



JANUARY 5, 2021 / ISSUE 19

# THE ANVIL INSIDER

A Newsletter from the 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade



Photo by Spc. Jose Brown

## Happy New Year from the 28th ECAB!

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# How the 28th ECAB got through holidays together, missing home

THE MIDDLE EAST -- Soldiers with the 28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade leaned on each other and used their creativity to get through the holiday season, half a world away from their families and loved ones.

They are deployed to the Middle East supporting the fight against Daesh and maintaining a U.S. military posture in southwest Asia. The 28th ECAB commander, Col. Howard Lloyd, says the brigade's mission in the Middle East perfectly encapsulates the spirit of the season.

"One of the things I find comforting is our whole mission, why we are here," said Lloyd. "We joined our coalition partners in creating an environment conducive to everlasting peace and prosperity through the region."

From the fixed-wing unit in Kuwait and the attack battalion in the north, to attached units from the Italian and Spanish armies, Lloyd says 28th ECAB Soldiers are exceeding all expectations in that mission. But he understands that the separation from loved ones makes for an especially tough season for Soldiers and families. While some enjoyed the festive atmosphere, many missed being together with their loved ones and just tried to get through the holidays.

At home, the 28th ECAB rear detachment, family readiness group and Pennsylvania National Guard State Family Program Office put on a Park & Presents event in early December in various Pennsylvania cities where families enjoyed a drive-through style visit with Santa Claus and received a bag of toys.

Abroad, some units put on holiday parties and events for their Soldiers where they enjoyed a cookout, watched movies or just enjoyed each other's company. Soldiers decorated their workspaces, with one such area decorated with a wooden pallet formed into a Christmas tree. Dining facilities served a special meal on Christmas Day.

"We did have to work that day but it didn't stop us from having a good Christmas," said Spc. Mariliz Serrano, a petroleum supply specialist serving in Iraq with Echo Company, 2-104th General Support Aviation Battalion. "We don't normally have time to do anything outside of our shifts, so talking to our families, taking pictures and the holiday lunch really made us happy. At the same time it was a little hard, simply because everyone at home was together and it just makes me sad knowing I am not there with my family enjoying the holidays. It made me miss them a lot."



Photo by 1st Lt. Alysa Nantarojanaporn

It was common for Soldiers to wake up around 2 a.m. local time to call in to their families' Christmas Eve parties back in the states. Many enjoyed video chatting later in the afternoon to watch their children open presents during the morning hours at home.

For Sgt. Caitlin Reinard, a medic serving in Syria with Charlie Company, 2-104th GSAB, she appreciated the camaraderie and spending Christmas with her fellow Soldiers, despite some hardship.

"We watched Christmas movies, played corn hole and rugby. 1st Lt. [Xiomara] Espinosa made us paper stockings and put in morale patches that reminded her of us individually. We had to pay for our meal and it wasn't much which was a bummer but we all ate together," said Reinard. "Also since the mail stopped we didn't get our Christmas packages from home so that bummed us all out. But at the end of the day we had each other."

Lloyd acknowledged the delays in the mail system but he appreciates the kindness and generosity of so many people and organizations.

"The care packages we are receiving from home from loved ones, churches and agencies around the United States are overwhelming," said Lloyd.

The 28th ECAB deployed to the Middle East in the summer of 2020 to conduct combat operations and provide military support to civilian authorities, and is scheduled to return home in late spring of 2021.



# **Llama Yields Antibodies That May Prove Effective Against COVID-19**

By Sarah Marshall, Uniformed Services University

BETHESDA, Md. -- Researchers at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences recently identified pint-sized antibodies, or "nanobodies," that could protect against COVID-19. At least one of these nanobodies — produced by a llama named Cormac — also appears to work well in either liquid or aerosol form, suggesting it could also help protect a person's lungs from infections.

The study was led by Dr. David Brody, director of USU's Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine, along with Thomas J. "T.J." Esparza, a Henry M. Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine employee working in support of CNRM. Both Esparza and Brody also work in the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

Nanobodies are a type of antibody naturally produced by the immune systems of camelids, such as camels, alpacas and llamas. These proteins are about a tenth of the weight of most human antibodies on average. They can be isolated in the lab and essentially free-floating versions of the tips of the arms of heavy chain proteins, which form the backbone of a typical Y-shaped human immunoglobulin antibody found in the blood. These tips recognize proteins on viruses, bacteria and other invaders, also known as antigens. Therefore, they play a vital role in the immune system's defenses.

Nanobodies are also more stable, less expensive to produce and easier to engineer than typical antibodies. Therefore, they have been increasingly used for medical research. A few years ago, for example, scientists showed humanized nanobodies may be more effective at treating an autoimmune form of thrombotic thrombocytopenic purpura, a rare blood disorder, than current treatments.

Since the pandemic broke, several researchers have produced llama nanobodies against the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, which is believed to be effective at preventing infections. In this study, published in Scientific Reports, the researchers used a slightly different strategy to find nanobodies that may work especially well.

"For years, TJ and I had been testing out how to use nanobodies to improve brain imaging. When the pandemic broke, we thought this was a once in a lifetime, all-hands-on-deck situation and joined the fight," Brody, the senior author of the study, said. "We hope that these anti-COVID-19 nanobodies may be highly effective and versatile in combating the coronavirus pandemic."



The researchers found that at least one of these nanobodies, called NIH-CoVnb-112, may be highly effective at preventing infections or detecting virus particles by grabbing hold of SARS-CoV-2 spike proteins. These "spike proteins" act like a key by "opening the door to infections" when they bind to a protein found on the surface of certain cells, called the angiotensin converting enzyme 2 receptor, the researchers explained. They then found a way to isolate these nanobodies that block infections by covering the "teeth" of the spike protein, which bind to and unlock the ACE2 receptor. This was done by immunizing the llama, Cormac, five times over the course of 28 days with a purified version of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein.

After testing hundreds of nanobodies, they found Cormac produced 13 nanobodies that could potentially be strong candidates, including one they refer to as NIH-CoVnb-112. The researchers then showed that the NIH-CoVnb-112 nanobody could be effective at preventing infections.

To mimic the COVID-19 virus, the researchers genetically mutated a harmless 'pseudovirus' so that it could use the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein to infect cells that produce human ACE2 receptors. The researchers saw that relatively low levels of the NIH-CoVnb-112 nanobodies prevented the pseudovirus from infecting these cells in petri dishes.

Additionally, the researchers showed that the nanobody was just as effective in preventing the infections in petri dishes when it was sprayed through a nebulizer, or inhaler, often used to help treat patients with asthma.

"One of the exciting things about nanobodies is that, unlike most regular antibodies, they can be aerosolized and inhaled to coat the lungs and airways," Brody said. "This is promising in that it could potentially be used to protect the lungs from infections."





Photos by Capt. Brian Becker

Photo by Spc. Stanford Toran



Photos by Sgt. Eric Smith





**Sgt. Jacob Morningstar**, after attending Shippensburg University where he played rugby and majored in business, joined the military in search of a greater purpose in his life. Originally from Colorado Springs, he loves living in Pennsylvania now because he is able to enjoy all four seasons but still has a knack for snowboarding. Between shopping in New York City or shopping online in pajamas, he says he would prefer shopping in NYC.

Morningstar is currently deployed with Alpha Company, 628th ASB where he serves as a small arms/artillery repairer.



This week's homefront hero is Amy, wife of 1st Sgt. Matthew Stohrer!

As if taking care of a home of nine kids during a pandemic and with her husband deployed wasn't enough, Amy has handled their kids' schooling and still makes time to help her husband take care of his Soldiers.

Thank you Amy, and the whole Stohrer family, for holding down the homefront!

(Submitted by Capt. Nathan Bevans)

**Follow the instructions in the flier below if you know a Homefront Hero you'd like to see recognized.**

# HOMEFRONT HEROES

Soldiers and families,

We know there are many ways our families “hold down the homefront” and we want to share their stories.

If you'd like to recognize a family member back home please do one of the following:

- 1) Send a message to the 28<sup>th</sup> ECAB Facebook page with a photo of the family member and a short paragraph describing why they deserve a shout out.
- 2) Email your FRG leader with a photo of the family member and a short paragraph describing why they deserve and shout out.
- 3) Contact the brigade PAO or your UPAR for assistance



**Ideas include...**

- A child who reads bedtime stories to their younger siblings
- A niece or nephew who sent care packages to their Soldier's unit
- A parent or in-law who has been stepping up to take care of the kids
- A child who broke a personal record at a recent track meet
- A spouse who threw a party for their child's birthday on their own (yikes)
- A spouse or parent who picked up a new skill or earned a degree

*"The strength of the armed forces of the United States is as much about its families as it is about its combat capability."*

– Gen. Martin Dempsey





Follow the link  
below for the  
latest AFN  
TV schedule

<https://v3.myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/>



<https://www.facebook.com/28ECAB/>



<https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/28cab>



For the latest Army news, visit  
the Army News Service at  
<https://www.army.mil/ARNews>

# SPORTS SHOUTOUTS



Want to send a shoutout to  
your favorite team? Contact  
your company UPAR or the  
brigade PAO

*The Anvil Insider: a publication by the  
28th ECAB and Task Force Anvil  
public affairs office*

## **28th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade**

Commander:  
Col. Howard Lloyd

Senior Enlisted Advisor:  
Command Sgt. Maj. Sean Livolsi



# PEGASUS POST

*HHC Fall Newsletter*

*January Edition*



## **GREAT SEASON GLOVES OF IRON**

**CONGRATULATION TO  
HHC'S GLOVES OF  
IRON ON FINISHING  
FOURTH PLACE IN  
THE CAMP BUEHRING  
SOFTBALL LEAGUE.  
WE LOOK FORWARD  
TO A RETURN OF THE  
GLOVES OF IRON AS  
TRAINING CAMP  
APPROACHES IN THE  
SPRING.**

## **CONGRATS MAHAFKEY AND LARK**

**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO MICHAEL LARK  
AND DALE  
MAHAFKEY ON  
THEIR PROMOTIONS  
FROM STAFF SGT.  
TO SGT. 1ST CLASS**

## **MAKE SURE TO KEEP YOUR MASK ON WHEN IN YOUR WORK AREA**

**MAKE SURE THAT  
YOU WEAR YOUR  
MASKS WHEN  
OPERATING IN  
YOUR WORK AREA  
DUE TO AN  
INCREASE OF  
COVID CASES.**





## SOLDIER SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations to HHC 28th ECAB soldiers who received promotion and their right sleeve insignia



### DALE MAHAFKEY

SGT. 1ST CLASS DALE MAHAFKEY, A COMBAT MEDIC AND 28TH ECAB MEDICAL OPERATIONS NCO, IS CURRENTLY DEPLOYED TO THE MIDDLE EAST WITH TASK FORCE ANVIL IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION SPARTAN SHIELD AND OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE. DALE IS FROM PITTSBURGH AND WORKS FULL TIME FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD IN THE MEDICAL READINESS SECTION. DALE SAYS HE SERVES BECAUSE HE LOVES HIS COUNTRY. WITH THIS DEPLOYMENT, DALE HAS REACHED 18 YEARS OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE AND BEING PROMOTED TO SFC. THANK YOU, SGT. 1ST CLASS MAHAFKEY, FOR BEING A PART OF THE TASK FORCE ANVIL TEAM!





HHC 28TH ECAB

# NEW YEARS MESSAGE

HHC  
Message

**Let the old year  
end and the New  
Year begin with  
the warmest of  
aspirations.  
Happy New  
Year!**







# THE WILE E. WEEKLY -ish



*On the trail with Task Force Coyote, 2-104th GSAB*

**January 4, 2021**

**Volume 1, Issue 19**



Photos by Sgt. Eric Smith

Soldiers across the battalion recently trained in a downed aircraft recovery scenario with the 82nd Airborne Division in Kuwait. Our DART team kept their skills fresh in responding to downed aircraft incidents.

Join your company's FRG Facebook group, the battalion Facebook group and the brigade page for updates



# A flight mission in central Iraq



Photos by Spc. Stanford Toran and  
Capt. Travis Mueller

## **The Wile E. Weekly Staff**

### **Regular Contributors (UPARs)**

HHC- SFC Joshua Shaffer

A- CPT Nathan Bevans

B- 2LT Dean Johnson

C- SGT Eric Smith

D- SGT Joshua Mayro, PFC Luke Shepherd

E- SGT Carissa Diggs, SPC Jennifer Raley, SPC Tyler Speer

F- SSG Breanna Chase, SPC John Kushner

### **Editorial Staff**

CPT Haddock

SGT Lee

### **Consultant**

CSM Shannon Cullen

Join your company's FRG Facebook group, the battalion  
Facebook group and the brigade page for updates





# 1-137 AHB UPDATE

Facebook: @taskforcechickenhawk



Motto:

**"Rule #1: Don't talk about Flight Club."**

01.04.2021

Issue XIV



To all the friends and family of the 1-137 AHB, we would like to thank you for your continued support. As holiday seasons come and go we remind all soldiers, friends, and family to stay in touch with loved ones. For many soldiers this can be a challenging time, being away from friends and family.

Exciting News:  
January marks the projected half way point for our time in the Middle East!!  
Happy Holidays!

If you have not already please follow the Task Force Chickenhawk Facebook Group, this is where you can keep up to date with the 1-137 AHB. Please, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out through the group for more information.

We look forward to keeping you updated on all things Task Force Chickenhawk!



Happy Holidays:  
TF Chickenhawk welcomes in the new year the best way we know how: Training, Training, Training!



Gulf Company conducted live static and dynamic hoist training with members of the 1-137 AHB. In events of a Medevac Gulf Co. UH-60AL pilots and crew members need to be ready to pick up patients at a moments notice. It was a cold and rainy day but just because the weather is bad doesn't mean that training stops!



The Legacy of 1-137 AHB:  
SSG Mike Seimer creates the TF  
Chickenhawk Mural  
commemorating our time in the  
Middle East. The painting  
symbolizes the group of states  
brought together: IN, NE, OH,  
WI, to form the 1-137 AHB. The  
painting also depicts the  
company mascots all named  
after Looney Tunes characters  
following suit with TF  
Chickenhawk.  
(Photos by Chaplain (CPT)  
Jason Neslon)





# SOLDIER OF THE WEEK: SPC DESARAY LARSON



## 1. Where are you from?

Wisconsin, baby! GO PACK GO!

## 2. How long have you been in the military?

5 ½ of 6 years! I am done with my contract (ETS) on August 26, 2021!

## 3. Why did you join the Army National Guard?

To start my life off on the right foot with better opportunities. The benefits the military offers definitely helped me, such as free college!

## 4. What is your MOS (Military Occupational Specialty)?

92F, Petroleum Supply Specialist. Since I am with an aviation unit, I refuel helicopters.

## 7. What are your current Deployment must haves?

Crocs and coffee!

## 8. Favorite things to do off work?

Working out 7 days a week. Gainz for dayz!

## 9. Describe the best care package you've received so far.

My sister is my lifesaver. She sends me everything and anything I ask for, mainly snacks or workout clothes.

## 10. What do you miss the most about home?

Something I miss the most is MY FAMILY! However, I try to live in the moment here and know the memories I've made here are valuable and irreplaceable too.

## 5. What do you do on the civilian side?

In the civilian world, I am a police officer for the City of Milwaukee, WI. I am currently in school now though. Hopefully a degree will allow me to explore other career options.

## 6. What has been the best and worst part of deployment for you so far?

The worst part has been never feeling settled. I've had to constantly pack and unpack all the time. Another bad part has been the stress level at times, and the patience I've had to maintain when things get difficult. The best part of deployment is definitely the amazing people I have met, and I have also loved the travel opportunities. The fact that I am in the Middle East and can explore and see things I would never regularly see in the USA has been really rewarding.

## 11. What is one takeaway, or "lesson learned" on deployment?

Have an open mind at all times. Life can change instantly, therefore having an open mind keeps you from setting yourself up for failure.

## 12. Tell some fun facts about yourself!

I have a cat, I love exploring Milwaukee, and I love the Packers.



Interview by SPC  
Mikaela Bolker



# ROADRUNNER REVIEW

## Task Force Roadrunner Newsletter



### Aircraft Maintenance

B Co.'s aircraft maintenance section bring in 2021 at work. As they leave 2020 in the dust, they look forward to fresh strength in the new year. While maintaining a mission-first attitude they balance challenges of COVID-19 mitigation methods to remain operational and fully-staffed.

*(Photos and story by SGT Francis Calabro)*



### ACFT Training

Soldiers of A Co. and C Co. recently completed an Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) familiarization. Events include the deadlift, standing power throw, hand release push-up, sprint-drag-carry, leg tuck, and two mile run.

*(Photos by SPC Kayla Harley and SPC Jason Kopp)*



### *Happy Birthday This Coming Week To...*

PV1 Lara	SGT Nye
PV1 Raudenbush	SGT Peters, A
SPC Alwine	SGT Peters, N
SPC Cottingham	SGT Staerker
SPC Thompson,	SFC Roof
Maine	
SPC Trainor	

#### Roadrunner Review Staff

HSC- SPC Zachary Wynn, CPL Zach Mateja  
 A Co.- SPC Kayla Harley  
 B Co.- SPC Joyce Avila, SGT Francis Calabro  
 C Co.- SPC Jason Kopp

### Get To Know Your Soldiers...

Name/Rank: SGT Madison Straka

Hometown: Reading, PA

Age: 23

MOS: 89B

Civilian Occupation: Tech at UTES  
 (Unit Equipment Training Site)



Favorite Holiday Movie: Elf

Goal After Deployment: Go to nursing school



## Operation Roadrunner

Pine Grove Area School District held "Operation Roadrunner," collecting and donating essentials for our taskforce. Viktorya and Melissa Luckenbach packaged and shipped the items to us. Thank you for your support!

*(Photos and story sent by  
CW5 Thomas Luckenbach)*



PFC Szablewski (left) and SGT Long (right) of B Co. show that you can be safe and have fun too with their decorated helmets.

*(Photos by CPL Zach Mateja)*



Have a story, Soldier to highlight, cool photo, or something else for the newsletter? Reach out to your company level Roadrunner Review staff member or email [628thPublicAffairs@gmail.com](mailto:628thPublicAffairs@gmail.com)

## Additional Care Package Services

Below are just some of the many care package systems available to deployed soldiers with package descriptions and QR codes for the links to the websites to sign up.

### Operation Paperback:

-Books, dvds, and video games



### Operation Turbo:

-"Boxes of Home" (snacks and hygiene products)



### Operation Gratitude:

-Snacks, Hygiene Products, Entertainment, Handmade Items, & Letters of encouragement



\*Please note that with any of the "operation" care package systems they will more than likely continue sending items until you request them to stop. Please make sure that you cancel your subscription a month or two before demobing. Also be sure to only sign up for as many care packages a month as you can handle, they will add up quickly.