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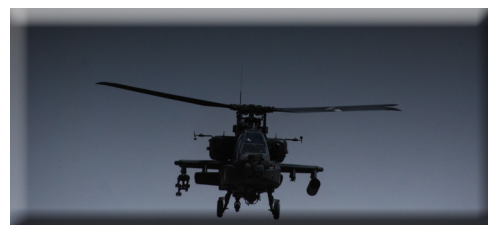


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PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Pfc. Hector Diaz of Los Angeles, an AH-64 Apache helicopter mechanic with Task Force Attack, inspects the auxiliary power unit of an Apache during a scheduled inspection Aug. 30 at Forward Operating Base Sharana. Apache helicopter mechanics conduct scheduled inspections based upon the number of hours the aircraft has flown. TF Attack, an aviation unit of 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, is attached to 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Div. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)

EYE OF THE FALCON

August 2011

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BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter sits on the flightline at sunset Aug. 17. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)

From Falcon 6:

Dear Families, Friends, and Soldiers of Task Force Falcon and 10th CAB,

I hope that your summer is going well as you prepare to transition to kids heading back to school. For our part, the Task Force is doing extremely well through a summer that has presented huge operational challenges. I am certain that most of you heard of our largest challenge experienced to date. On August 6th, 2011, a CH-47D crewed by Soldiers attached to Task Force Knighthawk received enemy fire and was downed by insurgents in the Wardak Province during combat operations, resulting in the loss of all 5 crewmembers and 33 passengers including special operations forces and Afghanistan security forces. This loss was a tremendous blow to our Nation, CJTF-1, Task Force Falcon, Task Force Knighthawk, and most importantly, the Families and Friends of our fallen Heroes. We lost 5 extraordinarily skilled and dedicated Soldiers in this incident: Chief Warrant Officer Four David Carter and Sergeant Patrick Hamburger from Bravo Company, 2-135, as well as Chief Warrant Officer Two Bryan Nichols, Specialist Alexander Bennett, and Specialist Spencer Duncan from Bravo Company, 7-158.

Words cannot express how much this loss impacted our unit. I ask that you keep in your thoughts the Families, Friends, and Soldiers who knew and worked with these fine aircrew members, as well as all of our fallen. This fight remains extremely tough against a challenging and determined enemy who we face daily in our operations. Despite the challenges presented by this enemy and despite the impact of this loss, your Soldiers continue to demonstrate everyday exactly why they are the world's best at doing what they do. Their focus remains unwavering and their dedication to successful mission accomplishment is never shaken. Rest assured that all leaders in this task force remain focused on mitigating the risks to our teams while we keep our eye on accomplishing the mission.

10th CAB's redeployment is approaching quickly and it will be led this month by our own Mountain Dustoff team returning to Fort Drum. They had an absolutely phenomenal year during this deployment and they saved countless lives in this fight. When you see our MEDEVAC Soldiers, remember that their contributions to this fight were literally life-and-death actions accomplished daily in exceptionally dangerous conditions, and they exceeded all expectations. We will soon start to see members of the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade



arrive for the rest of the RIP/TOA. I ask that you remain patient. Redeploying a unit of this size is rarely smooth in terms of exact dates for when someone will arrive home. Rest assured that we will focus on making this transition happen with as little chance as possible but, as always, our first consideration has to be on ensuring that our mission is not dropped in the process. Every one of the nearly 30,000 US and Coalition Soldiers in Regional Command-East depend on what we do. We will not let them down as we transition this fight to the 82nd CAB and leave them to carry on the mission.

Thank you so much for your support to our Soldiers!

Fly to Glory!
Col. Pedro Almeida
10th Combat Aviation Brigade
Falcon 6

From Falcon 7:

Families, Friends, and Soldiers of Task Force Falcon and 10th CAB,

We have been deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom for about ten months. We're well past the mid-point and are rapidly approaching the time to claim mission accomplishment. While we're getting closer to returning home, we must not become lax in our responsibilities, both to ourselves and those to our left and right.

You've been soldiering in this environment for almost a year and probably feel quite comfortable with it. Many of you likely feel that you could perform your mission while asleep. Don't let your familiarity with your position poison your safety procedures; stay ever sharp and vigilant. Many accidents occur due to negligence, whether from ignoring standing safety procedures or through carelessness while performing the same routine you've done countless times this deployment.

Included with maintaining your vigilance, be sure to wear all personal protective equipment required for the task. Wear hearing protection in high noise areas. When you're working on aircraft or vehicles, remove jewelry that can become snagged and when climbing up and down vehicles and aircraft, make sure to remove rings that can get caught on something and cause serious injury. We're too far along now to suffer an injury from carelessness.

Know and enforce the standards, whether we're in garrison or in combat. Ensure you're in the proper uniform, that you're wearing it properly and that it's serviceable. Be professional; from your appearance to your actions.

Fly to Glory!

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton
10th Combat Aviation Brigade
Falcon 7



Wounded pathfinder proud to continue to serve alongside comrades in new role

By Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – “I knew I didn’t want to leave my fellow Soldiers; my teammates,” the young pathfinder said as he explained why he decided to return to Afghanistan despite having the opportunity to recover from his gunshot wound stateside. “We arrived together, we’ll leave together.”

Since returning to his unit at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, U.S. Army Spc. Stephen Moore of Pathfinder Company, Task Force Knighthawk, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, has no regrets about his decision.

The China Grove, N.C., native was on a downed aircraft recovery mission with his platoon April 23 when he sustained a gunshot wound to his leg. An OH-58 Kiowa helicopter had gone down in a valley and insurgents were beginning to surround the aircraft.

“We were moving toward the downed aircraft when I got shot,” said Moore. “Bullets were flying but you never think – don’t want to think – about one hitting you. It’s a reality check when you get hit.”

The unit’s medic applied a pressure dressing, tourniquet and intravenous fluids. Moore then had to walk more than a mile to a casualty evacuation point while



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - U.S. Army Spc. Stephen Moore, a native of China Grove, N.C., prepares for a medical evacuation mission at Forward Operating Base Shank July 30. Moore, a member of Pathfinder Company, Task Force Knighthawk, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, sustained a gunshot wound April 23 during a downed aircraft recovery mission. Due to his injuries, Moore was no longer able to go on missions with his pathfinder platoon. Now he provides security on medevac missions. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)

taking fire. From the CASEVAC point, he was flown to a nearby base and the following day, he was evacuated to Landstuhl, Germany.

After about a month of physical therapy, Moore was given a choice to go to the U.S. to recover or to return to his unit to continue physical therapy at the FOB Shank medical facility.

Moore said he knew he would no longer be able to go on missions with his pathfinder platoon. Nonetheless, it was important for him to return and finish the deployment with his fellow Soldiers. Moore's commanding officer commended his Soldier's determination and decision to return.

"He had to move more than (a mile) down steep terrain, across a river and never complained," said U.S. Army Capt. Joseph Lang, a Wailuku, Hawaii, native and Pathfinder Company commander. "First reports were that Moore wanted to come back even though he knew he couldn't go back on missions; it says a lot about him."

Moore returned to FOB Shank May 13 and although he isn't going out on missions, he is able to spend time with his former comrades daily. He was assigned to Task Force Knighthawk's medical evacuation platoon where he provides added security on certain missions and escorts non-coalition patients.

"He's an excellent asset; a great guy to have around," said U.S. Army Capt. Julian Gilbert, a Baraboo, Wisc., native and MEDEVAC platoon leader with Co. C, TF Knighthawk. "He serves as an additional security asset for us. Sometimes when we must land in areas where there are not a lot of U.S. forces present, Specialist Moore will pull security outside the helicopter."

Moore said he finds his new role to be very rewarding and interesting, especially since he's able to contribute to the mission alongside his platoon.

"I'm glad I came back," he said. "I consider it an honor to come back and serve my country."

Moore received the Purple Heart Medal and Combat Action Badge June 16. 🇺🇸



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Col. Pedro Almeida of New Bedford, Mass., Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, commander, awards the Purple Heart Medal to U.S. Army Spc. Stephen Moore, Pathfinders Company, TF Knighthawk, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Div. June 16. The China Grove, N.C., native sustained a gunshot wound during a downed aircraft recovery mission April 23. After he was treated in Landstuhl, Germany, Moore chose to return to his unit to be with his pathfinder teammates. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Janelle Emerson, Task Force Knighthawk)



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Stephen Moore, Pathfinders Company, TF Knighthawk, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Division, stands with his platoon after receiving the Purple Heart Medal June 16. It was the China Grove, N.C., native's platoon that was the motivation for his decision to return to his unit at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, to recover from injuries sustained from a gunshot wound during a downed aircraft recovery mission April 23. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Janelle Emerson, Task Force Knighthawk)

Mountain Eagle team recovers



damaged aircraft

By Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – While helicopters have proven their value during Operation Enduring Freedom, from protecting Afghans and Soldiers to delivering supplies, sometimes these versatile aircraft are forced to the earth, unable to continue their mission. This is where downed aircraft recovery teams come in, rescuing the remains of aircraft to investigate what happened, to bring the aircraft back to coalition forces and in some cases to repair and return the aircraft to duty.

DARTS are responsible for the extraction of grounded aircraft from the downed location to a nearby post where inspections and assessments take place.

Soldiers of Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, recovered an AH-64 Apache helicopter July 7, thanks to the efforts of the task forces' DART.

"We were notified around 5:30 a.m.," said U.S. Capt. Benjamin March of Saint Johnsbury, Vt., the officer-in-charge of the operation with TF Mountain Eagle who deployed from Fort Drum, N.Y. "Our prep time was about five hours between notification and our (launch time)."

In those five hours, briefs were held and plans were made.

"We gathered information about the crash site and the condition of the

CONT. on pg. 10



aircraft; getting our tools and equipment ready based on (the information), linking up with our convoy elements, and doing the necessary mission briefs and pre-combat inspections,” March said.

Due to the location of the aircraft, the DART determined that a vehicle convoy would be the best choice for the mission and decided to bring in Co. A, TF Mountain Eagle, as well as a recovery team with 584th Maintenance Company, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

Once the convoy made it to the crash site, the first thing on the agenda was the inspection. Subject matter experts took photographs of the site, getting images of the downed aircraft from all angles and documenting the damage the aircraft sustained.

“They took pictures of everything before we touched anything,” March said.

After the inspection, the DART began its work.

“Once we could start, we de-armed the weapon systems and removed a number of components, such as the main rotor blades, to allow it to fit onto the trailer,” March said. “Then we worked with the 584th

SMC guys to get all the pieces hoisted onto the trailers and strapped down. Altogether, we spent about two hours preparing and loading the aircraft onto the trailers, which is pretty good.”

After loading everything up, it was a smooth ride back to the safety of the base. Getting back to Bagram didn’t mean the job was complete, however.

“Once we got back to BAF, download was essentially the same as loading. The only difference was that we had to set the AH-64 down on some cradles so that it could be moved as needed,” March said. “After we were done downloading all the pieces, we ended mission.”

Now that the aircraft has been returned, a thorough investigation can be performed to determine the cause of the crash, as well an assessment as to whether the Apache can be repaired.

“It’s important to conduct DART missions,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Michael Morgan of Bluemont, Va., a standardizations instructor with the 10th CAB. “Because of their work, we can recover U.S. property, and may even be able to repair it.” 🇺🇸



BAGRAM, Afghanistan- U.S. Army Capt. Benjamin March of Saint Johnsbury, Vt., the officer-in-charge of a Downed Aircraft Recovery Team mission July 7, watches as members of the team prepare a downed AH-64 Apache helicopter for transportation back to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, where it can be assessed for repairs. March deployed from Fort Drum, N.Y., with Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. (Photo courtesy of Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade)



BAGRAM, Afghanistan- U.S. Army Capt. Benjamin March of Saint Johnsbury, Vt., the officer-in-charge of a Downed Aircraft Recovery Team mission July 7, helps prepare a downed AH-64 Apache helicopter for transportation back to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, where it can be assessed for repairs. March deployed from Fort Drum, N.Y., with Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. (Photo courtesy of Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade)



BAGRAM, Afghanistan- Company B, 277th Aviation Support Battalion, Task Force Mountain Eagle Downed Aircraft Recovery Team members pose after returning from two DART missions, in which they recovered an AH-64 Apache and a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. The team spent a week tearing down the aircrafts and preparing them for transport back to Bagram.

BOTTOM ROW: (from left to right) Capt. Benjamin March, Sgt. Donald Wilkins, Sgt. Ryan Gardner, Spc. Thomas Tipton, Spc. James Warner, Spc. Jose Muniz.

TOP ROW: (from left to right) Spc. James Henderson, Staff Sgt. John Brown, Staff Sgt. Zachary Ray, Spc. Julio Mendoza, Sgt. Benjamin Lyon, Spc. Sean Tomsu, Pfc. Scott Nickas, Spc. Joshua Hanna, Staff Sgt. Louis Fitch, Sgt. Eric Drop, Spc. Elmo Dorsey, Spc. Britton McElwee. (Photo by Sgt. Maj. Rodney Harris, TF Mountain Eagle)



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan- Company B, Task Force Mountain Eagle Soldiers prepare to hook up a generator sling to a CH-47 Chinook helicopter. Pictured are: Staff Sgt. Michael Withrow, Pfc. Adam Steimle, and Pfc. Donald Thurmond. (Photo by Sgt. Maj. Rodney Harris, TF Mountain Eagle)

Soldiers serve up memorable meals at Mountain Eagle Cafe'

By Staff Sgt. James Myers
Task Force Mountain Eagle



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Spc. Jasmine Moore, a native of Middletown, Ohio, pours chicken wings from a perforated pan to a mixing bowl in preparation for serving between 1,300 and 1,500 lunch guests at the Task Force Mountain Eagle Cafe dining facility. Various styles of chicken wings are one of many unique food items prepared and served by the Soldier-run dining facility. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The Mountain Eagle Café dining facility is one of seven dining facilities on Bagram Airfield and is one of the few managed and operated by an all-service member staff. The Soldiers, assigned to Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain

Division, cook and serve meals to hundreds of service members and civilians and from all over the base, with an average daily headcount of 3,000.

“I’ve been the rations non-commissioned officer-in-charge since we’ve arrived in country and I take pride in making sure that the 10th Combat

Aviation Brigade Dining Facility receives top quality products while deployed,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Charity Edwards of Gainesville, Fla.

In spite of limited resources, the Soldiers involved in cooking and preparing the meals take great pride in the quality of product they provide. The facility not only serves a variety of

food, it modifies its menu constantly to improve the quality and creativity of the dishes served.

Specialty meals include Mexican Monday, Asian Tuesday, Italian Wednesday and surprise meals on Thursdays. Each Friday, Mountain Eagle Café provides a Surf and Turf meal, with steaks, grilled the traditional way on an outside grill, and seafood. Popularity for this meal has grown so much that the preparation sometimes starts as early as Wednesday.

The Mountain Eagle Café also presents a chicken wing bar with 6 to 8 different styles of sauces on Saturdays. Sundays, customers can enjoy brunch early in the day and a Soul Food dinner with homemade cobbler and corn bread in the evening.

“The Soul Food dinners are amongst

the best I’ve ever tasted so I decided to take out time to assist these outstanding Soliders with preparation of the dinner meal,” said U.S. Army Capt. Carl Jackson of Fayette, Miss., HSC, TF Mountain Eagle, executive officer. “I enjoyed the time, professionalism and dedication they show from start to finish and I look forward to doing it again in the near future.”

The Mountain Eagle Café dining facility also serves lunch and midnight chow to its customers on the east side of Bagram Airfield. Due to split operations and varying shift work, Soldiers on the east side are unable to get back and forth to chow so the Soldiers of The Mountain Eagle Cafe’ take chow to them. The average headcount from the east side is 150 per meal.

The Mountain Eagle Café dining facility remains one of the most versatile dining

facilities on Bagram Airfield. The Soldiers in The Mountain Eagle Café prepare and make food trays, fruit trays and pastries for various special events. These events and activities are a creative and diverse way for the Soldiers to use their training to make something fun and enjoyable.

“I enjoy their offering of a healthy variety of food groups and I look forward to the meals daily,” said U.S. Army Sgt. Joseph Wilder of Atlanta, a military intelligence non-commissioned officer with HSC, TF Mountain Eagle.

The Mountain Eagle Café may be a small facility, but surprisingly its headcount has at times reached very large numbers.

“Our daily headcount has reached as high as 1,900 for one single meal,” said U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Reed of Marked Tree, Ark., and DFAC non-commissioned officer-in-charge. “It is because of its popularity and high quality meals that bring in such an impressive amount of people. The good reputation that this facility has had in the past has only been outshined by the amount of hard work that the Soldiers have put into it since the beginning of the deployment making the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade’s Mountain Eagle Cafe’ the preferred dining facility on Bagram Air Base.” 🇺🇸



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Food service specialists of Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, enjoy a brief break before gearing up to serve lunch Aug. 23 at the Mountain Eagle Café dining facility. From left, U.S. Army Spc. Amanda Oelschlager, Pfc. Tabitha Wigginton, Spc. Samuel Daigle, Spc. Brian Ferrero, Pfc. Chet Banger, Spc. Scott McPherson, Spc. Daniel Mohamed, Spc. Crystal Gallardo, Spc. Michael Rowe, Pfc. Aaron Mark, Sgt. Donald Dew, Pv2 Tanisha Abdat, Spc. Patrick Murray, Spc. Jasmine Moore, Pfc. Stephanie Lars, Sgt. Scott Richards, Spc. Jeremy Faircloth, Pfc. Tyler Inhofe. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)

TF Falcon provides training for career counselors at Bagram Airfield

By Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot
Task Force Falcon



BAGRAM, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, congratulates Sgt. Billy Hill of Amarillo, Texas, a cable systems installer and maintainer with TF Duke, 1st Infantry Division, who also serves as his company retention officer Aug. 10. Hill traveled from Forward Operating Base Salerno for company and battalion level career counsellor training. (Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Michael Syner, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Task Force Falcon hosted training for ten company - and - battalion level retention noncommissioned officers at Bagram Airfield Aug. 8-10.

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Eric Crist, the retention noncommissioned officer for Task Force Falcon, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division and the person responsible for putting this training together, sought out senior career counselors at Bagram from Combined Joint Task Force 1, TF 44th

Med, and TF Paladin to assist him.

“These Soldiers are going to be the first line of defense for company or battalion level command teams when it comes to re-enlistment operations,” said Crist.

Sgt. Billy Hill, a cable systems installer and maintainer with TF Duke, 1st Infantry Division, who also serves as his company retention officer, traveled from Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan, for the training.

“We learned basic information to qualify a Soldier for re-enlistment, how to counsel Soldiers on re-enlistment options, how to compute a Soldier’s bonus, and career progression,” the Amarillo, Texas, native said. Hill said his job is to support the battalion career counsellor and keep his command team informed of who is in their re-enlistment window as well as re-enlistment statistics. He said this training was important because he must be knowledgeable in order to give the right information to Soldiers

so they could make informed decisions about their careers especially with the Army starting to downsize.

“The Army is looking for quality over quantity, and is initiating bars to re-enlist for Soldiers not meeting standards,” said Hill. “Competitiveness in the senior NCO ranks will get tighter.”

A graduation ceremony at TF Falcon’s headquarters building culminated the event. 🌟



Capt. Hague relinquishes command

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Task Force Six-Shooters outgoing Troop E commander Capt. William Hague of Garden City, N.Y. passes the guidon to TF Six-Shooters commander Lt. Col. Christopher Downey of Philadelphia for the last time during the Troop E change of command ceremony held at Jalalabad Airfield, July 31. (Photo by Cpl. Kam Gerohimos Task Force Six-Shooters, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade)



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Andre Pegues of Fayetteville, N.C., a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief with Company C, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, waves during training Aug. 20. The unit out of Fort Bragg, N.C., recently replaced Co. C, 3rd GSAB, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Div. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Janell Emerson, Task Force Knighthawk Public Affairs)



Farewell, Mountain Dustoff...



...We'll meet you



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers of Task Force Knighthawk, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, wave goodbye to Company C, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th CAB, 10th Mountain Div., Aug. 20. Co. C, 3rd GSAB, 82nd CAB, 82nd Airborne Div., replaced the Fort Drum, N.Y. unit, which recently completed its 12-month deployment. (Photo by U.S. Army Sgt. Janell Emerson, Task Force Knighthawk Public Affairs)

back at Fort Drum.



Task Force Attack draws the line in the sand

Story by Sgt. Richard Wrigley
1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division



FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHARANA, Afghanistan – “When the challenge is drawn in the sand...the soldiers step up,” said Maj. Paul Berg, a native of Stuttgart, Ark., executive officer of Task Force Attack.

No statement could be closer to the truth when in regards to the soldiers of TF Attack, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, who are conducting operations in Regional Command-East, Afghanistan, and are currently attached to 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

“We have a very good team here,” said Berg. “This is my fourth deployment, and this is the best team I’ve been with so far.”

The best team is exactly what is needed right now in RC-East, as the operational tempo is incredibly high.

Lt. Col. Douglas Brockhard, a native of Colombia, S.C., and commander of TF Attack, compared the escalated operational tempo to a NASCAR pit-team functionality when he described the demand for aviation support.

“The demand outweighs what we have on hand,” he said.

Brockhard elaborated how due to the demand, the task force is forced to operate under launch-recover-launch conditions, so that when an aircraft lands, maintainers, armament, and fuelers must be out there

with the aircraft preparing it for the next team to take off, making for a NASCAR mentality.

However, when any unit flies as much as TF Attack is flying, maintenance becomes an issue and a challenge: one that Berg describes as an everyday battle that requires team effort.

This team effort is evident throughout the ranks of TF Attack, and can be seen in the actions of much of the leadership, said Berg.

One way they are combating this maintenance challenge is through the sacrifice of non air-crew soldiers within TF Attack.

Usually, door gunner slots in Army

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHARANA, Afghanistan – An AH-64D Apache helicopter from Task Force Attack, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, attached to 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division returns to Sharana Airfield after completing a mission, July 22. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)

aircraft are filled by the crew chiefs themselves. However, in TF Attack, from the battalion command sergeant major on down, non aircrew soldiers have been volunteering to man the guns during missions, allowing the aviation maintainers the necessary time they need to work on the aircraft, and to recover.

Yet sheer demand for aviation support is not the only challenge TF Attack has faced in Afghanistan.

One other major challenge they faced is their separation from their parent brigade, the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, and their attachment to the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Nevertheless, this transition took place without nary a hiccup, which Brockhard attributes to the great relationship between 10th CAB and TF Attack, and their respective leadership, which consists of senior leaders in both units that have worked together prior to this deployment.

Furthermore, Col. Pedro Almeida, a native of New Bedford, Mass., commander of 10th CAB and TF Falcon, talked about the apparently seamless integration of the soldiers of TF Attack into the 10th CAB.

“We’ll be great, this is what we’ve trained for; this is why we do what we do.”

- Maj. Paul Berg, executive officer of Task Force Attack.

“TF Attack soldiers have blended in with their Task Force Falcon counterparts extraordinarily well and made a difference in accomplishing this tough mission at the incredible kinetic and flying operational tempo that defines RC-East,” said Almeida.

In the end the success that TF Attack has already garnered speaks volumes of the hard work, sacrifice, and dedication that the Attack team has brought in RC-East.

When asked if TF Attack can maintain this operational tempo successfully throughout the year’s deployment, Berg replied confidently.

“We’ll be great, this is what we’ve

trained for; this is why we do what we do,” he said. “We came here prepared and ready, and we couldn’t have asked for a better team in order to execute the mission in the most difficult terrain, with the toughest enemy, everyday.”

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHARANA, Afghanistan – An AH-64D Apache helicopter from Task Force Attack, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, attached to 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division takes off from Sharana Airfield on a security mission to Orgun-e, July 22. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, Task Force Falcon Public Affairs)



Company A, 1-169 Aviation Regiment first Reserve Blackhawk unit to fly in support of OEF

By Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson
210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Sgt. Christopher Fransen, a crew chief with Company A, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, watches a valley below his UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during a flight between Bagram and Kabul Aug. 28. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Once again, some aviators from North Carolina are first in flight.

“We’re the very first Blackhawk unit from the Army Reserves to be fielded in Afghanistan,” U.S. Army Capt. Brent Hilzendager, company commander of Company A, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, said.

“The Army Reserves stood up several Blackhawk units in the last few years, but we’re the first to support Operation Enduring Freedom.”

The unit, which is out of

Fayetteville, N.C., is comprised of about 50 Reserve Soldiers, many of whom were cross-leveled for the deployment from 13 other units throughout seven states. The unit, dubbed the “Smugglers” – drawing from North Carolina’s naval history, had a busy year, logging more than 5,000 flight hours. According to Hilzendager, the unit flew nearly seven missions a day for 10 months..

“We’re a command aviation company, which means we conduct all the basic missions that a Blackhawk unit does – all the utility missions – the air assaults, the sling loads, the regular movement of personnel and equipment, and we also conduct VIP missions as well,” Hilzendager

explained.

Hilzendager, a native of Anamosa, Iowa, said his favorite memories of the deployment are some of the larger missions the unit flew, such as Operation Bullwhip which was the largest Air Assault conducted by the 101st Airborne Division during its deployment to Afghanistan. Hilzendager said it was especially memorable to him because as an Iowa native, his company’s air assets were supporting members of the Iowa National Guard on the ground during that mission.

U.S. Army Sgt. Christopher Fransen, a native of Fort Walton Beach, Fla., a crew chief for nine years with two deployments to Iraq under his

belt said flying in Afghanistan was a greater challenge than flying in Iraq due to the mountainous terrain. He said the amount of flight hours the crews logged tested their mettle.

“This year has been an extreme challenge,” Fransen said. “The amount of cargo and personnel that we’ve moved around this year and the things we’ve gone through put me through the ultimate test. The experiences I’ve had here far exceed anything I’ve done before.”

The unit also faced a determined enemy willing to attack their aircraft from the ground. The Smugglers were awarded 14 combat action badges, 62 air medals, eight air medals with valor, and two Bronze Stars during their year in combat.



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Pilots from Company A, 1st Battalion, 169th Aviation Regiment, prepare for a flight Aug. 28 on Bagram Airfield, Parwan Province, Afghanistan. The “Smugglers” are finishing up a year-long deployment to Afghanistan in which they were the first Reserve Blackhawk unit fielded in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson, 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



Pre-flight Inspection

PAKTIKA PROVINCE, Afghanistan – U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 2 Elisabeth Dodge, an AH-64 Apache helicopter test maintenance pilot with Task Force Attack, checks the condition of the rear rotor blade of an Apache during a pre-flight inspection Aug. 30 at Forward Operating Base Sharana. Dodge is originally from Bamberg, Germany, but now calls Copperas Cove, Texas, home. Task Force Attack, an aviation unit of 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Hood, Texas, is attached to 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon)

Married couple pins on same rank, same day

By U.S. Army Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown
Task Force Phoenix



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Sgt. Amalia Zuluaga and Sgt. Sebastian Zuluaga, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Phoenix, were promoted the rank of sergeant Aug. 15. Amalia, a native of Chicago, is a human resource specialist. Sebastian, a native of New York City, is an aviation operations specialist working dual positions as the TF Phoenix command sergeant major's driver and as a door gunner for the unit's VIP flight company. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – It is a rarity for a dual military married couple to get promoted in the same month. A couple at Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Phoenix, took that rarity to a new level.

U.S. Army Sgt. Amalia Zuluaga, from Chicago, is a human resources specialist, and U.S. Army Sgt. Sebastian Zuluaga of New York City is an aviation operations specialist working dual positions as the TF Phoenix command sergeant major's driver and as a door gunner for the unit's VIP flight company.

The couple was inducted into the non-commissioned officer corps here Aug. 15. Sebastian has been serving the Army for three years and attended the promotion board in May – a month before his wife.

"We were competing to see who would get promoted first," said Sebastian, joking with Amalia about their experience.

He said it was that friendly competition that encouraged him to work diligently to achieve the next rank in his career.

"It was nice to be promoted together," said Sebastian.

Amalia agreed that it was a wonderful experience. Her support and motivation helped him to accomplish his achievement in rank in less time than herself.

"It felt weird because it took me double the time to get the rank as my husband, but I was very proud of him," said Amalia.

Amalia reflected on how this day was made more memorable by being promoted on their daughter's first birthday.

"It was the best feeling in the world to get promoted on our daughter's birthday," said Amalia, "I thought I was going to be sad because I was not there with her, but it turned out wonderful."

Sebastian also reflected on the bittersweet moment of being away from his daughter, and having the pleasure of joining the corps of non-commissioned officers.

"I wish my little girl could have been here to watch us get promoted," said Sebastian, "Not only was it a special day for our daughter, but also a special day for my wife and I. Years from now we will look back and remember that day as the day that we both got promoted to sergeant."

Amalia and Sebastian said they both look forward to learning how to become good non-commissioned officers and make a difference in the lives of Soldiers around them. 🇺🇸



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - U.S. Army Sgt. Amalia Zuluaga and U.S. Army Sgt. Sebastian Zuluaga, a married couple in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, were both pinned the rank of sergeant Aug. 15. Amalia, a native of Chicago, is a human resource specialist. Sebastian, a native of New York City, is an aviation operations specialist working dual positions as the TF Phoenix command sergeant major's driver and as a door gunner for the unit's VIP flight company. The married couple recently returned from leave and asked to wait to be pinned on the 15th of the month - which marks their daughter's first birthday. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)

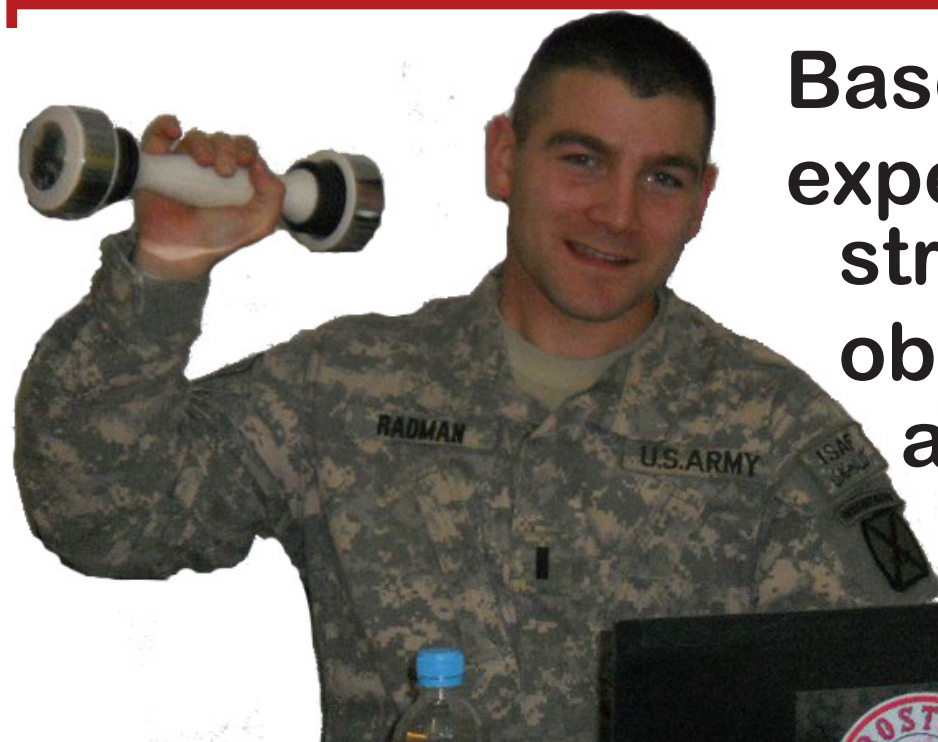


Talking with Heroes



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Bob Calvert, of Talkingwithheros.com, visited with Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade Aug. 17. Top left, Calvert talks with Soldiers of Company D, TF Phoenix. Right, Calvert interviews Sgt. Paul Roberts, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter door gunner with Co. B, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, a reserve unit serving with TF Phoenix, about Robert's mission to bring care packages to Soldiers serving in remote locations. Bottom left, Calvert interviews Soldiers who have attended Embry Riddle University. (Photos by Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown, Task Force Phoenix)





Based on my experience: stress and coping observations from a junior officer

By 1st Lt. Matthew Radman
Task Force Mountain Eagle

We have all been there. It's 8 a.m. on a Monday and you've just walked into work. Your inbox is full of emails, each requiring immediate action and response. A subordinate soldier comes up and asks you for assistance with a personal issue. Your family back home is having issues keeping up with paying bills. Your boss is asking you for a status report on that big project you are working on, informing you that your deadline has been moved up. You feel overwhelmed that regardless of how much progress you make today, tomorrow will be exactly the same. If you can relate to the above scenario, then you have probably experienced stress.

According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary, "stress is physical, chemical, or emotional factors that cause bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation".

Stress can be caused by many different factors, both positive and negative, which when combined can lead to potential harm to your body. There are many signs and symptoms of being stressed, the more common being headaches and muscle tension, problems sleeping and excessive fatigue, irritability, lack of motivation and focus, social withdrawal and drastic changes in eating habits. If you are experiencing a combination of these symptoms, your every day stress levels have probably added up to a point where your body is having trouble coping.

A great way of looking at stress is to think of water on a stove. As one turns up the heat, over time, the water

gets warmer until finally, at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, the water will boil. As stress builds, it takes a physical toll on the body.

One of the first things an individual should do when he or she recognizes they may be stressed is to identify what is causing the stress. A great tool to identify and tally effects causing stress is the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale. A numerical value is given to 43 life events. An individual will then add up values which will result in a score between 1 and 300. The higher the score, the more likely stress can lead to potentially harmful consequences.

After completing the stress scale, one has an idea of what types of issues can lead to stress, but the question remains - how does one deal with stress in a deployed environment?

Talking to soldiers in Company C, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, there are many different ways to deal with stress, but the number one method used by Soldiers is going to the gym and working out. Another method used by Soldiers to help relieve stress is a simple variation of meditation involving breathing exercises.

A third technique used by Soldiers is to manage their time, prioritizing which tasks should be accomplished at different times of the day.

A final technique that works is using friends around you for social and moral support; as you talk about what issues are bothering you and let it out, many times you will feel better just by talking about your experiences.

One of the biggest stressors Soldiers encounter revolves around redeployment. As the days drive on, Soldiers can easily become overwhelmed with the multiple tasks and assignments needed to be complete before boarding their plane to freedom. Change-management becomes a critical cornerstone to rely on as plans, schedules, and deadlines all change simultaneously.

A great way Soldiers can deal with stress caused by the many moving parts of redeployment would be to take a “tactical pause” during the course of their work. A tactical pause is a temporary moment of reflection Soldiers can use to look back on all they have accomplished and see how close they are to returning home when they finish up the current task they are completing. This is not to say that every task requires a tactical pause, but as stress and deadlines build up, allow your hurricane of work to stop for a simple moment, and sit back to take a break.

As Soldiers, it is vital to maintain our physical, emotional, and psy-

chological readiness to accomplish whatever missions we are assigned to accomplish. The most important things to know about stress are: 1) Everyone experiences both positive and negative stress, 2) everyone’s reaction to stress is different and unique in each situation, and most importantly 3) stress can be managed

Sometimes as work and life seem to overwhelm us, we don’t often see that light that signifies the end of the tunnel. As we near redeployment as a unit, make sure you don’t let stress get the better of you. Remember that everyone experiences stress and don’t be afraid to let someone know that you are feeling overwhelmed and need a break. 🇺🇸



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Task Force Six-Shooters cavalry trooper Sgt. Colby Scott of Sequim, Wash., a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief, is awarded a deployment coin from squadron commander Lt. Col. Christopher Downey of Philadelphia, for his service while deployed with the task force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom XI. (Photo taken by Cpl. Kam Gerohimos, Task Force Six-Shooters)

Deployment Coins for Service

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Task Force Six-Shooters cavalry trooper Staff Sgt. Adam Rexroad of Colorado Springs, Colo., a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief, is given a deployment coin Aug. 2, from squadron commander Lt. Col. Christopher Downey of Philadelphia for his service deployed with TF Six-Shooters in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Photo taken by Cpl. Kam Gerohimos, Task Force Six-Shooters)





**Congratulations to
Staff Sgt. Lashonda
Nash of Task Force
Attack.**

**Staff Sgt. Nash won
the Equal Opportunity
poster contest for the
month of August.**

Task Force Tigershark Soldiers Receive Combat Patch

KHOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan-Task Force Tigershark commander Lt. Col. David Kramer stands before a formation of Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment at the start of a shoulder sleeve insignia, or combat patch, ceremony held Aug. 23. Co. B, 2-135th Avn. Regt. is attached to the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade.



“T” is for Tigershark... and Texas Pride

KHOST PROVINCE, Afghanistan-Soldiers of Task Force Tigershark, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade show their Texas pride in front of an AH-64 Apache helicopter on Forward Operating Base Salerno. (left to right) Sgt. Isaac Trevino, Capt. Christopher McFarland, Capt. James Falcon, Staff Sgt. Frank Aguilar, Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Stevens, and Command Sgt. Maj. Nicolas Carter of Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Sgt. Carter Coon of Company D.



Grand Opening

Camp Avenger community center showcases Soldiers' ingenuity

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Command Sgt. Maj. Zacchaeus Hurst, Task Force Mountain Eagle command sergeant major, and Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, Task Force Falcon command sergeant major, chat in front of The Rat's Nest Community Center Aug. 13 before the facility's grand opening. The community center was constructed by Soldiers on Camp Avenger to fulfil the recreational needs of the Soldiers and civilians who live on the camp. (Photo by Sgt. Roldan Chandler, Task Force Mountain Eagle)



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Staff Sgt. Richard Turner, Company B, Task Force Mountain Eagle, gives Col. Pedro Almeida, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade commander, a tour of The Rat's Nest Community Center before the grand opening Aug. 13. Turner oversaw the construction of the facility and supervises its operation. (Photo by Sgt. Roldan Chandler, Task Force Mountain Eagle)



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Col. Pedro Almeida, Task Force Falcon commander, presents the Army Commendation Medal to Staff Sgt. Richard Turner, Company B, Task Force Mountain Eagle, for his role in constructing and managing The Rat's Nest Community Center, Aug. 13. The presentation was done just before the grand opening of the facility. (Photo by Sgt. Roldan Chandler, Task Force Mountain Eagle)

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Soldiers use the internet services at The Rat's Nest Community Center, which recently held its grand opening Aug. 13. Leaders from Task Force Falcon and Task Force Mountain Eagle were on hand to commemorate the event. In addition to internet services, the facility has a game room, telephones, and a movie room. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot, Task Force Falcon)



In Memory of our Fallen Heroes We Will Never Forget

Company B, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment

**Chief Warrant Officer Four David Carter
Sergeant Patrick Hamburger**



Company B, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment

**Chief Warrant Officer Two Bryan Nichols
Specialist Alexander Bennett
Specialist Spencer Duncan**



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jesse Edwards of Port Angeles, Wash., a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot with Company A, Task Force Phoenix, and Capt. Melinda Walden of Sandpoint, Idaho, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot with Co. B, TF Mountain Eagle practice a two-wheel pinnacle landing at 12,000 feet. (Photo courtesy of TF Mountain Eagle)