



# 1AD Today



United States Division-Center

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## Air Cav first to employ new unmanned aircraft system

By Sgt. Travis Zielinski

1st ACB, USD-C

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Placing a new aircraft in a combat situation is a true test of its capabilities and future role within the Army.

Unmanned aircraft systems have become a mainstay in military operations during Operation Iraqi Freedom; injecting new concepts and technologies will only further push the uses of these aircraft.

Quick Reaction Capability 1, attached to 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, is a small unit of 16 Soldiers deployed from Unmanned Aircraft Systems Training Battalion out of Fort Huachuca, Ariz., that has spent the past months putting the new MQ-1C Sky Warrior UAS through numerous tests to help Department of Army officials determine the path of the unmanned aircraft systems.

The Sky Warrior, a system larger than the Predator, is operated by Soldiers in Iraq as opposed

to being flown remotely from the United States. It has a wing span of 56 feet and is capable of carrying Hellfire missiles.

The Department of the Army wanted QRC1 to be assigned to the Baghdad area of operations; and since the 1st Cavalry Division was in charge of operations for Baghdad at the time, the unit fell under 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, said Capt. Travis Blaschke, from Spokane, Wash., commander of QRC1.

“This aircraft is in its infancy. The aircraft that we have right now on the flight line are the first aircraft produced by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and deployed by the Army,” said Blaschke. “All of the aircraft were built during the Development and Testing phase of the acquisition process, which means all the aircraft are prototypes.”

Even though the Sky Warrior is still in a testing phase, it is being used in missions to support units on the ground. Through these missions, the QRC1 unit is gathering data to



Photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., USD-C

**After completing a 24-hour mission, an MQ-1C Sky Warrior aircraft from Quick Reaction Capability 1, attached to 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, makes a landing here Jan. 11. The Soldiers of QRC1 conduct daily operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.**

determine the direction the program will go.

“Our mission is to support [U.S. Division – Center] on all of their [reconnaissance surveillance and target acquisition] missions by providing aero-scout capabilities to the maneuver commander,” said Blaschke. “Our secondary mission is to validate the MQ-1C for the program of record.” Program of record is the final milestone for any new Army asset. This will move the MQ-1C from development and testing into full rate production and adoption into the Army’s

common inventory.

The Army saw a need for having division-level UAS assets similar to the Air Force Predator. The Sky Warrior MQ-1C will answer this need, said Blaschke.

“We [QRC1] are actually testing the concept of operations, system limitations, hardware and software,” he said. “We are working through a lot of challenges by forging a new path, but it has been worth it to see the incredible progress.

“To think that the

See ~ Unmanned Pg. 2

## Unmanned ~ From Pg. 1

company was created 14 months ago, finished qualification training eight months ago and we are now conducting full spectrum RSTA missions in theater is pretty amazing,” he said.

QRC1 is a program that has been developed to assume and mitigate a lot of the risk for the POR, which should be developed in about three years, said Blaschke.

If the QRC1 program is successful, the Army has a plan in place to give every aviation brigade multiple Sky Warriors starting in 2011, said Blaschke. The aircraft would be a division-level asset and would be further dispersed down to the combat units to support the maneuver commanders.

“To date, the majority of the missions we are conducting involve the dissemination of full-motion video, which provides situational awareness for the commanders at battalion, brigade and even division,” said Blaschke. “We have been over-watching air assaults, cordon and searches; conducting reconnaissance and surveillance.”

Along with the ability to conduct surveillance and fly well beyond a dozen hours, once testing is complete, the Sky

Warrior will be armed with Hellfire missiles, which will add another dimension to its combat role.

“This is an aircraft that can have different pay loads,” said Blaschke. “It has the capability of actually looking out long distances in order to find the enemy in different ways. Whether it is using the image intelligence, using signal intelligence, using measuring intelligence, this platform can not only find the enemy but will ultimately be able to engage and neutralize the enemy.”

The Sky Warrior also has the capability to point out targets for other aircraft – enabling them to hit their target while the Sky Warrior aims, said Blaschke. It can guide in a Hellfire from an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter or even Joint Direct Attack Munitions from an F/A-18 Super Hornet, F-16 Fighting Falcon or F-22 Raptor – making a hunter-killer team.

“This aircraft will be standing side-by-side Army maneuver assets, rotary wing teams on air assault missions, or teaming with the ground maneuver commanders on cordons or raids,” said Blaschke.

However, the Sky Warrior with all of its technology is nothing more than a



Photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., USD-C

**An MQ-1C Sky Warrior unmanned aircraft system from Quick Reaction Capability 1, attached to 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, sits dormant in a hanger.**

display model without the men and women who operate the aircraft and know its full capabilities.

“The operators of the system need to be at the highest level of proficiency and also maintain the proper situational awareness to ensure they are supporting the ground commander to the best of their ability,” said Blaschke.

Unlike the Air Force, who only allows officers to operate UAS, the Sky Warrior operators of QRC1 consist of officers, warrant officers and enlisted personnel.

Twenty-year-old Spc. Josh Palowitch, from Grayson, Ky., QRC1, is one of three Soldiers at his rank qualified to operate the Sky Warrior in garrison and combat operations. Given the uniqueness of his position, Palowitch remains humble.

Everything taught in the schoolhouse and everything done here is done for one reason, said Palowitch; to support the ground troops.

“I definitely think this is a unique aircraft and once the systems come up to par, I believe it will be a valuable asset for the Army to have in many different situations,” he said.

The QRC1 unit is on the edge of the envelope and Army leaders have high expectations for the future of the Sky Warrior program, according to Blaschke.

“We are in the process of honing the operators’ proficiency to the highest levels and also developing this aircraft to the pinnacle of reliability and lethality,” said Blaschke. “The future of MQ-1C operations is only limited by the breadth of our imagination.”





**Keri Noble**  
kerinoble.com

appearing at

**MULTIPLE SHOWS!**

- Monday (1/18) 1200 hours at Camp Victory main stage
- Monday (1/18) 1900 hours at Camp Slayer's Lion's Den MWR
- Tuesday (1/19) 1200 hours at East Liberty's Raider DFAC
- Tuesday (1/19) 1900 hours at the Sather Air Base movie tent





**TROVATA ENTERTAINMENT**

## About Keri Noble

Keri Noble (born 1975) is an American singer-songwriter born in Fort Worth, Texas and raised in Detroit.

Her father was a Baptist minister, and Noble sang in church as a child. She attended a local Assembly of God school for jr. high and high school in Dearborn Heights Mich.,. After meeting Billy McLaughlin, she moved to Minneapolis, Minn.,

and in 2003 she signed with the major recording label EMI. She is often compared to Norah Jones. She left EMI in 2005 and signed with JVC in Japan where she achieved great success, enabling her to continue to write and perform in the US without the support of a label.

In 2008, Noble signed with Telarc Records in the U.S. and released a full-length album (self titled) in February, 2009. In June,

she released her EP, "Leave Me in the Dark", and November brought the release of her first-ever holiday cd, "Winter Comes Again", which she produced herself.

Currently, Noble resides in Minneapolis, Minn., with her cat, Akiko, and continues to tour both the U.S. and Japan in support of her albums.

For additional information about Keri Noble go to <http://www.kerinoble.com>.

## Camp Liberty MWR Calendar

Calendar events start at 2000

Saturday Smooth Grooves	Sunday 8 Ball Pool	Monday Texas Hold'em	Tuesday Spades	Wednesday Karaoke & Ping Pong
Lone Wolf Comedy Tour Jan. 16 at noon Sather Air Base outdoor MWR	17	18	19	20
				



Photo by Spc. Jared Eastmen, 1AAB PAO, 3rd Infantry Division, USD-C

**BAGHDAD – Staff Sgt. Derick Polk, a topographic supervisor assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, Third Infantry Division, and a Camden, N.J. native, re-enlists at Contingency Operating Station Falcon, Jan 14.**

## Weather

Today	Tomorrow	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
				
73° F   50° F	77° F   57° F	77° F   59° F	71° F   51° F	70° F   50° F



## Quote of the Day

“The noblest service comes from nameless hands, and the best servant does his work unseen.”

**-Anonymous-**

For more coverage of what USD-C Soldiers are doing, pick up a copy of the upcoming issue of *The Iron Guardian* in publication Jan. 18.



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