

PHOENIX RISING

TASK FORCE PHOENIX NEWSLETTER

MAGIC MACE A TALE OF GRAND PROPORTIONS

***Be advised:** This story is a work of fiction by a Dustoff pilot as you will soon see. Enjoy!*

By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Allan Mace

Oh the flight was *awesome!!!!*

First, we took fire from the left and then right! I was dodging bullets inside the cockpit! The major was scared out of his mind! He kept talking about some tree - the size of a toothpick - at the approach end of the landing zone. We must have circled the landing zone about 45 times - hoping that the dust wouldn't consume us.

Approach after approach, the thick dust finally subdued and allowed us to penetrate the ominous cloud. Just at that moment, on short and final, a stray bullet came from the pits of hell and destroyed one of the blades! The major bounced around on the ground attempting to land the dilapidated beast, hoping to find an eager piece of earth that would accommodate the wounded Blackhawk!

Pvt. First Class Comstock yelled in sheer terror. "OH GOD!!! We're HIT, We're HIT!!!"

I, sitting in the front right seat turned around, calmly told the terrified private first class, "It'll be ok, Daddy will comfort you later."

At an attempt to calm the situation, the major mustered up a few words, "Oh- oh- oh- my god, that was close! Mr. "Mac Daddy" Mace, I- I- I think you should fly this three winged helicopter."

I, of course, couldn't decline. The smell of dust soon dissipated and the damaged aircraft vibrated immensely. As my right hand grasped the cyclic, the agitated aircraft calmed to a soft purr.

I looked over to the major with certainty in my eye and strength in my voice, "I have the flight controls!!"

Aircraft 086 never seemed to be steadier, surer, and more *awesome!* The helicopter knew, "Magic Fingers Mace" was on the controls and nothing would ever harm it again. With patients on board, the medic, Specialist Medina, worked feverishly to save them.

Pvt. First Class Comstock, still shaking in his seat, was in disbelief - his eyes glazed and soft whimpers pouring from his lips.

"Oh my god, I never thought that I would have survived that mission."

The major slowly lifted his visor - a tear fell from the corner of his eye. He began to recite verses from the bible and muttering words of thanks and praise.

With my eyes fixed on the horizon, I pulled the PTT button and said, "It's ok Sir, Daddy's here for you too."

The aircraft flew soundly - without conflict and without hesitation.

"Humor is mankind's greatest blessing."

~ Mark Twain



Task Force Phoenix Commander's Corner

Dear Phoenix Family and Friends,

As we enter the transition between winter and spring here in Afghanistan, our pace has slightly slowed with the daily onslaught of rain and snow and sleet and more rain. The good news is that the dust is kept to a minimum but the bad news is that our flying is also kept to a minimum. That is not always a bad thing as our maintainers get to provide some good ol' tender love and care to our hard ridden equipment.

For those Phoenix Soldiers stationed at Bagram, the slow move to the East Side continues and our Soldiers are doing everything they can to make life even better than they had on the west side. Feel free to peruse our Soldiers hard at work dry-walling, spackling and painting our new offices at: www.flickr.com/photos/tf_phoenixrising/.

I recently had the opportunity to visit our Executioner Soldiers (Echo Company 3-10) at two outlying Bases (off Bagram). These guys run the Forward Arming and Refueling Points at both locations. I can assure the executioner Families that your Soldiers are making great use of their time and most have put on at least 10 pounds of muscle. Their morale is high and their performance is even higher.

I'd like to thank CPT Magennis and his wife for their superb performance as Arch Angel 06 and Mrs. Arch Angel 6. Matt changed command on the 28th of February. He had a great command for the last 19 months and we will surely miss his contagious grin. CPT Charity O'Dell now has the Arch Angel reigns and I know she'll do great.

As we enter the fifth month of this deployment, I'd like to say how proud I am of our Soldiers for their outstanding performance here. Their discipline is the best I've seen and the operational pace that they execute on a daily basis is absolutely unmatched. I am in awe of what I witness on a daily basis. It is truly more than I've ever seen in 20 years of service.

Thanks Phoenix for what you do. I'm proud to be a part of your team.

"FEEL THE BURN"
LTC Dennis J. McKernan

*"Be a yardstick of quality.
Some people aren't used to an environment where excellence is expected."*

~ Steve Jobs



CSM Corner

Dear Phoenix Family and Friends,

Every day I am impressed in what our Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix do every day. With the movement to the east side of Bagram to the new task force footprint these last couple of months. Every company has rolled up their sleeves and asked, "What can we do?" What you see is Soldiers turned into construction workers. Our heroes are building shelves, desks, painting walls, laying linoleum flooring on concrete, and setting up communication lines - all with motivation to do more. Years from now, our Soldiers are going to think back to the memories of the sweat, tears and teamwork it took to make this facility what it is.

Regardless of this major distraction, we are able to continue the mission we were selected for - to support RC-East with no degradation of aviation and ground support. This was only possible because of our most junior Soldier to our most senior leader and their untiring support to the overall mission success. You are the "plank owners" for future units that will assume our mission. A plank owner is a term used by, and has consequently been variously defined, different units. The origin of the term is the implication that a crew member was around when the ship was being built and commissioned, and therefore has bragging rights to the "ownership" of one of the planks in the main deck.

Thank you for your untiring support.

CSM Ron Dvorsky
Command Sergeant Major
Task Force Phoenix

*"Action is the foundational key to all success."
~ Pablo Picasso*



MEDEVAC pilot achieves 5,000 flight hours

By Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown

Marcia Wieder, speaker and author, once said, “Commitment leads to action. Action brings your dream closer.” Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kenneth Brodhead, instructor pilot in Company C Dustoff, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, has always pursued his interests with gusto, and being a rotary wing pilot in the Army has been no different for him.

His passion for flying has resulted in a successful career which has culminated with reaching a remarkable aviation milestone recently. Ever since childhood, Brodhead was drawn towards aviation.

“I thought that the helicopter was the most amazing contraption ever conceived,” said Brodhead, a native of Homestead, Fla.

Brodhead had the rare opportunity of having an aviator in his family which influenced his desire to fly. His grandfather was a Lockheed P-38 Lightning pilot in North Africa during World War II. Brodhead said his earliest memories involving aircraft are those of watching his grandfather building aircraft and flying with him.

After an eight-year stint as an Army band tuba player, Brodhead decided to pursue his lifelong dream and the Army could make it a reality for him.

In 1995, Brodhead joined the ranks of warrant officers in pursuit of flying rotary wing aircraft for the Army. He was eager to pursue his dream of flying the aircraft that had impressed him as a young child.

He recalls the excitement of watching a helicopter land at his school when he was in third grade. In 2007, Brodhead had the opportunity to land *his* helicopter at his kid’s school.

“I had a great time,” he said with a smile. “I would bet that one or more kids at that school were inspired to someday fly helicopters from that visit.”

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Allan Mace, maintenance test pilot in Co. C Dustoff, TF Phoenix, 10th C B/TF Falcon, has known Brodhead since their 2007 deployment to Bagram nearly four years ago. He has known Brodhead long enough to be able to convey his style as a pilot and his personality. He characterizes Brodhead as a man who stays calm, is exact and patient.

“When someone asks me about Kenny; about his personality, his experience, and his accomplishments, I can only think of one thing – unique,” said Mace, a native of Sacramento, Calif., “At first glance, you see a hardened aviator who probably would not stand for a lot of nonsense, who could be uncompromising, and only focused on the mission. I would honestly submit he’s far from that tough exterior. His teaching style not only increased the unit’s ability to become mission focused, he also allowed junior and senior aviators alike to think and act beyond the confines of their box.”

On February 15, sixteen years after joining the warrant officer corps, Brodhead – who always told himself he would never turn down an opportunity to fly no matter what - finds himself achieving the feat of acquiring over 5,000 flight hours. He has served on three different aviation deployments – all of them with 10th CAB. Brodhead reflects on his time spent in the air with great enthusiasm.

“The greatest thing about reaching 5,000 hours is thinking

*“Diligence is the mother of good fortune.”
~ Benjamin Disraeli*

back on those hours,” said Brodhead, “Every hour was flown as a member of a team and I have been lucky enough to fly with hundreds of pilots, crew chiefs, and medics over the past sixteen years. I have seen so many wonderful things from the cockpit of helicopters such as volcanoes in Hawaii, the Alps of Germany, the Grand Canyon, downtown Los Angeles, and the incredible panorama of Afghanistan.”

Brodhead shares his experience with lesser experienced pilots as he prepares to retire upon TF Phoenix’s return from Afghanistan. He asserts that he is just doing what was once done for him – passing along knowledge.

“I am just a link in the perpetual chain of experience,” he explains. “I have simply passed on that which was given to me from those who taught me. My pilots in this company are smart and skilled and I will be able to retire with confidence, knowing that they will prepare the next generation of pilots, continuing that chain.”

He has learned a lot over the past sixteen years as a pilot; from how to approach Soldiers when giving instruction to what his own personal limitations are.

“Teaching adults can be real tricky,” said Brodhead, “An effective instructor pilot needs to be - among other things - a bit of a practical psychologist. Every person learns differently than the next. I have also learned what I can and cannot expect from myself. I have also learned that though the world can sometimes be ugly up close, it is always beautiful when you step back a few hundred feet.”

Brodhead says he is proud to know that he has passed along information that has helped lesser experienced pilots during challenging situations that have arisen during their flights. His mentorship has benefited pilots in overcoming situations that has allowed them to perform better and grow as aviators. This affirmation of his skill and knowledge in his area of expertise makes him an invaluable asset to his unit.

As he nears retirement after 24 years, he plans to continue sharing knowledge by becoming an elementary teacher. Children are very important to Brodhead. If you were to ask him what his most memorable story as an Army pilot would be, he would tell you that his best stories are ones that



involve children.

“I have flown sick or injured children to hospitals in California, Iraq, and Afghanistan,” Brodhead recalls, “I am exceptionally sensitive when it comes to children. My own twin boys are alive today in part because a MEDEVAC crew was there to take my wife to a major medical center 180 miles away from the remote installation that we called home. To me, all children are pure and wonderful and I will go to great lengths to help a child. At my age, I see the Soldiers that we transport as kids. I always think as a dad and it pleases me that we are doing this service [as a MEDEVAC crew] for the dads back home.”

Brodhead is a Soldier who loves to fly – claiming each day is as exciting as the very first. Mace acknowledges Brodhead’s enthusiasm for his profession.

“With a touch of sarcasm and twist of humor, people look beyond the superficial shell of the seasoned aviator and learn and love to fly just as he does,” said Mace, “It is this love of flying that has allowed him to fly more than 5,000 hours, equating to over 208 days sitting in one position, manipulating his mechanical beast, commanding it to do his will. It’s the passion and the sense of freedom that has allowed him to strive beyond what most aviators only wish they could accomplish in their career.”

*“Action is the foundational key to all success.”
~ Pablo Picasso*



Joke heightens morale for Soldiers, Families

By Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown

Many people know what you are talking about when you mention the name Gumby – a stop motion clay animation series that aired on NBC starting in 1957. This green clay humanoid character has had a plethora of merchandise created over the years. The most prominent item sold - the bendable figures.

Bill Perreira, father of Capt. Crystal Moore, human resource officer in charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Phoenix, Task Force Falcon, sent her a care package with one of these figures dressed in fatigues. The fatigues were created by Connie Perreira from some camouflage material

purchased at their local Walmart. Bill, a native of Sonora, Calif., wrote down an Army chaplain's personal story of adjustment that he told at Bill's church during a veteran recognition service and sent it with a flexible Gumby toy.

"I sent the story of Semper Gumby to my daughter, Crystal, because I knew she needed a 'lift,'" said Bill, "As a former military member myself, I know what it is like to be separated from family for periods of time and without having any contact with the outside world. Adjusting to new locations and unfamiliar surroundings can be tough enough. When you're a

mother it is even harder to be away from your children. So, when I heard the story it was very timely, Crystal had already been deployed and I knew she would have to be making a lot of adjustments. So the story and Gumby was given to her to aid in making that adjustment."

Bill summarized the story, typed it up, and sent it to his daughter. The message to be taken away can be summed up in just a couple sentences from the story, "Semper Gumby – forever flexible. [...] Bend where you need to, stay firm when it is required, and life will be smooth no matter what. Watch your perspective."

*"Be obscure clearly."
~ E. B. White*

The toy quickly became the office mascot. He starred in a few photos for the battalion newsletter holding a miniature United States flag and hanging out in the office Christmas tree because Moore was elated to receive this Gumby.

"I am always excited to get stuff from home because my Family always sends something different and unexpected. I enjoyed the story that came with the Gumby, as well as his awesome 'get up,'" said Moore, a native of Arlington, Texas.

The Gumby figure went missing just days after his debut in the battalion newsletter. What started as a thoughtful gift from a Family member would soon become the source for a fun distraction from the long work days, and a way for Family members to interact with the Soldiers. Bill was elated to see his gift turning into a story on the unit's website.

"I almost died laughing," recounted Bill, "Sounds strange, but camaraderie is what it is and [the fact] that someone took advantage of poor old Gumby was actually hilarious. I was proud of the fact someone felt comfortable enough to do such a thing and elated at the banter that could actually take place. Humor comes in all forms."

Not long after his disappearance, a mass e-mail was sent out to the TF Phoenix chain of command from a proclaimed

"Gumby Slayer" with photos detailing his capture.

"We have your famous mascot, Gumby!!! We snatched him quietly and discreetly while he was dosing off during his guard shift. We discovered his famed status while reading an article about him in the most recent issue of the Battalion's Newsletter: Phoenix Rising," wrote the Gumby Slayer.

Soldiers and Family members began getting involved in the rescue of this office mascot. Bill could not contain himself and constructed a rescue team of ninja dressed Gumby figures and other various movie heroes.

"I personally got caught up in the spirit of it all," said Bill.

One report was sent out by the battalion's tactical operation center. They claimed - in this farce report - that locals reported the Gumby Slayer as being responsible in the abduction of the battalion's Blue Phoenix during the unit's patch ceremony.

It has since been the source of discussion and laughter. There have been a total of 13 combined reports and threats collected since Gumby's initial disappearance back in December.

"It made us laugh when he was first kidnapped because we had no idea that he had been stolen and tortured. It was our very own comic strip playing out," said Moore.

The story has noticeably boosted the morale of both

deployed Soldiers and their Families as the efforts to find the missing office mascot ensues. Joint efforts to locate the infamous Gumby continue with optimism.

"I was glad [Soldiers in Task Force Phoenix] were having fun with the things I sent, and that is what mattered most to me," said Bill, "Support can come in many forms and I have always desired to show my support for the unit and naturally for my daughter. I just like being kept up to date and I am thoroughly enjoying seeing the whole thing play out."

As the culprit remains hidden behind photos and harmless threats, deployed Soldiers look at each other with questioning eyes - wondering if they were the one who captured the mascot. Soldiers in TF Phoenix continue on with their mission, and Family members continue with their daily routine; however, for just a few brief moments out of each day Soldiers and Family members have something fun they can enjoy and participate in together as the story slowly unfolds.

"There needs to be ways for the Families to connect. This was sent as a way for my parents to just give me something that would make me smile, and share a good story. It turned out to be something that could be shared with the entire task force," said Moore.

"Drawing on my fine command of the English language, I said nothing."

~ Robert Benchley

TF Phoenix Crew Chief Becomes 'American' Soldier

By Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – It takes a dedicated and organized individual to obtain citizenship in the United States of America. Sgt. Andreas Buttner, a 34-year-old crew chief in C Company Dustoff, Task Force Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade/TF Falcon, was recently naturalized as a U.S. citizen after months of research and determination.

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, naturalization is commonly referred to as the manner in which a person not born in the United States voluntarily becomes a U.S. citizen.

Buttner, originally from Fulda, Germany, began the process of obtaining his citizenship after



*“All things are difficult before they are easy.”
~ Thomas Fuller*

arriving in theater the first week of September. He deployed to Afghanistan prepared with all of the paperwork he would need to begin his naturalization packet such as his marriage certificate, tax returns, birth certificate, and military service documentation. Buttner was anxious about dropping his naturalization packet – even though he had been extremely thorough.

“I was nervous and excited; nervous that I was missing any documents - excited that I was on track for citizenship,” said Buttner.

Once his packet was complete, he mailed it back to the United States in order to begin the procedure of having it reviewed. While that was being done immigration services would begin processing his background check.

Four months after dropping his naturalization packet, Buttner flew to Kandahar, escorted by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Allan Mace, a native of Sacramento, Calif., to finish the immigration process which included completing an interview.

“The interview took about one and a half hours, and I was very nervous because the decision for

citizenship approval or disapproval is made right then and there,” said Buttner. “Of course, the thought of missing any paperwork or supporting documents was on my mind.”

Prior to his interview, Buttner had been required to study 100 questions for a civics exam which covered American history and government. In order to be eligible for citizenship he had to answer six out of ten of the questions correctly. He passed with flying colors.

“The questions were not too hard. I studied all 100 possible questions in depth prior to the interview until I knew all of the answers,” he said. “I answered all questions without any mistakes or hesitation.”

Buttner joined over 100 other Soldiers to take the oath of citizenship during the Combined Joint Task Force 10 Naturalization Ceremony Jan. 29.

“Guest speakers talked about the sacrifices the candidates [endured] to become US citizens; the time to prepare for arduous tests and interviews, and [the forgoing of] the allegiance of their birth country,” said Mace. “I’ve

known Sgt. Buttner for more than four years. He not only sacrificed, but he also invested himself in our nation. It is people like him that tell the world that with hard work, diligence, dedication and love for a nation that the United States continues to be a country of opportunity and compassion.”

“I felt privileged, proud, and honored to be able to become a citizen,” said Buttner.

He recommends that Soldiers, who are also looking to get their citizenship to be prepared, do the necessary research, and to take advantage of the support the military offers.

TF Phoenix’s newest citizen is a proud one - his pride reflecting that of a Soldier who was born in the states. Buttner is prepared to continue defending his country and supporting the U.S. Army in their endeavors.

“I am extremely proud to be a citizen and to continue to fight along my fellow citizens for the stabilization of Afghanistan and to ensure the freedom and liberty of all back home. God bless the USA,” said Buttner.

“Be open to the amazing changes which are occurring in the field that interest you.”

~ Leigh Steinberg









Headquarters and Headquarters Company

By SGM Robert Bousley

Wow! Spring is only a couple short weeks away, time is flying by quickly, the months only seem like weeks, before you know it your loved ones will be home on R&R leave.

On to business, the S3 shop welcomed one of its own to Bagram in early February, PFC Joyce Brown joined us from Rear-D and has rapidly integrated into the Flight Operations Section. The transition was so smooth it's almost like she has been here from the beginning of the tour. February also saw the beginning of the Task Force move from the west side of Bagram Airfield to our new work area on the east side. All of the flight companies with the exception of MEDEVAC and BLUEMAX (C/1-10) are working out of temporary buildings until work is complete on the new K-spans. The officers and Soldiers of the S3 have done an exceptional job dealing with the split operations.

You can truly be proud of your Soldiers.

When the Air Force Red Horse construction team completed the major construction of K-Spans some work was left unfinished, specifically all the internal walls left bare with gaps in the sheet rock. So the Task Force asked several Soldiers to exchange one weapon for another, their M16 for a carpenter's tool box. SFC Bettis is leading the charge for the S3 Shop in preparing the new tactical operation center (TOC) with assistance from SPC James Mead, SPC Ruben Burgos, SPC Jayson Lee, SPC Jonathan Edney, PFC Franklyn Green and PFC Joyce Brown. Each Soldier has assisted with building new work stations, spackling and sanding dry wall and painting. We still have a lot of work left before we are ready to move into the new TOC but we are hoping to move before the end of March. When all is said and done the new TOC will be better than our facilities back at Fort Drum, and it all because of the hard work of the S3 Soldiers; I couldn't be more proud of each of them. Every Soldier Truly counts!

Operations Sergeant Major

"Get the best people and train them well."

~ Scott McNealy

A Company

By Capt. Charity Odell and ISG Albert Serrano

Greetings to all Archangel Family and Friends! February was another busy month as the Company continues to run at a breakneck pace, while still accomplishing the mission with style and professionalism.

February saw the Archangels move their working area and flight-line parking from the West side of the airfield to the East Side. Already a busy month filled with VIP missions, change of command inventories and a full-court press to finish construction/finishing work on our new command post within the KSPANs, a long steel hut, which promise to be as nice as our facilities on Wheeler Sack Army Air Field, Fort Drum. Several of our Officers and Soldiers with construction experience spearheaded the finishing work, but in the end, we all pitched in with mudding the drywall, sanding, painting and flooring.

The weather is indicative of Fort Drum weather in spring: snowy, rainy and cold. Several days in February was marked by 2-3 inches of snow here at Bagram. Though that doesn't stack up to the feet of snowfall on the North Country, it did afford the company to blow off steam with impromptu snowball fights as we cleared aircraft blades of the accumulation. Despite the weather and occasional

snow fall, everyone is staying healthy and strong. And though we may regret it later, we can't wait for warmer weather.

First Sergeant and I would like to welcome SPC Kelley to the Archangels, he is an experienced 15T (UH-60 maintainer) from our sister company Delta 3-10 and shows promise of becoming an excellent crew chief. We send a fond farewell to SSG SantaMaria and SSG Burns, you have served the Archangels with professionalism and dedication, good luck in all of your future endeavors.

On the home front, I would be remiss if I did not thank Mrs. Kelby Magennis, Mrs. Kim Gonzalez and Mrs. Iris Mitchell for their selfless service to our service members as the Family Readiness Group leadership, we could not do what we do without your support. Additionally, thank you to Mrs. Gonzalez for picking up the torch from Mrs. Magennis as our Company FRG Leader. I look forward to working with our FRG for the duration of the deployment, and I look forward to meeting in person.

Until next month, it is a pleasure to serve with the Archangels and Task Force Phoenix. To our Soldiers, keep up the hard work and excellent safety record.

*"Leadership cannot really be taught.
It can only be learned."
~ Harold S. Geneen*

A Company

Smugglers

By Capt. Brent Hilzendager

Smuggler News, March is here already and old man winter has still not released us from his grasp. We have had snow, ice and a lot of cloudy weather. This is typical Afghanistan winter weather. The temperatures have been around 0 degrees here on the airfield but the mountains we are surrounded by are all snow covered. One village 10 miles Northwest of here got 8 feet of snow within 24 hours!

We are still living on one side of the airfield and working on the other. Therefore we are dependent on the battalion busses. The busses are to run on the ½ hour but one of the two busses were involved in an accident and now the busses run on the hour. But we are making do.

The new command post is still in need of some work. We are mudding, taping and panting of our new work areas. We hope to be moving in a few weeks. We have flown about 300 missions so far. We are now supporting the Red Bull Task Force. That is a National Guard Task Force from my home state of Iowa. We are providing them with their aviation support.

Thank you for all your support, emails, letters, packages and prayers. We miss you all.

Smuggler 6

*“Leadership is practiced not so much in words
as in attitude and in actions.”*

~ Harold S. Geneen

B Company

Saying Goodbye

By Michael Farrell

Greetings from Afghanistan! It is with a heavy heart that I write this, as Bravo Company is destined to depart Task Force Phoenix. We will be moving down the road only a short distance to become part of Task Force Six Shooter in Jalalabad. Many of the Soldiers are sad to be leaving Bagram as it has become their home over the last four months. Others look at this as an opportunity to start a new. SSG Gary May feels that the change of scenery is a good way to break up the deployment. Of course not the whole company will be in Jalalabad, half of the company will be in Sharana attached to Task Force Gambler. While the Soldiers would like to stay together as one company they understand that CH-47Fs are in high demand in Afghanistan and to meet the needs of the Soldiers on the ground they must be in two different locations.

Even though the company will be dividing into two different entities it will also be uniting with Soldiers who departed the company to join Task Force Shooter in July. Even as plans are being made to move the company out of Bagram the Soldiers have been getting excited to see their Chinook brothers in Jalalabad. But until Bravo Company moves completely to Jalalabad the Soldiers will be busy packing up all of the company equipment and their personal gear.

When the Soldiers have not been busy packing up for the move, they have been enjoying some down time brought on by the snowy weather here. While the snow and rain has made it a little messy

getting to and from the office it has provided a much needed break from the rigors of flying every day. Of course this lull won't last forever.

A nice surprise the Soldiers received this month came in the form of all the candy and Valentine's Day cards that were sent by people back at Ft Drum. It really cheered all the Soldiers up and brightened the otherwise dreary month of February here in Afghanistan.

With each new challenge that faces the company I am continually astonished at how the Soldiers effortlessly overcome these hurdles. I know in part it is due to all of the support from the families and friends back at Ft Drum! For this support and on behalf of all of the Soldiers of Bravo Company I want to say thank you and we look forward to seeing you all in just eight months!



LEFT: *Spc. Beth Ackey poses for a quick photo on her way to work on March 5.*

“Making good decisions is a crucial skill at every level.”
~ Peter Drucker

C Company

By ISG Tim Clay

Hello Families and Friends of the Blue Max. I hope you are all doing well, wherever you are at this time of year. We have seen some snow here, and I feel certain that many of you are seeing it as well. I think it is time for spring to come and bring some sunshine.

We have had a challenging month here, with weather causing some disruption to our flying, yet giving us a bit of downtime for the Soldiers to gather themselves.

I would like to thank every-one for the support that they gave in sending so many Valentine treats and notes. All of us here got a smile, if not a little bit fatter from all the goodies. Sincerely, thank you.

We continue to move forward, even in the conditions presented to us. I commend the Soldiers of the company

in being able to stave off boredom at times, and then be able to start up again at a moment's notice. Please understand that our Soldiers are operating in the cold, rain and snow, around the clock. They are tough and resilient, and I know the grounding force in them being able to keep up the pace is knowing that they have your support.

I would like to congratulate SPC McLendon on his promotion to Specialist. He is one of those Soldiers who works hard, and I rarely hear him complain; honestly, I rarely hear him say anything; he is a quiet man. Kudos to you, SPC McLendon, keep up the fire.

We are continuing to rotate Soldiers through Rest and Relaxation (R and R) leave so they can come home and see new babies, family, friends, or just go on vacation. As always, I will do my best to take care of your loved ones. They are taking care of business here, in a supremely professional way. Thank you all for your continued support.



*“To succeed, one must be creative and persistent.”
~ John H. Johnson*

C Company

*Fourth Platoon Reporting
From Jalalabad Airfield*



By Sgt. Julia Bringloe

Things are really starting to warm up out here in JAF both literally and figuratively with regards to our mission tempo. Due to some personal changes throughout the area of operation, I recently moved over from Bagram to join the Six Shooters team in Jalalabad Air Field. Spc. Hinrichsen has replaced me at Bagram. JAF has exciting and challenging missions, tempered with a fun and relaxed atmosphere when the work is complete. From the highest ranking officer to the lower enlisted the Six Shooter Dustoff Team is a great group to work for.

The spring and summer months will soon bring unbearably hot humid weather and hoards of mosquitoes with it. Like so many before us, I am sure we will manage though. The best news of all - we are half way done with the deployment and looking forward to being home with family and friends!



*“Change your thoughts and you change your world.”
~ Norman Vincent Peale*

D Company

By Dan Snyder

Delta Dukes put the "Team" in Teamwork. Everyone knows the importance of the Delta Dukes helicopter maintenance company in success of our Task Force Phoenix's overall mission. However, what you may not know is, Delta Company is playing a major role in preparing the new buildings for the Task Force's future occupancy. Heading up the teams are SSG Plummer and SGT Bushek. SSG Plummer is in charge of building just about anything you can think of out of wood. Newly promoted, SGT Bushek is in charge of the mudding and taping for the majority of the new buildings. For the most part, the people in their teams are rotated out in order to give everyone a chance to pitch in. And, everyone has pitched in to make this transition as painless as possible. Just think, by the time you read this, we will be almost half way to redeployment. Next time we will talk about putting things into perspective. Take care and keep us in your thoughts. You are always in ours.



LEFT: Sgt. James Bushek attends the ground maintenance brief on March 5.

RIGHT: Chief Warrant Officer 2 Glenn Felton stands next to his new and improved truck.



*"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap
but by the seeds that you plant."*

~ Robert Louis Stevenson



E Company

By Staff Sgt. Jason Boyer

Family, friends, and supporters of Distribution Platoon: Greetings again from Bagram, Afghanistan. As many of you may have heard, it has been a very cold and wet month for us but we continue to drive on with our mission. We have had the opportunity to endure just about every type of weather this country has to offer, from days of bitter cold with vast amounts of snow accumulation to days that we contemplated building an ark. We have slipped through the snow and mud, dodged mud puddles the size of lakes and been soaked to the bone, and through it all, we accomplished every mission given to us. This month we picked up a few more taskings (additional missions) and everyone is staying on their toes supporting the task force. Needless to say, our down time has dwindled significantly, but on the positive side, with all the taskings and mission requirements the days go by faster and faster. We will be past the halfway mark for the deployment before we know it.

This month, we welcomed three new Soldiers to the platoon. The ammunition section welcomed SGT Brackbill and PFC Martinez, and the fuel section welcomed SGT Richard to the team. These Soldiers have already proven to be a valuable asset to the team. We also received word from the rear detachment that the new Platoon Leader, 2LT Latham arrived at Fort Drum and has begun the required training for deployment and will be joining us in the coming months. We look forward to her arrival.

On behalf of the platoon, I would like to take a moment to extend our sympathy to SPC Noland and his Family on the loss of his grandmother in early February. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them in their time of grief.

Please continue your amazing support to the platoon as we press towards the halfway mark of the deployment. I would again like to thank each and every one of you for your outstanding support.

*“Happiness is not something you postpone for the future;
it is something you design for the present.”*

~ Jim Rohn

Military Humor

New chemical warfare

An instructor in chemical warfare asked Soldiers in his class:

"Anyone knows the formula for water?"

"Sure," replied one Soldier, "That's easy."

"What is it?"

"H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O."

"What, what," asked the instructor.

"H to O," explained the Soldier.

Daddy is going to war

During the Persian Gulf War, I was assigned to go to Saudi Arabia. As I was saying goodbye to my family, my three year old son, Christopher, was holding on to my leg and pleading with me not to leave.

"No, Daddy, please don't go," he kept repeating.

We were beginning to make a scene when my wife - desperate to calm him - said, "Let Daddy go and I'll take you to get a pizza."

Immediately, Christopher loosened his death grip, stepped back, and in a calm voice said, "Bye, Daddy."

Bragging about old times

Two men were boasting to each other about their old army days.

"Why, my outfit was so well drilled," declared one, "that when they presented arms all you could hear was slap, slap, click."

"Very good," conceded the other, "but when my company presented arms you'd just hear slap, slap, jingle."

"What was the jingle?" asked the first. "Oh," replied the other offhand, "just our medals."

High military ranks

When little Reggie was inducted into the Army, he was advised to act tough.

"That's the only way to command respect in the Army," his friends said.

So Reggie did his best to carry out the advice. He swaggered all around camp, bragging, blustering and talking out of the corner of his mouth.

"Show me a sergeant and I'll show you a dope," Reggie shouted.

No sooner had he spoken than a brawny, battle-hardened figure appeared.

"I am a sergeant!" he bellowed.

"I am a dope," whispered Reggie.

An inferiority complex

An old man saw a very tired infantryman resting after a hard foot march. The man said with disdain,

"When I was your age I thought nothing of a ten-mile hike."

"Well, I don't think much of it either," replied the GI.

“What do I have to do to prove to you that I wasn’t the one who took Gumby - sign a sworn statement - because I will,” joked Sgt. Amanda Jo Brown in reference to the Gumby kidnapping.

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“Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you. Never excuse yourself.

~ Henry Ward Beecher

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PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Staff Sgt. Daniel Gerhardt brought a snowman to life outside of the S-1 shop on Feb. 12. Snowmen can be found anywhere here at Bagram Airfield – from by Soldier’s living areas to the beds of work trucks.