PEGASUS MAGAZINE

GROUND AIR MOBILITY

Serving the Soldiers and Families of the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade

Fueling success: a Soldier's story on the FARP |7|

Danger: Hidden hazards lurking where you live |22|

CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS |26|

Bonus: Promotion and retention information you need!

Becoming a Black Hawk crew chief |14|

DECEMBER 2011

7

14

28

Pegasus
MAGAZINE

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Pegasus 6 & 9

I am incredibly proud of the effort and accomplishments of our entire brigade. Our great Troopers have exceeded not only my expectations, but CJTF-1 standards.

So far, our great air crews have flown more hours per airframe then anyone has ever witnessed in Afghanistan with most crews averaging more than 100 hours per month.

Our maintainers have managed to cut aircraft maintenance times, particularly phase maintenance times, which keep our aircraft in the fight.

This is vital for the protection of the ground troops who depend on us for transportation, protection, and medical evacuation. They can breathe a sigh of relief when they hear those rotor blades cutting the air whenever they put out the call.

A constant aviation presence is the key to success in RC-East. If you have travelled through the region at all, you understand the challenges our ground units face.

They rely on air power to overcome those challenges.

Each and every one of you, from aviator to maintainer to the Trooper who delivers the mail plays a critical role in the success of the entire brigade. For each missile that destroys an enemy fighting position, hundreds of CABTroopers have put in their time and sweat to make that moment happen. Your leadership realizes that, and you are all constantly in our thoughts.

The holidays are upon us, and with that, a set of personal challenges for each of us. At this time of year, the personal sacrifices you have made to promote freedom and justice the world over are more clear than ever. I ask you to find the time to communicate with your families, take a moment to enjoy the support of your battle-buddies, and rely on resources both here and at home to keep yourself emotionally and spiritually fit.

You are truly the greatest CAB in the Army, and a truly formidable force. Keep up the good work, and I look forward to meeting and flying with you during our weekly battlefield circulations.

All the Way and God Bless,

- Col. T.J. Jamison, Pegasus 6

It is with great pride I am addressing you. These first two months have flown by. Through the deployment, aircraft build-up, movement to your Forward Operating Bases (FOBs), and mission sets you have accomplished we all have a lot to be proud of.

You are without a doubt one of the finest Aviation Task Forces ever assembled. You landed feet first and have taken the fight to the enemy. You have been extremely motivated while settling into our new "home away from home."

Your moms, dads, brothers, sisters and spouses can be proud of what you have accomplished in such a short period of time.

As the weather continues to change, I ask that each of you dress for the event and ensure we continue to look out for our buddies. Always remember there are no cool points for being miserable!

With the Christmas Season right around the corner and many of you heading home on R & R leave, take a moment to remember what this time of year really means. Enjoy your time home with your families, but never lose focus, as we are awaiting your return back to the fight.

I look forward to seeing each and every one of you during the battlefield circulation P6 and I conduct every week.

Stay safe, have a Merry Christmas and a quiet New Year.

Airborne- All the Way!

-Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Farmer, Pegasus 9

MEDEVAC crew earns valor awards for rescue under fire

by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon
Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs

A French platoon-sized element was guarding a small compound, Sept. 7, when an insurgent threw a grenade over the wall.

"Yesterday was hell," said Maj. Cyrille, a French medical officer in a Sept. 8 letter.

The explosion killed one, and injured one other. As insurgents continued to attack, another French soldier was shot through the throat.

Since they were almost a mile from the main supply route and the only way to get there was a treacherous journey by foot over rocky terrain, they called in an American helicopter to carry the injured soldiers out.

For their actions that day, four U.S. soldiers received Army Commendation Medals for valor, Nov. 11, for saving the lives of the two critically-wounded French troops in the Tagab Valley, Kapisa province.

The medical evacuation crew arrived overhead within minutes, only to find a battle still raging below. There was little hope the French soldiers would survive without their help.

U.S. Army Maj. Graham Bundy and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher DeOliveira, both with C Company, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, made the decision to land.

"The only thing running through your mind at that point is that there are people down there who need our help," said Bundy, of Holly Springs, N.C. "You have to get to them; you can't fail."

Sgt. Robert Wengeler, of Cheney, Wash., provided security while Staff Sgt. Erin Gibson, a flight medic, climbed out of the helicopter and ran to the patients.

"I didn't even think about the danger at the time," said Gibson, of Covington, Ohio. "I just knew there were two hurt guys out there that needed my help and I had to get them on my helicopter."

Gibson triaged the patients, had them loaded, and had the pilots lifting the wheels of the helicopter off the ground in less than four minutes.

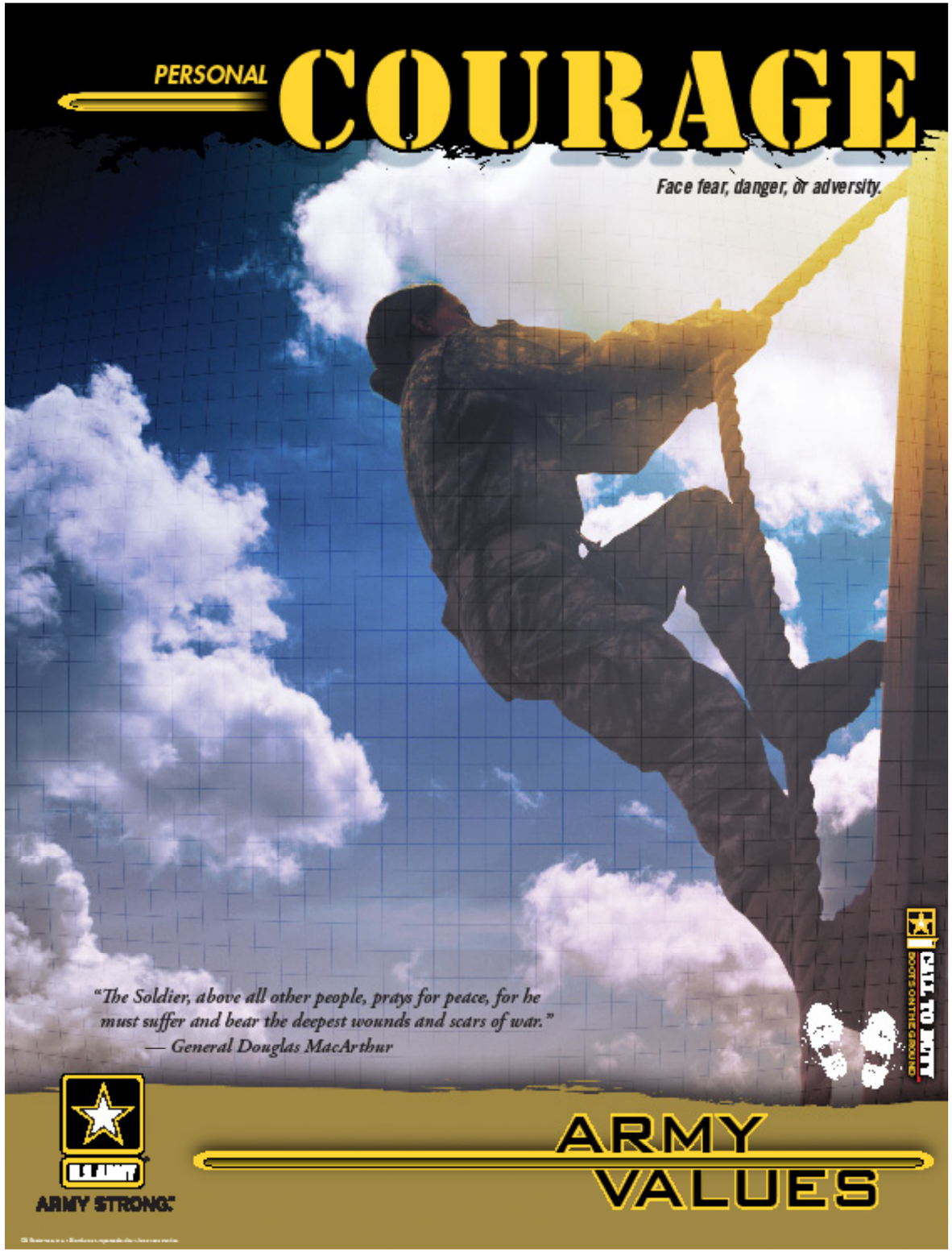
"We witnessed the incredible courage of the U.S. Army as you made an air evacuation under fire only 200 meters from our position," said Cyrille. "Because of your actions, our Soldiers are still alive."

"When I heard what the crew did that night, I was in awe of their bravery and commitment to never leave a fallen comrade, whether it be American or not," said Col. T.J. Jamison, commander, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade. "These soldiers truly exemplify the warrior ethos."

Gibson has a much more modest view of what happened.

"Really, I'm just doing my job like any soldier" said Gibson.

(top) From left to right, Maj. Graham Bundy, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher DeOliveira, Staff Sgt. Erin Gibson, and Sgt. Robert Wengeler, all with C Company, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade. All four Army Commendation Medals for valor Nov. 11 for saving two critically-injured French soldiers while under fire in the Tagab valley on Sept. 7. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)



U.S. Army Pfc. Lee Younger is a Petroleum Specialist serving in Khowst Province, Afghanistan with Task Force Wolfpack, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade. Younger, 20, of Douglasville, Ga., joined the Army just over a year ago. He's the first member of his family to serve since Vietnam. He joined at his mother's suggestion; she pushed the Army's job security and educational opportunities. *(Photo by Staff Sgt. Donna Davis, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

A Soldier's story: Finding a future on the FARP

By Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon
Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs

Boom! An explosion rattles the ground only 100 meters from more than 100 thousand gallons of fuel, stored in trucks and containers that look like giant water balloons.

U.S. Army Pfc. Lee Younger, barely a year in the Army, and a month into his year-long tour in Afghanistan, scrambles down from the cab of the fully-loaded fuel tanker he'd been sitting in. His buddies are running for bunkers and shouting for him to move faster.

An enemy mortar had landed dangerously close to the Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP).

"That was pretty scary, cause it could have hit again, and I was in the fuel truck," said Younger, 20. "Had it been a hundred meters closer, it would have been over, so…"

Being an Army petroleum specialist means he's willing to accept the risk of working and living around thousands of gallons of fuel, stores of rockets and the still-spinning blades of helicopters landing for fuel. That's only a few of the dangers.

Younger is also on the outer edge of Forward Operating Base Salerno. You can see right in to the open doorways of homes just outside the fence line. He works and lives, quite literally, on the edge.

His life was quite different a year ago.

Younger had just graduated from Hiram high school in Douglasville, Ga., without a plan and a G.P.A. he felt barred him from ever going to college. He just wasn't interested in high school, so he let his grades slip down to the two-point-zero range.

That's where his mom, a waitress who had endured her own hardships, stepped in.

"He's so bright and can do so many things when he puts his mind to it," she said. "He wasn't putting that energy toward anything good."

His mom, Mikki Bradley, moved to Georgia with her immediate family from Kansas City, Missouri years earlier to escape the violence and criminal behavior the city offered many of its young residents, including some of her own family.

Now raising Lee and his two younger brothers, ages seven and three, she saw familiar signs her son was heading down a bad path and gave him an ultimatum.

"She said 'You go to college, which you know you can't get into, because of your grades, or you join the Army,'" said Younger. "She gave me six months to decide, then I was out of her house one way another."

He felt like he'd let his mom down many times over his life, and knew his chances of success in college were low, so Younger headed down the road he thought would make his mother proud.

"For her to say 'I want you to join the Army, this is what I want you to do, and you're either going to college or do this, but I really hope it's the Army...' Well, I knew the what I had to do," said Younger. "I wanted my mom to be proud of me."

Younger's grandfather had served during Vietnam, but his family was mostly unexposed to the military. Younger's mother, however, did her research before trying to convince her son to join.

"She kept putting into my mind the travel, the benefits, and the guaranteed paycheck on the first and the 15th," said Younger. "That's all she knew, but it sounded better than messing up in community college, and I'd have a skill and a good career."

So she and other members of his family pushed him to try something no one else his family had done, earning him some notoriety.

"My great-grandmother's especially proud of me," said Younger. "Cause all my other cousins, they're ratchet and ghetto, and not going anywhere with their lives. I like the attention I get, I guess, that I receive for doing something outside the box and doing something my family isn't really used to. I like it. I'm making people proud of me."

Bradley has been the driving force behind her son's success, and when he almost gave up and was nearly booted from the Army for failing physical-fitness tests, she was the one who encouraged him to keep pushing on.

"She wants me to stay in," said Younger. "When I was almost chaptered out for not passing my P.T. test, she was really disappointed. She begged me to stay in. I saw a way out, but I couldn't disappoint her again."

His mother says that while seeing him commit to the Army and deploying to serve his country makes her proud, it was the choice he made in the beginning that really makes her happy.

"I'm proud of him for making that choice," said Bradley. "Even though this is what I wanted him to do, it was always his choice. I didn't put a gun to his head and make him do it. He went through with this on his own. I'm so proud of that, and I'm proud he's over there with other Soldiers, trying to serve and protect us back at home."

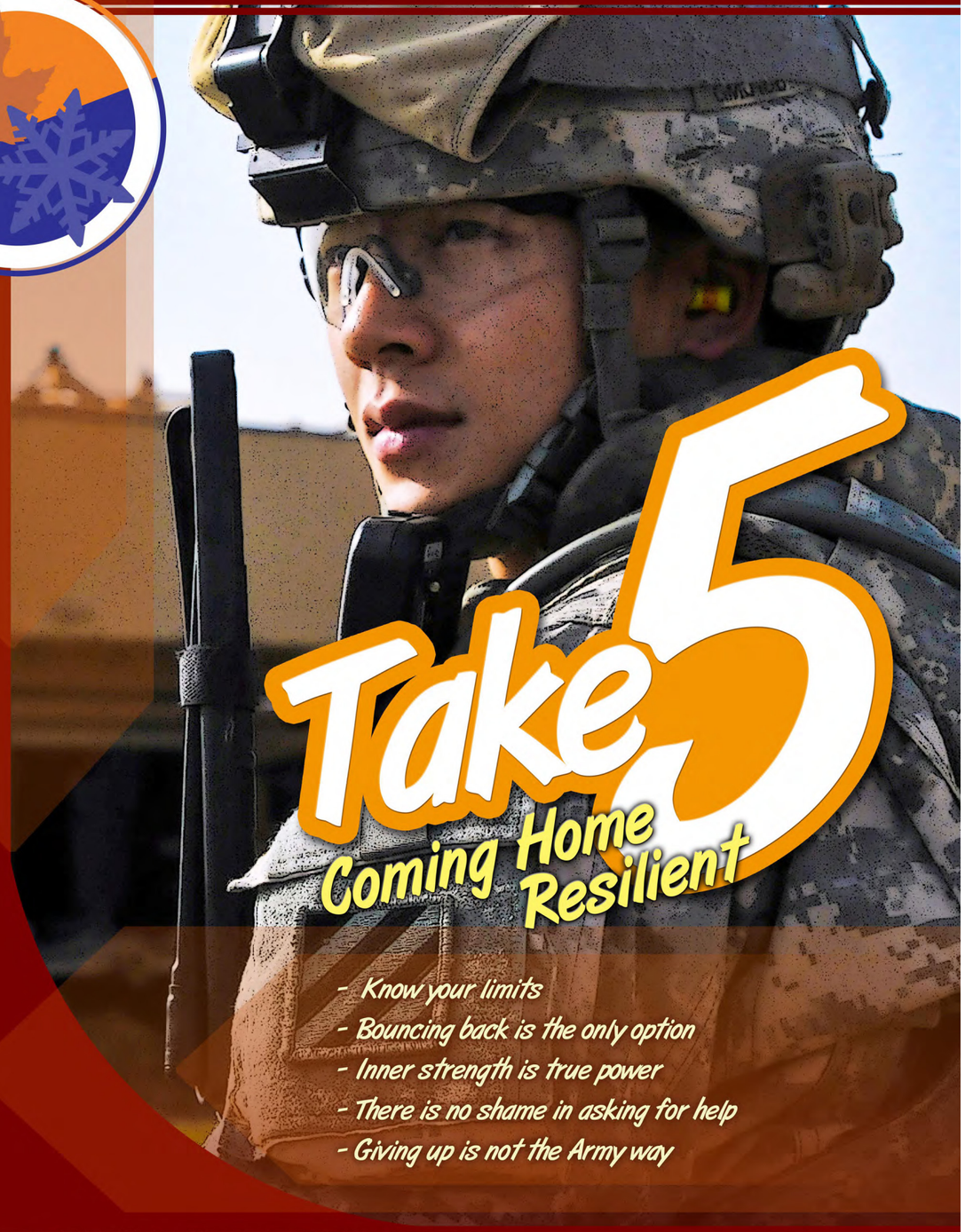
Now in Afghanistan, his platoon sergeants select him to give some visiting journalists a tour of the FARP. He explains each function with detail and confidence, never stumbling or answering a question with "I don't know." It's a far cry from the slacker he says he was.

"The [landing] pads are hooked up by this main line here," explains Younger as he strolls down a dusty, rocky road, pointing out key sections of the refueling operation as they pass by. "Next I'll take you down here to the pump section, where someone's always standing when we have birds in. They operate the pump. When we have a bird in, we signal for him to start the pump, sending fuel through each pad, and that's how we get the birds in and out of here."

He points out the different nozzles they use, the difference between "cold re-fuel" (that's when a helicopter shuts down to fuel) and "hot re-fuel," when the blades keep turning and they have to operate amid the noise and wind to re-fuel the helicopter.

He's also sure to point out the mammoth fire extinguishers on hand, then big, metal clamps with wires running from them at the end of each concrete pad.

"This is the grounding cable," he says as he picks one up with his right hand. Then he gives an eerie reminder (***cont. on page 9***)



Take 5

Coming Home Resilient

- Know your limits
- Bouncing back is the only option
- Inner strength is true power
- There is no shame in asking for help
- Giving up is not the Army way

Pfc. Lee Younger is a Petroleum Specialist currently serving in Khowst Province, Afghanistan with Task Force Wolfpack, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade. Younger, 20, of Douglasville, Ga., joined the Army just over a year ago. He's the first member of his family to serve since Vietnam. He joined at his mother's suggestion; she pushed the Army's job security and educational opportunities. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Donna Davis, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)

of how treacherous his work can be.

"It's for the static electricity," said Younger. "Most of the time you can actually see it at night when the birds are coming through. You can see sparks of electricity up in the rotors. It's a reminder of how dangerous this is. You don't forget to ground it."

Younger sets the clamp down, then resumes his tour. He smiles as he walks and talks, gingerly picking his way across the large rocks surrounding the fueling pad on his way back to the road. It's easy to see in his expression that he really enjoys his job.

"What do I like about this job? It's the adrenaline rush," says Younger as he stares at an empty pad. "Like with the medical helicopters. When we get them, we really get out there, get them fueled, and get them out. You never know if they need to get out to save someone's life."

The Army, however, appears to be just a stepping stone at the moment for Younger, who sees himself trying to combine two very different career fields when his enlistment is up in 2013.

"I really want to be an actor so bad," he said. "You just can't do too much with that on a work schedule like this. That, and I want to be somewhere I can focus on going to school for law."

The kid who shunned high school now has his sights set on law school. Although he hasn't started classes yet, he's begun the paperwork to enroll in college through the education center. He says it was the lessons he learned through the Army that finally pushed him to it.

"I learned discipline and patience," said Younger. "Patience was key, really, because I never had that before. Things don't always happen as quickly as you want. The Army's 'hurry up and wait' all the time, so it takes patience and discipline to make it through each day successfully."

He said the change in his attitude was most evident when he went back home to Douglasville for vacation just prior to deploying.

"The same person I used to work with at this fast food place was still working there," said Younger. "Not to knock her hustle, because you have to earn money however you earn money, but I'm out here taking care of life, and she's still back there doing the same things. I don't want that for myself."

That realization has led him to some create his "five-year plan" and even a "10-year-plan."

"In five years, I would like to have an apartment out in California, and I just hope to be on somebody's T.V. If not, then I'll be in law school. In 10 years, I'm going to be somewhere. If I'm not on T.V., then I will of course be done with law school, working at a law firm, trying to establish my own law firm, because that's what I really want to do with my life."

"Not to knock her hustle, because you have to earn money however you earn money, but I'm out here taking care of life, and she's still back there doing the same things. I don't want that for myself."

- Pfc. Lee Younger

Younger said working out at the FARP, with little to do in his downtime except think, has led him to look at the world a little differently.

"This experience here, it is what it is," said Younger. "It's most definitely time away to think about life and realize all the things you took for granted, especially seeing the things that are going on out here. Back home, I never thought about Soldiers in Afghanistan or Iraq, but now that I'm here, I hope someone's thinking about me and praying for me- it's a big deal. So, it's a lesson learned to go back home and never forget the people that are over here."

Photo by Sgt. Victor Everhart,Jr.
Task Force Bulldog Public Affairs

Photo by Sgt. Victor Everhart,Jr.
Task Force Bulldog Public Affairs

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon
Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs

Task Force Bulldog troops call Apache pilots "guardian angels"

by Sgt. Victor R. Everhart Jr.
Task Force Bulldog Public Affairs

Since its first flight on Sept. 30, 1975, the AH-64, otherwise known as the Apache attack helicopter, has been a sort of guardian angel for ground and tactical forces alike.

For the Soldiers of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, known as Task Force Bulldog, operating in Logar and Wardak Provinces, these tools of war are just minutes from coming to the rescue in the ongoing fight in Afghanistan.

"There's nothing like being able to help the ground guys," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Paul Fekete, a flight instructor assigned to Charlie Company, 1-82nd Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, known as TF Corsair, from Fort Bragg, N.C. "Going out and helping with basic reconnaissance and supporting troops in contact is always exciting and extremely rewarding."

Supporting ground troops is a central concentration for a brigade staff in a warzone.

"As a quick reaction force, we are here to support the Soldier on the ground either by engaging or just by circling overhead as a show of force," said Fekete.

He also said the pilots are there to give the Soldiers on the ground the peace of mind that backup is available at any time so they can accomplish their missions.

There are many positions on an attack team from maintenance to flight commander, but overall the mission stays the same: Protect America's war fighters and eliminate enemies of Coalition and Afghan forces.

"As an attack pilot, your main goal is to keep as many people on the ground safe as possible," said Capt. Merritt Thomas, a platoon leader assigned to Charlie Company, TF Corsair. "It's a good day anytime we can protect Soldiers on the ground from the enemy."

An AH-64 Apache moves from its pad in preparation for take-off. The Apache is a four-blade, twin-engine attach helicopter with a two-man crew. The pilot sits behind the gunner. First flown in 1975, the AH-64 features a nose-mounted sensor suite, a 30-millimeter chain gun, and typically carries a mixture of Hellfire missiles and 2.75 in. rocket pods. *(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

An Apache sets down at Task Force Wolfpack's Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) in the late-afnoon sunset on Forward Operating Base Salerno, in Khowst Province, Afghanistan, with a Black Hawk close behind. Both helicopters are coming in for a "hot re-fuel," where Wolfpack's Petroleum Specialists pump hundreds of gallons of fuel in to the birds while the helicopter is still running. *(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

Learning the ropes to become a Black Hawk crew chief

by Sgt.1st Class Eric Pahon
Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs

U.S. Army Pfc. Craig Lewis(left), 19, and U.S. Army Spc. Jared Yoakam, 26, both with Task Force Saber, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, watch for signs of mechanical issues with the main rotor their UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter as it shuts down. Yoakam is training Lewis to become a Black Hawk crew chief; a position that makes him responsible for the daily operation and safety of the nearly $6 million machine and its passengers. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)

A young instructor strapped into a Black Hawk helicopter jump seat glues his eyes to his even younger student.

U.S. Army Pfc. Craig Lewis, head out the window, holds a smoke grenade in a death grip as he circles around and around a bomb crater in the sand far below.

"See how even simple tasks become complicated with all your responsibilities up here?" crackled U.S. Army Spc. Jared Yoakam over the headset. "All you have to do is drop that grenade out the window. It's as simple as that."

Lewis, from Crescent City, Calif., a Black Hawk mechanic with the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, is under some serious stress; trying to do everything right and earn a job that gets him out of the repair hangar and into the gunner's seat.

It's where he'll not only get to be one of two "big bosses" in the helicopter, but get to see much more of the Afghan countryside than what lies just outside the base.

When you're responsible for everything in the helicopter to include the cockpit, rotors, people and equipment, nothing is simple.

A Black Hawk crew chief is known to just about everyone as the Soldier in control of the helicopter. They're so important, their names used to be stencilled in black paint on the side of the bird. The Army's moved away from that tradition in the past few years, but the crew chief's importance hasn't diminished.

When passengers climb in, the crew chief says who goes in what seat, where the cargo goes, and has the final say in just about everything related to the trip.

Landing a Black Hawk amidst trees, other helicopters and vehicles is a little like trying to parallel-park an 18-wheeler without rear-view mirrors in high winds. Lewis has to become the eyes and ears for the pilots, whose view is limited to what they can see out of the cockpit windows. That leaves 53 feet of helicopter they can't see; about the same length as a large semi-trailer.

Even though he's got a mentor to guide him, Lewis, 19, has just found himself responsible for a machine where each of the four rotor blades costs more than $200,000.

That's quite a change from the young man he was just a year-and-a-half ago when he joined the Army at 17 during his senior year of high school.

"My grades weren't exactly on par," said Lewis. "I passed tests and that was kind of good enough for me. I was thinking well, there's no way I'm getting scholarships or going to college or anything. So, I thought I'd join the Army, get college paid for, and have a better chance of being accepted."

And while he originally wanted to join field artillery, it was his dad who pushed him toward aviation.

"Since I was 17, my dad was like, 'Absolutely not. You're not doing that.' So, he pushed me toward working on Black Hawks."

While Lewis attempts to throw his smoke grenade, he also has to look for aircraft in the area, watch for enemies on the mountainsides, maintain control of the large machine gun perched in front of him, and still try and get that grenade to land in a hole a hundred feet below and passing by at 40 knots—a slow speed they picked for this training mission.

As he passes the target yet again, he waits, bites his lip, then finally pulls the pin and tosses the grenade. It falls straight down, hits the wheel, and lands about 200 yards from his target.

"Don't hesitate," says Yoakam. "You have to anticipate the target and factor in how fast you're moving. It's important to get it right. You're marking a safe LZ [landing zone] for us. You need to be dead-on."

Lewis nods his bulky flight helmet, which makes him look a little like Darth Vader.

Yoakam, of Yellow Springs, Ohio, decides to try another approach to calm his student's nerves.

"Lets have a contest," says Yoakam over the headset. "We'll see who gets closest… you get one run, one shot at this."

He tells the pilots to speed it up to "something realistic." About 120 knots, or 138 mph.

First Yoakam tosses, then Lewis. As the pilots head in a wide arc, the two plumes of smoke, one yellow, one purple, stream from two tiny specks of grenades far below. Yoakam, the yellow, is about 50 feet from the target. Purple smoke rises about 200 feet further away. It's easy to see who won, but both are smiling.

"I try to make it fun," said Yoakam. "You have to make it fun, so as he gets further along, and he's required to know a lot more stuff, it all points back to being fun, which is the reason why it's worthwhile to study and learn. Not everybody gets to do this, but there's a lot to learn and do and not much room for error."

Becoming a fully qualified crew chief is a three-step process. Lewis is "Readiness Level III," or the most basic level. The relationship between him and Yoakam is similar to that of a student driver and instructor. And Yoakam is always there in the passenger seat ready to hit the brakes.

"We're there to teach, but also to perform the duty as well," said Yoakam. "So when I'm with an RL-III guy, like today, then even with something as simple as turning the aircraft right, I'm there to make sure the aircraft is free of obstructions. Now, I'm going to let my crew chief I'm training call it, but I'm responsible for it. If he doesn't do it right, I jump in, call it, and give the 'all clear' or trump him when his call is wrong."

> **"It's nerve-wracking knowing you're responsible for so much, and having someone sitting there staring at you the whole time."**
>
> ***- Craig Lewis***

Once prospective crew chiefs master the very basic skills, they move on to the second phase of training. They work on getting proficient with the door weapons, transporting machinery and cargo beneath the helicopter, and other tasks, such as night vision training, which might be required on a real-life mission.

Graduation time comes at RL-1 status, when a new crew chief is born. He becomes part of the crew, loses the instructor shadow, and sits in control of a machine worth nearly $6 million. That's quite a lot of responsibility for someone in their early 20's.

"It's nerve-wracking," said Lewis. "Knowing you're responsible for so much, and having someone sitting there staring at you the whole time. You've got all that information you've got to retain, and you're trying to bring it back out. You learn all of it in the classroom first, and you don't really have any connection to the helicopter, then you get in and you're thinking, 'What was I supposed to do at this point?' But you know everything depends on you, and you just do it."

The helicopter drops to just a few hundred feet off the ground, and swings its way into a steep, narrow valley with sharp hilltops and ridges so close it seems like you can reach out and touch them. This particular valley is where helicopters of all types practice a skill critical to survival in combat: aerial gunnery.

"Keep a close eye out for people and targets," cautions Yoakam through the headset. "Really watch close. We don't want to hurt anyone out here."

The crew makes three passes, each time picking out different targets on the hillsides. The area is devoid of people, except for some kids running down the road directly beneath the helicopter.

"Kids waiting for our brass," says Yoakam, referring to the spent brass shell casings that are about to rain toward the ground as the M240B machine gun eats through round after round of ammunition. "The kids here collect and sell it for extra money."

Once the children were in the clear, Yoakam gave the direction to start the first "live" run down the valley. He points out a concrete barrier perched on a dusty hilltop among scrub brush and gives the order for Lewis to "light it up."

Lewis squeezes the trigger, and bullets fly. He's hitting dirt- shooting high or too far left or right. The tracer rounds seem to curve away from wherever Lewis aims under the whirlwind of the blades.

Before he knows it, he's chewed up his 240-round belt of ammo and it's time to reload. The ammo shouldn't have gone that fast. Lewis should've fired short, controlled bursts to dial in his aim.

"We do a lot of teaching on the ground from Power Point," said Yoakam. "Slide after slide we teach this stuff in a classroom, but it's hard to describe moving in three axes and doing this stuff for real in the aircraft until you get out there."

Lewis re-loads as the helicopter swings an arc at the end of the valley to take another run. Yoakam gives him some brief pointers over the radio, his voice nearly drowned by the rushing wind and roar of the engines.

This is the first time Lewis has fired from the air, but not the first time he's practiced what he should be doing. The real instruction took place back at home base.

"Before I start flying too much with people, I like to do a lot of dry runs at the aircraft," said Yoakam. "We don't get the availability to talk tons as we're flying. You can't just sit there and have a five-minute explanation on how to do something. So, we talk about it in the classroom, bring it out to the aircraft, briefly run over it- how you're going to accomplish it- what the classroom really means to the aircraft- and then go fly. Since it's fresh, you cut down the amount of time you have to talk."

Yoakam, 26, joined the Army in 2006. In his five-year career, however, he's accrued more than 1500 hours of flight experience, trained nearly ten crew chiefs, and honed his teaching style like a fine art. It's a duty he takes personally, seeing it as a chance to spread everything he's learned over the past few years.

"I like making my mark," said Yoakam. "Most people do. I've been doing this long enough that I hate watching people do things the wrong way. It's just a thing people develop. This is my outlet; my way of breaking bad habits in the flight company. I'm not saying I'm perfect by any means, but it's my job to leave what's in my head for someone else. That's the way I look at the job. I demonstrate not just what the manual says, but other ways of doing things that are smarter, better, and still accomplish the

standards. I was a coach in high school, and ever since I got out of school, I've been a teacher. It just made sense for me to follow this path."

Yoakam's method is working for Lewis, who by his own account has never been much for traditional schooling.

"I like Yoakam because of the way he has everything broken up into sections," said Lewis. "I'm not sure how anyone else does it, but I can imagine if you had all the information and responsibilities all at once, it'd be a lot harder than what it is, because the stuff we did today isn't half of what I'd normally have to do. And those weren't even the mission tasks. Those were the standard tasks you'd have to do for any flight."

Lewis, who ironically aspires to leave the military one day and become a middle school history teacher, has gained more out of Yoakam's instruction than just basics required to become a crew chief.

"He makes it fun and funny," said Lewis. "He's a funny guy. He doesn't yell at you for messing up. He just explains it. He doesn't get upset, which makes it easier to learn. He has a good time with it too, which makes it better. You can tell some teachers don't like their jobs, but he's not one of those types."

"It's rewarding to watch someone grow," said Yoakam. "Usually there's a 15-20 hour mark of guys who are going to get it, then it just clicks. They start doing multiple things at once. For instance, you'll take a new guy out and you have to nudge him along, but then by the 4th or 5th flight, the pilots will say 'we're doing this' and then he's just in motion. He's doing what he's got to do and all I do is sit back there and give him a check mark."

In the air, Yoakam is still busy nudging Lewis. Two more passes through the valley, more expended belts of ammunition, and then, rather suddenly, Lewis begins firing short, controlled bursts and landing a majority of the rounds on target.

"There you go," sounds Yoakam over the intercom. Lewis turns his head and smiles. A few more congratulatory words, and Yoakam asks the pilots to head back home. He and Lewis have achieved a victory for the day, and he ends the training on a high note.

Lewis is progressing well, says Yoakam, but that's not always the case.

"Not everybody makes it," said Yoakam. "I've had one or two guys who didn't make it. It's usually retention; retaining the information and situational awareness. Like when the aircraft's in a landing profile; and you can hear it, you can see it, you can hear us making the radio calls to the tower. I've had a few people that can't tell you that information after 60 or 70 hours in the aircraft- that we're in a decelerative attitude and coming in for a landing and I'm having to prompt them in the aircraft, 'Hey, this is your time, you're clear down right.' There are a few people who just never get it."

Yoakam is sure Lewis isn't one of those people, although he's got a long way to go before he'll fly without his shadow in tow.

"You've got 90 days at the most, but I don't think it's going to take me too long, because like I said, Yoakam's a good teacher," said Lewis. "There's still a lot of stuff to learn, but I've got this."

U.S. Army Pfc. Craig Lewis, 19, fires his M-240B machine gun from a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter in Eastern Afghanistan. U.S. Army Spc. Jared Yoakam, 26, is training Lewis to become a Black Hawk crew chief; a position that makes him responsible for the daily operation and safety of the nearly $6 million machine and its passengers. Aerial marksmanship is just one of many tasks Lewis will have to master before he earns his qualification. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)

THE DOCTOR IS IN...

by Lt. Col. Mark Crago
Task Force Poseidon Surgeon

For our families back at home in Fayetteville and for all of us here with Task Force Poseidon in Afghanistan, winter is almost upon us!

Winter is a great season, bringing cold temperatures, ice on the trees, and for many of us, the joy of seeing snow. Not all of us enjoy these changes as much as others, but for some of us, there is no better way to play football or go out for a hunt than in cold, snowy weather.

Winter does bring cold and frozen precipitation that can have disastrous or deadly results if you don't prepare properly.

Most all of us are aware that hypothermia can be harmful and even fatal. Prolonged exposure to cold temperatures (they don't have to be below freezing), especially when wet, can produce a variety of physiologic changes that most do not know of yet can lead to major problems.

Being cold can alter your normal thinking process, making you less likely to make good decisions and worsening an already bad situation. The cold can make you lethargic and decrease your muscular coordination. In an operational environment, these symptoms can be especially disastrous.

Another less obvious problem that comes about with the onset of cold weather is carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas associated with the burning of fuels and with a variety of engines, indoor heaters, stoves, and fireplaces. It is a deadly gas in high concentrations; at low levels it can make you feel like you have the flu.

During the cold months, it is very important to have proper ventilation when any heater or fuel-burning appliance is used. It's also important not to use fuel-burning engines in areas without adequate ventilation.

Visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website for more information on how to safely use indoor heaters and appliances without exposing yourself to the dangers of carbon monoxide.

Protecting yourself, your Soldiers and your family from cold weather includes using layers of clothing when going outside in the cold. By having loose-fitting layers, you can easily remove one or two to avoid getting wet due to perspiration when active. Loose-fitting layers also hold the heat in better.

Also, make sure your clothing is in serviceable condition. Broken buttons, zippers, holes and rips make your outer garments much less effective in keeping the warm air in and the cold air and moisture out.

For Army aviators, we must be careful in wearing the right clothing in the winter when in and around aircraft.

Many of today's popular (and effective) winter clothing is made from materials not suitable for aviation-related duties due to their ability to cause greater injury to the wearer if these materials are exposed to high temperatures (they will melt!).

Go out and enjoy all that winter has to offer! The snow, ice and cooler temperatures offer a lot of fun and exciting things you cannot do at any other time of year. Be safe, prepare for the conditions ahead of time, and look out for those around you. Help everyone to keep warm and enjoy the season!

THE WINGS OF PEGASUS

Hon. Katherine Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, and Hon. Terry Yonkers, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Logistics visit Task Force Atlas Soldiers on Bagram Airfield Nov. 7. Atlas caught their attention with a Soldier-created battery recycling program which reduces vehicle downtime and saves the Army more than $20-thousand per month.

A Task Force Saber Apache and UH-60 Blackhawk sit at the ready under the cover of night near Jalalabad, Afghanistan. *(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

An OH-58D Kiowa Warrior lands at the Task Force Wolfpack Forward Arming and Refueling Point 26 Oct. The Kiowa is the Army's primary scout and reconnaissance helicopter, and can carry Hellfire missiles, 2.75 in. rocket pods, or a .50 caliber machine gun. *(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

Sgt. Andre Nash cooks up steaks for the Army vs. Air Force Cook-Off at the Aviation dining facility on Bagram 5 Nov. The two services competed for 'Top Chef' while the game raged on television. Because of the time difference, the party didn't start until 11:00 p.m *(photo by Staff Sgt. Donna Davis, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

A Task Force Attack AH-64 Apache stirs up dust while heading to the active runway on Forward Operating Base Sharana in Paktika province, Afghanistan on 11 Nov. *(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

A UH-60 crew chief with Task Force Saber in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, peers through night vision goggles as his helicopter spins up late at night. *(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

(above) WTVD reporter David Anderson observes F Company Pathfinders from Task Force Corsair conduct extraction training on Forward Operating Base Shank Nov. 11. *(photo by Staff Sgt. Donna Davis, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

(right) F Company pathfinders provide security seconds after stepping off a UH-60 Black Hawk in Logar Province, Afghanistan. Army Pathfinders are specialists in navigating their way through foreign terrain and establishing safe landing zones for Airborne and Air Assault Soldiers or Army aircraft. *(photo by Staff Sgt. Donna Davis, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)*

A UH-60M MEDEVAC helicopter crewed by C Company, 5-159th "Cowboy Dustoff" lands during training on Forward Operating Base Salerno Oct. 27.

Everything's going to be fine… here comes Dustoff

by Sgt. Andrea Merritt
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Around 6:00 p.m. Oct. 27, while soldiers of the 3rd Forward Support Medevac Team sat eating dinner in the office, a voice over the radio uttered the words "Medevac! Medevac! Medevac!"

The crew from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, immediately sprang into action, leaving their half-eaten meals behind. They grabbed their equipment and raced down the flight line at top speed to the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters.

Within five minutes, the helicopters took off from FOB Shank and flew toward Combat Outpost Chak to pick up an Afghan National Army soldier who sustained second-degree burns to his face, neck and upper left extremities in a non-combat related incident.

"We see a wide range of injuries," said New Orleans native U.S. Army Sgt. Robert Smith, flight medic with the 3rd FSMT. "Everything from traumatic brain injury, amputations, multiple gunshot wounds, cardiac arrest and heart attacks to your basic medical illnesses and [we] get them to a higher level of care."

Once the patient was in the aircraft, Smith turned on his red-lensed flashlight and went to work checking his vitals.

For a brief moment the ANA soldier awoke, seemingly startled by the shadowy figure with the glowing, red face standing over him. After some reassurance from Smith, he calmed down and drifted back to sleep. The hospital was only a few minutes away.

In less than an hour, the medevac crew responded to the call, picked up the injured ANA soldier, took him to the forward surgical team at FOB Shank, refueled the aircraft, and returned to base, ready to answer the next call.

With elements at FOBs Shank and Ghazni, the 3rd FSMT provides medevac support throughout Logar and Wardak provinces in support of Task Force Bulldog.

The 3rd FSMT "All-American Dustoff" Soldiers stand ready to take off at a moment's notice to reach patients in need of potentially life-saving medical treatment.

"Every medevac pilot knows that Dustoff stands for dedicated, unhesitating selfless service to our fighting forces," said U.S. Army Capt. Adam Ellington, Cedar City, Utah, native and 3rd FSMT platoon leader. "That's what we provide to the guys on the ground."

When a soldier is injured, the time it takes for him to receive proper medical care can mean the difference between life and death.

"In the medical field, we have what we call the Platinum Ten and the Golden Hour," Smith said. "The Platinum Ten is the first line of care provided to a casualty within the first ten minutes of an injury."

"If they contact us immediately and we get the patient to the FST within the Golden Hour, it raises their chances of survival exponentially," Smith explained.

If a patient is in need of urgent medical care, the medevac team has 15 minutes to get the aircraft off the ground. On average, the crew can take off within five minutes of receiving an urgent medevac request.

"We do the big inspections and stage our gear in the morning so that when we get a call, all we have to do is run to the aircraft and start it up," Ellington said.

Throughout the day, a Soldier mans the desk and monitors the messaging traffic between ground forces and higher headquarters. If a 9-line medevac request comes up in their area of operation, the medevac crew already has a heads up and can start preparing before the actual call comes in.

The crew has to function together like a well-oiled machine to accomplish the missions that come their way.

"Teamwork and good communication are the most important things," Smith said. "Our crew has strong teamwork. We can handle things thrown our way. Without teamwork, the mission could fall apart."

In a 24-hour period, the crew responded to two medevac requests. If they weren't out on a mission, they were conducting unit business; all the while, their radios within reach to listen for the call that could possibly save someone's life.

"I love my job," said Lusby, Md., native U.S. Army Spc. Bryan Heaston, crew chief with the 3rd FSMT. "It feels good to get Soldiers off the battlefield. Sometimes, we risk our lives going in and to be able to save them makes it worth it."

Shocking information…

Hidden dangers lurking where you sleep

Living quarters destroyed in a fire caused by a non-approved power strip.

UL and CE… what do they mean?

A non-UL or CE-approved transformer.

There are a lot of items for sale in bazaars across RC-East. Quite a few, however, are cheaply-made and when you're dealing with electricity, that's not a good thing.

Avoid the shock of a counterfeit product, and look for a "UL" or "CE stamp on the product.

Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) and European Marking of Conformity (CE) test products to ensure they're safe for home use.

According to UL's website, www.ul.com, the company has been testing products for more than 100 years.

"Our product safety evaluations involve a comprehensive review of important safety issues such as electrical shock, fire hazards, and even performance when it's inherent to a product operating safely," said company officials on their website.

CE is the European equivalent of UL, and test products not only when they're first produced, but conducts regular testing and factory visits throughout the item's production.

In Afghanistan, there has been an influx of cheaply-made product imitations which still may bear a UL or CE marking. Like anything of value, these markings have been counterfeited so people will think they're buying the real thing, but what you're really getting is a disaster waiting to happen.

The danger ranges across a variety of power products. Be sure to check plug adapters, power strips, and transformers you've bought at a bazaar.

Some brands commonly sold here are unapproved, un-listed with either UL or CE, and are unsafe. A few of them are: Goldsource, Matsunaga Stavol, Aihsan, Super General and Akira.

If you have a power converter from one of these brands, U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A) requires you stop using the product immediately.

Using one of these brands not only puts you at risk for shock or fire, but puts everyone you live with in the danger zone.

FUNCTIONAL SAFETY

FUNCTIONAL SAFETY

FUNCTIONAL SAFETY

Non-approved plug adapters for sale in a bazaar on post

How to Recognize a Genuine UL Mark

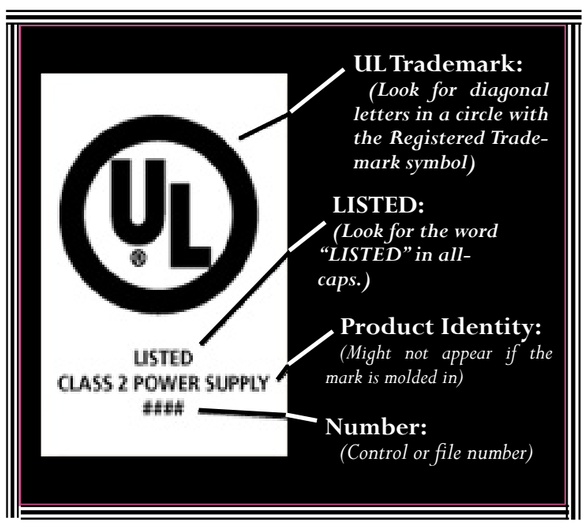
Whether a UL Mark comes in the form of a label or is die-stamped, silk-screened or molded into a product, it needs to contain the following 4 design elements to be verified as legitimate:

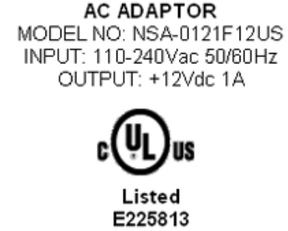
The UL trademark: the letters "UL" arranged diagonally (descending left to right) within a circle, with a small ® symbol directly below the U.

The word "listed" printed either below or beside the circle in all capital letters: LISTED.

A 4-character alphanumeric control number, or a 4 to 6-digit issue number. In the case of the issue number, it may or may not be preceded by the phrase "Issue No." as well as 1 or 2 letters.

A product identity phrase that concisely names what the product is.





A counterfeit UL sticker. Note: "Listed" should be written in all capital letters. The product identity phrase is also missing.

Tip-Offs that a UL Mark is Counterfeit

When shopping, keep an eye out for the following red flags, which can also be telling signs of a bogus UL Mark:

Products whose packaging makes reference to UL, but is free from a company name, trademark, trade name, or other UL-authorized designations.

Low-quality, cheaply manufactured products with the letters "UL" printed side by side, instead of diagonally and inside a circle.

The use of words like approved or pending in place of classified or listed. Neither "approved" nor "pending" are sanctioned or used by Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.

"UL marked" product packages containing a large number of spelling and grammatical errors.

The lack of appropriate product documentation, including instructions for use, safety warnings, and information on proper care and maintenance.

Products whose packaging lacks a toll-free customer service number, company address, or other corporate contact information.

Sgt. 1st Class James Crews, of Raeford, N.C., reaches for a box of Thanksgiving dinner for his Soldiers on tower guard. Crews is a maintenance platoon sergeant with Task ForceWolfpack, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Donna Davis, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)

A Guard tower Thanksgiving

by Staff Sgt. Donna Davis
Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs

With two plates of Thanksgiving food, pecan pie for desert and energy drinks, U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class James Crews gets into his Gator and starts his rounds to the two guard towers he'll visit tonight while dropping off Thanksgiving meals to his Soldiers on duty.

Crews is a maintenance platoon sergeant with Task Force Wolfpack, and feels it is his responsibility as a supervisor to make sure he takes care of his Soldiers.

"You have to let them know that you appreciate what they are doing," said Crews, of Raeford, NC. "They are the first line of defense for this Forward Operating Base. I appreciate them being out there on guard duty."

Before Crews could even make it to the first tower guard, the sun went down.

The Gator's dim red headlights barely lit the road up ahead, making it hard to find the first tower guard. In the dim light he could barely see the turn to the guard tower.

White flashlights and headlights aren't allowed here after dark, making it difficult to see even a few feet ahead.

It took Crews almost 15 minutes to find the first tower.

Carrying the plate of food, desert and energy drinks, Crews walked up the steep stairs of the tower.

U.S. Army Pvt. Jose Gutierrez, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with Task Force Wolfpack, was surprised to see his supervisor and even more surprised when he found out he had a Thanksgiving meal.

"I had nothing to eat but sunflower seeds," said Gutierrez, of Manizales, Columbia. "And I think it's good, he is taking care of his people."

Before leaving, Crews made sure Gutierrez didn't need anything, shook Gutierrez's hand, and wished his Soldier a Happy Thanksgiving as he headed down the stairs.

With one more Styrofoam plate of food bouncing down the road in the seat beside him, Crews took another dark dirt road to where U.S. Army Sgt. Jared Waymire, of Hillsboro, Ore., was also on tower guard duty.

Waymire was impressed, but not surprised by Crews's actions.

"He definitely improves morale," said Waymire. "He's always looking out for us. I would expect this; it's pretty much his standard."

Sgt. 1st Class James Crews, of Raeford, N.C., places pie in a bowl on Thanksgiving for his two Soldiers who are on tower guard. Crews is a maintenance platoon sergeant with Task Force Wolfpack, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Donna Davis, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)

A Pegasus Thanksgiving

Sgt. 1st Class Oscar Smith prepares green beans

A happy diner...

Lt. Col. Darryl Gerow and his ice cream creations

Pfc. Anthony Lupo and Pfc. Frank Wilmot

Capt. Donald Minchew couldn't be happier...

Master Sgt. Franklin Rodriguez and Sgt. 1st Class Pope Morgan serving it up

Staff Sgt. Lakida Huery and Spc. Nicole Cygan

Spc. Eric Picarella preps potatos

All hands on deck...

1st Sgt. Jeffrey Matthews greets guests

1st Sgt. Danita Wimberly puts the finishing touch on the dinner rolls

Sgt. Andre Nash and his incredible cakes

On the serving line...

Command. Sgt. Maj. Ronald Evans, Sgt. 1st Class Robert Archer, and Lt. Col. Landy Dunham

Warrant Officer Nadeshka Negron, Maj. Debra Doolittle, and Warrant Officer Alicia Cando

Sgt. 1st Class Michael Reid, Aviation Dining Facility Manager talks turkey with Spc. Darren Gray

Master Sgt. Juan Contreras dishing it out...

Spc. Antonio Webb puts the finishing touch on the "near-wine" table

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, prepare a pallet for sling load Oct. 19 at the helicopter landing zone on Forward Operating Base Altimer. Due to road conditions, a convoy could not deliver supplies to Combat Outpost Charkh so the Soldiers stacked pallets with food, water and medical supplies and prepared them for delivery by air. (Photo by Sgt. Andrea Merritt, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

HLZ Soldiers serve as lifeline to warfighters

by Sgt. Andrea Merritt
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Hundreds of forward operating bases and combat outposts strategically line today's battlefield; and some are in such remote locations, units have to rely heavily on logistical support to sustain their forces.

As liaisons at the helicopter landing zone on Forward Operating Base Altimer, six Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, not only keep track of passengers traveling in and out of their area of operation, but also make sure warfighters at smaller bases have access to critical supplies.

HLZ operations support U.S. and Afghan National Army Soldiers, civilian employees and interpreters at Combat Outposts Baraki Barak, Charkh and Kherwar , and Joint Security Station Roadhouse.

In addition to food, water and medical supplies, the HLZ team also ensures fortification materials, vehicle repair parts and equipment, mail and other materials are sent to the units by convoy or air, if necessary.

"We are a lifeline for the guys down there at the smaller FOBs," said El Paso, Texas native U.S. Army Sgt. Manuel Guerrero, supply sergeant and HLZ team member. "They need equipment to build up and harden the site so they can stay alive."

Sometimes road conditions do not allow for convoy travel, so the Soldiers have to stack pallets with supplies ordered by the units and prepare them for sling load onto helicopters.

Although pallets are stacked during the day, the sling load usually happens during hours of darkness. Once the helicopter arrives, team members don their Army combat helmet, eye protection and gloves and secure the loads to the aircraft as it hovers in the darkness above their heads.

"It can be dangerous if you don't know what you're doing. We run through safety procedures before the birds arrive," Guerrero said. "First, we have to hook the static rod and clear it so we don't get electrocuted. We also have to make sure we don't duck because if we go lower, the helicopters will come down lower."

Despite some of the risks associated with their work, the Soldiers at the HLZ enjoy their work and realize the importance of doing their jobs efficiently and effectively.

"The guys out there fighting need energy to do their jobs," said Chicago native Spc. Carlos Pryor, supply specialist and HLZ team member who gained experience with HLZ operations during a previous deployment. "We make sure they get food, water and mail, which is good for morale. If I don't do that, then I failed the mission."

(right) Photo by Sgt. Andrea Merritt, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Promotions and opportunities you need!

by Warrant Officer Nadeshka Negron

Maj. Gen. Daniel Allyn, CJTF-1 Commanding General, promotes 1st Lt. Erica Robinson and 1st. Lt. Barbara Harrington (photo by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Pahon, Task Force Poseidon Public Affairs)

Savings deposit Program

The DOD Savings Deposit Program (SDP) was established to provide members of the uniformed services serving in a designated combat zone the opportunity to build their financial savings.

You can deposit up to $10,000.00 while you're deployed, and earn 10% interest annually.

This is the time to make some extra money, because you can't take part in the program back at home.

You have to be receiving Hostile Fire Pay and be deployed for at least 30 consecutive days, or 1 day in each of 3 consecutive months in order to participate in the program.

If you're intersted in making an extra 10% on your money, contact your battalion S1 or get more details and information thru the DOD website:

http://militarypay.defense.gov/benefits/SDP.html

You can withdraw your money online through MyPay, by sending and email to: CCL-SDP@dfas.mil (SDP mailbox), or by fax to (216) 522-5060.

You can only close your SDP account after departing the combat zone.

Interest will continue to accrue on the account up to 90 days after departure from the combat zone. Should the 90 day period end on any day other than the last day of a month, interest will accrue through the last day of the preceding month.

If the 90-day period ends on the last day of a month, interest accrues for that month. Members in a combat zone may withdraw accrued interest over the $10,000.00 principal quarterly.

Emergency early-withdrawals must be authorized by the members' commanding officer

Junior Enlisted Promotions changes

If you're promoted after Jan. 1st, 2012, get ready to see changes to the point distribution under Military Education. The change may affect your promotion points.

Soldiers competing for Sgt.:

Under Professional Military Education Warrior Leader Course (WLC) graduates will get 80 pts, WLC graduates on "Commandants List" will see an adjustment to 92 pts and WLC graduates who achieved "Distinguished Honor Graduate" status or "Distinguished Leadership Award" will now receive 104 pts.

In addition, both Resident Military Training and Computer Based Training will be capped at 78 pts each.

Soldiers competing for Staff Sgt.:

Under Professional Military Education ALC graduates will now get 90 pts, ALC graduates on "Commandants List" will adjust to 101 pts and ALC graduates who achieved "Distinguished Honor Graduate" status or the "Distinguished Leadership Award" will now get 112 pts.

In addition, both Resident Military Training and Computer Based Training will be capped at 84 pts each.

To see how the point distribution under Military Education will affect an individual's total promotion points select "View Upcoming PPW Points Adjustment" from the Promotion Points Worksheet (PPW) or History Screen on AKO.

If you have questions about how to find your worksheet on AKO, just contact your S1.

Become an Army Officer

Task Force Poseidon Troopers: Further your career and achieve even more by becoming Army officer.

The next Officer Candidate School (OCS) board is on Feb. 10, 2012. Packets are due Feb. 3.

Active duty Troopers have to be less than 28 years old by the time the packet is submitted to HRC.

Waivers for time-in-service, age, and UCMJ / Civil convictions have been suspended indefinitely.

Any Trooper Staff Sergeant Promotable or above may not apply.

You can get the rest of the requirements and additional eligibility information on MILPER Message 11-317.

For any additional information related the OCS board contact your BN S1 or the Brigade S1 POC WO1 Negron at DSN 481-6283 or by email nadeshka.negron@afghan.swa.army.mil.

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