

PHOENIX RISING

TASK FORCE PHOENIX NEWSLETTER

Task Force Phoenix Soldiers make the move to east Bagram Airfield

By Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown

With the biggest holidays of the year behind them, Task Force Phoenix Soldiers prepare to tackle the rest of their tour with avid enthusiasm.

“The stress and anticipation of moving to the east side is mostly over. We can put more focus on our mission. I am excited about our new facilities and cannot wait to move to the east side and set up my shop,” said Spec. Sabrina Posey, Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Big changes are already underway throughout the TF Phoenix area of operation. Soldiers throughout each company are preparing to move or have already begun moving their offices to the east side of Bagram. The process is being done in slow steps to ensure a fluid transfer during a time when the mission must continue rolling.

All of this change can be a very stressful time for Soldiers, but most are in high spirits as they pack up their areas and make numerous trips to the other side of Bagram Airfield. A Company Archangels joked around as they packed up boxes and took a few minutes to throw around a football before lunch. They will be fully moved by the end of the day shift work day on Jan. 28.

Soldiers in D Company are pulling together their shops and making their move while still maintaining the mission. Most of the shops are empty as you walk into their office. Where once there were lockers or desks are now occupied by only air.

Truck loads of equipment and office supplies are quickly being moved. The pace is high, spirits are up, and the mission is being accomplished. Task Force Phoenix Soldiers are on top of this task.



Left Photo: PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Spec. Thomas Zbinden helps ground guide a forklift that is uploading a truck during the move to the east side of Bagram Airfield.

Right Photo: PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – A Company Archangel Soldiers work together to move a heavy chest out of their office on 28 Jan. A Company successfully moved to east BAF in late January.

Working hard, Going far



*By First Lt. Stephen Macumber
E Company*

PV2 Fleisch is a 29 year old native of New York City, NY. Fleisch joined the Army for an adventure, change up the pace in his life, and to gain some sweet job skills.

This ambitious Soldier entered as a 94E, Radio/Communications Security Repairer. Fleisch deployed to OEF with the Maintenance Platoon in the Forward Support Company of Task Force Phoenix. Fleisch recently moved from the Maintenance Platoon over to Headquarters Platoon three months ago. Since this time, he has become the jack of all trades tracking stats in the orderly room, delivering mail, performing PMCS on the Commander's gator, driving the bus, pulling ECP,

and is currently taking a class - Greek and Roman Mythology.

Fleisch has improved immensely in the area of PT over the last few months. Running with the Commander and 1SG has made its impact on this young Soldier.

Since November, Fleisch has lost 29 pounds, run the perimeter (start to finish was gauged at 8.5 miles), and at the end of January passed his PT Test with flying colors. December was mustache month for Echo Company and Fleisch ended up winning the contest by a large margin.

This Soldier will be pinning on PFC next month and we are proud to consider him one of the Soldiers in Echo Company.

*"Keep your dreams alive. Understand to achieve anything requires faith and belief in yourself, vision, hard work, determination, and dedication.
Remember all things are possible for those who believe."*

~Gail Devers



Task Force Phoenix Commander's Corner

Dear Phoenix Family and Friends,

This Task Force continues to prove to CSM and me that we are the best Multi-functional Aviation Task Force in the Army. Our movement of personnel and equipment as well as our reconnaissance and security missions are precise and on time. Our support personnel keep the aircraft and vehicles moving and the staff coordinates every event. Your Soldiers continue to do an outstanding job and I know that you know they are *THAT GOOD*. It is, however, always great to express words of affirmation from our end as we observe it. This month, our Soldiers moved to the East Side of the airfield. They did it with smiles on their faces and never once lapsed in their daily missions. The higher level commands were very surprised at how seamless the move was with no impact on the mission. This absolutely reflected their hard work, determination and professionalism. I am extremely proud of them and humbled to be among them as a Task Force Phoenix Soldier.

Over the past month, CSM Dvorsky and I started making our rounds to the other Bases to visit our MEDEVAC Platoons. Thus far we visited First, Second and Fourth Platoon. These Soldiers are *SUPER HEROES* in our minds and have a tough mission. They seriously do directly save lives every day. I am in awe by their performance as well as by their professionalism. They are doing *GREAT*.

Last month, I highlighted how warm and sunny it was here in Bagram. This month, it seems like Old Man Winter has finally arrived. For those at Fort Drum, the weather here in Bagram is more like Fort Drum in November. The temperatures are in the 40s-50s during the day and in the 20s at night. We have had storm systems come through every 4-6 days that limit flying and frost the surrounding mountains. It is quite beautiful until you start sloshing around in the mud. I am expecting March to bring the sun back to Bagram.

I would like to thank the Soldiers and their Families for their sacrifice as we close the first quarter of this deployment. You are all doing an outstanding job.

“FEEL THE BURN”
LTC Dennis J. McKernan

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

~ Winston Churchill



CSM Corner

Dear Phoenix Family and Friends,

Soldiers throughout Task Force Phoenix have made tremendous strides these last 90 days and impress me every day. Every Soldier and Airman contributes to support the fight daily in RC-E, to the point that some of the contributions become routine and mundane. Over time people can become complacent and overconfidence can lead to laziness for things like Pre-Combat Checks, Pre-Combat Inspections, and normal supervision. We owe it to our Soldiers to check and inspect over time to ensure standards are met so that we do not lose focus as we continue operations in this combat environment. We cannot afford to create a lull in the momentum that everyone has created and this can easily stall if we do not stay vigilant in our daily operations. Making sound judgment, conscious decisions, coupled with combat experience plays a critical role in ensuring our operational mission is accomplished. We owe it to our Soldiers and Airmen and must do everything we can to protect them, stay focused, and fight the rigors of becoming complacent.

CSM Ron Dvorsky
Command Sergeant Major
Task Force Phoenix

*“Complacency is a state of mind that exists only in retrospective:
it has to be shattered before being ascertained.”*

~ Vladimir Nabokov















S-1 shop poses for a Charlie's Angels photo in early January.



PFC Meeks holds down the fort at the Aviation chow hall.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company

S-3 Updates and Optimistic Outlook

By 1lt. Kyle Eberly

The past month of January and the early beginnings of February have remained a busy but productive time for the soldiers assigned to the S3 shop of TF Phoenix. With Christmas and New Years in the rear view most of the soldiers in the S3 shop turned their attention to the numerous bowl games and NFL playoff games that were playing on AFN.

January went by very quickly due to the high op tempo. Much of the S3 shops attention was turned to supporting Vice President Biden's visit to Afghanistan. Much of the work remains the same but the soldiers of TF Phoenix remain dedicated and vigilant as they perform their duties day after day.

All the Christmas decorations have been taken down in the TOC. However this was not a sad event and reminded the soldiers to keep looking forward to the spring and the eventual redeployment back home.

The Weather here in Afghanistan has been excellent this past month. We have had a light snowfall around Bagram and on clear days the views of the mountains are unmatched. This is truly a beautiful if desolate country.

So from the Task Force Phoenix TOC to Fort Drum and the family members who are patiently and diligently holding up the home front we wish you happy New Year and hope spring comes quickly to your end of the world.

"Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough."

~ Og Mandino

A Company

Conquers newest challenges

By Capt. Matthew Magennis

Alpha Company aptly proved its capacity to handle unique situations when January 2011 kicked off the year with a fresh set of challenges. Opportunely, the first snow fall landed on the same day as our first major maintenance hurdle. Snow, ice, and weather systems grounded the fleet and cancelled missions at the same instant when we realized the aircraft needed long overdue TLC. A day that began with 7 out of 10 aircraft quickly developed into 3 out of 10. The Archangels seized this opportunity to come together in an impressive feat of teamwork to arduously and patiently (as much as possible anyway) work through each issue and bring the fleet back to operating strength. Ironically, the merciless weather that we could not fly in proved the miserable, perfect weather to turn wrenches in. Our maintenance team continues to impress us throughout each month with their hard work and abilities.

Besides the struggles of weather we were accosted with losing a valuable asset to the company, one of our Flight Instructors (FI) – SSG Santamaria. After the good news of Julio Santamaria's promotion from Sergeant to Staff Sergeant, we had to say goodbye to him since his promotion meant Delta Company much needed and desired his services. Another bit of good news blessed our halls – Nels Bergmark received a promotion from CW2 to CW3. We value his expertise and experience as a senior aviator and the promotion is much deserved.

Because of his work ethic, dedication to duty, and attitude, SPC Posey was unanimously selected as the Crew Chief of the Month. The Task Force commander awarded SPC Posey the Army Achievement Medal for his inspiring actions and

contagious poise throughout the entire month.

The company's Standardization Pilot (SP) Jesse Edwards shows how little he works with the time he has available to "shoot the breeze" with Vice President Joe Biden. Jesse, when will WO1 Reborchick be progressed?

January also brought an interesting and comical bet – Hair VS Nair. Two of our pilots, CW2 John Botto and CW2 Keith Mitchell, made a unique wager. The bet: if Michigan State won the Capitol One Bowl then CW2 Mitchell would shave his head for a month, however, if Alabama won the football game, CW2 Botto would "attempt" to grow his hair out for a month. A little history on the two involved: Keith loves his hair and spends hours styling it each morning. John's hair to him is like kryptonite to superman. For those who don't know the outcome of the game, the picture tells all!



CW2 Mitchell



CW2 Botto

"When you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn."

~ Harriet Beecher Stowe

A Company Smugglers

Soldier Recognition

This week's featured Soldier is SGT Joseph Smith. SGT Smith is a 28 year old from Chesapeake, VA, where he lives with his wife Jessica and their two daughters, Haley and Hannah. SGT Smith was one of the individuals who volunteered to join the Smugglers for this deployment; his home unit works out of FT Eustis, VA. Back in the rear, SGT Smith is a Close Quarters Battle (CBQ) instructor at a local Joint Task Force Base, where he teaches Soldiers, Marines, and Sailors basic instruction in CBQ. Additionally, he uses his Army Combatives Level 3 training to volunteer at the local YMCA teaching a free women's self-defense course.

Primarily a 15P, an Aviation Operations Specialist, SGT Smith's primary role for the deployment is a door gunner. His goal is to achieve 500 flight hours in combat throughout the deployment. In addition to his flying duties, SGT Smith still assists Task Force Phoenix by managing the Smugglers' Flight Records for 46 Soldiers. Balancing two jobs might be a struggle for some, but SGT Smith handles both of his duties professionally and skillfully. Furthermore, SGT Smith is currently taking courses from Embry Riddle University with a focus on Aviation Safety and Operations. He is an extremely hard worker, a pleasure to be around, and a great asset to the Smugglers.

*"Oh, if it be to choose and call thee mine, love, thou art every day my Valentine!"
~Thomas Hood*

B C o m p a n y

By Capt. Michael Farrell

Greetings from the frozen North! After weeks of near freezing temperatures it finally snowed here in Afghanistan. The snow looked really beautiful on all of the mountains surrounding Bagram, but it made the walk to and from work very muddy.

In the recent weeks Bravo Company has been very busy flying and moving the command post over to the other side of the airfield. Unfortunately the Air Force evicted us from our comfy confines on the west side of the airfield to temporary offices on the east side of the airfield. I know the 1SG and I came to consider our little spot on the flight line as a second home. All were sad to pack up all of our worldly office supplies, load them into the back of a five-ton truck and watch that truck drive into the sunset toward the eastside.

Once that five-ton made the arduous journey to the eastside there was a band of motivated

Soldiers there to unload it and setup our new workspace. Those Soldiers were lead by CPT Alexander and SSG Porter. They did a fabulous moving the company in and it was done in record time. All told it took Bravo Company no more than three days to move all of our equipment and aircraft over to the eastside of the airfield.

Now that the offices and aircraft for Bravo Company are over on the eastside many of Soldiers are starting to enjoy being on the less crowded side of the airfield. SPC Hanley likes the fact that the crew chiefs have a lot more room in their new accommodations. CW2 Medeiros likes the fact that all the pilots, platoon leaders, and commander are all in one room, which means that he never has to go looking for anyone because they now all share an office.

While the one B-hut and one Alaskan tent that Bravo Company moved into is not its permanent home many of the Soldiers are excited to be over on the eastside

when they look at the brand new, permanent, offices that they will inhabit in a few short weeks. These building are bigger and nicer than any other building on Bagram.

Of course just after the company moved over to the other side the weather turned ugly. There was a solid week of rain and snow which left the ground very muddy and soft. When it snowed it made Bagram and the surrounding mountains look like a winter paradise nestled in the Alps. However once the snow began to melt it turned Bagram into a mud bowl. This of course led some amusement as the truck carrying Bravo Company's containers got stuck in the mud right out in front of the company.

With the move to the eastside while still flying every day the Soldiers of Bravo Company continue to amaze with their hard work and dedication. I know they could not do it without all of the love and support of everyone back at Ft Drum!

"In our life there is a single color, as on an artist's palette, which provides the meaning of life and art. It is the color of love."

~ Marc Chagall

C Company Blue Max

*CW2 Foschetti provides Soldiers,
Families with helpful warnings*



Picture taken from CPT Bright's cockpit of Bamyan Valley.

By CW2 Francesco Foschetti

Hello once again family and friends of Blue Max! We are having another wonderful month with no accidents or injuries at beautiful Bagram. Your loved ones have been working very hard this last month to sustain our combat power effectiveness, and have been doing so with great success! Not to mention their overall concern for the safety of not only themselves, but for their fellow soldiers to their left and right.

Here are a couple of things to keep in mind back home in regards to your safety.

For all of you who own and operate a snowmobile for transportation or recreational purposes please be aware that although snowmobiles are fun to ride, they are also very dangerous. Unfortunately, a 10th Mountain Soldier lost his life back in December while operating a snowmobile on a designated trail. He lost control and collided with another snowmobile, and then struck an embankment. So please be careful and be aware of

your surroundings at all times.

WARNING! My wife was recently involved in a phone scandal. Two gentlemen, with Jamaican accents, posed as debt collectors and asked her to pay for a loan that went delinquent over a year ago. She quickly went to verify the claim to make sure we were not truly at fault. Once she was certain that it was a false claim she asked for some information from them. They quickly turned the conversation around on her, and told her my SSN and that I worked for the Army, and that they could send an official document to my Commander stating that your Soldier is delinquent on one of his loans. These individuals were well pre-pared and sounded very official. She called the Watertown Police Dept and reported the incident. These individuals have a large history of doing this to many families in the Upstate area. Request certified mail for anything that seems suspicious, and always discuss these matters with your loved one. Together you can make the right decision.

*“Brief is life, but love is long.”
~ Alfred Lord Tennyson*

C Company Warlords

Commander's Update

By Capt. James Polk

Families and friends,

It's officially Winter here in Afghanistan. We have had a couple of days of snow showers, and rain. Of course it is nothing like good old Fort Drum in the wintertime. This has been a month of change for the company. We have made our transition to the other side of the airfield, and it has brought a welcome change. We are in a temporary command post and are awaiting the move into our finished building. We have more space now and are settling into our new digs rather nicely.

With the passing of another month, we hope that the Warlord families are doing well. Remember to stay in touch with your key callers and send your info to them anytime you will be away from your primary location, so information can get passed in a timely manner. We hope the deployment is going as fast for you as it is for us! There will be several Battalion FRG events in the coming months, so stay informed and we hope to see you all there! Until next month, take care and keep up the good fight on the home front!

Air Assault!



Warlord Soldiers pose for a photo in front of their aircraft.



Just another day in Afghanistan for Warlord Soldiers!

"If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over?"

~ John Wooden

C Company Dustoff

Training Afghanistan's new flight nurses



By Damian Schwab

Nurses from all over the United States applied to be a part of one of the Army's newest programs, the Flight Nurse program. Critical care nurses are needed to help MEDEVAC sustain our fighting forces. Flight Nurses are needed to help Flight Medics maintain patients from Forward Surgical Team (FST) sites to better equipped facilities. Some of these critical care transfer flights last more than an hour.

The nurses selected came to Bagram Dustoff to train on all aspects of flight care and how to work on and around helicopters. They went through a week of rigorous training day and night. After a week of learning and testing, the nurses were selected to go to the sites all throughout Afghanistan that best fit their skill set.



*"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."
~ Benjamin Franklin*

D Company – *Moving Forward*

By Michael Flint

Greetings and Salutations!

The Dukes have been really busy this month. They have completed three phases between the Chinooks and Blackhawks as well as count-less other maintenance actions. During this "defining year" for OEF, our Aviation forces will play a major role here in Afghanistan. Without the hard work that your Soldiers are putting in every day, that would not be possible. We've almost completed our move to our new home. The final phases will be completed in coming months and we find ourselves in temporary work areas until then. It's really not as bad as we thought it would be and the new surroundings provide a well needed change of scenery.

For our families and loved ones back home; thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing all of you as much as all of you are. Enjoy the snow and other weather brought on by the North Country winter!

By Daniel Snyder

We are now the newest neighbors on the East Side of Bagram. It literally took us no time at all. The entire company worked as a team to not only move our containers, but other companies as well. While all of this was going on, the Dukes were also conducting the required aircraft maintenance to keep the fleet flying. I could not be more proud of the Dukes right now. They made it look simple. Thanks for all of the families supporting us back home. Keep the mail coming.



“When a person really desires something, all the universe conspires to help that person to realize his dream.”

~ Paulo Coelho



E Company Combat Spurs

On January 31st, five Echo Company Soldiers were awarded combat spurs as part of ceremony conducted in Jalalabad. The five Soldiers; SSG Ranis, SGT Bueno, SPC Clements, PFC Sauve and PFC Seidel, had been sent down to Jalalabad to help support Task Force Shooter for the past six weeks. Over that course of time, they were working on TF Shooter's forward arming and refuel point (FARP) conducting aircraft refuel operations. Task Force Shooter, known as 6/6 CAV back at Fort Drum, was the only OH-58 Kiowa Warrior Battalion at Fort Drum prior to the Combat Aviation Brigade's Task Force Task Organization move that shifted aircraft to each Battalion.

The Order of the Spur is a cavalry tradition dating back to knighthood, where the awarding of spurs symbolized entry into the ranks and fraternity of mounted warriors. As the military changed from horses to tanks and aircraft, the tradition remained and continues strong within today's Army. There are two ways to receive your spurs: the Spur Ride or through wartime induction. Having served within the CAV unit for the past 6 weeks and performing exceptionally, Task Force Shooter felt that they were deserving of the prestigious award. Congratulations to each of them for a job well done. Executioners!!!

*"Do you love me because I am beautiful, or am I beautiful because you love me?"
~ Cinderella by Oscar Hammerstein II*

Aviation Humor

Weather forecasts are horoscopes with numbers.

Mankind has a perfect record in aviation; we never left anyone up there!

Flashlights are tubular metal containers kept in a flight bag for the purpose of storing dead batteries!

If something hasn't broken on your helicopter, it's about to!!

Army Helicopter Pilot - Frequent Movers

By Bill Austin

As an Army helicopter pilot you never seem to live in one place for very long. Typically, during a move, you stay in a hotel until you can find a permanent place to have your things delivered.

The four children enjoy this greatly, although sometimes it can be a bit confusing for them.

Recently, as we were driving down an interstate and passed a Holiday Inn, our three-year-old squeaked in excitement from the back seat. "Look," he exclaimed. "There's our old house!"

A Perfect Cup of Coffee

A DUSTOFF medic was surprised by her 7-year old grandson one morning. He had made her coffee. She drank what was the worst cup of coffee in her life. When she got to the bottom, there were three of those little green Army men in the cup.

She said, "Honey, what are these Army men doing in my coffee?"

Her grandson said, "Mom, it says on TV, "The best part of waking up is soldiers in your cup!"

Q: How did the WO1 explain how his air ambulance crashed?

A: He said it was getting cold, so he turned off the ceiling fan!

Low Fuel Issues

DUSTOFF: "San Antonio tower, DUSTOFF 22, I am out of fuel."

Tower: "Roger DUSTOFF 22, enter autorotation! Do you have the airfield in sight?!?!"

DUSTOFF: "Uh...tower, I am on the south ramp; I just want to know where the fuel truck is."

“Here’s a funny joke for you: ‘I went to war, but when I got there...garrison broke out.’”

FEBRUARY, 2011

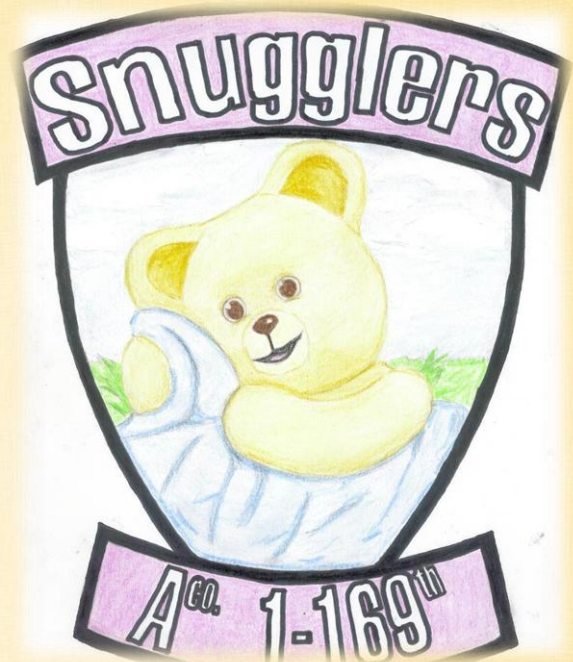
VOL # 1 ISSUE # 5

“When the sun is shining I can do anything; no mountain is too high, no trouble too difficult to overcome.”

~ Wilma Rudolph

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PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Spec. Sabrina Posey drew a mock patch for A Company 1-69. She did not know it at the time, but the Smuggler’s FRG is called the Snugglers. Patches are currently being made with her design.