

Telling the Story of Task Force 34

The Flightline



RRF Team • TF34 Murals • Port Operations



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The Flightline • Oct. 2008 Issue II

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Dear Families and Friends of TF 34,

Last month, during aircraft movement from Udari Airfield to Joint Base Balad, tragedy struck our great Task Force with the loss of seven great Soldiers, our Fallen 7, and RED RIVER 44, a CH-47D Chinook helicopter. On Monday, Sept. 22, the 2-149th General Support Aviation Battalion, along with many helpers from Task Force 34 and the Joint Base Balad staff, conducted an absolutely superb memorial ceremony to our Fallen 7. No words, written or spoken, will ever adequately or fully describe the effects of our loss and sadness. Our grief is very real, painful, and felt throughout all the ranks of this Task Force and our Families. Our Fallen 7 are, and will always remain, heroes. They answered their state and nation's call to service in a very harsh, unforgiving place, this country of Iraq.

Especially during times of uncertainty, loss, and deep sorrow, I turn to God's word and promises to men. In Matthew 5:9, Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God." Our Fallen 7 came to Iraq to bring peace to a distressed land and people. Their legacy will be that of Peacemakers!

Early this morning, RED RIVER aircrews supported operations that took the fight to Al-Qaeda in Iraq. They executed their mission tasks perfectly and with great boldness. RED RIVER is back in the saddle, galloping forward. May God always bless these mighty Warriors and Peacemakers, our precious Families, and all Soldiers of TF 34.

ONE TEAM- ONE FIGHT, ATTACK!

Written by COL Clay Brock



COL Clay Brock
Task Force 34 Commander

TF34 Fun Facts

The Legacy of the Red Bull Combat Patch



As Task Force 34 have all received the Red Bull combat patch, it is important to understand the history and significance of the patch.

Symbolism: The patch shape represents an olla (Mexican water flask) symbolizing the 34th Infantry Division's origin, formation and intensive training at Camp Cody, New Mexico in Oct. 1917. The bull skull also symbolizes the surrounding dry, desert-like area. Black denotes durability, firmness and stability and red is for courage and action.

34th Division in Action: As the first U.S. Division to be shipped overseas, PVT Milburn Henke of Hutchinson, Minn. was credited as being the first American Soldier to step off the boat in support of the WWII effort on Jan. 26, 1942.

The division participated in six major Army campaigns in North Africa, Sicily and Italy. The division is credited with amassing 517 days of continuous front line combat, more than any other division in the European theater.

Formation of the U.S. Army Rangers: The U.S. Army Rangers trace their lineage to the 34th Infantry Division. During WWII, the 1st Ranger Battalion was formed under the command of one of the Division's officers, CPT William Darby. Eighty percent of the 1st Ranger Battalion's volunteers were drawn from the 34th, and they soon became famous as "Darby's Rangers".

Courtesy of pentagon.mil



CSM Gery Thesing
Task Force 34
Command Sergeant Major

Hello families and Soldiers of Task Force 34 (TF 34), we are now in the fifth month of our deployment with only seven months to go. Time is passing fast, the 1-244th Assault Helicopter Battalion, headquartered in Hammond, Louisiana will be home in April, only six months away!

Can you all remember way back when we were first alerted to our deployment and all the thoughts that ran through our minds? Who will mow the grass, babysit, shovel snow, help out in hurricane season? Will my family be ok? As we all thought about those issues and more way back then, and maybe at the time those issues seemed to be insurmountable and will crush the family. Now looking back, I see how my family has pulled together; my wife, son, daughter, father, mother, brothers, sisters, in-laws, out-laws; they have all come together; all the insurmountable issues are not really issues. Life is functioning at home; most likely not the same for all of the Soldiers and families in the Task Force. We are not all

as fortunate in life and at times it may seem unfair that someone has it better than themselves.

Remember that the Task Force leadership invites all the families to contact the Family Readiness Group (FRG) leaders at www.ArmyFRG.org, and the rear detachment leaders. Soldiers of Task Force 34 can talk to their first line leaders for issues they may be having at home or in Iraq. The Task Force, the FRGs and the rear detachment commanders have many resources to help in resolving the issues at home that have not come together yet. Do not let an issue go any longer, ask! There are good people here in Iraq, your state and home towns that have one purpose in life; they want to help, ASK for it!

The entire Task Force is now in the theater of operations; some in Kuwait, the bulk of the Task Force is in Balad, and others are supporting the people of Iraq in various areas around the country. COL Brock and I are proud of the Soldiers in TF 34, the expertise of everyone is evident as we get our "battle rhythm" and support our motto of "fly-fix-fly." Pilots are flying helicopter missions day and night using night vision goggles, crew members are preparing the aircraft for flight, staff members are controlling the missions, and all the aviation related support is working 24 hours a day in shifts.

The other Soldiers that are the backbone to our operations here in Iraq are the sections that maintain, repair, provide logistics support, professional services, administrative services, and Soldier personal services. What are those you ask? Those services are pay, spiritual counseling, professional counseling, fuelers, mechanics, administrative, legal, mail, awards, and promotions. There are experts in many different specialties, too many to mention them all specifically, such as refrigeration repair, sheet metal, avionics, engines, computer repair, information technology, networking, parts, and supplies of all sorts that range from an aircraft engine to toilet paper.

We eat very well because of TF 34's cooks; that ensure all our meals are prepared perfectly by the KBR employ-

ees. Did your Soldiers tell you that there are four meals a day, they are served in a mess hall that is the size of a football field, and the meal choices offered are usually four different main courses plus a short order, and some sort of specialty food such as Mongolian BBQ or Balkans. For desert, pick from numerous flavors of Baskin Robbins ice cream, multiple toppings, or if you have a sweet tooth, try one of many pies, cakes or cookies. It is said that you will be pressing 300 pounds, scoring 300 points on a physical training test, or you could weigh 300 pounds!

The Soldiers that are working in some remote and alternate locations around Iraq do not have it as comfortable as those in Balad or Baghdad, do not assume all of the Soldiers are as comfortable as I described. Some of the Task Force 34 Soldiers do have some austere living conditions; we have to remember that it is a combat theater of operations.

The Soldiers work hard here in Iraq and we also know that our families work very hard; keep e-mailing and calling each other, stay in touch with your families, support each other in this separation from our loved ones. Rest and Recuperation leave has started; Soldiers will start rotating to go home on leave for approximately 12 days. Enjoy your time together and think of how fast the time has gone by so far; the remaining time here in Iraq will be as fast and we will be planning the trip home before you know it.

We have made new friends, had some of the best of times and will have memories for years to come. We also have had the worst of times; losing seven of our best Soldiers, friends and loved ones. They will never be forgotten by this Task Force, always remember; never forget "Red River 44."

Until the next "Flightline," I ask the families and the Soldiers to keep in touch and if you do not have the means to do that, ASK THE LEADERSHIP and the FRG for HELP!! We miss you all, take care, and God bless all of you.

Written by CSM Gery Thesing

Wing and a Prayer

The title of this section in our Task Force newsletter "Wing and a Prayer" has, for me, taken on an even greater significance in the aftermath of the loss of our Fallen 7. The phrase "A Wing and a Prayer" was coined during World War II by an Army Aviation crew, and immortalized by a song from that same era. Several times, while flying nearly impossible air missions, crew members could not understand how they were able to return to base even under the most difficult of times, if it were not for "a wing and a prayer." For those of us in TF 34, this is one of those "most difficult times!"

I ask myself the question, what makes someone volunteer for military service, and what makes us raise our hands and vow to 'uphold and defend' all that we hold dear? I believe the answer for me is love. Love is one of those four letter words that evoke strong emotional feelings within the human spirit. What allows us to face uncertain times knowing that we may be called upon to give our all? I believe it's because we love our families, we love our freedoms, we love our country!

Robert Kennedy once asked the question while campaigning in 1968, "If not us, who? If not now, when?" Our Fallen 7,

along with countless other service men and women during this war on terrorism have, I believe, answered Mr. Kennedy's question, "It is us, and it is now!" In John 15:13, Jesus tells his disciples, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." It is nearly unfathomable the number of friends, like our Fallen 7, that America and freedom has had over so many years, a debt that we as a free people can never fully repay.

We who served with our brothers from "Red River 44" will continue to honor their selfless service by running and finishing "the good race," this race that was set before them, and yet still lies before us. We will carry the memories of them always. It is not for us to determine



CH (LTC) Joel Severson
TF34 Chaplain

where our paths lead from here, but this I do know. We, in TF 34, will not forget, will not fear, will not fail to move forward with the same full confidence that the crew of "Red River 44" had in our mission and purpose.

Written by CH (LTC) Joel Severson

Public Affairs Guidance

Unit Public Affairs Reps. (UPAR)- Each company in Task Force 34 has a part-time UPAR. They will ensure your company is well represented to your families and hometown media. They will help build your company web pages on www.TaskForce34.org and this newsletter. Please send your photos and videos to your UPARs.

Blogs- The Public Affairs Office (PAO) is collecting blog links to feature on www.TaskForce34.org. We are interested in blogs, MySpace, Friendster, photo hosting websites and other pages created by Soldiers and family members of Task Force 34. (It is actually required to turn in your links to BDE. The individual Soldier can tell the Soldier's story. Through these web sites TF 34's story is told.

Shout-outs- Hey sports fans! PAO will be capturing your team spirit and sending video clips to your favorite team for broadcast during the big game. We'll be doing holiday shout outs and "hi honeys" as well. Watch the BDE FRAGOs for dates and locations.

File share- All Task Force 34 photos, graphics, talking points, etc. are posted on <http://jbb.iraq.centcom.mil/tenantunits/corps-cab/SpecStaff/pao>

Written by SFC Daniel Ewer

ASK THE JAG

Q: There is an E3 in my section dating an E6 from another section. Both of them are single, but I thought that NCOs could not date junior enlisted Soldiers?

A: The Army's Command Policy, AR 600-20 addresses relationships between Soldiers of different ranks which are prohibited relationships. Relationships between single enlisted Soldiers or single officers are generally permissible unless they:

- (a) Compromise or *appear* to compromise supervisory authority or the chain of command
- (b) Cause actual or *perceived* partiality or unfairness;
- (c) Involve, or *appear* to involve improper use of rank or position for personal gain;
- (d) Are, or are *perceived* to be exploitive or coercive in nature;
- (e) Create an *actual* or *clearly predictable* adverse impact on discipline, authority, morale, or the ability of the command to accomplish its mission.

Given these directives, relationships between Soldiers in the same immediate chain of command are generally a violation of the regulation. For instance, a section sergeant must not date Soldiers within his/her own section. You will notice though that each of these prohibitions above talks about perception or appearance, not just what is actually happening. If two Soldiers of significantly different ranks choose to date, they must think how their relationship appears to subordinates and superiors. They must clearly think about how their actions or choices are viewed by those outside the relationship. Most issues with these relationships do not come from big things (like using rank to get a girlfriend/boyfriend promoted), but from small things over time such as an E6 taking his E3 girlfriend on long lunches, asking her E5 supervisor for an extra day off for her, exempting her from details, or having a talk with an E4 co-worker his girlfriend is having a problem with.

Particularly in a deployed environment, these perceptions will affect your relationship and most likely your job. Remember, as a Soldier you must always place the mission first. If you choose to date another Soldier in your unit, it is important to keep this relationship as separate from your workplace as possible. When you are in uniform, you must bear in mind you are a Soldier first and you must maintain your military manner and your professionalism. Soldiers in a personal relationship should never use their rank or position to influence the career or working environment of the Soldier they are in a relationship with. The senior Soldier in the relationship is in the best position to maintain the standards and do the right thing. However, this does not imply that junior Soldiers will not also be disciplined for violating the Army regulation. If you are questioning your actions, you are probably doing the wrong thing. Ask before you act.

Have a burning legal question you need answered? If you do, I'm sure many others have the same question. So, drop us a line. Come by, leave a note or send us an email to artem.bunin@iraq.centcom.mil. We will publish select questions in the next newsletter, but we will never publish your name with your question.

Written by CPT Lyndsey Kimber

NATURALIZATION

If you are a Soldier with TF 34 and you want to become a United States Citizen, don't wait! You can apply for U.S. Citizenship based on your military service and the TF 34 Legal Office can help! As a member of the military there are naturalization requirements that you may be exempted from, including the required residency and physical presence in the United States.

General requirements and qualifications must be met in order for you to become a U.S. citizen. These include:

- Demonstrating that you have good moral character
- Demonstrating knowledge of the English language
- Demonstrating knowledge of U.S. government and history ("civics")
- Demonstrating attachment to the United States by taking an oath of allegiance to the U.S. Constitution

PASSPORTS

If you want to travel overseas during your leave, the TF 34 Legal Office can assist you in getting a renewal or a new passport.

The fee for a new passport is \$100. You must also have a certified copy of your birth certificate if you were born in the U.S., and proof of identity (a military ID works).

The fee for a renewal passport is \$75 and all you need is your current passport.

The TF 34 legal office can help you find all the necessary forms and give advice on where to submit the forms. You can also visit travel.state.gov for more information.

If you're interested in gaining U.S. Citizenship or a U.S. Passport contact the TF 34 Legal Office. Your point of contact is SSG Artem Bunin at artem.bunin@iraq.centcom.mil or DSN 318-483-4156.

Many of us come from states with an unofficial state bird, the MOSQUITO. With that statement comes knowledge of some basic preventive measures, i.e. long sleeves, long pants, DEET insect repellent and staying indoors during certain periods of the day. That knowledge should have been on our packing list as these basic preventive measures do apply to Joint Base Balad and the SAND FLIES but does that knowledge produce action? Ask yourself these basic questions:

1. Do you wear long sleeves and pants to work?
2. Do you wear long sleeves and long pants when off duty?
3. Do you apply insect repellent to all exposed skin between dusk and dawn?
4. Do you avoid fragrance items such as cologne, perfume, body spray, etc.?
5. Are you cleaning your CHU on a regular basis?
6. Do I keep my CHU door secured between dusk and dawn?
7. Have you treated your CHU with Permethrin?
8. Have you treated your ACUs with Permethrin?
9. Is there more I could do to prevent the medical threat they pose?



(Above) Soldier scratches her bug bites after not taking necessary precautions to prevent bites.

(Top Right) Mosquito

(Bottom Right) Sand fly



I can understand not wanting to wear long sleeves and long pants 24 hours a day 7 days a week for the duration of our deployment. However, not having insect repellent or not taking the 30 seconds to apply insect repellent to exposed skin between dusk and dawn is either laziness or forgetfulness and both can be corrected. Supply sergeants should be able to order:

1. Permethrin Impregnation Kit, IDA
2. 33% Controlled-Release DEET - 2 fl. oz. squeeze tube
3. Permethrin Aerosol Spray Can (can be used as an alternative if IDA is not available)

However, remember that Permethrin CANNOT be used on NOMAZ/Fire Retardant, Aircrew Combat, solid color coveralls, 27P flyers coveralls and the combat vehicle crewman uniforms.

Additionally, it is okay to be non-cordial to sand flies. Keep your doors closed even on these cool nights. Some of you may even consider treating your baseboards with Permethrin creating a barrier in extreme cases (WARNING: Read the directions carefully, ensure you have proper ventilation and vacate the premise for 8 to 10 hours while the treatment dries/cures).

I do believe all of us have up to 5 minutes a week we can spare to preventive medicine.

Written by SFC Gwen Zimmerman

Remembering Red River 44



CPT Robert
Vallejo II

Texas



CW3 Brady
Rudolf

Oklahoma



CW2 Corry
Edwards

Texas



SGM Julio
Ordonez

Texas



SSG Anthony
Mason

Texas



SGT Daniel
Eshbaugh

Oklahoma



SGT Michael
Thompson

Oklahoma

On Sept. 22, Soldiers of Task Force 34 gathered together to remember the lives of seven of their recently fallen comrades.

CPT Robert Vallejo II, CW2 Corry A. Edwards, SGM Julio C. Ordonez and SSG Anthony L. Mason from the Texas Army National Guard, and CW3 Brady J. Rudolf, SGT Daniel M. Eshbaugh, SGT Michael Thompson from the Oklahoma Army National Guard were

aboard a Chinook helicopter CH-47 enroute to Joint Base Balad, Iraq when it was unexpectedly and catastrophically lost.

"As these teams fly missions, bonds of trust are made, and friendships are strengthened," said CPT Jason Rowe, B Co. 2-149th General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB) Commander. "Over the years that I have been with

this group, our friendship has grown. I am proud to say that the men we honor were more than friends, they were like family to me."

"I will be forever indebted to each of them for their personal sacrifice."

-LTC MacGregor,
2-149th GSAB Commander

the words we can use to describe our brothers," said MAJ Matthew Masias, D Co. 2-149th GSAB Commander.

"Let us not forget their families and sacrifices they have made and the challenges they will face, and together we will remain courageous and will honor their memories as we continue the mission at hand."

Each of the commanders who ad-

dressed the crowd, spoke of the fallen Soldiers like they were their own brother or son.

"As their commander, I will be forever indebted to each of them for their personal sacrifice," said LTC MacGregor, 2-149th GSAB Commander. "It breaks my heart to know the pain and sense of loss their family and loved ones will experience in the coming months and years. I take great comfort in knowing their families and their loved ones back home have the full support and love of the Texas and Oklahoma National Guard families and our Army family."

When the final honors were completed, the service members were able to say goodbye to their brother-in-arms.

"As aviators they understood the inherent risk and danger associated with flying, but they also knew the joy, love and excitement of flying," LTC MacGregor said. "They were professionals who loved their work and loved their country."





"Soldiers and units are not judged by how they respond when faced with easy decisions, when things are going well. Soldiers and units are judged by how they respond when faced with adversity," LTC MacGregor said. "I know that in the final analysis, history will depict our Soldiers and this unit as resilient, courageous, professional and steadfast – for that is who and what you truly are."

"So now great Task Force 34 Soldiers, aircrewmembers, and commanders, we will not forget our Fallen 7," said COL Clay

Brock, Commander, Task Force 34. "In honor of their selfless commitment to duty; carry the memory of our friends in your heart and go forward to finish the good race that was set before them and still lies before us today."

Written by SGT Lynette Hoke



For more photos of the Red River 44 Memorial visit:
www.TaskForce34.org

CPT Robert Vallejo:

In lieu of flowers you may donate to the Baby Vallejo Trust Fund through Plains Capital Bank. Checks should be made payable to Baby Vallejo Trust or Hillary Ann Vallejo. Contributions should be mailed to: Plains Capital Bank 777 Taylor Street, Suite 102 Fort Worth, TX 76102.

CW3 Brady Rudolf:

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Brady Rudolf Memorial Fund. This fund will be used to set up a perpetual scholarship in CW3 Brady Rudolf's name at his alma mater, Southeastern State University, Durant, OK. Donations can be made at any First United Bank location. Information for one of the Durant locations is: 2025 W University Blvd, Durant - (580) 924-9300. The bank website is: www.firstunitedbank.com

SGT Daniel Eshbaugh:

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Daniel Eshbaugh Fund. Proceeds of this fund will be donated to charitable organizations chosen by the family. Donations can be made at any Bancfirst location. The phone number for Bancfirst in Norman is (405) 360-6061.

SGT Michael Thompson:

The family has requested that donations in the name of CPL Michael Thompson be made to Army Emergency Relief (AER) in lieu of flowers. All donations to AER are used to support Soldiers and their families. Checks should be made payable to Army Emergency Relief (or simply the letters "AER"). Contributions should be mailed to: Army Emergency Relief, ATTN: Donations, 200 Stovall St. Room 5-N-13, Alexandria, VA 22332-0600. If you have additional questions about donating to Army Emergency Relief, you may contact them at 703-325-0463 or by e-mail to Campaign@aerhq.org

The fund information is informative only and not required for any Soldier or family to donate. Listing of these funds does not reflect any Army or command endorsement of any particular fund.

Transfer of Authority, Joker is Ready

The chairs were set, the color guard was positioned and the cake was made for the Transfer of Authority ceremony between Task Force Ready, 5th Battalion, 158th General Support Aviation Battalion and Task Force Joker, 2nd Battalion 149th General Support Aviation Battalion on Sept. 25.

Each of the distinguished guests came to the podium to address the crowd who came to witness the traditional ceremony.

"Task Force Ready, you have never backed down from a mission and you never gave quarter to the enemy," said COL Clay Brock, Commander of Task Force 34. "You have set the high watermark for all who follow you... from the Task Force 34 Command Sergeant Major, myself and all the Task Force 34 Red Bull Soldiers, well done and thank you for your service."

During the ceremony, the colors of 5th Battalion, 158th were covered and the new colors of 2nd Battalion, 149th were unrolled to symbolize the new battalion, new commanders and new Soldiers taking over the mission in theater.

"Since we first met, I and the rest of Task Force Ready have been completely impressed by the professionalism, desire and determination displayed by

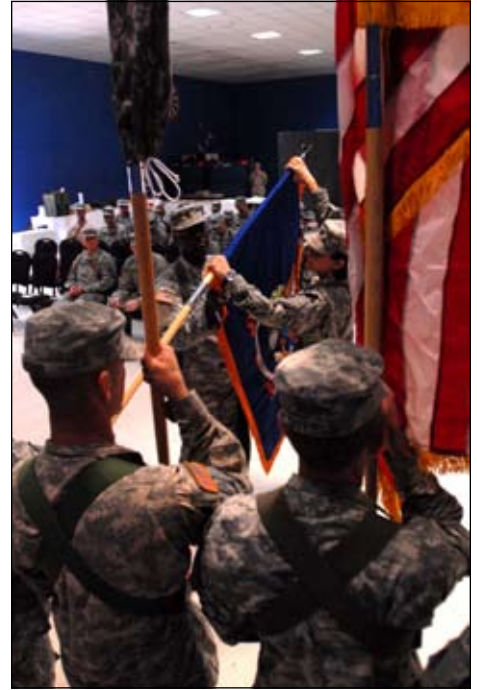
you and your Soldiers," said LTC Jack Bone, outgoing Battalion Commander of Task Force Ready.

After weeks of preparation, training and handing off responsibilities, the outgoing battalion commander expressed his confidence in the new battalion taking over the mission.

"Our country has called upon you to take on this very tough mission, and if the past few weeks are any indicator of your future performance, they have made the right choice and can sleep secure at night knowing that you are point guarding their freedom," LTC Bone said.

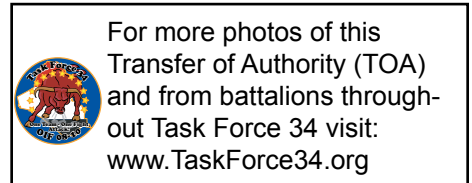
Through the training and other hardships, TF Joker is ready for any mission given to its Soldiers.

"Task Force Joker, together we have weathered the severest of storms that claimed seven of our finest; they will never be forgotten. We must forge ahead in this way," COL Brock said. "Take care of our Soldiers, our most



precious asset. You will represent our country and this task force with great distinction and honor."

Written by SGT Lynette Hoke



For more photos of this Transfer of Authority (TOA) and from battalions throughout Task Force 34 visit: www.TaskForce34.org



Rapid Reaction Force

Crawl, Walk, Run... is the Army's official training motto and attitude for its Soldiers. Usually met with rapid succession, Soldiers are shown a task; they practice the task and then are expected to execute it as professionals.

For the Soldiers of the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) for Task Force 34 (TF 34), running was their only option during a recent training exercise.

The Soldiers, who never met prior to the training set, were required to form TF 34's first ever RRF and Protective Services Team (PST). A training event which usually would take a week or more was condensed into three days due to high demands on the Soldiers, who were all in the process of deploying to Iraq.

Despite varied demographics, cultural backgrounds and military experience, there was a common ground with each of the team members.

"We have diversity on a physical and cultural basis, but emotionally we are all on the same page," said SGT Jacob Long, a qualified 1st Army instructor. "When we were training there was

never once a disagreement; we got our mission, we accomplished it, and had no problems."

The quick cohesion of the new team members made for a smooth training set, especially when the demands were high for the Soldiers as individuals and as a team.

"We all love our job and our fellow Soldiers," SGT Long said. "We are willing to put our lives down for others, and dedicate 110% to the mission."

Written by SGT Lynette Hoke



For the full story of the RRF and more photos of their training exercise visit: www.TaskForce34.org



Task Force 34 Soldiers participated in an aggressive training exercise to form the first Rapid Reaction Force on Aug. 28 near Camp Yankee, Kuwait. After arriving in Iraq, the team members will continue to train throughout the duration of their deployment.

PORT OPERATIONS IN KUWAIT

Port operations set up Task Force 34 for success.

Months of preparation, planning and coordination were placed into action upon the arrival of the United States Navy Ship (USNS) Fischer.

The Fischer, an 800-foot long 'Roll-On' 'Roll-Off' vessel which carried the aircraft and equipment of the 3-142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion (AHB) and the 2-149th General Aviation Support Battalion (GSAB). These are two battalions of Task Force 34 (TF 34) deploying as Multi-National Corps-Iraq's corps-level aviation brigade.

Demonstrating the TF 34 "One Team, One Fight" motto, an additional battalion of the Task Force participated in the unloading of the vessel in Kuwait. Each battalion provided dedicated personnel to accomplish the various tasks associated with Port Operations.

The units and their tasks included the 3-142nd AHB providing aircraft mechanics and maintenance test pilots to reassemble and test fly their UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters. The 2-149th GSAB provided aircraft mechanics and maintenance test pilots to reassemble and test fly their UH-60 Blackhawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

The 834th Aviation Support Battalion (ASB) had five primary tasks in the port operation mission. They developed the concept of the operation and coordinated and provided billeting, transportation, unit movement,



Task Force 34 Soldiers participated in around-the-clock port operations to include: unloading equipment from the ship, aircraft checks and maintenance, maintenance test flights and culminating in the aircraft being flown to Udari Airfield, Kuwait.

and maintenance.

The 834th ASB also unloaded all aircraft from the vessel and provided aircraft maintenance support. They provided shuttle drivers to move personnel to and from the port and also to move flight crews between three different locations: Camp Buehring, Arifjan and the port.

Operational requirements mandated that TF 34 needed to be clear of the port in just a few days. History shows that to clear the port is sometimes more of a wish than it is a realistic timeline with contributing factors of weather conditions, functionality of the equipment, and any other poten-

tial problem you could imagine.

Working 12 to 18 hour days, in temperature approaching 125 degrees, the 180+ Soldiers involved with the port operations were able to set the tone for TF 34 success by clearing the port in four days.

Written by SFC Barry Mathwig



For more photos of Task Force 34 Soldier participating in round the clock port operations visit us on the web at: www.TaskForce34.org



Grandson of Rising Sun serves with U.S. Army

SPC Yoshihide Aomizu's grandfather Haruo Aomizu, lived in Osaka, Japan and served with the Japanese Army during WWII in China, Indonesia, Burma and Vietnam.

Haruo's son, Hideki was of the farmer/merchant caste. He moved to California where he met Yoshihide's mother, Yumiko, who was of a minor warrior caste from Tokyo. Yoshihide was born in California in 1981. Haruo died shortly thereafter before he had the chance to meet his grandson.

SPC Aomizu joined the U.S. Army in response to 9/11 and served four years of active duty with the 29th Engineer Battalion, 25th Infantry Division, Ft. Shafter, HI.

In May 2008, while fulfilling his enlistment in the Inactive Ready Reserve, Aomizu left his classwork at the College of Alameda and transferred to join the 34th Combat Aviation Brigade Headquarters, the command element of Task Force 34, for deployment training at Ft. Sill, OK in support of

their Operation Iraqi Freedom mission.

His parents, living in Alameda, while worried for his safety, are supportive of SPC Aomizu's decision to serve. "I wanted to deploy when I was on active duty, in a way it is nice that I'm finally doing it now," said SPC Aomizu.

SPC Aomizu is looking forward to serving as a Topographic Analyst for the Task Force. Having completed deployment training he is serving in a nine month tour in Iraq. His future plans include completing his geography degree and serving another tour on active duty with the U.S. Army, possibly utilizing his current skills as a Japanese linguist.

Written by SFC Daniel Ewer



For more Task Force 34 stories and photos visit: www.TaskForce34.org

What makes the Army? **Soldiers**

Task Force 34 leaves their mark in Kuwait

SPC Samantha Starbird, Aviation Operations Specialist with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, Task Force 34 was chosen to do the Brigade's wall mural during their brief stay at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

"The experience was definitely different from what I have done before," said SPC Starbird. "It was a whole process of getting a design together, then getting it approved by the post, collecting paint and supplies and then painting at night by a generator light."

SPC Starbird faced many challenges when painting the mural, as well as accomplishing her required deployment training in Kuwait and additional

duties she was assigned.

"The most challenging part was dealing with the heat," said SPC Starbird. "At 8 o'clock at night it was still 108 degrees outside and the cement barrier that we were painting was even hotter because it had been soaking up the sun all day."

Like a true Soldier, she pressed through all the hurdles and completed the mural before leaving for Iraq.

Written by SGT Lynette Hoke



For the full story and more mural painting photos visit:
www.TaskForce34.org



(Top Right) 834th Aviation Support Battalion (Second from Top Right) B Co. 2-149th General Aviation Support Battalion (GSAB) (Third from Top Right) C Co. 2-149th GSAB (Fourth from Top Right) D Co. 2-149th GSAB (Bottom Right) SPC Starbird painting Red Bull on Task Force 34 barrier (Bottom Left) Task Force 34 barrier

