



NORMANDY NOW

29th Combat Aviation Brigade – Task Force Normandy

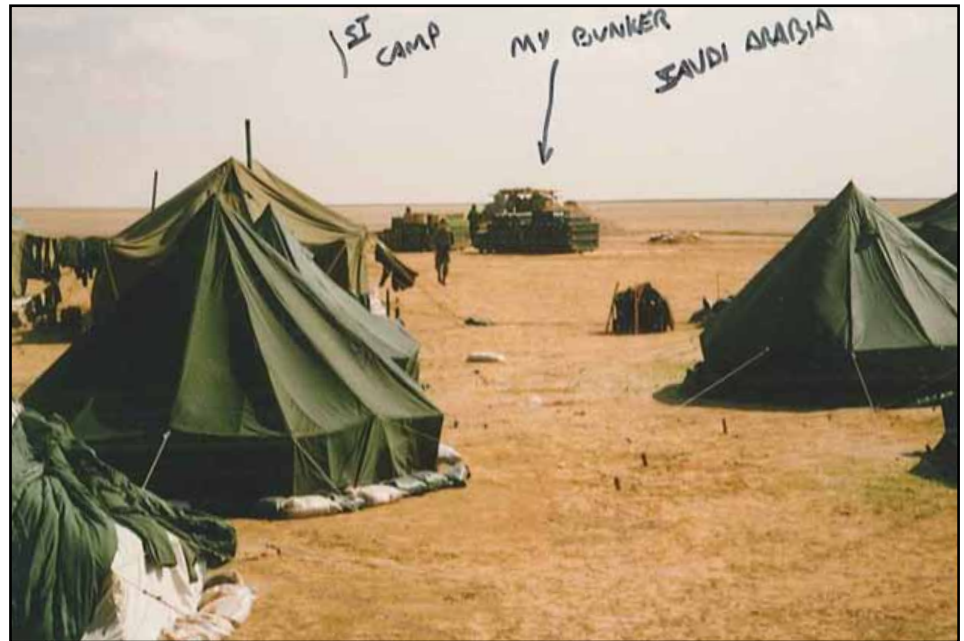
DESERT BLADES. CAMP BUEHRING, KUWAIT.

Deployments, Kuwait 21 Years Later

By Spc. Matthew Dornbusch,
1204th Aviation Support Battalion

Operation Desert Storm, commonly referred to as the Gulf War, or now the First Gulf War, officially began January 17th 1991. Its preparation was quick. A few months prior, Soldiers were trained and mobilized, ready to help liberate the small nation of Kuwait.

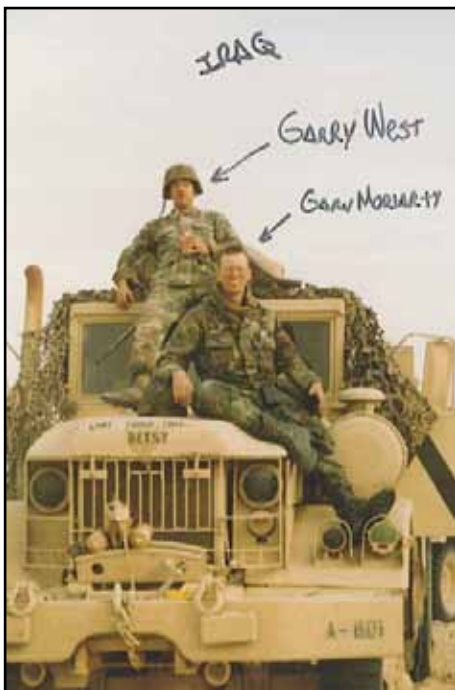
At 3:00 a.m. on that January morning, the U.S.-led attack on Saddam Hussein's forces began with an air campaign. Thirty-eight days later, on February 24th, ground forces moved into Kuwait and liberated Kuwait City in only three



days. It would only be a few weeks later that coalition forces moved into Iraq and an official cease fire was reached.

Headquarters Company, 1204th Aviation Support Battalion who have not forgotten. These Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers, 20 years after their deployment and return from the First Gulf War, are once

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With the shadow of the recent operations in Iraq, most Soldiers rarely talk about Operation Desert Storm any longer. Most of the younger Soldiers hardly even know the events that lead up to the conflict, let alone what happened in the conflict itself. Maybe it was because it ended so quickly, or maybe because the casualty rate was so low.

Whatever the reasons, there is a small group of Soldiers within Headquarters and

NORMANDY NOW

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~Col. David Carey

Command Sergeant Major:

~Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Beyard

Public Affairs Officer:

~1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner

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~Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington

Contributors:

~Chaplain (Capt.) Johnnie Hutson

~Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan

~Spc. Matthew Dornbusch

Commander's Corner



working hard to ensure we don't miss a beat as we transition into our new mission.

As the blade's edge for our new operation, we are currently working under U.S. Army Central Command conducting diverse missions in the Middle East. Soon, we will even have units in Afghanistan supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. We remain in a combat-focused posture prepared for any mission in our area of responsibility while partnering with, and helping to train, neighboring countries to foster security and stability in the region.

The last few weeks have been very productive for Task Force Normandy. After months of operating in multiple locations, the 29th CAB is finally together at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Everyone here is

This is an exciting new direction for us, combining the operational warfighting knowledge we gained during Operation New Dawn with our past National Guard experiences with

the State Partnership Program using with civil-military nature of the Guard to interact with both active and reserve forces of foreign countries.

Our time at Camp Buehring promises to be rewarding. We will remain vigilant and combat-ready, while taking advantage of the many unique cultural opportunities this location has to offer. In a constantly changing world political environment, we never know when our mission may change. We will continue to maintain our focus as a fighting force and adhere to the National Guard motto: "Always ready, always there."

"29, Let's Go!"

David Carey
"Normandy 6"

Command Sgt. Maj.



people. Families, friends, significant others and co-workers made the holiday season very special for us with their gifts, home-baked goods and more. It was also nice to read the very personal thank you letters from people you never met or may never meet that often come in gift boxes. The words – "thank you Soldier", written by average American citizens to our Soldiers, is simply awesome.

2012 brings with it new challenges and opportunities. While many units that deployed in support of Operation New Dawn in Iraq are now home, our brigade was not one of them. We have a new mission, or better yet series of missions, that will continue until the end of our deployment in the coming summer. Much of our work will be here in Kuwait. We will also be

providing some of the best training possible to prepare our Soldiers for whatever situation may arise in the future.

I encourage each Soldier in the 29th CAB not to lose focus as we transition to new missions in the uncertain times ahead. We must continue to maintain our high standards of discipline and military bearing. As I often say, the true test of discipline is how you act when no one is watching. Set the example for your fellow Soldiers and do and be your best each day. I watch our Soldiers doing their jobs each day with great pride and satisfaction. I wish you a great 2012 and thank you for your commitment and sacrifice on behalf of the American people.

Thomas Beyard
"Normandy 7"

It seems the holidays came and went very quickly, and we are now starting fresh in 2012. Since last month's newsletter, the one thing that continues to overwhelm me is the sacrifice of our Soldiers and the continuing generosity of the American

From the Chaplain

by Chaplain (CPT) Johnnie Hutson



Soldiers in this photograph (from left to right) are Chaplain (Capt.) Johnnie Hutson, Spc. Mandy Ebert and Chaplain (Maj.) William Butler.

Happy New Year!
We have another opportunity, in 2012, to make this year one of the best years of our lives. Many times we make resolutions in an attempt to achieve different kinds of goals. As well intended as these resolutions are, so many times they go unfulfilled.

Webster's defines resolution as:

- 1: Process of resolving.
- 2: Firmness of purpose.
- 3: Statement of the opinion, will or intent of a body.

In order to see resolutions fulfilled in our lives, I recommend finding an accountability partner that will hold you accountable, and to whom you can be accountable. Remember, accountability can only go as far as you allow it to go. Some of the most common resolutions people make are things like losing weight, getting physically fit, quitting smoking, etc. Basically, we

want a better quality of life. As helpful as accountability partners are, I recommend that first you invite God into your life to help you improve your quality of life. People miss out on so many blessings from God simply because they don't realize what God has to offer. He brings love, joy, peace, strength, encouragement, healing, provision and protection, just to name a few.

We think by making a resolution on our own, somehow we can bring about these blessings and obtain them. Let me say that God is the only one that can truly bring these kinds of blessings into our lives. When making a resolution, ask God to come into your life to give you the help, strength and encouragement you need to see your resolution fulfilled. Allow God, the creator of heaven and Earth, make this the best year you ever had!!

Note From the PAO



As we transition into a new year and a new mission, I want to make sure the 29th CAB Public Affairs Section is covering all the units of Task Force Normandy to the greatest extent possible. To that end, please send any story ideas as well as personal photos, with captions, to me at kris.baumgartner@us.army.mil.

We are always looking for new material to publish in *Normandy Now* and on our social media sites, www.flickr.com/29thcab and www.facebook.com/29thcab.

Anyone can view and download high-resolution photos from Flickr, and we highlight many brigade activities and external media stories on Facebook.

Thank you for reading this issue of *Normandy Now*, and we look forward to a great upcoming year!

1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner
Public Affairs Officer
29th Combat Aviation Brigade



again in the Middle East. Their legacy was as the first Soldiers in, and twenty years later, they were the last ones out.

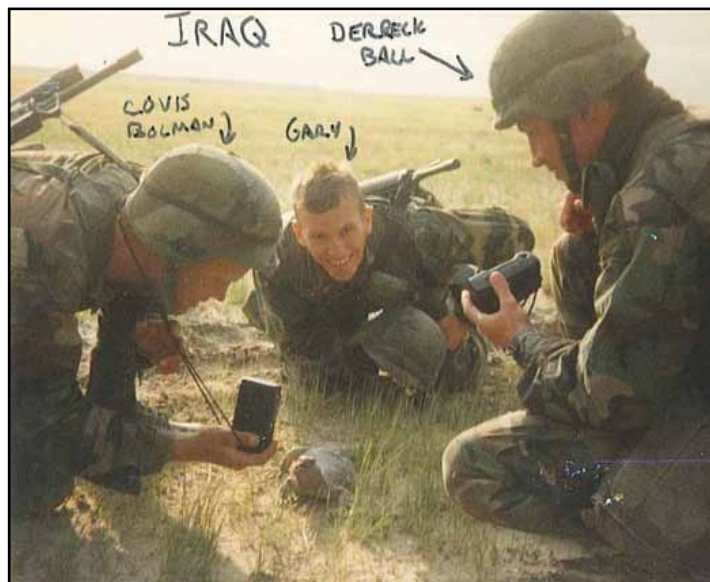
Sgt. 1st Class Dean Regester was stationed at Fort Knox, Ky. in 1990 when he was mobilized for Operation Desert Storm. He deployed overseas with the 19th Engineer Battalion as a lightweight vehicle mechanic. Regester compared what he did then with what route clearance teams do now.

“Back then there were no roads,” he said. “The engineers I was with made the roads.”

Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Leasgang was only 19 years old when his unit, 4th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment with the 3rd Armored Division, was called into action. He departed

from Germany, where he was stationed, moved through Saudi Arabia and into Iraq. As an M1 Abrams tank operator, Leasgang has already been redeployed to the Middle East and compared the two wars.

“FOBs?” he said, referring to forward operating bases.



“We didn’t have FOBs. The only thing we had then were assembly areas for vehicles. That’s where we slept.”

2nd Lt. Greg Slater was a 20-year-old specialist when

he entered theater during Operation Desert Shield. He was with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment—a rapid deployment unit. They could be deployed to any part of the world in a very short amount of time. Slater was a crew chief at the time.

“I’ll never forget when we crossed the berm into Iraq and a Blackhawk (helicopter) flew overhead. He dropped his flares and fired his rockets.”

Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Ireland was also a specialist with the 2nd ACR back in 1990. Prior to that time, he spent four years in Germany as a high-frequency radio operator.

Ireland immediately laughed before describing his most memorable moment.

“March 2, 1991. We were taking sniper fire from a quarry. I was going on almost four days of no sleep when my captain jumped into the hole I had dug to tell me my son had been born. I was so excited I forgot about the sniper fire and started running around telling everyone about my son.”

Staff Sgt. Kelly Darland had just finished special forces selection, but was still formally with the 101st Pathfinders. He was pulled,

however, to go with the 5th Group Special Forces team. He was put on Personal Security Detail and assigned to guard the officer in charge of the security force that personally watched over the prince of Kuwait.

Sgt. Larry Watkins was a Petty Officer 3rd Class with the United States Navy serving aboard the U.S.S. America. He was in the Red Sea when his ship was ordered to move off the coast of Kuwait. Watkins worked with aviation ordnance and loaded bombs onto aircraft. This was an around-the-clock operation and helped the United States keep air superiority over Iraq.

Sgt. John Amburgey was a lance corporal with 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Amphibious Assault Vehicle Battalion. He was stationed at Courthouse Bay located within Camp Lejeune, N.C.

“We were all ready to go on a NATO float to Europe,” said Amburgey. “The next morning Capt. Wagner, our commanding officer, told us since we were already gearing up, we were probably going to go [to the Middle East].”

Master Sergeant Gary Moriarty was a specialist in 1990 stationed in Schwabach, Germany. He was assigned to the 6th Battalion 3rd Air Defense Artillery, whose slogan was “If it flies it dies!”



“The individual resiliency of the Soldiers was amazing,” said Moriarty. “Everybody did everything.”

Moriarty related a story about a moment that still sticks out in his mind—he saw a line of tanks at night while he wore a pair of night vision goggles. The tanks fired their rounds and explosions went off in the distance.

“It was devastating; it was chaos; it was war,” said Moriarty.

The experiences of all these men were completely different, but have tied them together as Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers. Where they once helped liberate a country from a tyrant, they helped bring the most current operations to a close. They have seen the people of Iraq evolve from being ruled by dictator to now running an emerging democratic nation. This, they hope, is not the proverbial end to the U.S. book of involvement in Iraq, but the beginning for a country headed in the right direction.



SONGS FOR A FALLEN

**By Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington,
29th CAB Public Affairs**

Staff Sgt. Lori Wilson, the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade's legal non-commissioned officer-in-charge, has been singing to a church crowd since the age of six.

"I would sit on the piano bench with my grandmother as she was playing at church, and I would sing along with her," said Wilson. "Everyone was really shocked that such a big voice could come out of such a little person."

Wilson stated that she is very shy and only recently started singing at her current church, First Christian Church, in Havre de Grace, Md.

"The more I [sing] the more I want to do it," she added.

During post-mobilization training at North Foot Hood, Texas, she approached Chaplain (Maj.) William Butler, brigade chaplain, and some of the battalion chaplains about singing during worship services.

"They didn't have anyone approach them to help lead the worship, so I asked if I could help," said Wilson. "I brought some music from my church, and the chaplains had some of their music—



Staff Sgt. Lori Wilson sang during worship services with the Eisenhower Dr. North Band on Jan. 15, 2012, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

sometimes I sang a cappella."

Wilson was asked by Chaplain (Capt.) John Scott to sing at a memorial service for a fallen comrade, Spc. David E. Hickman, 23, of Greensboro, N.C., who was killed Nov. 14, in Baghdad.

He succumbed to injuries sustained after an improvised explosive device exploded near his vehicle. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C. Hickman was the last casualty in Operation New Dawn.

During the Nov. 16

memorial service, Wilson sang a solo, "Jesus Draw Me Ever Nearer" and a duo "Amazing Grace" in the Taji Ministry Center packed with mourning Soldiers.

"I felt very honored," said Wilson. "...and then to know that he was the last soldier killed in Iraq. It was a very touching and very somber moment."

The battalion commander presented Wilson a command coin after the service.

"[Receiving the coin] is going to mean more to me than any awards on this deployment just because of the meaning behind it," added Wilson.



Soldier of the Week

Sgt. Amber Culver
Headquarters and
Headquarters Company,
1-111th Aviation Regi-
ment
Dec. 7, 2011

Sgt. Amber Culver is a medic and has treated Soldiers within the battalion using “tailgate” medicine while the battalion prepared a fully operational medical facility. Culver has a personal goal to improve her physical fitness.

Since arriving at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, she has logged more than 130 miles from 5-kilometer runs and on the elliptical machine in the gym. Culver, while on guard duty, stood her ground and fulfilled her obligations by adhering to standing operation procedures.

When she was tested by a lieutenant general, she used integrity and personal courage to do what was right instead of what was easy in the face of adversity. She stopped him and required an escort. She upheld not only the general orders but duty to her unit and to the position she was holding.

Spc. Kenneth Davis
Headquarters and
Headquarters Company,
1-151st Attack Recon-
naissance Battalion
Dec. 14, 2011

Spc. Kenneth Davis has taken on much more than his normal workload and has excelled tremendously. He filled in for a second lieutenant in managing command and control missions and assumed responsibility for another brigade's team sheet without hesitation, complaints or errors.

Davis is a flight operations specialist for Task Force Marauder and has been with 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion for almost 8 years. Davis deployed three times, twice with the 1-151st ARB and once with a North Carolina Army National Guard attack battalion. Davis was assigned to the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade as a liaison, scheduling all UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter air mission requests for the CAB.

Since being assigned to the brigade AMR cell, Davis has processed 212 AMRs moving 10,765 passengers and 327,889 lbs. of cargo. He is a tremendous asset to Task Force Marauder and to the CAB.

Spc. Kyle Hoben
Headquarters Support
Company, 1204th Avia-
tion Support Battalion
Dec. 28, 2011

Spc. Kyle Hoben consistently volunteers himself for all work details, and he always puts in his best effort.

His efforts have included helping locate and move bunk beds, wall lockers and mattresses to the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade tent area at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

This helped improve the living conditions for units in the brigade. He always has a positive attitude and presents a soldierly appearance at all times.

Hoben proved invaluable, assisting the maintenance platoon sergeant to locate and inventory 100 percent of assigned equipment.

He also put in long hours helping to move the shipping containers from the old consolidated maintenance area to the new one.

Spc. Earl Jonas
Headquarters and
Headquarters Company,
1-111th Aviation Regi-
ment
Jan. 4, 2012

Spc. Earl Jonas was chosen by his command to deploy to Taji, Iraq, where he assumed the duties of a company-level supply sergeant. This position is two levels above his grade. Jonas inventoried all theater provided equipment, separated serviceable from un-serviceable equipment, turned in unserviceable equipment, consolidated all theater property and prepared the equipment for shipment to Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Additionally, he maintained property accountability and provided logistical support during the battalion's joint base operations. Jonas accepted these challenges without hesitation and worked relentlessly to ensure the missions given to him were completed accurately and efficiently.

He successfully inventoried and relocated over \$650,000 of Army equipment including weapons, vehicles and other equipment essential to Task Force Normandy's mission by ground and air.

Spheres of Recognition



Pfc. Albert Hansen, a Soldier in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was awarded an Army Achievement Medal on Dec. 24, 2011.



Sgt. Mark Bettuo, a Soldier in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was awarded an Army Achievement Medal on Dec. 24, 2011.



Spc. Justin Hughes, a power generator mechanic in Task Force Normandy's, E Company, 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to sergeant on Jan. 5, 2012.



Pfc. Joshua Ashley, an AH-64 Apache mechanic in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to specialist on Dec. 24, 2011.



Pfc. Logan Dorminey, an AH-64 Apache mechanic in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to specialist on Dec. 24, 2011.



Warrant Officer Robert Smith, brigade mobility officer for the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer Dec. 19, 2011, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



Pfc. Carter Lybrand, an armament specialist in Task Force Normandy's E Company 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to specialist on Jan. 4, 2012.



Pfc. Joshua Taylor, an AH-64 Apache mechanic in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to specialist on Dec. 24, 2011.



Pfc. Dustin Martin, an AH-64 Apache mechanic in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to specialist on Dec. 24, 2011.



Pfc. Delonte Dunlap, an AH-64 Apache mechanic in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to specialist on Dec. 24, 2011.



1st Lt. Randall Phillips, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to captain during a ceremony Dec., 2011.



Pfc. Steven Lane, an AH-64 Apache mechanic in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to specialist on Dec. 24, 2011.



Spc. Brian Lemieux, a motor supply specialist in Task Force Normandy's E Company, 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to sergeant on Jan. 5, 2012.



Warrant Officer David Weaver, an Apache pilot and tactical operations officer in Task Force Normandy's 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, was promoted to chief warrant officer on Dec. 30, 2011.

Camp Buehring's Wellness



By Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan, 1-151st ARB, Public Affairs

Camp Buehring, Kuwait, formerly named Camp Udairi, is more than 20 miles away from the Iraq border. The camp has served as a military base for troops moving into Iraq. Camp Buehring is surrounded by miles of mostly uninhabited desert.

The camp was renamed after Lt. Col. Charles Buehring, of Fayetteville, N.C., who was killed in Baghdad, Iraq, on Oct. 26, 2003. He was one of the highest ranked United States casualties in the Iraq war.

Camp Buehring can accommodate several

thousand Servicemembers and equipment such as armor, artillery and helicopters. Udairi Training Range, a live fire range, is nearby. Although isolated,

Servicemembers have some comforts of home and many amenities such as familiar restaurants, a movie theater and an active USO.

The Moral, Welfare, and Recreation department on Camp Buehring held a 5-kilometer race and a Health and Wellness expo at the main MWR stage and the Oasis Recreation Center Jan. 7.

At the expo, vendors from different military units, universities specializing in working with military people, and Harley Davidson Motorcycles had tables for Servicemembers to visit. Pvt. Brittany Holcomb, communication specialist with 519th Signal Co., 54th Signal Battalion, 160th Signal Brigade said, "I stopped by the University of Maryland table because I have thought about starting to work towards my degree. Just picking up some



information was a good place to start.”

Sgt. Mariel Hunt, non-commissioned officer-in-charge at the health and wellness table, Headquarters and Headquarters Co. 113th Sustainment Brigade from Greensboro, N.C., said, “We are here to help give Soldiers a snapshot of where they are as far as their health and fitness are concerned. We can give them a guide of how many calories they should be consuming and give them a range for maintaining or losing weight.”

There were also other tables set up. Chaplains provided spiritual reading

material and behavioral health professionals provided tips on how to relax and sleep better.

Overall, there was a little

something for everyone, and it was a great way to get Servicemembers out to see what the military has to offer them.



APACHE DUNKER TRAINING

By Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan, 1-151st
ARB, Public Affairs

Pilots with the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, South Carolina Army National Guard, went to Korea for Apache dunker training in early January.

Dunker training was taught by the 4th Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade and Korean instructors at the Water Survival Training Facility. At Camp Humphreys, South Korea. The training is how pilots practice getting out of the helicopter in the event of a water landing. They also learned many survival skills to use if they needed to float in the water for a prolonged period of time.

Chief Warrant Officer Ricky Padgett, pilot with A Co. 1-151st ARB said, "This training is very important for every pilot. Just for the chance that we might have to land the Apache in the water and be rescued in open water."

"An Apache is very top-heavy. As soon as it lands in the water, it rolls over, making egress more difficult," added Padgett.

Padgett said, "We started training with classroom



Pilots with the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, South Carolina Army National Guard, trained on how to egress an Apache once it has been submerged in water at the Water Survival Training Facility at Camp Humphreys, Korea Jan. 1-8, 2012. Instruction was provided by 4th Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade and Korean instructors. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. John McElveen, operations officer 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion.)

instruction on the dunker shallow water egress trainer chair and the new gear that we were going to have to use. Then we practiced egress in the SWET chair. We had to go through the motions of egress from an actual cockpit, and then we all did three dunks in the Apache dunker simulator."

"Once we were safely out of the cockpit, we had to practice emergency extraction from the water using a rope ladder and a harness that hung from the rescue helicopter."

Padgett said that many

things made the egress more difficult than just climbing out of the cockpit. "We wore all our flight gear. Our harness would get stuck on something, and there are a lot of little things that are easy to forget when you are pressed for time and under water."

One of the new items on the aviation life support equipment vest was a breathing apparatus, the helicopter emergency egress device. The HEEDs is a small lightweight self-contained breathing apparatus. This would allow the pilots a little extra time to get themselves

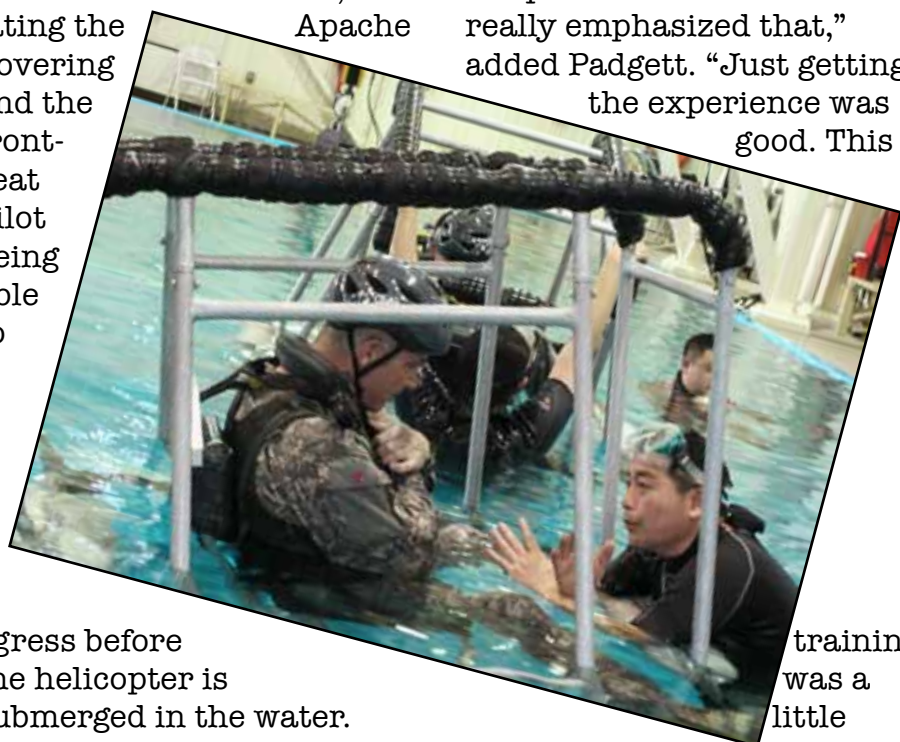


out of their seat in the cockpit.

part of our ALSE vest,” said Padgett.

Another skill the pilots practiced was to jump from 10 feet above the water, simulating the hovering and the front-seat pilot being able to

“The most important thing we all learned was to not panic. The instructors really emphasized that,” added Padgett. “Just getting the experience was good. This



egress before the helicopter is submerged in the water.

“We would jump into the water and then inflate our survival raft or activate our flotation collar which is

better than what some of us received at flight school because it was Apache-specific.”

POTUS CHRISTMAS CALL



By 1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner,
29th CAB Public Affairs Officer

A Maryland National Guard soldier deployed to Kuwait with the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade received a holiday phone call on Dec. 25, 2011, from President Barack Obama.

Sgt. Samantha Sherrill, F Company, 1st Battalion, 111th General Support Aviation Battalion, which falls under the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, was chosen by her command to represent the unit and speak to President Obama on Christmas morning. The president expressed gratitude for her service on behalf of the American people.

“He asked me to tell everyone he thanks us and our families for their sacrifices,” said Sherrill.

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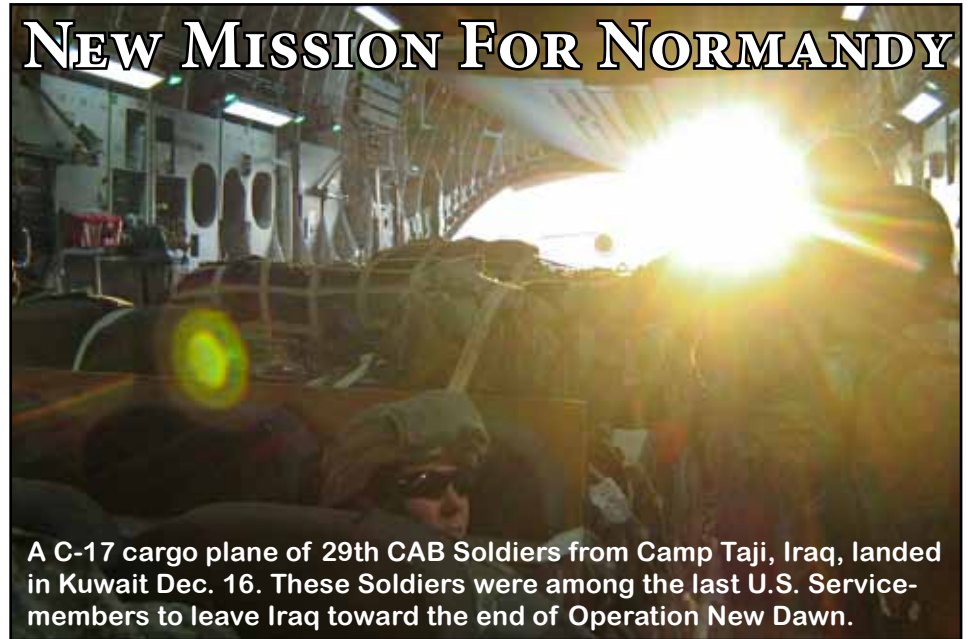


Sherrill's military occupation is an air traffic controller. She works full time for the Maryland National Guard and is studying to be a physician's assistant. When not deployed, she lives in Randallstown, Md. While stationed at Camp Taji, Iraq, Sherrill became a Certified Tower Operator and trained Iraqi air traffic controllers in preparation for the U.S. departure.

"I felt very confident in the Iraqi controllers we left behind," said Sherrill. "We completed the mission we were assigned, and I wish the Iraqis success in the future."

The 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, comprised of units from approximately 25 states and territories, was mobilized in September 2011 and deployed to Iraq and Kuwait in support of Operation New Dawn. As the last combat aviation brigade in Iraq, members of the unit flew the last aircraft out of Iraq on Dec. 18.

NEW MISSION FOR NORMANDY



A C-17 cargo plane of 29th CAB Soldiers from Camp Taji, Iraq, landed in Kuwait Dec. 16. These Soldiers were among the last U.S. Service-members to leave Iraq toward the end of Operation New Dawn.

**By 1st Lt. Kristofer Baumgartner,
29th CAB Public Affairs Officer**

The 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, known as Task Force Normandy, has a new mission in Kuwait only days after the end of the war in Iraq.

The last remaining American Soldiers departed Iraq Dec. 18, bringing the almost nine-year conflict to a close. Col. David Carey, Task Force Normandy commander, led the last combat aviation brigade in Iraq and was aboard the final helicopter to cross the border into Kuwait.

"It was a surreal feeling," said Carey. "Some of my Soldiers were in elementary school when the war started in 2003, and now we we're making history together as we end this mission and transition to our next one."

The brigade's new mission, working under U.S. Army Central Command, is to combine training and partnership-building

activities with other countries in the region to develop and maintain security and stability.

Many of the brigade's Army National Guard Soldiers are accustomed to a variety of domestic and international missions, which take advantage of both their civilian skills and military specialties.

As part of the Maryland National Guard, members of the brigade's Headquarters and Headquarters Co. have conducted peacetime partnership-building missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Estonia under the auspices of the National Guard's State Partnership Program.

In addition, National Guard Soldiers are trained to respond to emergencies, such as natural disasters in the U.S., while continually preparing for combat missions.

Last Choppers Out



By Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan, 1-151st ARB, Public Affairs

The 29th Combat Aviation Brigade was among the last of the U.S. forces to close out operations and depart Iraq.

The Soldiers in the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, South Carolina Army National Guard, and B Co., 1-111th Aviation Regiment, Mississippi National Guard, flying under the 29th CAB, flew the last of the aviation missions out of Iraq while members of the 82nd Airborne Division convoyed along roads from Iraq to Kuwait Dec. 16-18.

It was South Carolina Guardsmen in the 1-151st ARB and their Apache Longbows who provided the vital overhead protection for the 82nd ABN. The 1-151st ARB provided security and reconnaissance for the ground troops and ensured everyone's safe arrival into Kuwait. The 1-111th AVN picked up remaining Navy medical personnel from Basrah and made their final flight out of

Iraq along with the commander of the 29th CAB. They were flying with two CH-47 Chinooks from the 111th AVN and three Navy UH-60 Seahawks.

Chief Warrant Officer Jesse Green, a pilot with B Co., 1-111th AVN said, "It was exciting to be part of the last coalition flight out of Iraq. We made the last call to Mohalab Control, the air traffic control tower that coordinated border crossings with Iraq."

The last of the 1-151st ARB Apaches departed Camp Taji, Iraq before noon on Dec. 16. They conducted one more mission around Baghdad and then met up with the 82nd convoy. No one's mission was complete until the entire convoy had crossed the border into Kuwait on Dec. 18th.

Capt. Randall Phillips, Headquarters and Headquarters Co. commander

and Apache pilot for the 1-151st ARB was one of the pilots in the last mission that flew on the 18th. He said, "We provided security for Gen. Odierno as he closed Camp Adder. We also acted as a communication relay because the local system broke down. We were transferring messages from other units to the general's task force."

"It was an honor I never expected to get," said Phillips. "I was part of the last combat mission in Iraq."

"While we were securing the area for the general and listening to the radio communication, we heard 'Lion 6 on board, Ironman 11 on the move. Mission complete. Collapse perimeter.' Those words will stay with me forever," said Phillips.

The departing team of three Blackhawks and two Apaches took off for Kuwait with the Apaches in the lead still securing the area, ensuring a safe departure out of Iraq.

"Our battalion made significant contributions in the successful departure of U.S. forces out of Iraq," said Lt. Col. Ray Davis, commander of the 151st ARB. "The South Carolina Army National Guard has made its impact on the history of Operation New Dawn. Our citizen-Soldiers and their families should be very proud."



The empty flight line of the Camp Taji, Iraq airfield on Dec. 16, 2011. Members of the 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment were the only Soldiers and helicopters remaining, waiting for the word to leave. (By Staff Sgt. Tracci Dorgan, 1-151st ARB, Public Affairs)



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