

PHOENIX RISING

TASK FORCE PHOENIX NEWSLETTER

Without our Families, we would not be so strong

By Spec. Amanda Jo Brown

As Soldiers of Task Force Phoenix pack their bags, put on their gear, and walk forward into history you will find friends and Family seeing them off with a mixture of sadness and sheer awe. No doubt it takes a unique individual to wear the uniform of the United States Army, but it would not be possible without the loving devotion and support of those behind each Soldier.

Being a part of an Army Family is no easy task – especially when you know that the day will come when you will have to watch your Soldier depart for war. Army Families join them in their final minutes before they board the plane knowing that their future mission is crucial to people around the world. They provide comfort, encouragement, love and pride that will sustain their Soldier through their journey on foreign soil. Their sacrifice is vast, but it does not fall on blind eyes.

Families depend on their Soldiers for love and encouragement, especially during deployment. Even while their loved ones are away, Soldiers are appreciative of everything their Families endure and do.

“I appreciate my wife [when I am deployed] because she is the critical link between my family and friends,” said Sgt. 1st Class John Tengel of A Company, Task Force Phoenix.

The Army gladly provides the Family Readiness Group to help with the transition. The FRG stands strong in their support to provide information through education and social activities to help empower Families to be self-sufficient and thrive while their Soldiers are overseas. They offer fun activities like powder puff football, Thanksgiving get-togethers, and movie nights as well as informative meetings and useful tools to help Families with their daily needs.



*Left Photo: FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Spec. Mitch Workman poses for a photo with his wife and daughter at the Sept. 18 ORG day.
Right Photo: FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- Spec. Donna Morgan sits with her husband and daughter in a CH-47 Chinook on Sept. 18.*

Family Readiness Group

Task Force Phoenix Families have the opportunity to talk to the rear detachment team at the monthly Rear-Detachment Commander's Breakfast held at the Muleskinner's DFAC. Receive the most updated information about TF Phoenix and ask questions in an informal setting. Families that came to November's breakfast were treated to a fantastic meal for \$2.30. The next breakfast will be on December 6th at the Muleskinner's DFAC from 8:30-9:30am.

The TF Phoenix family readiness group gears up to play Powder Puff Football. The FRG members will practice on Nov 13th with the game on Nov. 20th. Both events will be at the Pines Plains field at 10am. We are still looking for players and fans! If you want to cheer the ladies on, please feel free to stop by.

As autumn extends into the end of November and the leaves have just about finished falling, Thanksgiving quickly approaches. Many Families of TF Phoenix are thankful for the lack of snow; while others can't wait to see the inevitable white stuff. Whichever view you may have, this is a great time to get together for a Thanksgiving meal at the TF Phoenix hangar on WSAAF. Each company FRG has been assigned a type of dish to bring. If you are unsure of what type of dish your company has been assigned, would like to know the time and day for the Thanksgiving meal, or you have questions about other events, contact your FRG Leader or your FRSA Lisa Kadaraitis 315-774-1274.



"The reason it hurts so much to separate is because our souls are connected."

~Nicholas Sparks, The Notebook



Task Force Phoenix Commander's Corner

Task Force Phoenix Soldiers and Families,

As we welcome Veterans Day 2010, Task Force Phoenix continues to assume the mission here in Afghanistan from the great 2-3 General Support Aviation Battalion (3rd Combat Aviation Brigade). We expect the remainder of our Soldiers to arrive from Fort Drum by the middle of November and our equipment continues to trickle slowly through the gates of Bagram Airfield. It is true that some of the contents of our containers were pilfered during the trek to Bagram and we are working through the challenges of replacing this equipment as well as filing personal claims, but morale remains high despite the losses. The weather is still sunny and beautiful (low 70's) during the day and the temperatures quickly drop into the 30's as the sun goes down at night. The terrain is ruggedly beautiful and the food is superb, thanks to our food service Soldiers.

I wish that every reader could witness the great work that our Soldiers are accomplishing over here. Unfortunately, I lack the vocabulary and skill to clearly paint a word picture that does our Soldiers justice. Let me just say that they are working extremely hard (14 hour days at a minimum). The majority of our Soldiers are no longer leaning on the outgoing unit but running their own programs. It is pretty awesome and humbling to watch these Soldiers and leaders do their thing in combat. I know that they terribly miss their Families, but I have yet to see anything but smiles on their faces as they accomplish this difficult mission.

I am equally proud of our Phoenix Families who carry the torch back in the States. They recently kicked off the WALK TO AFGHANISTAN and will play some powder-puff football later in the month. I truly believe that the Families have the toughest mission and I do appreciate their support of this unit and their Soldiers. We couldn't do anything without them. I know that they will thrive in the coming months although "thriving isn't always painless".

I'd like to offer our condolences to Mrs. Doolittle, spouse of our recently deceased SPC Scott A. Doolittle who recently passed away in Carthage New York on 8 November 2010.

"FEEL THE BURN"
LTC Dennis J. McKernan

"There are two critical points in every aerial flight—its beginning and its end."

~ Alexander Graham Bell, 1906









Photo by Spec. Amanda Jo Brown



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Photo by Spec. Amanda Jo Brown

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Spec. Jamie St. Germaine and Sgt. First Class Ellatisha Barfield, S-4, pause for a smile on Nov. 9.



Photo by Spec. Amanda Jo Brown

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Staff Sgt. Tyrone Luckie hides from the camera as he leaves his office on the airfield.



Photo by Spec. Amanda Jo Brown

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Pvt. Ryan Ingham and Staff Sgt. Diane Smith pose for a photo after dinner chow Nov. 8.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company

All Boots on Ground, Ready to Move Forward

By Spec. Amanda Jo Brown

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Hooligan Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company are now all in Bagram, Afghanistan and slowly getting into their battle rhythm. For many Soldiers of HHC, this is their first deployment and they are adapting quickly to the unique aspects of the environment. For the rest of the Soldiers, this is another year long deployment overseas that is all too familiar.

Soon our Task Force Knighthawk counterparts, in 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, will be on their way back to the States to some well-deserved downtime and we will be here ready to confidently take the reins.

Already, we are very thankful for our friends and Family who are waiting patiently stateside for us to complete our mission and come home. Without a doubt, we appreciate the care packages and letters that have already been sent – not to mention the phone calls. The things endured by Families stateside do not fall on blind eyes; however, there is a lot of positivity that can be taken away from this endeavor. Our commander, Capt. Haemmerlein, said it best:

“When times get tough - when you miss having your Soldier around - remember that you and your Soldier can take great pride in this noble task.”

“When I give, I give myself”

~ Walt Whitman

A Company

Said Our Goodbye, Now Ready to Fly!

By Capt. Matthew Magennis

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- The month of October was filled with finishing up all the last minute details of preparing for our deployment. We sent off our containers filled with mission equipment and conducted the last of our pre-deployment classes. A Company conducted a farewell party with the entire company and its Families at the Otter Creek Winery. The night was a great bonding experience for A Company's Families. Many people met each other for the first time as the company has seen a large turnover during the past twelve months. Everyone had a great time to say the least!

With all equipment securely packed and all our Family goodbyes fulfilled, A Company began its year-long deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom XI. We deployed personnel through staging in Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan and forward onto our final destination of Bagram

Airfield, Afghanistan. By Nov. 5, A Company's Soldiers arrived safely in Bagram. We spent the first day going through brigade and task force level academics before we could begin any aviation duties. We quickly moved into our wooden "B-Hut" living quarters and began to unpack. The first week, we conducted environmental qualification flights and local area orientation flights. Additionally, we promoted Pfc. James Posey to Specialist. We all met on the flight line to take a company picture and honor Posey on his promotion. He has done great things since his arrival in A Company and we are expecting much from him in the future. This upcoming month we will also promote Warrant Officer 1 Whitten and Warrant Officer 1 Erb to Chief Warrant Officer 2. We are now focusing on assuming the mission from Alpha Company 2-3 "Storm." Very soon, the mission will be under the Archangel's control. We miss all our loved ones at home and think about them often.

B Company - Colossal

By First Sgt. William Howard

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Greetings from BAF. B Company is finally whole again here in Afghanistan. Actually, we have some new Soldiers attaching to us from B Company 1/171 Aviation from the Hawaii National Guard. The days are long and the nights are short (unless you are flying), but our Soldiers continue to work extremely hard to assume the mission from our B Company 2-3 brothers.

Our Soldiers have finally settled into their living quarters and they are slowly setting the control point up for flight planning operations. As with every relief in place, some house cleaning must be done, but none of that has impacted our ability to perform our mission. Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael Bellotte and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jason Moore have been diligently working with our crewmembers to get our new CH-47F Chinooks up and operational. It has been a long process but is finally starting to pay off. Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Hasbrouck and Sgt. 1st Class Jimmy Clayton continue to manage the enlisted personnel and maintenance. Meanwhile, Capt. Joseph Alexander and Capt. John Wlasniewski get a crash course on daily combat operations.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Neil Williams, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bryan Brooks, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher McGrath, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ivan Cruz-Rivera and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Daniel Ramirez were able to complete all the pilots common core training with the help of our B Company 2-3 brothers.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Marc Mederios has been busy with receiving our containers and getting them inventoried to ensure we have the equipment and personal gear needed for our deployment.

The rest of the company continues to work day in and day out assisting where needed with either test flight, mission planning or performing missions. You should all be extremely proud of their accomplishments thus far. I know that I am.

Colossal 07

*"Can miles truly separate you from friends...?
If you want to be with someone you love, aren't you already there?"*

~Richard Bach

C Company

Testing and Training to the Standard and BEYOND!

By Sgt. Damian Schwab

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Even though Charlie Company Task Force Phoenix Dustoff is flying into combat saving America's Soldiers, it is still training and evaluating its Soldiers to the highest standard and beyond. This month we'll talk about Nonrated Crew Members who are all flight medics and crew chiefs, as they begin their Annual Proficiency and Readiness Test. The APART measures a crewmember's individual and crew proficiency and readiness. It consists of written exam, oral evaluation, standardization flight evaluation, Night Vision Goggles evaluation, Medical skills evaluation, and much more. The APART time frame is three months - ending on the last day of the NCM's birth month. Ten Soldiers have already completed their APARTs since arriving in Afghanistan.

I interviewed Staff Sgt. Michael Hubbard the company NCM standardization instructor (SI) how he goes about the APART process for all NCM's. He will go to FOB Shank first due to a lack of a medic Flight Instructor (FI), then he will go to all the other FOBs to conduct APARTs. He will stay as long as it takes, because Dustoff believes in training to standard, not to time. He will evaluate all aspects of the NCMs like hoist and general aviation knowledge not just their specific jobs. He will check NCMs during their normal duty shifts on real missions. During the evaluation on a mission he will not just sit there, he will give a hand during patient care and ask questions to medics on why they are treating patients that particular way. The last thing Hubbard will do during the APART is help with and conduct training at all the sites so as to keep Dustoff Soldiers above and beyond the Army standard.



AFGHANISTAN -- Medics and crew chiefs participate in hands on medical training.



FOB SHANK, Afghanistan -- A UH-60 Blackhawk conducts an early morning run up.

"A pilot lives in a world of perfection, or not at all."

— Richard S. Drury, 'My Secret War'

D Company – *Boots on Ground*

By First Sgt. Dan Snyder

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Hello to the friends and family of Delta Company Task Force Phoenix. We are now at nearly 100% deployed and one big family again. The Dukes have been working extremely hard since we arrived. We are moving together like a well oiled machine. The hours are long and intense with work to keep the aircraft in the air and to let D co 2-3 go home for a well needed rest with their loved ones. The tired look on the Delta Dragons faces gives us a clue as to what is ahead for this deployment. I am proud of all the Soldiers in the unit and trust they will strive for mission success. We have already asked for so much of them and will ask for more.

Your Soldiers have such an intricate part in the accomplishment of missions from many different echelons and countries. We send you our love and ask that you keep us in your thoughts and prayers.

**1SG Dan Snyder
Duke '07**

E Company – *Echo Arrives!!!*

As seen in Echo's Executioner's Alley

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- E Company has officially landed in Afghanistan and is performing their war time missions. Your Soldiers are spread out between three bases. Most of our Soldiers are at BAF while a slice of our Soldiers are on Forward Operating Bases Methar-Lam and Morales-Frasier. All Soldiers are excited to move forward with their missions and send 3rd ID home after their 12 month deployment. Our trip from Fort Drum to Afghanistan took several days and messed with each Soldiers sleep pattern and battle rhythm. Upon arriving to BAF, they were provided housing, given an orientation and allowed to rest up for the remainder of the day. The next day consisted of a weapons range, ammunition draw and additional paperwork for security badges. Soldiers were then introduced to their counterparts and began

working with their counterparts to get ready for their missions. Overall, this has been a relatively smooth process so far and your Soldier's morale and motivation are high. It is time to go to work!



Photo by Spec. Amanda Jo Brown

FORT DRUM, N.Y. -- One of the last groups of Task Force Phoenix Soldiers climb the stairs to claim a seat on the commercial aircraft that will take them to Manas Air Base, Krygyzstan Nov. 1. They spent two days in Krygyzstan before they took a flight on a C-17 - landing at BAF on Nov. 5.

*“Prepare for the unknown, unexpected and inconceivable....
After 50 years of flying I'm still learning every time I fly.”*

~Gene Cernan

You Might Be a Helicopter Mechanic if....

You've ever slept on the concrete under a bird.

You've ever said "Oh, yes sir, it's supposed to look like that."

You have a better bench-stock in the pockets of your coveralls than the supply system.

You've ever used a piece of safety wire as a toothpick.

You've ever been told to go "get some prop wash and a yard of flight-line."

You've ever worked a 14 hour shift on an aircraft that isn't flying the next day.

You can sleep anywhere, anytime, but as soon as the engines shut down you are wide awake.

You've ever stood on wheel chocks to keep your feet dry.

You have used dikes to trim fingernails.

You have wiped leaks immediately prior to crew show.

You've ever had to defuel an aircraft an hour after refueling it.

You've used a wheel chock as a hammer.

You know more about your coworkers than your own family.

You ever wished the pilot would say "Great helicopter."

You have had a pilot ask you why the valve stems on all the tires are not the same size.

You have screwed up something really expensive....

You have had fire lick the back of your neck after getting the INOP APU finally started.

You have told someone that you are an aircraft mechanic only to have them say, "But not on the engines...right?"

"They say that the fondest memories we create are those shared with the people closest to us - then what are we without our memories? I believe we would be empty vessels. This is why prior to deployment - and after - it is important that we share our time with Family and friends. Being in the Army I have learned that the people we work with on a daily basis are like family - we may not have a direct blood connection, but by being around one another constantly we create memories that are irreplaceable," said Pfc. Israel Perez of D Company, Task Force Phoenix. Perez is originally from New York City, New York.

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"A joke is a very serious thing."

~Winston Churchill



*Photo by Spec. Amanda Jo Brown
BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- A Soldier holds up a toy snake that "lives" in the S-6 shop. Soldiers are cautioned when they sign-in. The snake enjoys hiding inside the binder.*

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