

The North Star

Serving Task Force Marne
U. S. Division- North, Iraq



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Photo by Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts, 25CAB, 25th Inf. Div. PAO

Chief Warrant Officer 3 John Bilton (left), standardization pilot, Co. C, 2-159th ARB, 25th CAB, 25th Inf. Div., and CW3 Bruno Guzman (right), maintenance test pilot, Co. C, 2-159th ARB, 25 CAB, 25th Inf. Div., conduct pre-flight inspections of an AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopter prior to mission at COL Sykes, Feb 27.

CAB Soldiers provide aerial eyes for ground troops

By Staff Sgt. Mike Alberts
25CAB, 25th Inf. Div PAO

The Apache helicopter is designed to survive heavy attack and inflict massive damage. Its technical array of flight weapons, sensor and armor systems require a team of aviation Soldiers to keep these “flying tanks” operational.

In the far reaches of northern Iraq, that team is Company C, 2-159th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, Task Force Wings, 25th Infantry Division.

“Our mission is to support the ground maneuver units in our area of operation,” explained Capt. John

Landers, AH-64D Longbow pilot and commander, Co. C, 2-159th ARB. “Basically, we assist Iraqi and U.S. ground forces with border security and reconnaissance along the Syrian and Iraq border [to eliminate] the smuggling of foreign fighters, terrorist facilitators and contraband.”

To date, Capt. Landers’ team has logged almost 3,000 flight hours and conducted more than 500 missions. They accomplish the mission not only with Co. C aircraft, pilots and air crew, but also with an attachment of maintenance Soldiers from the battalion’s

aviation maintenance company.

Collectively, the group calls themselves Task Force “Whiskey,” after their unit call sign.

According to Capt. Landers, TF Whiskey operates around the clock, launching at aircraft each day.

The team is performing phenomenally, and Soldiers are really staying on top of issues, being proactive, anticipating scheduled maintenance and making sure parts are on hand, Capt. Landers added.

See PILOTS, Page 2 —

Speicher fair promotes women's health

By Sgt. Johnathon Jobson
TF Marne PAO

In observance of International Women's Day, female Soldiers from Task Force Marne organized a health fair on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, March 8.

International Women's Day has been celebrated in countries around the world since 1911.

"Stronger Women, Stronger Nations" was the theme of the health fair, which was meant to raise awareness of women's health issues.

According to the World Health Organization, 1,600 women and more than 10,000 newborn children die each day due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth, and nearly all of these deaths occur in developing nations. Also, more than 90 percent of the approximately 14 million teenage pregnancies each year occur in under developed countries.

"I believe that in order for a community to thrive, the backbone of that community, which is more often than not the female component, needs to be healthy," explained Florinda Lucero, an ethnographic analyst with the TF Marne Human Terrain Analysis Team

and women's initiative coordinator.

"It needs to be able to reproduce and also fulfill the caretaker's role for the next generation. Without that healthy backbone, you end up with a fragile community."

General health and stress relief were the main focus of the presenters at the event.



Photo by Sgt. Johnathon Jobson, TF Marne PAO
(L to R) Sana Kappouta, a special advisor for women's issues to TF Marne, Capt. Kathleen Camarena, with the 422nd CA Bn. and Staff Sgt. Odaliah Maupins, from 130th Eng. Bde., pose on International Women's Day, March 8.

"We had three representatives, one from the combat stress clinic; the public health nurse to answer general wellness questions, and the COB dietician here to answer health and diet questions," said Sgt. Debra Whittingham, a target audience analyst with the 364th Psychological Operation Company, 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion. "In addition to getting tangible information, people were also able to get their blood pressure checked, get their BMI calculated, and get a neck and shoulder massage."

Also at the event was a raffle held to give away three \$20 gift cards for the PX donated by Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

The Women's Initiative Group would like to congratulate 1st Lt. Llexandra Landreth from the 166th Region Support Group; Staff Sgt. Odaliah-Maupins from 1st Engineer Battalion, 130th Engineer Brigade and Airman 1st Class Brittany Lantry from the 732nd Casualty Liaison Team, as the winners of the raffle.

Information in this article was taken from the World Health Organization (<http://www.who.int/gender/other/health/en/index.html>)

Continued from PILOTS, Page 1

First Lieutenant Gavin Scheibe is an Apache pilot and platoon leader, Company C, 2-159th ARB. In addition to his flying responsibilities, he oversees a platoon of pilots, air crew and aircraft maintainers.

Lieutenant Scheibe is on his first deployment and has enjoyed the relative isolation at Contingency Operating Location Sykes.

"I have been enjoying being up north with such a close unit. Being separated requires you to gel [so-to-speak]," said 1st Lt. Scheibe.

"The flying has been challenging, but the fact that we have come together as a team so well has been the most rewarding aspect of the

deployment so far.

"We've had a 100 percent mission launch rate which shows that we've accommodated anything that has come up, and that's due to the hard work of the maintainers, maintenance test pilots and others that do everything they can to keep the helicopters flying."

Launching an Apache helicopter is truly a collective effort. Each launch requires two pilots, a crew chief and one of the company maintainers. Sergeant Liang Chen is one of the Apache crew chiefs. Sergeant William Case is one of the supervisors and an Apache armament, avionics and electrical systems repairers.

Sergeant Chen is organic to Co. C, while Sgt. Case is attached from the maintenance company. Both emphasized the importance of team work.

"When you operate alone and have limited resources especially when you need parts you must make things happen on your own," said Sgt. Chen. "It requires team work, and clever management and scheduling of aircraft to make missions happen without compromising ground unit support. We cannot control when they fly, but to a large extent we can control which helicopters we want to fly. We identify those aircraft and, together, we make things work."

"We work three shifts. Basically, night shift takes care of all scheduled maintenance based on inspections requirements, and normally the day shifts handle major maintenance," added Sgt. Case. "We have a great team dynamic, and it really is a team that launches these Apaches."

"Only through cooperation can we get things accomplished. Its working together that has made us so successful from a maintenance standpoint," said Sgt. Case. "We've got real dedicated Soldiers up here that put in long hours, and we've pulled together not as individual units, but as Task Force Whiskey."

Southern Steel rolls out, Bootleggers take wheel

By Spc. Jessica Zullig
135th Mobile PA Det.

Outside the cavalry regiment's headquarters building at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, troops from the 1st Squadron, 98th Cavalry Regiment, Mississippi National Guard, known as "Southern Steel," transferred their authority to the 3rd Squadron, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tennessee National Guard, "Bootleggers."

Outgoing commander Lt. Col. John Nipp, squadron commander for the 1/98th Cav., provided his comments bidding farewell and welcoming the 3/278th.

"I'm as proud as an expecting papa of my squadron," he said. "We accomplished many great things and Iraq is better for us being here.

"Now, Bootleggers it is your turn as we pass the torch to you all today," he continued. "Lt. Col. Blevins, Command Sgt. Major Cartwright, you have a fine squadron and



Photo by Spc. Jessica Zullig,
135th Mobile PA Det.

Lieutenant Colonel John Nipp, commander of 1/98th Cav. Regt., Mississippi National Guard, and 1st Sgt. Brian Belue, interim command sergeant major of the 1/98th Cav. Regt., case their guidon during a transfer of authority ceremony held at COB Speicher, March 10.

I know you all will pick up right where we left off and you will continue to raise the bar. I pray that the good Lord puts his most gracious arms around each and every one of your troopers and allows them all to complete

the mission safely."

Lieutenant Colonel Nipp left the 3/278th Cav. with two phrases of advice: Meet on the high ground and accomplish the mission with integrity.

During the nine months the 1/98th has been on the ground in Iraq, they have completed close to 600 missions, travelling approximately one million miles without sustaining any serious injuries.

"Our convoy commanders were a great asset to our mission," said 1st Sgt. Brian Belue, the interim command sergeant major for the 1/98th Cav. "From planning the mission to execution, we had a lot of good E-6s (staff sergeants) that made good decisions throughout the year that allowed for these safe operations."

The mission that the 1/98th Cav. transferred to the 3/278th ACR is to ensure the safe arrival of supplies across Northern Iraq.

"The transfer of authority to the 3/278th ACR has gone well," said Lt. Col. Nipp. "I believe we set them up for success."

First Sergeant Belue agreed with Lt. Col. Nipp saying, "We've done a lot work over the past two weeks to prepare these guys for the transfer of authority."

Lieutenant Colonel James Blevins, squadron commander of the 3/278th ACR, says that the unit's primary goal is to safely conduct its missions and make sure that Soldiers are taken care of.

"We received convoy escort and Army Warrior Training to help prepare us for this deployment," said Lt. Col. Blevins, who acknowledges there's a challenge ahead. "It's satisfying to be here after the long train-up that we had and assume the mission."

Command Sergeant Major Cartwright commented, "Being in Iraq is what we trained for."



TASK FORCE MARNE
U.S. DIVISION NORTH IRAQ



Find it all at Task Force Marne's Web site

The Task Force Marne Web site is active and open to the public. It's a site that is dedicated to highlighting the outstanding achievements of the task force's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Civilians.

Extraordinary strides are taking place through the partnership that has been developed between the U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces, and those stories are packaged on a visually appealing, easily accessible Web site.

The mission of the site is to give Families, friends, news media and all

interested citizens a window into the world of Task Force Marne. Represented on the site are all six brigades with information on their unit history, along with feature articles photos and rear detachment phone numbers.

It's an all inclusive site that also allows for interaction with the commanding general through his personal blog. Located on the site are links to the Task Force Marne Facebook page and other social media sites for all the brigades.

Direct your loved ones to the Web

site to read "The North Star" and read about the Task Force Marne Hero of the North.

There's no longer a reason to jump from site to site to learn about what's going on in TF Marne's footprint.

Please bookmark the site and enjoy it often as it will be continuously updated to keep its users informed and in touch with Task Force Marne.

<http://www.stewart.army.mil/tfm/homepage/default.asp>

Rock of the Marne!

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Private Justin Vance, of Gaston, Ind., is a radio telephone operator for 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Briagde Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. He performed admirably for his platoon. In addition to being a vital link between troops on the ground and the company command post, Pvt. Vance assisted with the planning and coordination of more than 75 joint patrols. The missions involved every type of Iraqi security forces and nearly every conceivable mission profile. Whether a raid, cordon and search operation, humanitarian assistance mission, Commander's Emergency Response Program project reconnaissance, polling site assessment for Iraqi national elections, or other mounted and dismounted operation, he proved himself up to the challenge with a calm and steady presence in the face of adversity. Private Vance also participated in more than 100 key leader engagements, and proved himself capable of performing nearly every function on the missions, many of which are well above his pay grade. His sheer determination and unwillingness to compromise excellence make him a great choice for today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Bruce Van Tassel, of Miami, is a Command Post of the Future Representative for Task Force Marne. He has gone to extraordinary lengths to support the task force dating all the way back to reset, pre-deployment exercises, and actually arrived in United States Division - North two months prior to the division's Transfer of Authority. He provides daily hands-on training to all CPOF operators throughout the Division - Main building and across USD-N. His high level of understanding and prior experience enables him to provide immediate on the spot assistance to users. His confidence and ability to simplify the CPOF system to where the users can understand make him a critical member of the team. His actions reflect great credit upon him and make him a natural choice for the Task Force Marne Service Provider of the Week.

Daylight Saving Time

Geography.about.com

March 14, at 2 a.m. Daylight Saving Time begins in the United States.

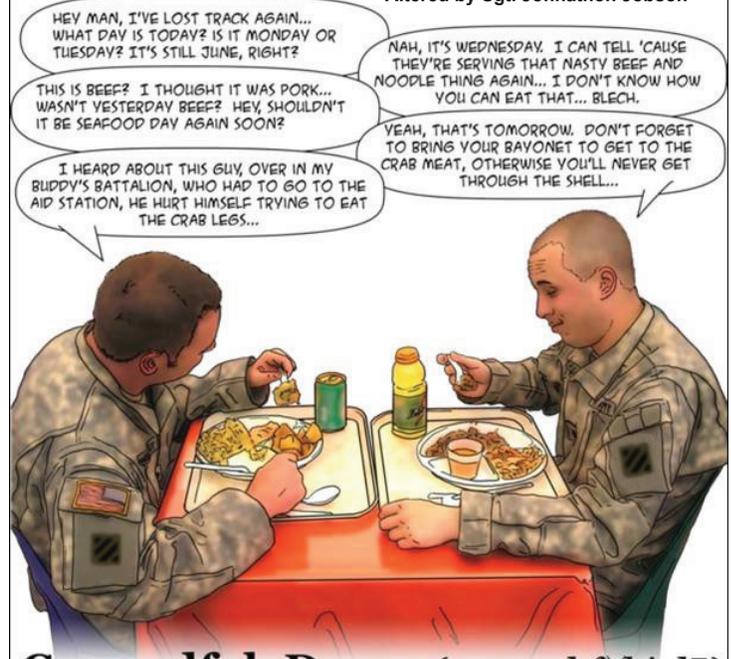
Every Spring we move our clocks one hour ahead and "lose" an hour during the night and each Fall we move our clocks back one hour and "gain" an extra hour. But Daylight Saving Time (and not Daylight Savings Time with an "s") wasn't just created to confuse our schedules.

The phrase "Spring forward, Fall back" helps people remember how Daylight Saving Time affects their clocks. At 2 a.m. on the second Sunday in March, we set our clocks forward one hour ahead of Standard Time ("Spring forward"). We "Fall back" at 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in November by setting our clock back one hour and thus returning to Standard Time.

The change to Daylight Saving Time allows us to use less energy in lighting our homes by taking advantage of the longer and later daylight hours. Daylight Saving Time is four weeks longer since 2007 due to the passage of the Energy Policy Act in 2005. The Act extended Daylight Saving Time by four weeks from the second Sunday of March to the first Sunday of November, with the hope that it would save 10,000 barrels of oil each day through reduced use of power during daylight hours.

BOB ON THE FOB by SGT Albert J. Merrifield

Altered by Sgt. Johnathon Jobson



Groundfob Day n. (ground-fōb' dā)

1. The perception that each and every day in-country is indistinguishable from the one that preceded it; all days are the same. 2. The state of existence where the only way to tell one day from another is by using the menu at the dining facility to differentiate between days.

(See also *menu months*)

REGIONAL HEADLINES

'Human Google Project' planned

Topeka Capital Journal

Think Big Topeka is looking for 500 volunteers, all dressed in white.

The group, which is seeking to convince Google to choose Topeka as a test site for ultrafast Internet service, asked Tuesday for volunteers to take part in a "Human Google Project" from noon to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 20, at Hummer Sports Park near S.W. 6th and Oakley Avenue. Think Big Topeka said in a newsletter

Tuesday that participants are to form a human message for Google by standing in formation to spell out the word "Topeka," then morphing into another six-letter word — "Google" — in an area 150 feet long by 40 feet wide.

Participants will be photographed and videotaped both on the ground and from a helicopter, said Alissa Sheley, a member of Think Big Topeka. She encouraged those who take part to bring cameras and camcorders to record the event from their personal perspective.

Sheley said Think Big Topeka plans to compile a photo journal of the event to go on its Web site at www.thinkbigtopeka.com. The Web address of that site will later be delivered to Google along with forms nominating Topeka to be chosen as a test site. Mayor Bill Bunten drew national attention last week when he sought to set Topeka apart from the numerous

other cities vying to be chosen by Google by issuing a proclamation calling for Topeka to be referred to throughout March as "Google, Kansas, the capital city of fiber optics."

Topeka Collegiate School plans to support the efforts to attract Google by becoming "Google Collegiate School" for the rest of the month, said Mary Loftus, development director of the school. Plans call for Topeka Collegiate's first-graders to help change the school's sign to display its new name at 9 a.m. March 17.

Bison on Interstate going home

Atlanta Journal Constitution

SPARTA, Ga. - The 450-pound animal was headed from Tennessee to spend the rest of her life on the Lone Branch Farm in Sparta.

Her traveling companion that day was a bison named Jessica, said Will Minter, who was driving the truck along I-20 when the animal jumped out on Feb. 26.

Minter, who owns the Lone Branch Farm with his wife, Carolyn, said it was his first time transporting the large animals.

He has no idea how the bison — which his daughter was supposed to name — jumped out of the truck.

"The gates were locked, so they couldn't get out," he said.

There was an opening, however, about three feet wide. Minter said he remembers a semi-truck blowing its

horn at another car that was getting too close.

Man loses control of car, crashes into barn near Oso

United Press International

OSO, Wash. - A man apparently drove his vehicle off the road and crashed into a barn in Oso on March 4.

Washington State Patrol Trooper Keith Leary said the 59-year-old man lost control of his steering wheel and his 1978 Buick went off the road in the 19900 block of SR 530 around noon and struck a dairy barn.

"The steering wheel actually popped off the steering column," Leary said.

No calves were injured. The driver had some slight neck pain after the collision, but did not report any injuries, he said.

**Happy Birthday Maj. Jason Marquiss
in the Provost Marshal Office.
From your mom,
Renee Marquis**



THE North Star

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1st Infantry Division
2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
3rd Infantry Division

3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team,
2nd Infantry Division
1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
1st Armored Division

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