

THE CONDOR



40th CAB Zeros In On Training

Story and Photos by Spc. Darriel Swatts



Spc. Charles Young zero's his M16 at a range on Ft. Hood, Texas.

The Soldiers of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade have vigorously trained at Ft. Hood, Texas in preparation for whatever challenges Operation New Dawn will bring.

“The training that we receive here is vital to our mission in Iraq,” said

Cpt. Ealey Seto, Higher Headquarters Company commander and UH-60 pilot. “Everything from the flight training, weapons qualifications, and job specific training are extremely important to our survival while in country.”

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The Condor Command Staff

Commander
COL MITCH
MEDIGOVICH

Command Sergeant
Major
DAVID MCFERRIN

Deputy Command Officer
LTC LAURA YEAGER

Editor
1LT JASON SWEENEY

Design Editor
SSG YVONNE NAJERA

40th CAB knocks out second ATX *Story by 1LT Jason Sweeney*

FORT RUCKER, Ala. – Soldiers from the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade showed up at Ft. Rucker Jan. 15 ready to get their ATX on.

The Aviation Training Exercise (ATX) brought together the brigade headquarters staff and five battalion staff sections over a week and allowed them to run through various scenarios that the aviation

brigade may encounter during its yearlong deployment in Iraq.

The brigade completed the ATX on Jan. 22 and passed it with flying colors, clearing the way for its departure to Iraq where it will be responsible for full-spectrum aviation operations for much of 2011 in support of Operation New Dawn. **Cont. page 8**

From the Brigade Commander, *COL Mitch Medigovich*

We've trained hard here at Ft. Hood, and now as we prepare to depart "The Great Place" for Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn, the Brigade



has surpassed every goal set and we are ready to perform our mission.

In the month of January, we accomplished many tasks with great success.

Everyone returned safely from pass after spending the Holidays with loved

ones—it sure was hard to leave again! We then jumped right into a Mission Rehearsal Exercise (MRE). The MRE was an arduous weeklong, round-the-clock, live-fire exercise that tested the Battalions' ability to execute complicated missions and the Brigade's ability to Command and Control missions, which will be performed in theater. The Battalions executed attack, air assault, medical evacuation (MEDEVAC), passenger transport missions and ground convoys. The Battalions, some of them composed of Soldiers and equipment from as many as five different states, performed exceptionally well and were validated for deployment as a result.

Upon completion of the MRE, we moved more than 200 Soldiers to Fort Rucker, Ala. to participate in our final validation exercise, the Aviation Training Exercise (ATX), where our abilities were heavily scrutinized by training evaluators from the active and reserve Army. Using simulated aircraft, we again proved our

ability to operate and command multiple aircraft in a dynamic environment.

As I write this, we have hundreds of Soldiers already deployed into Kuwait setting the conditions for our impending arrival.

In spite of the pace, three soldiers from the 640th ASB found time to "tie the knot." My congratulations go out to Sgt. Daniel Alvarez and his new bride; and to Sgt. Erik Fuentes and his bride Spc. Trena Reyes. Also, our Soldiers watched Melvin Guillard defeat Evan Dunham at Ultimate Fighting Championship Fight Night 23 live at South Fort Hood; and, of course, we were able to watch the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Green Bay Packers win their conferences and become the teams to faceoff at Super Bowl XLV on Feb. 5. We are all looking forward to watching the big game in Kuwait.

We accomplished all of these tasks and are now completely validated for mobilization due to the speed, dedication and leadership of every Soldier assigned to the 40th CAB. These events have been happening all at once and we have come together like a symphony, with everyone playing their part with orchestra-like synchronicity, precision and professionalism.

Thank you, families and friends for your continued love and support. It means the world to us, God Bless.

COL Mitchell Medigovich
Condor 6
"Wings of the Sun"



From the Command Sergeant Major, *CSM David McFerrin*



Hello from the Great Place. As most of you know we are well underway with our movement to Iraq.

Many are already in Kuwait receiving the brigade's helicopters, equipment, and the main body.

On January 22, we completed the Aviation Training Exercise at Fort Rucker, our last training and validation requirement. An ATX allows the brigade and battalions' staff to exercise and to demonstrate their capabilities in receiving

and conducting a multitude of operation missions. We accomplished this very well. Fort Rucker graded us green in every area.

Our Soldiers are highly motivated, morale is high, and we are in good spirits. My next article will be from Kuwait.



Camp Buehring is a US Army facility set in the Kuwaiti desert, approximately 12 miles from the Iraq border and it is packed with morale and recreation facilities that could rival some US bases. For all the benefits here though, Camp Buehring is still a desert camp, far from home, and the friends and families of our Soldiers. There is a fully-stocked PX (Post Exchange store) plus several phone centers, an internet café to include wi-fi service, a coffee house, gym facilities, Burger King and a 24-hour Pizza Inn.



“40TH CAB TRAINING STORY” BY SPC. DARRIEL SWATTS CONT.

preparing for any deployment are to be proficient with one’s assigned weapon system and knowing how to defend yourself should you find yourself in a close combat with the enemy.

“Two of my favorite events so far have to be the weapons qualifications and the combatives training,” said Spc. Edgar Zamora, supply specialist with the 40th CAB. “I like to know that should something ever happen, I know what to do.”

Every Soldier also gets training in their specific job

The 40th CAB is receiving some of the best and realistic training the Army can provide and they give it their all, all the time.

“The 40th CAB is one of the best units to come through here; they have the right mind set and Soldiers for the job,” proudly stated Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Donnelly, Observer Controller (trainer) from the 166th Aviation Training Brigade. “I have trained several different units this year alone, and the CAB is one of the few I will remember the most. I am almost sad to see them go; they’re a great group of Soldiers”.

As the 40th CAB gets ready to leave Ft. Hood for Iraq, they take with them the knowledge and strength to not only have a safe and successful mission; but, to also come home safely at the end of this year.



field. The pilots for example, go through extensive training to include having to be ready to fly at any time, day or night. They also receive specialized training depending on their mission requirements.

“We have to be qualified in multiple different aspects of flying in order to be qualified to deploy,” said Seto. “We as pilots are all going for our readiness level one (RC1); which means we are qualified in our 1000 series and 2000 series flight task.”

Once designated RC1, a crew member is prepared to safely perform any mission assigned.



Moving the 40th CAB is a big job in more ways than one

Story and Photos by 1LT Jason Sweeney

FT. HOOD, Texas – The task is monumental. In fact, it's a job so big that giant Air Force C-17 and C-5 strategic airlift aircraft are involved.

Even lumbering Antonov An-124 heavy lift cargo planes are in on the action.

Before the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade begins its yearlong mission in Iraq, it first must get over there. That means more than 2,000 Soldiers, dozens of helicopters and tons of equipment must be transported by land, sea and air from Ft. Hood, Texas to the other side of the planet.

"It's huge," Chief Warrant Officer 2 Amanda Fisher said of the scale of movement. Fisher is the brigade's mobility warrant officer and is in charge of organizing and overseeing the brigade's movement operations.

"The challenge is that there are so many elements," she said.

Two of the 40th CAB's aviation battalions—the 1-147th Aviation Helicopter Battalion and the 1-140th Aviation (Air Assault)—arrived in Iraq in the summer of 2010.

Five of the CAB's battalions and its higher headquarters company wrap up two months of intense pre-deployment training at Ft. Hood at the end of January. The units have conducted all manner of aviation and Soldier skills training, as well as two training exercises that simulated various scenarios expected to be encountered in Iraq, with both exercises running a week in length. At the same time, a complex logistical operation has been underway.

While participating in such pre-deployment training as convoy operations and helicopter mounted gunnery, the brigade's unit movement officers have worked overtime to document, palletize, load up and ship out a vast amount of military hardware.

The shipment of some of the CAB's helicopters and equipment began in late December. Advance parties



departed for Kuwait in mid-January. And once pre-deployment training finishes at the end of the month, the 40th CAB's main body will be on the move.

Adding to the complexity of the movement has been the number of aircraft involved, Fisher explained. Personnel are departing on chartered airplanes, while the brigade's helicopters and containers full of equipment are being transported on C-17 and C-5 strategic airlift aircraft.

In addition, five An-124s—aircraft larger than the Air Force's biggest, the C-5—were contracted out from Russian companies.

Also, two ships loaded down with helicopters and containers have departed from Beaumont, Texas to Kuwait.

The brigade's UH-60 Black Hawk, CH-47 Chinook, OH-58 Kiowa and AH-64 Apache helicopters were broken down before being loaded onto the planes and ships. They are being rebuilt as they arrive in Kuwait before being flown into Iraq.

"It's challenging getting everyone on the same page and having to work all the different parts," said Sgt. Nathan Fielding, the 40th CAB's non-commissioned officer in charge of unit movement operations.

Fielding coordinates with the unit movement officers in the CAB's battalions down to the company level.

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The PEP BOYS of Aviation



(left) North Fort Hood, Texas – Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Bryson from B Company, 640th ASB works on the engine and propeller of a UH-60 Black Hawk. (below) Spc. Garry Yang from B Company 640th ASB works on the cockpit of a UH-60 Black Hawk.



Story and Photos by Spc. Matthew Wright.

Many people rely on their vehicles for the routines in their lives, but what happens when those vehicles break down? Usually, we take them to a mechanic to get them repaired.

But what if your routine includes flying an Army helicopter over Iraq and you don't just break down but encounter structural or component damage? Then your mechanic will most likely be from the Bravo Company 640th Aviation Support Battalion of Los Alamitos, Calif. These mechanics will ensure that the helicopters of the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade will rule the skies when the brigade arrives in Iraq in the next few weeks.

The 640th ASB has multiple functions, but as its name implies, its main purpose is to support and repair aircraft. Alpha Company refuels helicopters, Charlie Company is the communications arm of the support battalion, and Headquarters Company integrates everything and handles logistics. The mechanics of Bravo Company have the demanding task of keeping helicopters up and running and

mission capable when problems go beyond unit level. This work at the intermediate level of aviation maintenance, or AVIM, includes tackling more technical repairs, such as damage from bullets and flak to aircraft sheet metal or the complete replacement of engines and transmissions damaged on missions. Their repairs are later validated with a Maintenance Test Flight (MTF) completed by Bravo's maintenance test pilots.

If it were not for aviation mechanics like those in Bravo Company, there would be no aviation missions and therefore no air superiority for the U.S. Army over its enemies. "Our job is to repair the aircraft at different levels," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Lapomardo, a maintenance supervisor with Bravo Company. "We repair aircraft that need minor maintenance, to those aircraft that are deadlined, which are helicopters that cannot perform their mission because they are inoperable for whatever reason," he said.

The highest maintenance level, or depot level, is the

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California National Guard's Top Leadership Visits North Fort Hood

Story by and Photos by Spc. Matthew Wright.

NORTH FORT HOOD, Texas – The top command of the California National Guard toured North Fort Hood over two days in January to see how the training for the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade's upcoming deployment to Iraq was progressing.



Brig. Gen. Mary J. Kight, the Adjutant General of the California National Guard, was at hand to meet and greet the Soldiers, as well as see the operations in person. She visited not only the headquarters of the 40th CAB, but also the headquarters command of the 640th Aviation Support Battalion. A focus of her visit was the morale of the troops, as well as an opportunity to meet the Soldiers who were making the deployment happen.

“I am impressed with the confidence that these soldiers have for this mission, and to see that the training in California has been beneficial to them,” Kight said. “Their morale is extremely high for this upcoming deployment.”

She was accompanied by Major General John S. Harrel, Deputy Adjutant General, Army Division, California National Guard. He, like Kight, was there to get a feel for how the training mission was going leading up to the mobilization to Iraq. He engaged

with the top command of the brigade and said he felt confident with its outlook on its mission.

“I am most impressed with the focus on the mission. It is more complicated, multi-faceted, and they will have more equipment than they ever trained with before,” Harrel said. “The leadership here has shown they are willing to expand their horizons, from the junior enlisted to the senior staff.”

Attending with generals Kight and Harrel was Command Sgt. Major William Clark Jr., senior enlisted advisor to the adjutant general. He, like the also wanted to see how the training was succeeding, but more importantly he wanted to meet the Soldiers and check on their health and welfare, to make sure morale was up and to see how the enlisted soldiers were dealing with the training and the chain of command.

“Soldiers should challenge leadership to continue to allow them to aspire to be leaders themselves,” Clark said.

They ate lunch with the soldiers and from there, Harrel continued his tour with the 166th Aviation Brigade, who have been sponsoring the 40th CAB at North Ft. Hood and providing the training for this deployment.

Harrel's tour ended with a visit to the Longhorn airfield to see the helicopters and the heart of the 40th CAB. He visited the main offices of all the 40th CAB's flying battalions for the mission in Iraq.

He met with the pilots and the mechanics who make the aviation core of the CAB what it is and who are the reason why the CAB was chosen to take responsibility for all the Army aviation operations in Iraq in 2011.

“40TH CAB KNOCKS OUT SECOND ATX” STORY CONTINUED

The ATX was held at Ft. Rucker’s high-tech Aviation Warfighter Simulation Center, where CAB pilots flew virtual helicopters over a virtual Iraq while the brigade’s commander, Col. Mitch Medigovich, put his staff through the paces.

The brigade had completed a pre-mobilization ATX at the same location in March. The latest ATX came nearly two months into the CAB’s mobilization and a week before its main body departs for Iraq.

“It’s fairly complex,” Medigovich said of the exercise, explaining that the brigade had just come off a weeklong mission rehearsal exercise at Fort Hood, Texas, while simultaneously sending advanced parties to Kuwait and undergoing a load out of equipment and aircraft.

“Everybody’s doing well,” Medigovich said. “They’re battle focused. They’re getting it done.”

During the ATX, the brigade staff and staff sections at the battalion level worked together as they ran through various battle drills, such as air assault missions, responding to downed aircraft and transporting high-level government officials.

“Think of this exercise as if the brigade commander could take his entire brigade into the field. That is what this replicates,” said Lt. Col. Gregory Williams, chief of operations for the Directorate of Simulation, which runs the flight simulators and tactical operations centers that make up the Aviation Warfighter Simulation Center.

The center can simulate having up to 18 aircraft in the air at once, allowing the staff sections to rehearse some of the most complex and dangerous situations possible.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Trevor Robinson, a company standardization pilot for Charlie Company, 8-229th Aviation Regiment, which is the attack arm of the 40th CAB, said flying an AH-64 Apache in the

simulator doesn’t compare to the real thing, but that the value comes in being able to practice operations with other types of aircraft and with the staff sections.

“The pilots are here to fly missions to give the staff sections training on everything that happens over there, and just basically let them see how things are going to be and help them develop a battle rhythm,” Robinson said. “It’s good for collective training.”

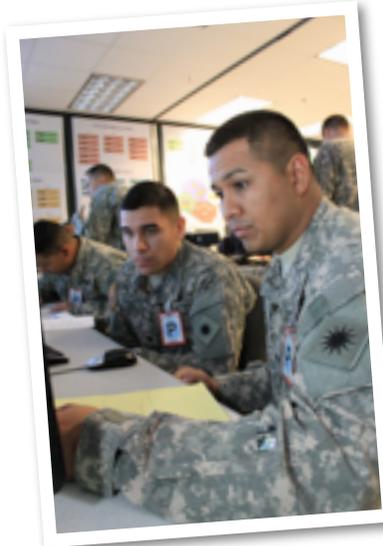
“The ATX has given us the opportunity to work with the other units that we will work with in Iraq,” said Maj. Tyler

Hemmerich, the operations officer for the 8-229th. “It allowed us to understand one another a little bit better and get on the same page operationally before we actually go in country and do the mission.”

The exercise was overseen by First Army Division West’s 166th Aviation Brigade from Ft. Hood. The 166th Aviation Brigade is responsible for all Army Reserve and National Guard aviation mobilization training and validation for deployment.

“It’s a well-trained unit,” Col. Lawrence Madkins, commander of the 166th Aviation

Brigade, said of the 40th CAB. “It’s going to go and do the task and mission that our nation has asked it to do in this critical year—the last year of the current security agreement with the government of Iraq. They will represent our nation very well.”



“THE PEP BOYS” STORY CONTINUED

sustainment level of maintenance. Numerous Soldier mechanics from the 1106th Theatre Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group (TASMG), out of Fresno, Calif., have joined the 640th for this deployment and will also be working as members of the Bravo Company maintenance team. They bring additional experience and skills to the effort of maintaining helicopters used by the 40th CAB’s flight battalions. In Iraq, they will work on the brigade’s CH-47 Chinook troop helicopters, UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopters, AH-64 Apache attack helicopters and OH-58 Scout/Attack Helicopters.

The 640th’s maintenance crews also have an important job

of retrieving helicopters that go down due to maintenance failure or attack from enemies in theater. These crews are called Down Aircraft Recovery Teams, or DART Teams. Their role is to go outside the wire of their base and either repair a downed aircraft on the spot or bring it back to their base for repair. This may encompass dismantling the aircraft for transport via ground transport or rigging the downed aircraft to be slung under a CH-47 and flown to the Bravo Company repair site.

The Soldiers of Bravo 640th have many responsibilities, from ordering replacement parts and keeping track of which

aircraft are available to fly, all the way up to going into a hot spot to bring a fallen helicopter back and making it mission capable again. Their jobs are vital to the pilots and crews of these helicopters, but they also make sure those flight crews make it back safely after performing their missions in a hostile environment.

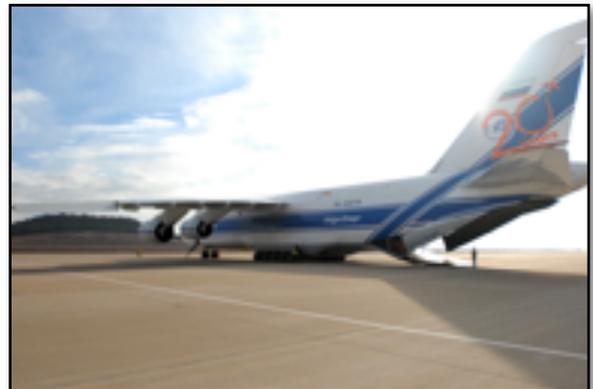
“I am inspired by the professionalism, dedication, and commitment of Bravo Company’s mechanics and Soldiers every day,” said Bravo Company commander, Maj. James Chavez. “They are a true model of teamwork within the 40th CAB.”

“MOVING THE 40TH CAB” STORY CONTINUED

“It’s a very big deal—all these moving parts that are involved in projecting that combat power,” said Lt. Col. Mark Kampa, who heads the brigade’s logistics office. “We have to get everything there—people, parts, containers, trucks, weapons, helicopters. It’s an incredibly complex job that requires all the brigade’s personnel.”

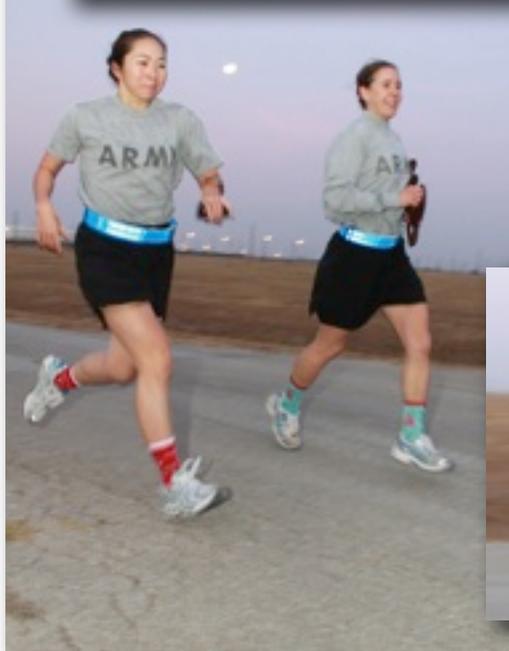
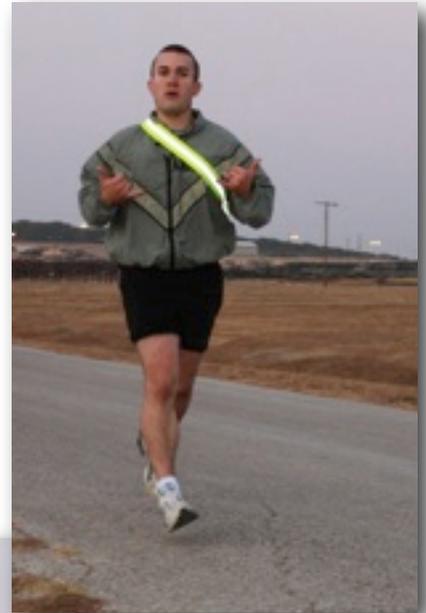
The 40th CAB is made up of aviation units from the National Guard, Army Reserve and active-duty Army, with elements from 22 states. It is headed by a California Army National Guard headquarters company from Fresno, Calif.

The brigade is taking over the mission in Iraq from the Kansas-based 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, which is nearing the end of its yearlong deployment. The 40th CAB will be responsible for full-spectrum aviation operations in Iraq for the remainder of 2011, to include everything from medevac to reconnaissance to force protection.



Jingle-Bell Jog

Soldiers from the 40th CAB kick off their Christmas pass with a 5k fun run.



Sexual Assault Reporting Process

If you have been sexually assaulted, immediately contact your Unit Victim Advocate, Chaplain, Medical Facility and/or Master Sgt. Rebecca Calleja, the 40th CAB Deployment Sexual Assault Response

Unit Victim Advocates by BN are:

1-185th: SSG Lashanna Moore and SSG Christopher Free

640th: CW4 Raul Castro, 1LT Guy Wangenstein, CPT Joseph

Adams, 2LT Marcelles Richardson, SSG Julissa Avila, SSG Alex Leung and SSG Steven Ferguson

1-171: WO1 Reuben Bussey, 2LT Rebecca Royalty, SFC Shelia Ramsue, SFC Barbera Williams

SSG Melissa Smith, SSG Maxime Cadet, SSG Mary Jo Snyder and SSG Lloyd Perryman

1-140th: 1LT Nicole Wiggin, CW4 Thomas Murphy, SSG Claudia Hernandez-Smith and SGT Joanna Cervantes

8-229: CPT David Duncan and SSG Katherina Guavey

1-140th: 1LT Dennis Wiebe and SSG Yovanka Hilbert

40th CAB: MSG Debra Frazier and 1Lt Vincent Garcia

6-17: SGT Richardson, SSG Kenneth Tecala and SSG Cheatham

The Chaplains for the BDE and the BN:

The **BDE Chaplain** is: LTC Saint-Fleur, his assistant is SSG Dow

The **1-171** Chaplain is: CPT Parker, his assistant is PFC James George

The **1-185** Chaplain is: CPT Branning, his assistant is: SPC Walker

The **6-17th** Chaplain is: CPT Howell, his assistant is: SPC Hyde

The **640th** Chaplain is: CPT Quinton, his assistant is: SPC McMurray

The **8-229** Chaplain is: CPT Elliott, his assistant is: SPC Jones

The **1-140** Chaplain is: CPT Brown, his assistant is: SPC Young

Equal Opportunity & Sexual Harassment Program Contacts

If you feel you are not being treated fairly or have been sexually harassed, please contact your Unit Equal Opportunity Leaders (EOLs) and/or the Brigade Equal Opportunity Advisors (EOA).

The Equal Opportunity Leaders

40th CAB: SGT Sapiens and CW3 Williams.

1-185th CPT Kyle Jaacks, CPT Lyle Daniel, 1LT Curtis Bounds, SSG Joseph Billips, SSG Christopher Cox, SSG Kimberly Pannell, SSG Greyon Winford, SSG Tyler Lutz, SSG Dennie Martin, SSG Kenyatta Kitchens, SSG Lashanna Moore and SSG Juan Vasquez.

640th: CPT Diana Alvarez, 1LT Brian Bode, 2LT Marcellus Richardson, SSG Julissa Avila, SGT Richard Rivera, SSG Jajuane Smith, SGT Ian Tashima, SSG Lisa Brooks, SGT Vashon Simms, SSG Joseph Tamayo, SGT Mercy Valdez and SFC Eva Rodriguez.

1-171: 2LT Murray Schesser, WO1 Rueben Bussey, SSG Mary Jo Snyder, SSG Jacqueline Hamilton, SSG Nicholas Osterhaus, SGT Linda Patterson, SGT Joaquin Echevarria, SGT Lee Harrell, SGT Peter Pentland and SGT Randall Bright.

1-168: SGT Nicholas Robinson and SGT Jason Johnson.

8229: SSG Christopher Butler, SSG Katharina Guavey, and SGT Taiesha Washington.

1-140: 1LT Nicole Brauer and SGT Margarita Ortiz.

6-17: CW2 Cory Burgraff, CW2 Adam Zigelhofer, SSG Christopher Hill, SSG Charles Parker, SSG Valentin Santos, SGT Mike Gomez, SGT Christian Conde, SGT Dashawn Brown, SGT Carl Richardson and SGT Robert Leitelt.

40th BDE EOA is: MSG Rebecca Calleja

FYI Corner



The Family Readiness Group

Website

<http://40thcab.ning.com>



Chaplain's Word of the Day:

"We may not be able to control certain events, but we can choose our attitude about them"

AMEN!

Are you our friend?

facebook



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/40th-Combat-Aviation-Brigade/174295589261992>

Useful Links

US Army on FACEBOOK <http://www.facebook.com/usarmy>

US Army PODCASTS <http://www.army.mil/rss/podcasts/>

NATIONAL GUARD Website <http://www.ng.mil/default.aspx>

ARMY NATIONAL GUARD Website <http://www.arng.army.mil>

Calendar

February 14, 2011

Valentine's Day

February 21st, 2011

Washington's Birthday

April 3rd, 2011

Easter

May 8th, 2011

Mother's Day

The CONDOR STAFF

1ST LT JASON SWEENEY



40th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs

Officer.



SSG YVONNE NAJERA

40th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs NCOIC.



SPC DARRIEL SWATTS

40th Combat Aviation Brigade

Photo Journalist.



SPC MATTHEW WRIGHT

640th Aviation Support Battalion Photo Journalist.