

The way forward



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan --Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, who deployed for the first time with 10th Mountain Division were presented the 10th Mountain Division patch to be worn on the right shoulder to signify their deployment to a combat zone at Bagram Airfield



Fly to Glory!



FALCON FLYER

**Ready to
*Fly to Glory!***



October / November 2010



Pfc Michael Syner

Senior leaders from 10th CAB stand with Col. Pedro Almeida and Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton for a group photo with a bear that was painted in honor of the brigade during the Afghanistan Aviation Training Exercise at Fort Rucker, Ala. in August.



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

Maj. Gen. James L. Terry, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and Fort Drum commander, prepares for his first flight in an AH-64 Apache helicopter at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield Sept. 21. Piloting the helicopter is Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steve Donahue, Taskforce Knighthawk master gunner and senior instructor pilot.



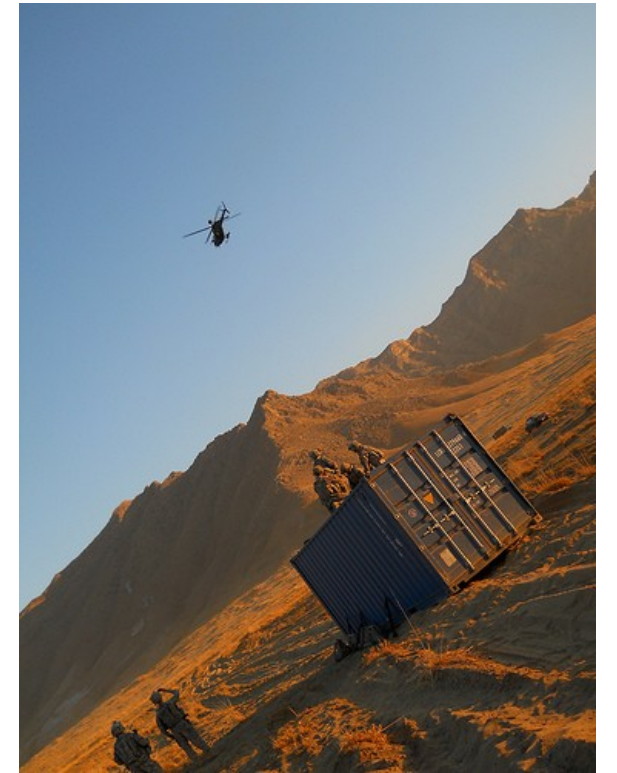
Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams

Members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th CAB smile as 1-year old Jonathan Cobbs stands in as the guidon bearer for a Family friendly formation at the brigade's Fall Festival Sept. 18 at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield.

October/November Manifest

- 4 - FROM FALCON 6
- 5 - FROM FALCON 7
- 6 - FIRST TO DEPLOY
MEDEVAC company cases colors in August
- 8 - FROM ONE FALCON TO ANOTHER
10th CAB assumes responsibility of aviation ops
- 10 - TF KNIGHTHAWK ASSUMES AUTHORITY
- 11 - TF SHOOTER TAKES ON AVIATION OPERATIONS
- 12 - TRADING PLACES
Brothers switch out same role during transfer of authority
- 13 - 10TH CAB AVIATORS BRING SUPPLIES TO AFGHAN SCHOOL
Outgoing chaplain team delivers donations
- 14 - 10TH CAB CELEBRATES THANKSGIVING
- 15 - THANKSGIVING AT FOB SALERNO AND FOB BOSTIC
- 16 - FACE OF DEFENSE
Wife, Mother serves for Family, Country
- 17 - EYE OF THE FALCON
- 18 - FAMILY FUN
Falcon brigade takes day to celebrate Family, friends
- 20 - KIDS TOWN HALL
10th CAB children learn about Afghanistan, discuss deployment
- 22 - REACHING NEW HEIGHTS
Brigade pilots train at Whiteface to prepare for Afghan operations
- 23 - SPOUSES SPUR RIDE
Task Force spouses earn spurs, experience day in the life of their Soldier

EYE OF THE FALCON



From top left,

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Soldiers from Task Force Mountain Eagle provide security as they off load a CH-47 Chinook during a Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) exercise Nov. 8. (Photo by TF Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade)

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Soldiers from Task Force Mountain Eagle look on as an OH-58D Kiowa provides security during a Downed Aircraft Recover Team (DART) exercise Nov. 8. (Photo by TF Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade)

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BOSTIC, Afghanistan -- With razor wire in the foreground, a river flows down the highlands in the distance, toward FOB Bostic. Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Justing Espada, TF Mountain Eagle

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- The village of Nari just before sunset on Nov. 13. (Photo by US Army Pfc. Justin Espada, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade)

Face of Defense:

Wife, Mother Serves for Family, Country

Story and Photos by Spc. Amanda Brown,
TF Phoenix, 10th CAB

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – When Army Sgt. Autumn Hughes re-enlisted at Bagram Airfield on Nov. 23, she renewed her commitment to the Army while remaining dedicated to her role as a wife and mother.

This was the second re-enlistment for the 25-year-old Keyser, W.Va., native, currently assigned to Task Force Phoenix with the 10th Mountain Division's 3rd Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade.

One of her re-enlistment options was a two-year stabilization at her home station, Fort Drum, N.Y.

"I re-enlisted for the stabilization and because I plan on staying in for 20 years," said Hughes, noncommissioned officer in charge of the Task Force Phoenix communications and information management shop. "I serve in the Army for the protection of my family and my country."

While this is her third deployment, it's the first time Hughes has been deployed with her husband, Army Sgt. Anthony Hughes Jr., a native of Syracuse, N.Y., who is a 10th Combat Aviation Brigade intelligence analyst in Task Force Falcon. He said deploying with his wife makes some things easier and that he is proud of her and her sense of duty.

"I am extremely proud of what my wife is doing for our country," he said. "She has decided to stay in the Army despite us having a child, and still wants to serve. I think that it takes a very dedicated person to do this when given the opportunity to get out because of us being [a] dual-military [couple]."

Hughes said she enjoys her job in the Army because it allows her the opportunity to meet and get to know a variety of people. As a signal support system specialist, she helps to set up the unit's computer systems. She runs cables, connects printers, manages share portals and sets up radio sets.

It is her responsibility to take care of most things that deal with communication.

With more than seven years in the Army, she said, she is familiar with facing challenges and learning to overcome them.

"I take challenges on with a positive attitude," she said. "If I don't know how to fix it, I ask questions. I'm never afraid to ask questions."

The couple's 11-month-old daughter, Summer, with is staying with Autumn's mother while the soldiers are deployed.

"This is the first time I've had to [leave my daughter], and I'm going to admit it is hard, but I know what I'm doing for our daughter and one day she will understand why I had to do it," Hughes said. "There are times that are harder than some, but I have to push those feelings onto the back burner and keep my head in the game — not only for myself, but for my soldiers."



PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Sgt. Autumn Hughes, a native of Keyser, W.Va., is reenlisted by U.S. Army Capt. Philip Haemmerlein, Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander, Task Force Phoenix, in front of a UH-60 Blackhawk Nov. 23 at Bagram Airfield. Sgt. Hughes is the TF Phoenix communications noncommissioned officer in charge.

FALCON FLYER

October/November 2010

Falcon Flyer is published in the interest of the servicemembers of the 10th Mountain Infantry (Li.) Division's Combat Aviation Brigade. The Falcon Flyer is an Army-funded newsletter authorized for members of the U.S. Army, under the provision of AR 360-1. Contents of the Falcon Flyer are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, or Department of the Army.

10th Mountain Division Commander
Maj. Gen. James Terry

10th CAB Commander
Col. Pedro Almeida

10th CAB Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton

10th CAB PAO
Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams

10th CAB PAO NCOIC
Staff Sergeant Todd Pouliot

Editor
Pfc. Michael Syner

CONTACT
481.6597
HQ CAB_PAOMail@afghan.swa.army.mil

TASK FORCE TIGERSHARK
FOB Salerno
Lt. Col. David Kramer
Command Sgt. Maj. Nicolas Carter

TASK FORCE KNIGHTHAWK
FOB Shank
Lt. Col. Lars Wendt
Command Sgt. Maj. Carlos Escalara

TASK FORCE PHOENIX
Bagram Airfield
Lt. Col. Dennis McKernan
Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Dvorsky

TASK FORCE SHOOTER
FOB Fenty
Lt. Col. Christopher Downey
Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick McGuire

TASK FORCE EAGLE
Bagram Airfield
Lt. Col. Albert Stiller
Command Sgt. Maj. Zacchaeus Hurst

COVER PHOTO

Col. Pedro G. Almeida, 10th CAB commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth E. Patton, 10th CAB command sergeant major, case the unit's colors in a deployment ceremony at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield Oct. 5. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot)



Spc. Amanda Brown

Sgt. Felix Cedano, D Company, TF Phoenix, shows Soldiers how to do proper teardown procedures on a CH-47 Chinook Oct 4. The aircraft were being prepared for shipment to Afghanistan for the unit's deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

FROM FALCON 6...

Col. Pedro Almeida
10th CAB Commander

Commanders, Leaders, Soldiers, Families and Friends of Task Force Falcon,

After a demanding year of preparation based at Fort Drum, NY, the Brigade Task Force is now focused on what the prep was all about: we've successfully deployed to Afghanistan and are ready to assume the Aviation mission in Regional Command-East.

The Transfer of Authority between the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade and the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade marks our official place in the future of a stable Afghanistan. We enter the fight at a pivotal point of a strategic surge of US troops into the country. Not only will our Task Force grow in strength as we take on additional forces and conduct full spectrum aviation operations throughout the command, we will provide capabilities to our coalition brothers-in-arms that no one else can deliver.

Our formations consist of the finest Soldiers in the Army. We will move out as a disciplined, dedicated, and aggressive Team to get the job done. Leaders and Soldiers will

continue their focus of balancing the mission with managing risk, always looking out for each other professionally and personally. Watching out for our fellow Soldiers will always be our creed: whether out on a mission or on our operating bases.

For our Families and Friends back home who stand behind us, offering support and sacrifices on a daily basis- we are tremendously grateful. Your support is crucial to everything we do and we rely on your encouragement and backing. Please maintain contact with your Soldier as often and as best you can and use your support networks to work through any issues that might come up, to include our Rear Detachments and Family Readiness Groups as required.

Finally, as we move ahead towards mission accomplishment, it's important to note that each member of the Falcon Brigade- Soldier, Family member, and civilian- is integral to that goal. We must work together and rely on each other as part of one Team to achieve each milestone in the year ahead. This way, we will get the job done and remain as safe as possible while doing so.

Fly to Glory!
COL Pedro Almeida
Task Force Falcon Commander



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

Col. Pedro G. Almeida, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade commander, flies to Forward Operating Base Shank for a battlefield circulation visit. The 10th CAB command team periodically fly to outlying bases to visit with subordinate commanders and Soldiers to ensure operations are conducted effec-

Thanksgiving At FOB Salerno and FOB Bostic



1st Lt. Jennifer Bales, Task Force Tigershark

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan -- First Sergeant Charles Wagenbrenner of Delta Company, Task Force Tigershark, serves meals to Soldiers on Thanksgiving Day.



1st Lt. Jennifer Bales, Task Force Tigershark

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan -- Task Force Tigershark Command Sgt. Maj. Nick Carter, TF Tigershark Executive Officer Maj. Ryan Miedema, and B Company, TF Tiger-shark, 1st Sgt. Timothy Tarras, serve Thanksgiving meals at the dining facility here.



1st Lt. Jennifer Bales, Task Force Knighthawk

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan -- Task Force Tigershark Commander Lt. Col. David Kramer and Command Sgt. Maj. Nick Carter pose with the commanders and first sergeants of TF Tigershark alongside Tom the Turkey on Thanksgiving Day.



Pfc. Justin Espada, Task Force Mountain Eagle

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BOSTIC, Afghanistan -- Soldiers enjoy Thanksgiving meals Nov. 25 at FOB Bostic.



Pfc. Justin Espada, Task Force Mountain Eagle

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BOSTIC, Afghanistan -- Soldiers are served Thanksgiving meals Nov. 25 at FOB Bostic.

10th CAB Soldiers celebrate Thanksgiving

Story by Pfc. Michael Syner, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Being separated by thousands of miles did not stop Task Force Falcon Soldiers from enjoying an American tradition; a Thanksgiving feast Nov. 25.

The Aviation Dining Facility, which is run by the Soldiers of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, served a wide assortment of traditional Thanksgiving courses here, including roast beef, baked turkey, stuffing, and mashed potatoes.

"It was really good," said Spc. Ricaud Brown, a personnel clerk with the brigade and native of Montego Bay, Jamaica. "It's nice to get a meal like that while deployed, to get a small taste of life back in the States."

The people behind serving bar are quite pleased with the menu, having started preparations for the holiday weeks earlier.

"We started prepping for Thanksgiving early," said Pfc. Curtis Palmer, a food service specialist with Task Force Eagle and native of Brooklyn. "We have to order the meat and other food, and make sure that we have everything ready."

The night prior to Thanksgiving saw the cooks defrosting turkeys and preparing the side dishes.

The crew working the dining facility also extended the serving hours so more people could get a taste of home.

"It's nice to be able to be a part of giving a good day to Soldiers while we're in Afghanistan," Palmer said.



Pfc. Michael Syner



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams

Top: Spc. Luis Gonzalez of Manati, Puerto Rico stuffs a turkey with freshly prepared dressing. Soldiers of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade dining facility began preparing the Thanksgiving meal the evening before, Nov. 24 at Bagram Airfield.

Middle: Task Force Falcon commander, Col. Pedro Almeida, of New Bedford, Mass., and TF Falcon command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, of Waynesburg, Pa., serve Thanksgiving meals to Soldiers Nov. 25 at the Aviation Dining Facility on Bagram Airfield.

Bottom: Soldiers were served traditional Thanksgiving meals at the Aviation Dining Facility on Bagram Airfield Nov. 25. Aviation DFAC Soldiers prepared for nearly week for the event.

FROM FALCON 7...

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton
10th CAB Command Sergeant Major

Soldiers of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade; we have arrived. We are here to provide aviation support for all of Regional Command-East, whether it is a logistical move, a medical evacuation, or fire support. While our role here is to help the Soldiers around us, do not forget to take care of yourselves. This deployment is one of the best opportunities you will ever have to set and accomplish personal goals.

We must be mission oriented and focused on succeeding. Set personal goals that enhance our mission, while simultaneously improving yourself. I urge you to set goals for yourself and figure out a plan to reach those goals. Hit the gym more often, plan out your finances to make your increased pay go the distance, work on your civilian education so that you can be a

more well-rounded person, or give up smoking! Focus on improving yourself while performing the mission.

While you work to improve yourself, also remember your loved ones back home. Just because you are separated physically does not mean that you have to separate yourself emotionally. Call them, write them, let them know that you're alive and well, that you've packed on muscle, or that you're only two credits away from earning your bachelor's degree. Your families and friends keep you strong, and sacrifice as much as you do while deployed.

Every one of you is critical to our mission success. While we must work together as a team to succeed during Operation Enduring Freedom, you must also work on yourself to succeed at life. Please, do not squander this opportunity.

Fly to Glory!
Falcon 7



Pfc Michael Syner

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade command sergeant major, serves Thanksgiving dinner to a Soldier Nov. 25 at the Aviation Dining Facility at Bagram Airfield.



First Sgt. Brian Peplinski and Maj. Michael McFadden case the colors of their unit, C Co., 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, as a part of their deployment ceremony held at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield Aug. 5. The company, a Medical Evacuation unit, was the first unit from the 10th CAB to leave for the latest deployment to Afghanistan.

FIRST TO DEPLOY

MEDEVAC company cases colors in August

Story and Photos by Pfc. Michael Syner

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – Soldiers of C Company, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, held their deployment ceremony at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield here 5 August. The unit is slated to deploy this month in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The company will be responsible for providing medical evacuation to wounded Soldiers while in Afghanistan, and it is a task they have plenty of experience with.

“These Soldiers are some of the most dedicated and professional Soldiers in this Army,” Maj. Michael McFadden, the company commander, said. “During the train-up, we flew over 1,400 hours...trained and ualified over 100 crewmembers with the combat rescue hoist, and conducted three separate medical rotations in Bronx, N.Y.”

10th CAB aviators bring school supplies to Afghan school

Outgoing Chaplain team delivers donations

Story and Photos by Pfc. Michael Syner

BAMYAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Soldiers of 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, of Task Force Falcon, Combined Joint Task Force-101st, helped in delivering over 3,500 pounds of donated school supplies to students here Nov. 9. The supplies included pens, paper, backpacks, notebooks, and markers.

The donations are overseen by the TF Falcon chaplaincy.

“We’ve been doing this for a while,” said Army Capt. Christopher Campbell, the chaplain for 2nd Brigade, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, and native of Madisonville, Tenn. “There’s a bunch of people in Kansas that round up supplies, then send it to me to help them get the supplies to the Afghans.”

Even though the 3rd CAB redeploys back to its home base of Hunter Army Airfield soon, the donation delivery missions will continue through 10th CAB chaplains.

“It was a great experience,” said Army Capt. Robert S. Hearon, the chaplain for 3rd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th CAB, and native of Greenville, S.C. Hearon accompanied Campbell on this mission, and will be organizing future deliveries.

The supplies were moved from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, to Kiwi Base in Bamyan, where the New Zealand Provincial Reconstruction Team Bamyan operates out of. The NZPRT aids in teaching local children and adults English and math.

Maj. Ra Koia, a chaplain with the NZPRT, teaches many classes for the locals in the area.

“They really needed these supplies,” Koia said. “Most come from poor families and simply don’t have paper and pens. These donations are pretty regular, and are really helping out.”

While the donations will be given to students throughout the ion, the Soldiers involved with the delivery were given the opportunity to hand the supplies directly to students at the Kiwi Camp’s school.

“It was incredible to see them open the bookbags,” Hearon said. “They really lit up, and it’s pretty obvious we had a good impact here.”

The supplies were gathered and packed by Help Us Learn, Give Us Hope, a not-for-profit organization that aids schools and students in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa by donating school supplies.



Students of the New Zealand's Provincial Reconstruction Team Bamyan's english language school receive backpacks filled with school supplies.



A forklift removes the first of several pallets of school supplies donated to students in Bamyan province Nov. 9

Trading places

Brothers switch out same role during transfer of authority

Story by Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade PAO

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The tactical operations center of any unit requires continuous observation, coordination and management. Each subsection within the TOC monitors an element of the mission, providing information to the Soldiers in the field while keeping the TOC updated on progress.

In the midst of the activity is one person who maintains line-of-sight communications for each section, provides the overall battle picture for the team, and offers input on the fluid tempo of operations. This person is known as the battle captain.

Transferring responsibility of the battle from one Soldier to another is no simple matter. The battle captain must have the ability to maneuver easily between sections, communicate effectively, synchronize efforts on a variety of fronts and essentially be the right-hand man for the operations officer. The intricacies and nuances of such a job aren't always easy to explain to another person; unless, of course, you're passing the mis-

sion to your brother.

"It's a little more familiar getting information from someone you know really well rather than a stranger," said U.S. Army Capt. Paul J. Milas, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade battle captain. "Plus, you know a [family member] wants to set you up for success so they spend more time with you before leaving."

Paul Milas is literally trading places with his brother, U.S. Army Capt. Michael J. Milas, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade battle captain. The brothers, natives of Hawthorne Woods, Ill., have spent the last few weeks going over the roles and responsibilities of the job.

"I feel like I have a greater responsibility to set my brother up for success, to ensure he knows and understands the operations taking place in our area of responsibility," explained Michael Milas. "If I leave anything out, there could be massive repercussions."

"Yeah, mom won't like it," Paul chimed in, and the two brothers laughed.

Michael finally conceded that, as the older brother



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

Following the transfer of authority ceremony from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade to the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Capts. Michael J. Milas, 3rd CAB, Neroliza Miles, 3rd CAB from Orlando, Fla., and Paul J. Milas, 10th CAB pose for a picture Nov. 10. The brothers, from Hawthorne Woods, Ill., literally traded places as the tactical operations center battle captain. Capts. Michael Milas and Neroliza are married to each other.

by two and a half years, avoiding their mother's disapproval is another motivation to do a good job with the handover. "She definitely wouldn't like that."

The Milas family is no stranger to military service. Their father served in the Army as an infantry officer for 12 years and completed his own combat tour in Vietnam from 1970 to 1971. Both grandfathers also served in the Lithuanian army; one served during World War I and one between the two great wars. And while both brothers spent the last few years in the Army as pilots, Michael flies the AH-64 Apache and Paul flies the OH-58 Kiowa helicopter, this deployment is a little different for their family.

"Usually when one of us is gone, one is home," said Michael. "Now, all three of us are gone and that triples the anxiety, the nerves, and the

emotions."

Michael said three because his wife, U.S. Army Capt. Neroliza Milas, originally from Orlando, Fla., is deployed to nearby Jalalabad.

Neroliza is the company commander of Echo Troop, 317 Cavalry, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade.

Once the transfer of authority between the 3rd CAB and 10th CAB is complete, Michael and Neroliza return to home station at Savannah, Ga., while Paul remains in Bagram for the next year to continue the mission of the battle captain. For now, the brothers are enjoying the time together.

"This is the most time we've spent together in the last eight years," said Paul. "It's been great just to spend the last few weeks doing the left seat, right seat (relief in place)."

During their previous deployment to Iraq, the company flew over 350 evacuation missions, transporting over 450 patients. They returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom in October of last year.

"We all know it has been an extraordinarily short time since our brigade has departed the Iraqi theater of operations," said Col. Pedro G. Almeida, the brigade commander. "The pace has been breathtaking as we prepared for operations in Afghanistan. We all recognize that the impact upon Soldiers and families has been significant, especially for those individual Soldiers returning to combat operations after redeploying from Iraq with this brigade. You [the families,] deserve tremendous recognition for supporting your Soldier as he or she executes this crucial mission."



Maj. Michael McFadden, the commander of C Company, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, speaks at the unit's deployment ceremony held at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield Aug. 5. The unit, a medical evacuation company, is the first unit from the 10th CAB to deploy in support of Operation Enduring Freedom this year.

"We all know it has been an extraordinarily short time since our brigade has departed the Iraqi theater of operations," said Col. Pedro G. Almeida, the brigade commander. "The pace has been breathtaking as we prepared for operations in Afghanistan."

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Brigade pilots train at Whiteface to prepare for Afghan operations

Story and photos by Pfc. Michael Syner
10th Combat Aviation Brigade

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – Afghanistan features high, rugged mountains and elevations of up to 6,000 feet, a very important fact to consider for pilots in preparation for upcoming deployments.

In preparation for its deployment to Afghanistan, the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, conducted high altitude training in May at Whiteface Mountain, which boasts an elevation of roughly 5,000 feet.

The mountains of Afghanistan are higher than these," said Col. Jim Baker, former deputy commander of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, said, "but this training gives pilots an appreciation of how wind affects the aircraft and how mountain terrain appears."

The training allows pilots to experience for themselves the difference in flying at high altitudes, like what they will encounter in Afghanistan.

"Whiteface Mountain is the closest we can get to Afghanistan terrain with one day of travel," said Col. Baker.

One of the challenges with the training exercise is the fact that Whiteface is host to a variety of both public and private areas.

"We will be 'flying friendly,'" said Col. Baker, "Environmental concerns have been addressed, and we will be avoiding densely populated areas."

Roughly 20 flights per week were planned, with over 100 pilots getting the opportunity to fly to Whiteface, which is about a 50 minute one-way flight. Once there, crews performed different maneuvers that would also be performed while deployed, such as quickly landing long enough to load/off-load, then resuming flight.



A UH-60 Blackhawk approaches Whiteface Mountain during a training exercise held to prepare the pilots of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade for their deployment to Afghanistan. Roughly 100 pilots flew to Whiteface in May to familiarize themselves with flying in high altitudes.



A UH-60 Blackhawk lands at a rest area on Whiteface Mountain during a training exercise intended to familiarize 10th Combat Aviation Pilots with high altitude flying. About 20 flights a week were taken to Whiteface in May, as part of the brigade's preparation for its deployment to Afghanistan.

The biggest draw of Whiteface is its increased elevation compared to the Fort Drum area.

"I'm really looking forward to this because it's very similar to Afghanistan," said Cpt. Sean Gaul, a UH-60 Blackhawk pilot with 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th CAB. "I haven't done a lot of mountain flying, it'll be good training."

One of the big differences to factor in, said Gaul, is the wind. The winds will be much stronger at the height we'll be flying at.

TF Shooter takes on aviation operations

Story and Photo by Spc.
Kam Gerohimos

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry Aviation Regiment, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, now known as Task Force Shooter, officially replaced 3rd Squadron, 17th Cav. Avn. Regt., 3rd CAB, designated TF Lighthorse, in a Transfer of Authority ceremony here Nov. 18.

TF Lighthorse formed as a multi-functional aviation task force and deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom X in November 2009. While stationed in the eastern city of Jalalabad, TF Lighthorse served as the direct support aviation task force for TF Mountain Warrior and TF Bastogne in the Nagarhar,

Nuristan, Kunar, and Laghman (N2KL) regions of eastern Afghanistan under the Regional Command - East HQ of Combined Joint Task Force (CTJF) 82nd and CTFJ-101st.

"We follow in the footsteps of 2-17, 7-17, and now 3-17 Cavalry," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, of Philadelphia, commander of TF Shooter, in his speech during the ceremony. "The colors, the leaders and the Cavalry troopers are transitioning today – but this is the only thing that will change with our mission assumption as the fourth US Cavalry Squadron to serve here at Jalalabad. Aggressive, competent, and responsive Army Aviation throughout this battle space will remain constant."

The 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry Aviation Regiment, reactivated on July 6, 1990, has

greatly contributed aviation support in combat from Operations Desert Shield and Storm to Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. In addition, the squadron has been called upon to assist during Operation Joint Endeavor, Joint Guard, and Joint Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo. Upon redeployment from OIF 09-11, 6-6 Cav. Regt., known for its aerial reconnaissance capabilities of the OH-58D

Kiowa Warrior, became a multi-functional aviation Task Force in March 2010. This includes all four Army aircraft that include AH64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters, UH-60 Black Hawk utility and medical evacuation helicopters, and CH-47 Chinook cargo helicopters. With their multiple aerial capabilities, TF Shooter will be able

to support ground elements along with coalition forces in the sustainment of counter insurgency in the areas of operation surrounding the city of Jalalabad, Afghanistan, and the N2KL. The squadron conducted collective training and aerial gunnery in Fort Drum, N.Y., Whiteface Mountain, N.Y., Fort Carson, Colo., and Fort Rucker, Ala., in preparation for their 12-month deployment to Afghanistan.

Incoming task force commander, Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, recognized the actions of the leaders and Soldiers of TF Lighthorse.

"Stand tall and be proud," said Downey. "You truly set the bar high. You are truly a professional organization who sustained the energy to ensure that the Six Shooters were trained and ready."

"Today the history chapter closes for Lighthorse and opens for the Six Shooters," said Lt.Col. Downey.

"We have already executed over 2,000 flight hours of responsive, relevant and integrated aviation support throughout Area of Operations Bastogne," he said, directing his speech toward TF Bastogne, the ground task force in the area. "To our infantry brothers, you pick the fight and we go your back!"



NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – The cased guidon of Task Force Shooter, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, moves toward the space left by the newly cased guidon of TF Lighthorse, 3rd CAB, at a transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Fenty Nov. 18. Soon

TF Knighthawk assumes authority

Story and Photo by 1st Lt. Kaylee Laakso

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan—TF Knighthawk, 10th CAB, Ft. Drum, NY, assumed responsibility for operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom on Nov. 15 after its transfer of authority from TF Brawler, 3rd CAB. The ceremony also formally ended the highly successful efforts of TF Brawler over the past year within Logar and Wardak Provinces in Eastern Afghanistan.

TF Knighthawk commander Lt. Col. Lars Wendt, Watertown, NY, praised TF

Brawler for all of their successes over the past year.

Wendt stated that “this area is a different place because of their efforts...it is different because they have truly changed the lives of the Afghan people, said Wendt. “TF Brawler played an integral part by assisting and laying the groundwork for a transition of authority to the Afghan government.”

TF Brawler laid the groundwork for continued success in this portion of RC-East. TF Knighthawk intends to expand on the accomplishments of their predecessor over the next year. Knighthawk Soldiers look forward to

overcoming the challenges that lie ahead with confidence in their training, abilities and dedication to the mission.

As TF Knighthawk Soldiers and aircrews stood proud and ready to take over the mission, Wendt spoke of the endless hours of training completed over the past year in between combat deployments in preparation for this demanding mission.

“This meant not only sacrifice on their part, but that of their families, as well,” he said. “They did this without hesitation and truly demonstrated their resolve and their desire to be the absolute best the Army has to offer. They

are the finest our country has to give, making our nation safe while fighting terrorism and helping the citizens of Afghanistan to be free and safe in their own country.”

TF Knighthawk will continue the ongoing aviation mission to provide support for coalition forces and the people of Afghanistan. TF Knighthawk looks to create an environment that protects the populace, allows for expanded commerce in the region, and enables the future transition of responsibility to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Task Force Knighthawk, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, command sergeant major Carlos Escalera, Mesa, Ariz., and TF Knighthawk, 10th CAB, commander Lars Wendt, Watertown, N.Y., uncased the task force guidon during a transfer of authority ceremony Nov. 15 at Forward Operating Base Shank.

Spouses Spur Ride

TF Shooter spouses earn spurs, experience day in the life of their Soldier

Story and Photos by Spec. Kam Gerohimos, TF Shooter

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – “With saber in hand and having displayed those traits associated with all accomplished Cavalry Troopers... is hereby entered onto the rolls of the prepared and loyal Honorary Spur Holder...” These are some of the words printed on the Honorary Order of the Spur Certificate awarded to spouses of Task Force Shooter Soldiers who completed the Spouses’ Spur Ride on Oct. 1, 2010.

Approximately 75 Soldiers from TF Shooter completed the spur ride as part of the time honored tradition to become part of the Order of the Spur Sept. 29. This tradition was extended to 35 spouses of Cavalry Soldiers.

“The purpose was a means to build unit cohesion in preparation of the unit’s year long deployment to Afghanistan,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, commander of TF Shooter. “It’s very important to us that we have strong relationships on the home front.”

The tradition of having to “earn your spurs” reaches back to the beginning of the Cavalry when green troopers arrived to their new cavalry units and were assigned a horse with a shaved tail leading to the nickname “Shave Tail” for newly assigned spur-less soldiers. These troopers were in need of training in the area of swordsmanship atop of a horse and the horse with the shaved tail was given extra room to operate since the rider was marked as an amateur. During this phase, troopers were not allowed to wear spurs because it would only compound their problems and were awarded spurs when they were able to prove their ability to perform with their horse and saber.

The spouses’ spur ride kicked off with the spouses, all women, outside the squadron headquarters at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield with Capt. Thomas Jones giving a boisterous orientation. He instructed the spouses to complete five push-ups and run to Sgt. 1st Class Vazquez to be briefed for their first event – physical competition where the ladies filled up buckets of water and transported a stretcher.

Throughout the day, the spur candidates completed a series of events in order to get a better feel of what their husbands do on a day-to-day basis. One such event included shooting simulated weapons at the Engagement Skills Trainer here. At the EST, they shot simulated M16A2 rifles and the M9 pistol in training events to become more familiar with the weapons their spouses will be carrying upon deployment.

The spouses went on to flight simulators, most choosing the ones their husbands fly, to get an appreciation of the aircraft their spouses will pilot while deployed. Cavalry aviators generally fly OH-58 Kiowa’s, which have direct-fire capabilities; but, as a multi-functional task force, the unit now flies every type of helicopter the Army has, to include UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopter, the AH-64 Apache Longbow attack helicopter, and the CH-47 heavy lift helicopter in order to better support the fight in Afghanistan.

The final event included a “murder board” in which the spouses were tested on their knowledge of cavalry tradition and unit history as well as physical challenges. One such question, given by the headquarters troop commander Capt. Thomas Kavanaugh, was “What do all the Army aircraft have in common?” One spouse stepped up to answer with, “They can all fly?” The answer was partially correct but the correct answer was given by Sonia Patton, wife of 10th CAB Brigade Command Sgt.Maj. Kenneth Patton, which was, “they all include names of Indian tribes.”

“The Spouse’s Spur Ride was integral to the team building of the Task Force and it allowed spouses an opportunity to see what their soldiers do on a daily basis while simultaneously establishing relationships to lean on for the deployment,” said Capt Benjamin Jackson, the Spouse Spur Ride coordinator.

Upon completion of the spur ride, the spouses were awarded Honorary Order of the Spur certificates, spur key chains and a spur necklace instead of actual spurs, according to Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, TF Shooter commander. He said he felt that it was important that Cavalry spouses build a relationship with each other in order to have a strong bond for the hardships of being away from their spouses for the upcoming deployment.

From left to right: 1. Spouses from Task Force Shooter receive training on firing the M9 pistol at the Fort Drum Engagement Skills Trainer Oct. 1. The event was one of several during a day in which spouses got to experience the activities that their husbands do on a regular basis. 2. Spouses of TF Shooter line up for instructions at the cavalry unit’s spouses spur ride Oct. 1 at the 6th Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment headquarters. Spouses completed several tasks which gave them an idea of what their Soldiers do on a regular basis.





Pfc. Michael Syner

Soldiers and family members of the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade gather Saturday at the Rapid Deployment Facility here to participate in a brigade-wide organizational day. Events held include various competitions between units, bouncy castles,

FAMILY FUN

Falcon Brigade takes day to celebrate Family, friends

Story by Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams, 10th CAB PAO



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams

Family members were given the opportunity to explore an UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade's organizational day held at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield Sept. 18.



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams

Bianca Hart, 2, demonstrates the joy of a bounce house to her mother during the 10th CAB's Fall Festival. On September 18th, the 10th CAB held Fall Festival as a way to spend time with family and friends before the Soldiers' upcoming to deployment to Afghanistan.



1st Lt. Jennifer Bales

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan -- Lt. Col. David Kramer, Task Force Tigershark Commander, and Task Force Tigershark Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Nick Carter salute just prior to uncasing the Task Force Colors at the Transfer of Authority ceremony on 10 Nov.



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SHANK, Afghanistan -- Lt. Col. Lars Wendt, 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Knighthawk, and Command Sgt. Maj. Carlos Escalera, 2-10 Aviation Regiment, 10th CAB, TF Knighthawk command sergeant major, uncased the task force guidon in a transfer of authority ceremony here Nov. 15.



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- From the left, Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Dvorsky, of Trumbull, Conn., TF Phoenix command sergeant major; and Lt. Col. Dennis McKernan, of Haddon Township, N.J., TF Phoenix, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, commander, uncased their task force guidon during a transfer of authority ceremony at Bagram Air Field Nov. 20.



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

NANGARHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- Lt. Col. Christopher Downey, of Philadelphia, TF Shooter commander; and Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick McGuire, of Rockford, Ill., TF Shooter command sergeant major, uncased the task force guidon during a transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Fenty Nov. 18.



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Lt. Col. Albert Stiller, Task Force Mountain Eagle, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Zacchaeus Hurst, TF Mountain Eagle command sergeant major, uncased the 277th Aviation Support Brigade guidon in a transfer of authority ceremony here Nov. 14.

Task Forces assume authority



Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot

Representatives from 10th Combat Aviation Brigade and 3rd CAB, both known as TF Falcon, participate in a transfer of authority ceremony at Bagram Airfield Nov. 10. During the ceremony, 10th CAB officially assumed responsibility for aviation operations for Regional Command—East, Afghanistan, replacing 3rd CAB.

From one Falcon to another

10th CAB assumes responsibility of aviation ops

By Staff Sgt. Todd Pouliot
10th Combat Aviation Brigade

After several weeks of gradually taking over aviation missions in Regional Command – East, the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, Task Force Falcon, officially replaced the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, also known as TF Falcon, in a transfer of authority ceremony Nov. 10 at the Combined Joint Task Force - 101 Headquarters here.

The 3rd CAB deployed to RC-East in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in November 2009. During their 12-month deployment, the 3rd CAB provided direct and general support aviation operations to RC-East and RC-Capital. They also provided humanitarian assistance to Afghan and Pakistani citizens affected by an avalanche an earthquake and devastating floods. Following the ceremony, the brigade's soldiers left to their home station of Hunter Army Air Field, Ga.

“It has been an honor to command TF Falcon in combat,” said U.S. Army Col. Donald Galli, 3rd CAB commander, a native of Havertown, Pa. “I am even more honored to have served with each and every one of the Dog Face soldiers of TF Falcon - from Falcon 7 and my battalion command teams to my aircrews; from my staff to the soldiers turning a

wrench, fueling an aircraft or serving a meal. I have been humbled by my soldiers’ tireless efforts and selfless service to our nation. They have proven to be the finest of Americans, the toughest of warriors and true American patriots. I thank them all for their service.”

The 10th CAB, constituted Aug. 21, 1965, has contributed significantly in combat from Vietnam, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. In addition, the brigade has been called upon to serve during Hurricane Andrew in Florida, in Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia. To prepare for this 12-month deployment, soldiers of 10th CAB trained in Fort Carson, Colo., Whiteface, N.Y., and Fort Rucker, Ala.

“For the soldiers of the 10th CAB, now TF Falcon; you have an enormous challenge facing you,” said U.S. Army Col. Pedro Almeida, 10th CAB commander, a native of New Bedford, Mass. “You have trained hard to be here, and you have done it exceptionally well. You will face difficulties and challenges you have never confronted before, and you will prevail. I am honored and privileged to be in the same formation with you and I have the utmost confidence in your ability to get the mission done.”

It’s no secret that the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade moves to a high operations tempo. After all, the Falcon Brigade returned from a deployment to Iraq in October 2009. Yet, despite the fast pace of preparing for another rotation, the brigade made a point to acknowledge those who share the sacrifices and successes of the organization.

On Sept. 18, Soldiers from 10th CAB invited their Families, friends and even a few pets to Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield for Fall Festival, a brigadewide organizational day.

“This (Fall Festival) is about Family and friends. This is why we’re here,” said Col. Pedro Almeida, 10th CAB commander. “This organization, these task forces and companies – we are trained and we are ready for our deployment. You have *all* worked very hard to get to this point. So today, we’re going to have some fun together before we head out.”

The day featured a variety of events and activities for nearly every interest. From a 5K fun run, to sumo wrestling; bounce houses to tug-of-war; a chili cook-off to a petting zoo.

“Our goal with the Fall Festival was to provide 10th CAB Soldiers and their Families a send-off event to recognize all of the hard work they put in to prepare the unit for deployment,” explained Capt. Christian Kennerly, 10th CAB rear-detachment executive officer. “We wanted everyone in the 10th CAB Family to know that this was a day exclu-

sively for them.”

In addition to the fun activities, the Rear-D staff also set them up as inter-task force competitions with a final objective: win the Commander’s Cup.

“We assigned point values of 10, 20 and 30 points for third, second and first place in most events. Certain events, like coloring, required subjective voting, but they were also given point values for first, second and third place,” Kennerly said.

At the end of the day, TF Tigershark and TF Knighthawk shared the top score. To break the tie, Almeida announced the cup would go to the TF commander who reached the top of the climbing tower first.

Soldiers and Families crowded around the climbing tower, screaming cheers and encouragement to the commanders as they suited up in safety gear. Once the command “go” was given, both men jumped on to the tower and quickly made their way skyward. But it didn’t take much longer for Lt. Col. Lars Wendt, TF Knighthawk commander, to ring the buzzer, signaling his triumph to the crowd below.

Once the TF commanders made it back down the tower, Almeida awarded the Commander’s Cup to TF Knighthawk and thanked all of the brigade Soldiers and Families for the fun and eventful day.



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams

10th Combat Aviation Brigade Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Patton, emerges from the water following his first official soak at the Dunking Booth during the 10th CAB’s Fall Festival. Soldiers and Family members spent the day at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield Sept. 18 to share some fun times together before the CAB deploys.



Sgt. 1st Class JR Williams

Members of Task Force Shooter lean back in an effort to pull their opponents during a Tug-of-War match during the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade’s Fall Festival. The Tug-of-War competition was one of many events during the 10th CAB’s Fall Festival, which brought Soldiers, Families and friends together for a day of fun before the Soldiers’ deployment to Afghanistan.



KIDS TOWN HALL

10TH CAB children learn about Afghanistan, discuss deployment

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Todd L. Pouliot, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade

The children's shyness quickly disappeared as the moderator asked them what they knew about Afghanistan. Eager hands rose around the room as the children waited to join the discussion.

Despite knowing that a family member was about to deploy, smiles and laughter were evident while the children learned more about their parents' upcoming deployment to Afghanistan.

The 10th Combat Aviation Brigade held a Kids Town Hall Meeting at the multi-purpose auditorium here Sept. 27. Tom Wojcikowski, 4H military clubs coordinator for New York State, began by discussing the geography and culture of Afghanistan.

"Can anyone tell me where Afghanistan is?" he asked.

A hand quickly went up. "On the other side of the world," a young boy responded.

Wojcikowski lauded the boy's correct response and explained that Afghanistan is in Asia and is about the size of Texas.

Most Afghan children do not have television, computers, and game consoles, he said. Although many people live without the comforts we have here, the situation in Afghanistan is improving.

"When the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, few children went to school," he said. "Girls were not allowed to go to school. More children are going to school now and by 2015, it's expected that 13 million children will be in school."

After Wojcikowski finished his discussion, Col. Pedro G. Almeida, 10th CAB commander, directed the children to come forward and fill in the front rows. Col. Almeida, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth E. Patton, and several task force commanders each took a seat at the edge of the stage in front of the children and began addressing questions that were submitted prior to the meeting.

"The goal of the Kids' Town Hall was to allow children to ask the commanders and command sergeants major - their moms' and dads' bosses - questions that might be worrying them," said Michelle Kennedy, Task Force Eagle Family Readiness Support Assistant. "Things that might concern a spouse, such as finances and legal, don't concern children. From what we saw at the town hall, children wanted to know if their parents could get ice cream, how often they'll get to communicate with their parents, and if they can watch the same football games they (the kids) are watching at home."



At the conclusion of the Town Hall Meeting, when a group photo was announced, the children jostled to position themselves next to the 10th CAB leaders.

"The kids really seemed to enjoy spending time with the commanders and sergeant major," said Elizabeth Jara Valencia, who brought her son to the Town Hall Meeting. "I think this will really help ease the kids' anxieties over the deployment."

On their way out, each child received a "With You All the Way Deployment Kit", which were donated by the USO and contained resources to help and comfort military children and their families.

"The concept of a kids town hall came up at a weekly 10th CAB FRSA huddle, said Kennedy. "We were planning our pre-deployment preparation training and it was brought up that we should do something for the children as well as the spouses. A lot of time and effort goes into training the Soldiers for deployment, but it's important to prepare the whole Family."

The 10th CAB FRSA, the Fort Drum USO, and 4H Military Clubs, are just a few of the many organizations available to assist families cope with deployments.

"If you could send one thing to your parent while they are deployed, what would it be?" asked Col. Almeida.

Nearly every child's hand went up. The first two responses:

A plane ticket so he can come home and visit. A certificate to give my mom a vacation from Afghanistan.

While these kids face being without a parent and, in some cases, both parents, for many months, the Town Hall Meeting gave them a chance to spend some time with kids who are going through similar experiences, as well as with the leaders of their parents' organizations. And from the many smiles and laughter, perhaps the anxiety has been eased just a bit.



Photos from top: 1. Children of 10th CAB participated in a Kids Town Hall Meeting where they learned about Afghan geography and culture, and participated in a question and answer session with the 10th CAB commander, command sergeant major, and task force commanders. 2. Col. Pedro G. Almeida, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade commander, discusses the upcoming deployment to Afghanistan with children of the 10th CAB. 3. Children of the 10th CAB participated in a Kids Town Hall Meeting where they learned about Afghan geography and culture, and participated in a question and answer session with the 10th CAB commander, command sergeant major, and task force commanders.

Photos from top: 1 and 2. Col. Pedro G. Almeida, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade commander, visits with children of the 10th CAB after the Kids Town Hall Meeting. 3. Command Sgt.

Maj. Kenneth E. Patton, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade command sergeant major, discusses the upcoming deployment to Afghanistan with children of the 10th CAB.