



Wings of Destiny

OEF XII - XIII



DECEMBER 2012

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Destiny-6

COL Paul Bontrager



Message From the Cockpit



Merry Christmas, and Happy Holidays TF Destiny Soldiers, Families, friends and loved ones. As we continue this challenging yet fulfilling deployment, we must pause for a moment to celebrate our unique heritage and traditions.

Traditions, whether in Afghanistan or at home, whether physical or intangible, are real and they are important. They give us our humanity, they define us as individuals and Families, and they strengthen our ability to withstand adversity and difficult times. Thanks to our many inspired and active individuals, our headquarters is transformed into an authentic holiday spectacle. The door decoration contest, officiated by our operations section, set the tone early and established an environment of good cheer and high spirits. Beyond the decorations are the feelings of optimism and positive energy.

While acknowledging the difficulties of spending

another holiday season away from home, the passing of this season also signals the passing of another milestone of this deployment. We are another step closer to return, with a renewed energy that will sustain us in the months ahead.

In closing, a sincere and heartfelt 'thank you' to all of our Family members and volunteers who faithfully support this wonderful unit. Knowing of the support we have at home, and seeing the great cheerfulness here Afghanistan, when walking around our headquarters or visiting one of our many units, one can't help but have feelings that despite our situation, life is pretty darn good, and if I must be away from home, here is where I want to be, among this Family that we call Destiny.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays! We will be home soon, God bless you every one.



Destiny-7

CSM Harold Plattenberg



Leading From the Front



Season's Greetings to all TF Destiny Soldiers, Families, friends and loved ones. I would like to send this small token of appreciation for the commitment that your family has given during this Holiday Season. Although we cannot be together we can feel the continued support and love of each and every one of you. Army families are special and unique as we endure a lot for the pursuit of a better life for many others that do not have a chance for such. This in itself is the spirit of this holiday spirit.

We continue to carry on with the holiday spirit by displaying the same things that we would as if we were together. The feeling of being with our families is alive and well here within the Wings of Destiny. Decorations are only a small part of the feelings of this time of year. The exchanging of care package goodies and gifts

are part of our day to day operations.

Like our Families, we are working to close out this chapter of our military endeavors. Being away from home during the holidays means we are passing another milestone of this deployment. This brings us a step closer to our homecoming.

Again I would like to thank you for your continued support of this great and wonderful unit. The support we have at home is an uplifting spirit that words cannot describe as we see it in the eyes of our Soldiers. I want all of you know that we are thinking of each and every one of you during the holidays.

I hope that you have joyous holiday season. We are all looking forward to the joyous reunion upon us in the New Year.



Destiny Chaplain

CH (MAJ) Billy Graham



Count Your Blessings



“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18 ESV) The Christian message of Christmas is all about new beginnings. The Christ-child came into the world to create a means for mankind to be reconciled, to bridge the divide in order to have a relationship with God.

This same message can be adopted by each of us where we live. The Soldiers serving here in Afghanistan demonstrate the hope of new beginnings through their celebrations, events, and overall jovial spirit as they look forward to life beyond this deployment. It goes without saying that there also exists the hope of the new beginning being offered to the Afghan people through the efforts of Task Force Destiny.

It is our hope that back on the home front; the message of new beginnings is also taking root and growing into an excitement of what is ahead. It is all too common to get stuck in the moment of how difficult separation can be. I encourage all of us to move beyond the moment to look forward to the possibilities of new beginnings.

One last thought is the value of reconciliation that

can be at the heart of new beginnings. In every sort of relationship, difficulties and disputes can arise. This is part and parcel to the human condition. The real challenge is how do we handle the disruptions in relationship? The first step is each of us has to adopt a spirit of forgiveness. Forgiveness is releasing the offending party from the responsibility of the hurt they caused. We have to make that choice often more than once for the same individual. The next thing is to build the bridge back to the offending individual with the goal of healing and strengthening the relationship. Reconciliation requires both parties to be involved in creating a new beginning within the relationship.

My encouragement is for all of us to look forward to new beginnings. First by acknowledging that we are where we are because of a string of new beginnings. Christmas is an excellent annual reminder of those new beginnings. Secondly, I encourage all of us to aggressively engage in a lifestyle of reconciliation with all those we encounter so much as it is possible. Forgiveness requires the individual, but reconciliation requires both individuals. Lastly, as we enter into the New Year, I encourage us all to make personal goals in anticipation of our redeployment creating the environment in which new beginnings can flourish.



“If you want it done ask the 101” This is a replica of the sign that presided over a walkway leading from a helicopter landing zone at Camp Eagle during the Viet Nam War. This sign was constructed by SGT Brad Rentz, the repair and upkeep NCO for HHC, 101st CAB. SGT Rentz’ craftsmanship now presides over TF Destiny headquarters at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

Below: The first snow at Bagram sticks to a metal plate bearing the insignia of the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade.





Task Force No Mercy



The past month has been very busy for the Soldiers of Task Force No Mercy. First, they welcomed their new National Guard Chinook Company; B/1-126th from the great State of California. They have come in and integrated seamlessly with the rest of the Task Force and are doing great work here already. The task force also conducted a transfer of authority between their MEDEVAC detachments, welcoming in C/2-149th with Soldiers from Texas and Oklahoma. They have also picked up right where the outgoing unit has left off, executing multiple missions extremely well.

On Thanksgiving Day, the dining facility here at FOB Salerno served up a variety of traditional dishes to include; sliced turkey, roasted ham, yams, mashed potatoes with gravy, a variety of dressings, corn, scores of pies, cakes and much more. A lot of pictures were taken of the Soldiers, and the No Mercy command team, who served the troops in the serving line. And

although the Soldiers certainly missed all of their Families at home, they had a very nice meal with their extended No Mercy family on FOB Salerno.

On the evening of Veterans Day, No Mercy conducted their combat patch ceremony. Over 103 Soldiers were recognized, and received the 101st Airborne Division Patch on their right shoulder sleeve. This was a special occasion for some of them as it is their first combat deployment. It was a proud moment to see the Soldiers of No Mercy become combat veterans of the 101st Airborne Division.

Task Force No Mercy almost reached the halfway point in their tour here in Afghanistan. The Soldiers continue to stay focused on providing the very best aviation support, sustainment and other critical functions to the ground forces in an effort to help shape the future of Afghanistan.

Task Force No Mercy



Above Left: LTC Ryan pats a Soldier on the shoulder after placing a Screaming Eagle patch on his right sleeve pocket during a patch ceremony.

Above Right: Soldiers standing in formation during a transfer of authority ceremony in a hangar at FOB Salerno, Afghanistan.

Below: Soldiers get served Thanksgiving dinner by senior members of Task Force No Mercy at the dining facility on FOB Salerno Afghanistan. It is tradition that senior NCOs and officers in a unit serve the junior members of a unit during holiday meals to build esprit de corps.





Task Force Saber



Task Force Saber, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment Soldiers continue to find ways to enjoy and bring to others the Christmas spirit during this holiday season. TF Saber Soldiers continue their daily routines in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with a little more kick in their step, smells of pumpkin spice and cinnamon coffee in the air, and holiday sweets to bring many a smile to CAV Soldier's face and stomach. Care packages help bring little a piece of home and Christmas tradition to CAV land.

The Airgas Company sent boxes of working gloves, candy, food, thank you cards, hygiene products, and tons of hot sauce in support to TF Saber through Operation Homefront. Soldiers also shared the care packages with the USO and dining facility workers.

It would not be Christmas without the decorations to adorn the Troop CPs, lights between Soldier's B-huts, and personalized miniature Christmas trees and stockings for the rooms.

SSG Angelo Harrison made a candy cane reindeer

to add to Echo Troop's Christmas tree. CW2 Kati Lamm and CW2 Salvia Grandstaff, raided the Troop CPs for candy, treats, popcorn, and string to create a CH Gingerbread aircraft.

Our Family, friends are the true reason why CAV Soldiers continue to serve with happier hearts during the holidays. TF Saber created a Christmas video to share holiday cheer with Family and friends back home. SGT Dwight Arnold had one of the loudest Christmas singing voice during the first couple of trials for "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." Even far from home, TF Saber Soldiers celebrate the holidays with Family, friends and each other.

Decorations, care packages, and holiday events were seamlessly woven into daily TF Saber routines and continue to encourage the Soldiers to go above and beyond their everyday best. The holidays help bring a sense of normalcy and act as another notch on the calendar for the return home.

1LT Amanda Williams

Task Force Saber





Task Force Troubleshooters



Soldiers with B Company, 96th ASB pose with their handywork after they loaded two CH-47 Chinook helicopters into an Air Force C-5 Galaxy for transport back to the U.S. for reset maintenance. The Chinook helicopter is the Army's prime heavy-lift helicopter.

Troubleshooter families and soldiers, I send my sincere gratitude for your commitment to our mission. The Troubleshooters made the best of Thanksgiving and will embrace Christmas and the New Year as blessed benchmarks that will get us closer to completing our mission and enjoying a wonderful homecoming. I thank the Troubleshooter Leaders for making our traditional Thanksgiving meal a success, as they donned the proper gear to serve our soldiers or assumed their soldiers' duties to allow them to enjoy a well deserved meal. Although the meal did not have our home flavors, it did have the Troubleshooters' family warmth.

Our Troubleshooters at home

and deployed continue to excel. Through various inspections and General Officer visits the resounding message continues to provide unmatched accolades to our great Soldiers. I cannot keep from smiling every time I receive a message from the VIPs who travel through the Rotary Wing Terminal and experience the professionalism the Cipher team offers time and time again; or the numerous thank-yous for all of the Troubleshooters that are now volunteering at the various facilities around Bagram. From providing customer service at the SSA, maintaining aircraft in our hangar or ensuring all aircraft are safely loaded with ammo and fuel at our two FARPs, the Trouble-

shooters always exude professionalism. I'm humbled to be part of such a great organization.

Congratulations to all of the Troubleshooters who have been promoted or took the opportunity to reenlist.

Families, thank you for your endless support, love and prayers. With your support the Troubleshooters will continue their mission success. Please continue to support your FRGs and Battalion social events. God bless you all.

FIX, MOVE, COMMUNICATE,
TROUBLESHOOTERS!

Sincerely

Ben Bahoque, TS6

Task Force Troubleshooters



Above: Santa pays a visit to the Soldiers of Task Force Troubleshooters at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Santa wrote off any naughty behavior on account that all the Soldiers are making big sacrifices being away from their loved ones during the holidays.

Below: Soldiers with B Company, 96th Aviation Support Battalion push a rotor pylon for a CH-47 Chinook helicopter into place inside the cargo bay of an Air Force C-5 Galaxy transport airplane. With some disassembly required, the Soldiers of B, 96th ASB were able to fit two Chinooks, rotor blades and all, into the cargo bay for transport back to the U.S. for reset maintenance.





Task Force Eagle Assault



Christmas The Eagle Assault Way

The presents are wrapped and underneath the Christmas tree. The lights and decorations have all been hung. The sound of Christmas music is heard softly down the hallway. Homemade goodies are out for all to feast on. The mountains in the distance are white with snow. It is hard to believe, but all of this describes the holiday season at FOB Shank for TF Eagle Assault.

Each company and staff section played their role in ensuring that holiday cheer was abundant at every turn. The Pachyderms braved the winter chill and darkness of night to put up Christmas lights on their building. The intelligence section went into decorating over-

drive, resulting in a room that the Fire Marshall probably wouldn't have approved of. The Pathfinders, in true infantry form, decorated a Christmas tree with dip cans, expended .50 cal rounds, and 7.62mm links. The operations section transformed the Task Force conference room into a winter wonderland with lights and garland.

The Eagle Assault team also knows how to throw a fantastic party. We had a busy party circuit that would have tested even the most seasoned party animal.

The Chaplain threw a Christmas Eve party for the task force that rocked into the night. The companies each threw their own events with lots of food and

entertainment. There was no shortage of holiday cheer; that is for sure.

The holiday season is always a difficult time to be away from Family and friends. Here at TF Eagle Assault, we are thankful that despite being away from home this year, are able to spend the holiday in some great company. Our fine Army Family makes the deployment both fun and manageable.

LTC Chuck Rambo and CSM Larry Harris want to express their gratitude for the hard work and sacrifices of each and every Soldier of Task Force Eagle Assault. They feel truly blessed to serve in the company of such high caliber individuals. Happy holidays! Eagle Assault!

Task Force Eagle Assault





Task Force Shadow



Happy Holidays from TF Shadow.

As the nights get longer and the temperature drops, the need for the joy and camaraderie that comes with the holiday season is much needed. Although we would rather be at home with our Families and friends, enjoying a warm fire, and a hot beverage, we understand that we are needed here, now more than ever. As such, it has been a focus for the Task Force to bring as much happiness to our Soldiers throughout the many Forward Operating Bases that we occupy.

We owe a big thanks to the

FRG, and to the incredibly generous Americans that support our Soldiers. They provided us with an abundance of donations from which we were able to put together well over 700 Christmas stockings, filled with everything from cakes and cookies to toiletries and homemade knit caps, for every Soldier in TF Shadow.

Along with our stockings, the TF Shadow Junior Enlisted Counsel (JEC) held a Christmas Tree decorating contest. With judges including the JEC members and the TF Shadow command

team, it is no wonder our California Nation Guard Chinook unit took top honors.

These fun activities, along with several other holiday events, are helping to keep morale up. We miss our Families and friends back home, but we stay strong by keeping them in our thoughts and prayers. As we wait to come home, we want to wish you all a joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!

Shadow of the Eagle, and Air Assault!

Task Force Shadow



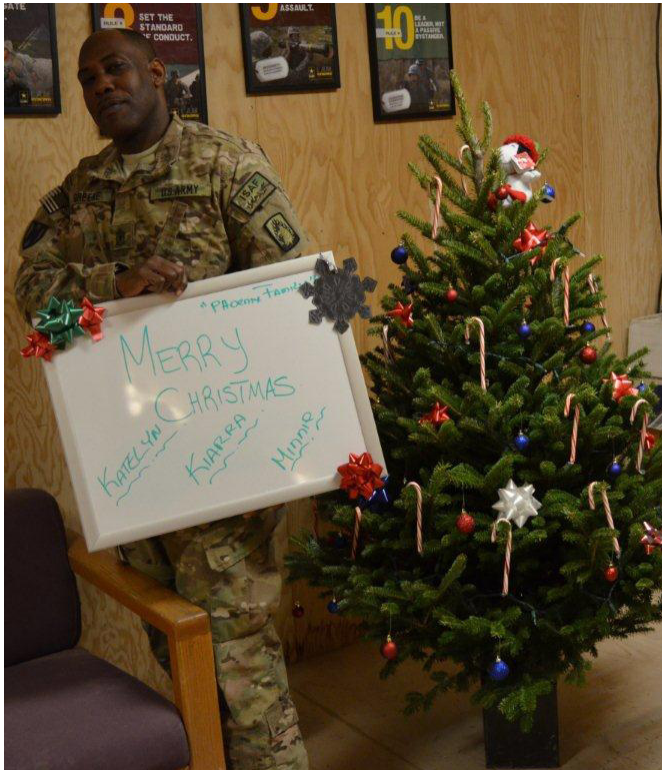
Above: Crew chiefs with 6th Battalion, 101st CAB assigned to the night crew pose after pulling a CH-47 Chinook Helicopter into a maintenance hangar during a snow storm at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan Dec. 27.

Below: A UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter crew with A, 5-101st CAB attached to Task Force Shadow pose with their helicopter after doing pre-flight checks and an engine run to ensure mission readiness during a snow storm on Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan Dec. 27.





12th CAB



It was the months before redeployment and all through the TOC not a Solider was stirring, not in the FARP, FOB or COP.

The aircraft were nestled, all tucked away on their pads, while the crew chiefs hid in their tents playing Black Ops like mad.

The S3 was sleeping in the glow of their screens, while Sergeants were busy keeping soldiers from doing anything obscene.

When out from the motor pool there arose such a clatter, I sprang to my Blackhawk to see what's the matter.

What I saw down below was oh such a sight, a sled towed by vehicles all covered with lights!

The sleigh driver whipped the trucks and they jerked forward with a shout, the convoy rolled out as the driver threw presents about.

On HMMWV, on HEMMIT, on Hilux and Gator! On MRAP, on Wrecker and Tanker!

As the convoy rolled out I heard the driver say, we're less than a hundred days out and enjoy your Holiday!

12th Combat Aviation Brigade



German President Joachim Gauck attaches a streamer to the battalion colors of 4th Battalion, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade to symbolize the awarding of Germany's Fahnenband, the highest German honor that can be given to a military unit. Task Force Ready, along with Task Force Pirate provide air support and medevac support to the Soldiers of the German Army in Regional Command - North. "On Many occasions you put yourselves in harm's way for one reason: to save the lives of German Soldiers," said Gauck during a ceremony at Camp Marmal, Afghanistan."





Task Force Pirate



Time Flies! It's the TF Pirate motto and it rings true with another month passing. TF Pirate continues to maintain a steady, moderate Op Tempo despite the drop in temperature. Nothing slows the Pirates down! Not even our upcoming re-deployment of 1-211th elements followed by 12th CAB elements just a month later. As the old saying goes "out with the old and in with the new", the 1-211th ARB, Pirate HQ, will soon pass on the torch to the 1-104th ARB, the Shadow Warriors.

Until then, if you ask LTC Hartvigsen he would say "it's business as usual," but in the past month the Pirates have experienced several events worthy of praise: The maintenance company, D/1-211th ARB, just completed their last scheduled AH-64D 500hr phased maintenance,

bringing the total scheduled AH-64D heavy maintenance tally to eight 500hr and eight 250hr Phase maintenance repairs. Congratulations to the three Soldiers receiving their well earned promotions from "Big Windy", B/5-158th, 12th CAB CH-47 airframe repair section. Two AH-64D and one CH-47 pilots readiness level progressed to pilot in charge with an additional three other pilots beginning the process and one CH-47 crew chief to flight engineer, all are considered culminating achievements of the deployment.

But one could argue that the aforementioned events pale to the dozen plus new Pirate Baby additions to our Families back home. These events are a clear reminder to us who we make sacrifices for. Our honor is to serve for the sake of their future liberty!

Task Force Pirate



SGT John Stanford, with 1-211 ARB participate in the German Schutzenschnur, a marksmanship exercise covering weapons from the rifles and pistols issued by the Bundeswehr to anti-tank weapons and machine guns. According to the regulations, all enlisted personnel and officers can participate in the exercise and be awarded the marksmanship badge, but only enlisted members may wear the badge. This regulation also applies to foreign Soldiers that participate in the Schutzenschnur.



CPT Kelly Kimber promotes his wife, Eddy Blue, to SSG.



31 August 2012, CW4 Brandon Davis and CPT Jessie Frampton performing a maintenance test flight.



SGT Jason Witham being awarded the Gold for his efforts in the Schutzenschnur.