevent them from being attacked, but I feel more confident that they have the tools to resist an attacker."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Derrick L. Mims

Pvt. Coinal Calderon, a supply clerk in D Co. 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, defends herself against an attacker during a sexual assault prevention class.

Retention Corner

By Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Organ

I would like to congratulate all the Soldiers that have reenlisted since Oct. 1. Soldiers and Families continue to reenlist and stay 'Army Strong' at a remarkable pace.

This past month, I was able to attend some training and would like to pass along some information that will affect many of the Soldiers in the 12th CAB.

The Army's bonus program has changed many times over the past few months.

The Army has decided that the current enhanced bonus program is having the desired effect, and provides Soldiers an easier way to calculate their own bonus, so the proposed bonus change that was previously discussed has been put on hold.

This change is a direct result of you, the Soldier, telling the Army what you want. Many Soldiers have expressed their satisfaction with the enhanced bonus program. The enhanced program

might be decreasing amounts in January, so keep that in mind.

If you have any questions about your bonus please contact your servicing Career Counselor. Along with the bonus program, the Army released Milper Message 07-302, the Montgomery GI Bill Transferability of Benefits to Dependents Program.

The MGIB Transferability Program allows Soldiers that are being offered a critical skills bonus the opportunity to transfer some of the Soldier MGIB benefits to a spouse or child. Soldiers can only do this at the time of their reenlistment and must be qualified.

As we reach the five month mark of the deployment Soldiers can now start to look at assignments for their reenlistment. The Army has said that they will start placing our Soldiers on assignment in the June 2008 timeframe.

A couple of the assignments that they will be placing soldiers on are Drill Sergeant and Recruiting. So if any Soldier is looking at reenlisting for a cer-

tain location or reenlisting for an option, make sure you try to reenlist before June.

Once a mid-term Soldier is placed on assignment instructions, he can no longer reenlist for any option other than Needs of the Army.

Currently these assignments are available for Soldiers in their reenlistment window and within 12-18 months from DEROS:

Ft Bragg, N.C.
Ft Carson, Colo.
Ft Campbell, Ky.
Ft Drum, N.Y.
Ft Lewis, Wa.
Ft Polk, La.
Ft Stewart, Ga.
Ft Hood, Texas

As everyone knows, the brigade will be going through some changes in December with some units moving to Taji. No matter where you are located there will be retention support at your location.

There will be three career counselors here in Balad, with the 3-158th counselor and myself in Taji, so no matter where you are located there will be someone to answer all your questions.

Chronicles of the Griffin Brigade: History of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade (Part 4)

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

Task Force XII is serving in Iraq at a historic juncture in this campaign, as an increase in "boots on the ground" and helicopters in the air, combined with a renewed emphasis on counterinsurgency operations, has produced a downturn in violence and an increasing alliance between the Iraqi people and Coalition forces.

In Vietnam in 1968, the 12th Aviation Group's participation in the Tet Counteroffensive was of similar significance.

When North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces attacked across South Vietnam on 31 January 1968, the Griffins swung into action, allowing rapid counterattacks by U.S. forces in every threatened area.

In Saigon, the 120th Assault Helicopter Company responded to attacks on Tan Son Nhut Airport and the American Embassy by moving quick reaction forces, supplies, and ammunition where needed, and by evacuating diplomatic



Photo by Peter A. Bird

Photograph of an AH-1 Cobra in Vietnam.

personnel and families. Two Air Weapons Teams from the company's 4th Gunship Platoon "Razorbacks" were off the ground in three minutes after the alarm was sounded, and remained airborne for the entire day, landing only to refuel and rearm. The Razorbacks flew yet another new addition to the Army Aviation inventory, the AH-1 Huey Cobra gunship, the venerable airframe in which our very own Griffin 6, Col. Edens, learned the trade

of the attack pilot.

Capt. Nelson Garcia, an American advisor to a South Vietnamese unit, described, to Hawk Magazine in April 1968, some of the action and the support he received from the Razorbacks: "We ran head on into one of the attack forces. There were approximately 350 men against my 30 ... then those beautiful gunships came in and started circling the area. I threw up a pocket flare to mark the position ... and then he went in. He was right on target - he placed the rockets right in the middle of Charlie's position. Altogether ... we killed over 200 enemy, and I'd estimate that 80 to 85 percent was attributable to the helicopters."

Click here for more information, <http://www.1stavnbd.com/Articles/12thTet68p2.htm>.

As a direct result of the flexibility and firepower that Army Aviation units like the Griffins brought to the fight, U.S. forces stopped the Tet Offensive and virtually destroyed the Viet Cong as a viable fighting force.

Hooah! See you next month.

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
Sgt. Brandon Little



12th CAB PAO Contact Information
Building 4022
LSA Anaconda
DSN: 314 483-2079
christopher.seaton@iraq.centcom.mil
brandon.little@iraq.centcom.mil

This edition and all others can be found online at:
www.12cab.army.mil

The Griffin is an authorized publication for Department of Defense members. Contents of The Griffin are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs Office.