



KEYSTONE

Aviation



CHARLIE'S ANGELS

Charlie Company, 3-238th MEDEVAC's
first all-female flight team



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KEYSTONE Aviation

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On the Cover:

(Clockwise from top, left) Capt. Trish Barker, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Andrea Galatian, Staff Sgt. Misty Seward and Sgt. Debra Lukan of Charlie Company, 3-238th MEDEVAC recently became the unit's first all-female crew. They are currently serving in Iraq as part of Task Force Keystone. (Photo by Sgt. Neil Gussman)

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Giving Thanks by Giving Back

Story and Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Erika Nyberg

The senior leaders of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade showed their appreciation by serving the Thanksgiving meal to Soldiers here.

Leaders from every unit within the CAB reported for duty today, each pulling half hour shifts, standing shoulder to shoulder serving turkey, ham, vegetables, shrimp scampi and desserts. The holiday meal drew many people, stretching the line out the door. Everyone waited patiently for a chance to sample the specialties.

According to 1st Sgt. Donald Bartch, 28th CAB Headquarter Company first sergeant, it is a military tradition to have "the leaders serving the led."

"A true leader has devoted countless hours to his troops, developing them into Soldiers and watching them grow, praying for them and worrying about their safety. A true leader is always happy to show that he is part of this large family, the Army family."



Capt. Michael Lacertosa, an aircraft mission request officer in the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, serves Soldiers on Thanksgiving.

Spc. John Leddy, an avionics mechanic with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 104th Aviation Regiment, said he was thankful for the good food, and it was the best meal he had in a long time. Leddy spent most of the day on duty like most CAB Soldiers, commenting that the "mission doesn't stop," but it was "nice to come to the DFAC and take a break." Leddy, a resident of Carlisle, Pa., had his family in his thoughts and planned to make many phone calls home after dinner.

Operational requirements often mean eating on the run for Soldiers like Spc. Ira Hammond, who is a force-protection specialist. But today, leaders from 28th CAB Headquarters took turns relieving Soldiers like Hammond so they could enjoy a sit-down meal. Hammond, of Mount Pleasant, Pa., thought this "was really nice, something different" and appreciated the opportunity to relax. When asked what he was thankful for today, Hammond replied, "my daughter."

Preparations for the first Thanksgiving meal ever served in the Warrior's Dining Facility started months ago according to Master Sgt. Patricia Wallace, senior food service operations sergeant for the 28th CAB. It takes approximately 1,900 pounds of turkey to feed the on-average 4,000 service members and civilians serviced daily by the facility, explained Wallace. The elaborate decorations and extensive menu came together as a result of the hard work by the civilian contractors led by Anthony Lugo, Warrior's Dining Facility manager and the 31 28th CAB Soldiers, led by Wallace, assigned to the facility to provide oversight of the daily operations.



Sgt. 1st Class Christine Frederick, 628th Aviation Support Battalion medical platoon sergeant, serves Soldiers on Thanksgiving.



CHARLIE'S ANGELS

Charlie Company, 3-238th MEDEVAC's first all-female flight team

Story and Photos by
Sgt. Neil Gussman

For the three days before Thanksgiving, one of the on-alert crews for Charlie Company, 3-238th MEDEVAC, became the first all-female MEDEVAC crew to fly in this company's history, while serving in Iraq as part of Task Force Keystone.

"This is the first time an all-female crew has come up in the rotation for us," said Maj. David Mattimore, 38, of Hampton, N.H., Charlie Company commander. "And it would not have been possible until one of our avionics sergeants became a crew chief."

The four women who comprise this crew have a total of nine deployments and each has between eight and 12 years of service. "This is the first all-female crew any of us have flown with," said Capt. Trish "Cocaine" Barker, the operations officer, who has an energetic and addictive personality according to the other women in the crew. She has ten years service and enlisted in 1999 as an aircraft fueler. Barker, 30, went to Officer Candidate School in 2003 and Flight School in 2004. A native of Menominee, Mich., she was deployed to Bosnia in 2005 as a MEDEVAC section leader. When she returns from this deployment she will return to her job as the state occupational health specialist for the Michigan National Guard.

"Same for me. Never flew with an all-girl crew," said Staff Sgt. Misty "Monkey" Seward, 30, of Owosso, Mich. Seward enlisted in 1998 and has served as a medic for a total of 11 years. She has four years as a flight medic and seven years on the ground. She deployed to Kuwait from 2001 to 2002 and to Baghdad from 2006 to 2007, both

tours as a ground medic. When she returns from serving as a flight medic in a war zone, she will resume her job as a security officer at a level-one trauma clinic in Lansing, Mich., part of Sparrow Health Systems.

The pilot in command of the crew is Chief Warrant Officer 3 Andrea "Anddie" Galatian, 31, of Lansing. "There must have been another all-female MEDEVAC crew somewhere, but I haven't seen one," she said. Galatian enlisted in 1997 and served five years as an administrative clerk before going to flight school in 2002. She has served seven years as a pilot including a deployment to Bosnia in 2005.

The newest name on the flight roster is Sgt. Debra "Guns and Knives" Lukan, 43, of Keene, N.H. She enlisted just after 9/11. "I just barely made the age cutoff," said Lukan. She trained as an avionics mechanic and just recently switched from the shop to flight crewmember. Lukan deployed to Camp Spyker and Tikrit from 2005 to 2006 serving in the avionics field and is happy to be on the flight rotation this time. "My family doesn't know I'm flying," said Lukan. "They worry a lot, but I suppose I'll have to tell them eventually." Lukan is a federal technician working in avionics in the New Hampshire National Guard.

"It may be months before this crew comes up in the rotation again," said Mattimore. "We only have nine female flight crew members and everyone rotates to our remote bases, so the odds of them being back together again are low."

"I'm glad we got a chance to be first even if it is just first for us," said Barker.



(Clockwise, from top-left) Chief Warrant Officer 3 Andrea Galatian, Staff Sgt. Misty Seward, Capt. Trish Barker, Sgt. Debra Lukan



Soldiers and Civilians Keep Supplies Stocked

Story and Photos by Sgt. Andy Mehler

The deployment of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom has brought some of the Soldiers of the Pennsylvania National Guard to Contingency Operating Base Adder. While stationed here, some Soldiers have found that they are sharing their duties with civilians who work at COB Adder for private civilian companies.

The supply platoon of Company A, 628th Aviation Support Battalion, has been tasked with running supply operations at the Supply Support Activity at COB Adder,

which is also staffed by civilian employees of the Black Hawk Management Corporation, based in Killeen, Texas.

Sgt. Matthew Bircher, of Etters, Pa., is the non-commissioned officer in charge (NCOIC) of his platoon's mission. According to Bircher, the supply platoon runs a Class-9 aviation operation and warehouse. "We receive, store, distribute and turn in Class-9 aviation parts. We distribute parts throughout the entire brigade," he said.

Bircher said that his operation also supplies all of Iraq and Af-

ghanistan with parts that other SSA warehouses may not have readily available. According to Bircher, his warehouse carries 3,467 authorized items in its inventory, with a cash value of 56 million dollars.

The supply platoon also orders and distributes food items for the aviation brigade, which are used to stock the Grab & Go trailers, where Soldiers can get sandwiches, chips, cold drinks and other assorted food items for a fast meal on the run.

There have been as many as 15 civilian contractors working with Bircher and his team at any given

time. "The civilians work for me and provide assistance in parts distribution and other warehouse operations. We all work integrated together," Bircher said. The civilians are trained to use the same online Army supply program used by Bircher to order and track the delivery status of parts requested by the units deployed in theater.

"I think we have a great rapport with the civilians," added Sgt. Wendell White. White, a resident of Annville, Pa., is the first-shift supervisor and also the operations manager at the SSA. "I make sure all the cylinders are turning," he said. White said it is a group effort at the SSA between the civilians and military teams. "There are civilians in every section of the SSA.

They play a major role," he said.

Aside from their supply activities, the platoon runs escort missions in which they provide an escort for incoming delivery drivers who are transporting parts to the SSA. They also run water missions, delivering pallets of bottled water to the air field, fuel point and other areas of COB Adder which are manned by Soldiers of the aviation brigade.

Bircher said that while working in the SSA, they have made an important security improvement to the grounds by the placement of jersey barriers to create a one-way-in-and-one-way-out traffic pattern. According to Bircher they have faced some environmental challenges being in a desert climate. "We've

had to adapt to the environment. Heavy winds bring dirt and dust into our storage area," he said. The large tents used for storage areas are open at both ends which can cause dust problems for computers located in the work areas as well as dirt covering the shelves where parts are kept.

The supply section of Company A, 628th ASB has faced many challenges but has adapted to the environment and integrated with a civilian workforce to effectively meet the needs of the 28th CAB and other units in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to White, it's been a growing experience for them all. "We have a lot of young Soldiers that grew a lot here; it's made them more responsible."



Sgt. Wendell White, a resident of Annville, Pa., is the first-shift supervisor and operations manager for the supply section of Co. A, 628th ASB.



Sgt. Matthew Bircher, of Etters, Pa., tracks and orders supplies on his computer at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

