159th Combat Aviation Brigade

Thunder Enlightening

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Soldiers exercise, train with combatives

Town hall meeting keeps families informed

A typical day in Afghanistan

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Commander's Corner

Col.Kenneth T. Royar

Brigade Commander

All of us who have spent any time around the military know there are risks associated with what we do. That is precisely the reason we, as an Army, especially within Army aviation, go to great lengths to ensure we constantly determine the best means to accomplish the mission while ensuring the safety of not only ourselves, but those we support as well.

Last month, we tragically lost six members of the Pathfinder company due to improvised explosive devices. These men were heroes. Since their arrival in country, they and their fellow Pathfinders were responsible for helping to rid southern Afghanistan of literally tons of explosives -- the equivalent of hundreds of IEDs. They absolutely made a difference.

As the Brigade continues on with its mission, we do so with the understanding that there are potential risks involved. However, we also take every precaution we can to ensure the safety of our Soldiers. The Soldiers of the Brigade are not only good at what they do, they are, simply the best. The standards they maintain are amazing, and the results are equally impressive. It is their actions on a daily basis that have resulted in the unit having one of the best safety records in the Army.

During deployments, we often wrongly assume that all of the risks reside with those deployed. While the situations are different, Families and Soldiers at home are not immune to being in harm's way. Unfortunately, we statistically lose more Soldiers in off-duty incidents than we do in incidents on-duty during deployment. Simple actions like looking out for one another go a long way to help reduce the likelihood of bad events occurring.

The Army's Combat Readiness Center has a wealth of great tools that can be used for both work and home situations. The CRC website is https://safety.army.mil.

All of us want and deserve to enjoy the liberties we cherish and have chosen to defend. When confronted with any situation, I contend that we all have a responsibility to think it through and mitigate any risks before we act. By doing so, we can all enjoy the best America has to offer.

A word from

Brigade Command Sergeant Major

Eric C. Thom

Most, if not all, of you have been made aware of our tragic loss May 26. What most of you are not tracking is the incredible amount of support that came pouring out to provide assistance in our time of need.

The Soldiers and Families of the Thunder Brigade and others have been nothing less than inspiring.

Just here at Kandahar, we had more than 100 Soldiers volunteer their time and skills to send our six fallen heroes home with the dignity and respect they deserved. Every participant, no matter where they were located, was a volunteer, and their efforts paid off in two superb memorial ceremonies. Task Force Wings held a ceremony at Wolverine and the Brigade held a joint service for all 10 Heroes, including two Air Force and two Afghan partners who were on the same mission.

Our volunteers did not start or stop at the ceremonies, though. From mission support to planning and executing the ramp ceremony on the front end, to the outstanding support of our FRSAs and family care teams supporting our heroes' Families back home, this brigade pulled together to take care of our own.

Don't get me wrong – we still have our differences and will fight amongst ourselves over the smallest of things, but when push comes to shove, everyone in this brigade knows they will not stand alone.

This is an outstanding organization and I can't put into words how proud I am to serve with you as your Command Sergeant Major.

CSM Thom

Leadership luncheon promotes resiliency amongst TF Thunder headquarters

By Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Soldiers from the Task Force Thunder brigade staff gathered for a leadership luncheon in the brigade conference room here June 9 to focus briefly on the attributes that make good leaders.

The outgoing deputy commanding officer for the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, Lt. Col. Hank Perry, offered the analogy of a three-legged stool to demonstrate to the room the three pillars of resiliency and leadership.

"Up top, you have the platform," he said. "That's your balance. It's held up by three legs – mental toughness, physical well-being and spiritual well-being. Without all three legs, the stool will fall over."

"It's important to constantly get better and not harp on things that are bad that happened in the past," said Col. Todd Royar, the brigade commander, as he introduced Perry as the guest speaker for the leadership luncheon.

Perry said he believes those three legs, among other things, are the key to that challenge.

"A good leader is competent and inspiring," he said. "They can come up with a plan to get something done and get everyone else to follow it."

He used the example of a recent project at Mustang Ramp here to move matting from the flight line. With only their own hands to get the job done, a team of Soldiers from several subordinate battalions came together to move the aluminum AM-2 mats, which weigh approximately 150 pounds per panel.

"This couldn't have happened without good leadership," Perry said.

He also explained the importance of legitimacy above all else as a leader.

"Legitimacy as a person," he said. "You can never breach trust; once you've done that, it's very difficult to get it back."

In closing, Perry left the audience with some quick words of advice to make them strong leaders.

"Be an example, lead by example, and have balance in your life."

Photo by Spc. Jennifer Andersson

Sounds of Thunder

As we approach our three-month mark, what can Soldiers do to maintain vigilence against complacency?

"Everything we do is inherently dangerous. We must maintain the same standards we did during train-up. Standards are based on lessons learned from previous experiences. Leaders must maintain standards."

Col. Todd Royar,
Commander,
Task Force Thunder

"When it is hot enough outside to cook bacon on the flight landing strip, our judgment usually slows and so does our reaction time. Hydration, proper sun protection, breaks, and leader involvement are all elements to avoiding complacency while working in the temperatures."

Capt. Joshua D. England,
Commander,
Troop A, Task Force Palehorse

"I consider situational awareness the most critical safety issue we face. As Soldiers, we get comfortable with our everyday operations and interactions. We must remain vigilant and unpredictable in even the most mundane task."

Capt. Katrina Grimes,
Commander,
FSC Task Force Wings

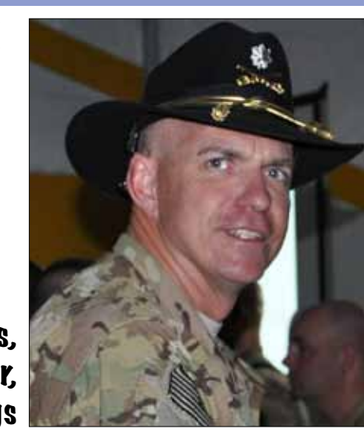
"Check, check, and re-check again. PCIs/PCCs at all levels will catch mistakes. Take time every day to rest so you can come back to the fight the next day focused. Your buddies rely on you to do so."

Capt. Luke Chivers,
Commander,
HHC, Task Force Thunder

"As time on ground increases, so does complacency. It is an easy thing to deviate from the standard or perhaps even take a short-cut. We can mitigate that risk by holding each other accountable down to the lowest level as a battle-buddy, team leader, and squad leader."

Capt. Blake P. Jenkins,
Commander,
Company E, Task Force Lift

"Soldiers must remain unpredictable and be challenged in their daily routine. That way, things don't become too repetitive for the Soldiers, and more importantly, for the enemy. We must make sure that we challenge them in situations, and ensure that they are properly resourced and rested."



Lt. Col. Christopher Albus,
Commander,
Task Force Wings

Town hall meeting keeps Families informed

By Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Task Force Thunder command teams used a video teleconference here in the early morning hours June 10 to reach out to Families at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The town hall meeting was the first since the brigade deployed at the beginning of the year, and it provided the Families at home an opportunity to receive important information firsthand, as well as the chance to highlight their own concerns.

"Let me start by telling you the entire team is doing absolutely fantastic," said Col. Todd Royar, the commander for the TF Thunder. "They've helped get literally tons of explosives out of the enemy's hands, moved thousands and thousands of Soldiers, and have supported hundreds of air assaults."

After filling in the Families on what has been going on in Afghanistan, he also addressed some of the questions he's received.

"I have gotten the question about whether the brigade might be home before Christmas," Royar said. "The answer is no."

The brigade is scheduled to be in Afghanistan for one year, but Royar emphasized that every individual will be here no more than 365 days. There may be some individuals who serve less time in Afghanistan due to special circumstances.

"We may have some cases where a Soldier is scheduled to ETS (end tour of service) or we may send a Soldier home for a school, but those will all be looked at and handled on a case-by-case basis," he explained.

He went on to let the Families know they could expect their Soldiers to redeploy in the same order in which they deployed to Afghanistan. As some of members of the brigade are nearing their six-month mark in theater, the forward elements have already started working with other organizations to plan for redeployment and maximize family time once the unit returns.

"We're looking to maximize mobile training teams for our Soldiers who require professional development when we get home," Royar said.

Among the classes that are expected to be conducted at Fort Campbell as opposed to in another location are the Warrant Officer Advance Course, the Warrant Officer Staff Course, and Phase One of the Advance Leader's and Senior Leader's courses, both of which can be completed online. There is also coordination underway for flight instructor and senior instructor pilot training at Fort Campbell.

Staff of Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) gather to conduct a town hall meeting conducted via video teleconferencing here June 10. The town hall meeting was the first one held since TF Thunder's arrival in theater.

(Opposite) Task Force Attack's Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Green (left) and Lt. Col. Rod Hynes (center) address TF Attack Families at Fort Campbell during the VTC town hall meeting June 10. The meeting provided Families important information and gives them an opportunity to express their own concerns.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie Carl

In addition to helping with school requirements, the brigade has started coordinating follow-on assignments as well.

"We're working with HRC (Human Resources Command) to make sure our Soldiers get the best possible choice," Royar said.

The brigade is using the planning, development and review process to facilitate assignments. Typically, this process is used only on the officer side of the house, but the brigade has also implemented the process to meet the needs of its enlisted Soldiers.

"If a Soldier wants to stay at Fort Campbell, we're trying to make that happen," said Royar. "We're querying the Soldiers right now, and then we'll provide the results to HRC to see whether they can support. We'll have a meeting with HRC to discuss any requests they say they can't support."

Following Royar's brigade-level information, each of the subordinate battalions had an opportunity to discuss what's been going on within their formations.

At Forward Operating Base Wolverine, Soldiers from Task Force Wings have taken on the 101 Challenge, during which they run the more than four miles around the FOB 101 times during the deployment, said Lt. Col. Christopher Albus, the TF Wings commander.

Operationally, the unit is also staying busy.

"Our team is providing security that's never been seen here in Zabul Province," he said.

Meanwhile, at Tarin Kowt, Soldiers from Task Force Attack are also seeking to improve themselves.

"Many of our Soldiers spend their off time working on classes – either military or civilian – online to improve themselves," said Lt. Col. Rod Hynes, the TF Attack commander. "All of the Soldiers of Attack are doing great, and we want you to know your Soldiers are making a difference here."

Within TF Palehorse, it's not just the Soldiers who are looking to expand their horizons. The entire task force is about to expand with the addition of Soldiers from Task Force Guns (4th Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment), out of Fort Hood, Texas, said Lt. Col. Neil Reilly, the task force commander.

Meanwhile, the individual Soldiers continued the theme of self improvement with a new gym and a "Biggest Loser" challenge, said Command Sgt. Maj. Stacy Quarterman, the TF Palehorse command sergeant major.

Within TF Lift, Lt. Col. Darren Gerblick's Soldiers are "busy doing their jobs."

"The quality of life is gradually getting better," said Gerblick, the TF Lift commander.

"The food's getting better," he quipped. "I think that's affecting the success of the 'Biggest Loser' challenge."

Lt. Col. John Smith, the TF Fighting commander, focused on the many missions his aviation support battalion Soldiers have conducted.

"The motorpool and HSC (Headquarters Support Company) conducted vehicle recovery on everything from SUVs to Gators, to HMMWVs right after we got here," he said. "We call Alpha Company the "moving company;" they run our MCT (Movement Control Team). Bravo Company started phases before the (transfers of authority) even took place, and we've got Charlie Company spread to the four winds supporting all of the MEDEVAC detachments."

"Our Soldiers are staying busy," said Command Sgt. Maj. Sean Ward, the TF Fighting command sergeant major. "That's a good thing; the busier they are, the faster the deployment goes."

Royar used this point to bring the town hall meeting to an end.

"As you've heard, folks are staying busy," he said. "They've also done a lot of building. Use this as free reign to get your honey-do lists out."

A day in the life

Staff weather officers keep 'birds' out of bad weather

Story and photo by Sgt. Michael Tellier
Task Force Wings Public Affairs Representative

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WOLVERINE, Afghanistan – A small team of exceptional Airmen who essential weather information to the pilots and crew chiefs that operate the helicopters.

The staff weather officers, endearingly called "SWO" by their fellow Soldiers, belong to the Airfield Support Section, Operations Support Weather, 18th Operations Support Squadron, 18th Operations Group, 18th Wing, and are stationed here with Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division), and provide essential weather information to the pilots and crew chiefs that operate the helicopters.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Lauren Snyder is one such member of the team.

"My job consists of airfield weather support," she said. "The pilots can't fly without a brief. So before they fly, we brief current weather and future weather for where they are, their destination and anything in route."

The training these Airmen receive before deploying includes an initial technical training for approximately eight months as a forecaster. They then attend another school to learn to be an observer, which is what they need to be qualified to deploy to a remote location. Afterward, they are stationed at a weather hub for a few years, which allows them to forecast in a real environment, but with others around to assist them.

In order to prepare for a deployment to Afghanistan, Snyder recalls, "We read up on the region we're going to, we also go to ECAC, which stands for Evasion, Conduct and Capture, a week long course. For one month we were at Camp Blanding in northern Florida to learn how to support the Army. Then we have to make sure we're caught up on forecast qualifications before deploying."

There are unique challenges facing these weather officers as they support an Army unit full of helicopters.

"As a pilot, accurate weather is one of the most important things we consider before taking off," said Lt. Col. Christopher Albus, the commander of TF Wings.

"The weather has a huge impact," said Capt. Jordan Glover, an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior pilot with Troop C, TF Palehorse (7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment), currently assigned to TF Wings, who knows the effects of weather on the helicopters.

"To accomplish the mission as a scout, you have to see where you're flying, and to see the enemy as well," he said. "When we do performance planning, it's all based on the weather. Large fluctuations can stress out the aircraft; it can also affect our speed, altitude, and fuel burn."

"Different aircraft have different sensitivities," Snyder said. "Helicopters are very sensitive due to their light weight. Helicopter (pilots need to know) about lower elevation effects such as turbulence, wind shear, crosswinds, and icing."

In order to adapt to such weather conditions, the aviators must also adjust their weight, munitions, and speed to accommodate the weather in the helicopters, Glover said.

The remote location of FOB Wolverine is yet another challenge the weather officers face.

It is a more remote location than a large airfield such as Kandahar, resulting in a much more "data sparse" environment, with fewer sensors to indicate the weather. The sensors in the very remote locations can also require repair and give out inaccurate measurements in the meantime.

There is a common joke that meteorologists predict the weather right only 50 percent of the time.

"Weather is one of those things that you can do everything right on, but still be wrong," Snyder said. "People take it for granted when we are right, but it's easier to remember when we're wrong. After my year and a half of training and six years of experience, it still only allows me to make educated guesses."

Weather is critical to the success of TF Wings mission, and the SWOs currently assigned to the unit do a superb job keeping our birds in the air – and out of hazardous weather.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Lauren Snyder, a staff weather officer, with the Airfield Support Section, Operations Support Squadron, 18th Operations Support Squadron, 18th Operations Group, 18th Wing, attached to TF Wings, reads weather instruments at FOB Wolverine June 5 to assist aviators in mission planning.

TF Dragon cases colors as TF Guns takes to the sky

Story and Photos by Spc. Shanika L. Futrell
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (June 15, 2011) - The 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, also known as Task Force Dragon, who supported TF Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) and ground elements across Regional Command-South's area of responsibility, cased their colors during a ceremony here June 19.

The casing ceremony signaled the end of a successful year-long deployment for the Soldiers who deployed from Fort Hood, Texas to conduct reconnaissance, surveillance, close combat attacks and air assault missions.

"1-4 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion was alerted for deployment to Afghanistan in December 2009, along with the rest of the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade," said 1st Lt. Natasha Bennett, the narrator for the ceremony. "1-4th's designated mission was to provide direct support to special operation forces operating throughout Afghanistan. This was the first deployment of an entire organic conventional aviation battalion in direct support of special operations forces because of the decentralized nature of the special operation force missions."

The battalion split its organization into multiple formations, attaching itself to various combat aviation brigade headquarters across regional commands North, East and South.

"In the south, Task Force Dragon was attached to the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade for the first nine months of the deployment and to the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade for the remainder of the deployment," said Bennett.

Bennett said over the duration of the year, Dragon crews in RC-South flew more than 5,400 hours, launching more than 50 percent of available aircraft every night for a year with a 100 percent mission success rate. Crews conducted at least 400 missions in support of Task Force South operations.

Leaders said that without training, the accomplishments made during this deployment could not have happened.

"We weren't sure how we were going to conduct missions, so our team prepared a well-thought-out process and we trained for everything," said Capt. James Barnett, the operations officer for TF Dragon. "My Soldiers have exceeded my expectations as a leader, and they were a vital part of mission success by performing beyond the call of duty."

To reward Soldiers for their outstanding actions while deployed, an end-of-tour ceremony was held here June 13.

"Our Soldiers have done an outstanding job this deployment, so the command awarded 10 Bronze Star medals, three Air medals, 84 Army Commendation medals, 11 Army Achievement medals, and two combat action badges," said Staff Sgt. Florence Pulliam, a human resource specialist with TF Dragon.

Task Force Thunder brigade commander, Col. Todd Royar thanked TF Dragon for a job well done.

"I cannot think of another essential Army aviation unit that has helped to garner, capture and kill more… targets than 1-4 has… they truly are a tactically competent and excellent unit," said Royar. "When 1-4 came into theater, the battalion was split up, and that's a tough thing to do. But their ability to do that and to be successful at every location, not just here within RC-South, speaks volumes for the folks inside their formation. The Soldiers of Task Force Dragon always had a smile on their face. They were able to maintain the standards and able to operate several levels above what they have been trained to do - truly outstanding."

Task Force Dragon commander Lt. Col. Charles R. Bowery Jr. thanked the Combat Aviation Brigade commanders he was attached to for making TF Dragon feel a part of the team.

"We would not have been as effective in our mission without the support you gave us in various ways and without the support of my fellow battalion commanders in the task force," said Bowery. "It was honor to fight and fly with the 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault," said Bowery. "One of our supported joint tactical air controllers put it best when he wrote to us, 'In my experience, the professionalism, tactical proficiency (from) overall support to your direct support…, constantly provided for our team has been second to none. The quality of crews, the ease of execution of any tasking and the confidence all of you have provided for us on the ground has been truly exceptional.'"

Bowery ended the ceremony by welcoming his replacements from Fort Hood, Texas.

"(Major) Dan (Legerit), the commander of Task Force Guns (4th Battalion, 227th Cavalry Regiment) best of luck to you and your team as you take the baton and continue to add to the legacy of the attack aviation here at (Kandahar Airfield)," said Bowery. "Command Sergeant Major (Timothy) Todd - the TF Dragon command sergeant major - and I leave all of you with our best wishes for the rest of your deployment. First to strike, Air Assault, stand fast and loyal, climb to glory."

Lt. Col. Charles R. Bowery Jr., the 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment's commander and Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Todd, the 1-4 ARB command sergeant major, roll their colors during a casing colors ceremony here June 19. The ceremony marked the end of a successful year-long deployment for the Soldiers who deployed from Fort Hood, Texas to conduct reconnaissance, surveillance, close combat attacks and air assault missions.

Patients rely on 9-lines to survive

Story and photos by Spc. Shanika L. Futrell
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (June 8, 2011) - When a radio call is made reporting a wounded warrior or civilian casualty in dire need of assistance, the medical evacuation company quickly moves into action.

"From the time that the medevac request is posted to the time we need to be off the ground is 15 minutes," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Alan Harty, a UH-60A Blackhawk pilot-in-command with Company C, 1st Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment, which provides medevac support throughout Regional Command South. "Fifteen minutes may seem like a fair amount of time, but when you are trying to coordinate (a crew), print off mission information, and plan on a map a quick route to get there and start up a military helicopter, it can go by pretty quick."

Harty explained how the initial call can spur an immediate adrenaline rush for the medevac crew, but the response must be tempered.

"When you get that call and you hear someone is dying out there, your heart starts pumping, and you want to rush out there as fast as you can to try and help that person because you know you are the only person who is going to go out there and save them," he said.

The crew has to step back and look at the mission, take a few minutes to figure out the right course of action, Harty said.

Deciding the right course of action all begins with the nine-line medevac request, which initiates the action in the first place. One of the most important parts of the request is the category level of the casualty.

"There are three category levels: Alpha, Bravo and Charlie, with Alpha being the most serious," said Spc. Daniel Denison, a flight medic with Co. C, 1st Bn., 52nd Avn. Rgt.

Category Alpha patients are the most serious – typically their wounds are so extensive they require treatment within an hour, he said.

"Category Bravo patients who are priority patients require us to be there within four hours," Denison explained. "They don't require immediate interventions, but it would be nice. Category Charlie patients who are your routine convenience casualties require us to retrieve them in less than 24 hours."

Other important things of a nine-line are location and its security, radio frequency, special equipment needed, how the landing zone will be marked to signal the aircraft, status and nationality of the casualty, and if there are any nuclear, biological or chemical agents contaminating the area.

Once the medevac team receives the most important information, they prep to launch, with each member of the crew filling a different role that's needed for mission success.

"We all play a different role on the aircraft to ensure we can get the mission done efficiently," said Denison. "The pilot-in-command is overall in charge of the bird. The co-pilot, a lot of times is a (more junior) pilot (with) less flight hours, is trying to build up to fill the position of the pilot-in-command, the crew chief is the mechanic and takes care of the aircraft to ensure its up and running, and then you have the flight medic who provides aid to the patients."

Before the aircraft lands at the evacuation site, the pilot-in-command often time has to make the tough decision on whether or not they should land.

Spc. Daniel Denison, a flight medic, Company C, 1st General Support Aviation Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment opens up the saline lock on an IV connected to a patient who is being transported to medical care June 9 here. Company C, 1-52 GSAB is attached to Task Force Lift, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment to support medical evacuation missions in Regional Command South area of responsibility.

Spc. Daniel Denison, a flight medic, Company C, 1st General Support Aviation Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment and a servicemember from role 2 in Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan transport a patient onto a UH-60 Blackhawk to recieve better care June 9 here. Role 2 in Tarin Kowt, Afghanistan acted as a transition medical facility before the patient was able to be transported to role 2 here.

"There are many difficult decisions when it comes to medevac, but the hardest is being that guy sometimes and say you can't (land the helicopter)," said Harty. "If the weather is too bad, if the (landing zone) isn't good, if the helicopter just isn't running right – you have to be careful to not jeopardize the lives of … other people in order to save that one. It's a tough decision and it's hard. That is one of the hardest things for me – trying to figure out how to balance all of those things and trying to get that mission done quickly and safely."

The team relies on its training and procedures to mitigate risks on the ground. Their ultimate goal is to land, load the patient onto the aircraft, and be back in the air as quickly as possible.

While the medevac crew is processing all of its information and making quick decisions, patients are often focused on one thing.

"They can see that big red cross, and when the dust clears for a moment and before he gets loaded on, he will see that cross on the cargo door and feel that beacon of hope," said Harty.

While getting onto the medevac bird may bring a sense of relief to the patient who is no longer in the line of fire, things are still stressful for the air crew.

After receiving the patient and loading him on the aircraft, time is often limited to get him to higher treatment.

"To ensure getting there and back quickly and safely, we work together as a crew, looking outside as much as we can, watching out for other aircraft that may run into us," said Harty.

The flight medics face a different challenge.

"Riding in the helicopter and treating patients, things can become really difficult and interesting, especially at night," said Sgt. Daniel Sherwin, a flight medic, Co. C, 1st Bn., 52nd Avn. Rgt. "To combat any further injury to the patient or myself, I try to keep my balance by holding onto things to brace myself,"

Once the bird reaches the medical facility, the crew can breathe a little easier. They have priority for landing ahead of all other aircraft.

"We have air traffic control personnel who help to separate us from other aircraft, and we also have procedures that help to expedite us through the flow of the aircraft here," said Harty.

Once the patient is dropped off at the next level of care, the medevac mission is over.

"It's rewarding to know that you are making a difference you are actually going out there and doing something that will help save someone and that means a lot," said Harty. "Especially when you are working with kids and civilians, you know they have no other recourse, going out there knowing that you are doing that humanitarian type of mission, it makes you feel good at the end of the day."

Spc. Daniel Denison, a flight medic, Company C, 1st General Support Aviation Battalion, 52nd Aviation Regiment opens the valve to an oxygen tank to help the patient breathe while being transported to a medical facility June 9 here.

563rd ASB launches offensive on excess, saves $63 million

By Maj. Eric R. Peterson
Task Force Fighting Executive Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The 563rd Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Fighting, launched a new offensive in the war on excess in Regional Command South that has saved the military more than $63 million to date.

The goals of the battalion's cost-saving initiative include reducing excess supplies currently on the ground, properly accounting for excess, improving retrograde operations and implementing an effective container management program.

Upon assuming the role of sustainment support for the aviation task force and numerous other smaller units conducting operations in RC-S, Task Force Fighting took control of two multi-class supply support activities – one at Kandahar Airfield and the other at Forward Operating Base Tarin Kowt. Within days, both SSA's conducted a move to a new location on their respective installations.

The new facilities were smaller, so it became necessary for the unit to identify excess they could get rid of.

"The team created and incorporated an innovative supply team with the sole purpose of reducing waste and returning serviceable items to the source of supply," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Juan Romero, the battalion maintenance officer. "Furthermore, careful study of supply demand history helped restructure the acquisition process to efficiently reduce spending while continuing to properly support current combat operations."

The nature of Task Force Thunder's mission supporting the entire region made it especially important that decisions not be made in a vacuum. Instead, 563rd worked with the Defense Reutilization Management Office, Supply Support Activities, Tank Automotive and Armaments Command, and logistics assistance representatives from Communications Electronics Command, Romero explained.

Since the project began in February, the amount of retrograde cargo has decreased to a manageable amount. Additionally, weekly turn-ins have cleared up much needed yard space and returned needed recoverable items, such as rotor blades, engines, and rotor heads, to the aviation enterprise. In addition to the recoverable items, the SSA has also properly accounted for a massive amount of Class IX (maintenance) air and ground parts that were scattered throughout the area of operations.

The SSA has also been very effective in the management of Class II (basic supplies), IV (construction) and VII (major end) items that were building up in the SSA and becoming unserviceable due to the elements.

"By rolling our sleeves up, the (Aviation Intermediate Level of Maintenance) cleaned out years' of combat Class IX stockpiles that had little to no visibility in the national supply system," explained Maj. Nathan Surrey, formerly the Co. B, 563rd ASB, commander. "We tagged thousands of parts and re-entered them in the (Department of Defense) supply system."

In addition to the already existing stockpile of supplies, a large number of old requisitions for copier paper, printer cartridges, awards and cleaning supplies continued to flood the SSA.

The support operations section has begun an intensive and comprehensive Container Management Program to identify carrier-owned containers on which the Army has been paying fees totaling more than $33,000.

The majority of items were for units that already departed theater or were ordered by previous units for their replacement. Still others had no customer identification number.

As a result of the overwhelming and never-ending flow of Class II, IV, and VII items, the SSA has established an additional yard, known as the "Smith" yard.

The Smith yard is where the SSA stores and issues the supplies that have no customer or that customer has departed and has no record. The yard NCOIC maintains an accurate inventory of the supplies stored within the yard and documents whenever something is issued out to a customer.

Items stocked in the Smith yard were further placed on the Brigade Do Not Order list, which is managed by the brigade support operations shop.

The Smith Yard also serves as a point where bulk retrograde items are stored and palletized for shipment out of theater.

The turn-in of serviceable and unserviceable parts and supplies is not just limited to the SSA. The Fighting Motor Pool has also played a huge role in the reduction of excess and recapitalization of supplies.

The brigade motor pool, which is mayored by the 563D ASB, has turned in more than 40 HEMTT Up-armored doors, a non-tactical vehicle and various other pieces of obsolete / unserviceable equipment. In doing so, the motor pool has increased its maintenance space.

"Motorpool contributions to the Global War on Terrorism extended far beyond the call of duty," said Romero. "During the most recent budget crisis, motorpool leadership incorporated supply standards that reflect pragmatism."

Meanwhile, another team spearheaded the recovery of pallets, cargo nets, chains, binders, tie-down straps and cleaning supplies throughout the battalion.

Lastly, the support operations section has begun an intensive and comprehensive Container Management Program to identify carrier-owned containers on which the Army has been paying fees, totaling more than $33,000.

To date, 17 of these containers have been identified and turned back in to the carrier. The contents of these containers included thousands of printer cartridges, automation support equipment, copier paper and lumber.

These items were redistributed throughout the brigade, and what was left was added to the Smith yard inventory for further distribution and accountability.

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (May 19, 2011) - Navy Rear Adm. Vincent L. Griffith, the commander of Defense Logistics Agency, Aviation, out of Richmond, Va., examines the contents of a shipment Task Force Fighting (563rd Aviation Support Battalion) received at Kandahar Airfield May 19 so it can be added to the inventory, during a tour of forward operating bases in Afghanistan.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl

Task Force aid station honors commitment, sacrifice of fallen medic

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl

By Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – "I will, by my own attitude and example, inspire compassion for humanity, loyalty to the Army, my country, and my people, and a true conviction that the American ideals of freedom and equality for all mankind will prevail."

Soldiers from Task Force Thunder gathered at Mustang Ramp here June 10 to recognize the commitment and sacrifice of Sgt. Louie A. Ramos, a man who embodied this last line of the Code of the Medical Soldier, by dedicating the brigade's new aid station to his memory.

"The night before his last mission, I had the honor of walking Sergeant Ramos through this very clinic," said Sgt. 1st Class Francisco Vasquez, the senior medic for Task Force Thunder, during the dedication ceremony. "We talked about his future and about him becoming a leader at one of our aid stations. He said 'That would be really cool. I'd like that.' Today, you're all going to help me make that promise happen."

Ramos, who served as a combat medic for the Pathfinder's Kandahar Detachment, was killed during an IED attack against his patrol May 26. As a result, the brigade felt it was only appropriate that the new clinic, whose construction was nearly complete when the attack happened, be named in his honor. For the medics who served with Ramos, the hope is that everyone who passes through the doors of the clinic will feel a little bit of his presence.

"A Soldier could go to him any time, day or night, if they needed help," said Sgt. Gerardo L. Ruiz, the medic for Pathfinder Team 2 and one of Ramos' closest friends. "It didn't matter if it was for something medical or just to talk, Louie was always there for people just to open up and he would listen."

Like Ramos, the clinic is always there for the Soldiers of Task Force Thunder. The clinic is scheduled to be open 24 hours a day, with sick call hours from 9-10 a.m., 4-5 p.m. and 8-9 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and from 1-2 p.m. and 8-9 p.m. Sundays. Soldiers can also call the clinic at 421-7620 to schedule routine appointments.

If there were one characteristic of Ramos that Ruiz could ensure was carried on by the Soldiers who serve in the clinic, it would be his smile.

"Louie always smiled a lot," Ruiz said. "I hope that whenever Soldiers come in here to be seen, they will always be greeted with a smile the same way Louie would."

Photo by Spc. Shanika L. Futrell

Spc. Joseph Socha, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter maintainer for Company D, TF Lift, helps with the construction of the Sgt. Louie A. Ramos Aid Station, which opened at Mustang Ramp June 10.

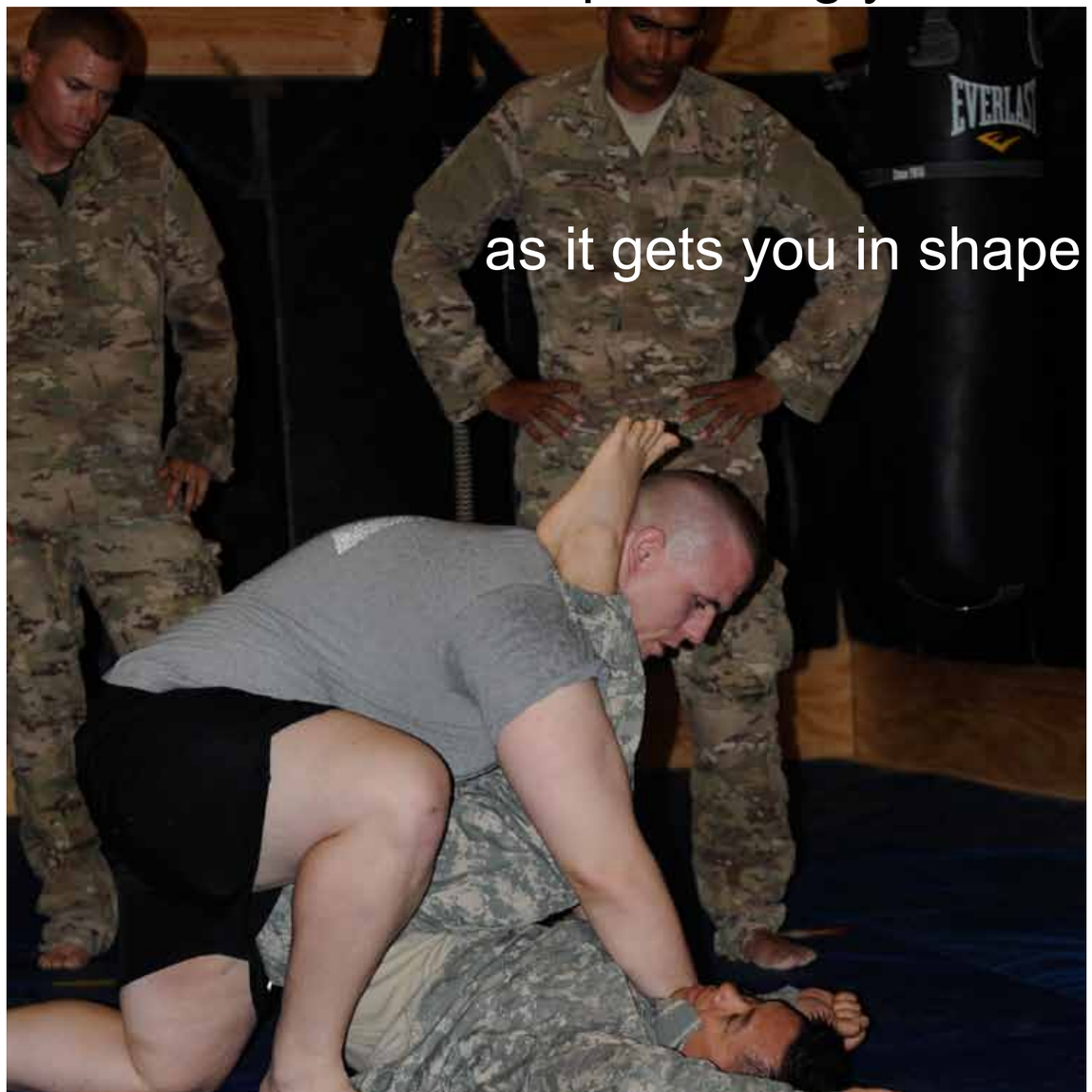
Photo by Spc. Shanika L. Futrell

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl

(Left) Sgt. Cory Followill, a combat medic with Task Force Fighting (563rd Aviation Support Battalion), unpacks supplies to stock an examination room at the newly-built aid station at Mustang Ramp at Kandahar Airfield.
(Above) Sgt. 1st Class Vincent O'Donnell (left), electromagnetic spectrum manager for TF Thunder, and Master Sgt. Patrick Shaughnessy, the brigade's S-6 NCOIC, pose for a photo next to the plaque they constructed for the opening of the new TF Thunder aid station, named in honor of Sgt. Louie A. Ramos, combat medic for the Pathfinder's Kandahar Detachment, who was killed during an IED attack against his patrol May 26.

Combatives teaches protecting yourself

as it gets you in shape



Story and photos by Spc. Shanika L. Futrell
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan The Army's primary focus in training is preparing Soldiers for every possible situation - combatives is another way they do this.

"The Army started the use of combatives to improve Soldiers' capabilities for hand-to-hand combat," said Sgt. Daniel Golden, a combatives instructor with Task Force Fighting (563rd Aviation Support Battalion). "The use of combatives enhances Soldiers' chances for survival in close-quarter combat."

Since it opened in April, the dojo, a building in which several different physical activities take place, has welcomed everyone to take classes.

Task Force Fighting took the initiative to build the dojo in efforts to enhance the Soldiers' physical and mental capabilities.

"To make sure that we do not become complacent out here, everyone needs that something besides their normal work routine to stay focused," said Golden. "Captain (Shawn) Tajalle, Sergeant Major (Sean) Ward and I decided to build this gym to help keep the Soldiers entertained, while also certifying them in combatives here."

To be certified in level one and two combatives, only a certified level four combatives instructor is authorized to qualify students.

"Levels three and four can only be certified by personnel at the school house," said Golden.

The instructors at the dojo follow the curriculum from the schoolhouse at Fort Benning, Ga., to ensure safety during the classes here.

"Safety is important when it comes to the dojo here," said Tajalle, an Insanity instructor with TF Fighting. "When the punch drills takes place during the level one combatives course, a medic is present, and we have all of the proper equipment to run this program, to include mouth guards and combative kits."

Stretching is important as well to ensure the safety of the student.

"If a person does not stretch, they could hurt themselves causing them to be taken out of the fight temporarily," said Golden. "To combat this issue, my class stretches in the morning and in the afternoon to ensure the safety of personnel and to ensure they are all mission capable."

Soldiers taking the course say the instructors are lenient when it comes to mission required situations.

"If a Soldier has to miss a class due to a mission, medical, et cetera, the instructor will take the time to catch the Soldier up to finish with the rest of the class," said 1st Lt. Stephen Punch, a certified level two combative student with TF Fighting.

It does not matter if someone has had little or no combative training at all, the instructors will help anyone get to where they need to be to certify.

"Sergeant Golden is extremely helpful and never puts you down if you do not know any of this stuff starting out, or if you need extra assistance to get a move down," said Punch.

Soldiers say this course is a morale-boosting class that more Soldiers should join.

"I have seen Soldiers with significant increases in self-confidence and a boosted morale because of this combatives course. People who never tried fighting realize this training helps to build their endurance and understand the importance of knowing how to use this effectively."

While this class helps Soldiers to have balance while deployed, it also helps with career progression. Specialists, and sergeants earn four promotion points apiece for level, one and two certified personnel.

The training also helps Soldiers to get in shape.

"This is the perfect place for a Soldier to enhance their physical fitness, while earning promotion points to further their military career," said Punch. "There is always more room for one more at the dojo, so a Soldier shouldn't hesitate to come out and train with us."

But Soldiers who come out should be prepared to work.

It all depends on the physical condition of the person when they start how they feel after the first few days of training, said Punch

"Some people show up in amazing cardiovascular condition and also do a lot of strength training," he said. "Others show up without doing any pre-conditioning. But if you want the class to be easy, show up ahead of the game, lift weights and run. It is still brutal for the first couple of days, if you don't consecutively do combatives. There is no exact physical training plan to encompass all of the combative criterias. The only way to get better and not be sore is to just participate more and consume protein to help with the muscle break down."

Instructors say they are looking for more Soldiers to participate in the class.

"The combatives class is an all-day course that lasts for two weeks," said Golden. "Everyone is welcome, all Soldiers from any brigade, all military members and civilians. As long as you are willing to train and learn, and (you're) motivated, you can receive training."

A tribute to our fallen Heroes

FOURTH of JULY
TF THUNDER
5K/10K

THE RACE WILL BEGIN
AT 0600 AT THE FOOT BRIDGE
ON MUSTANG RAMP

To register or volunteer see SSG Fick at Brigade Legal anytime
or SGT Grimm in the D Troop, TF Palehorse Supply Office
M, W, F from 1030 to 1200
Register via email to adam.d.garrison@afghan.swa.army.mil or
charlene.fick@afghan.swa.army.mil

This is a free event and all participants will receive a free T-shirt!

This is a satellite of a race held in Nashville, TN on July 4th and sponsored in full by Not Alone, a Nashville based non-profit organization that provides free counseling to warriors and their families suffering from combat stress and PTSD, and I Run For The Party, a Nashville based event management company.

Sponsored By

NOW ON FACEBOOK:

"LIKE US" to get info on upcoming events and to participate in the weekly photo caption contest!!!

To find out what is going on at Wolverine or TK, contact your MWR Reps:

TF ATTACK: SSG Kenneth Brown / PV2 Wagner - DSN: 673-4104

TF WINGS: 1LT Amit Patel at DSN: 673-4614

USO Kandahar — June 2011 — USO Kandahar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Surprise Sunday		Tuesday Game Night		Creative Thursday	A Friday Evening at the Movies	Sport Saturdays
USO KANDAHAR EVENTS CALENDAR			1 NCIS Marathon All Day	2 550 Cord @ 1300	3 Doughnut Day Celebration @ 0600 Movie Night- **Shooter** @ 2100	4 Cornhole @ 1400
5 Scavenger Hunt @ 1400	6 D- Day Band of Brothers Marathon All Day Combat Crafters Club @ 1900	7 Texas Hold 'Em @ 2000	8 Glee Season 1 Marathon All Day	9 550 Cord @ 2000	10 Iced Tea Day Movie Night- **Independence Day** @ 2100	11 Water Wars @ 2200
12 Pamper You Too All Day Long in the Library	13 Combat Crafters Club @ 1900	14 Army Birthday Celebration @ 1700 Texas Hold 'Em @ 2000	15 True Blood Season 1 and 2 Marathon All Day	16 Tie Dye @ 1900	17 Movie Night- **Avatar** @ 2100	18 Picnic Day at USOK @ 1200
19 Father's Day! Operation High and Tight Dad's Day Out @1400	20 Combat Crafters Club @ 1900	21 Summer Solstice Celebration Texas Hold 'Em @ 2000	22 Dexter Marathon All Day	23 550 Cord @ 1130	24 Movie Night- **Knight and Day** @ 2100	25 Scavenger Hunt @ 1900
26 Ladies Night at USOK @ 1800	27 Combat Crafters Club @ 1900	28 Texas Hold 'Em @ 2000	29 Spartacus Marathon All Day	30 Jam Session @ 2000	All events are subject to change. Please visit the Facebook page USO Kandahar or stop by the center to view the most up-to-date calendar. The USO Center is located in the RSOI Complex.	

TF THUNDER RETENTION

TF THUNDER Command Retention Officer
Col Kenneth T. Royar

TF THUNDER Command Retention NCO
CSM Eric C. Thom

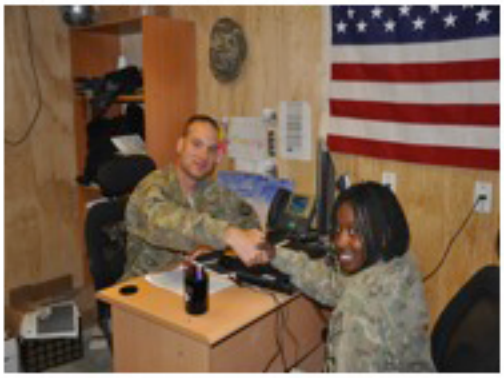
TF THUNDER Senior Career Counselor
MSG Jose Urbaez
DSN 318-421-2522

Why We Continue to Serve:
To support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. So help me God.

What's Happening in Retention !

Career Progression

The first question most soldiers ask when they walk into a retention office is "what are my options and how much money am I going to get?', but in an Army that is changing to quality over quantity, a soldiers first question should be "what is it going to take for me to stay in the Army". Career progression can be one of the hardest decisions in a soldier's life, but with support and guidance from a soldier's leadership it can be the one thing that helps keep them in. In the last two months the army enlisted program has made some major changes that have affected a soldier's career progression; a new promotion system, a new set of Retention Control Points, and current strengths that have almost 70% of skill level one MOS's at over strength.



For certain soldiers this means do everything they can to get promoted by raising their PT scores, raising their marksmanship, going to college, excelling at NCOES schools, and updating their records to reflect the points they have earned. For other soldiers it might be time to change out of their current MOS by switching into another MOS that is under strength, for those with a 4 year degree putting their OCS packet in, those who want to fly or specialize in their MOS by dropping a Warrant Officer packet, or try something new for a couple years by going recruiter or drill sergeant. The most important key to any part of career progression is having a plan. As NCO's it's our job as leader's to make sure these soldiers have the tools necessary to make these plans. Have you looked at your soldiers ASVAB scores to see if they should retake it or helped them out in developing a civilian education plan? Benjamin Franklin once said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail", with the new changes that are coming we must makes sure that our soldiers are prepared to deal with them.

- Soldiers with questions pertaining to Career Progression should contact their appropriate career Counselor for clarification

TF THUNDER Retention Contacts

SFC Depontee	TF Attack	DSN: 303-673-4137
SFC Middleton	TF Fighting	DSN: 318-421-7216
SSG Holman	TF Wings	DSN: 303-673-4613
SSG Cartwright	TF Lift	DSN: 318-421-6664
SSG Scruggs	TF Palehorse	DSN: 318-421-7950

For additional information see your servicing career counselor or visit www.armyreenlistment.com

Happy Birthday U.S. Army!

Task Force Attack Soldiers Celebrate the Army's 236th Birthday

Story and Photos by 1st Lt. Cassandra Perkins
Task Force Attack Public Affairs Representative

It has been 236 years since the Continental Congress created the Continental Army back in 1775. Uniforms have changed, and equipment and technology have improved greatly, yet the spirit of the American Soldier has not changed.

From the Revolutionary War to the Global War on Terror, the nation's Soldiers remain strong and deeply committed to keeping America safe and protecting the rights and freedom of those who have been persecuted around the world.

The Dining Facility was decorated festively for the Army's Birthday here at Tarin Kowt. With American flags, and red, white, and blue streamers around, it definitely uplifted the morale of Soldiers in a very stark Afghanistan.

As Soldiers gathered around hoping to get a big piece of delicious cake, Lt. Col. Rod Hynes talked about the history of the Army and led the Soldiers in singing Happy Birthday and the "The Army Goes Rolling Along".

From left to right: Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Green, 1st Sgt. James Henson, PV2 Jonathan McCorker and Lt. Col. Rod Hynes cut the Army's birthday cake during a celebration at Tarin Kowt June 14.

To celebrate the Army's Birthday, Task Force Attack continued the tradition of the cake cutting. It is a tradition to have the eldest Soldier - in this case Company D's 1st Sgt. James Henson— as well as the youngest Soldier in the formation — also from Co. D, PV2 Jonathan McCorker.

This tradition signifies the development of the Army over the years.

History of the Army Song

At every Army ceremony Soldiers sing "The Army Goes Rolling Along". However, many Soldiers do not know the history behind this epic song. It goes back to March 1908 when Brig. Gen. Edmond Gruber wrote "The Caissons Go Rolling Along". Gruber was a lieutenant at the time and stationed in the Philippines. During a grueling march through the Zambales Mountains on Luzon Island, Gruber heard one of his section chiefs shout out to his drivers, "Come on! Keep 'em rolling!"

Months later, with lyrical assistance from a number of his fellow lieutenants, Gruber came up with the tune that became very popular among the ranks.

After World War II ended Army leaders were anxious to come up with an organizational song. In 1952, the U.S. Army conducted a nationwide search for an official song. The committee voted for Gruber's "Caisson Song". Still, the Army needed to change some of the lyrics to better fit not just the Field Artillery.

Dr. H.W. Arberg molded the song we know and love today.

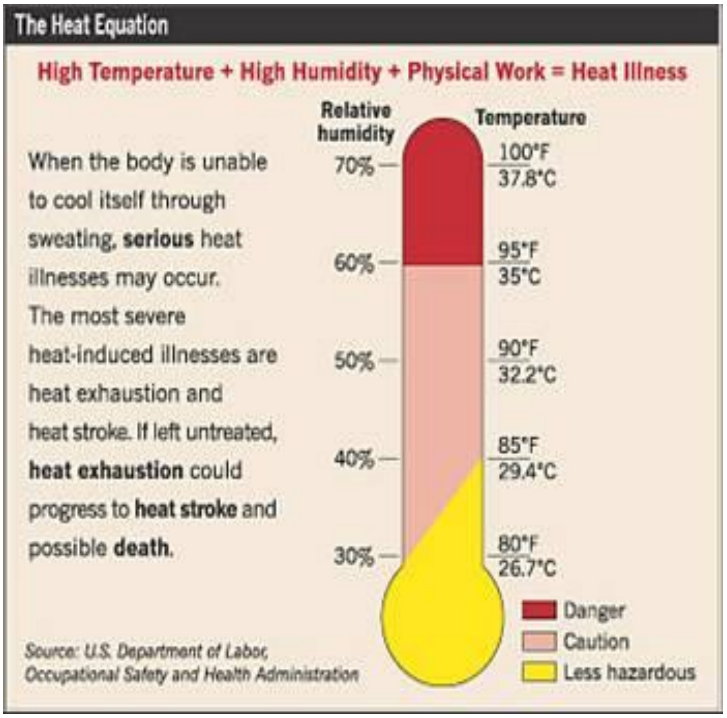
FORT CAMPBELL SAFETY OFFICE

(270) 798-6995

THE HEAT IS ON

As the mercury in the thermometer rises, so does the risk for heat injury.
During hot humid weather the body's internal temperature can rise and result in heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Heat exhaustion, if not treated, can quickly turn to heatstroke which requires immediate medical care and can be fatal.

THINK PREVENTION!



Preventing Heat Injury

- **Know the symptoms of heat stress.**
- **Monitor yourself and those around you.**
- **Block out direct sun or other heat sources.**
- **Use cooling fans/air conditioning; rest regularly.**
- **Drink lots of water; about 1 cup every 15 minutes.**
- **Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes.**
- **Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks, or heavy meals.**
- **Avoid being out during the hottest part of the day (1100-1500)**

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- **Headaches, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting.**
- **Weakness and cool clammy skin.**
- **Irritability or confusion.**
- **Nausea or vomiting.**
- **Muscle cramps**

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- **Dry, hot skin**
- **May not be sweating.**
- **Severe, throbbing headache**
- **Mental confusion.**
- **Seizures, convulsions or loss of consciousness.**

Source: US Army Medical Command, Center for Disease Control

WHAT TO DO FOR HEAT EXHAUSTION OR HEAT STROKE

- **Call 911.**
- ***While waiting for help to arrive***
  - **Move individual to a cool, shaded area.**
  - **Loosen or remove heavy clothing.**
  - **Provide cool drinking water.**
  - **Fan and mist individual with water.**

DIAL 798-HEAT for up to date Heat Index

Water. Rest. Shade

The work can't get done without them!

SAFETY BULLETIN

SAFETY BULLETIN

SAFETY BULLETIN

A typical day...

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Eaton
Task Force Thunder Fires and Effects Coordination Cell NCOIC

About two years ago I wrote an article similar to this one, purely to give everyone back at home a sense of what life is like for a deployed soldier. It wasn't anything special, inflated, or glorified; just a simple snapshot of a typical day in the life of being over here and away from all that is comfortable and known.

Typical… Now, obviously, I associate that word loosely with the environment here versus life at home. It does take on a new form or definition uncommon to the everyday hum-drum routine of the average American citizen.

Nonetheless, we have what we consider "typical" days in war.

Spc. Jacob Durham of Riverside, Calif., works in the Air Defense and Airspace Management cell. He is a quiet young man and does his work to a superb level. He never complains about much of anything and goes about his day and shift in the tactical operations center without drawing much attention at all. Most days you would quite possibly not even know he was there unless you went looking for him specifically.

His "typical" day starts at about 7 p.m. when he rises from his twin-size bunk in the room he shares with two other soldiers, all working different hours. They share a small metal box of nineteen feet by seven feet, with one window and one door called a relocatable building, or RLB. He sleeps against the wall beneath the air conditioning unit, which is an issue in itself. When it works, it drips water onto the backside of his bed, and when it does not work; his room can reach temperatures of over 115 degrees while he is trying to sleep. Needless to say, one cannot rest very well in either condition, but you will never hear that from him. He heads to the shower to clean up, shave, and wake himself up for work.

He makes a quick stop by the nearest chow hall for a quick bite of dinner.

Then he walks the nearly two miles to where our unit's headquarters is located. The large trucks and buses drive past him clouding his vision with the fine Afghani dust just hanging in the air, only amplifying the evening heat. He trudges on in order to make to work at his station on time to relieve the previous shift so they can return to the RLB's and rest themselves due to our 24 hour a day operations in direct support of the war just outside our perimeter.

He works from midnight till 8 a.m. monitoring transponder feeds of all the aircraft flying across Regional Command – South and parts of Southwest. His job boils down to ensuring our pilots have a dedicated set of eyes watching their icons of aircraft move across the map on missions in case something bad happens to them in flight. That way, someone knows exactly where they are when it happens.

That someone is Durham.

He is their lifeline when seconds count and aircraft goes down. His quietness quickly shifts gears to responsiveness when a situation occurs. He is the first line of information to getting support and recovery assets to that location of our pilots to provide them security and medical support with extraction and get them out of harm's way as fast as possible.

Photo by Spc. Jennifer Andersson

Pfc. Jacob Durham, looks at the information screen in the Air Defense and Airspace Management cell during another typical day at work at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

When his shift ends at 8 a.m., he gathers his things, briefs his replacement, and heads to the gym for an average of two hours to maintain his physical fitness. When he is done there, he will swing by one of the chow halls here on Kandahar Air Field and get a meal.

He again treks the two miles in the morning heat and dust back to his RLB, in hopes that his air conditioning is working, even if it is leaking on his bed. At least it will be cool and he might sleep a little before his next shift.

The process starts all over again. No weekends, no days off, and "down time" is whenever you find it. This is the life this soldier leads here; this is his typical day.

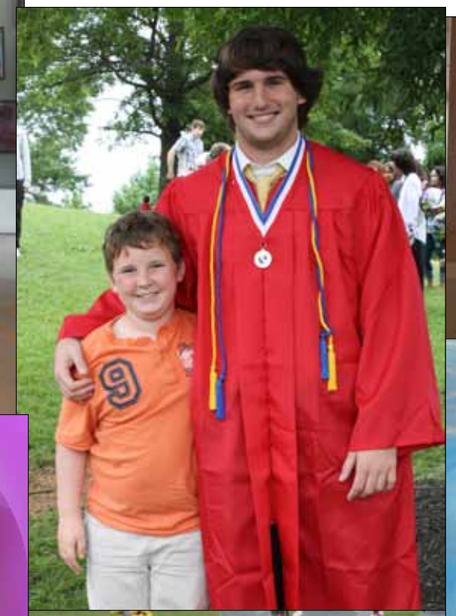
Now, I ask you, how "typical" is your typical? How does your average, everyday routine compare?

Have you ever heard, "No matter how bad you think you have it, someone else has it worse…?" I have seen "worse," and in some cases, the "worst".

So, when your 9-to-5 ends on Friday, you are driving home in your comfy car or truck thinking of how you are going to spend your weekend, maybe sleeping in on Saturday or Sunday morning in your queen-size bed and steady air conditioning, TiVo-ing American Idol or Dancing with the Stars, think of this soldier walking to and from his little room on maybe three or four hours of sleep covered from head to toe in dust and dirt and be thankful he is willing to do it all again tomorrow, the next day, and every day for an entire year.

He, like all of us here, volunteered for this so you would not have to. We are Soldiers; this is what we do on a typical day in our deployed lives.

Through your eyes



Wash Out

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Cassandra Perkins
Task Force Attack Public Affairs Representative

After a pilot's last flight, it is a tradition for the aircraft and pilot to be hosed down by the local fire department, symbolizing that the pilot's flight career is finally "all washed up".

This past Memorial Day was that day for Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jenice Henderson, who, after 20 years of service and serving over the last 10 years as an AH-64 Attack helicopter pilot and pilot-in-command, had her last flight of her Army career.

Henderson has served five combat tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan from 2002 to 2011. She has held numerous positions during her time in aviation, including, armament officer, company tactical operations officer, and the night vision goggle officer, in which she supervised the maintenance program and facilitated training for technicians. She currently serves as battalion tactical operations officer.

For her last flight in Army aviation, Henderson was acting air mission commander for a quick reaction force mission to provide security for a downed CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

After her mission was complete, Henderson came back to Tarin Kowt to a warm welcome.

As her aircraft headed to parking, one of the fire trucks crept behind the Apache awaiting her departure from the aircraft. Her pilot, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Cody Frye, escaped quickly from the front seat as the aircraft was spinning down as not to be caught in the crossfire.

As Henderson emerged from the aircraft, Capt. Philip Singleton - her company commander - and fellow pilot Chief Warrant Officer 4 Robert Slider sprayed her down, but in true Jenice Henderson style, she was not going down without a fight.

An opportunity arose as Henderson lunged toward Singleton. He dropped the hose and ran, leaving Henderson in charge of the hose, thus providing ammo and leaving Slider in her sights.

Needless to say Henderson was not the only one who got all washed up.

Henderson will be leaving Tarin Kowt at the end of the month to join her husband and daughter, eventually retiring in Wisconsin.

On behalf of Task Force Attack and the U.S. Army, thank you, CW3 Jenice Henderson, we will truly miss you!

A word from your Equal Opportunity Advisor

The first 100 days of our current deployment has passed for most. Groundhog Day is a reality. We continue to chip away at the deployment clock and accomplish our mission. Unfortunately, conflict and stress is inevitable. Extremely warm weather, dust, arduous working and living conditions set the stage for the perfect storm. The home front is not exempt from conflict – unruly teenagers, managing finances, and additional responsibilities can all contribute to sources of conflict.

Every company in the task force has an equal opportunity leader within their ranks. They can assist you in resolving conflict, however every Soldier has the responsibility to address the situation and allow their chain of command to assist. Asking yourself this question will help you determine if it is an equal opportunity complaint, "Am I being sexually harassed or discriminated against based on race, religion, national origin, gender or color?" If the answer is no, then it may be any combination of the effects of The Perfect Storm, not an EO issue.

Conflict is inevitable, but how you identify and rectify it is up to you. There are many years of leadership experience within your formations; utilize it to assist you in conflict resolution. Remember every Soldier, spouse or significant other has the same common goal, to accomplish the mission and return home safely.

Sgt. 1st Class Raymond LeMieux
DSN 318-421-6067

I would also to thank some Soldiers for taking time out of their busy day to volunteer. Twenty-five Soldiers from the Thunder Brigade contributed their time, talents and cultural background to enhance the Asian Pacific Heritage month sponsored by Regional Command-South. I would like to extend a special thank you to Staff Sgt. Crisostomo and his band from B Company, 1st Battalion, 171st Aviation Regiment, for the outstanding entertainment. The music they provided added an exceptional ambience to the event. Also, special thanks to Chaplain Robert Lee with Task Force Lift for providing the invocation. Soldiers from TF Fighting and TF Dragonlords also provided ushers, food service and educational booths. Thank you for the support, these observances could not succeed without volunteers!

WHAT'S UP WITH JAG ?

Bldg 407a
Screaming Eagle Blvd
NIPR: 841-2525
SIPR: 841-2031
CENTRIXS: 265-0418

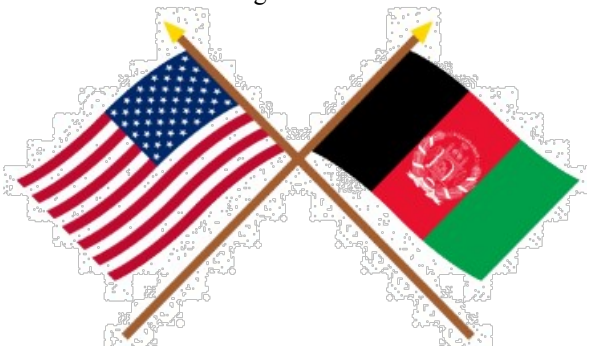
CPT Jason Williams, Task Force Thunder's Brigade Judge Advocate, along with an interpreter, promote the US-Afghan partnership by teaching Evidence Collection Procedures, Detainee Operations and Rule of Law to Soldiers of the Afghanistan National Army.

ASK LEGAL: What is fraternization?

- Army fraternization policies are contained in Army Regulation 600-20, **Paragraphs 4-14 thru 4-16**: *Army Command Policy*.
- Fraternization is a relationship between two Soldiers that is PROHIBITED.

Soldiers and NCOs of the Pathfinder Company, Task Force Wings participated in "Ground ROE" training at FOB Wolverine.

"SPC" Rice enjoyed her first month as a Specialist. " On top of completing Female Engagement Team Training, my NCO's have trusted me to complete more actions with minimal errors and faster processing times, handle more tasks, and also have expected me to step it up a notch and take on more responsibilities" says Rice.



A word from the Chaplain

Memorial Message

May 31, we conducted a Joint Remembrance Service for our six fallen Soldiers, two EOD Airmen and two ANCOP. Below are the words I shared at that service:

Brothers are often defined by having the same parents, but they can also be defined as people who grew close to due to shared hardships and life experiences. Six of the 10 fallen were Pathfinders. They belonged to the 101st Screaming Eagles Division. The Soldiers of this division are often called a band of brothers due to the history of hardship and bravery during World War II. In our generation, where nations defend freedom and peace along side of each other, often shoulder to shoulder, or Shohna ba Shohna, we see a new definition of brothers being written.

On an arid day in southern Afghanistan, 10 men gave their all - their life for an ideal. That ideal is a dream of hope and peace for both of our nations.

On an arid day in southern Afghanistan, 10 men from different families, locations and cultures also became a band of brothers. In a world where people are divided by lines, languages, locations we saw them erased as these fallen heroes fought alongside of each other and died with each other. Their bravery and selfless-sacrifice is a testimony to our two nations and to all that will hear that we are all God's creation. Life is something that should be cherished and remembered as a gift from God. Let us celebrate the gift of their life and the goodness that they brought to their loved ones, friends and our countries.

The pain of the loss of these 10 great men can seem overwhelming. These men are the brave sons of our nations. These men are some of the best our two nations have to offer. Some of you may be wondering how we honor them, move on, mourn them and make sense of this tragedy. God is not remiss in providing answers to these difficult questions.

I find hope in the words of the Psalmist when he wrote "The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion." God cares about us in our suffering and is our help in our hour of need. He asks us to turn to Him and embrace his compassion in this dark hour. Some of you may find it hard to turn to God wondering why he didn't protect our friends from this tragedy. God gave us an answer to this question as well by reminding us that His ways are not our ways and many things in this life will remain a mystery. God never promised us that he would protect us from suffering; rather He promised that he would sustain us through it.

I encourage you to turn to God and may you find, as I do, that He gives strength for the journey of not only during your present grief but for your life.

We are reminded that our Lord is a one that sticks closer than a brother. I encourage you today to walk beside each other, comfort each other, and pray for each other…be a brother or sister to each other. We few, we proud, we band of brothers.

CH (MAJ) Brian Curry

FRSA Notes

Upcoming Events on Fort Campbell

ODR Riding Stables Performance Show:
- o July 9 at 9 a.m.
- o $10 per class fee, $5 office fee
- o 27 categories
- o Western or English attire must be worn
- o 270-798-2629/3126

Hooper Bowling Pizza and a Lane
- o Every Tuesday, 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
- o one lane for an hour, one large one topping pizza, one pitcher of soda, one refill, and four pairs of shoes all for $20.
- o Additional time may be purchased
- o 270-798-5887

Note from FRSA's on Summer Safety back home

Keep your Family safe this summer by following these tips:

Fun in the Sun

- The first, and best, line of defense against harmful ultraviolet radiation exposure is covering up. Wear a hat with a three-inch brim or a bill facing forward, sunglasses (look for sunglasses that provide 97% to 100% protection against both UVA and UVB rays), and cotton clothing with a tight weave.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during the peak intensity hours - between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- On both sunny and cloudy days use a sunscreen with an SPF 15 or greater that protects against UVA and UVB rays.
- Be sure to apply enough sunscreen - about one ounce per sitting for a young adult.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.
- Use extra caution near water and sand as they reflect UV rays and may result in sunburn more quickly.

Pool Safety

- Never leave children alone in or near the pool or spa, even for a moment.
- Install a fence at least four feet high around all four sides of the pool. The fence should not have openings or protrusions that a young child could use to get over, under, or through.
- Make sure pool gates open out from the pool, and self-close and self-latch at a height children can't reach.
- If the house serves as the fourth side of a fence surrounding a pool, install an alarm on the exit door to the yard and the pool.
- Keep rescue equipment (a shepherd's hook - a long pole with a hook on the end - and life preserver) and a portable telephone near the pool. Choose a shepherd's hook and other rescue equipment made of fiberglass or other materials that do not conduct electricity.
- Avoid inflatable swimming aids such as "floaties." They are not a substitute for approved life vests and can give children and parents a false sense of security.
- Children ages one to four may be at a lower risk of drowning if they have had some formal swimming instruction. However, there is no evidence that swimming lessons or water survival skills courses can prevent drowning in babies younger than one year of age.
- The decision to enroll a one- to four-year old child in swimming lessons should be made by the parent and based on the child's developmental readiness, but swim programs should never be seen as "drown proofing" a child of any age.
- Whenever infants or toddlers are in or around water, an adult – preferably one who knows how to swim and perform CPR – should be within an arm's length, providing "touch supervision."
- Large inflatable above-ground pools have become increasingly popular for backyard use. Children may fall in if they lean against the soft side of an inflatable pool. Although such pools are often exempt from local pool fencing requirements, it is essential that they be surrounded by an appropriate fence just as a permanent pool would be so that children cannot gain unsupervised access.

Summer Heat Safety

- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids, even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol. Eat small meals and eat more often.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored clothing. Avoid dark colors because they absorb the sun's rays.
- Slow down, stay indoors and avoid strenuous exercise during the hottest part of the day. Postpone outdoor games and activities.
- Take frequent breaks if you must work outdoors, and use a buddy system when working in excessive heat.
- Check on family, friends and neighbors who do not have air conditioning, who spend much of their time alone or who are more likely to be affected by the heat.
- Never leave children or pets alone in enclosed vehicles. Check on your animals frequently to ensure that they are not suffering from the heat.

Avionics Shop: Essential to mission readiness

Story and photos byy Spc. Shanika L. Futrell
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Though air crews may seem to be the most important human element in any aviation brigade, they could not fly without equipment working properly.

Aircraft electricians within the avionics shop are often forgotten about, but their job is just as essential to the mission as the crew chiefs and the pilots.

"Our job makes or breaks the mission," said Sgt. Timothy Darrah, an avionic maintenance NCO with Company B, 563rd Aviation Support Battalion, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade. "Something as small as the electronic connector can mean an aircraft doing missions, or it being passed up. Our job is vital to ensure that all crewmembers can complete their missions effectively and arrive home safely."

The avionics shop fixes all electrical parts of the aircraft through two different levels of phase maintenance inspections.

"PMI one we conduct after 200 hours of flight time, and PMI two we conduct after 400 hours of flight time," said Spc. Chad Hill, an aircraft electrician specialist with Co. B, 563rd ASB. "In these phases, we test all of the flight systems, such as the P-dot static, which helps the pilots be aware of their air speed and altitude; the radar altimeter, which helps them know how high they are off the ground; and the automatic flight control system, which helps the pilot fly and sends information from the control sticks through sub-systems to the rotor heads."

The avionics shop handles phase maintenance for all of the Blackhawk and Chinook model helicopters within the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade. But the aircraft electricians don't just conduct scheduled PMIs, they also conduct unscheduled maintenance.

"If there is anything wrong electrically with the aircraft, we are all over the problem," said Hill. "Whether it is replacing a part or splicing wires, we take care of the issue to allow the mission to go on and support our brothers on the ground."

"We use a lot of high-tech and sophisticated equipment to help us fix and pinpoint certain faults on the aircraft," said Hill. "We have to be extremely proficient at what we do because the pilots and crew chiefs depend on the navigational instrument systems and components to be in top-notch operational order for them to succeed in their mission."

To provide proficiency at all times, the avionics shop works 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week.

"We work in two shifts, a day and night shift, so that the birds stay up and running and mission capable."

Pilots depend on the avionics shop to perform the proper maintenance on their electrical systems in order to do their mission.

"The avionics shop is essential to us communicating with the ground forces,"said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Derek Skinner, an aviation safety officer and CH-47 Chinook pilot with Company B, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment. "Without communication with the ground forces, we are unable to effectively support them and their needs."

Just as the pilots are passionate about the support roles they play, as are the avionics specialists.

"I've always loved aviation," said Sgt. Badley Verzwyvelt, an avionics platoon aircraft electrician flight line leader with Co. B, 563rd ASB.

"Since I was a toddler, I always dreamed of being an airline pilot. That's what I wanted to do - fly. When I joined the Army, I was too old to become a warrant, so I decided to be in the aviation side of things and fix them. Now that I have been doing this for sometime, I know that if it were not for us, the infantry wouldn't be able to have the transportation in and out of missions."

(Left) Sgt. Michael Kiger, the flightline squad leader, Company B, 563rd Aviation Support Battalion, fixes the electrical connection on a console for a UH-60A Blackhawk helicopter here March 20. 159th Combat Aviation Brigade's avionics shop and flightline shop Soldiers conduct maintenance on aircrafts daily to keep the mission going successfully.
(Opposite) Spc. Chad Hill, Company B, 563rd Aviation Support Battalion, aircraft electrician, scans a part for the order number to order a replacement for a UH-60A Blackhawk helicopter here March 20.

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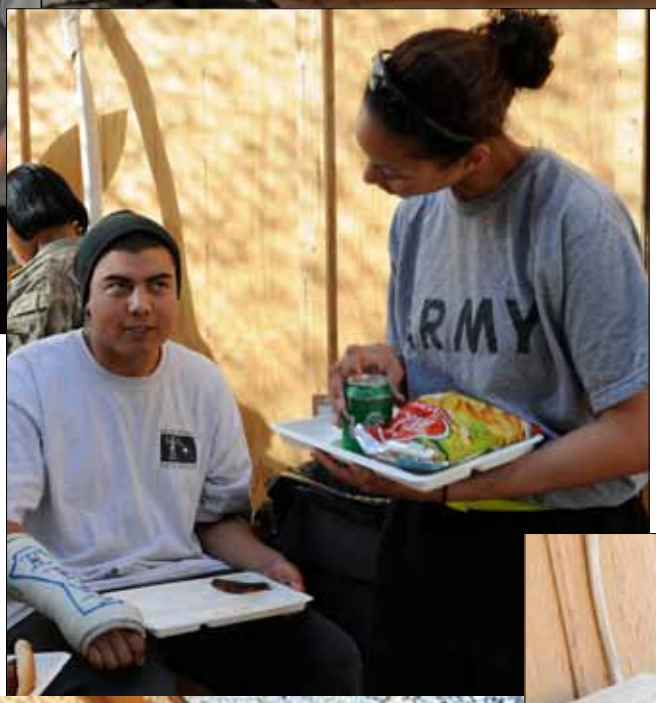
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