

PHOENIX RISING

TASK FORCE PHOENIX NEWSLETTER



Photo by Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown

Task Force Phoenix Spec. Donna Morgan, Company E, guards the Task Force Phoenix gate to Bagram Airfield July 7. Soldiers in Company E guard the gate and entrance to brigade.

*“When we are no longer able to change a situation,
we are challenged to change ourselves.”*



Dear Phoenix Family, friends and fans,

I hope everyone is enjoying the last few weeks of the summer as we begin planning for the redeployment process. Although we still have a way to go, at least we are finally in the double digits on days and nearly single digits on weeks. Our last few R&R personnel are departing on leave shortly and we welcome back the majority of our personnel to help grind through this very busy period.

We are both sad and glad to see our fellow Soldiers from A/1-169 and C/3-10 MEDEVAC depart this month. Sad because both units were phenomenal, each in their own right and they will be missed. We are truly happy for them to successfully end their tour. Mountain Dustoff saved more lives and broke more records this year than any other Medevac unit here in Afghanistan. We are all very proud of them. The Smugglers entered this rotation as an unknown and became our "Go To" unit for the most challenging night assault missions. They will truly be missed.

I look forward to writing the last deployed newsletter next month.

"FEEL THE BURN"
LTC Dennis J. McKernan







*Nurses join MEDEVAC unit
under new Army program*

By Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown

Aviation medical evacuation Soldiers are tasked with a hefty mission to retrieve injured patients and keep their vital signs stable until they can reach a hospital to receive higher level treatment.

Soldiers in Company C "Dustoff," Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, have made strides in improving patient care since their arrival in country last August. This is due, in part, to the inclusion of the Army's new program in which flight nurses have been attached to the unit.

U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Brian Peplinski, a native of Bay City, Mich., said having nurses on the team to help with critical patients ultimately helps achieve their goal – to save lives.

"[Having nurses attached to MEDEVAC units in high operation areas] is good for the patients," said Peplinski, "At the end of the day taking care of people – U.S. military, contractors, coalition forces and those in need - is what it's all about."

Peplinski said he feels extremely lucky to have the nurses working with Dustoff.

"They are very talented additions to the team," said Peplinski, "The nurses provide an extra set of hands in critical situations that has repeatedly made a difference in patient care and outcomes."

Every six months, five nurses travel from stateside hospitals, such as Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Madigan Army Medical Center, to serve with MEDEVAC units to provide en route critical care for patients in Afghanistan.

These highly skilled nurses undergo a wealth of training upon arrival to their Dustoff team including training on the UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter, emergency procedures, medical equipment familiarization, as well as receive classes in the areas of administering medication and trauma care.

The flight nurses are trained to the level of a non-rated crew member. They complete a myriad of tasks from attending crew member briefs, cleaning windows, and ensuring all medical equipment is functional.

*"You can avoid having ulcers by adapting to the situation:
If you fall in the mud puddle, check your pockets for fish."*

~Author Unknown

U.S. Army Capt. Tanesha Richardson, of Louisville, Ky., just completed her six-month tour with the company and says she is leaving Afghanistan as a more-rounded nurse.

“This experience has been very rewarding,” said Richardson, “I’ve become more knowledgeable and independent. I now understand why certain things were done for the patient. I can see the bigger picture of what the patient has gone through.”

As Richardson, and the four other nurses who accompanied her to Afghanistan, end their deployment and prepare to return to the hospital environment of the States, she shared some of the complex situations she faced when she first got to the unit.

“One of the most challenging things for me was learning how to assess the patient in the dark while flying,” said Richardson, “You have to gather the information in a different way.”

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Jason Taylor, one of the newly arrived nurses on the Dustoff team, agreed with Richardson. He said the challenge would lie in the new surroundings.

“I think the most difficult thing about this tour will be adapting to a new environment,” said Taylor, a native of Mokena, Ill.

The nurses are well aware they will not have the controlled atmosphere that a hospital offers – such as proper lighting and a broad range of medical supplies at the ready; however, Taylor expressed confidence in the new team of nurses.

Taylor is certain that the next six months will be successful for them because of the knowledge and experience they already possess.

“[Nurses] have the skill set needed to do the job well,” he said. “It’s just a matter of applying and doing it in this environment.”

All of the nurses who have served with Dustoff, in Regional Command – East, are among the first Army nurses to receive the Air Medal for Service and Basic Army Aviation Badge.

Richardson said this experience has provided her with knowledge that she will utilize stateside when caring for patients.

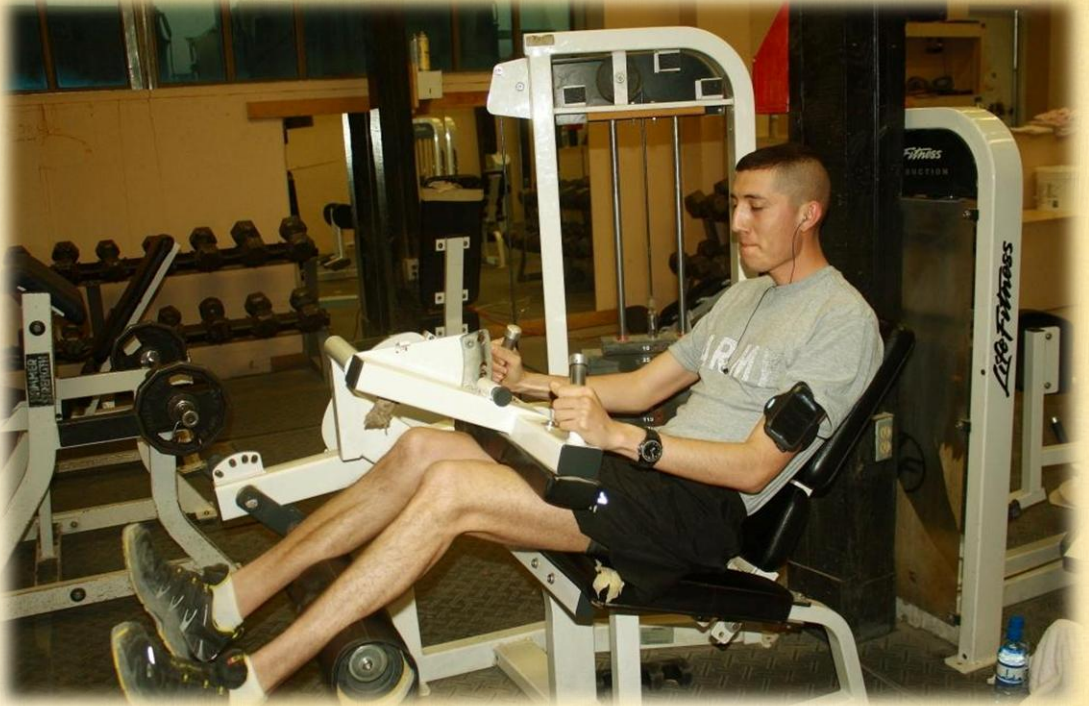
“I think by performing my duties with [Dustoff] my skills as a nurse have broadened and given me a better understanding of injuries,” said Richardson, “It has given me a better understanding of what patients have been through from start to finish.”



*“Time, which changes people, does not alter the image we have retained of them.”
~Marcel Proust*

Phoenix Soldiers prepare for physical fitness test by utilizing music to enhance workouts

U.S. Army Sgt. Gonsalo Campos, an avionics mechanic with Company D, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, 10th Mountain Division, said his workouts have improved with the use of music. He conducted a round robin exercise with one of his Soldiers, also listening to music at Fuller Gym, on the work out machines Aug. 1. Campos, a native of Bakersfield, Calif., said he has improved his physical fitness test score by 30 points by using music at the gym six days a week.



By Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown

Upon walking into the Fuller Gym on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, many Task Force Phoenix Soldiers can be found utilizing music during their workouts to improve their physical fitness test scores and weight management.

U.S. Army Pfc. Mario Charles, a logistics clerk with Company D, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, 10th Mountain Division, had been struggling to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test run since November.

Six days a week, sometimes twice a day, he could be found in the gym running to upbeat music to improve his two-mile run time. Focusing on the rapid beat of his rock music pulsing in his ear, and thinking about his newborn baby girl as motivation, he significantly improved his run.

After all of his music-filled training, Charles, of San Angelo, Texas, successfully passed his APFT in April.

An article published in *The Sport Journal*, The United States Sports Academy's monthly publication, detailed verifiable data of music's positive effect on individuals who utilize it for sports and exercise routines.

*"If nothing ever changed, there'd be no butterflies."
~Author Unknown*

According to *The Sport Journal*, by utilizing the right music, an individual can feel less fatigue and boredom by diverting his or her attention away from repetitive exercises. Listening to music while exercising can also provide a distraction to push oneself further, and can help sustain rhythm – particularly while running.

“My music keeps me from being bored while I’m running on a treadmill staring at a wall,” said U.S. Army Spc. Erika Ortiz, an arms room clerk with Co. E, TF Phoenix, 10th CAB, TF Falcon, 10th Mountain Div. “I can stare at a sign on a wall forever when I have my music to keep me moving.”

Ortiz is working on lowering her weight to meet Army standards by going to the gym five days a week, at least once a day; however, the chronic pain that she gets in her feet while she exercises, puts a damper on her efforts.

She has found that listening to music helps to alleviate some of the pain of her injury, allowing her to push through her workouts to help strengthen the muscles needed to recover.

“When I use music, it keeps my mind off of my pain in my feet so it’s not so bad,” said Ortiz, of Corpus Christi, Texas, “I forgot my iPod once when I went to the gym to work out. Never again! My feet felt like they were on fire without my music. I always have my music now to distract myself from the pain.”

U.S. Army Pvt. Manuel Santiago, an aviation operations specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF Phoenix, 10th CAB, TF Falcon, 10th Mountain Div., hits the gym twice a day, six days a week.

He said he enjoys listening to rock, rap and reggae while he’s working out. Santiago admits that it provides him a diversion to push himself and that it helps him maintain his rhythm while he is doing cardio.

“Music helps me drain out all of the distractions and helps me get through my workout until the end,” said Santiago, of Lynn, Mass., “I catch myself running to the rhythm – like it’s cadence.”

Santiago has been struggling with his sit-ups for his APFT.

“I’m using music to get my abs proficient enough to pass (the APFT),” he said. “It gets me into the rhythm so I can do sit-ups without thinking about them. I focus more on the music I’m playing in my head than how my body feels.”

TF Phoenix Soldiers recognize the benefits of exercising to music and are reaping the benefits daily as their APFT scores improve and their weight is properly managed.



“We did not change as we grew older; we just became more clearly ourselves.”

~Lynn Hall

HHC

Greetings Hooligan Families and Friends,

July has come and gone and the Hooligans are still performing at a remarkable level.

This month will see our last few Soldiers depart for their well deserved R&R as the rest of the company slowly preps the battlefield for our fellow Soldiers from the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade. This month we also had the privilege of promoting 6 outstanding Soldiers. SPC Lardge and CPL Laughlin were both promoted to SGT. PFC Wilkerson was promoted to SPC and PV2 Williams was promoted to PFC. SPCs Amelia and Sebastian Zuluaga are currently spending time with their loved ones on R&R and will be promoted when they return. If we could all be so lucky! All of these Soldiers have performed at an incredible level and these promotions were much deserved. We continue to stay focused and motivated for the mission and look forward to returning to FT Drum in the upcoming months.

Born of Fire!

Captain Charles A. Thomas

*“Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches,
letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.”*

~Pauline R. Kezer

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By CPT Odell & 1SG Serrano

Another hot month down and we are within 10 weeks of sending our first wave of ArchAngels home! July was a big month for the ArchAngels in that we proudly promoted two of our most promising Soldiers to the rank of Sergeant. SGT Ricardo Caletz and SGT Andrew Gonzalez are two of our newest Non-Commissioned Officers and we look forward to their continuing contribution to the excellent tradition of leadership within the ArchAngels. As we start the process of redeploying we will rely on our NCOs to make it happen, with their leadership, they always do.

I hope everyone's 4th of July was a successful, safe and memorable break from work or just a time to remember the great nation we are all so fortunate to call our own. As one of my favorite holidays, it is always a little sad to spend it away from the smell of fresh cut grass, the excitement of fireworks, picnicking with loved ones and reminiscing on the front porch. As I write this, I am so very humbled to work with such patriots and professionals that the sacrifice is worth the cost and we will all enjoy the holiday next year all that much more.

This July saw an unprecedented break from the norm in the form of a Task Force Safety Stand Down Day. I say unprecedented as in my previous tours, the time is not afforded for this most important Aviation tradition. The ArchAngels attended Battalion and Company led classes for the duration of the day, touching on weapons discipline, aircraft fundamentals and FARP safety. Thank you to all of the instructors, CW2 Whitten, CW2 Busch, CW3 Botto, SPC Kelley, 1SG Serrano, CW3 Abramo, and SPC Blile, for their educational and informative classes.

Continue to support each other as you have so diligently supported us. We are truly grateful for such loving and supportive families and friends. Take care, enjoy the summer and we will be home to watch the leaves change colors with you.

“We spend our time searching for security and hate it when we get it.”
~John Steinbeck

C Company Blue Max



CPT Reeves with CPT Shadwick.

By CPT Reeves

Hello, for the first time, to all you Blue Max friends and family members! I know that I have not written very much in these pages before, but I hope that my first article will be well received.

I would just like to take the time to emphasize how great a job all of your Soldiers have been doing out here. We have Apache crew chiefs who help arm and launch Kiowas. We have pilots that fly for 5 hours, and then land and work supply issues for another 7. Folks often choose to work way past their scheduled work hours to help out on projects like building a new gym or painting CAV flags on flight

line boxes. Everyone always comes together to help make the mission happen.

I think you'll all be happy to hear that folks are staying pretty upbeat around here. Despite the heat and humidity and always having one more task to accomplish, people are still smiling, and cracking jokes and generally horsing around. I imagine that this exuberance will only increase as our remaining time in theater gets shorter.

I guess I'll close by saying I am proud to know your Soldiers, and am looking forward to meeting all of you back in the States.

*"There is no reason why the same man should like the same books
at eighteen and forty-eight."*

~Ezra Pound

C Company Warlords

By CPT Brisson

Warlord families and friends,

I am CPT Sarah Brisson, the new Warlord platoon leader. I spent the month of July getting integrated and getting to know the pilots, crew chiefs, and door gunners that make up this incredible company and I could not be more excited to join such a fantastic group of people. I've spent a month with the Warlords now, and I must say they make this job truly enjoyable and very rewarding. With the summer months in full swing we are flying more than ever. It is a daily battle trying to find a crew chief that isn't over his allowable monthly hours. Amazingly though, they still beg and plead to get on the flight board. They haven't quite had enough of this beautiful mountain flying and that motivates us all to remain focused on the mission as we enter our final months in the deployment.

I would like to congratulate SPC Mariuz Sochacki on his tremendous performance at the Soldier of the Month board and at the Promotion Board. He is now able to be promoted to Sergeant and we'll look forward to adding a new non-commissioned officer into our ranks. Congratulations also to Steven Calloway, who was promoted from Private First Class to Specialist on August 1st.

No matter how you're counting down, whether it's by the week, month, or day (here it is reset days, steak nights, or haircuts) we are getting close! I look forward to meeting everyone soon!

Air Assault!



*"We all have big changes in our lives that are more or less a second chance."
~Harrison Ford*

C Company Dustoff

Almost There!



By CPT Keller

Can you believe how fast time has flown? I can't tell you how proud I am of every Soldier in Mountain Dustoff and especially 3rd Platoon here at Bagram. Throughout the last 11 months we've managed to overcome every obstacle in front of us to perform our lifesaving mission and when we look back on this deployment there is no doubt in my mind that the lives of countless Soldiers will be better because of our time here in Afghanistan. That being said I know how much everyone is looking forward to some well deserved time at home and we're only a few more weeks away! Well with that I hope everyone back at Ft Drum is doing well and we'll see you soon!!!



*"If you want to truly understand something, try to change it."
~Kurt Lewin*

D Company

By *CPT Bales*

Family and Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to offer a short introduction. My name is CPT Michael Bales, and I have been given the honor and privilege to serve as the D Company 3-10, TF Phoenix Company Commander. After two and a half years in Savannah, GA and Iraq with 2-3 GSAB, including 15 months as a Shops Platoon Leader and just over a year on staff here in TF Phoenix, I am excited to join this spectacular team of Soldiers and Families. After watching the Dukes perform from a distance, it is with eager anticipation that I join the team and get to meet the great Soldiers who make maintenance happen, to witness their exploits in person and – upon our return – to meet all the Families and friends that are behind these great young men and women.

My arrival, however, means the departure of CPT Michael Flint. His leadership, expertise and hard work will be sorely missed. He did a fantastic job getting D Company ready to come to Afghanistan and oversaw a successful first half of the deployment. He has now moved on to TF Six Shooter as an Assistant S3 and a CH-47F Maintenance Test Pilot. He will serve them well, and if you ever see a guy in a big black Stetson flying a Chinook, it's probably CPT Flint.

The new month also saw the Dukes welcome the newest Specialist: SPC Skimin, who was promoted on July 23rd. It is great to see a hard working Soldier moving up in the ranks. Also moving up is the temperature, both here and stateside. So enjoy the A/C, play in the pool, sip some ice tea and keep counting down the days until we come!



“Things do not change; we change.”
~Henry David Thoreau

E Company

By CPT Floyd



Greetings!

It is my pleasure to take command of Echo Company, 3-10. I would like to take this opportunity to say it is an honor to be serving in this position and I look forward to putting faces with names I hear so much about. Right now the company is focused on finishing this deployment strong as we begin preparations to come home.

A little about myself: I joined the Army in 1996 as an enlisted Signal Soldier. In 2000 I decided to try a new adventure as a college student, joining the ROTC program on my junior year and earning my commission in December 2004. I am married to CPT Raymond Floyd III, who as it turns out, is also enjoying this all expense paid vacation courtesy of the US Army. We have two sons that we are eager to reunite with as I know you are also ready to be reunited with your friends and family.

I am very excited to embark on this journey with all of you. I would like to say thank you to everyone for the support they give us every day. We could not do what we do without you. And a special thank you to Mrs. Manhart for taking over as the FRG leader! I look forward to working with each of you.

Executioner Six!

“Because things are the way they are, things will not stay the way they are.”

~Bertold Brecht

Military Humor



SWAMP SAFETY

SUN SAFETY

SLUG GUG GLUG

Slip Slop Slap
REHYDRATE

SWAMP SAFETY

If it LOOKS WRONG

SPEAK UP

SWAMP SAFETY

Think SAFETY

I'M GOING TO MAKE IT. I'M GOING TO MAKE IT. I'M GOING TO.

take 5 & think

STUPIDITY
is difficult to
MITIGATE

SWAMP SAFETY

Protect your HEARING

use correct
HEARING PROTECTION

“The vision that you glorify in your mind, the ideal that you enthrone in your heart, this you will build your life by, and this you will become.”

~ James Allen

AUGUST, 2011

VOL # 1 ISSUE # 11

“They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

~ Carl W. Buechner

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PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Sgt. Jose Rojas, Company E, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/Task Force Falcon, enjoyed playing horseshoes during Company E’s organizational day.