

159TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE

THUNDER *ENLIGHTENING*



Inside this issue:

TF Attack conducts first Jump-FARP

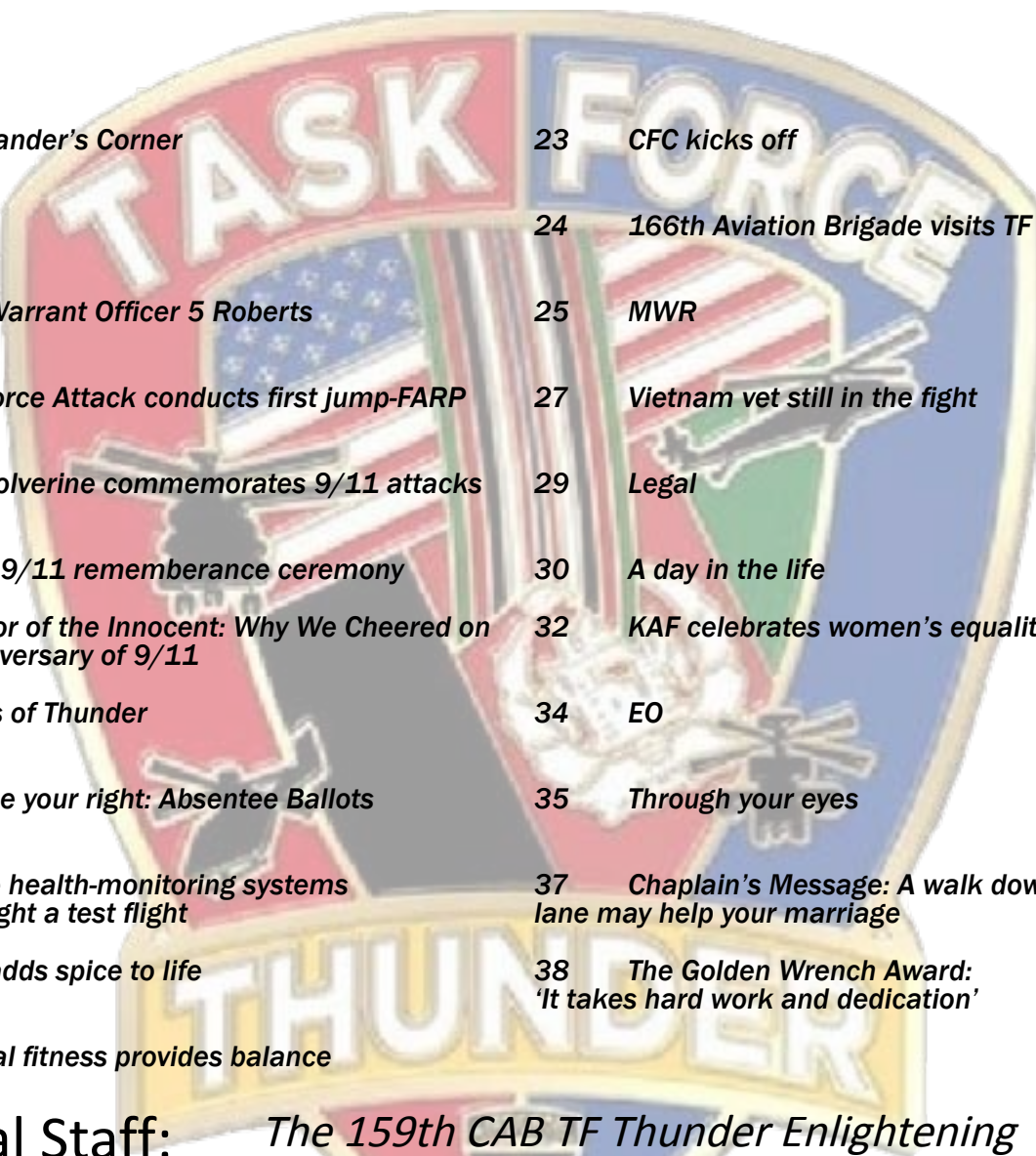
Exercise your right: Absentee voting

Vietnam vet still in the fight

Volume 1, Number 7

September 26, 2011

Table of Contents



3	<i>Commander's Corner</i>	23	<i>CFC kicks off</i>
4	<i>CSM</i>	24	<i>166th Aviation Brigade visits TF Thunder</i>
5	<i>Chief Warrant Officer 5 Roberts</i>	25	<i>MWR</i>
6	<i>Task Force Attack conducts first jump-FARP in theater</i>	27	<i>Vietnam vet still in the fight</i>
8	<i>FOB Wolverine commemorates 9/11 attacks</i>	29	<i>Legal</i>
10	<i>Attack 9/11 remembrance ceremony</i>	30	<i>A day in the life</i>
12	<i>In Honor of the Innocent: Why We Cheered on the Tenth Anniversary of 9/11</i>	32	<i>KAF celebrates women's equality</i>
14	<i>Sounds of Thunder</i>	34	<i>EO</i>
16	<i>Exercise your right: Absentee Ballots</i>	35	<i>Through your eyes</i>
18	<i>Vehicle health-monitoring systems make every flight a test flight</i>	37	<i>Chaplain's Message: A walk down memory lane may help your marriage</i>
20	<i>Salsa adds spice to life</i>	38	<i>The Golden Wrench Award: 'It takes hard work and dedication'</i>
22	<i>Physical fitness provides balance</i>		

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This newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Content for the 159th CAB TF Thunder are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Fort Campbell, Ky.

It is published monthly using the 159th CAB Public Affairs Officer services.

All editorial content of the 159th CAB TF Thunder is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Public Affairs Office of the 159th CAB of Fort Campbell, Ky.

All news items, articles and photographs must be submitted to the Public Affairs Office. Items may also be e-mailed to the editor at 159cabpao@gmail.com.

Commander's Corner

Col. Kenneth T. Royar

Brigade Commander

You have probably heard the Army is going to nine-month combat tours. True. Unfortunately, getting to that point will take some time to phase in. In short, our current tour will still be for a year, and we will come home on the anticipated schedule.

As of today, the next several combat aviation brigades deployed will be gone between nine and 12 months. By next summer, all brigades will deploy for nine months. However, with nine-month deployments also comes the end of R-and-R leave.

Bottom line is our current deployment will remain 12 months, but future brigade deployments will only be nine.

In talking to Soldiers, one of my favorite questions to ask is why they came into the Army. As you might imagine, the answers vary wildly. Some came in for patriotic reasons, some for the employment and others for the experience.

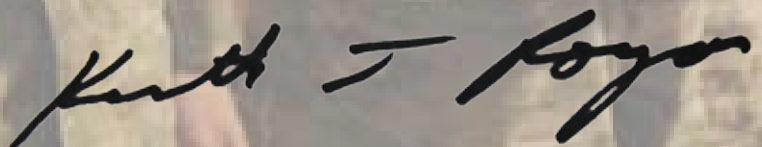
However, now that this deployment is more than half done, with most facing deployments again at some point in the future, maybe the question I should ask is why do you continue to serve?

Everyone's answers will most certainly be different to that question, but here's mine:

- I'm proud of what the Army and, in particular, this unit do on a daily basis
- I'm proud of my service and what I do to contribute to our Nation's ideals
- I serve for my fellow Soldiers
- I serve to ensure my wife and children can safely enjoy the freedom our country allows

Regardless of your reason, I'm honored to have the opportunity to serve with each of you. Whether a service member or a Family member, all of you sacrifice a great deal.

As we remembered the tragic events of 9/11 earlier this month, all I can say is I am grateful that there are individuals such as those in the brigade who are willing to step up and serve for the benefit of others.



A word from

Brigade Command Sergeant Major

Eric C. Thom

How many of you had your interest piqued last month with the talk of changing our current retirement system? If I had to guess, I would say the majority of us did, and this may have energized or revitalized your interest in the legislative actions of Congress. Many of us are interested in this legislation in Congress, but we cannot always speak for ourselves because we are proudly supporting this great Army and our Nation. Thank goodness for us, there are other entities that exist with a primary focus of representing us.

The first thing for you to remember is where the decisions are being made. Your hometown and home-state politicians help influence the decisions that may impact your future. When topics like the retirement issue come up for discussion, an email or letter to your representatives can help them to better understand how their decisions may impact you - their constituents.

In addition to your representatives, there are also non-profit organizations that have made it their purpose in life to advocate for you. They serve as your voice in Congress; they foster public support for you, and provide educational scholarships and programs for you.

There are many different veterans organizations out there. Some of these organizations are focused on specific branches of service, some are focused on specific periods of service, others focus on units, and still others focus on job specialties.

The Association of the United States Army is one such example of a service-related organization that serves as a watchdog for veterans' interests. In fact the DOD retirement issue can be tracked in their legislative news update "Our 2 Cents" posting found on their website.

Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) is another type of non-profit organization. For the aviators, which many of you are, this one focuses on our professional career field. They provide a forum to cultivate our knowledge and networking with others in our profession. Quad A also acknowledges outstanding efforts annually by individuals and units.

The 101st Association is an example of a unit-centric organization. All of its members are veterans of the 101st Airborne Division. They are, in essence, our hometown support.



The possibility of a change in the retirement system got the attention of all of us, and maybe that is a good thing, because it caused me to emphasize the organizations that are out there to support you. There are lots of different organizations out there with different areas of emphasis; some that I'm sure will fit with your greatest concerns. I highly recommend that you take the time to look at them and decide for yourself if you would like to join one or more of them.

Thank you for all you do in our great organization; as always I am proud to serve with you as your Command Sergeant Major.

EC TH

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Joseph Roberts



Wow, how quickly the month of August went by, and we are more than halfway through September.

This month, we are finishing up the personnel distribution roster and finalizing it with the Human Resources Command. As I said in last month's "Thunder Enlightening," the PDR is a process used by HRC to train and reassign commissioned and warrant officers within our brigade organization rather than individually.

As with any endeavor of this magnitude, there is significant difficulty in balancing the needs of the Army against the desires of individuals. However, I am very pleased to say we were about 99 percent successful in getting our officers the assignments they desired. Unfortunately, there were a few who did not get what they wanted. In those instances where some have been

on station for extended periods and were required to accept a permanent change of station, we did all we could to try and get them the assignment of their choosing.

Needs of the Army always dictate assignments, and to the degree HRC can fulfill an officer's desire, they make every effort to do so. This becomes much harder to do the higher in rank one becomes. For instance, it is much more difficult to place a chief warrant officer five in their desired location and position than say a chief warrant officer three because there are fewer positions available. Regardless, the system has been fairly equitable through the years and continues to be as fair as possible.

Certainly we will farewell and miss those who will be leaving us next summer, but we will also hail the new faces that will make up the Thunder Brigade.

Speaking of new faces, we've had two new arrivals over the past couple of weeks. A hearty welcome to the 702nd Expeditionary Airlift Squadron from the Ohio Air National Guard, who are supporting the airlift operations with the C-27J Spartan twin engine cargo aircraft. Supporting them are members of the Army National Guard, including Chief Warrant Officer 5 Roy Brown, the senior Army officer and liaison officer from the Oklahoma National Guard. Additionally, I would like to welcome the pilots and crew of the Communication, Electronic Attack Surveillance and Reconnaissance team. The CEASAR team is the first group to fly specially-equipped C-12 twin-engine airplanes in support of the electronic warfare mission.

As we close out the month of September and enjoy cooler weather in the fall, I want to thank all our Families and team members who have supported TF Thunder thus far. The Thunder team has performed superbly on every mission and remains determined to defeat our enemy while protecting the lives of Afghan citizens.

As we get closer and closer to redeployment, we must continue to focus on the basics, set and enforce high standards, live the Army values, and provide engaged leadership, all of which our great Soldiers deserve and expect. Air Assault!

TF Attack conducts first

Jump-FARP



Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Rebecca L. LeBlanc
Aircraft Refueling NCO

To a petroleum supply specialist, a jump forward-area refueling point mission is more exciting than finding two prizes in a box of Cracker Jacks. It gives the Soldiers of the Company E, Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), distribution platoon the opportunity to implement training and skills they have honed and sharpened over the years and to use equipment that is made specifically for such missions. At least it is a break from the daily norm.

“For me, it is something new – something a fueler doesn’t get to do every day,” said Spc. Carlos Jimenez, a petroleum supply specialist for Co. E, TF Attack.

“I was excited to go because this was my first jump-FARP in an actual combat zone, so you could say I was

a little nervous as well,” said Sgt. Gideon M. Cline, a petroleum supply NCO for Co. E.

Employing a jump-FARP allows the aircraft to operate longer in a specific location without having to go all the way back to a base-FARP to refuel. The jump-FARP can be placed closer to the aircraft’s area of operation and allow them to refuel faster and return to the mission on a shorter turn around.

Operating a jump-FARP encompasses many different skills the Soldiers in distro are trained in.

The distribution platoon consists of petroleum supply specialists, ammunition supply specialists and transportation specialists.

The distribution platoon structures its operations to ensure the unit has sufficient fuel, ammunition and transportation assets to sustain combat operations worldwide, in any tactical environment. Its focus is to ensure the task force’s aircraft are able to operate outside normal logistical areas with no degradation of performance or compromise of mission.

The Soldiers of distro platoon work hard to ensure the advanced aviation forward area refueling system, or AAFARS, is ready for any mission. This modular, portable, four-point refueling system provides filtered fuel at 55 gallons per minute to each of four nozzles.

The team reconfigured the inside of a portable container, called a Tricon, so they can reverse pack the system, meaning the first items to be pulled out are the first items required to set up the AAFARS system, thus ensuring a faster set up time.

“As a leader, making sure my Soldiers are 100 percent ready in all areas of the mission can be a challenge because it is my responsibility to cover all the basics with them from delivering mission details to making sure they have the right equipment and gear they’re going to need while away on the jump-FARP,” Cline said.

Several members of the distro platoon are air assault-, pathfinder- or sling load inspectors course-qualified. They rig, inspect and hook-up all the equipment needed for the jump-FARP mission.

The platoon’s sling load equipment is not used as often as other equipment; however, it is inventoried and inspected bi-annually at a minimum. This ensures it is ready to be put into use at a moment’s notice.

“Testing our equipment and making sure there are no

URUZGAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan (July 27, 2011) - Sgt. Miguel SotoPena, a pump mechanic for Company E, Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), operates the advanced aviation forward area refueling system pump as he watches for cues from the refueling crew during the task force’s first jump-forward-area refueling point mission in Uruzgan Province July 27. Jump-FARPs allow aviators to conduct extended missions outside of their regular areas of operation.

issues with the system helps us move faster in support of the overall mission,” Cline said. “Also, testing the system multiple times before we move out gives us more time to fix things that may be missing or have gone bad.”

Everything needed to refuel the aircraft is packed into one Tricon - a large steel container. Once the Tricon and fuel drums are sling loaded to the jump-FARP location, it can be fully operational and able to issue fuel in one hour. This enables our aircraft to be closer to their objectives, refuel faster and more effectively support

Combined Team Uruzgan, a multi-national Brigade-level headquarters, which is responsible for mentoring the Afghan National Security Forces within the Uruzgan province.

“The jump-FARP allowed CTU to conduct extended missions outside of our regular areas of operation,” said 1st Lt. Javier Lee, Co. E’s Quartermaster Distribution Platoon leader. “The jump-FARP also supported the ability to gather and interpret new intelligence in these locations, potentially saving several lives down the road.”

FOB Wolverine commemorates 9/11 attacks

Story and photos by
SpC. Jennifer Andersson
Task Force Thunder
Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WOLVERINE, Afghanistan (Sept. 12, 2011) – Despite hundreds of people around, the silence was deafening in an area where one would normally cringe at the noise.

On the flight line here, troops stood silently in formation, paying their respect to the thousands whose lives had been taken since Sept. 11, 2001.

Lt. Col. Christopher Albus, the commander for Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), delivered a speech to the Soldiers, many of whom were in grade school at the time of the attacks, thanking them for their heroism and bravery to come to the aid of their country after the tragic events.

“Our American spirit is defined by our innate ability to reach out and help others, even in times of unthinkable crisis and unfathomable odds,” Albus said. “Just think about the courage of our policemen and firefighters who rushed into burning towers to bring thousands to safety. Think about our Pathfinders who selflessly man the perimeter at (Battle Position) Osman when they’re under attack or the MEDEVAC crew who launch in poor weather to rescue a wounded Soldier or civilian. Think about our (AH-64) Apache crew chief, on his third deployment, working the night shift to provide our aircrews safe aircraft or our Workhorse Soldiers alone at the (forward-area refueling point) at Al Masaak to provide quality fuel for our scout weapon teams. Our American spirit is defined by our ability to move forward in the aftermath of overwhelming loss, even when it seems easier to quit.”

The ceremony to commemorate the 10-year anniversary was somber, remembering more than just the people who perished on that dark day in history.

“It’s not just remembering that day, it’s remembering everyone we’ve lost along the way because of that day,” said SpC. Michelle Wilson, a medic for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Wings, who was 13 years old then.

Wilson, who was home-schooled, had just turned on the news

for her current events class as the events were unfolding, she said.

“My dad forced us to turn the television off about three hours into it,” she said. “I was the oldest of the homeschooled kids, and he realized it was an overload for the younger kids. We turned it off and discussed it a few times. We went on with dinner and let the kids talk to get it expressed in their own way. My older sibling and I watched it all the next day. I didn’t really grasp what was happening that first day. It took a few days for it to sink in.”

Wilson said the events she witnessed that day, mixed with an influential number of family members in the military, played a large role in her decision to join the Army later. She’s definitely not the only one.

“Some of our Soldiers here were in grade school when this happened 10 years ago, and yet they’re here today to do their part for our country, for the things we believe in,” said Capt. Steven Mosher, the communication and network officer for Forward Operating Base Wolverine. “The victims of 9/11 weren’t the end, they were the beginning. Thousands of Soldiers have sacrificed – we’ve all made sacrifices – being away from our families, injuries, financially, or whatever – we’ve all made sacrifices to do what we believe in.”

Service members everywhere have made sacrifices in one way or another, and for various – and perhaps numerous – reasons. Mosher’s reasons are clear.

(Left) Two OH-58 Kiowa helicopters do a low fly-by over Soldiers of Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) during a ceremony here to honor those who lost their lives during and since the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon Sept. 11. The ceremony commemorated the 10th anniversary of the attacks.

“I feel like I owe something to those folks who lost their lives that day,” he said. “And to the people who have lost their lives since – the Soldiers.”

Patriot Day is a day to remember – painful for some, necessary for all.

“I think it is good to remember,” Mosher said. “I don’t think anybody in the military, no matter how old they are, is in danger of forgetting why we’re doing what we’re doing. If we forget history, we are doomed to repeat it.”

Wilson said Sept. 11, 2001, was a wake-up call. Because there had not been such violence on U.S. soil in so many years, Americans had grown comfortable, thinking it couldn’t happen.

Sept. 11 was a wake-up call that continues to remind Americans what is important.

“Let this memorial service provide all of us with a daily reminder to take nothing for granted,” Albus said. “Appreciate your freedoms. Count your blessings. Strive to help your fellow man. Cherish your friends and families. Let this serve as a reminder of the American spirit which burns in all of us – that way of life which makes this the greatest nation on Earth.”

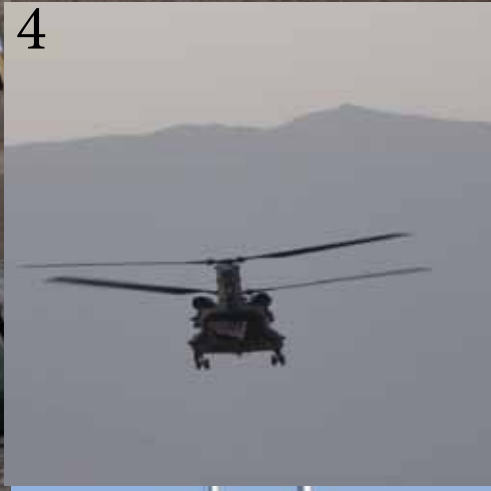


(Above) Soldiers of Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) render honors to those who lost their lives during and since the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon during a ceremony here Sept. 11.

(Left) Lt. Col. Christopher E. Albus, the commander for Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), delivers a speech to Soldiers during a ceremony here Sept. 11.

Attack 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony

- 1 FORWARD OPERATING BASE TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan (Sept. 11, 2011) – Lt. Col. Roderick Hynes (foreground), the battalion commander for Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) and his acting command sergeant major, 1st Sgt. James E. Henson, hang a wreath at a 9/11 memorial here to commemorate those who lost their lives on 9/11.
- 2 FORWARD OPERATING BASE TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan (Sept. 11, 2011) – Lt. Col. Roderick Hynes, the battalion commander for Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) delivers a speech at a 9/11 memorial here in remembrance of those who lost their lives during the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.
- 3 FORWARD OPERATING BASE TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan (Sept. 11, 2011) – Two AH-64 Apaches, a UH-60 Blackhawk, and a CH-47 Chinook from Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) conduct a fly-over here after the playing of Taps at a 9/11 memorial to honor those who lost their lives during the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon Sept. 11, 2001.
- 4 FORWARD OPERATING BASE TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan (Sept. 11, 2011) -A CH-47 Chinook crew from Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) flies a U.S. flag in the back of their aircraft while they conduct a fly-over here on the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks.
- 5 FORWARD OPERATING BASE TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan (Sept. 11, 2011) – Soldiers from Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) and their Austalian counterparts bow their heads in prayer to honor the victims of the 9/11 attacks in the U.S.
- 6 FORWARD OPERATING BASE TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan (Sept. 11, 2011) – Spc. Roberto Diaz, the chaplain assistant for Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), plays Taps on an electronic bugle at a 9/11 memorial ceremony here honoring those who have lost their life during this tragic day 10 years ago.
- 7 FORWARD OPERATING BASE TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan (Sept. 11, 2011) – Soldiers from Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) salute the colors during the National Anthem at a 9/11 memorial here in order to pay tribute to all those who made the ultimate sacrifice.
- 8 FORWARD OPERATING BASE TARIN KOWT, Afghanistan (Sept. 11, 2011) – Soldiers from Task Force Attack (3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) stand for the playing of Taps at a 9/11 memorial here to honor the 184 victims killed when American Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon during a terrorist attack in 2001.



In Honor of the Innocent:

Why We Cheered on

the 10th Anniversary of 9/11

Story by 1st Lt. Daniella Mestyaneck

Task Force Thunder Intelligence Officer

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Bombs are falling, bullets are flying, deadly weapons are being destroyed, and human lives are being extinguished in an instant. In the background, sounds of cheering and celebration fill the air. I am forced to ask the question: how do seven ordinary people come to find themselves sitting together in a windowless room in Kandahar, Afghanistan, cheering on the protracted lethal targeting of two men?

It's the tenth anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks that killed more than 3,000 people and changed the lives of at least 300 million Americans. It would be impossible to count how many lives were affected by that terrible date, but its effects can be seen on this side of the world, where 88 countries have formed a coalition of forces to partner in the fight against terrorism. It is our tenth year of battling terrorists in Afghanistan as we fight to end the insurgency that has taken hold of this country.

The setting is the tactical operations center of the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, which has been deployed here for the past seven months to provide rotary-wing air support — which includes everything from transportation to showing up with the big guns at a moment's notice — all in support of our brothers and sisters on the ground. The people are six Army Soldiers and one Airman. These seven people have been pulled together from all over the country and volunteered to spend a year of their lives at Kandahar Airfield supporting the war effort.

Early that morning, we received the following message: “(All Concerned) -

Please disseminate this message to all levels.

President Obama has proclaimed Sept. 11, 2011, as Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance. With this, he has directed all U.S. National Colors be flown at half-staff, and for there to be a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m. EST. If mission allows, please observe silence at (5:16 p.m. local) to honor the innocent victims who perished as a result of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.”

All day long, we sit in the TOC and track the war. We watch screens that constantly show us terrorists exploiting the international laws of war in order to more successfully maim and kill — in increasingly brutal ways — American, coalition, and Afghan Soldiers. We watch them bring women and children into courtyards where they are drying explosive material at the moment when a helicopter is set to fire at it. We watch American Soldiers die as victims of suicide bombings, where terrorists have dressed up like women to disguise the vests on their person. We watch a father holding his 2-year-old son in his arms as he is laying detonation cord for an improvised explosive device. And the list goes on.

Just after 2 p.m., we watched incredulously as two terrorists loaded an 82mm armor-piercing recoilless rifle and fired it at one of our forward operating bases. The two insurgents



fled the scene, carrying the weapon system into a compound, where they were immediately surrounded by a group of young children. We were all sure that, once again, these loathsome individuals were going to escape scot-free.

Two hours later, the Air Force weather officer asked me, “What does that mean?” I looked up to see a laser focusing on its target, and seconds later the long awaited explosion sent us into the first round of unadulterated cheering. What followed was 20 minutes of watching and waiting while our helicopter pilots, in conjunction with other assets, tracked and killed the remaining terrorist. While I was watching the flames rise off of the motorcycle that had just been hit with a bomb, hoping that the helicopter would land its lethal shot quickly, the same Airman said to me, “I never thought I would be the kind of man that would wish death on anyone.”

I looked over to the next screen and saw yet another scene of fiery destruction being played out, only this time it was the moment of impact as an airplane crashed into the second World Trade Center tower. Fox News was broadcasting the imagery of that fateful day in our history, as they had been doing for two days, and I thought to myself “That’s why!”

So I got to thinking, how did we come to be here, in this moment, rooting for the death of one man? What is the extent of the impact Sept. 11, 2001, had on each person in this room, or will we ever even know? How do seven good people come to find themselves celebrating the macabre destruction of other human beings? And should we be ashamed or elated?

Sept. 11, 2001

Kenneth Viault had just completed a test to recertify for his job providing weather support to every branch of the U.S. military. He drove straight home and lay down for a nap. Several hours later, he began receiving calls — which he first thought to be pranks — telling stories of airplanes crashing and towers collapsing. He finally received a phone call from someone who he knew to be telling the truth, and, as the realization dawned,

he slowly got up and began to put his uniform back on. He felt sadness, he felt some fear, but mostly he felt a sickening realization that finally our sense of security had betrayed us — someone has broken through America’s seemingly impenetrable defenses and hit us at the very heart. It was going to be a long day. Through 10 years of war, Viault remains an Airman. Now a master sergeant, he labors to identify atmospheric and hazardous conditions to ensure the safety of all rotary and fixed-wing aerial assets. He is still serving his country in the heart of the war against terror. He will never forget that day.

Gilbert Higuchi had just walked into the Baltimore Airport where he worked as a flight attendant and looked up at the screen. His immediate deduction was, “Well, I know that we are not flying today.” Two years later, Gilbert Higuchi was laid off from his job as a flight attendant, a direct consequence of the events of that day. Ten years later, Higuchi is serving his country as a combat medic. Now a sergeant, he currently facilitates, tracks, and helps to control the launching and landing of MEDEVAC aircraft — always ready at a moment’s notice to fly to the rescue for everything from life, limb or eyesight, to even minor ailments. He aids in arranging MEDEVACs for Afghan soldiers, as well as for local national civilians who are injured by the insurgents’ disregard for human life. Starting 10 years ago, aircraft have played a major role in who Higuchi is today.

Joshua Morrison was 13 years old, sitting in history class in a small town in Alabama. Joshua today laughs off his decision to join the Army, yet regardless, he is among the thousands who have volunteered to serve their country in a time of war. Morrison left Alabama for the first time when he signed up to go to basic training, and now he serves as an air-traffic controller. Today, as a specialist, his mission is to de-conflict airspace and ensure no unauthorized aircraft ever gain access to his area of control. His job is to make sure that no aircraft ever flies where it is not supposed to.

Puerto Rican Ricardo Crespo was 12 years old and happy to be released from school early for the day, even if he did not know why. He got to his cousin’s house, where he saw the news on TV. He immediately thought it must be a movie and sat down to watch. It took him awhile to realize this was really happening, somewhere far away, but in his very own nation, nonetheless. Crespo says the events of 9/11 did not affect his decision to join the military, yet he is now serving on his first deployment, where he monitors aircraft radio traffic, with the goal of being the first to know of any emergency situation involving our aircraft and helping to mitigate the situation. Ten years after 9/11, Crespo is a specialist, studying to become a combat pilot to fly in support of ground forces.

Frank Arnold was just beginning his senior year of high school, half asleep in class, glad that he only had seven more months of school — ever! The news hit, it is all kind of a blur. No one could really fathom the extent of what had just happened, and how their lives would be changed forever. Ten years later, Arnold has deployed three times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. A decade later, Arnold is a staff sergeant who works as a battle NCO; his job is to track aircraft, from wheels up time until mission completion. He must maintain situational awareness of each and every thing that could affect an aircraft along its planned route. It is Arnold’s task and purpose to never forget about an aircraft.

Christina James woke up that day, looking forward to celebrating her 16th birthday with her friends and family that evening. She was looking forward to getting her driver’s license as soon as school let out. Christina James enrolled in college

as an ROTC student, emerging four years later as a lieutenant in the Army. Fast forward four more years, and James is now a captain in Afghanistan working as a battle captain, where she is responsible for maintaining a mental picture of the exact location, situation, and functionality of all aircraft at all times, anywhere in the area of operations. James’ goal is to never be surprised by an aircraft again.

I had just woken up. Being home-schooled, I had a later schedule than most ordinary 14-year-olds in California. I had just come to the United States for the first time four months earlier, and I had never had such a culture shock. Born abroad to American parents, I had always known I was American, but had very little concept of the country, culture, or what it meant to be one. I walked downstairs for breakfast and saw the television broadcasting live in my living room for the first time ever. My missionary parents did not believe in television. Not being as numb to the sight of violence on a television screen as a typical American teenager, it took me several long minutes to even fathom this horrific sight could possibly be real. I felt terribly afraid that if it could happen in New York, then it could happen in Los Angeles as well. I worried about my friends who lived in New York. I remember thinking that maybe my parents were right about all the evil in the world. I remember being equally horrified by the religious leaders who proclaimed the attack on America as God’s divine justice on an evil nation.

I always felt a sense of gratitude to have been born an American, and throughout my life I have benefitted from my citizenship on multiple occasions. I always felt the desire to give something back, and after Sept. 11th, “giving back” meant military service. Eight years later, after graduating from college, I went to basic training and then commissioned as a military intelligence officer. Today, I’m a first lieutenant. My job in Kandahar is to know the enemy, inside and out, and to predict when, where, how and why they might attack aircraft. It’s my job to help provide enough intelligence to the pilots, so they, in turn, never let the enemy get close enough to effectively attack them.

Sept. 11, 2011

The children of 9/11 have become the Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Seamen of today, valiantly battling the “War on Terror,” and hoping that they can just go home soon. We represent a nation that has been formed by the terrible events of that day; a nation that has become stronger and more fearful; a nation that has maintained its ‘open-door’ policy to the world, but has become more suspicious, even of its own. We represent a nation looking for vengeance, a nation that “Will Never Forget.” We watched two confirmed terrorists being dealt a stroke of justice, just as the screen next to it played the dreadful scene of Tower 2 falling out of the sky. Yes, we cheered today.

Morrison pointed out that, in the midst of our celebration, we had forgotten to observe the moment of silence declared to honor the innocent victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. I felt remorse for a brief moment, until my eyes fell back on to my screen and I noticed the timing of the last shot fired by our helicopter coincided almost exactly with the prescribed moment of silence.

So, I ask you, my fellow Americans — survivors, directly or indirectly, of those thousands of innocents — will you forgive us our temporary preoccupation with a poetic stroke of karma that caused us to ignore — if only for a moment—what we owe to the memory of our fallen? It was but a lapse in judgment as we crafted our own memorial — an epic moment when two enemies of America went down in flames next to the infamous images of our towers falling.

I promise ... we will never forget.

Sounds of Thunder

How did the events of 9/11 impact your life?

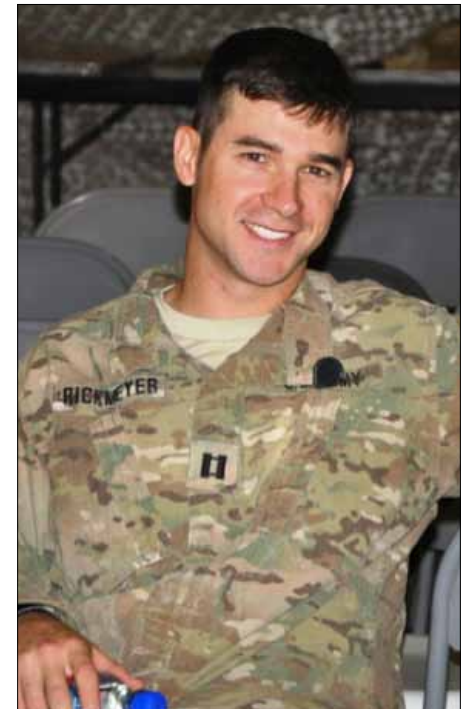


"I was stationed at Fort Eustis, Va. in a TRADOC unit. I was on leave during the attack. I called my unit to see if I was needed at work, and they told me that I could stay on leave. I received a call from a girl who I was supposed go on a first date that night with to see if I was going to be able to go or not. I told her that I could still go on the date. Four years later that girl became my wife. We still talk about how our first date was on 9/11."

**Sgt. 1st Class Terrance M. Yates,
Battalion Safety NCO
HHC, TF Attack**

"I lived three blocks from the White House and had just started my second week of ROTC as a freshman in college when 9/11 occurred. It was a very early indicator to me that my time in the Army would involve deployments and sacrifice."

**Capt. Paul Rickmeyer,
Brigade Intelligence Officer,
HHC, TF Dragonlords**



"September 11, 2001, was my first day as a freshman in high school in Manhattan, N.Y. Lots of my friends lost parents that day, and we were allowed to go home only if the school could reach our parents. Otherwise, we had to stay in a church. My family survived, and my uncle is a firefighter who flew in from Texas to help out."

**Spc. Kristine Rush,
Aviation Operations Specialist,
HHC, TF Wings**



"I was a junior in high school. I had already started applying for college. I didn't personally know of anyone who was affected by the events that happened that day, I just knew I had to do something to make a difference. Deciding whether I would go to college or go to war was not a hard choice for me. I knew I would join the military and attend college a little later in life."

**Staff Sgt. Shandra S. Roberts
Human Resources Assistant NCOIC,
HHC, TF Lift**



The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)

The FPCA can be used by military and overseas citizens to simultaneously register to vote and request an absentee ballot. Local election officials determine the citizen's eligibility to vote based on information provided on this application. Citizens should include all contact information (email, telephone, fax, and/or mailing address) on their FPCA and submit it early enough for election officials to contact them should problems processing the application arise.

Check that FPCAs Include:

- Signature and date
- Complete voting residence address (no P.O. Box addresses)
- Legible handwriting
- All information required by the state
- Party preference if the citizen wants to vote in primary elections (if required by state)
- Witness or notary signature (if required by state)

Note: There will be no notary requirements for the 2011 general election or any election for federal office thereafter. Also, be sure that the citizen mails the FPCA to their local election official in time to be received by the state registration and/or absentee ballot request deadline.

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

The FWAB is available to military and overseas citizens who have requested but have not received their state absentee ballot in time to vote and return it before the deadline. To use the FWAB, citizens must have applied for a state ballot early enough so that

their local election office received the request at least 30 days before the election or before the state's ballot request deadline, whichever is later. The FWAB may be used to vote for federal offices (president/vice president, U.S. senator, U.S. representative, delegate or resident commissioner) in general elections. Some States have expanded the use of the FWAB and accept the FWAB for voting in primary, special, and runoff elections and/or for state and local offices. Some states also allow the FWAB to be used for voter registration and ballot request. Note: Starting January 1, 2011, the FWAB may be used by any uniformed service member, family member, or overseas citizen to vote in any primary, general, special, or runoff election for federal office.

Tips for Using the FWAB:

Citizens who have not received a requested state ballot in time to return it before the election should immediately complete and submit the FWAB to their local election office.

The FWAB must be received by the local election office no later than the ballot return deadline.

The transmittal envelope must be signed and dated, (and the witness or notary signature must be included if required by State). Note: There will be no notary requirements for the 2011 general election or any election for federal office thereafter.

If citizens receive their state absentee ballot after submitting the FWAB, they should vote and return the ballot immediately. If the state absentee ballot arrives by the ballot return deadline, the state will count the state absentee ballot instead of the FWAB.

VOTING MATERIALS AND SERVICES:

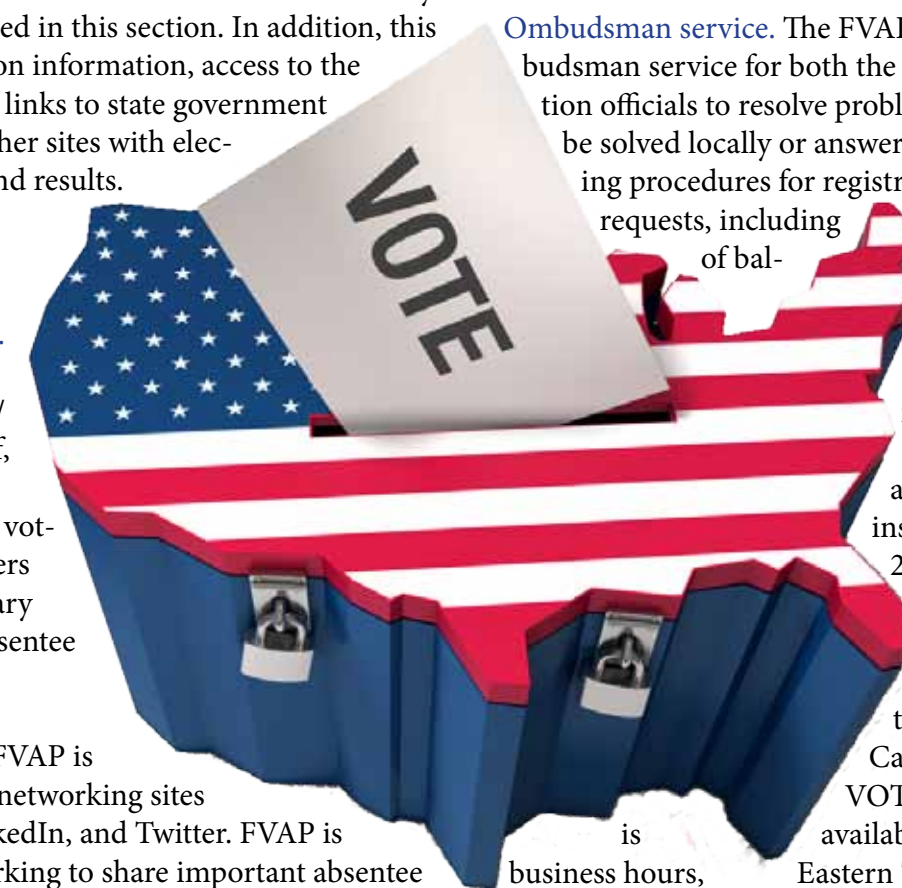
The Federal Voting Assistance Program website. Located at <http://www.fvap.gov>, this site provides an overview of the FVAP as well as electronic access to many of the materials listed in this section. In addition, this site provides election information, access to the on-line FPCA, and links to state government home pages and other sites with election information and results.

2010 - 2011 Voting Assistance Guide (2010 - 2011 VAG). Located at <http://fvap.gov/resources/media/2010vag.pdf>, this site provides a reference guide for voting assistance officers providing a summary of state-by-state absentee voting procedures.

Social media. The FVAP is available on social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. FVAP is using social networking to share important absentee voting deadlines and procedures, and to collaborate with voters on improving the absentee voting process. Local election officials, military and overseas citizens,

and VAOs can follow FVAP for important updates on absentee voting.

Ombudsman service. The FVAP provides an ombudsman service for both the voter and local election officials to resolve problems which cannot be solved locally or answer questions concerning procedures for registration and ballot requests, including the timely receipt of ballots. Soldiers and local election officials may call for assistance using the international toll-free numbers below, and contained on the inside back cover of the 2010 - 2011 Voting Assistance Guide. The toll-free number for citizens in the United States and Canada is 1-800-438-VOTE (8683). Assistance is available during normal business hours, Eastern Time, or a recorded message may be left at other times. International toll-free telephone numbers are listed on the FVAP website <http://www.fvap.gov>.



Despite improvements in military and overseas voting successes brought about by changes in States' laws, 2010 preliminary data shows that military and overseas voters still face greater difficulties in successfully casting a ballot than does the general population. Late delivery and the non-return of ballots continue to be the leading causes of failure for a good part of that population.

Taken from FVAP website article "FVAP releases 2011 Legislative initiatives to benefit military and overseas voter"

Vehicle health-monitoring systems make every flight a test flight

Story and photo by
SpC. Jennifer Andersson
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Aug. 25, 2011) – Despite increased operation requirements, the Army's Class A aviation accidents – which are the most costly accidents in terms of money or people – have decreased dramatically this fiscal year.

"We've had only one Class A since we deployed six months ago," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Timothy Burke, the safety officer for Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Avia-

tion Brigade). "That is down from previous deployments. We had no Class A through C aviation accidents at all from November 2009 to February 2011."

The numbers are down for Class A accidents, and that's remarkable, he said, because Afghanistan's environment is more stressful on the aircraft – given the types of missions Task Force Thunder flies, the terrain and the temperatures here.

Naturally, during a deployment aircraft are going to be utilized more frequently than in garrison, which means more wear and tear on the aircraft engines and parts, and in turn, more man hours determining

whether parts need to be replaced and which ones, said Sgt. Christopher Sutton, a flight instructor for Company A, Task Force Lift (7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment).

One of the ways TF Thunder keeps its birds aloft is through not preventative – but predictive – maintenance.

Most passenger vehicles today have a computer chip, or "brain," to detect when the oil or tire pressure is low. Task Force Thunder's UH-60A, L and M Blackhawks are equipped with similar equipment – the health and usage monitoring systems, or HUMS.

These aircraft systems are designed to minimize maintenance, eliminate

operator errors and maximize flight hours. The technology also may eliminate unnecessary inspections that drive up maintenance costs and risk damage to healthy parts by allowing maintainers to predict when parts will need replacement.

On the UH-60A and L helicopters, HUMS was a post-production element. However, the newer Mike model integrated the system into its design.

"When they designed the Mike model, they incorporated the HUMS into things like the wiring harnesses, in a format you can read because it has multi-function displays," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kyle Hill, standardization pilot for Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment).

The Alpha and Lima models, which use the original HUMS, have a computer chip that must be removed from the aircraft and the data uploaded to a computer post-flight. While this information is still valuable, the feedback is not immediate like it is in the Mike model, in which the data is visible on a computer screen in real time.

"You can touch buttons and bring up those pages on a computer screen in the cockpit," Hill said.

Most people have heard of the black box. Well, technically, it is orange. Both HUMS and IVHMS have a "black box," which contains the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder. This enables post-crash data review to recreate and evaluate what happened in a downed-aircraft incident. Not only could it assist in determining the cause of the crash, it could prevent future accidents due to that particular cause.

Thirty years ago, when an accident occurred, the lack of information available limited investigators to speculation on what happened. With HUMS and IVHMS installed in the aircraft, investigators can examine what happened at each moment and pinpoint what went wrong, said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Joel Sizelove, the production control officer for TF Lift.

There are many systems in an aircraft, and many things that could go wrong. HUMS is an early warning system that detects whether the aircraft is facing any possible issues.

"It is very easy to work with," said Sutton. "It records all information,

and it can pinpoint a problem, eliminating the guesswork."

With HUMS in place, every flight is a test flight, saving hours – possibly days – worth of man hours that would have been spent poring over each system – each part – to determine potential problems.

Crew members seem to agree HUMS cuts their man hours in half.

"(Without HUMS on board, it would take us) probably about double the time or more, especially on engine problems," said Staff Sgt. Ryan Munsterman, a platoon sergeant for Co. A, TF Lift. "In many cases where a pilot thought they saw an engine indication out of the norm, but couldn't remember the exact (part), we can look it up on HUMS, which in many cases eliminates a test flight to try to reproduce the problem."

HUMS also saves money because there's less guesswork in replacing parts that might have more life left in them.

"It gives us the ability to monitor the condition of the aircraft components and have warning of impending failures instead of replacing them at a set number of flight hours," said Al Chapmon, a field service engineer for TF Thunder. "This enables the unit to minimize downtime and mission aborts due to maintenance, as well as reducing the cost of spending on components and minimize scheduled and unscheduled maintenance."

If a tire on a passenger vehicle is not balanced, it causes vibration in the wheel, potentially causing damage to the axle and the steering column, at minimum. Similarly, if a helicopter blade is not properly weighted, the vibrations could cause unnecessary stress on components and the airframe. HUMS provides feedback that help maintainers recognize improper balance.

"It allows us to see how the rotor is flying, and HUMS provides solutions for weight, pitch change rod, and trim-tab adjustments to smooth out our vibrations in the aircraft without having to do a full track and balance and test flight," said Munsterman.

Most importantly, HUMS can help save lives.

"It keeps us from flying an aircraft with a component that might possibly fail in flight," said Chapmon.

"It's all about safety," said Sizelove.

Key benefits of vehicle health-monitoring systems:

- Manage fleets and individual helicopters

- Minimize maintenance, eliminate errors and improve aircraft availability

- Precise data delivers maximum benefit to the operator

- Provide clear, actionable maintenance information and detailed ancillary data, including:

- Rotor track and balance

- Mechanical diagnostics

- Exceedance monitoring

- Usage & structural monitoring

- Engine diagnostics



KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Aug. 24, 2011) - Chief Warrant Officer 4 Joel Sizelove, the production control officer in charge for Task Force Lift (7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), checks the readouts from the integrated vehicle health management system on a UH-60M Blackhawk to determine, among other things, track vibrations in the rotors. IVHMS ultimately saves maintainers hours or even days of work, and gets the aircraft and its crew back into the fight faster.

Story by Sgt. Shanika L. Futrell
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFILED, Afghanistan (Aug. 30, 2011) – Salsa is a tomato-based sauce that adds a spicy flavor to your cuisine and often used as dip for chips. Salsa is also a spicy rhythm and dance that sends many to the dance floor.

Salsa, the dance, found its roots in Cuba's Afro-Cuban music. The instruments used in Salsa also come from African and Cuban cultures, said Master Sgt. Jose Urbaez, the Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) retention advisor.

"A lot of different cultures, including Puerto Rican, Dominican and Cuban, have their own way of doing things, but Cubans led the way," he said.

"Beginner lessons at Salsa classes here are easy to learn," said Sgt. Joel Murray, the HSC, Task Force Fighting, mortuary affairs NCOIC and frequent participant of Salsa night and lessons. "The primary lessons to teach in this class are the basic steps involved in Salsa. After just a few lessons at this level, most of our dancers will begin attending the intermediate/advanced class."

Since Salsa is a partnered dance, the intermediate-level classes teach the beginners how to dance with one another without feeling awkward, but there is one catch - the woman in this dance only follows her partner.

"The male is the lead in this (dance)," said Urbaez. "He guides the female to wherever he wants her to go, and if he does not lead, the dance will not happen."

Typically the dance is a six-count step, 1-2-3, 5-6-7. This style of Salsa is taught at the classes here.

"The lessons are designed to teach people who want to learn the steps and how to conduct the dance of Salsa," said Murray. "While our events also involve other dances - Bachata, Cumbia, Merengue - Salsa is considered the most complicated of them all with limitless variations of combinations, moves, styles and techniques."

Salsa night is held as a morale booster for troops while deployed.

"Salsa night is held to give our Soldiers and coalition partners an opportunity to spend time together in a social environment," said Murray. "Friendships that have been started at Salsa night have grown stronger over time based on a common love for the music and dance. Whether a beginner, intermediate or advanced dancer, people who join in the festivities are always invited into a warm, safe environment that encourages everyone to learn something new."

There are several different styles of dancing when it comes to Salsa; it depends on where you were raised and your personality when it comes to performing to determine which one you would use.



There may be different step patterns, different timing of steps, particular movement on the dance floor, dancer preference of turns and moves, attitude, dress code, and others. The presence of one or more of particular elements does not necessarily define a particular style, but the involvement of different Latin heritages, the region you were from and the inclusion of various styles of music, all led to these radical changes within the Salsa community over the decades.

Some different styles of Salsa are Columbian style or Cumbia, Cuban style, Puerto Rican style and whole lot more.

Some of the differences between these styles are Columbian style is not a showy style of Salsa it is also danced to a different style of Salsa which is known as Cumbia. Everything is basic in this style of Salsa even the turns, and is generally

danced close with one another from head-to-toe.

Cuban style has a lot of hip movement. The male is typically the lead, and he is the person who shows off in this style of dance. In this dance you can switch from dancing on the first or on the second beat.

Lastly, there is Puerto Rican style, which has a lot of shoulder shimmies in this particular style of dance. This dance hits the accents of the Clave, since the dance has only five beats if the performer chooses to start the dance on the second beat.

Salsa is a tradition, and keeping with tradition is vital to many Latinos.

"Our traditions are very important to me," said Pfc. Karina Meza, Company C, TF Fighting supply clerk. "This means this is something my family, my culture has been doing for years. I-no, we (Hispanics)-cannot let that fade. I enjoy the dancing, the music with family and friends, just as my family did when they were my age, it would be a (detriment to our culture) to not pass that on to the next generation."

Many Latin personnel have migrated to the U.S., and though they have moved from their country, their culture and traditions remain with them.

"I was introduced to Salsa at the age of 8," said Spc. Elisa Acosta, an orderly room clewrk with the Headquarters Support Company, TF Fighting (563rd Aviation Support Battalion). "I left Mexico when I was three years old and moved to Las Vegas. Since I didn't have a lot of family where we moved in the States, my family decided to put me in the School of Dance, so I would learn the traditional style of Salsa, Merengue, Bachata, Rumba and Mambo ... Regardless if you were raised in the Hispanic culture of Mexico, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico or (in the U.S.), it is important to learn your culture, to pass it down to the next generation."

While Salsa has its roots in Latin cultures, its appeal has spread beyond ethnic boundaries.

Even if you're not Latin, adding a bit of Salsa to your life might spice things up a bit.



A delicious salsa recipe made with fresh ingredients

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons finely chopped onion
- 2 small cloves garlic, minced
- 3 large ripe tomatoes, peeled and seeds removed, chopped
- 2 hot chile peppers, serrano or jalapeno, finely chopped
- 2 to 3 tablespoons minced cilantro
- 1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons lime juice
- salt and pepper

Preparation:

Put chopped onion and garlic in a strainer; pour 2 cups boiling water over them then let drain thoroughly. Discard water. Cool.

Combine onions and garlic with chopped tomatoes, peppers, cilantro, lime juice, salt, and pepper. Refrigerate for 2 to 4 hours to blend flavors. Makes about 2 cups of salsa.



Physical training: commitment, drive lead to healthier lifestyle

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

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Sept. 6, 2011) – When Sgt. Kevin Edge deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan, with Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) in 2009, he had just finished recovery from a knee surgery to repair damage to ligaments and his meniscus.

The 5 kilometer “fun runs” that were often used to raise awareness for various causes weren’t an option for the cook, who said he was intimidated by the thought of others looking down on him for walking rather than running.

For this deployment though, Edge refused to let others get the best of him.

“This time around, I decided to just walk it,” Edge said.

Edge, who now works as a medical supply sergeant for Task Force Thunder, has completed about 20 different events since he arrived at Kandahar Airfield in February. His longest “run” was 10 kilometers, but he also participated in a few ruck marches, including one that entailed traveling 13 kilometers per day for four days straight.

“Staying fit has always been important to me,” Edge said. “My biggest motivation is sort of pride. It’s like going before a promotion board. If you look at your uniform right before a board and realize it’s messed up, it shakes your self confidence.”

Edge explained that the impact regular exercise has on someone’s appearance can have that same impact on a person’s self confidence. The impact on self confidence can also go beyond the superficial.

“Exercise is a way for people to see how far they can push themselves,” said 1st Lt. Monica E. Walrond, a physician’s assistant who joined Edge on many of the organized events and shares his passion for a healthy lifestyle.

But it’s important not to push oneself too hard, too fast.

Army TC 3-22.20, the Army Physical Training Readiness manual, high-

lights four phases of training – initial conditioning, toughening, sustaining and reconditioning.

According to the publication, the initial conditioning phase applies to those who have not yet joined the military. Once someone joins the Army, they enter the toughening phase, which is designed to gradually build people up to meet the physical demands of being a Soldier.

“One of the first things we do at basic training is have a Soldier run one mile for time, so we can assess where they’re at,” said Master Sgt. Priscilla Jones, the Task Force Thunder personnel section NCO in charge and a former drill sergeant.

Jones explained that after the one mile run, they would put the Soldiers into ability groups based on their times, which helped to better focus the training.

They would also do 30/60 runs, which required the Soldiers to sprint for 30 seconds, then jog for 60 seconds. They gradually built up to running two miles and completing 60/120 runs.

This method of training is known as progression training, which allows the body to positively adapt to the stresses of training, according to TC 3-22.20.

Once a Soldier has completed the progression training that makes up the toughening phase, they enter the sustaining phase. Most Soldiers who are on active-duty and at regular units are usually in the sustaining phase. This phase is designed to keep units ready

to perform their wartime tasks.

Occasionally though, a Soldier is injured or sick, and slips out of the sustaining phase. The same can be said of Soldiers who deploy to austere locations where they don’t have the assets or security required to allow for traditional physical training.

For Soldiers who fall into this category, it’s back to the progression training, this time as part of the reconditioning phase.

Entering this phase often presents challenges for Soldiers, but it’s important to stay motivated – not just because of the Army’s requirements.

“My granddaughter is my other big motivator,” Edge said. “When I’m pushing her around in her stroller or running around on the playground with her, I wanna be able to keep up.”



Sgt. Kevin Edge comes into the finish line at the Boardwalk on Kandahar Airfield during the USO morale run here Sept. 20.

CFC KICKS OFF

1st Lt. Kevin Stewart, 6th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, and Staff Sgt. Antonio Ramo, 6th Bn. 101st Avn. Reg., talk with Fisher House volunteer Rebecca Ponder about what the Fisher House does during the Combined Federal Campaign kickoff Aug. 25. Civilians and Soldiers from across Fort Campbell, Ky. gathered at Cole Park Commons to find out more about some of the organizations they can donate to during the CFC as well as find out about this year's goal. Deployed Soldiers from the 101st Avn. Regt., 159th CAB, who contribute online donations will be contributing toward Fort Campbell's fundraising efforts. This year the CFC hopes to bring in \$750,000 or more.



Story and photo by Nondice Thurman
Fort Campbell Courier Staff

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. -- Fort Campbell kicked off the Combined Federal Campaign with a luncheon at Cole Park Commons Aug. 25. This year marks the 50th year the fundraising drive has taken place as a way to give service members and civilians the opportunity to donate to a number of non-profit organizations they may be interested in. This year, Fort Campbell hopes to raise \$750,000.

Major Gen. James C. McConville, 101st Airborne Division and Fort Campbell commander, serves as the Fort Campbell Area CFC chair. He took the time to speak with those attending the luncheon and reflected on how presenting a Silver Star to the widow of a young specialist made him think of the giving nature of our community.

"I started thinking about our Soldiers," McConville said. "I started thinking about our Families and I started to think what makes us different. I came to the conclusion it is really the choices we make that define our lives. In this case, this brave young man made the choice to join the military. He decided to become a medic. He decided in the heat of combat to put others before himself. That's why he's a hero. So I look at this opportunity with the CFC and I see it as an opportunity to put others before ourselves ... As I walked around and saw all these organizations that are here, and there's many more like them, it's about taking care of our fellow man and it's an opportunity to give."

Close to 40 different non-profit organizations attended the luncheon. It gave key workers from the various units and organizations across the installation a chance to find out more about the different non-profits so they can take that information back to share it with their coworkers.

"Some of it's moving and inspiring to listen to these people that really truly, deeply [and] sincerely want to better their community," said Sgt. Eric Lamotte, a key worker for D Company, 6th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade. "[I came] to

see what kind of impact they have on the community, to let the Soldier know where the money they are donating is actually going."

Key workers also listened to part of the life stories of two individuals who work for the Titans. One of the speakers was Tresa Halbrooks, Titans manager of community relations. She spoke about her journey from an abusive marriage to working with a group of people she once swore she would never have anything to do with.

She had been married to a college football player who became abusive after he was injured and watched his dreams of playing in the NFL disappear. One of the teams he dreamed to play for was the Oilers, who eventually became the Titans. When she left, she told her mother she would never have anything to do with athletes again. Her journey though took her to work with some of the very athletes her ex had one day hoped to play on a team with and helping them find their ways to give back and to tell their stories.

"My charity of choice is the YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter in Nashville," said Halbrooks. "I'm so proud that many of my efforts go to benefit them, but that's because that's my story... We all have a journey. We all have a story. How are you going to use yours?"

The campaign runs through Dec. 15. Individuals can go through their key workers to donate or use the pledge online feature of the Fort Campbell Area CFC website, www.ftcampbellareacfc.org. The website has information about the campaign, for donors, campaign materials, for charities, about the charities, local contact information and a calendar of events.

During the campaign, a thermometer near the intersection of Screaming Eagle Boulevard and Bastogne Avenue will show how close the installation is getting to their goal.

"It's an opportunity to give," said McConville. "It's an opportunity to put others before yourselves and there's tremendous satisfaction in that. Our Soldiers do it every single day; our Families do it every single day and I'm convinced that when given the opportunity to do this, they will do it also."

166th Aviation Brigade visits TF Thunder Reserve, National Guard augmentees

Story and photo by
SpC. Jennifer Andersson
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Aug. 15, 2011) – It's said that the Devil is in the details, and at no time is that proverb more true than when a unit is preparing to deploy.

"There are a lot of things we can do. And they're little things – not big shifts – that help shape the training environment," said Lt. Col. Dan Gallagher, a transport battalion commander for the 166th Aviation Brigade. "I won't say it's too easy, but I would say it's not something we can't overcome."

Gallagher and other leaders from the 166th visited with Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) and its subordinate units throughout Regional Command – South Aug. 13-16, hoping for a better idea of how they can support the fight. The unit, which is headquartered at Fort Hood, Texas, offers training support to deploying Army Reserve and National Guard aviation units.

It's the only unit in the Army with the authority to validate the post-mobilization training of Reserve

aviation units, which make up 47 percent of the Army's total aviation force, according to the Army Reserve website.

"We came out here to provide information and to gain information," said Col. Lawrence Madkins, the commanding officer of the 166th. "This allows me to go out and see the ... commanders."

Madkins talked with the active-duty commanders about the Reserve and National Guard units augmenting them on deployment, while he talked to the National Guard and Reserve commanders about the training their Soldiers received before the deployment.

"That helps us refine the training program for the next unit that comes through," he said.

A Reserve or National Guard unit is usually notified about one year before deployment, and the expectation is that they train on their own for 10 months then spend about 60 days at Fort Hood training with the 166th, said Gallagher.

This trip allowed members of the 166th to get a better idea of how they could change their training plans.

During a morning-long briefing, Capt. Marcus Wilhelm, the company commander of Company B,

2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, a National Guard unit attached to Task Force Lift (7th Bn., 101st Avn. Rgt.), expressed frustration with the focus of some of their training at Fort Hood because it duplicated training they had already completed. He said some of the time spent training on things like combatives could have

been better spent flying the aircraft, practicing mission planning and going through aircrew progression.

"It's only three or four days, but time is time," he said.

In addition to maximizing time, it's important for the training to be as applicable as possible to real-life experiences units might face in theater, whether in Iraq or Afghanistan.

"Primarily the training we've done in the last couple of years has been for Iraq: Operation New Dawn," Gallagher said.

"However, we do have units that have been training for Afghanistan," he said. "The purpose of this trip was to go to the three combat aviation brigades in Afghanistan to learn (tactics, techniques, and procedures) so that when we do train those units going to Afghanistan, we're familiar with the latest TTPs for the operating environment."

"The biggest mistake people can make is to think that Afghanistan and Iraq are similar," Gallagher said. "I personally was deployed to Iraq as an (AH-64) Apache (helicopter) aviator, and it's just a very different fight. Just because of the terrain. There is the heat and the dust in Iraq, but the mountainous terrain changes how we fight dramatically."

"Bringing along the subject-matter experts, the (tactical air combat operations) guys, the (instructor pilots), the (standardization pilots), it gives them that face-to-face time to cut through that political correctness when you're talking colonels to colonels and just get down to the business of what it's really like, what's really happening and improving the process back home at Fort Hood," Wilhelm said.

"It gives them insight into the conditions here in Afghanistan, how the training the units went through at Fort Hood, whether it helped or didn't help them in preparing for the mission," he added.

Changes are definitely on the way.

"The biggest piece we've picked up on, because of the transition and personnel from the National Guard and Reserve, their force is getting less experience than it was 10 years ago," said Madkins.



Col. Lawrence Madkins, the commanding officer of the 166th Aviation Brigade, meets with leaders of Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) and the Reserve and National Guard units augmenting them here Aug. 15 to discuss the effectiveness of the pre-deployment training the 166th offered the augmented units. The 166th met with the leaders of the Reserve and National Guard aviation units deployed to Afghanistan to glean feedback in order to improve the relevance of the training given.



AUDITIONS: 11 OCT - 15 OCT
ROUNDS 2-6: Every Saturday Night
from 22 OCT - 19 November

For more information or for an application, please contact one of the ORS Event Coordinators:

SSG Fick, Charlene;
charlene.fick@afghan.swa.army.mil;
NIPR: 841-2235

SSG Timothy S. Andzelik;
timothy.andzelik@afghan.swa.army.mil;
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Vietnam vet still in the fight

Story by Spc. Jennifer Andersson
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Sept. 1, 2011) – A \$5 bill transformed Roy Brown's boyhood dream into reality in 1971.

"My mother asked me how I knew I wanted to be a pilot if I'd never flown, so I went to the local airport, paid \$5 and rode in a Piper 140 airplane for about 20 minutes," Brown said. "Then I walked right into the Army recruiting office and said, 'Send me to flight school.'"

The recruiter told then-19-year-old Brown about a program called "High School to Flight School." Still in his first semester of college, he knew flight school was a good opportunity, so he took it. His mother had reservations about him going to war, but knew that flight school was something her son would never be afforded any other way.

"He always wanted to be a pilot, even when he was a little boy, playing with (toy) airplanes," his mother, Betty S. Terry-Schmidt, said. "It did not surprise me that he chose to be a pilot."

Following basic training at Fort Polk, La., Brown went on to primary flight school at Fort Walters, Texas, and advanced flight school at Fort Rucker, Ala. Even then, Brown was a force to be reckoned with.

As the custom held on the day of a pilot's first solo flight, fellow students would throw the pilot into the local swimming pool.

"I evaded them successfully for about two hours, which, at that time, I think was a record," Brown said. "Then, of course, I was finally caught and thrown into the pool."

Brown proved to be an exceptional beginner pilot

and graduated at the top of his class. This distinction earned him the privilege of choosing which airframe he would fly.

"I knew Vietnam was a hot and muggy place," he said. "There was one aircraft with air conditioning, so I went with the (AH-1) Cobra. Besides that, I knew if somebody shot at me, I could shoot back."

And choosing the Cobra guaranteed Brown would get shot at.

"The question was not 'Who's going to Vietnam?'" he said. "If there were one or two not going to Vietnam, that was the unusual part. Everyone was going to Vietnam – me especially, when I chose the Cobra. That was 100 percent assurance you were going."

While Brown embraced the adventure on which he was about to embark, his mother struggled to temper her fears with the support she knew her son needed.

"As a mother, I was anxious. Not about him leaving, but about him

going into war," Terry-Schmidt said. "I could understand his feelings, though. He was very determined, so I could only back him."

Rather than feeling fear or anxiety about heading to war, Brown chose to think positively.

"We were apprehensive about what could happen in Vietnam," he said. "At the same time, we were young and bold, and we would be the ones to beat the odds."

While Brown beat the odds, not all of his buddies did, nor did the enemy.

Brown said despite the casualties he saw in Vietnam, he never experienced post-traumatic stress disorder the way some veterans have.

"I was young and naive enough that it didn't faze me," he said.

His job as a gun pilot was to take down the enemy by any means necessary, and he did his job.

"Non-military people don't understand, especially back in the days of Vietnam," he said, "and if you



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Roy Brown (third from left), then an Army National Guard pilot, stands on the side of an older model of the OH-58 Kiowa. Brown is currently serving in an Afghanistan after 41 years of service.



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Roy Brown, now serving in Afghanistan, stands with his helicopter in the early 1970s when he was a Cobra pilot serving in Vietnam.

can't deal with that part of it, the military may not be a career path you should take."

"He was always a strong young man, and he knew what he had to do," Terry-Schmidt said.

Back at home, Terry-Schmidt had to endure long gaps in communication from Brown, with only the news to keep her informed. Sometimes it would be three weeks or longer before she'd hear from him.

"It would seem like forever," she said. "I was always anxious for his safety."

To keep her mind off the periods of no news from her son, she kept herself occupied.

"At that time, I was working, and I had younger children still at home, so in the daytime, I was busy," she said. "At night time, I would think of him, and of course, I did a lot of praying, trusting that God would take care of him, and my prayers were answered."

Communication then was not like

it is today, where Soldiers can have contact with family and friends at most any time of the day, Terry-Schmidt said. This time around, she hears from her son a few times a week.

Improvements in communication have improved not only Soldiers' morale, it has also improved how we fight wars, Brown said.

Forty-one years and three wars – Vietnam, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom – later, Brown is now a chief warrant officer five and serves as Task Force Thunder's (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) liaison officer to the 702nd Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, the C-27J Air Force unit which supports Regional Command – South.

Throughout his career, he has become qualified on 11 types of aircraft – both rotary and fixed wing – some with multiple models, like the UH-1 Huey models B, C, D and H. He has deployed five times.

"I feel more confident with him being in Afghanistan than I did with him in Vietnam because of the experience he has now," Terry-Schmidt said. "I know he is a very careful pilot. He knows his abilities. I know he wishes he was not in Afghanistan, but that's where his duty has led him, and I respect him for that."

Much to his dismay, Brown's duty must come to an end within a few years, but he'll fight it every step of the way.

"I have no desire to retire," he said.

This is because he is simply in love with the Army values.

"Call it patriotism or call it my admiration of the Army's principles – its organizational objectives and goals, its performance over the decades in areas not only of military success, but what I think of as social equity," Brown said. "But your life's works need to have a higher purpose."



Chief Warrant Officer 5 Roy Brown, the liaison officer for 702nd Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, stands on the side of an OH-58 Kiowa here Sept. 24.

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What is AR 608-99?

AR 608-99 is the Family, Support, Child Custody and Paternity regulation. This regulation covers the Department of the Army policy, responsibilities and procedures of the financial support of family members, child custody, visitation, paternity and compliance with court orders. (1-1a) Below, you will see the 2011 support table, which displays financial support required in the absence of a financial support agreement or court order using the formula found in para 2-6c. (Some cases are exceptions to the rule. Please read through the regulation to find out what your obligations are under certain circumstances)

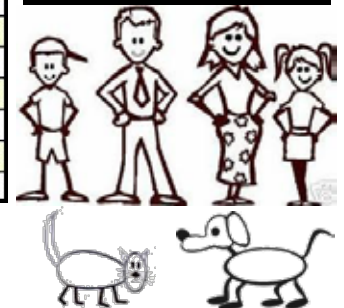
When do I start paying financial support?

If there is no court order, the date you and your spouse live in separate dwellings. (2-7a(3))



Can I get into trouble for not paying?

YES! Failure to pay is in violation of AR 608-99 and punitive under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.



2011 Non-Locality BAH Rates				
Effective 1 January 2011				
Pay Grade	Partial*	BAH RC/T		Differential
		Without Dependents	With Dependents	
E-7	\$ 12.00	\$ 721.50	\$ 961.80	\$ 289.80
E-6	\$ 9.90	\$ 666.60	\$ 888.60	\$ 279.90
E-5	\$ 8.70	\$ 599.40	\$ 799.20	\$ 238.20
E-4	\$ 8.10	\$ 521.40	\$ 694.80	\$ 206.10
E-3	\$ 7.80	\$ 484.80	\$ 646.20	\$ 168.60
E-2	\$ 7.20	\$ 462.00	\$ 615.90	\$ 225.60
E-1 >4	\$ 6.90	\$ 462.00	\$ 615.90	\$ 267.30
E-1 <4	\$ 6.90	\$ 462.00	\$ 615.90	\$ 267.30

pro-rata share = $\frac{1}{\text{total number of supported family members}}$ X Applicable BAH II-WITH rate

Am I still obligated to pay if my spouse cheated on me?

Yes. In absence of a Court Order or written agreement, only your Battalion Commander or Brigade Commander has the authority, under certain circumstances, to release you from your financial obligation. (2-6a)



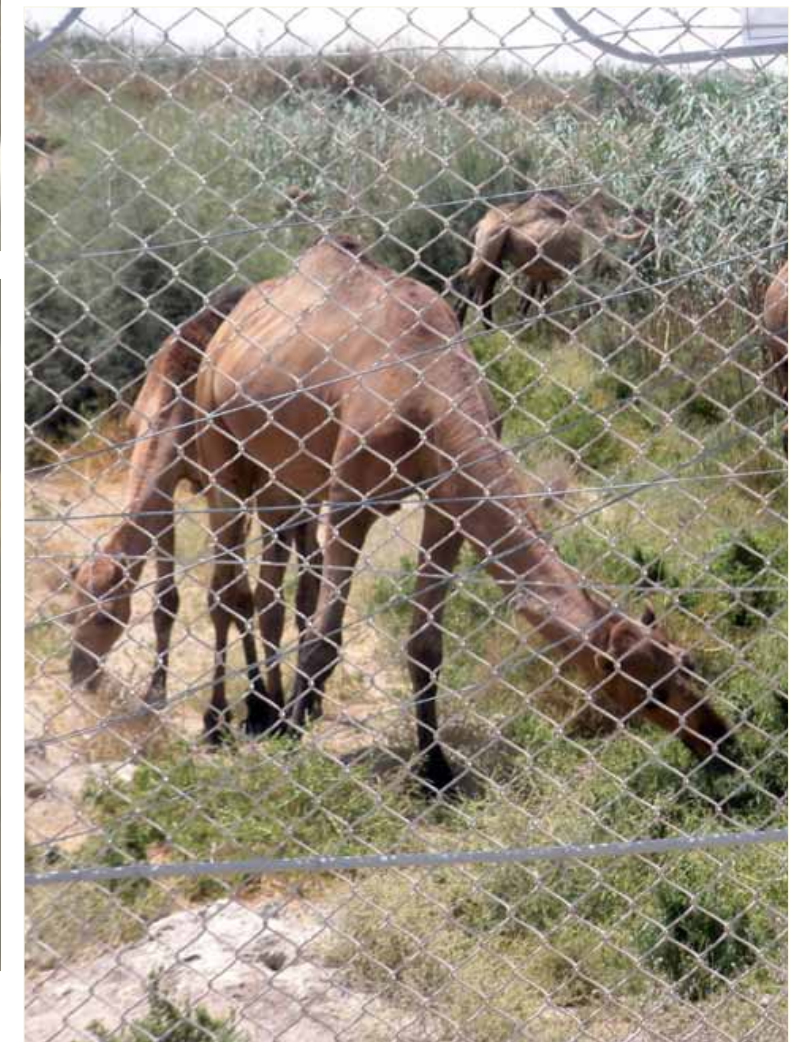
Do I still get BAH if I get divorced and don't get custody?

It depends on your situation... but a Soldier's obligation to provide financial support to family members under this regulation is not contingent upon whether the soldier is entitled to, or receiving, any form of BAH. (1-7b)



LAO can assist with any additional questions: 841-1163

A day in the life



Sixty-sixth Congress of the United States of America;

At the First Session,

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Monday, the nineteenth day of May,
one thousand nine hundred and nineteen.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution extending the right of suffrage
to women.

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States
of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein),
That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution,
which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when
ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.*

"ARTICLE ———"

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or
abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

"Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate
legislation."

F. H. Lilette

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Thos. R. Marshall

*Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.*

Women's Equality Day

The suffrage is still not complete

By Sgt. Shanika L. Futrell
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs

**"IT IS YOUR LEGAL RIGHT.
IF YOU WON'T VOTE FOR
YOURSELF, WON'T YOU
VOTE FOR YOUR GRAND-
CHILDREN?"**

A mere two centuries ago, many women across the United States of America had the dream of seeing women treated as equals. If they were alive today they would see women serving in the Senate, Supreme Court, and as generals and admirals within the military. This would have not been possible if it weren't for the ratification of the 19th amendment.

"It took decades of agitation through protest before the victory was finally realized," said Lt. Col. Rose H. Bean, the guest speaker at a Women's Equality Day observance here Aug. 26. "To achieve the milestones, the women had a lot of lengthy and difficult struggles that took place. This celebration and the observance of this day mark women's continuing effort toward full equality."

August 26, 1920, the agreement of the 19th Amendment within the Constitution was completed, which guaranteed women's right to vote.

"It took over 41 years before it was presented in both the Senate and the House of Representatives,

which happened in January 1919, and then it was sent to the states for ratification and approval," said Bean. "In order for the women to achieve, what we consider a radical change to the Constitution; it had to go through several generations of women's suffrage-marching, lecturing, and even practicing civil disobedience."

"I appreciate the time and effort

**"IN ORDER FOR THE
WOMEN TO ACHIEVE,
WHAT WE CONSIDER
A RADICAL CHANGE TO
THE CONSTITUTION; IT
HAD TO GO THROUGH
SEVERAL GENERATIONS
OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE-
MARCHING, LECTURING,
AND EVEN PRACTICING
CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE."**

women throughout history have dedicated, not only to ensure the right to vote, but that we are observed as equals," said Spc. Brandi Tucker, a volunteer for the Women's Equality Day observance and the chaplain assistant for Task Force Lift (7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment). "It is good to see how

things have changed between the time the movement started and today. We are headed in the right direction, but we still have a long way to go."

Even though the military is the leading organization today that recognizes women's equality, it should not stop there. It is up to the current generation to set the example for the future generations.

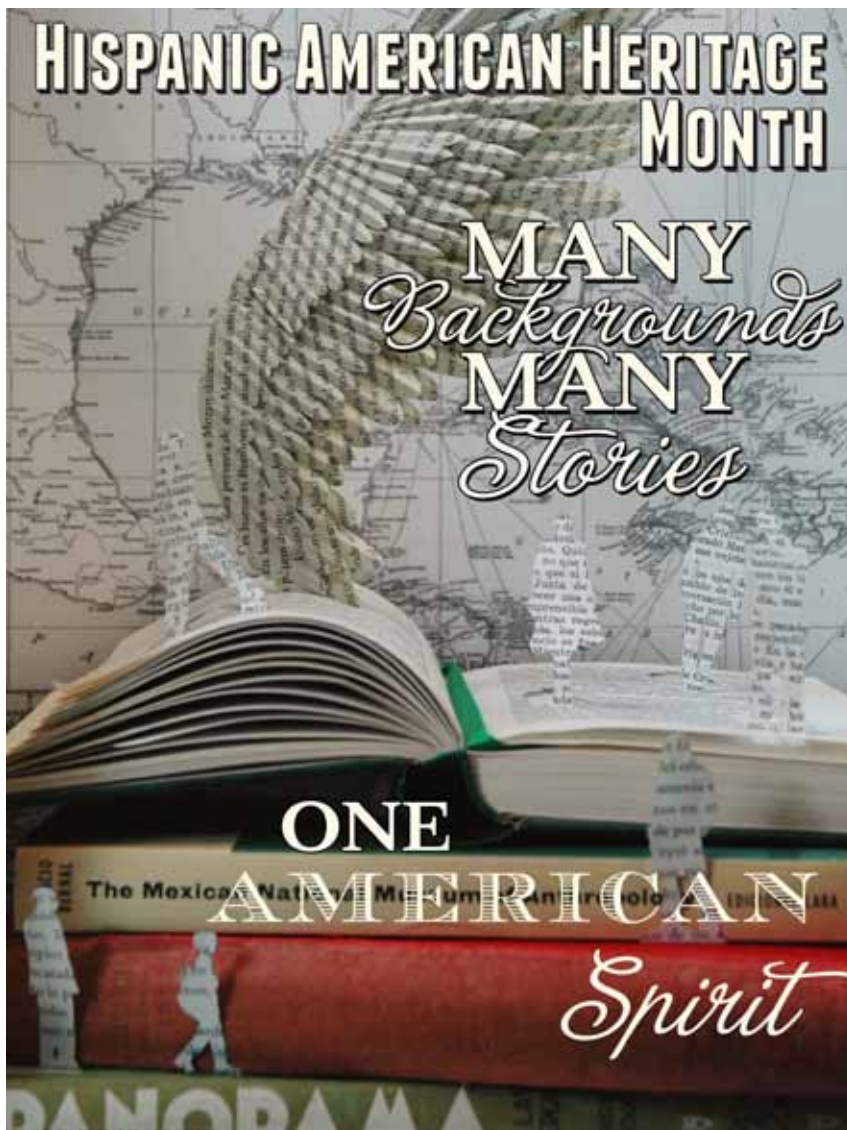
Bean said she conducted an interview with her great-grandmother for a paper that was due for college sometime ago. When she realized through a few interviews with her that her great grandmother had never voted in her almost 100 years of living, she convinced her by saying, "It is your legal right. If you won't vote for yourself, won't you vote for your grandchildren?"

"Apparently my words struck a nerve to her, because one of the last things she did before she passed away was vote," said Bean. "It took almost 10 years from the time we had those conversations to get her to that point of voting, and the suffrage is still not complete."

"We've chosen the path to equality, don't let them turn us around," said Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman to run for vice president.

"Women's equality; our right to vote," said Bean.

**"WE'VE CHOSEN THE PATH
TO EQUALITY, DON'T LET
THEM TURN US AROUND."**



Hispanic American Heritage Month Facts

50.5 million The Hispanic population of the United States as of April 1, 2010, making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or race minority. Hispanics constituted 16.3 percent of the nation's total population. In addition, there are 3.7 million residents of Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory.

43% Percentage increase in the Hispanic population between April 1, 2000, and April 1, 2010, making Hispanics the fastest-growing minority group.

132.8 million The projected Hispanic population of the United States on July 1, 2050. According to this projection, Hispanics will constitute 30 percent of the nation's population by that date.

2nd Ranking of the size of the U.S. Hispanic population worldwide, as of 2010. Only Mexico (112 million) had a larger Hispanic population than the United States (50.5 million).

63% The percentage of Hispanic-origin people in the United States who were of Mexican background in 2010. Another 9.2 percent were of Puerto Rican background, 3.5 percent Cuban, 3.3 percent Salvadoran and 2.8 percent Dominican. The remainder was of some other Central American, South American or other Hispanic or Latino origin.

25 Number of states in which Hispanics were the largest minority group. These states were Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming.

http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb11-ff18.html

In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson obtained authorization from Congress to proclaim a week in September as National Hispanic Heritage Week. In 1988, the observance was expanded by President Ronald Reagan to a month-long commemoration, beginning Sept. 15 and ending Oct. 15, making 2011 the 23rd annual celebration. During this month, America celebrates the culture and traditions of Latin Americans who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and Spanish-speaking nations in Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting date for the celebration because it marks the independence anniversary of five Latin American countries; Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile also celebrate their independence days in September. Hispanic Heritage Month also includes Oct. 10th, known as Columbus Day in the U.S. and as El Dia de la Raza in Latin American Countries.

Through your eyes



Walks down memory lane may help your marriage

This month we are reminded of the tragic events that took place Sept. 11, 2001. The question of the month from media is, "Can you remember where you were when you heard the news?" Another popular question is, "How has your life changed since Sept. 11?" Sometimes remembering can be a painful experience due to tragic events, and so, we often try not to remember. Sadly, as we get older, some of us have a difficult time remembering names, dates or big events that took place in our life.

Over the past 20 years, I've counseled hundreds of couples as they struggled to work through issues in their relationship. When it comes to relationships, we sometimes define them based on the feelings of the day versus the shared history of the relationship. In other words, just because the relationship is presently strained doesn't mean it has always been that way. It is my belief if a marriage was healthy at any point in the past, no matter how bad it is now, it can be better in the future.

After I meet with a couple for the first time I often give them homework. I call it going down memory lane. The goal of the homework is to get them to remember the good times as we work through the bad times.

Here is a list of things to help you go down memory lane:

Do you remember the first time you met your spouse?

Do you remember the first time you realized you loved your spouse?

Can you remember where you went on your first date and what you did?

Do you remember that first kiss?

Can you remember what they were wearing when you first thought they were attractive?

Do you remember sharing your dreams for the future, and how you both planned out your future together?

If you have children, were you scared or excited when you both found out you were expecting your first child?

Where was your favorite date

location?

What is your favorite feature of your spouse, and have you ever told them?

Who was the first person(s) you told you were going to get married?

Since Sept. 11, our nation has asked Soldiers and their Families to endure multiple deployments. There is help if your marriage is straining under the pressure of this deployment. The chaplains of TF Thunder stand ready to help if anyone needs help with their marriage. Since we deployed to Afghanistan, we have conducted marriage counseling for numerous individuals and couples. Thanks to modern technology, we have the ability to counsel couples either by conference call or video call. Contact your individual Task Force chaplain or the Rear-Detachment chaplain for more information.

In next month's issue we will list the upcoming dates for our reintegration Strong Bond events.

Blessings!

- CH (MAJ) Brian Curry

Golden Wrench Award

‘It takes hard work and dedication.’

*In memory of
Staff Sgt. Jose E. Guevera
“We will never forget.”*

Story by Sgt. Shanika L. Futrell
Task Force Thunder Public Affairs



KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Sept. 6, 2011) – Oct. 9, 1997, the Army’s largest aviation brigade split its nine battalions into two separate brigades - the 101st Aviation Brigade and the 159th Aviation Brigade.

As the two brigades split, many traditions were kept and others started from scratch.

“We started out with the Golden Dipstick Award, as a silly award the battalion gave out at the hail and farewells or just when someone did something silly,” said Lt. Col. John Smith, Task Force Fighting

(563rd Aviation Support Battalion) commander. “We decided as a battalion we wanted to give a more serious award as well to the Soldiers, so we created what is known as the Golden Wrench Award.”

The Golden Wrench Award is given to those who honor their unit by going above and beyond the call of duty.

The award was inspired by a Soldier, Staff Sgt. Jose E. Guevera, who worked hard every day in the motor pool and could fix anything. Guevera had a heart attack and died in the motor pool in 2004, and Smith said it was important to remember the hard work and dedication he put into his work and the overall mission for the brigade.

“The (Supply Support Activity) is the current recipient for this award,” said Smith. “Their (previous) company commander presented facts to the board that contributed to their win over the motor pool, which led to a unanimous decision.”

The award is not given out often, and when another person is deserving of this award, another board will be held.

“This award is not easy to achieve,” said Smith. “It takes hard work and dedication to the mission to be recognized (for) it.”

The SSA’s Soldiers accomplished several things throughout their short time deployed here that made them stand out among the rest of their peers.

“Days before deploying (to Afghanistan), my Soldiers moved the SSA (back in Fort Campbell, Ky.) to a different location,” said Staff Sgt. Nathan Yingst, the

SSA NCOIC for TF Fighting. “After this, they helped (Aviation Missile Command) move its SSA. After deploying to Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan to replace 96th ASB, (101st CAB), we immediately conducted on-ground inventory and moved immediately to a different location.”

What made this move challenging while deployed was not all the equipment they had to move, but the location to where the SSA was moving.

“The location we are currently in was not intended for a SSA,” said Yingst. “It was built for a (movement control team), but we found a way to adapt to the situation and continued on with our mission. We had a huge back log and the Soldiers were able to get everything processed and shipped to various locations such as (Forward Operating Bases) Tarin Kowt, Lagman and Shindand.”

The SSA accomplished an abundance of tasks quickly and immaculately.

“After moving, processing and shipping parts, and reconfiguring a SSA, there were zero deficiencies and 100 percent accountability of all equipment and parts,” said Staff Sgt. Samuel Gordon, a Company A, platoon sergeant for TF Fighting.

2nd Lt. Angelo Cabrera, the SSA platoon leader for Co. A, TF Fighting, said he is proud of his Soldiers and their ability to work as a team to get the tasks set before them done quickly in order to carry out the mission.

“No one is more proud of this group of Soldiers than I am,” he said. “We are not at full strength, as the mission requires my team to spread out at several other locations to support the rest of the brigade’s efforts. By the Soldiers putting in the hard being dedicated to everydo, this is how they re-award. This is what team-like, and this is what will Soldiers come together a task. They stepped and showed not only company commander made of. That is why for them on this proof was in the they received it,”

work and thing they ceived this work looks happen when to accomplish up to the plate me, but their what they were he went to bat award, and the facts as to why said Cabrera.

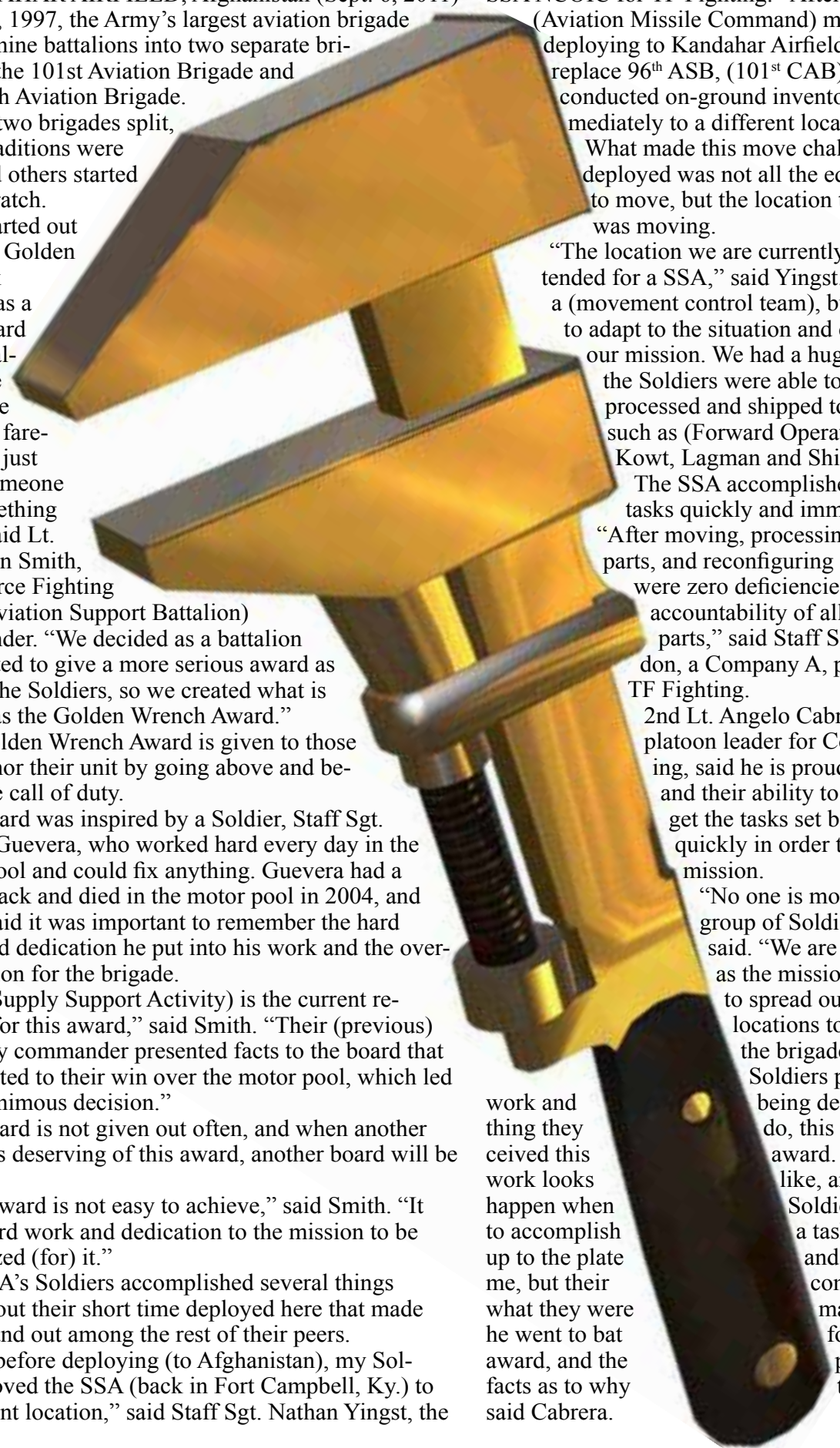




Photo by Staff Sgt. Char Fick,
Task Force Dragonlords

Every month we will have a contest to select the photo for the back page. We're looking specifically for photos taken by Soldiers from the task force while they are deployed. Photos for consideration should be emailed to 159cabpao@gmail.com by the first of each month. Please do not send photos that violate OPSEC.

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DVIDS:

www.dvidshub.net/publication/373/thunder-enlightening