



159TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE

# THUNDER *ENLIGHTENING*

*Inside this issue:*

'Target in sight'

Weapons Gauge

Enlisted to warrant

Volume 1, Number 8

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## *The 159th CAB TF Thunder Enlightening*

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# Commander's Corner

## Col. Kenneth T. Royar

### Brigade Commander



### Decisions, Decisions.

At this point in the deployment, many of us are faced with important decisions about our future. Should we stay in the Army or end our terms of service or retire. If we decide to stay in, should we ask to stay at Fort Campbell, Ky., or elect to move on to another duty station? These are all important decisions that need to be thought through.

In making the decision about whether to stay in or get out of the Army, consider what the Army has to offer in comparison to a civilian career. While both have

their advantages and disadvantages, carefully weigh all considerations, to include everything from family stability to financial compensation and other benefits like health care that are sometimes hard to quantify. Also know that with the removal of troops from Iraq, the time between deployments will continue to increase.

If your decision is to remain in the Army, then of course you must consider the next step in your career. Is it professionally enhancing to stay at Fort Campbell, Ky., or is it better to do a permanent change of station? Do you have the option to go to a non-deployable unit or organization? I recommend finding a mentor to discuss career options.

In the end, decide what is best for you and your family. Professional careers must be balanced with family considerations, and many times the decisions are not clear cut. Know that the chain of command is here to help you make an informed decision and then support you with whatever you decide.

Regardless of whether your decision is ultimately to stay in the Army or get out -- to stay at Fort Campbell, Ky., or move on, thank you for your service. As a Soldier or Family member, you have already done what less than one percent of Americans have, and that is to serve. It is an honor to serve with each of you.

A word from

Brigade Command Sergeant Major

*Eric C. Thom*



Hello to all,

So far October has been a very good month for Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade), promotions were abundant, we had over 100 reenlistments in the first week, and the long hot days of summer are finally starting to cool down.

I want to congratulate Sgt. Andrew Herndon from TF Lift and Spc. Revanth Renduchintala from TF Fighting, as they were the winners of the fourth quarter fiscal year 2011 NCO and Soldier of the quarter board winners respectively. They will compete Oct. 20 until Oct. 21, with the other quarter board winners for the right to be known as the TF Thunder NCO and Soldier of the Year. I wish all the participants the best of luck and want them to know that there are over three thousand personnel in this Task Force, and they have already been chosen to be

the best we have to offer; now they get the opportunity to prove they are the best of the best.

We must also say congratulations to Chief Warrant Officer 4 Rick Bebb from TF Wings for his selection as the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) winner of the annual Aircraft Survivability Equipment Award; and Sgt. Angel Jordan from TF Palehorse for receiving AAAA's annual Avionics Award. I predict these are just the first of many individual and unit awards that we will receive. I say that with all the confidence in the world because I know the quality of the Soldiers in this brigade have no equal ANYWHERE!

As always it is my honor to serve as your command sergeant major!

*Eric C. Thom*

## From the Command Chief Warrant Officer *Joe Roberts*



Another month has passed, and Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) continues to keep the pressure on the enemy as we head into the last third of our deployment.

I recently returned from rest and recovery and got to experience the sheer joy of returning to family for a very enjoyable and memorable couple of weeks. For those who have yet to go on your R & R, be sure to enjoy every minute of it; it goes quickly.

It's also great to be back with TF Thunder during this truly exciting time, as we have transitioned to the fall season and the weather is cooler.

The personnel distribution roster is now complete, and we were very successful in fulfilling our warrant officers' assignment desires, be it a permanent change of station or to remain at Fort Campbell, Ky. We are fortunate to have a great working relationship with the Human Resources Command. Additionally, most of you were able to realize your goal to obtain skill qualification (track) training. As a result, many will be leaving TF Thunder next summer with a heightened anticipation of their next assignment.

As leaders, it's important that we ask ourselves what we can do to enhance our warriors' transition to their next assignments? For one thing, we should be very proactive in ensuring all their training and evaluations are up to date, to include flight training and evaluations, common

Soldier training, such as weapons qualification, physical training tests, sexual harassment and assault prevention training, and medical examinations to include flight physicals and dental screening.

We also must tell the positive story of the great impacts our warriors have made as members of the unit. Nothing sets a Soldier up for success faster than a positive image told by his previous unit team members. If you have nothing positive to say, then say nothing. For the message we send is a critical enabler that will help our young warrant officers as they grow and develop into our future warrant officer leaders.

Speaking of leadership, our branch has made the decision to formalize the position of command chief warrant officer (CCWO) as a command team position within each combat aviation brigade. Currently, the development is on-going, to include the creation of a formal modified table of equipment position, nominative selection of candidates for the position at the HRC level, and assignments to coincide with that of the brigade commander and command sergeant major. This means warrant officers will have an advocate and voice at the brigade level as a full-time job. However, expect the CCWO's priorities to match that of the brigade commander just as they currently do.

We recently had another milestone, the Regional Command South transfer of authority from the 10th Mountain Division to the 82nd Airborne Division. The transition has been relatively seamless and smooth with little impact to our formation. We welcome the senior staff of the 82nd to RC South and look forward to their leadership and wisdom as we move into the fall/winter fighting season. Additionally, we certainly welcome the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey, and our new Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Ray Odierno.

What lies ahead for us? Although we are two-thirds through the deployment there is still much to be done. As the senior brigade staff continues planning for redeployment, our war fighters continue to provide outstanding support to our ground force commanders while integrating our allies and Afghan forces. However, the time is passing quickly as we approach the holiday season. Halloween will be within a week or so by the time this is published, and then about three weeks later there's Thanksgiving. About four weeks after that we will celebrate Christmas followed closely by New Years Day.

Then shortly afterward, the relief-in-place process and transfer of authority will occur, followed immediately by redeployment. For now though, we must keep our eye on the ball and our head in the game. We do that best by focusing on the basics, setting and enforcing high standards, living the Army values, and providing engaged leadership.

*Joe Roberts*

# ‘Target in Sight’

Aviation gunnery keeps crews proficient, ready to engage the enemy

Story and Photos by

Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WOLVERINE, Afghanistan – “Target in sight,” Sgt. Alex Williams’ voice crackled over the headset.

“You’re clear to engage when you’re ready,” came the pilot’s response.

Moments later, Williams began firing the M-240H machine gun, slowly at first, as he followed the path of the tracer rounds and watched for dust clouds so he could adjust fire as needed. Meanwhile, the brass casings from the rounds flew back into the helicopter and to the ground.

Shooting an area target with a machine gun that fires as many as 650 rounds per minute might seem like an easy task, but try doing it from a helicopter up to 200 feet in the air while moving up to 115 knots per hour.

This annual requirement for all UH-60 Blackhawk crew chiefs and door gunners ensures they are prepared to engage the enemy effectively on the battlefield, and it doesn’t go away just because a unit is deployed.

In fact, maintaining this standard becomes a little more challenging while deployed – not just because of ongoing operations, but because of the environmental considerations that come into play.

Before an air crew can begin engaging targets as part of their qualifications here, they have to make sure the area is clear. In Afghanistan, there are constantly people on the ground, tending to crops and herds. As soon as the crew chiefs and gunners begin firing, the locals scramble to collect the casings,



▲ Staff Sgt. Brian Williams, the standardization instructor for Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), sorts 7.62mm ammunition during gunnery at FOB Wolverine Oct. 8.

which they turn in at nearby bases.

“Here we fly over anywhere from 50 to 100 feet to make sure the area is clear. We constantly monitor who’s around and where they are,” said Staff Sgt. Brian Williams, the standardization instructor for Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment). “They want our brass, so they’re running out there to collect the brass. But as long as we’re conscious of them and where they are, we’re good. It helps with the crew coordination.”

Throughout September and October, Task Force Thunder’s Soldiers have been completing their annual gunnery qualification requirements, which started with eight hours of academics training.

“The training focuses on weapon control, status and configuration – the position of the weapon,” Williams said.

It also includes some of the basic radio calls that are required as part of the crew coordination.

Williams explained that a lot of the

training starts out on the ground, as many of the door gunners have no background in aviation.

“They’re new to progressing in an aircraft,” he said. “Plus, when they first start out as door gunners, a lot of them are scared of the weapon. It’s a machine gun that fires at a high rate.”

The M-240B machine gun – or M-240H if it’s in the helicopter-mounted configuration – serves as the primary defense for most UH-60 Blackhawks, which requires the door gunners to completely understand how the weapon works and to instinctively know how to respond if something goes wrong.

Part of the testing for the crew chiefs and door gunners requires them to announce a weapon malfunction and begin remedial action within 10 seconds of the problem presenting itself.

This also tests the crew coordination aspect of working on an aircraft.

“Learning the calls was one of the hardest parts in the beginning,” said Spc. Tyker M. Fenwick, a door gunner

with Company A, 4<sup>th</sup> Bn., 101<sup>st</sup> Avn. Rgt.

Fenwick is actually a supply specialist who served with the unit during its 2009 deployment, then volunteered to be a door gunner for this deployment.

“When I went through my first progressions at Fort Irwin, (Calif.), I told myself I could get better,” he said.

Throughout the past year, Fenwick has learned more about both the weapon system and the aircraft, which has helped him prepare for this gunnery. He explained that when he took his academics test, his biggest problem was getting the different numbers mixed up.

“You don’t just want to start shooting at a target,” he said. “You want to know the different distances you can effectively shoot at when you’re in the air.”

The academics test helps Williams and his company standardization instructors find the Soldiers’ weaknesses and retrain them.

“Overall, I was very pleased with the test results,” he said. “About 90 percent of our guys scored in the 90 to 100<sup>th</sup> percentile. But those test results give us a clue to what we need to train on.”

For some of the more seasoned crew members, the training may seem redundant, but that doesn’t mean it’s not important.

“You don’t know what’s going to happen – it’s the unknown,” said 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Jeff Harstine, the Co. A first sergeant and a crew chief for 18 years. “The more you do it, it becomes muscle memory and you don’t have to think about it. If you don’t have to think about it, then it works.”

Fortunately, none of Co. A’s Soldiers have been in a situation this deployment where they’ve had to fire their weapons for anything other than a test fire. But the continued training and qualifications, which are expected to increase soon from an annual requirement to a biannual requirement, continue to reinforce what the Soldiers need to know and do if they ever are placed in that situation.

“I know my guys have been trained to do what’s right and can make the quick decision,” Williams said.



◀ Sgt. Alex Williams, a crew chief with Company A, Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), leans out his window to gain situational awareness of local nationals as he prepares to conduct gunnery qualification at FOB Wolverine Oct. 8.



▲ Cpl. David O’Connell (right), a door gunner with Company A, Task Force Wings (4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment), conducts immediate action on his M-240H machine gun, after it jams during gunnery qualification at FOB Wolverine Oct. 8.

# KY 123rd ARNG celebrates 50 years since last activation



**RUSSELLVILLE, Ky., (Oct. 13, 2011) – Soldiers of the Task Force Lift (7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment) Color Guard lead the Russellville's 2011 Tobacco and Heritage Festival here Oct. 8. Task Force Lift volunteered to escort the veterans of Co. A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 123<sup>rd</sup> Armor Kentucky Army National Guard, as they celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their last call to national duty.**

By Spc. Jennifer Andersson  
*Task Force Thunder Public Affairs*

Soldiers of Task Force Lift (7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment) helped commemorate a very special date for Russellville, Ky., National Guard unit during the annual Tobacco and Heritage Festival Oct. 8.

This year marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the last national activation of the Russellville National Guard unit. The last time Company A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 123<sup>rd</sup> Armor was mobilized was in 1961 for 11 months to Fort Knox, Ky., in support of the Berlin Crisis. Since 1962, the Kentucky Army National Guard and Air National Guard

have been limited to state and local support during emergencies.

This was the first year the Russellville National Guard has been involved in the parade, said retired Col. Daniel Ellis Bentley, who had not been back to Russellville since 1963.

In addition to being featured at the



beginning of the parade, the 123<sup>rd</sup> Armor held a special reunion for the National Guardsmen who were mobilized to Fort Knox 50 years ago.

"Seeing the fellows in the unit who were called up and remembering those who are no longer with us are the main things I'm going to remember about today," Bentley said.

Bentley, who participated in the parade, said he was honored to be escorted by the Soldiers of TF Lift.

Sgt. Michael Hawes of East Bernard, Texas, a squad leader for Company D, TF Lift, said he was happy to participate in the event because it

gave him the chance to interact with the National Guard retirees.

Many of the Soldiers who participated said they really enjoyed it and would love to do it again next year if they were given the opportunity.

"I love listening to their stories from long ago," said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Timothy Gawarecki of Louisville, Ky., a platoon sergeant for Co. D. "Someday that'll be me. Overall, I think they have better stories because there were worse conditions for them compared to what we have now."

"I'm always in awe of what they

**RUSSELLVILLE, Ky., (Oct. 13, 2011) – Soldiers of the Task Force Lift (7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment) escort veterans of Co. A, 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn., 123<sup>rd</sup> Armor Kentucky Army National Guard, during the 2011 Tobacco and Heritage Festival in Russellville Oct. 8. This year marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kentucky National Guard's last call to national duty in 1961 in support of the Berlin Crisis.**

accomplished," said Staff Sgt. Thomas Capouch of Marsing, Idaho, a medium helicopter repairer technical inspector for Co. D. "Hats off to them. It would be a privilege and an honor to have served with them."

TF Lift Soldiers drove through the streets of Russellville, carrying retired National Guardsmen in the bed of Humvees during the parade.

The Tobacco and Heritage Festival began in 1941, though during World War II, activities ceased. It was revived in 1957. According to its official website, "By the mid 1970s, the festival had taken on an added purpose – to call attention to Logan County, Ky., itself. Traditionally, it is a time for examining and appreciating our heritage and for taking stock of progress and aspirations for the future. One observer stated, 'The Tobacco Festival helps make us more conscious of ourselves as a community of friends and neighbors who live and work together.'"

The Tobacco and Heritage Festival has become a time of homecoming for friends, family and former residents of Russellville, a town of less than 7,000 people.

Capouch said he knows how important a festival is to a small town like Russellville.

"Compared to my hometown, this is a big city," he joked. "Parades get the community going. You don't really get a sense of community pride and what the community is doing until there are events that bring everybody together. You could have events going on all year long that don't get out in local newspapers and nobody shows up, but when you have something like a city parade, the turnout is amazing. It's good to see people still enjoy taking the kids out to see parades – good fun, not just sitting home in front of the television playing video games."

"Small towns, big heroes," was the theme for the 2011 Tobacco and Heritage Festival, and this year the festival delivered both.

# Combat 10-Miler



## FOB Wolverine hosts shadow Army 10-Miler

Story and Photos by  
Sgt. 1st Class Stephanie L. Carl  
*Task Force Thunder Public Affairs*  
FORWARD OPERATING BASE  
WOLVERINE, Afghanistan – About  
6,000 feet higher, 15 degrees cooler,  
and eight hours ahead of runners in  
Washington, D.C., Coalition mem-  
bers here lined up in front of the Task  
Force Wings (4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Avia-  
tion Regiment) headquarters here to  
begin the Army 10-Miler Oct. 9.

The time zone was just a small differ-  
ence – the big ones were the OH-58D  
Kiowa helicopters providing security  
overhead and the safety briefing that  
included the typical advice to drink  
water, but more importantly, what  
actions to take in the event of indirect  
fire.

“When you get to the stop sign, take  
a right,” said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class William  
M. Peden, the run coordinator, as he  
briefed the route. “Don’t go out the

(entry control point).”

Peden, a crew chief with Company A,  
Task Force Wings (4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup>  
Aviation Regiment), began coordinat-  
ing the run in May.

“The hardest part was getting all the  
pieces, people and places to come to-  
gether,” he said. “We drove the course  
seven times trying to get 10 miles out  
of what we had to work with.”

Peden was one of several Soldiers  
who participated in the Army 10-Miler  
at Forward Operating Base Shank in  
2009. Another Soldier who partici-  
pated in that run was Capt. Ben Sum-  
mers, the commander of Company A.  
Summers finished this year’s run in  
first place with a time of 1 hour, 12  
minutes.

“I think the best part of this year’s run  
is that we had 14 Comancheros who  
started and finished,” he said. “I really  
wanted to run as a team, but since we  
had 14 guys running we wanted to see

if one of us could win.”

In total, 69 runners who participated  
in the race; originally, more than 90  
people signed up to run. One of the  
unique aspects of the run was the pop-  
ulation it encompassed. Some of the  
runners were from the Lithuanian and  
Romanian units based at FOB Wolver-  
ine, while others were third-country  
nationals who work on the base. There  
were more Soldiers from Task Force  
Wings signed up for the run, but one  
of the challenges in a combat zone is  
the need to continue operations.

“We tried to adjust the schedules as  
much as possible, but we still had to  
launch six ships (aircraft) during that  
time,” Peden explained.

Next year though, the unit doesn’t  
expect to have that problem.

“We’ll probably see if we can get a  
team from our company to go to D.C.  
together to run in the actual race next  
year,” Summers said.



◀ Capt. Ben Summers, com-  
mander of Co. A, Task Force  
Wings (4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Avia-  
tion Regiment) finishes the FOB  
Wolverine shadow Army 10-Mil-  
er Oct. 9 in 1 hour, 12 minutes,  
34 seconds.

▼ Coalition members at FOB  
Wolverine gather at the finish  
line of the shadow Army 10-Mil-  
er Oct. 9 for a group photo.



# TF Thunder Soldier receives Bronze Star, ARCOM with Valor medals

Story and Photos by  
Spc. Jennifer Andersson  
*Task Force Thunder Public Affairs*

**F**ORT CAMPBELL, Ky. (Oct. 17, 2011) –Capt. Thomas Buller, a platoon leader for Task Force Thunder’s (159<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade) Pathfinders, received two awards during a ceremony here Oct. 6 for actions as far back as February 2009.

Buller, of Brookfield, Ill., received an Army Commendation medal with Valor and a Bronze Star medal.

The Army Commendation medal was for an event in February 2009 for a personnel recovery mission outside of Forward Operating Base Salerno in Khowst Province, Afghanistan, when he was attached to Task Force

Attack (3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment). The Army Commendation medal is awarded for distinguishing oneself by heroism, meritorious achievement or meritorious service. The Valor device is for specific heroic acts during or supporting direct combat with the enemy.

“There was a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device that attacked a U.S. convoy returning to the FOB. The lead vehicle was an up-armored Humvee,” Buller said. “It got blown off the road. It killed two guys, and trapped and critically injured the third.

“Normally, first responders are from your own unit,” Buller said. “We were not part of their unit, but we’d heard the explosion, and we literally jumped on a MEDEVAC chase helicopter. No one invited us, but we said, ‘Hey, we can go out and help

with the tools we have. Let us give it a shot.’”

From the time of the explosion to the time the MEDEVAC was in the air was about nine minutes, Buller said.

“We volunteered to go out and extract the guy to try to save him with our MEDEVAC chase birds,” Buller said. “We assaulted into where the kill zone was. The vehicle was still on fire from the explosion. The passenger was trapped. We had to take our armor off to get to him. The ground commander recommended we leave because he thought the vehicle was going to explode – there was still a lot of live ordinance in there. We were open to ambush, too. Still, we went in there and cut him out with extractions tools we had, which was difficult because the tools were designed to cut through heli-

copters, not through armor.”

The TF Thunder Soldiers successfully extracted the patient, conducted first aid and got him out on a MEDEVAC flight. He was in surgery within the hour.

Buller kept a cool head by relying on his training. Drill, organization and teamwork were the key to the success of this mission, he said.

Buller also received the Bronze Star medal for his service in Afghanistan from February to May 2011, when he was attached to Task Force Wings (4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment). The Bronze Star is the fourth-highest combat award of the U.S. Armed Services and the ninth-highest military award (including both combat and non-combat awards) in the order of precedence of U.S. military decorations.

“We built a partnership from the

ground up with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Afghan National Civil Order of Police,” Buller said. “We (the Pathfinders and the 2<sup>nd</sup> ANCORP) started conducting hasty air assaults and they became very good at them. (We worked together) destroying the lethal aid network – homemade explosives. And we partnered with all kinds of inner agency groups.”

The awards he received are worn by individuals, but earned by – and represent – teams, Buller said.

“It’s more for the guys who work with you,” Buller said. “I couldn’t have done this without a good platoon sergeant to groom me to be the lieutenant I was, or the company commander to groom me into the leader I became. I see it as a celebration of the culture that we have in the Army – the selfless service – not so much for personal recognition.”



◀ FORT CAMPBELL, Ky., (Oct. 18, 2011) – Capt. Thomas Buller (right), a platoon leader for Task Force Wings (4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment), greets well-wishers after he received his Army Commendation medal with Valor during a ceremony here Oct. 6.

▼ FORT CAMPBELL, Ky., (Oct. 18, 2011) – Capt. Thomas Buller (right), a platoon leader for Task Force Wings (4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment), smiles proudly as Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Colt pins on an Army Commendation medal with Valor during a ceremony here Oct. 6. Buller received the ARCOM with Valor for heroic actions during his 2009 deployment, as well as a Bronze Star medal for his contribution to building a partnership with Afghan forces during his 2011 deployment.



# Sounds of Thunder

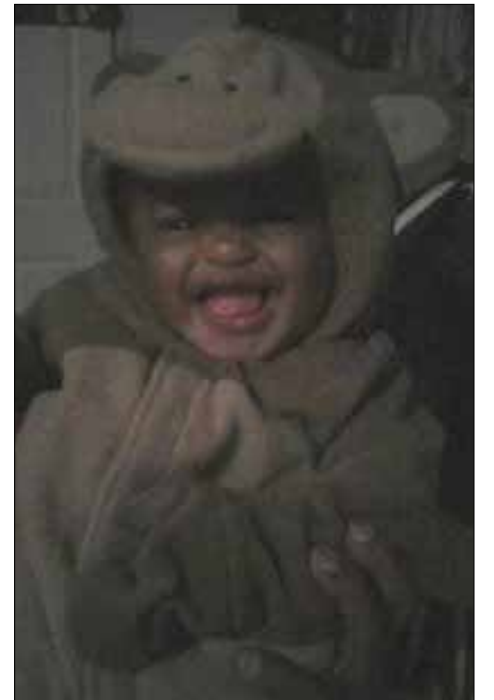
What is your most memorable Halloween costume?



**"My most memorable Halloween costume was a few years back when I dressed up as Santa Claus. I'd have to say it was the most memorable because I took so many pictures with the children that day, that I could never forget how excited they were."**

**Spc. Erich Kerkow,  
Radio Telephone Operator,  
HHC, TF Attack**

**"The most memorable costume for me was when my son dressed up as a monkey for Halloween. I remember this costume because this was his first Halloween experience."**



**Spc. Denita Samuel,  
Signal Support Systems Specialist,  
HHC, TF Dragonlords**

**"About two years ago, my daughter dressed up as the tooth fairy. This was the most memorable Halloween costume for me because she was adorable."**



**Spc. Jason Vogel,  
Blackhawk mechanic,  
Co. B, TF Fighting**



**"The most memorable Halloween costume for me was when my daughter was 2 years old, and she dressed up as a pumpkin. She was so cute as a toddler in it."**

**Staff Sgt. Terrell Craig,  
Liason Officer,  
Co. E, TF Attack**

# Comms keeps Air, Ground talking

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

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Sept. 22, 2011) - As the U.S. Army continues its efforts in Afghanistan to aid the Afghan military to neutralize the insurgency, protect the population, enhance freedom of maneuvers and build their own capacity, it needs to ensure its forces can deliver and receive the information needed to complete a mission while several divisions are spread throughout the different regions of Afghanistan.

With personnel and aircraft spread across an area roughly the size of Indiana, the Avionics Communication section's responsibility is to ensure the communications equipment within the aircraft is in top working order. This is important because communication permits the Soldiers within a unit to track and direct troop and aircraft movements here.

"There's communication happening all over this country from the ground elements to the pilots in the aircraft and even going as far as communicating with our friendly forces in their aircraft," said Staff Sgt. Kester Scott, the avionics communication section sergeant with the Company B. Task Force Fighting (563<sup>rd</sup> Aviation Support Battalion). "(Ultra-high frequency, very-high frequency and satellite communication) are the three different radios that can be installed in an aircraft to transmit to a vast amount of receivers. These systems enable pilots to communicate effectively with troops on the ground, air traffic control towers, flight operations stations and more. Without these radios, the pilot will not be able to communicate to the battlefield; he will not know when he is cleared for takeoff or landing, and he will not know what areas to avoid because of the threat levels changing as often as they do. This could put the lives in the aircraft in danger, so my team works hard to ensure the systems are always up and running in a timely manner."

In order to keep the maintenance up on radios, the radio and communica-



tions security repairer performs and supervises field or sustainment level maintenance by testing and performing preventative checks and services on equipment.

Prior to receiving the faulty equipment, the process it goes through to get to a radio communications security repairer is fairly quick.

"When a radio has tested for faults through the unit level maintenance teams, they take the equipment to the main production control office where the personnel in that shop will generate a work order in the system," said Spc. Emanuel Vargas, a radio and communications security repairer technician with Co. B, TF Fighting.

When the equipment is logged in the main production control office, it is logged as a Charlie status piece of equipment, which means it is awaiting shops or waiting to be picked up by me or my fellow battles in my section. Then it is ready to be picked up by a radio communications security repairer.

"Once the item is retrieved, it au-

tomatically goes into Bravo status, which means my shop, is in possession of this piece of equipment, and we can now conduct maintenance," said Vargas.

The first thing the radio communications security repairer does is a visual inspection of the equipment.

"I want to make sure the equipment has all of its screws and washers it came with before conducting the test on it," said Vargas.

After the visual inspection, the radio comsec repairer hooks the cable from the GRM/204A test set to the radio, to check for faults.

"When there is a fault with the equipment a LIT number, which is the fault code, will show at the bottom of the screen. A complete check takes 70 minutes to finish," said Vargas.

Next the radio comsec repairer correlates the fault code with his technical manual.

"The tech manual tells us exactly what is wrong with the equipment according to the code the GRM/204A gave us," said Scott. "We then con-



duct the necessary maintenance to fix the problem."

Scott said the most common fault in a radio is with receiving and transmitting.

"This is why it is important the aircraft have more than one radio transmitting off of different frequencies," he said. "Communication is extremely important in a time of war; it could save your life or your battle buddies'. No one wants to be the one who is responsible for (the loss of) another person's life, and that is exactly what is going through my mind, and what I instill in my Soldiers as we repair the radios to go back into the aircraft."

After the radios are repaired, the technical inspector has to check and ensure the maintenance has been properly conducted.

"The TI has the final say before the equipment is returned back to the main production control office," said Vargas. "He rechecks the radio to see if it is clear of faults, and he visually inspects the equipment to see if all the parts are put together properly."

Once the technical inspector checks the equipment, and it is good to be returned to the unit for use, it is logged back into the system as romeo status, which notifies the unit it's ready for pick up.

"Our job is completed once the equipment is given back to the main production control office," said Scott. "Then we move on to the next work order to save potentially another life. The job is never done until we are safely home."

# Operation Colorful Hope III: 'Placing a painting in every hospital and clinic in the world'

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Charles Cartwright  
Task Force Lift Unit Public Affairs Representative



There are many missions that we, Soldiers serving in Afghanistan, take on. But the most important are those that help to bring joy to others and Operation Colorful Hope does just that. Operation Colorful Hope donates free painting to hospitals and clinics in Afghanistan to give comfort to patients, families, and medical staff.

The program comes from the charity "Foundation of Hospital Art," which was started 27 years ago by John Feight, an advertising and marketing executive from Atlanta, who donates art to hospitals in the area.

In 2002, during Operation Enduring Freedom 1, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment's Chief Warrant Officer 3 Samuel Baker, a Soldier who now paints and donates artwork to hospi-

tals, was contacted by Feight to bring his charity program to the people of Afghanistan, this day marked the birth of Operation Colorful Hope.

Baker with the help of many Soldiers in his unit was able to distribute paintings to hospitals located in Kandahar, Kabul, Bagram, and Tarin Kowt.

The best part of the program is that all of the artwork gets painted by the Soldiers delivering the paintings. The artwork is painted in sections and done just like the paint by the numbers pictures many of have done as children.

Baker has kept the program through another deployment in Iraq and now has brought the program here to Kandahar Airfield, resulting in Operation Colorful Hope III. With the help of 194 volunteers, Baker has already been able to deliver paintings to Role III on KAF, Hotal Public Clinic in



the Maiwand District, Special Operation Soldiers working to build clinics in several areas, the KAF USO, the wounded warrior Soldiers here, and seven other paintings to be delivered to hospitals throughout Regional Command South.

When asked what his ultimate goal with the program is Baker said, "My goal corresponds with the mission of the foundation, which is to place a painting in every hospital and clinic in the world."



# Weapons gauging: Ensuring combat readiness



**Sgt. Eric Cavinta, a small arms and artillery repairman with Task Force Fighting (563rd Aviation Support Battalion) (center) gauges an M4 rifle, as his Soldier, Pfc. Isaac Parks, a small arms and artillery repairman with TF Fighting (left) and Spc. Adam Massie, the armorer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, write down deficiencies to keep track of the weapons that are good and the ones that have faults during an annual weapons gauging for HHC, 159th CAB, on Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, Sept. 30.**

Pfc. Isaac Parks, a 91F with TF Fighting, said he went to a forward operating base in Afghanistan to conduct weapons gauging on all weapons in his brigade's inventory.

"I decided to check a weapon used for roving guard before it headed back out on duty to ensure all weapons were checked properly prior to my leave," said Parks. "While performing the checks needed, I found a bullet stuck in the barrel. This was a good time for me to check the weapons systems in this particular area, because if the Soldier fired this weapon, the weapon would have blown up in his face."

TF Thunder intends to decrease the number of malfunctions with the weapons systems by conducting the checks that are required to be annually, biannually.

"This will be a very lengthy weapons-check process due to all of the weapons systems in our inventory, but we are up to the challenge," said Cavinta. "We know what this means and how important it is, so we do our job thoroughly and effectively to ensure mission success."

The inventory for the brigade contains several weapons to include the M240B and H machine guns, M4 and M16 rifles, and the M9 pistols. These Soldiers will take one or two days to go through and conduct weapons gauging for a company that has an inventory of hundreds of weapons.

"My Soldiers do an outstanding job considering a couple of them came directly from (advanced individual training) to deployment," said Cavinta. "Catching many of the faults in a weapon and understanding the outcome if we did not conduct these checks enables them to understand just how important our job is to the mission."

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

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Oct. 10, 2011) – Soldiers from Headquarters Support Company, Task Force Fighting (563rd Aviation Support Battalion), conducted weapons gauging for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) Sept. 29-30 here.

TF Thunder currently has four 91F, small arms and

artillery repairers, who are responsible for third level maintenance on the entire brigade's ground weapons and some aviation weapons systems such as the M240H machine gun, that are used by the door gunners on the UH-60 Blackhawk and the CH-47 Chinook.

The 91F job is to provide the brigade with direct support and general support maintenance and repairs on small arms and other infantry weapons, and towed

artillery, and also to diagnose and troubleshoot malfunctions.

"It is extremely important to have all weapons gauged during the deployment because it ensures combat readiness and that all weapons are up to standard, but more importantly it saves lives," said Sgt. Eric Cavinta, a small arms and artillery repairman with TF Fighting.

Cavinta said one of his Soldiers prevented a possible accident that could have cost a Soldier his life.

# Returning Home from Deployment:

## Part 1 of 4



This article is the first in a series of four that will address the reintegration process. If there's a topic you would like to see addressed in more detail, please contact the Task Force Thunder Public Affairs Office via email at [159cabpao@gmail.com](mailto:159cabpao@gmail.com).

After a year away from home serving in a combat zone, both you and the people you associate with will have changed. You might not notice the changes in yourself immediately, but chances are some of these changes will at least temporarily impact your day-to-day interactions with others. Below are some general tips to help make your transition home go a little more smoothly.

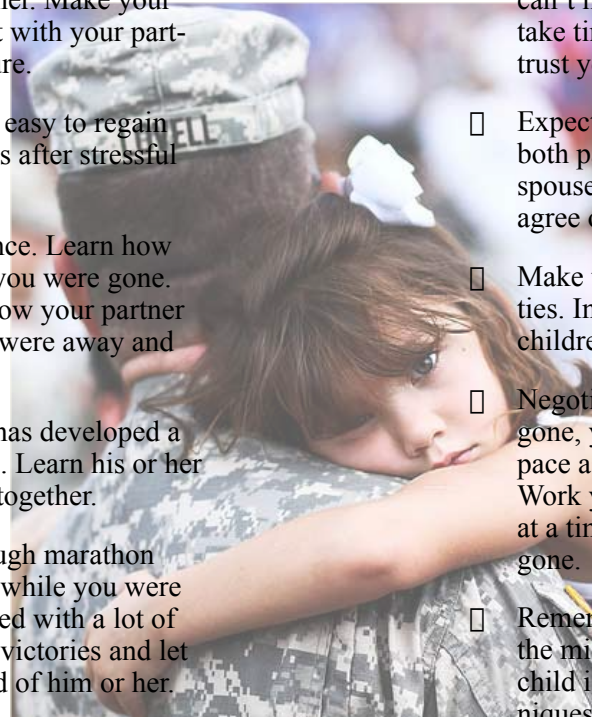


### Taking Time for Yourself

- Be patient. The process of reintegration and stabilization can take several months as you rebuild your relationships.
- Take care of yourself. Manage your stress as much as possible; eat a healthy diet and exercise.
- Make time to rest. Negotiate the number of social events you and your family attend.
- Limit your use of alcohol. If you choose to drink, ease back into a responsible pattern that doesn't interfere with the process of renewing important relationships. Avoid using alcohol as a crutch if you're having problems since this doesn't make the problems go away, and can actually make them worse.
- Go slowly in getting back into the swing of things. Depend on family, your unit and friends for support.
- Watch your spending. It's tempting to celebrate your return with dinners out or special gifts, but it's important to stay within your budget and continue to save for the future.
- Know when to seek help. If you, your spouse or other family members are feeling signs of stress, physical or emotional, it's important to seek expert help, the earlier the better. Your military service Family Support Center on the installation offers groups, classes and counseling for a variety of issues.

### Reconnecting with your Spouse

- Understand that it's normal to feel out of sync with your spouse at first. Both of you have grown and changed during the separation. It takes time to reconnect. Be patient and be flexible.
- Spend time talking with each other. Make your partner your priority. Time spent with your partner is an investment in your future.
- Ease back into intimacy. It's not easy to regain physical and emotional closeness after stressful situations.
- Listen to your partner's experience. Learn how he or she has been living while you were gone. Let go of your expectations of how your partner should have behaved while you were away and accept reality.
- Rebuild a routine. Your partner has developed a way of life while you were gone. Learn his or her routine and build a new routine together.
- Celebrate! Your partner ran a tough marathon of stress, anxiety and loneliness while you were gone, and managed and succeeded with a lot of responsibilities. Celebrate these victories and let your partner know you are proud of him or her.
- Work to resolve conflict. Yes, you will have disagreements. That is normal. Work the conflicts through to a healthy resolution.
- Get help if you need it. Attend a Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program marriage enrichment weekend if you are married. The program teaches couples effective communication skills and successful problem resolution strategies, and reveals how to discover the hidden issues in a relationship.



### Reconnecting with your Kids

- Learn all you can about your children's lives while you were gone. Let them share pictures, crafts, stories and memories.
- Be patient with your children and yourself. You can't make up the time missed overnight. It will take time for your children to reconnect with you, trust you and bond again with you.
- Expect your children to test the rules now that both parents are home. Set aside time with your spouse to come up with an approach you both agree on.
- Make time in your schedule for family activities. Include one-on-one time with each of your children.
- Negotiate your role as a parent. While you were gone, your spouse or your child's guardian set the pace as a parent. You can't take over all at once. Work your way back into the parent role one step at a time. Respect what was done while you were gone.
- Remember this is your child, not a member of the military. Learn the developmental stage your child is in and use age-appropriate parenting techniques. One size doesn't fit all.
- Accept guidance from your spouse or your child's guardian. Your most recent job has been as a member of the military. You need some retraining. Listen to the person with the most experience with your child.



### Reconnecting with Your Parents

- Be patient with your parents. They want to reconnect with you, but may not know how.
- Negotiate new roles/responsibilities. Your parents may want you to be the way you were before you left and you probably don't feel the same. Let them know, up front and patiently, the new relationship you want to have with them. Help them define new boundaries and new ways to relate to you.
- Share with them what is appropriate. Try not to shut your parents out of your life. Share what you can with them about your combat duty. Let them know your plans and your whereabouts.
- If you have younger siblings, be respectful of your parents' rules for them and be aware that you are a role model for your siblings. Remember, your military "language" may not be appropriate for your siblings.
- Celebrate! Realize your parents sacrificed a lot while you were gone. They worried about you and supported you. Celebrate their accomplishments and thank them for their support.
- Anticipate that your parents may want to celebrate your return and reconnect you with your relatives and their friends. This may be overwhelming for you. Make your parents aware of what you are comfortable with and negotiate with them regarding their intentions for you.

#### □ TRICARE Assistance Program (TRIAP)

- Active duty service members and their families can connect via webcam or instant message to TRIAP for free, confidential, Web-based counseling. Licensed behavioral health professionals are available 24/7 to provide short-term, non-medical care.





# The Search is on...



Story by Sgt. Shanika L. Futrell

*Task Force Thunder Public Affairs*

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Oct. 16, 2011) – Morale, Welfare and Recreation is currently holding a Department of Defense Armed Forces singing competition here to find the most talented singer in Afghanistan.

Operation Rising Star is held in Afghanistan, other overseas locations and the United States, and it is open to contestants in the Active Duty, National Guard or Reserves from any branch of service or Department of Defense contractor who is 18 years or older with a valid military or other government agency identification card, so this competition knows no bounds when it comes to the location or branch of service.

The contestants had to fill out an application to apply and meet all of the rules and requirements specified in the application, said Staff Sgt. Charlene Fick, an event coordinator for ORS.

Some of the rules and requirements were that the contestants must not have any adverse actions pending, must compete as a vocalist, and must be in the amateur status and not perform professionally.

The auditions started on Oct. 11 with 23 contestants to compete for the top 12 spots.

There are some awesome talents here and this event will be great during the competition that starts on Oct. 22, said Fick.

When the contestants auditioned, many were sick because of the weather changing here.

“My name is Sharyne Johnson, and I have a cold,” said Johnson during her introduction to the judges.

Despite the cough and cold symptoms she had, it did not stop her from making it into the top 12 to compete in the first of the competition.

Task Force Thunder (159th Combat Aviation Brigade) had one talented Soldier of the few who tried out make it to the first round to compete to win the number one spot in the ORS competition.

SpC. Ashley Perrymon a TF Lift (7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment) human resources specialist, sung her heart out to win the judges over, and it

worked.

During the auditions, the judges would always offer advice before the contestant started and after the contestant finished his performance. These judges are no amateurs when it comes to performing; they have performed in front of several audiences in groups or solo in various locations.

“Move around on the stage and on it,” said SpC. Robert Edward Diehl, one of the ORS judges.

“Look at the audience, make them feel as if you are singing to them.”

Now that the auditions are over and the top 12 contestants have been chosen to compete, the judges offer some small tips to further progress in the competition.

“Watch yourself in the mirror before you come to perform a song,” said Diehl. “If you have video capabilities, record yourself singing and performing, so you are able to work on the mechanics.”

“Practice music outside your genre,” said Lt. Col. Rose Bean, a judge with ORS. “When you choose the music ensure that it is within your voice range.”

“You have to be prepared every week,” said Brian Red Williamson, a judge with ORS. “It’s not practice makes perfect, its perfect practice makes perfect.”

After the first round of the competition, three contestants will be eliminated leaving nine to progress to the next level in the competition.

“Just go out there and have fun, that is what this is all about,” said Red.

In order for the 12 contestants to move on to the next round, they need the help of the audience.

The audience will be given a ballot to vote for their favorite performer, which will count for 50 percent of the total score and the judges votes will be the other half to determine the top nine contestants to move on to the next round of the competition.

Will the contestants be able to set their nerves aside and take Red’s advice? Come out and see for yourself. Join us at the Fest tent, every Saturday from Oct. 22 to Nov. 19 starting at 7 p.m. to help us find Afghanistan’s best performer.

# Retention



Congratulations to all of the Task Force Thunder Soldiers who've re-enlisted so far this fiscal year. If you are within one year of your contract ending, please see your retention NCO as soon as possible to discuss your options. The window for retention is extremely limited this year due to force drawdowns.

## WHAT'S UP WITH JAG ?



Bldg 407a  
Screaming Eagle Blvd  
NIPR: 841-2235  
SIPR: 841-2031  
CENTRIXS: 265-0418



*Time for this months...*

# ASK LEGAL:

## What changes were made that 82nd is here?

The new General Order Number 1 (GO-1) is dated 1 October 2011 and is signed by Major General James L. Huggins Jr. There are minor changes to the Order, to include changes to Paragraph 4d., which covers drugs, drug paraphernalia and prescription medication. Additionally, changes were made to the uniform policy. Wearing of ballistic eye protection is mandatory any time outside of a building, during all outdoor activities, including PT.

# ASK LEGAL:

## What does the new TF Thunder tattoo policy say?

The policy states that U.S. Army personnel assigned or attached to Task Force Thunder are forbidden to obtain or perform any body modifications to include but not limited to tattoos, body piercings, and branding while stationed in Afghanistan.



***If you have a question for next months magazine, please send it to your Task Force Paralegal.***



# A day in the life



Dear Soldier,

Effective Thursday Oct. 20., duffel bags are mailable containers subject to size limitations specified in section 400 Commercial Parcels of the domestic mail manual and applicable oversize or non-machinable surcharges. This change supersedes U.S. Central Command regulation 25-103, Jan. 25, 2008, paragraph 7, b.

Some of the restrictions and or conditions that apply:

- Parcel weight no greater than 70 pounds.
- Parcel length and girth no greater than 130 inches.
- Parcels greater than 108 inches (length and girth) are charged applicable oversize and nonmachinable surcharge. Failure to collect applicable surcharge will delay delivery until the addressee pays for the surcharge.

Any questions, please address them to 14th Human Resources Sustainment Center, Postal Operations Division.

Best,  
PAO



159TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE  
THUNDER  
ENLIGHTENING

MAIL

FREE MILITARY MAILING FACILITY

FROM: PAO

TO: Insert Your Name Here

FOR DEPLOYED SOLDIERS ONLY



# Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Proclamation by Barack Obama  
United States Commander in Chief

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we recognize the significant achievements we have made in reducing domestic violence in America, and we recommit ourselves to the important work still before us. Despite tremendous progress, an average of three women in America dies as a result of domestic violence each day. One in four women and one in thirteen men will experience domestic violence in their lifetime. These statistics are even more sobering when we consider that domestic violence often goes unreported.

The ramifications of domestic violence are staggering. Young women are among the most vulnerable, suffering the highest rates of intimate partner violence. Exposure to domestic violence puts our young men and women in danger of long-term physical, psychological, and emotional harm. Children who experience domestic violence are at a higher risk for failure in school, emotional disorders, and substance abuse, and are more likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence themselves later in life.

My administration is working not only to curb domestic violence, but to bring it to an end. Last year, we announced an unprecedented coordinated strategy across federal agencies to prevent and stop violence against women. We are empowering survivors to break the cycle of abuse with programs to help them become financially independent. We have prevented victims of domestic violence from being evicted or denied assisted housing after abuse. And we are promoting tools for better enforcement of protective orders, while helping survivors gain access to legal representation.

In addition, as part of the Affordable Care Act, the Department of Health and Human Services announced historic new guidelines that will ensure women receive preventive health services without additional cost, including domestic violence screening and counseling. The Affordable Care Act also ensures that

insurance companies can no longer classify domestic violence as a pre-existing condition.

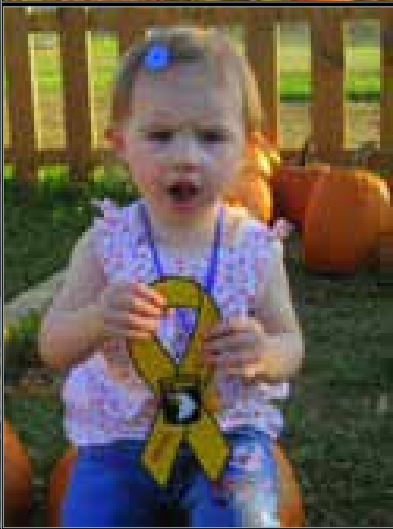
Last December, I reauthorized the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, giving communities life-saving tools to help identify and treat child abuse or neglect. It also supports shelters, service programs, and the National Domestic Violence Hotline, linking tens of thousands of victims every month to the resources needed to reach safety. I encourage victims, their loved ones, and concerned citizens to use this hotline for more information at 1-800-799-SAFE or visit [www.TheHotline.org](http://www.TheHotline.org).

This is not just a job for government; it is a job for all of us. Vice President Joe Biden's "1is2many" initiative reminds us that everyone has a part to play in ending violence against youth. By engaging men and women, mothers and fathers, and schools and universities in the fight, we can teach our children about healthy relationships. We are asking everyone to play an active role in preventing and ending domestic violence, by stepping up to stop violence when they see it. During National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we recommit to making sure that no one suffers alone, and to assisting those who need help in reaching a safer tomorrow.

Now, therefore, I, Barack Obama, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States do hereby proclaim October 2011 as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I call on all Americans to speak out against domestic violence and support local efforts to assist victims of these crimes in finding the help and healing they need.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

Through your eyes



# Reintegration Strong Bonds events

Four months from now we will arrive back at Fort Campbell, Ky. Your Task Force Thunder (159<sup>th</sup> Combat Aviation Brigade) chaplains are already planning our Strong Bonds events. The Strong Bonds events are designed to help make our Families stronger and more resilient, marriages stronger through better communication and single Soldiers wiser about relationships. Below are dates for the reintegration Strong Bonds events after we return.

We will open registration for these events in December. We will send more information on hotels, location and how to register through your family readiness support assistance and family readiness group in December.

<b>3-101</b> May 18-20 - Couples Retreat (Childcare will be provided.) May 22-24 - Singles Retreat May 25-27 - Family Retreat (This includes single parents.)	<b>7-17</b> May 11-13 – Family Retreat May 15-16 – Couples Retreat May 18-20 – Singles Retreat	<b>HHC BDE</b> May 13-15 – Family Retreat May 17-18 – Singles Retreat Mar 18-20 - Caregiver Family Retreat
<b>7-101</b> Apr 1-3 - Family Retreat Apr5-7 - Couples Retreat Apr 9-11 - Singles Retreat	<b>563D</b> March 19-20 – Singles Retreat March 23-25 – Family Retreat	<b>4-101</b> May 4-6 – Marriage Retreat May 8-9 – Single Retreat May 18-20 – Couples Retreat

~I look forward to seeing you at one of these events.

*CH (Maj.) Brian D. Curry*

# Powerplant repairers ensure aircraft's engine is safe prior to flight

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



KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Many Army missions depend on some type of aircraft for transportation to include flight training exercises and pathfinders to go on patrols. To ensure the mission is carried out, aircraft powerplant repairers work diligently on aircraft engines, so it and its crew members are safe and ready to fly. They do this by inspecting, servicing and repairing the helicopter's engines.

"Without the engine blades turning, the aircraft does not fly," said Staff Sgt. Sean Stewart, a squad leader for Company B, Task Force Fighting (563<sup>rd</sup> Aviation Support Battalion). "Once the engine stops on an aircraft, it's just a shell or static display, so it is crucial we do our jobs efficiently and to the standard to not have that happen."

It's important; however, the work is done right. Proper work-rest cycles help to maintain quality.

"Maintaining helo engines can be a very tedious job many days, so we ensure all personnel are afforded an adequate amount of sleep," said Stewart. "We do this because every part of the engine is important for it to work,

and we can't afford any mishaps. The lives onboard the aircraft are valuable to us and our unit. We take pride in what we do each day, and every day the aircrew comes back without an engine issue is another day of a job well done for my shop."

Quality is what Co. B, TF Fighting strives for, and anything less is unacceptable.

"You never sacrifice quality," said Pfc. Steve Perricone, a helicopter powerplant repairer for Co. B, TF Fighting. "Quality is the most important part of our mission. Just as any other job within the Army, we are important to the mission. Our job could mean life or death of the crew within the helicopter. We want to help ensure the mission is carried out successfully, and that all crew members come home with us at the end of our brigade's tour," he said.

The mission is dependent on the repairs, and most repairs on an engine are done by phase, or scheduled maintenance. However, others are performed out of necessity.

"We try to fix them ... to have longevity, so we don't

have to see them until next phase, saving the Army time and money," said Stewart.

The engine and its parts have a certain amount of hours to be used before they are turned in to be replaced.

"The engine life expectancy depends on the amount of hours it is used," said Sgt. Brian McKinnon, a helicopter powerplant repairer for Co. B, TF Fighting. "In saying this, every component hour has to be logged. When it is removed it has to be digitally recorded, so (Aviation and Missile Command at Fort Rucker, Ala.) can record how long a part has been used. AMCOM has designated several parts that have to be replaced after a certain amount of hours."

When powerplant repairers conduct maintenance on an engine and its parts, everything has to be checked with every step taken.

"Everything gets double and triple checked," said Perricone.

"Because this part of the aircraft is so important, there has to be several eyes on every single thing one of my Soldiers does," said Stewart. "Think of it as a checks-and-balances system. This is not to micromanage anyone, but this controlled redundancy is to ensure the safety of the lives within the aircraft."

Safety is paramount when it comes to Co. B, TF Fighting's aircraft powerplant repairers.

"We ensure when working with the engine and its parts, all Soldiers are wearing the proper equipment for the task or have taken off the jewelry that may hinder the mission," said Stewart. "I would not want any of the Soldiers to hurt themselves or destroy a part needed for the mission."

After the engine is serviced, and the leadership and quality control have checked, double-checked and triple-checked the engine, it is given back to the personnel it belongs to.

"It is good to feel needed while deployed, and we know, as a shop, we fill big shoes," said Perricone. "We are held to a standard, and it is our job to exceed that every time. In this line of work, mediocrity is not acceptable. By doing our job we can save lives of many of our brothers and sisters in combat. I take pride in knowing by doing my job to the best of my abilities every day, I help to accomplish the mission, save lives and place smiles on many faces. These are the reasons why I am here and why it is important for me and my fellow battle buddies to exceed the standard when maintaining aircraft engines," he said.



**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](mailto:159cabpao@gmail.com) by the first of each month. Please do not send photos that violate OPSEC.**



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