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THE ANVIL INSIDER

A Newsletter from the 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade



Our replacements in the 40th CAB (Task Force Phoenix) culminated their training at Fort Hood and now prepare to take over our mission as we prepare to head home.

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Phoenix Rising: Task Force Phoenix completes Culminating Training Exercise

By Maj. Jason Sweeney, 40th CAB Public Affairs



The Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix faced several worst-case scenarios during a Culminating Training Exercise (CTE) over 10 days in April 2021. Indirect fire attacks, downed aircraft, improvised explosive device (IED) attacks on ground vehicles—everything but the kitchen sink was thrown at them.

This occurred while the Task Force was executing typical aviation tasks its Soldiers will perform during an upcoming deployment overseas, such as VIP flights and Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) operations.

“The CTE prepared us not only for the mission we’ll be expected to perform downrange, but for many unplanned contingencies as well,” Task Force Phoenix commander Col. Alan Gronewold said. “We brought together units from nine states to form a team and we conducted pretty intense operations to build that team.”

Toward the end of the CTE when events were coming to a head, a real-world Texas rainstorm created additional challenges, temporarily grounding aircraft due to lightning, high winds and low visibility.

“Train to your worst day in theater; your hardest day of the deployment should be here at Fort Hood,” 166th Aviation Brigade Commander Col. Jennifer Reynolds told the Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix at the midpoint of the exercise.

First Army Division West’s 166th Aviation Brigade, based at Fort Hood, is responsible for all Army Reserve and National Guard aviation mobilization training and validation for deployment. Reynolds and her team of Observer, Controller/Trainers (OC/Ts) ran the CTE.

The purpose of the exercise was to enable the brigade headquarters staff, battalion staff sections and line companies to run through some of the most difficult scenarios they could potentially encounter once they commence their mission providing full-spectrum aviation operations to U.S. Central Command’s (CENTCOM) Operation Spartan Shield and Operation Inherent Resolve.

“It’s always challenging when you bring together more than 1,100 Soldiers from nine states,” Task Force Phoenix Chief of Operations (CHOPS) Maj. Matt Jackson said. “We executed four air assault missions, almost 30 MEDEVAC scenarios, four downed aircraft recovery missions and multiple convoys while providing mission command at the battalion and brigade levels. We proved that we’re ready and trained for our mission overseas.”

Task Force Phoenix has been at North Fort Hood for a month-and-a-half of mobilization readiness training and pre-deployment administrative tasks. The CTE was the final required training event to validate before the Task Force commences its mission. In addition to training, the Task Force has simultaneously been sending advanced parties to Kuwait and undergoing a load out of equipment.

Major training events during the CTE involved MEDEVAC and Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) missions, Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) operations, convoys, and culminated with a complex air assault raid on an enemy position. Pilots and crew chiefs flew both real-world UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters for the training missions, as well as virtual flights in Aviation Combined Arms Tactical Trainer (AVCATT) simulators.

“We saw quantifiable growth from the start of the exercise each day until the end,” said Lt. Col. Tyler Smentek, commander of 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment (General Support Aviation Battalion). “We exercised deliberate and rapid planning processes that allowed our subordinate units to provide aviation combat power to the Joint Task Force commander. We walked away from the CTE with processes and products that will enable our geographically dispersed Task Force to succeed in the CENTCOM AOR (Area of Operations).”

“The team did great,” Gronewold said of the exercise. “Everyone worked hard. Everyone stayed focused. Everyone stayed motivated and I couldn’t be happier with how the team performed.”

Task Force Phoenix is composed of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Combat Aviation Brigade; 1st Battalion, 168th Aviation Regiment (GSAB); and the 640th Aviation Support Battalion. In all, the Task Force includes Army National Guard units from nine states. An active-duty U.S. Army AH-64 Apache attack helicopter battalion will join the Task Force once in theater.

Task Force Phoenix will replace Task Force Anvil, led by the Pennsylvania Army National Guard’s 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, which has been in theater for the past nine months.



Soldiers use coffee, live music to prevent sexual assault

By Master Sgt. John Paul Karpovich, Staff Sgt. Andrea Whelan and retired 1st Sgt. Sean Whelan

During the 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade's deployment to the Middle East, the sexual harassment and assault response and prevention team found a unique way to serve their Soldiers while providing knowledge about their program.

A small compound here is home to the 28th ECAB chaplain's office, equal opportunity office and the sexual assault response coordinator. Usually these offices are a place for crisis and counseling where Soldiers and leaders can come for consolation and advice during times of duress.

But every Tuesday there is the smell of fresh coffee and snacks, the sounds of live music, conversation and laughter.

The counselors and advocates who run this makeshift coffee shop call it the Teal Bean Café. Teal is the Army color representing SHARP and the bean is the gourmet coffee that makes this an unlikely gathering spot for Soldiers to come and relax for a while. All coffee, tea, hot chocolate and snacks are free for the Soldiers who stop by the office.

"We wanted a way to not only raise awareness about sexual harassment and assault but to have a fun and relaxing environment where Soldiers and leaders can meet the Brigade's counseling team," said Master Sgt. John Paul Karpovich, 28th ECAB SARC. "It makes it much easier if you need these resources when you know where to turn and have already established a slight familiarization with those who you're dealing with."

Staff Sgt. Andrea Whelan has been running the coffee social since the beginning.

"It has really grown. When we started, it was just coffee, some Pop-Tarts and granola bars," said Whelan, the brigade's victim advocate. "Now, we have people and organizations sending us all kinds of snacks, and we have live music from The SandWalk Prophets, the ministry worship team."

In addition to the Teal Bean the team members run the "Free X," where Soldiers can pick up toiletries, snacks and assorted items at no cost. The items are donated by different organizations then sorted and organized for easy access for anyone.

Maj. Doug Knepp, the 28th ECAB chaplain, says there is more to the Free X than just a place to get toiletries.

"The advantage of having these teams together is that it provides a one-stop-shop. If a Soldier wants to speak with the chaplain or talk to the SHARP or EO, the coffee bar and free-x provide some anonymity," said Knepp. "It is not unusual to see Soldiers stopping by for a coffee and snacks or things from the Free X, so nobody assumes that people are coming to see the chaplain or lodge a SHARP or EO complaint. It is advantageous for everyone."



The Teal Bean provides a non-threatening way for the ministry and counseling teams to interact with the Soldiers. Still, for those that attend, it's a welcome break from work and a place to relax.

For Sgt. 1st Class Dale Mahafkey, one of the brigade's lead medical specialists, the Teal Bean is a chance for informal networking. Mahafkey says he enjoys coming to get coffee and donuts, but also to have something to look forward to every week. The event gives him an opportunity to interact with the command team on a social level.

The Soldiers who run the Teal Bean also offer raffles and giveaways to keep things fun. Pvt. Bianca Gonzalez says it's the variety that keeps her coming back.

"I like coming to the Teal Bean because it's a comfortable place to talk and socialize with Soldiers of all ranks over coffee and snacks. There is always something interesting going on, whether it's music or the weekly raffles," said Gonzalez. "It's a great start to my morning, and I look forward to every week."

When Soldiers stop by the Teal Bean, they can also participate in the "stamp out sexual harassment" campaign where Soldiers are given free stamps for letters and postcards. The program is made possible through donations from the SHARP Team's family and friends back home.

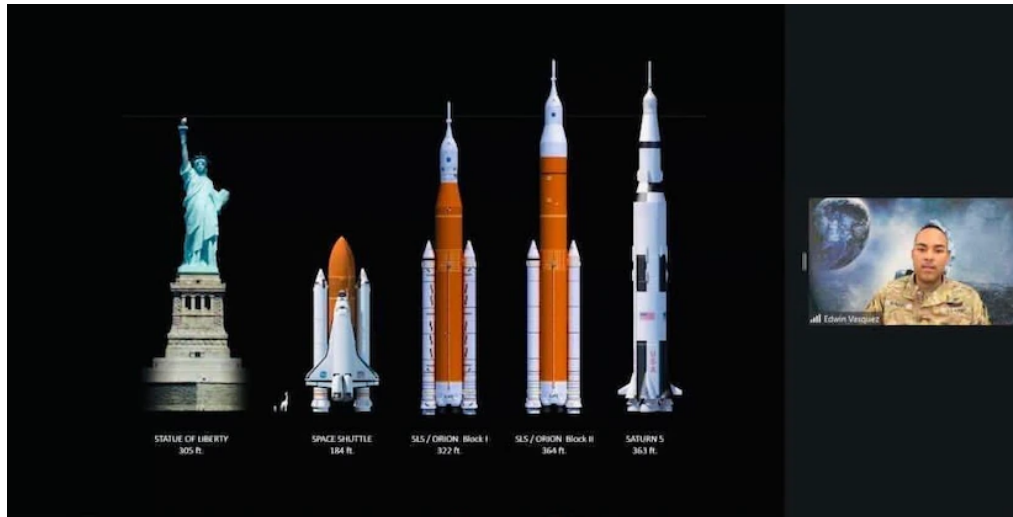
SARCs from sister brigades make regular appearances at the Teal Bean, helping to support the overall mission of raising awareness of sexual harassment and assault prevention. The Teal Bean served as a meeting place to plan Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month events with SARCs and collateral-duty victim advocates from around the post.

The 28th ECAB sexual assault response coordinator can be reached at john.p.karpovich.mil@mail.mil.

The 28th ECAB victim advocate can be reached at andrea.l.whelan.mil@mail.mil.

U.S. Soldier Teaches Kuwaiti Students to Reach for the Stars with Space Presentation

By Capt. Allegra Taylor
Task Force Spartan Public Affairs



At the invite of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, Task Force Spartan Chief of Space and Special Programs, Maj. Edwin Vasquez, gave a virtual Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics presentation on NASA's Artemis Space Program to students at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity April 3, 2021, in Kuwait.

Over 300 students and Soldiers logged in for the virtual event, which emphasized the importance of STEM. During the presentation, Vasquez educated the students on NASA's plans to return to the Moon, and one day put people on Mars.

"It was an honor to speak with the students about the NASA Artemis program, something I have been fortunate to be a part of in my civilian career," said Vasquez. "As both an engineer who has worked for NASA, and a leader in the Army's Space Corps., I hope this presentation has only strengthened the students' interest in space exploration so one day they too may work in this field."

This presentation came at an exciting time for children and adults across the Arab world, as last month the United Arab Emirates became the first country in the region to reach Mars with the Hope probe.

"The students who attended this program were thrilled to have the chance to speak with someone who worked on NASA programs," U.S. Embassy Cultural Attaché Nelson Wen said. "They asked many questions about how to pursue a career in space and about the Artemis missions. This kind of outreach shows the diversity of talent and backgrounds which U.S. military members in Kuwait have, and I hope we can continue to inspire local audiences by showcasing people like Maj. Vasquez."

The presentation hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait was a part of their Every Soldier is an Ambassador Program. ESA aims to strengthen the Kuwaiti public's relationship with U.S. service members through service members' contributions of their time, skills, and experiences to their host country. Past ESA events have included volunteer work, speaking engagements about an area of interest to the service members, sports and music performances.

"This is a huge moment for our friends and partners in the Middle East," said Vasquez. "It is exciting to see that as we strengthen our military relationships through bilateral training exercises, we may one day work together in space exploration as well."

Task Force Spartan is a U.S. Military organization that strives to strengthen U.S. partner relationships across Southwest Asia through annual seminars, key leader engagements and training events between U.S. Soldiers and their partner nations in the region. For more information about Task Force Spartan, visit us at <https://www.usarcent.army.mil/About/Units/>

During Volunteer Appreciation Week, we want to express our appreciation for our volunteers in our Family Readiness Groups back home.

"Volunteering is a thankless 'job,' but many of our dedicated volunteers set aside time from their busy lives to assist with your FRG." - Gina Childress, Pennsylvania National Guard Lead Soldier & Family Readiness Specialist.



Alicia Rudnik
Melissa Frentz
Kristen Cassidy
Sandy Facer
Dawn Young
Caroline Yackera
Jeanine Dimmick
Aj Lyons
Harmonie Sherk

Leroy Sherk
Nicholas Feidt
Beth White
Alexis Thomas
Adri Cortez
Gwen Pavasco
Heather Auer
Bridget Henne

And many more from our units outside Pennsylvania!



Soldiers with Bravo Company, 628th ASB gathered for one more photo and showed off their T-Wall mural honoring their efforts here.

Staff Sgt. John "Hutch" Hutchinson

is one Soldier who has volunteered to extend his deployment and will provide his expertise to the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade during their time in the Middle East.

As the brigade electromagnetic spectrum manager, his duties include coordinating and de-conflicting communication frequencies between multiple coalition partners, civilian companies and U.S. military units.

He says the best night of sleep he ever got was when he accepted a promotion at his civilian job as a field service engineer.

Though he provides his services to the entire brigade, and will soon serve with the 40th CAB, he is currently deployed with HHC, 2-104th GSAB.



Giving Soldiers with 256th Infantry Brigade Combat Team a lift during a nighttime operation. Our Soldiers remain engaged and focused in the fight against Daesh. (Photos by Spc. Rob Donovic)



Some lessons that **Sgt. Carl Ulmschneider** learned this deployment that he would like to pass on to Army leaders is that “good leadership = good work output, and if you take care of your Soldiers they will take care of you.”

Ulmschneider is an aviation operations specialist and air traffic controller with HHC, 1-137th AHB. He joined the military in 2003 to help care for his child who was very young at the time and is currently on his fifth overseas tour, having previously served in Germany, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait.

After being laid off from his civilian job due to COVID-19, he worked for a cleaning and services company and his local Pizza Hut before deployment. After deployment he is looking forward to finding work and catching up with his family, dogs, Cleveland sports and the Ohio State Buckeyes.

(Spotlight by Spc. Mikaela Bolker)

HOMEFRONT HEROES

Soldiers and families,

We know there are many ways our families “hold down the homefront” and we want to share their stories.

If you'd like to recognize a family member back home please do one of the following:

- 1) Send a message to the 28th ECAB Facebook page with a photo of the family member and a short paragraph describing why they deserve a shout out.
- 2) Email your FRG leader with a photo of the family member and a short paragraph describing why they deserve and shout out.
- 3) Contact the brigade PAO or your UPAR for assistance



Ideas include...

- A child who reads bedtime stories to their younger siblings
- A niece or nephew who sent care packages to their Soldier's unit
- A parent or in-law who has been stepping up to take care of the kids
- A child who broke a personal record at a recent track meet
- A spouse who threw a party for their child's birthday on their own (yikes)
- A spouse or parent who picked up a new skill or earned a degree

"The strength of the armed forces of the United States is as much about its families as it is about its combat capability."

– Gen. Martin Dempsey



Follow the link
below for the
latest AFN
TV schedule

<https://v3.myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/>



<https://www.facebook.com/28ECAB/>



<https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/28cab>

For the latest Army news, visit
the Army News Service at
<https://www.army.mil/ARNews>

SPORTS SHOUTOUTS



Want to send a shoutout to
your favorite team? Contact
your company UPAR or the
brigade PAO

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28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade

Commander:
Col. Howard Lloyd

Senior Enlisted Advisor:
Command Sgt. Maj. Sean Livolsi



STAY SHARP



Soldiers Complete SHARP Training



SPC Jacob Hogan (2/104 GSAB) and SPC John Pack (1-137 AHB) recently completed the SHARP Ambassador Course at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The course was administered by ASG-Kuwait and covered a variety of topics including The Importance of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM), Reprisal and Retaliation, Bystander Intervention, and had guest speakers from Special Victims Counsel, Medical, Criminal Investigative Division, and SJA/Trial Counsel. The Soldiers were given an overview of the SHARP program plus knowledge and tools that will help them assist their commands in recognizing and properly reacting to potential SHARP related situations.



SARC: MSG John Paul Karpovich / VA: SSG Andrea Whelan
Task Force Anvil SHARP Program
DSN: 318-824-3058



DoD Safe Helpline 24/7: 1 (877) 995-5247



ROADRUNNER REVIEW

Task Force Roadrunner Newsletter



Message From The Battalion Commander

As we now count the days until we start returning to our homes I wanted to take the time to thank each and every member of TF Roadrunner, their families and loved ones for the outstanding support that has been provided during this deployment. This mission would not have been as successful as it has been without the countless hours that you have devoted to your MOS and duties.

So far we have maintained and driven over 150,000 accident free miles, pumped nearly 100,000 gallons of fuel, moved over 7,000 packages worth over \$250 Million dollars, performed over 115,000 hours of aviation maintenance while completing 24 aircraft phases, turned the Arabian Gulf into drinking water, connected the entire Aviation Brigade with secure networking across 5 countries and multiple locations. You've accomplished all of these notable feats while battling a worldwide pandemic and an enemy that doesn't care about your well-being or way of life. Your service to the United States of America and the Middle East countries that we support is appreciated and helps to bring worldwide peace in support of democracy.

The mission isn't over yet, my goal is to return each and every Soldier of TF Roadrunner to their family and homes and continue to our support of domestic operations as we start to rebuild for the next time that we are called upon. Congratulations on completing this chapter in your career and life and be safe as we hand this mission over to the next support battalion. Their success is our success, WITHOUT COMPROMISE!

- LTC Gross

Message From The Sergeant Major

The Soldiers of the 628th ASB, soon to be known as the Task Force Roadrunners was notified several months in advance that they would deploy in support of Operation Spartan Shield and Operation Inherent Resolve. We wisely spent this time to train to be efficient and effective in our specific jobs and hone our Soldier skills. This training has shown from conception to completion of this deployment, because the Soldiers of the 628th Task Force Road Runners faced many challenges and successfully overcame them all.

This deployment was the first time that I have ever served in the position and performed the duties of a Command Sergeant Major and I couldn't have asked for a better group of well disciplined, hardworking, caring, and team oriented Soldiers to lead in these operations. Every soldier performed very well and far surpassed every expectation I had. Your family members and loved ones, should be extremely proud of your Soldier for a job well done. OSS/OIR 28 September 2020 to 27 May 2021. WITHOUT COMPROMISE!

- SGM Fleming

Norwegian Foot March

This event was hosted and run entirely by the 628th with a support staff of 25 Soldiers. The event was approved by LT Havard Boge and was planned in close coordination with 1LT David Ramer. Two of the participating units held qualifying rucks due to the high interest towards the event.

The standards for the event are that you must:

- Complete the foot march using an issued ruck or pack weighing a minimum of 25lbs
- Complete 30k (18.6mi) within your demographics' time standard
- Not leave the course at any time except to utilize the latrines

Out of the 125 attending Soldiers from our Brigade, only 84 finished in the time standards of their demographic. 38 of these Soldiers were from the 628th.

The male Soldier with the fastest time not only in the Battalion but in the event as well, was CPT Justin Thomas with a time of 3 hours and 18 minutes. The female with the fastest time in our Battalion was SGT Javiet Ballard with a time of 4 hours and 17 minutes.



Patches, Promotions, and Awards

Congratulations to all of the Soldiers who have earned their promotions, right shoulder patches, coins, and awards in the past few weeks. As we prepare to leave, many awards are being given out to the deserving Soldiers in every Company of the 628th.



Congratulations to the following Soldiers of the 628th on their completion of BLC between the months of February and April of 2021.

February

Endre Teglas
Andrae Douglas
Bobbie King
Patrick Morrisey
Jared Montague
Brandon Lyons

March

Arthur Anton	Michael Thompson
Reynaldo Lugo	Caitlin Lovelace
Matthew Schultz	Komeh Lansana
Robert Nam	Ashley Ericson
Tyler Goetz	Emily Marcus
Garrett Hernandez	Caleb Miller

April

Timothy Mills	Elijah Groff
Maine Thompson	Byron Ferreri
Julie Hunsberger	Katelynn Swank
Abdel Tchagnao	Giovanni Castro
Nathaniel Seitz	Casandra Leschinsky
Andrew Smetana	Kevin Powell
Brandon Roosevelt	Victoria Glasgow
Adam Litwinsky	Andrew Fry

Several months into our deployment, the Army National Guard Bureau was able to start up a 22 day Virtual Basic Leader Course (vBLC), enabling our Soldiers to continue their Professional Military Education (PME), in a virtual environment. The vBLC course is the first step in the Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development System (NCOPDS). Our enrolled Soldiers have learned the basic skills required of Sergeants which focuses on six Leader Core Competencies (LCC). These competencies are Readiness, Leadership, Training Management, Communications, Operations, and Program Management. Our Soldiers have also learned about counseling, conducting drill and ceremonies, and leading physical readiness training (PRT).

Being able to attend and graduate this course during our deployment has enabled our Soldiers to build basic leader and trainer skills not only needed to lead teams in the U.S.A, but have also truly put their new skills to test in a deployed environment.

- SGM Scott W. Fleming



Top (left to right): SGT Patrick Morrisey, SGT Bobbie King, SGT Brandon Lyons, CPL Michael Thompson
Bottom (left to right): CPL Endre Teglas, SPC Nathaniel Seitz, CPL Brandon Roosevelt, CPL Adam Litwinsky



Photos of A Co Fuelers taken by SPC Chelsea Matos.



Happy Birthday In The Coming Weeks To...

PFC McNally	SGT Mateja
PFC McPhatter	SGT Orłowski
SPC Agou	SGT Rosadosantiago
SPC Barbezat	SGT Shope
SPC Branigan	SGT Smith, A
SPC Brown, C	SGT Smith, T
SPC Butler	SGT Spencer
SPC Campbell	SGT Stafford
SPC Dempsey	SGT Straka
SPC Kamara	SGT Strickland, C
SPC Kates	SGT Villalobos
SPC Kopp	SGT Wenzel
SPC Lansana	SGT White, K
SPC Miranda	SSG Elicker
SPC Paine	SSG Kohler
SPC Peiffer	SSG Pinto
SPC Rearick	SSG Russel
SPC Swank	SSG Yackera
SPC Wynn	SFC Chudnofsky
SGT Barnes	SFC Danner
SGT Betcher	1SG Rarick
SGT Bruckno	2LT Berlet
SGT Davidson	2LT Silva
SGT Ebersol	CPT Bolton
SGT Felty	CPT Buccheit
SGT Fuller	CPT Collins
SGT Gitt	CW5 Yoder
SGT Grove	

Happy Birthday To Those From The Past Week...

SPC Frye
SPC Jester
SPC Maldonado
SPC Matos
SSG Fisher
1LT Magee
CW3 Smith

Important Upcoming Dates

12-13JUN:

- Rear DET IDT Weekend
- Soldiers can voluntarily attend if complete with Terminal Leave from MOB.

10-24JUL:

- Rear DET AT (Equipment Reception and staging)
- This can be volunteer for Soldiers that were on the MOB.

14-15AUG:

- Rear DET IDT Weekend
- Soldiers can voluntarily attend

18-19SEP:

- Virtual Yellow Ribbon / PDHRA IDT Weekend

16-17OCT:

- Yellow Ribbon / PHDRA / 28 ECAB Dining Out

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