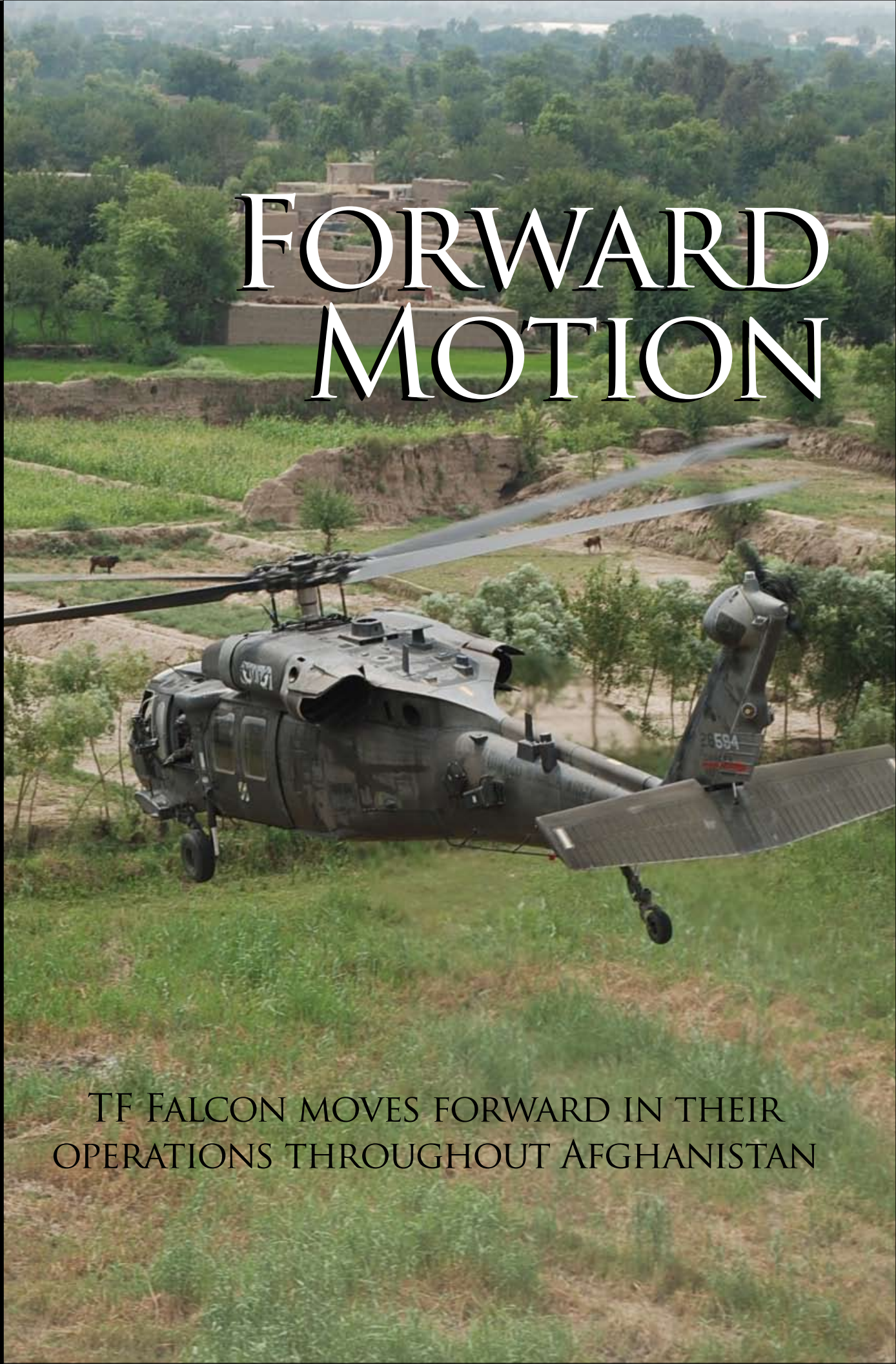




FALCON FLYER

July 2010

FORWARD MOTION



TF FALCON MOVES FORWARD IN THEIR
OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN

FLIGHT SCHEDULE - JULY 2010



CW2 Louis Boez

PAGE 10

Soldiers of TF Viper continue a legacy begun by an assault helicopter company in Vietnam.



Spc. Monica K. Smith

PAGE 12

The Korean TF Taegeuk arrives and makes history as the first Korean aviation unit in Afghanistan.



Sgt. Scott Tant

PAGE 18

Soldiers from TF Brawler take their mission further by assisting local Afghans.

4 - FALCON 6 SENDS

5 - FALCON 7 SENDS

6 - SIGHT PICTURE

7 - CLUB MEMBERS

TF Falcon Soldiers inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

8 - BACK TO LEAD

Former Afghan, who graduated from the second class of the crew chief academy, returns to teach his fellow countrymen.

10 - ALONG CAME THE SPIDERS

Soldiers of A Co., "Spiders," 4-3 Avn., TF Viper, continue the legacy of the 188th Assault Helicopter Company from Vietnam.

12 - MAKING HISTORY

Korean task force joins the 3rd CAB in Afghanistan.

14 - AROUND THE TASK FORCE

16 - PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN

Soldier becomes a U.S. citizen.

18 - GOING BEYOND HEARTS AND MINDS

An aviation unit displays its' effectiveness on the ground.

20 - PREPARING THE BATTALION FOR THE FUTURE

Professional development brief informs of tactical communication systems and capabilities.

22 - TF ODIN-A: ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND

Lt. Col. Kevin Diermeier takes command of TF ODIN-A during a ceremony on Bagram Airfield.

24 - FOURTH OF JULY THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN

TF Falcon Soldiers take time to celebrate the 4th of July in their area of operations.

26 - TASK FORCE VIEW

28 - PARTING SHOT

FALCON FLYER

Vol. II, Issue 7
July 2010

Falcon Flyer is published in the interest of the servicemembers of the 3rd Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade.

The Falcon Flyer is an Army-funded newsletter authorized for members of the U.S. Army, under the provision of AR 360-1. Contents of the Falcon Flyer are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or Department of the Army.

3rd ID Commander
Maj. Gen. Anthony Cucolo

3rd CAB Commander
Col. Don Galli

3rd CAB Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Stidley

3rd CAB PAO
Sgt. 1st Class Kimberly A. Green

Editor
Sgt. Monica K. Smith

CONTACT
481.6597
HQ CAB_PAOMail@afghan.swa.army.mil

TASK FORCE TALON
Bagram
Capt. Christopher Rogers
1st Sgt. Christopher Wood

TASK FORCE VIPER
Salerno
Lt. Col. Michael Musiol
Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Felicioni

TASK FORCE KNIGHTHAWK
Bagram
Lt. Col. Thomas Smedley
Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick Blair

TASK FORCE LIGHTHORSE
Jalalabad
Lt. Col. Thomas von Eschenbach
Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Lemke

TASK FORCE BRAWLER
Shank
Lt. Col. Robert Ault
Command Sgt. Maj. Stuart O'Black

TASK FORCE WORKHORSE
Bagram
Lt. Col. Woodward Hopkins
Command Sgt. Maj. James Snyder

TASK FORCE ODIN
Bagram
Lt. Col. Kevin Diemeier
Command Sgt. Maj. Marion Travis

TASK FORCE DARK KNIGHT
Bagram
Col. Monica Harwig
Command Sgt. Maj. Regina Rush-Kittle

COVER PHOTO

A Black Hawk with A Co., TF Knighthawk, takes off, Aug. 2, from FOB Fenty. Check out the stories in this issue showing how the 3rd CAB is making a difference in Afghanistan.

Photo by Sgt. Monica K. Smith



A Black Hawk with A Co., TF Knighthawk, flies over a small town outside of Jalalabad July 9.

FALCON 6 SENDS...

Col. Don Galli

CAB Commander

Soldiers, Family Members, and Friends of Task Force Falcon –
“For the support of this declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of the divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” – The Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776

With these words, Thomas Jefferson closed the Declaration of Independence. And our nation formally began its journey to freedom. As we celebrate the 4th of July far from home, those powerful words remind all of us in the Marne Air Brigade that the struggle for freedom is a great tradition handed down to us by our founding fathers.

Those words also remind us that the founding fathers knew the strife and obstacles that would come in the years ahead. They knew that the fighting would not be easy. But they knew it was worth the cost.

In the same spirit, the nation of Afghanistan and its Army are working to defeat the tyranny of the Taliban and the insurgents. They are working to bring freedom to their nation.

Throughout this deployment, we have been working shoulder-

to-shoulder with our brothers in the Afghan National Army. We have learned many important lessons through this partnership. We have learned that even though we come from different countries and different armies, we share many values and ideals with our Afghan brothers. We have learned that an incredible love of country resides in each and every Afghan soldier who trained with us. We have learned that Afghans are struggling for freedom in much the same way our ancestors did.

Each year, on Independence Day, we celebrate the spirit of 1776. At the same time, we rededicate ourselves to the ideals our founding fathers set out in the Declaration of Independence.

In the spirit of 1776 and in the tradition of generations of patriots before us, the Soldiers of the Marne Air Brigade have pledged our support and sacred honor to one another. We have also pledged our support and sacred honor to completing this mission by defeating the enemies of Afghanistan. We do so because we know that the people of Afghanistan have no less right than Americans to the ideals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

To our families and friends at home: I cannot thank you enough for all that you do for our Brigade. Your support keeps our morale high and our focus on the mission.

Marne Air! Rock of the Marne!
Falcon 6



Spc. Monica K. Smith

Col. Don Galli (left), commander of the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, places the 3rd Infantry Division patch on the right shoulder of a member of the Czech Republic, TF Hippo, June 16, at FOB Sharana.

FALCON 7 SENDS...

Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Stidley
CAB Command Sergeant Major

We're counting down the days we have left here in Afghanistan however we are still moving forward in our mission. Our crew chief and flight medic academies are progressing as we are now training the trainer and allowing them to take over instructing their brothers in arms with the ultimate goal of the 3rd CAB no longer being needed as instructors and all classes being handed over to the Afghans.

We had the honor of joining with the Republic of Korea Army's first aviation unit to serve in Afghanistan. This is the first time Korean aircrews used Korean aircraft outside of their country and we are proud to be working alongside of them.

This month we also welcomed Lt. Col. Kevin Diermeier as the commander of Task Force ODIN-A (Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize-Afghanistan).

Though the majority of our Soldiers are still moving forward in our mission here, our medevac unit, Company C, DUSTOFF, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Brigade is preparing to redeploy.

As the first unit to deploy from Task Force Falcon, C Co., DUSTOFF

set the stage for our missions here in Afghanistan. The National Guard unit they were replacing was leaving theater before TF Falcon would arrive so DUSTOFF deployed a month before TF Falcon in order to fill the gap. In addition, DUSTOFF is extending their deployment in order to assist the unit replacing them. After a long deployment, those medevac Soldiers will soon be boarding a plane and returning back to Savannah to a much anticipated welcome home celebration.

However, the fight here in Afghanistan will continue. As we begin the end of TF Falcon's deployment, I want to encourage Soldiers to remember to stay focused. The enemy is still out there and isn't going to relent simply because our tour is coming to an end. Also, be aware of silent enemies as we all face hard times, health problems, family problems and financial complications to name a few. Soldiers watch out for one another and encourage one another to remain resilient. We can see the finish line. Lets help one another return home with our heads held high.

I once again want to thank all the families and friends who are helping our Soldiers during this deployment. I know deployments aren't any easier for those left behind and I want you to know how much I appreciate everything you all have done to support us. Take care and we will see all of you soon.

Marne Air! Rock of the Marne!
Falcon 7



Spc. Monica K. Smith

(From left) Command Sergeants Major Scott Schroeder, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Dennis Carey, U.S. Forces Command, Richard Stidley, 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, and Thomas Capel, 82nd Airborne Division, pose for a photo during at meeting at the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon headquarters, June 10, at Bagram Airfield.

SIGHT & PICTURE



Sgt. Scott Tant

Staff Sgt. Ricky Wallace (center), and an ANA Soldier-escort (right) and the subgovernor of the Logar province, walk to a key leader engagement held, June 17, in the Surkhab valley.



SPC Monica K. Smith

CW2 Rick Campbell, a pilot in TF Knighthawk, receives a Combat Action Badge, June 26, at Bagram Airfield.



Warrant Officer Robert Renny



SPC Monica K. Smith

Above Sgt. Lance Grubb (center), crew chief with A Co., TF Knighthawk, and instructor of the ANSF Crew Chief Academy, goes over the in-flight training goals with a class of ANAAC, June 14, at Bagram Airfield.

Left A Chinook with B Co., TF Knighthawk, sits in the sunset, July 20, at Bagram Airfield.

CLUB MEMBERS

Task Force Falcon Soldiers inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club.

Story and Photos by Sgt. Monica K. Smith

Soldiers from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, were inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club during a ceremony, July 5, at Bagram Airfield. Staff Sgt. Jason Mawhorr, military intelligence analyst with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Knighthawk, Staff Sgt. Jorge Rivera, chemical NCOIC in HHC, TF Knighthawk, and Sgt. Kieana Peluso, operations NCO in Headquarters and Support Company, TF Workhorse, were all inducted in a ceremony which included a speech from the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Stidley.

"Being inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club is one of the highest honors any noncommissioned officer could hope to achieve," said Stidley. "Each of the NCOs here is highly deserving of this honor. Each of you should be proud and humbled by it."

To be inducted into the club, each of the Soldiers had to first be recommended by a Sergeant Audie Murphy Club member. From there the Soldiers attended weekly study halls and attended the brigade recommendation board and the Combined Joint Task Force-82 Sergeant Audie Murphy Club board.

"The Audie Murphy members that assisted us in the study groups continuously illustrated professionalism and dedication to help and prepare us to be a part of this prestigious club," said Mawhorr. "Every time I went to study hall I could feel the dedication they had. I wanted to be part of this club more than ever because I feel the leaders that are part of it will contribute to my success of being a better leader. The club is important because the members in it hold the highest standards and will always make an impact on others to do the same. It goes back to what we learned in basic training by doing what's right when no one is looking. I just feel that as time goes on I will learn a lot more from the elite professionals in the club."



Left Sgt. Kieana Peluso (center), HSC, TF Workhorse, stands for a photo with 3rd CAB, TF Falcon Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Stidley (left), and 3rd CAB, TF Falcon Deputy Commander Maj. Brian Schaap, during a Sergeant Audie Murphy Club induction ceremony, July 5, at Bagram Airfield. **Above top** Maj. Brian Schaap (left), deputy commander of the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, inducts Staff Sgt. Jason Mawhorr (right), HHC, TF Knighthawk, into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, July 5, at Bagram Airfield. **Above bottom** Staff Sgt. Jorge Rivera (right), HHC, TF Knighthawk, receives the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club medal from 3rd CAB, TF Falcon Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Stidley, during a Sergeant Audie Murphy Club induction ceremony, July 5, at Bagram Airfield.

BACK TO LEAD

STORY & PHOTOS BY
SPC. MONICA K. SMITH



Maj. Brian Schaap, deputy commander of the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, presents a certificate of appreciation to Mohammad Maqool, during the Afghan National Security Forces Crew Chief Academy graduation ceremony, June 24, at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Maqool was a former student who returned to assist with instructing at the academy.

The room filled with smiles and applause as five Afghan National Army Air Corps crew chiefs and two flight medics walked to the front of the room to receive their certificate for graduating the Afghan National Security Forces Crew Chief Academy, June 24, at Bagram Airfield.

Clapping along with the group was Mohammad Maqool. Maqool, graduated from the second class of the crew chief academy and returned to teach his fellow countrymen.

"The idea came from my commander and I wanted to help my country," said Maqool. "In this class I worked together with the other instructors and explained all the things for the new guys. I had a good time with them. I want to help develop my country and I'm so happy that my country is improving and developing."

The seven graduates were part of the third class to go through the academy. The academy is one of a series of academies within the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon Combined Action Program, including the Afghan National Security Forces Air Assault Academy, Flight Medic Academy and the Close Combat Attack Academy. This is the first time a former student has been certified to return and help teach the class.

"He's one of two who have been to the states and attended the [Mi-17] course at Fort Bliss, [Texas]," said 1st Sgt. Christopher Wood, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd CAB, TF Falcon. "It's important [to have him instruct] because the ultimate goal is to turn this over to the air corps and this helps them teach their own."

Maqool assisted Sgt. Lance Grubb, a crew chief with Company A, Task Force Knighthawk, 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, as an instructor during the 18-day academy. Having former students return to teach benefits the class and the students who are learning, said Grubb.

"He knows more about the Mi-17s and can explain the limitations of the Mi-17s and can also explain the things they do that is different from what we do," said Grubb. "It benefits having these guys come back and instruct because it gets [the Afghans] in the mindset of teaching the classes themselves because if they can train, they can do it faster and more efficiently."

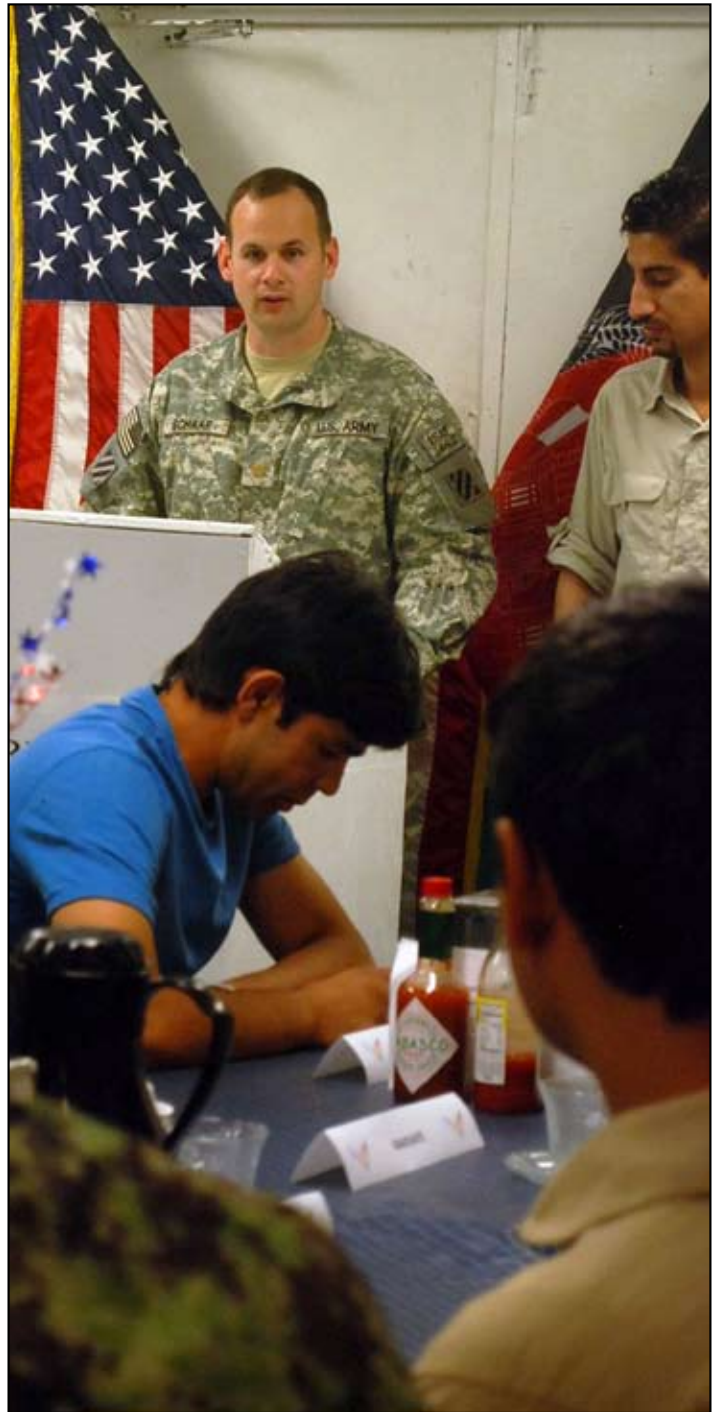
The academy included instruction on the responsibilities of crew chiefs such as how to make calls during flight, how to secure passengers and cargo, and how to ensure the safety of the aircraft.

One of the goals of the TF Falcon Combined Action Program is to provide structure, training and mentorship to the Afghan National Security Forces. From there, the ANSF can increase their combat effectiveness and enable combined action and independent capabilities for the security and stability of the Afghan people, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Chris Hinkle, TF Falcon Combined Action Program manager with HHC, 3rd CAB, TF Falcon.

"Eventually we want them to take the lead in providing security and stability to the Afghan people," said Hinkle. "We're developing their instructors with the goal of transferring all the academies over to them."

The ceremony included words from Wood and showcased images from throughout the academy. The 3rd CAB, TF Falcon Deputy Commander Maj. Brian Schaap, also gave a speech during the ceremony. He commented on the importance of the two units working together.

"When we launched the crew chief academy, we knew that if we continue to work together, we would be a team that is ready to face any foe, defeat any enemy and accomplish any mission," said Schaap. "After once again having the incredible opportunity to witness firsthand our soldiers and our nations working together, we can be confident that we will achieve that goal."



Maj. Brian Schaap, deputy commander of the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, gives a speech during the graduation ceremony of the Afghan National Security Forces Crew Chief Academy, June 24, at Bagram Airfield.



Along came the Spiders

Story by Capt. Dustin Healey

Under a blanket of darkness two Black Hawks maneuver low to the ground as they advance vigilantly towards an enemy safe haven, poised to insert lethal ground forces. The twin 1,800-horsepower engines roar with power as the 'hawks begin their approach into what is expected to be an extremely dusty landing zone in a dry river bed. The pilot calls, "one minute" as the crew chief relays back to the team leader on board with hand signals and a shout.

By the time a 30-second call is passed back over the intercom system, the Soldiers' shouts of excitement and enthusiasm become a roar that seems to overcome the noise from the engines and the rotor blades.

Based out of Forward Operating Base Salerno, these Black Hawks soaring through the air are not your ordinary helicopter unit. They are Company A, "SPIDERS" (4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment), 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, TF Viper's lethal Black Hawk unit who is continuously entrusted by Soldiers with the mission of safe passage across the P2K region of the

provinces Paktika, Paktiya and Khowst.

"Timely insertion of troops and equipment give ground force commanders the momentum they need to defeat the enemy," said CW2 Rich Satterfield, a pilot with A Co., 4-3 Avn., TF Viper.

Maintaining momentum is key to exploiting enemy weaknesses and capitalizing on friendly gains on the battlefield. One way to quickly move combat power on the battlefield in order to capitalize on enemy weaknesses is through the use of Viper's Black Hawks. The Spiders 24-hour coverage over the P2K region ensures ground force commanders have the flexibility to move combat power when needed.

A company with a call sign that dates back to Vietnam, the "Spiders," first made a name for themselves as the 188th Assault Helicopter Company. During the 1960s they made a name for themselves as an armed UH-1 "Huey" gun platoon. As told by Dick "Cherry Boy" Detra, a former 188th AHC door gunner, the "Spiders" of Vietnam were known to the ground Soldiers and Green Berets as "The Spider People," and were characterized by

their reputation for being the only helicopters brave enough to launch when ground units were under heavy enemy fire. Upon the completion of a successful engagement, the “Spiders” would always sign off with ground forces using their well earned motto, “Guns up!”

The responsibility of upholding the legacy of their Vietnam brethren is not lost on the current “Spiders” of Company A.

“Being in one of the most storied helicopter companies in the U.S. Army is an awesome feeling and a responsibility that I take seriously,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jim Layne, tactical operations officer, A Co., 4-3 Avn., TF Viper.

Each of the Company A aircraft are fittingly named after their Vietnam counterparts. Sudden Death, Satisfaction, Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds, Cold Sweat, The O.D. Streak, Climax, and Seduction sit patiently on the flight line waiting for aviators such as Chief Warrant Officer 3 Nigel Huebscher, standardization officer, A Co., 4-3 Avn., TF Viper, and Sgt. Jason Struckman, flight instructor, A Co., 4-3 Avn., TF Viper, to launch them into the Afghanistan sky.

“I look forward to keeping up the proud lineage of the Spiders before us from the Vietnam Era,” said Huebscher. “Every day the “Spiders” of today work towards adding to the unit’s long and growing legacy.”

Although flying combat missions garner the most attention on a daily basis, maintenance operations on the hot Salerno flight line drive every day operations. “Spider” crew chiefs and maintenance test pilots work around the clock to support the large flying hour program. Even without receiving accolades or recognizable praise from higher commands, the “Spider” crew chiefs recognize the importance of their jobs.

“I feel very accomplished after fixing an aircraft and then getting in it to fly,” said Struckman.

The last 50 feet of the approach stir the dust from the dry river bed as both Black Hawks are engulfed in heavy dust. The combination of low ambient light from the Afghanistan night and the use of night vision goggles allows the crews to land the aircraft on the ground in one of the most dangerous and unnerving maneuvers in aviation, the brownout landing.

The crew chiefs shout “Go! Go! Go!” as the Soldiers rush from the aircraft into the dark night. Flying out of the landing zone in order, the pilots pull power as the aircraft literally jumps into the air in an attempt to climb out of the dust cloud. Once the aircraft is clear of the dust cloud, the crew chief shouts “Clear the dust” as the pilot on the controls noses the aircraft forward to gain airspeed.

Although air assault missions typically garner the most attention from a combat perspective, the Spiders became the workhorse of the P2K regions of Afghanistan through their ability to execute a diverse number of mission sets in support of ground force commanders. Resupply, reconnaissance, medevac escort, VIP transport, and air movements are just a few of the different mission sets executed daily by TF Viper’s Black Hawks.

“I like my job because every day is something new, you never know what to expect,” said Spc. Kurt Sanson, a crew chief, A Co., 4-3 Avn., TF Viper.

As the Black Hawks execute an in-flight link up for the 15 minute flight back to FOB Salerno, there is almost a deafening silence between the aircraft and the crews. Another successful troop insertion and brownout dust landing under night vision goggles is complete. Once everyone regroups and heart rates return to normal, the typical banter between the pilots and crew chiefs of any combat tested unit begins again. When asked if he has anything left to say about the mission, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Louis Baez, a pilot with A Co., 4-3 Avn., TF Viper, from Holyoke, Mass., responds for all the Spiders with the simplistic battle cry of their Vietnam brethren, “Guns up!”



CW2 Jim Layne



CW2 Jim Layne

Above top Spc. Phillip McRae, Spc. Thomas Schwaab, and Staff Sgt. Shaun Kirby, all with A Co., “SPIDERS” (4-3 Avn.), TF Viper, conduct a preventive maintenance daily inspection on an aircraft after completing a mission in the P2K region of provinces Paktika, Pakiya and Khowst, May 2, at FOB Salerno. **Above bottom** CW3 Ed Griffie, and CW3 Greg Alford, both with A Co., “SPIDERS” (4-3 Avn.), TF Viper, prepare to conduct a high speed shaft vibration check on a Black Hawk engine following 120 hour maintenance, May 2, at FOB Salerno. **Opposite page** Dick Detra, a former door gunner with the Spiders platoon in Vietnam, served as the company artist and hand painted many of the Hueys during this tour. “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” was his 2nd lift platoon slick. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company “Black Widows” and “Spiders” were stationed at Dau Tieng and landing zone Sally, southern Vietnam, from April 1967 through June 1968.

Making history

Korean task force joins 3rd CAB in Afghanistan

Story and photos by Sgt. Monica K. Smith

Soldiers from Company A, Task Force Knighthawk, had the opportunity to join their Republic of Korea counterparts in the ROK Army's first aviation mission in Afghanistan, July 8, out of Bagram Airfield.

Task Force Taegeuk, the ROK Army's aviation unit, preceded their history-making mission with a ceremony on the Bagram Airfield flight line.

"I am proud of all of our [provincial reconstruction team] soldiers and for our friends for taking the time to be here with us," said ROK Lt. Col. Myong Ho Choi, commander of TF Taegeuk. "I'm glad to start and I am sure we will be able to proceed and complete our missions successfully."

Korean aviation began 40 years ago and though their soldiers served in Vietnam, they did not use their own aircraft. Their deployment to Afghanistan marks the first time Korean aviators will fly their own aircraft outside of their country.

"It makes me really proud to be a member of TF Taegeuk," said ROK Cpl. Yong Gee Hong, an air traffic controller for TF Taegeuk. "I'm part of making history in Korea."

The first mission for TF Taegeuk was a land orientation flight and included their two Black Hawks led by a U.S. Black Hawk from A Co., TF Knighthawk. Task Force Taegeuk will be deployed for six months and will support the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, from their base in Bagram Airfield.

Then, July 14, soldiers from TF Taegeuk took part in a combat patch ceremony. The task force put on the combat patch of the unit they are subordinate to, the 3rd CAB.

The commander of TF Falcon, Col. Don Galli, spoke during the ceremony, explaining the history of the 3rd Infantry Division, under which operates the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, and also described their combat patch.

"We are honored for you to wear our combat patch," said Galli. "I am proud to have you here with us and look forward to working alongside you."



Above top Soldiers from TF Taegeuk, the Republic of Korea Army aviation unit working with the 3rd CAB, unfold the blades of their Black Hawks, June 30, at Bagram Airfield. **Above middle** A Soldier in TF Taegeuk watches as a ROK Black Hawk prepares to fly its mission, July 8, at Bagram Airfield. **Above bottom** A U.S. Black Hawk with A Co., TF Knighthawk, leads two Black Hawks with TF Taegeuk, on their first flight, July 8, at Bagram Airfield.



(Clockwise from top) **1** Col. Don Galli, commander of the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, speaks to the soldiers of TF Taegeuk, Republic of Korea, after a combat patch ceremony, July 14, at Bagram Airfield. **2** Col. Don Galli (right), places a 3rd Infantry Division combat patch on a soldier from TF Taegeuk of the ROK Army, during a combat patch ceremony, July 14, at Bagram Airfield. **3** A Black Hawk with TF Taegeuk, flies over Bagram Airfield during its first mission in Afghanistan, July 8. **4** Col. Don Galli (right), shakes hands with Lt. Col. Myong Ho Choi, commander of TF Taegeuk, during a combat patch ceremony, July 14, at Bagram Airfield.



AROUND THE TASK FORCE



Sgt. Monica K. Smith

1



Sgt. Monica K. Smith

2



Spc. Grant Matzoff

4



Warrant Officer Robert Renny

3

(Clockwise from top left) **1.** Col. Don Galli, commander of the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, places an air assault patch on the arm of an ANA soldier, July 5, during a ceremony at Bagram Airfield. **2.** Sgt. Karlene Hister (left), promotes her husband, Spc. Anthony Hister, HHC, 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, to the rank of sergeant, July 5, at Bagram Airfield. **3.** Sgt. Elison Cody, D Co., TF Knighthawk, conducts a pre-phase wash on a Chinook, June 24, at Bagram Airfield. **4.** An Afghan crew chief looks out the window of a Black Hawk, July 20, over Bagram Airfield.



Warrant Officer Robert Renny



Spc. Grant Marzolf



Spc. Grant Marzolf

(Clockwise from top left) **1** A Chinook with B Co., TF Knighthawk, lands, July 20, in Sharana. **2** Sfc. Russell Gardner, A Co., TF Brawler, works with an ANAAC crew chief during a flight, July 21, at Bagram Airfield. **3** Staff Sgt. Kevin Hubbard, console operator with A Co., TF Knighthawk, scans out the window after transporting VIPs, July 12, near FOB Ghazni.

PROUD to be an AMERICAN

Story by Spc. Steven T. Rudy

Photos by Spc. Monica K. Smith

Among the ranks of the U.S. Army, many Soldiers are living and dying for a country they are not even a citizen of. For Spc. Ruhul Shah, an aircraft armament mechanic with Troop D, TF Lighthorse, from Dhaka, Bangladesh, a dream was reached when he was naturalized, June 3, at Bagram Airfield.

"I was proud after my naturalization process and walked away from that ceremony the happiest Soldier in Afghanistan," said Shah. "At first, this process was hard but I am glad to serve the United States and proud I have made it this far."

Shah began his journey towards citizenship on New Year's Day of this year. The process was completed only 72 hours after it was started at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

"Even though it felt long, 72 hours was well worth waiting for," said Shah.

"Honestly, trying to make it this far wasn't easy for me," said Shah. "While working 12-hour shifts everyday as well as attempting to complete this, I found myself frustrated and stressed often. After stopping to think, I quickly remembered what I was working for and now, here I am. I am finally a U.S. citizen and all the hard work and commitment paid off."

"I think it reflects great impact toward him and this unit," said 1st Sgt. Harold Sullivan (acting first sergeant), D Troop, TF Lighthorse. "Having Spc. Shah with us brings even more to the table for the success of this mission, the Army, and most of all, this country."

"I feel a sense of happiness and satisfaction," said Sgt. Alexander Santana, an aircraft armament mechanic, D Troop, TF Lighthorse. "Watching my Soldier on that stage almost brought tears to my eyes as I sat and watched him smile out of joy to finally become naturalized. That was the day I realized I take so much in life for granted."

Shah said his motivation came from his personal desires like voting and simply being able to say, "I am an American." Most of all, Shah said his parents helped motivate him to get this far. All of Shah's hard work and discipline paid off as he and 72 other service members participated in the naturalization ceremony organized by the Combined Joint Task Force 82, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate. The ceremony included speeches from the CJTF-82 Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti and U.S. Army Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl W. Eikenberry.

"It is a privilege to share this momentous day with you. All of you standing in defence of our national security and who



Spc. Ruhul Shah, looks down at his certificate during a naturalization ceremony, June 3, at Bagram Airfield.



will today reaffirm your commitment to our Constitution," said Eikenberry. "As you take the oath of citizenship shortly, you should feel proud that you represent the highest ideals of citizenship."

Task Force Falcon had three other U.S. Army Soldiers participate in the naturalization ceremony; Sgt. 1st Class Eti Falaniko, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Dark Knight, from American Samoa, Spc. Damilola Gbadebo, HHC, TF Viper, from Nigeria, and Sgt. Kamar Hamilton, Headquarters and Support Company, TF Workhorse, from Spanishtown, Jamaica.

After the ceremony, the new citizens posed in a photo with Eikenberry, Scaparrotti and other distinguished guests who were in attendance.

"I am proud of myself for making it this far," said Shah. "I have met people and have done so many things I've never dreamed of doing. Most of all, I have been so grateful for the education given to me since I have been living in America."

Above Spc. Ruhul Shah, an aircraft electrician with D Troop, TF Lighthorse, works on a Black Hawk, June 24, at FOB Jalalabad. **Right** Spc. Ruhul Shah, says the oath of allegiance during a naturalization ceremony, June 3, at Bagram Airfield.





As battle tactics in Afghanistan are adjusted to defeat the enemy, adaptability is a valuable asset to any Army unit involved in combat actions. At Forward Operating Base Shank, Task Force Brawler is displaying its adaptability by being as equally effective on the ground as they are in the air. With the creation of a civil affairs team, led by Cpt. Douglas Gray, civil affairs officer in charge, HHC, TF Brawler, supports the ongoing counterinsurgency tactic by helping remote villages in the mountainous regions of eastern Afghanistan.

The TF Brawler Commander Lt. Col. Robert Ault saw a need for a section specifically tasked with identifying the needs of small villages isolated from major urban areas. After identifying the needs, the team would then find the means to solving those particular villages' problems.

The Brawler civil affairs team, also known as the S-9 section, was the Commanders Emergency Response Program, or CERP. A relatively new program, CERP was first introduced to Army commanders in 2003.

Going Beyond Hearts & Minds

An aviation unit displays its' effectiveness on the ground.

Story and photos by Sgt. Scott Tant



The goal of the program is to win the trust of the civilian population and promote civil infrastructures in Afghanistan. It provides U.S. governmental appropriations directly to operational and tactical force commanders, enabling them to meet the emergency needs of civilians in support of humanitarian operations.

The program began in Iraq, with the intent to provide local commanders the ability to fund small infrastructure projects. The program receives oversight from the Coalition Provisional Authority, and is budgeted from money seized during the Iraqi and Afghan conflicts. The amount of funding through CERP is determined by command level; for TF Brawler, they could apply \$5,000 towards any one small-scale project.

Unlike most other programs in the Army, CERP spending allows a commander to decide how the funds are spent, as long as it falls within prescribed guidelines. This flexibility allows local commanders to more accurately identify problems that required fixing. For example, CERP monies could be used to help improve an irrigation system, refurbish public buildings, purchase medical supplies or build a school.

"The CERP funds have really helped the schools," said Sgt. 1st Class Russell Stacy, civil affairs noncommissioned officer in charge, HHC, TF Brawler. "Most villages don't have an effective school system in place, and therefore most schools don't operate with the necessary supplies, like books, paper and pens. [Commanders Emergency Response Program] helps purchase these needed supplies, and that helps with providing a better education for the children."

Above top Local nationals, in the Logar province of Afghanistan, deliver carpet into a mosque after TF Brawler Soldiers delivered it April 22. **Above bottom** Capt. Douglas Gray (left), civil affairs officer in charge, HHC, TF Brawler, speaks with the headmaster of an Afghan school after delivering school supplies, April 30, in the Logar province of Afghanistan.

Stacy serves as the S-9's noncommissioned officer in charge, while 2nd Lt. Evan Mace, assistant S-9 officer, HHC, TF Brawler, has been added to assist Gray.

Whereas CERP could help provide funding for small projects, actually connecting with the community and earning their trust was another issue. Fortunately, the successful partnership with TF Brawlers own ground unit and an Afghan National Army recon company provided a bridge between TF Brawler and the villagers. In turn, it is the Afghan Soldiers who will effectively link the locals with the provincial government.

"It is our partnerships through combined-action initiatives that have made us successful," said TF Brawler Executive Officer Maj. Craig Halsey. "Our partnerships with the ANA company, TF Nashmi from Jordan, the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Afghan National Army Air Corps have provided the means to influence the battle space. The effects have been by, with, and through our partnered forces."

Armed with government-backed program funds and an American-Afghan partnered security force, the TF Brawler civil affairs team can now effectively enter a village, have a key leader engagement with the village elders and determine needs versus wants, and then later return with the necessary items.

Task Force Brawler's first successful application of CERP funds was to purchase and distribute supplies to a local village school. English-to-Pashtu dictionaries, pens, and paper were the most requested staple. The next project brought buckets of paint, brushes and rolls of carpet in an effort to refurbish two mosques that were still in disrepair from

the Soviets occupation in the 1990s.

"Mosques are the central hub for an Afghan community, and the state of the mosque reflects the spiritual state of the community," said TF Brawler Chaplain Capt. Abraham Sarmiento. "In the Muslim religion the mosque is a place that is visited frequently, where the people go to rekindle their spiritual strength. For the task force to aid in the refurbishment of a mosque displays to the villagers that we understand its importance to them and we respect their beliefs."

Although not allowed directly in the mosque, TF Brawler Soldiers assisted in transporting the materials directly to the mosque's doorstep.

Medical care in the remote regions was another issue for the S-9 team to assist with. As most of the doctors in the Logar province work in more urban areas, outlying villages have little to no medical facilities available to them. The team coordinated American and Afghan medics to set up one-day clinics where CERP-purchased medicine could be distributed.

"Because of the CERP funding, we were able to provide the villagers with basic necessities," said TF Brawler Flight Surgeon Capt. Caton Hill. "Every day items we take for granted, like shampoo, toothpaste, even baby formula are much needed items in those remote places. The (CERP) program allows us to purchase these things for them; that, to me, is a potent effect."

In some cases though, the village elders would ask for something either out of the scope of CERP or a project that cost more than the \$5,000 allotted to small projects. In those instances, the S-9 team would help the villagers by showing them the necessary steps required to file requests through

provincial government offices.

For example, one village requested that the TF Brawler S-9 team contact a local contractor and force the company to complete an Afghan government-sponsored project started then stopped at a local school. With a little research, the team returned days later and provided the village elders a phone number where complaints could be registered with the provincial government.

In the four months since conception, the TF Brawler S-9 shop has delivered school supplies for more than 1,000 students, distributed medicine to more than 900 villagers, delivered more than 96,000 pounds of concrete for irrigation improvement projects, and purchased enough carpet and paint to refurbish three mosques. But according to Mace, the most important statistic is the one village that now attends weekly provincial meetings.

"The villagers are taking a very proactive role in their own development by working with the leaders of the provincial government," said Mace. "Our main goal has been to make these villages nondependent on aid from Coalition forces. In this one village, it appears we are having success with that thus far."

The end state for TF Brawler and its civil affairs team is to work their way out of a job, and in the process, ultimately become effective in the little time that they are in Afghanistan. By empowering the local populace with the ability to address their own issues with the government of Afghanistan, TF Brawler works to accomplish a goal Ault set down from the onset; that the task force make a difference by creating long-term effects in the battle space.



A Chinook with TF Brawler, lifts-off after unloading Soldiers and school supplies in the Logar province of Afghanistan.

Preparing the battalion for the FUTURE

Story by 1st Lt. Jonathan E. Harbin
Photos by 1st Sgt. Robert Diggs



Sgt. Paul Jean and Sgt. Jose Quintero, both members of C Co., TF Workhorse, demonstrate retransmission operations during officer professional development training, June 22, at Bagram Airfield.

In order to inform officers of the company's tactical communication systems and their capabilities, Company C, "Cobras", 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Workhorse, conducted an officer professional development brief, June 22, at Bagram Airfield.

"The event allowed all officers throughout the battalion to know and understand what is currently available to them on the battlefield and how C Company provides communications services to remote locations throughout Afghanistan," said Sgt. Jonathan Rowe, command post node section sergeant, C Co., TF Workhorse.

Soldiers and noncommissioned officers from the company taught classes on the joint network node, retransmission, and the command post node, all three of which provide communication capabilities to deployed Soldiers.

The event started with a brief description of the basic signal flow from the user to the receiver given by 1st Lt. Shonda Porter, executive officer, C Co., TF Workhorse. Then all officers were broken down into smaller teams and rotated through five stations, which lasted approximately 10 minutes each.

"The goal of the classes was to have the officers leave with a basic understanding of the capabilities, components, and functions of each system," said Sgt. Jose Quintero, CPN team chief, C Co., TF Workhorse.

At the first station, Quintero and Sgt. Paul Jean, C Co., TF Workhorse, gave a class on the setup and operation of a RE-

TRANS, a means of expanding radio communication abilities. Upon completion of the class the officers left with a better understanding of how radios and antennas retransmit signals.

Specialist Dwight Henry, a subject matter expert on the JNN, C Co., TF Workhorse, was the instructor of the next station. He explained the capabilities of the JNN, how it ties into the Army's Joint Network Transport Capability and its ability to provide voice and data to a brigade-sized element.

The CPN class, taught by Sgt. Brandon Goggins and Spc. Joseph Hicks, both with C Co., TF Workhorse, was the last station taught by C Co., Soldiers. This portion covered the signal flow through satellites detailing how the company provides services to the end users.

By the end of the hour the officers said they were grateful for the training they received because of the possibility of using it in the future.

"I was glad that I learned something about radios and RE-TRANS capabilities that may save my life some day on one of my downed aircraft recovery team missions," stated 1st Lt. Alex Grant, DART team platoon leader for A Co., TF Workhorse.

"Soldiers showed with great pride the abilities of C Company," said 1st Sgt. Robert Diggs, C Co., TF Workhorse. "They showed the officers of TF Workhorse that even though they provide the ability to strike hard at the enemy, the 'Cobras' give them the ability to strike first."



Sgt. Brandon Goggins, C Co., TF Workhorse, demonstrates satellite transportable terminal operations to officers during officer professional development training, June 22, at Bagram Airfield.

TASK FORCE ODIN-A ASSUMPTION OF COMMAND

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. MONICA K. SMITH



Lt. Col. Kevin Diermeier (left), incoming commander of TF ODIN-A (Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize-Afghanistan), 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, passes the task force colors to TF ODIN-A Command Sgt. Maj. Marion Travis, during an assumption of command ceremony, July 12, at Bagram Airfield.



Lt. Col. Kevin Diermeier, incoming commander of TFODIN-A, 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, gives a speech during an assumption of command ceremony, July 12, at Bagram Airfield.

Soldiers of Task Force ODIN-A (Observe, Detect, Identify, Neutralize – Afghanistan), 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon, conducted an assumption of command, July 12, at Bagram Airfield.

During the ceremony, Maj. Regan Baldwin relinquished command of TF ODIN-A to incoming commander Lt. Col. Kevin Diermeier.

"On the surface, a ceremony in the midst of a nine-year-old conflict may seem insignificant, and in comparison to the ultimate sacrifice that has been made by the countless heroes who have served here it is insignificant," said Diermeier. "However, in terms of the contributions that

have been made over the past year by the members of Task Force ODIN's first rotation personnel it is extremely significant."

Task Force ODIN-A is one of two "ODIN" units, the other being TF ODIN-I (Iraq). Both task forces are a permanent unit in the countries they reside in and the ceremony at Bagram Airfield marked the second iteration of Soldiers to work within TF ODIN-A, giving them the name TF ODIN-A II.

TF ODIN-A contributes to the 3rd CAB, TF Falcon, by bringing a new point of view to the fight not only seeking to warn ground units of potential threats but also integrating with ground forces to find those who are at the center of the threat.

Though TF ODIN-A is a declassified unit, much of the details surrounding the mission and capabilities of the task force are still classified to prevent the enemy from further evolving their tactics.

"Task Force ODIN-A has and will continue to be critical to providing Coalition forces freedom of maneuver along routes, neutralization of insurgents and ultimately protection to the Afghanistan population," said Col. Don Galli, commander of TF Falcon, during the ceremony. "Kevin you have a challenging, yet exciting job ahead of you. You come with a great reputation. I am certain you have the vision and enthusiasm to lead this great task force."

WE CAN DO IT!

Female Low Level Voice Intercept Soldiers make the team



Story by
Master Sgt. Mark Ligget

Photo by
Staff Sgt. Nicholas McMurray



For the first eight months of their deployment, Spc. Kayla Dougan and Spc. Jesseca Flook, both signals intelligence analysts with Company C, Task Force Dark Knight, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, TF Falcon, spend their time behind computers at Bagram Airfield.

"We've come a long way," said Flook.

Both Dougan and Flook are part of a low level voice intercept team, a team that attempts to pick up radio chatter that could reveal anti-Afghan forces' plans for improvised explosive devices, rocket attacks and ambushes. Because the enemy's transmissions are a low power, the LLVI teams can't intercept them from the safety of the FOB, but must go dangerously close to the insurgents.

The LLVI team, called "Knight Sirens" is assigned to FOB Joyce, in Afghanistan's Kunar province. The FOB is located south of the Korengal Valley, which the New York Times famously called "the Valley of Death", after 42 Americans died defending it, and a few miles from the Pakistan border.

Dougan and Flook underwent a month of training and practice on the systems they would be operating. During this time, meeting at the gym for workouts and perimeter ruck marches was routine.

However, prior to and after leaving Bagram Airfield, the women were joined by Staff Sgt. Nicholas McMurray, signals intelligence sergeant, and Spc. Seth Hernandez, signals intelligence analyst, both with C Co., TF Dark Knight. They brought with them the knowledge and experience gained from working on other LLVI teams.

"Sergeant McMurray and Spc. Hernandez were both previously deployed and on tactical LLVI teams," said Dougan. "They both had knowledge, experience and morale to make our team a perfect fit. They contributed in their own ways to the team whether it be expertise on the equipment, ideas on how to make the packs and gear more efficient, or the previous knowledge from being in the field."

"We soon developed a unique camaraderie which is as much a factor in our success as anything else," said Flook. "On such a team, each person's humor and frustrations are shared, but we are able to set all of it aside to accomplish the mission at hand."

On missions, the team averaged a packable weight of between 30 and 60 pounds per person, in addition to their body armor and the weight of the weapon. The pack weight came from the system they would be operating, the amount of batteries needed to power it for an extended number of days, their personal food and water, and hygiene products.

"To be a female in a war zone is often challenging enough but when you intend to submerge yourself in the tactical environment with your male counterparts, you have to be prepared," said Flook. "We are convinced that much can be done so long as you aren't afraid to get dirty and work hard. Our team has had to sleep in the dirt, go without showers and defend ourselves from flies just as much as from enemy fire."

Contrary to what they have heard about hostilities towards women, Dougan, Flook and their two female interpreters have only encountered welcoming and respectful men.

"Being a female has actually made it easier to build relations," said Flook. "Dougan and I were personally thanked for wearing traditional Afghan women's clothes to a festive occasion and, as a result, our team was invited to dine with them. After all this I can honestly say I am thankful for the experiences and opportunities that I have been afforded, regardless of the danger. I told Dougan, 'Who can say they've done what we have? We've been to Afghanistan and on an LLVI team. We've played volleyball and even eaten a traditional meal with the Afghan Security Guards.'"

After working in the LLVI team for three months, Flook and Dougan say they realize the importance of their mission.

"The Knight Sirens team is here to support its fellow soldiers," said Flook. "[Low level voice intercept team] is supposed to provide timely intelligence that could potentially save lives. Though taking lives is necessary, saving them is the most rewarding profession."

Spc. Kayla Dougan, signals intelligence analyst, with C Co., 321st MI Battalion, TF Dark Knight, draws a bead with an M-39 enhanced marksman rifle, June 24, near Forwarding Operating Base Joyce, Kunar Province, Afghanistan.

Task Force view



Sgt. Scott Tant



Spc. Steven Rudy



Spc. Steven Rudy



Spc. Grant Matzloff

(Clockwise from top right) **1.** Two Chinooks with TF Brawler prepare to land and extract Coalition forces participating in a school supply drop, June 24, in the Logar province. **2.** CW2 Sean Spears, a pilot with C Co., 4-3 Avn., TF Lighthorse, works on a Black Hawk, July 2, at FOB Fenty. **3.** A Black Hawk with A Co., TF Knighthawk, flies over the Jala-labad valley, July 8. **4.** Spc. Tyler Huckleberry, a crew chief with A Co., 1-3 Avn., TF Lighthorse, works on an Apache, July 10, at FOB Fenty.



Sgt. Scott Tant



Spc. Grant Marzolf



Sgt. Scott Tant



Spc. Grant Marzolf



Spc. Grant Marzolf

(Clockwise from top left) **1** (From left) Pfc. Timothy Hill, Sgt. Jeremy Clark and Sgt. Xavier Hawes, all members of E Co., TF Brawler, take a moment to rest while pulling security during a key leader engagement, June 17, in the Surkhab valley. **2** Spc. Daniel Liberty, a flight console operator for A Co., TF Knighthawk, tests the console on a Black Hawk, June 19, at Bagram Airfield. **3** Spc. Diego Bribiesca, member of E Co., TF Brawler, pulls perimeter security while key leaders from the task force meet with village elders, June 17 in the Surkhab valley. **4** Black Hawks with A Co., TF Knighthawk, wait for passengers, July 19, at FOB Fenty. **5** A Black Hawk with A Co., TF Knighthawk, crosses into Bagram Airfield air space July 19.

Parting Shot



Sgt. Monica K. Smith

Sgt. Raul Palmer, B Co., TF Workhorse, watches as Spc. Dustin Swain, also B Co., TF Workhorse, works on a Chinook, July 31, at Bagram Airfield.