

PEGASUS

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MAGAZINE

Aviator returns to mission

Mountain Pinnacle Landings

Air Assault facilitates Special Forces Mission

Operation Moshtarak:
Aviation supports offensive in Helmand

CH-47 PATIENT TRANSFER



GROUND AIR MOBILITY
Official Magazine of
Task Force Pegasus
(82nd Combat Aviation Brigade)

PEGASUS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 82ND COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE

Mission statement:

On order, deploy and provide full spectrum rotary wing aviation capabilities - attack, assault, reconnaissance, medical evacuation, cargo, command and control, and air-space management - in order to sustain and support operations ranging from combat to civil support.

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Task Force Commands:

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COL Paul Bricker, Commander
CSM Larry Farmer, CSM

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LTC Mike Morgan
CSM Richard Sullivan

Task Force Wolfpack
LTC David Jernigan
CSM Wayne Fausz

Task Force Corsair
LTC Carey Wagen
CSM Thomas Hamilton

Task Force Talon
LTC Wade Blackwell
CSM Vernon Brown

Task Force Atlas
LTC Robert Wegner
CSM Lourdes Berrios-Powell

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Injured Apache pilot returns to fight in southern Afghanistan

BY: Sergeant Meagan Young
Task Force Wolfpack

Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan—"I left with a void," said Captain Joshua Bowns when asked why he fought to return to Afghanistan. Just nine months before, Bowns, an AH 64 Apache helicopter pilot, crashed on the outskirts of a small village in southern Afghanistan. What started as a typical escort mission changed Bowns' life forever. On May 22, 2009, Bowns and his co-pilot, Chief Warrant Officer Brent Cole, left their base to provide security for two UH 60 Blackhawk helicopters transferring personnel to a smaller base. Before reaching their destination the two pilots encountered an aircraft emergency. They were going down and going down fast. Both pilots did everything in their power to land safely but nothing would keep the helicopter from hitting hard. Slamming against the side of the helicopter, the taste of blood unmistakable, Bowns had to act quickly. His helicopter reeled on its side. Grasping the battered frame of his Apache, he pulled himself from the front seat and crawled to give assistance to his co-pilot.

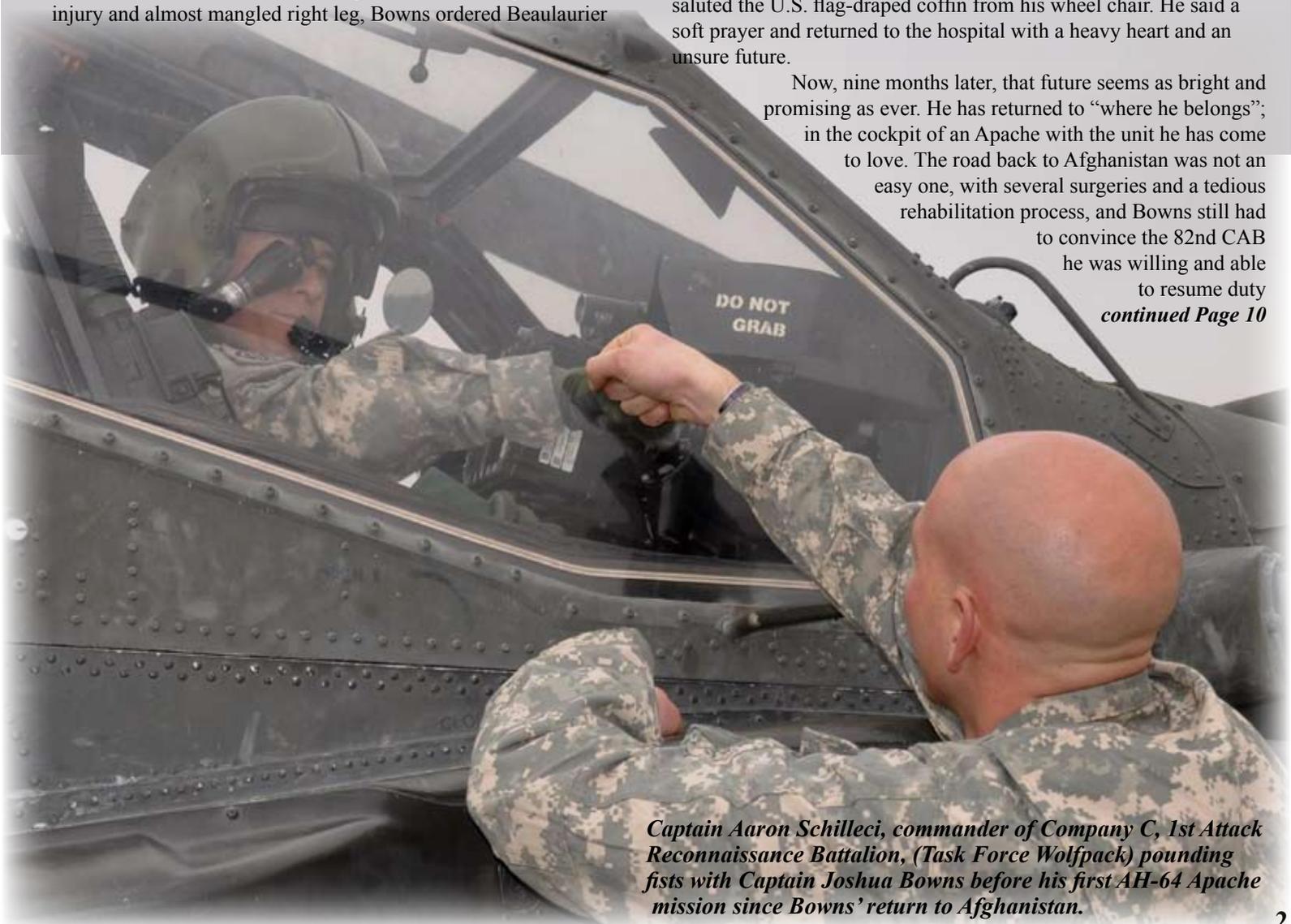
Meanwhile, one of the Blackhawks landed 200 meters away and a young crew chief, Specialist Eric Beaulaurier, rushed from his aircraft to assist Bowns. Even though he was suffering a severe head injury and almost mangled right leg, Bowns ordered Beaulaurier

to assist Cole. Unfortunately, Beaulaurier couldn't get a response from Cole and time was running short. The other Blackhawk circled above, reporting the incident back to headquarters and providing over watch in case local villagers got too curious. Beaulaurier directed all of his attention to the severely wounded Bowns, dragging him over the rocky terrain in the direction of the waiting Blackhawk. The other Blackhawk crew chief rushed by his side and the two helped Bowns onto the helicopter. They rushed to the nearest medical facility. Ground forces were dispatched immediately to secure the crash site and tend to Cole whom later was assessed to have died on impact.

The next couple of days seemed a blur as pilots and Soldiers of the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) visited Bowns at his hospital bed side. He tried to comfort the company of young Soldiers trying to make sense of it all. Before leaving for Walter Reed, Bowns attended the RAMP ceremony for Cole. On a warm night on the tarmac, more than a thousand in attendance saluted their fallen comrade as a procession led Cole on board a C-17, destination North Carolina. Bowns, with cuts etched deeply in his face, hardware stabilizing his right leg and three vertebrae fractures, came by ambulance to pay homage to his former co-pilot. Bowns saluted the U.S. flag-draped coffin from his wheel chair. He said a soft prayer and returned to the hospital with a heavy heart and an unsure future.

Now, nine months later, that future seems as bright and promising as ever. He has returned to "where he belongs"; in the cockpit of an Apache with the unit he has come to love. The road back to Afghanistan was not an easy one, with several surgeries and a tedious rehabilitation process, and Bowns still had to convince the 82nd CAB he was willing and able to resume duty

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Captain Aaron Schilleci, commander of Company C, 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, (Task Force Wolfpack) pounding fists with Captain Joshua Bowns before his first AH-64 Apache mission since Bowns' return to Afghanistan.

Tremendous pride in mission accomplishments

Troopers and Families,

It is with tremendous pride that I hammer away at my keyboard this month recounting significant accomplishments of our troopers over the past month.

The highlight of our last 30 days was our team's support of Operation Moshtarak: the fight to clear insurgents from central Helmand, specifically from the towns of Marjeh and Nad Ali, Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Pegasus troopers performed valiantly and with great effects in our support of British, US Marine and Afghan security forces. Following nearly 45 days of intensive coordination, planning, briefings, and rehearsals, the entire brigade task force surged to conduct this single largest operation; the largest most complex operation in the history of Operation Enduring Freedom. In the early morning of 13 February, over 60 of our helicopters and their respective aircrews from every one of our task forces, and literally hundreds of our troopers supporting from forward arming and refueling points (FARP), pick-up zones, and forward medical evacuation sites, conducted zero illumination air assaults of over 800 coalition forces deep into the center of insurgent controlled territory. The operation was conducted flawlessly and enabled our supported infantry forces to establish a critical foothold and seizure of key terrain deep inside insurgent enemy lines. The subsequent combat actions by these forces, and their link-up with thousands of other coalition forces attacking from the outside in, enabled coalition forces to rapidly separate insurgents from the Afghans, many of whom for years were subjected to Taliban rule. The effects of this operation demonstrated, not only to the Afghans, but also to the capitals of the many nations whose military forces are fighting here with us, tangible results of the US surge commitment to the war here in Afghanistan. Progress, as described by so many of the international media embedded with our forces, continues to effectively protect the Afghan people. The operation and the subsequent hold of this key area in southern Afghanistan is going well, albeit the fighting and the loss of coalition and Afghan lives underscore the tremendous cost in blood and treasure of combat. And the subsequent heroism by our MEDEVAC helicopters and escorting UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter aircrews was unprecedented. The men and women supporting near constant critical point of injury aerial medical evacuation of wounded coalition and Afghan



*Task Force Pegasus Commander
Colonel Paul Bricker*

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Be proud, you have set the standard



*Task Force Pegasus Command Sergeant Major
Command Sergeant Major Larry Farmer*

Pegasus Troopers,

What a great year we have had together. As we start to redeploy back to Fort Bragg, North Carolina I ask that each and every one of you look back at your tremendous accomplishments with pride. Each of you should walk out of Afghanistan with your heads held high; you have set the standard for all aviation brigades to follow, and the standards are high.

Through your efforts, Task Force Pegasus has helped International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to move this country and the Afghan people towards a better way of life. As you arrive home to family and friends, many of you may be overcome by emotion—no shame here. This is a very normal emotion at the end of a hard and tough road. Enjoy your time with your family and soak up the North Carolina sun—you deserve the downtime. Many in the months to come will start their trek towards a new installation and organization but your legacy here will last in time.

Your bravery, commitment and performance has been nothing but excellent and I would deploy into a combat zone with each and every one of you again. It has been my distinct pleasure to serve as your brigade command sergeant major.

To the families, thank you for your sacrifice and commitment; you have once again proven just how strong a military family must be. Your continued support has allowed us to achieve all that we have. God bless each and every one of you—see you on Green Ramp!

ATW!

CSM Larry D. Farmer

Aviators receive Distinguished Flying Cross

BY: Sergeant 1st Class Shannon Wright
Task Force Pegasus Public Affairs

Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan

– Ten Aviators assigned to the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) received Distinguished Flying Crosses (DFC) Friday for heroic actions while serving in Afghanistan. The DFC is awarded to any person who distinguishes themselves through heroism or extraordinary achievement while in flight. Further, the achievement must be deemed so exceptional as to set the individual apart from their peers who might be in similar circumstances.

Seven OH58 Kiowa Warrior helicopter pilots assigned to 1st Squadron, 17th Aviation Cavalry Regiment, or Task Force (TF) Saber, including the Saber commander; the commander of 1st Bn., 82nd Avn. Reg., or TF Wolfpack, an AH64 Apache helicopter pilot; the commander of 3rd Bn., 82nd Avn. Reg., or TF Talon, a UH60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot; and an aero-medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) pilot assigned to TF Talon were awarded DFC's by the Regional Command South (RC-S) commander, British Maj. Gen. Nick Carter, on Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan. RC-S is the 82nd CAB's division level headquarters in Afghanistan.

"It's great always for me as your CG (commanding general) to do things like this," said Carter. "When I look at what you're doing every day, you are unsung heroes."

The seven Kiowa pilots assigned to Saber fly reconnaissance and security missions for ground forces. One of Saber's areas of responsibility is the Arghandab River Valley in Kandahar Province where ground forces from the 4th Bde. Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div. patrol the area and interact with the local population.

"These Kiowa pilots, I hear nothing but praise for when I go to the Arghandab," said Carter. "I talk to the battalion on the ground, they say without the Kiowas, they simply wouldn't be able to operate the way they do."

Their cited achievements include exploitation of IED emplacement cells to further ground forces' abilities to collect intelligence; maneuvering against the enemy while under fire to destroy a concealed cache site and chassey mounted heavy machine gun position; providing overhead security for route clearance patrols while being engaged by enemy fire to include rocket propelled grenades, returning numerous times after refuel to safely see the patrol through the threat.

"The MEDEVAC piece, when I talk to Soldiers – they come in the middle of nowhere, not necessarily knowing the ground, not necessarily knowing what the circumstances are on the ground, it's a truly remarkable achievement."

Chief Warrant Officer Samuel Ratterree, a Talon MEDEVAC pilot, was awarded the DFC for maneuvering through enemy fire to reach critically ill Marines during Operation River Liberty in July last year. While landing, Ratterree positioned his aircraft so as to provide cover for Marines loading casualties on the helicopter.

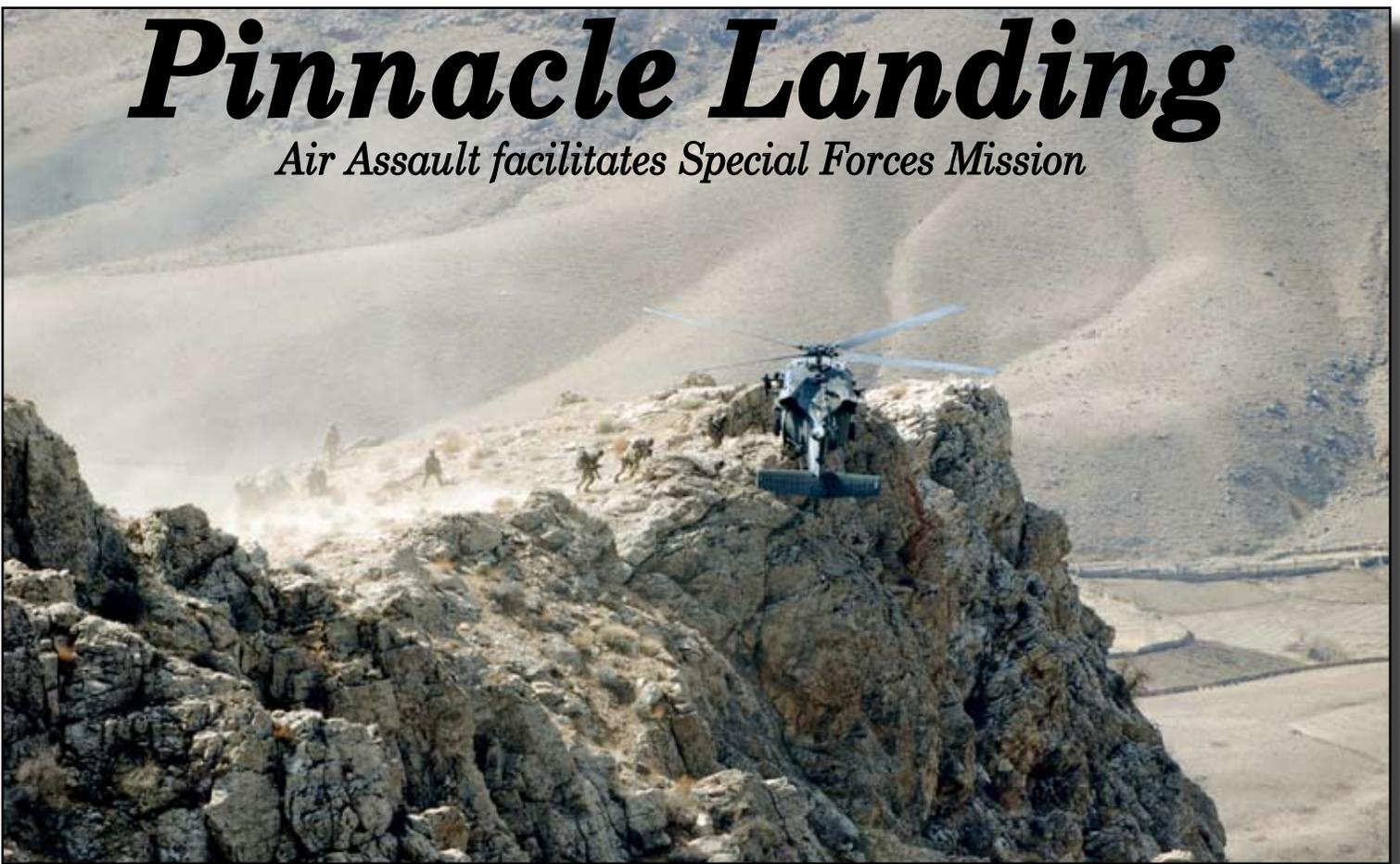
Carter ended with a quote he heard in church. "Battles are won by slaughter and maneuver. The better the commander, the more he demands in maneuver, the less he demands in slaughter." "And, if ever there was something that encapsulates what this organization does on the battle field, it is that."

The awardees were Lt. Col. Mike Morgan, commander of TF Saber and Kiowa pilot; Lt. Col. David Jernigan, commander of TF Wolfpack and Apache pilot; Lt. Col. Wade Blackwell, commander of TF Talon and Blackhawk pilot; Capt. Anthony Fuscellaro, Kiowa pilot; Chief Warrant Officer Michael Leoni, Kiowa pilot; Chief Warrant Officer Seth Schubert, Kiowa pilot; Chief Warrant Officer Toby Familo, Kiowa pilot; Chief Warrant Officer Adam Fletcher, Kiowa pilot; Chief Warrant Officer Cody Pearson, Kiowa pilot; and Chief Warrant Officer Samuel Ratterree, Blackhawk pilot.



Pinnacle Landing

Air Assault facilitates Special Forces Mission



US Special Forces being extracted from a mountain pinnacle in Zabul Province, Afghanistan by a US Army UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter from Company A, 2nd Battalion (Redhawks), 82nd Aviation Regiment, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade after executing an air assault mission to disrupt insurgent communications. (US Army photo by Staff Sergeant Aubree Clute)

Message from Commander continued

security forces, often in the face of intense enemy fire, saved many lives, and reinforced the commitment of Task Force Pegasus to the men and women fighting on the ground. The professionalism and commitment of our men and women, in my mind at least, helped prevent much greater loss. You should all be mighty proud of your Soldier's efforts as they were a vital part in ensuring this historic operations mission success.

Our deployment here in southern Afghanistan is nearing completion, at least this tour. Soldiers wearing familiar Screaming Eagle patches are beginning to arrive daily; our task now is to transition them into the fight so that they can continue providing rotary wing support to the coalition and Afghan security forces. As the CSM and I participate in the many award ceremonies across the mighty Pegasus Brigade, I am continually amazed by the positive attitude of our troopers; their humility, sense of teamwork, dedication and spirit of service indeed mark them as our nations finest. Our troopers are indeed most special and I know of no American who would not eagerly express their grateful appreciation for the sacrifice y'all make every single day in answering our great nation's call to duty. A

duty that has called you time and time again to serve in a foreign land, separated from your family, in dangerous places, in the defense of our American way of life.

A parting note: I would like to say a special thanks to SFC Shannon Wright and SSG Aubree (Rundle) Clute for their tremendous efforts during the past year sharing the story of Task Force Pegasus. Shannon and "A" are the co-editors of our Pegasus Magazine, as well as the focal point for the significant amount of print and digital media coverage of the Pegasus Brigade. Their efforts remain uniquely outstanding and have greatly assisted us in sharing the story of our deployment with US and European media, and most importantly, with our local Fayetteville Observer, the Paraglide, and our families. And, in light of their efforts, the Commander of USA FORCES Command recently selected our Pegasus Magazine as the best Field Newspaper in the nation, to include US based Army units deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan; well done troopers!

To all of you, I am honored to serve by your side and do indeed look forward to the reunion with our families on Green Ramp. Thanks for all you do.

**All the Way! Respectfully,
Pegasus 6**

HEADED HOME

Staff Sergeant Mike Ruffolo
Task Force Pegasus Safety NCO

During these past 12 months, we, the Troopers of the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade have endured many traumatic events and suffered the endless perils of what is soon to be known as history. From the discolored fruit from the Asian DFAC, to the ever speeding MRAP fresh from the monster truck rally to my personal favorite and my most cherished memory? That's right..."the poo-pond." Oh how I'm gonna miss that chilly cold mist blowing on my face on those early morning runs. Now, as we prepare to head back to our beloved Fort Bragg with her arms wide open, waiting to embrace us with a glorious hello and a hero's welcome, I can't help but stop and wonder. How much dust can one person really ingest without a serious health risk? And how many forms of PTSD are there. Is the blue splash on any of those lists?



Soon, we'll be reunited with the loved ones we had left behind to defend our country's Safety, Dignity and Honor. And those we left behind deserve nothing less! Keep them safe people. And keeping them safe, means doing the same for yourself as well.

The Army has put together a vast collection of programs to help us, help ourselves. TRIPS, GRAT, LEADER'S CORNER, just to name a few. These easy to use programs have been designed for Soldiers/Troopers just like us to help find and figure out safe ways to enjoy the pleasure of life we so deservingly need after a deployment.



Whether it's cruising that newly purchased motorcycle through the hills of NC, taking the family cross country to Disney World to check out Mickey and the Gang, launching that new boat, to a simple BBQ in the back yard, these programs can help you "keep 'em safe."

All these helpful programs can be found at "The Army Combat Readiness Center" and it's easy! Just logon and type in (www.army.safety.mil) it's all there for you to use, whenever for whatever.

We just ask that you remember one thing..."RISKS...take them if you like, but you might not like where they take you"...BE SAFE AND GOD BLESS!

OPERATION MOSHTARAK

82ND CAB EXECUTES AIR ASSAULT INTO MARJAH AND NAD ALI, HELMAND PROVINCE

BY: Staff Sergeant Aubree Clute
Task Force Pegasus Public Affairs

Helmand Province, Afghanistan-

US Army Aviation air assaults Coalition Force into Marjah, Helmand Province, Afghanistan-

Operation Moshtarak is the single largest combat operation to date in Operation Enduring Freedom. With focus on the Districts of Marjah and Nad Ali, Helmand Province Afghanistan, this joint force operation was constructed and executed to relieve the Afghan people of Taliban rule.

US Army rotary wing assets from the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade (Task Force Pegasus) inserted the first Coalition boots on ground in northeastern Marjah by air assaulting US Marine and Afghan Forces into multiple landing zones surrounding objective areas of the assault. Nearly 300 Marines and Afghan Security Forces were air assaulted into Marjah, Afghanistan under the hours of darkness 13 February.

Twelve UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and CH-47F Chinook helicopters, command and control helicopters, and aerial security provided by AH-64 Apache helicopters from TF Pegasus facilitated the air assault of Kilo Company, 3/6 Marines in seizing their

objective area.

“Protected by Apache air weapons teams (AWT), the Marines and their partnered Afghan Security Forces quickly began moving to their initial objective, seizing key terrain and preparing to link up with their parent headquarters scheduled to begin a ground assault into Marjah [mere hours after the air assault],” said 82nd CAB Commander, Colonel Paul Bricker. Having been in theater 30 days prior to Operation Moshtarak, 3/6 Marines are a constituent of the 30,000 increased force structure called to Afghanistan by President Barack Obama in accordance with International Security Assistance Forces Commander, General Stanley McChrystal’s request this past year.

Shortly after the US Marine insertion, additional Task Force Pegasus aviation assets concurrently assisted a Coalition air assault into nearby objective areas in Nad Ali. Task Force Pegasus’s 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 82nd Aviation Regiment (TF Wolfpack) was one of three rotary wing aviation units involved in the operation in support of the United Kingdom’s Task Force Jaguar.

“Their air assault was equally effective in seizing key terrain in the city of Nad

Ali, located adjacent and northeast of Marjah,” said Bricker. “Their operation was even more complex as it included over 20 rotary wing aircraft from the US, Britain and Canada.”

Task Force Pegasus continues to provide support to operation Moshtarak; however, the focus is now turned from aerial security to medical evacuation. Casualty evacuation teams are standing-by to transport wounded Coalition and Afghan Forces to appropriate field hospitals as necessary.

“[The CH-47F Chinook helicopter] has been specially configured with helicopter cabin litter support systems and manned with TF Pegasus surgeons and medics to conduct critical patient transfers from less capable combat surgical wards within Helmand Province, to southern Afghanistan’s largest and most advanced hospital on Kandahar Airbase,” said Bricker.

The 82nd CAB has successfully completed more than 120 air assault operations throughout southern Afghanistan over the span of 10 months in support of International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) and Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).



Re-deployment Medical Readiness



BY: Captain Bryan Johnson

Task Force Talon, Task Force Pegasus Flight Surgeon

I would like to advise troopers with chronic aches and pains to wait at least one to two months before coming into the 82nd CAB Aid Station for that “million-dollar work up”. All patients love MRIs because they want to know what’s wrong with them just to know; however, the key is: what is now going to be done with those MRI results. For most orthopedic-type complaints, the latest and greatest treatments remain activity modification (profiles) and anti-inflammatory medications. Give your body a chance to re-integrate into your normal activities of daily living after arriving back at Fort Bragg... not walking around fatigued in boots on uneven terrain all day while carrying a weapon can sometimes make an enormous difference. You might just find that that nagging foot pain you developed on deployment completely resolves within a couple of months after returning home.

On the other hand, the mind is a very complex thing that requires a completely different treatment regimen. If you are not feeling like yourself, or simply want to talk to someone, I cannot emphasize enough that you need to go and get help immediately—see your nearest health care provider or chaplain without delay.

Likewise, if you have a buddy who you think isn’t acting quite right and you have some concerns, this needs to be brought to your supervisor’s attention right away. Your buddy may be upset with you for telling someone, but he will thank you later if he does have an issue.

The human body is a machine like a vehicle is a machine, and the more that machine is stressed, the more maintenance it requires. This might require a specialist, especially when it comes to something as intricate as the human brain. Talking to a trained professional about life struggles you may be going through is like taking your vehicle into a professional mechanic and popping the hood.

Remember, we are part of the 82nd Airborne... the greatest fighting force in the Army and the envy of all those who know of us. In conclusion, I want to say that I am lucky to have served on this deployment with each and every last one of you and thank you for watching my back.

ATW!

Captain Bryan Johnson, MD

One Team No Matter What Rank

BY: Sergeant Meagan Young
Task Force Wolfpack



Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan – Crew chiefs and door gunners were feeling the pressure of a steady tempo of missions but lacking in crew numbers.

Two 1st Sergeants saw this shortage and found an answer... their own time.

“Don’t ask a Soldier to do something you wouldn’t be willing to do yourself” brought about what has been dubbed the “Geezer Crew.”

First Sergeant Michael Mobley and First Sergeant Daniel Moesch have taken it upon themselves to alleviate the strained UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crews of Task Force Wolfpack. They fly together, Mobley as door gunner and Moesch as crew chief.

These two lead from the front, doing everything expected of an enlisted Blackhawk crew from pre-flight checks to carrying out the courtesy of transporting the pilot’s gear to the aircraft. They also adhere to the “you shoot it, you clean it” rule of weapon maintenance.

The consensus among the pilots is “it has been great working with such seasoned professionals.”

Mobley spent twelve years as a CH-47F Chinook helicopter crew chief and Moesch six years as a Blackhawk crew chief. Now they work side by side troops fifteen years their junior.

These two “E-8” or senior noncommissioned

officers have done everything from the weekly shuttle to full fledged air assaults. Some passengers are caught off guard when they catch a glimpse of the rank of this unusual team.

Due to their background train-up was quick and painless, well, almost.

Sergeant Derek Quick, the Standardization Instructor (SI), tasked to bring the first sergeants up to speed, had to get over an underlining awkwardness brought on by the rank difference.

“I have never trained anyone higher than a Specialist so to tell my first sergeant to do this or that or you are screwing up was something that took a little time to get over,” said Quick.

These first sergeants consider it an “honor and a privilege” to be part of the Blackhawk crew chief team.

Moesch admires the dedication and hard work the young men of this Blackhawk company puts in everyday. “These guys are good, no matter day or night these Soldiers work to get the job done. Hot, cold, rain, snow, they are very passionate about their work.”

Mobley shares the same sentiments “They are the hardest working bunch of guys I have been a part of in a long time and anything I can do to make the deployment easier on them I will do.”

Return to fight continued

behind the controls of one of the Army's most sophisticated aircrafts. Bowns was determined to get well, he was determined to get back to Afghanistan and he was determined to fly again, and all of that came true.

On January 26th, 2010, a new chapter began for this young pilot. The overcast day and threatening clouds beyond the mountains did not faze Bowns as he climbed back in the front seat of his favorite airframe. Bowns was to take his first flight in the very helicopter that replaced his own, a "sweet and ironic moment" for him. His determination to get back has challenged and inspired his fellow Soldiers. Sergeant 1st Class John Yalch, the company platoon sergeant, who has worked thirteen years with Apache pilots said this, "To fall off the horse and get back on, he is the epitome of Attack Helicopter leadership."

When Bowns was asked what it meant for him to be back in Afghanistan, he humbly responded, "These guys developed me as a pilot, officer and as a person. To be able to come back here, and to finish off the deployment which we all began together, it means the world to me. And on top of that, to not only come back to the aircraft but to fly again, brings the whole thing full circle."

Bitter Sweet Reunion for Young Apache Pilot

Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan – Captain Joshua Bowns lived through an event every pilot prepares for but hopes never to encounter. Flying 1,000 feet above unforgivable terrain in Afghanistan in May 2009, Bowns and his co-pilot Chief Warrant Officer Brent Cole encountered an aircraft emergency. Seconds later Bowns emerged as the sole survivor of the helicopter crash neither could have prevented. Within a week Bowns was back stateside to start a long, tedious rehabilitation for a brutally damaged right leg and several fractured vertebrae. He had a lot of time to think things over.

"I made a decision to set a goal for myself to return to the unit before the end of the deployment," said Bowns. With a fierce desire to overcome and conquer, this young pilot fought to make that a reality. But permission to return did not come easy as he had to assure a handful of commanders and doctors that he was willing and able to fly again in a combat zone. Upon completing several examinations and evaluations, Bowns was cleared to return.

On January 22, 2010, exactly nine months since that painful day back in May, Bowns was reunited with his unit. His walk and demeanor were strong, only a small scar near his left eye gave any indication that he was ever wounded. When asked who prepared him to return he replied, "Pretty much everybody, the amount of support I've gotten is unbelievable. All of Charlie Company, specifically Sergeant 1st Class Yalch; the crew chiefs; Captain Schilleci, my company commander; Captain Garrow my fellow pilot and my brother in arms; Mr. Cole's family; my good friend Chief Warrant Officer Larry Irwin; and my own family. Also a lot of people I don't know, the people who read about what happened and sent cards, letters, or e-mails. All those letters and cards I read would just give me a little bit of a motivation boost, even on some of those days that would have been tough or when I lost focus. They helped keep me on track and maintain my focus. All the docs and medical personnel that helped out, with my surgeries and everyone from Landstuhl, Germany to Walter Reed, all of the rehab specialists. The Warrior Transition

Battalion (WTB) and the Wounded Warriors Foundation was amazing. The WTB regimented my recovery to the point that I didn't have to worry about anything. I was free to just heal and take things slow." Now he is back and eager to fly once again.

Apache Pilot Returns to Fly

Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan – Apache Helicopter Company commander, Captain Aaron Shilleci, scanned the distant valleys for signs of a Blackhawk. Two weeks ago Shilleci got word that one of his pilots won the fight to return to Afghanistan. The fight; recovering from the aftermath of surviving a helicopter crash nine months earlier, months of surgeries, rehab and evaluations. After convincing an understandably cautious command that he was willing and able to return, Captain Joshua Bowns was on his way to finish what he had started.

The Blackhawk landed and out came the young Apache pilot. The last images of Bowns before he left were of those lying on a hospital bed. Now he walked towards the embraces of his brothers-in-arms. The only visible reminder of his wounds was a small scar near his left eye; but, wounded he was with a severely damaged leg, head trauma, and broken vertebrae.

Four days after returning to the unit, Bowns once again sat in the front seat of his favorite airframe. Staring before him were switches, screens, and controls. What was once a familiar sight now was something to be mastered all over again. More excited than anxious, Bowns taxied out onto the runway, co-piloted by one of the most seasoned pilots in the unit, Chief Warrant Officer Rusty Norris. Bowns took her up reviewing the basic operating procedures and maneuvers; the first step of many.

Upon landing two hours later, Bowns was asked what message he would like to convey to those who have or are going through a similar experience. "The message would be to just stay focused, set goals. Small goals at first then large goals like getting back to Afghanistan, getting back to my unit, and to fly again. I had to set smaller goals first like walking and running, or returning home and healing from my injuries. Set goals and stay focused. Over those long nine months it's easy to let your mind wander, get down on yourself or lose focus. It really comes down to what you want to accomplish. I had a great support group that kept me focused. Pretty much a day didn't go by that I didn't think about coming back and flying again. "



Captain Joshua Bowns at hospital after the accident with Crew Chief Eric Beaulaurier

82nd Aviation, Afghanistan

Patient transfer by means of Chinook helicopter

BY: Staff Sergeant Aubree Clute
Task Force Pegasus Public Affairs

OPERATION MOSHTARAK, AFGHANISTAN—As Coalition and Afghan Forces advance through Taliban strongholds in the districts of Marjah and Nad Ali, the wages of war continue to call upon the medical evacuation of joint-force and Afghan local casualties affected by enemy combatants.

Two primary field hospitals in Helmand Province are the receiving points of such casualties; when these sites go “Amber” on bed space and critical patients require a higher level of treatment, the mission to transfer the patient becomes priority. Primarily used for cargo re-supply and support to air assault operations, CH-47F Chinook helicopters from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Aviation Regiment (Flippers), have been configured to support Operation Moshtarak, providing patient transfers from field hospitals in Helmand Province to higher level care facilities in Regional Command-South.

“RC-South Headquarters in conjunction with [82nd Combat Aviation Brigade] Task Force Pegasus developed a concept of patient retrieval using CH-47 with medical escorts [to provide] more space and a better environment to enable care of high dependency, and large

volumes of patients to be moved [if necessary],” said Colonel Martin CM Bricknell, RC-South Medical Director, UK Royal Army Medical Corps. The 82nd CAB’s medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) company, Company C, 3rd Bn., 82nd Avn. Reg. (DUSTOFF) executes primary responsibility for the evacuation of patients from points of injury (POI) by means of UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter with supporting MEDEVAC components from the US Air Force’s Task Force Pedro. In addition to MEDEVAC, patient transfer and casualty treatment teams have been integrated into the evacuation mission to ensure the continued care of wounded and expand rotary wing support to ground forces and local Afghans in need.

Flight surgeons, physician’s assistance and medics from Task Force Pegasus, deployed to southern Afghanistan, are on standby as casualty-evacuation teams for patient transfer responsible for stabilizing and continuing treatment of patients while in-route to their intended hospital.

“We laid out all of our equipment and went through every conceivable scenario we could think of,” said Captain Bryan

Johnson, flight surgeon for Task Force Pegasus, regarding preparation for initiating patient transfer operations. “Successful treatment at any level hinges upon expecting the unexpected. For instance, the routine transfer of an ambulatory patient can end up as the urgent transfer of a litter patient.”

A mission normally accomplished by DUSTOFF MEDEVAC, the Patient Transfer continued CH-47 Chinooks and casualty-evacuation teams assist the patient retrieval mission allowing the continuance and successful execution of of POI missions and patient transfers without any gaps in MEDEVAC coverage throughout the 82nd CAB area of operations (AO), said Sergeant First Class Darrell Kindle, Medical Operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge, TF Pegasus.

“It is amazing how everyone involved has gone directly from a routine sick call environment to a largely unknown medical environment and they work as though they’ve been performing patient transfers the entire deployment,” said Johnson. “I have to give my [noncommissioned officers] the credit for conducting daily training with the medics this past year in anticipation that one day

they would be called out for the very missions we are currently **PATIENT TRANSFER** participating in.”

“My mission is to assist[medical doctors on board] in maintaining the stability and safety of patients by checking their vital signs frequently [while in flight], maintaining oxygen sources for patients and providing proper medical dosages[if required],” said Specialist Pamela Powers, medic, TF Pegasus.

Chinooks can carry both litter and walking-ambulatory patients, allowing each case to be monitored and treated by these teams in-route to hospitals. In using this helicopter, US Army aviation provides the possibility of more patients to be moved in one-lift and space necessary to monitor multiple cases at the same time.

“Injury is a bi-product of war, therefore it is our responsibility to improve and maintain the lives of wounded [International Security Assistance Forces, Afghan National Security Forces] and the people of Afghanistan whenever needed—we are capable and have the means to do this,” said Captain Ryan Rodriguez, Aero medical Physician Assistant (APA-C), Task Force Pegasus. “[Our mission while conducting a patient transfer is to] preserve, stabilize, and improve life within our scope of practice. Transport patient while providing in-route care to a higher echelon of healthcare.”

Both Johnson and Rodriguez



(Left) Captain Bryan Johnson, flight surgeon from 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade discussing movement of an Afghan National Army Soldier from a field hospital in Helmand Province to Role 3 hospital at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan with Marine doctors and 82nd CAB medic, Staff Sergeant Dean Bostick (center) prior to the patients transfer by means of CH-47F Chinook helicopter.

have participated in patient transfer mission moving injured Afghan National Army Soldiers, local Afghans, and even detainees from field hospitals in Helmand Province shortly after Operation Moshtarak began.

On case in specific required both medical officers accompanied by additional casualty- evacuation teams from the 82nd CAB to responded to a patient transfer request of 11 individuals; a family affected by a mortar attack near their compound. The majority of the patients were walking ambulatory, meaning they didn't require transfer by litter carry—they were also Afghan children. During the hours of darkness two CH-47F Chinook helicopters responded to the patient transfer request to move the family from FOB Bastion Role 3 hospital to Kandahar Regional Military

Hospital; the primary Afghan-led hospital in the southern region of Afghanistan.

“Regardless of NATO forces, ANA, local Afghans, or Taliban; it is my belief that despite the detainee's ‘obvious’ intent before the infliction of injury, we must treat their lives as we do our allies,” said Rodriguez. “This is the direction those involved with this conflict must take if we are to ever live in peace. We set the example in an attempt to set a standard of living.”

Treating Afghan Locals injured by enemy attacks, Coalition and Afghan Forces wounded while engaged in combat, and detainees; medical evacuation and patient transfer requests continue to receive the support of medical evacuation and transfer from 82nd CAB rotary wing assets in southern Afghanistan.

Lancers Tackle Afghan Terrain

First Sergeant Duane Wilson

First Sergeant, E Company, 2-82nd Avn. Reg.

Zabul Province, Afghanistan -- Winter weather hit Forward Operating Base (FOB) Wolverine hard for several days. Flights were cancelled, extra “snivel gear” was pulled from duffel bags, snow fell, sleet blew, rain pounded, the ground froze. When the skies cleared and the sun came out several days later, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 82nd Aviation Regiment, or Task Force (TF) Corsair, from the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) welcomed the big orange ball in the sky. Mother Nature let everyone know that the winter season was still here. As life returned to “normal”, fellow 82nd Troopers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), or TF Fury, were outside the wire executing mounted patrols on the not so inviting soft terrain.

The radio call came just before noon. “Lancer CP (command post), Lancer CP, this is Corsair 71 . . . prepare for possible vehicle recovery mission.” The Lancers of E Company, TF Corsair acknowledged receipt of the transmission. Sgt. 1st Class Joe Rupp issued the warning order to the motor sergeant, Staff Sgt. Lopaka Boshers, and the motor pool came alive with activity. Several days earlier, the Corsair vehicle recovery team had executed a similar mission involving a Mine Resistant, Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle that had been damaged by an IED. Boshers was confident in his team as he ensured they checked their communications equipment, weapons systems, vehicle systems, and most importantly, their battle buddies. Sgt. Matt Jimerson and Spec. Jonathan Peake were the on call recovery crew and received the warning order from Boshers. Minutes later the team was pre-positioned near the link up point as Corsair’s Operations Officer, Maj. John Litvin, finalized coordination with TF Fury and issued his orders to the Lancers. The ground recovery team completed their final checks and inspections and awaited the link up with the TF Fury security element.

Jimerson and Peake both share a love of four wheel drive vehicles. The chance to demonstrate their driving skills provided all the motivation needed for a squad of Soldiers. The

convoy brief was over and the radio checks were complete. Boshers rehearsed in his mind the vehicle recovery steps and checked his personal checklist. “Do not get the wrecker stuck!” was the goal Boshers shared with Jimerson and Peake. The recovery team left FOB Wolverine with their TF Fury teammates in search of the stuck wrecker. The roads were smooth for most of the trip, but finally they got to do some off roading, Afghanistan-style.

As he arrived at the recovery scene Boshers was surprised to find two additional vehicles stuck in the low ground. One of the keys to a successful recovery is to not hurry through your recovery steps or you could end up stuck. It took Boshers’ team two hours to accomplish their mission, carefully planning and anticipating every move. Jimerson’s experience and skill as the wrecker operator were invaluable that day. Peake set up the tackle and ground guided Jimerson into position.

The Lancers were back on FOB Wolverine by dinner. They ran through their mission as it happened, conducting what the military calls an after action review (AAR). All vehicles had been recovered, no equipment had been damaged, and most importantly, there were zero injuries. As the Lancers shook hands and said goodbye to their TF Fury brothers they did so with a smile and began checking their gear for the next recovery mission.



Getting ready to come home...

Chaplain (MAJ) Roger McCay
Task Force Pegasus Chaplain

Finally! We are packing and getting ready to go home. What a great feeling it is! You've worked hard, accomplished much and you can hold your head high. At home you are considered a hero; one who served with honor. What a great status to hold. Family will flock around honoring you. Many of your friends will hold you in a kind of awe. And, they should.

If you've been working the "Soul Challenge" all along you should be physically stronger, mentally tougher with increased knowledge, and spiritually further along than you were when you arrived in country. Your confidence is higher as a result, and you are better than you were.

Just because you are going home doesn't mean you should stop continually improving in these three areas. Stay the course and never stop improving yourself.

If you are married, remember that things have changed since you left a year ago. Not only are you different, but your wife and kids are different. Your relationship with them is also a little different. Don't make the mistake thinking that you hit the pause button on the blue-ray layer for a year and all you've got to do when you go home is hit play again. You need to take your time to factor in what changes there have occurred and adjust accordingly. Be sure to talk with your family about how you have changed and how they have changed. Then, agree to work together to bring your family life back into harmony. This is not always easy, but people do it every deployment and have strong successful marriages and relationships as a result. You can do this too.

Consider the new status you have in society as a veteran and act like one. Don't go acting the fool. When you do, you stain your honor and it's your fault when you do. You can't blame your command when you drink and drive, beat your wife, or have an accident because you were driving like a crazy person. If you kill a young mother and her child because you just had to get your thrill going 130 miles per hour down All-American Freeway what does that make you? Don't throw away the honor you have earned through your hard work. Be a responsible adult.

I long ago lost count of the ramp ceremonies I've been to. We do several every week. Remember, the Soldiers that gave their lives and lift up a prayer for their families.

Make sure you remember to offer up thanks to the Lord God for getting you home safely. He brought you home. Many were the times when a bullet "just missed" or a rocket or RPG was thankfully a "dud". Don't think that was just chance. That was God taking a hand.

God bless you and have a wonderful homecoming!

ATW... Airborne,
CH McCay

TF Ready trains with Italian MEDEVAC

1LT Andrew Wempe
Task Force Ready PAO

Regional Command-West, Afghanistan- From 16 to 19 January, Task Force Ready conducted multiple partnership training events with Task Force Centre of the Italian Army. The training has been instrumental in forging a close bond between Task Force Ready and the Italian Army operating in Regional Command-West, Afghanistan.

On 16 January 2010, C Company, 5-158th General Support Aviation Battalion, participated in training the Italian Army on MEDEVAC and mass casualty operations. Led by SSG Shelley Broadhead and SSG Justin Proctor, the training event included an overview of the capabilities of the MEDEVAC aircraft and the equipment on board, 9-line procedures, as well as hot and cold loading and unloading of patients.

The training event culminated in a complex MEDEVAC mission. As the Italians convoyed outside of FOB Shindand, their vehicles received a simulated IED attack. The soldiers quickly set up a perimeter around the IED and cordoned off the area, while the convoy commander called a 9-line MEDEVAC for the wounded soldiers. Within six minutes, the MEDEVAC and chase aircraft were enroute from FOB

SSG Shelley Broadhead and SSG Justin Proctor pose with an Italian soldier during the training event.



A DUSTOFF aircraft comes in for landing during MEDEVAC training with Task Force Centre

Thomas. Once the aircraft landed, the Italians loaded the wounded soldiers onto the aircraft and took off. The scenario was repeated eleven times so that all soldiers could receive the potentially lifesaving training. “The Italians learned very quickly and applied what we taught them in a real world scenario” said SSG Broadhead.

Coinciding with the MEDEVAC training, officers from the Task Force Centre battle staff received a briefing on



the capabilities and proper emplacement of the Apache attack assets of Task Force Ready. The briefing gave the mechanized infantry an idea of the firepower and reconnaissance abilities of the Apache company, and how best to utilize such a valuable asset.

Two days later, Alpha and Bravo companies of 5-158th conducted joint training with the Italians. The joint training focused primarily on deliberate operations. SPC Gregory Martinez and

SPC Michael Tate, the primary trainers for the event, instructed the Italians on cold loading and unloading procedures before conducting infiltration and extraction operations. “Being from Germany, we work with many different countries and their armies,” SPC Martinez explained.

Task Force Ready will continue to train with Task Force Centre to further develop their relationship while operating together in RC-West.



(Left and below) Task Force Centre Soldiers receive medical evacuation information. Task Force Centre soldiers carry a wounded soldier during MEDEVAC training.



Siblings re-united from different fronts

BY: Chief Warrant Officer Kristina Irving
AH-64 Apache pilot, TF Corsair

My name is Chief Warrant Officer Kristina Irving; I am an AH-64 pilot, in Task Force Corsair, Zabul Province, Afghanistan. Recently, I was on emergency leave as my little brother, Private 1st Class Steven Micci, an Infantryman in A Co I-64 Armor, 2-3rd Infantry Division, who is in Q-West Iraq was struck by a mortar and severely injured (12 Jan 2010). I received word via email from my mother (Red Cross messages are tricky when both of us are fighting in different theaters). I called my mom and got all the facts as she knew them.

My brigade flight surgeon called Balad Patients Admissions and spoke to the doctors. Steven was transported to Balad via UH-60 MEDEVAC helicopter, where he underwent several surgeries on his jaw and one on his leg. Meanwhile, I packed up and prepared to leave at a moment's notice. I departed the following morning. Once I got to Kandahar, brigade and TF Corsair S-I worked hard to get me out as fast as they could. There were no direct flights to Landstuhl leaving anytime soon so I flew to Bagram and in to Qatar, where the Air Force got me out to Frankfurt Germany. All of this traveling happened in about 15 hours. I actually showed up in Germany 1 day prior to Steven's arrival. I eagerly waited for his arrival.

Once stable (2 days later) Steven was transported to Landstuhl via C-17. The 3rd ID LNO came and got me at about 2000hrs (15 Jan) from my room at the Fisher house and said his plane was landing. When he arrived in Germany and they unloaded him off the aircraft. He was surprised to see me and said (barely audible, because his jaw is wired shut), "Hey Krissy, what are you doing here?" He grabbed my hand and squeezed it. I was fighting tears seeing my 20 year old brother in such pain and so beat up. An entourage of flight nurses, medics and doctors brought him from the ambulance to an ICU room. They rapidly set up all his IV's, feeding tubes, heart monitors and other equipment. The room was tiny so I stood outside the door and watched. Steven kept motioning for me to come in the room, there was simply not enough space. After about 30 minutes of them situating him, I finally went in and hugged him. The flight nurse told me that "Steven really perked up once he saw you here". He had an array of bandages on his face and an "ex-fix" screwed into his left leg (we referred to it as the jungle gym) and smaller bandages all over his body from the shrapnel wounds. He look tired and pasty, (he had lost an enormous amount of blood while in transport from the JSS to Balad).

I sat beside him almost the entire 30 hours he was in Germany. We talked about what happened as much as he could, once he would get tired of trying to talk he wrote me notes on a tablet. Or I would just talk about stuff and he would just listen and nod his head. He said they were hit by 3 mortars that day. He heard the first two and he said he remembered the third one landing about 10 feet in front of him. Doctors deemed him stable enough to transport via C-17 on the afternoon of the 17th. I knew he was ready to go, but I could tell he was dreading the 9 hour flight.

They loaded him in a stackable litter at the back of the plane and

off to DC we went. The flight was 9.1 hours of agony for him. His leg was hurting him the entire way. There was a company of Rangers and their equipment on the plane, they allowed us to "strap hang" back to the states with them. Many of them came and spoke to Steven and gave him words of encouragement and shook his hand. We arrived at Andrews AFB and took an ambulance for about a 20 minute ride. Upon arrival they put him the ICU ward. He was there only about 10 hours before they did a very long evasive surgery on his leg. He was nervous about the surgery as the doctors explained to him the before, during, after effects and complications that could arise. One doctor told him that they were going to do a nerve block on him and when he woke up he wouldn't feel his leg (I think he was in fear of losing it). The surgery took about 7 hours.

I sat in the waiting room while the surgery was going on. There were a million things running through my head. The exhaustion and the stress were breaking me. While Steven was in surgery, I finally got to talk to my husband, CW3 Charles Irving, who was still in Afghanistan. He told me to stay calm, and I needed to be strong for Steven and I needed to be strong for my family (who were in transit from Colorado). I took his advice and he helped me sort things out a bit.

The Doctors came in and said the surgery went fine. I was so relieved. About 4 hours after he got out of surgery my mom, Sarah and Mia (his wife and daughter) arrived. It was a bitter sweet reunion. Steven was very tired and sore from the surgery. My mom kind of took over for the day, as I hadn't really slept since I left Zabul.

Days passed and we watched Steven slowly recover. He had his good days and his bad days. After about a week at Walter Reed he had began very gradual physical therapy on his leg. The doctors promised to remove his feeding tube if he could prove he could eat pureed food with a syringe or a straw. This was a huge frustration for him. He has perfectly straight teeth so getting the food around his teeth and down his throat was very difficult and frustrating for him. Finally, they removed it. Every day I saw an improvement.

While I was at Walter Reed I had the honor of attending his Purple Heart Ceremony and Combat Infantry Badge Ceremony. Colonel Sexton (2-3 ID brigade commander) insisted that I attend prior to my departure back to Afghanistan. He worked with the LNO's and "made it happen".

Steven is not only my brother, he is my brother in arms. Steven was honored to receive the Combat Infantry Badge, but when awarded the Purple Heart said "This is one award I never wanted".

I stayed for three more days and had to return to Afghanistan. Steven did not want me to go back (neither did my mom and dad). He said "you were there during the hard stuff, can't you just stay?" We developed a bond that soldiers have, along with being siblings it made it all the harder to leave him there at Walter Reed. It was truly amazing to see how fast the Army brought us together from two separate fronts.

Steven has showed me a new definition of bravery. I still see him as a little boy (he is 14 years younger than me), but he is truly a hero.

Task Force Saber... mission ready till the end



Kandahar, Afghanistan-The deployment for Task Force Saber Troopers is drawing to a close, though our focus has not changed: finish the way in which we started. Continue to sustain the credibility, respect and trust with the ground force we support each and every day. Accomplish the mission, the right way, every time. Whether FARPing, fixing, or flying aircraft, the Troopers of TF Saber are guided by the words of their Task Force Commander, LTC Mike Morgan. “Professional athletes like Michael Jordan, Mariano Rivera and John Elway are renowned for their ability to finish. Real champions finish,” states Morgan.

“Our main focus right now is wrapping up final maintenance efforts for aircraft we are leaving behind. We are trying to set the incoming unit up for success,” said SGT Robert West, Delta Troop Aircraft Structural Repairer. Leaders within TF Saber are aware of the acute challenges and stressors, presented by the final phase of deployment. “My main focus is making sure all of my Troopers finish up this tour safely and without incident, while continuing to accomplish the mission,” said 1SG Roque Quichocho, Bravo Troop 1SG. Even as containers are packed, Troopers like SPC Walter Slover, Charlie Troop OH-58D Kiowa Warrior crew chief, keep their focus on day-to-day functions. “It is hard to look back on this tour from this point and say whether or not it has gone by fast or slow. I have just been taking things one day at a time,” said Slover. Challenges are ongoing and the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop (HHT) 1SG, Dennis Quinn, recalls several. “One of our biggest challenges has been supporting a steadily growing airfield, with limited resources, such as ablution units and trash bins. TF Saber has also been providing airfield maintenance support as Mustang

Ramp continues to expand with the arrival of other units,” said Quinn. When it comes to the mission at hand, there is one focus as the TF Saber Executive Officer (XO), Major Mike Demirjian sums it up, “Our focus for the last 30 plus days is to finish the way we started. It’s the fourth quarter and we have no intent on allowing the enemy to score any points”.

The entire Saber Team significantly contributed to the fight in Regional Command-South. The Saber reputation is carried by the ground forces they support 24-hours a day, 7-days a week as stated by LTC Reik Anderson, Commander, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment: “Thanks for the tremendous support we get from you and your magnificent sky-soldiers. There is not a day that goes by that I do not thank God when I hear the comforting sound of Shamus overhead”.

The OH-58D Kiowa Warrior pilots of TF Saber flew over 21,000 hours since arrival in RC South, late April of 2009. The company of AH-64 Apache helicopters attached to TF Saber brought the combined total of flight hours around 30,000. Troopers loaded and fired tens of thousands of rockets and hundreds of thousands of .50 caliber and 30mm rounds. The maintenance hours performed on these aircraft exceeded 60,000 hours. The distribution platoon in the Forward Support Troop (FST) of TF Saber pumped over 500,000 gallons of fuel on Kandahar. They pumped over 30,000 gallons of fuel at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Wilson. The ground maintenance platoon provided continuous 24-hour maintenance coverage and conducted tens of thousands of hours in services, both scheduled and unscheduled.

The success of TF Saber is summed up in the following quote: “A Troopers importance to the mission is not defined by his or her proximity to the target. It takes everyone’s very best to produce the product in support of the ground force commander. The sum of the team is always greater than the sum of one.”

Saber looks forward to arriving back at Fort Bragg and the much deserved time with families and friends.

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