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Paid Advertisement. Two MH-47E Chinook helicopters from the 160th Special Operations Regiment in Fort Campbell, Ky., survey the Iraqi landscape during a recent mission. The unit, also known as the "Night Stalkers," uses its Chinook fleet primarily for the covert infiltration and exfiltration of special operations forces. *Caption provided by advertiser.*

briefings

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld announced March 3 that President George W. Bush has nominated Marine Corps **Brig. Gen. Samuel T. Helland** for appointment to the rank of major general. Helland is currently assistant deputy commandant, aviation, at Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

CAE has received a subcontract from Northrop Grumman Corporation valued at $8.5 million to upgrade two Army AH-64A Apache combat mission simulators (CMSs). This will mark the fifth and sixth AH-64A Apache CMSs to be upgraded by the CAE-Northrop Grumman team. Both new systems will be ready for training in 2005. The CMSs will be fitted with the CAE Medallion-STM visual system and new instructor operator stations, as well as upgrades to other systems. One of the CMSs to be upgraded is at Fort Rucker, Ala., while the other is at Fort Bragg, N.C. The contract option, awarded to Northrop Grumman's Mission Systems sector by the U.S. Army Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training and Instrumentation, was exercised ahead of schedule to accelerate the ready-for-training date of the simulators.

GE Aircraft Engines has received the Army's 2003 Aviation Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by a Major Contractor. GE was cited for its decision to produce spare parts for the T700 engine in advance of Army requirements, and for its extensive support for Corpus Christi Army Depot, Texas.

ARINC Inc. captured a major share of the world market in aviation-oriented satellite communications technology in 2003, company officials announced. The firm carries the majority of the world's air operational messages over its global networks of VHF, HFDL and INMARSAT satellite stations. The total number of aircraft using ARINC's satellite services grew almost 20 percent in 2003.

Armor Holdings' Aerospace & Defense Group is now the industry's leading provider of protective systems for military personnel, ground vehicles and aircraft. The creation of the Aerospace & Defense Group follows Armor Holdings' recent acquisition of Simula, and brings together an unparalleled combination of expertise in the areas of body armor, vehicle armor, aircraft safety systems and other personnel, vehicle and structural safety products. For almost 30 years, Armor Holdings companies have been leading the way in the development and deployment of protective measures for soldiers, including body armor, Up-Armored HMMWVs, crashworthy aircraft seating and survivability equipment.

The Arotech Corp. subsidiary FAAC Inc. has been awarded a $420,000 contract from Jacobs Sverdrup Technology Inc. to modernize FAAC's air combat training range software architecture. Jacobs Sverdrup is contracting on behalf of Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., one of the largest Air Force bases in the world. FAAC has a 30-year history of providing weapon system simulations for the family of U.S. Air Force ACTS and U.S. Navy TACTS Air Combat Training Ranges.

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University will introduce for its Fall 2004 semester a new bachelor of science degree program in aeronautical science that is specially designed to train pilots the way airlines do. The program will be offered at the school's campuses in Daytona Beach, Fla., and Prescott, Ariz. The new curriculum takes advantage of an array of sophisticated flight-training devices that simulate the jet aircraft used by regional airlines, as well as the smaller planes used in introductory flight training. The devices allow students to become better pilots faster and at a lower cost than before, school officials said. The FAA has given its top approval rating to the university's simulators, making them the only flight-training devices in the nation qualified at such a high level in a university program.

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Making U.S. Army Aviation Warfighting Center a Force Multiplier — Today and Tomorrow

By BG E.J. Sinclair

Where does a brigade commander serving in Iraq go when he has lost two aircraft to enemy fire and is unable to determine root causes and preventative measures? Where does the Army look for answers when unmanned aerial vehicle systems (UAVS) become an important and integral part of the warfight?

You might be surprised to know that the U.S. Army Aviation Warfighting Center at Fort Rucker, Ala., is a key component in helping find the answers to these questions and many others. While Fort Rucker trained more than 5,400 soldiers last year, it was the behind-the-scenes activities that reached unprecedented levels with regard to the variety of initiatives to support the soldier and the warfight.

AIRCRAFT SHOOT DOWN ASSESSMENT TEAM

When COL Ray Palumbo, commander of 12th Aviation Brigade, deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom he realized there were no formalized procedures for determining the causes of his aircraft losses and for deriving subsequent preventive measures. So he contacted the U.S. Army Aviation Warfighting Center for assistance.

While Fort Rucker trained more than 5,400 soldiers last year, it was the behind-the-scenes activities that reached unprecedented levels.

We responded by developing a teaming concept of subject-matter experts from throughout the Army; the Army Safety Center; the Missile, Space Intelligence Command; the Defense Intelligence Agency; and British Aerospace Engineering Systems Inc. The Aircraft Shoot Down Assessment Team (ASDAT) was formed under the leadership of COL Steve Dwyer, commander of the 1st Avn. Bde. at Fort Rucker, and arrived in Iraq within two weeks. The ASDAT's charter was to determine what caused the aircraft to crash; what weapon system was used to shoot it down; what friendly and enemy tactics, techniques and procedures contributed to the shoot down; and, finally, to provide recommendations to prevent further occurrences. The team initially investigated nine incidents, and determined definitive causes and made recommendations for each.

The ASDAT debriefed all aviation brigade commanders in Iraq, as well as the CJTF-7 commander. The team has also briefed aviation commanders from the 1st Infantry Division, the 1st Cavalry Div., and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force before their deployment to OIF-2. Because of the success of the ASDAT, the U.S. Army Aviation Center (USAAVNC), through the Army G3, is pursuing the establishment of a permanent organization that will specialize in the investigation of aircraft losses to enemy fire.

UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE SYSTEMS

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Systems (UAVS) have become a valuable force multiplier. Commanders at all levels depend on them to provide critical intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance information. The UAV mission is expanding across the full spectrum of operations: from ISR, battle-damage assessment and route reconnaissance to real-time target acquisition. Furthermore, the wartime operational tempo for UAVS is six times that of peacetime operations; the UAVS fly an average of nearly 18 hours a day in support of combatant commanders.

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As UAVS continue to evolve and mature into valued aviation assets, the proponency for UAVS was transferred from the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and Fort Huachuca, Ariz., to USAAVNC. As a function of proponency, USAAVNC conducted a UAVS Functional Area Assessment (FAA) and sponsored a Senior Leader Integrated Concept Team (ICT) meeting from Feb. 18 through 20.

The meeting provided a forum for the exchange of information between members of the UAVS and Future Combat System ICTs. Representatives from most of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) schools and centers, as well as other agencies throughout the Army, participated.

future requirements. The intent was to ensure that the Army UAVS program moves forward with a focused vision, and that each element of DOTML-PF has a coordinated, supportable and sustainable plan. The end state resulted in the development of recommended courses of action to further the UAVS implementation process.

CSA'S AVIATION TASK FORCE

Many decisions have been released based on the work of past several months work of the Aviation Task Force. Most notable is the organizational structure of the multifunctional aviation brigades.

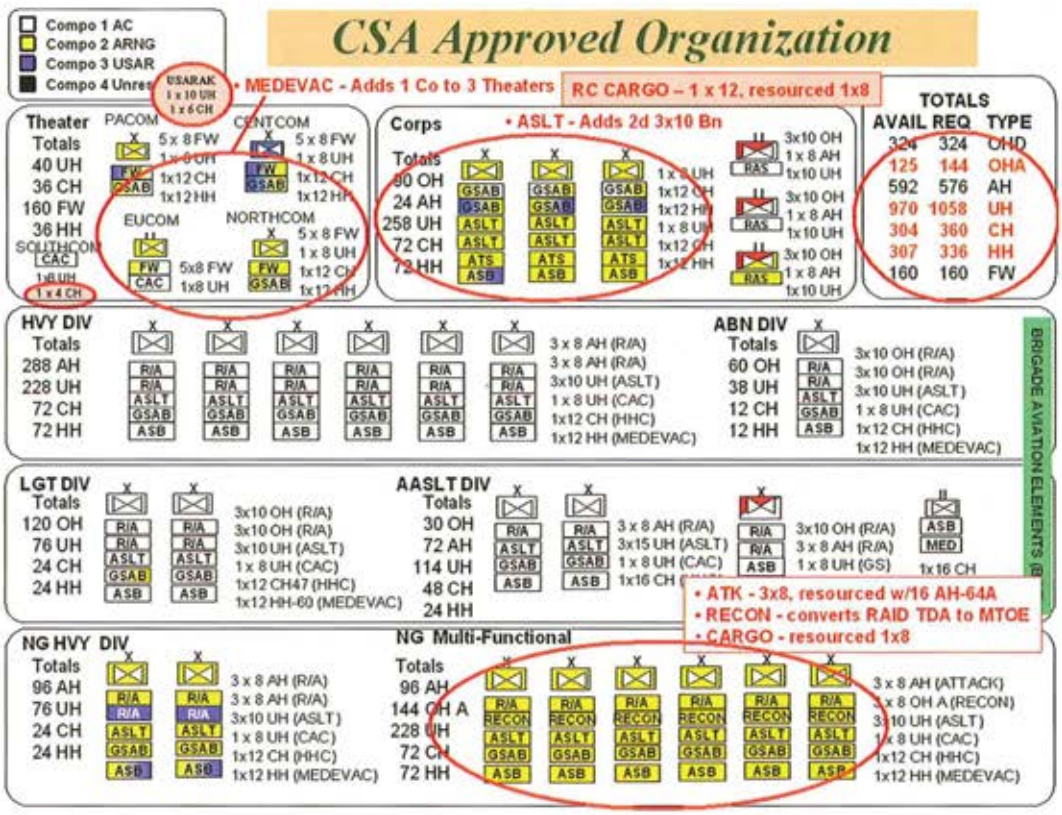
This organization will make aviation a more capabilities-based maneuver arm optimized for the joint

tion (medevac) units become part of the aviation brigade structure to ensure integration of mission planning and execution, safety, standardization and maintenance. Another key change will be the brigade aviation element at each ground maneuver brigade, which consists of planners and operators to ensure aviation is integrated into the ground commander's scheme of maneuver.

CONCLUSION

The U.S. Army Aviation Warfighting Center's mission includes the training of aviation soldiers, the development of the future aviation force and providing a vision for our branch on which to grow. It is truly a historic time for our branch as it transforms to meet future missions.

Many decisions have been released based on the work of past several months work of the Aviation Task Force.



The purpose of the FAA was to identify key issues and complete a Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Logistics, Personnel and Facilities (DOTML-PF) assessment of the Army UAVS program. The assessment facilitates the development of recommendations in concert with the chief of staff of the Army's (CSA's) focus areas and is a foundation for

fight. The organizational structure also addresses many of the shortfalls identified in operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF), such as the robustness of attack-helicopter battalions, the requirement for an air-assault capability and heavy-lift capability in every division, and the location of the aviation support battalion.

Additionally, air medical-evacua-

As these and other initiatives develop, we will continue to provide current and relevant information pertaining to branch issues that affect you and your commands.

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BG E.J. Sinclair is the Army aviation branch chief and commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation Center and Fort Rucker, Ala.

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AMCOM State of the Union

By BG(P) Jim Pillsbury

Ongoing operations in Southwest Asia (SWA) have put extraordinary demands on Army aviation. With flying operational tempo at 300 percent to 400 percent of normal peacetime rates under severe environmental conditions, combat customers require intense, focused management of aviation materiel. The U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM) has several initiatives underway to assist Army aviators supporting the global war on terrorism.

TASM

In support of this essential combat-support requirement, AMCOM, in partnership with the Program Executive Office-Aviation, is establishing a Theater Aviation Single Manager (TASM) to be forward positioned in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility. This new unit will be the mission-critical organization for integrated management of deployed aviation material, and will also be the focal point for both aviation units and wholesale system managers. Key elements of the mission are to resolve aviation logistics issues, enhance theater aviation readiness, improve management of aviation repair parts, inject new sustainment capabilities in the theater, and establish deliberate retrograde of aviation major and secondary items.

We are excited about the potential for this "one-stop shop" for our aviation customers. The TASM will work under the umbrella of U.S. Army Materiel Command's Logistics Support Element Southwest Asia, and will be in direct support of the Combined Forces Land Component Command and Combined Joint Task Force 7.

Based on the criticality of aviation to theater combat operations, the TASM is being fast tracked for standup in March 2004 under the leadership of COL Joe Moore, a 26-year veteran of Army aviation.

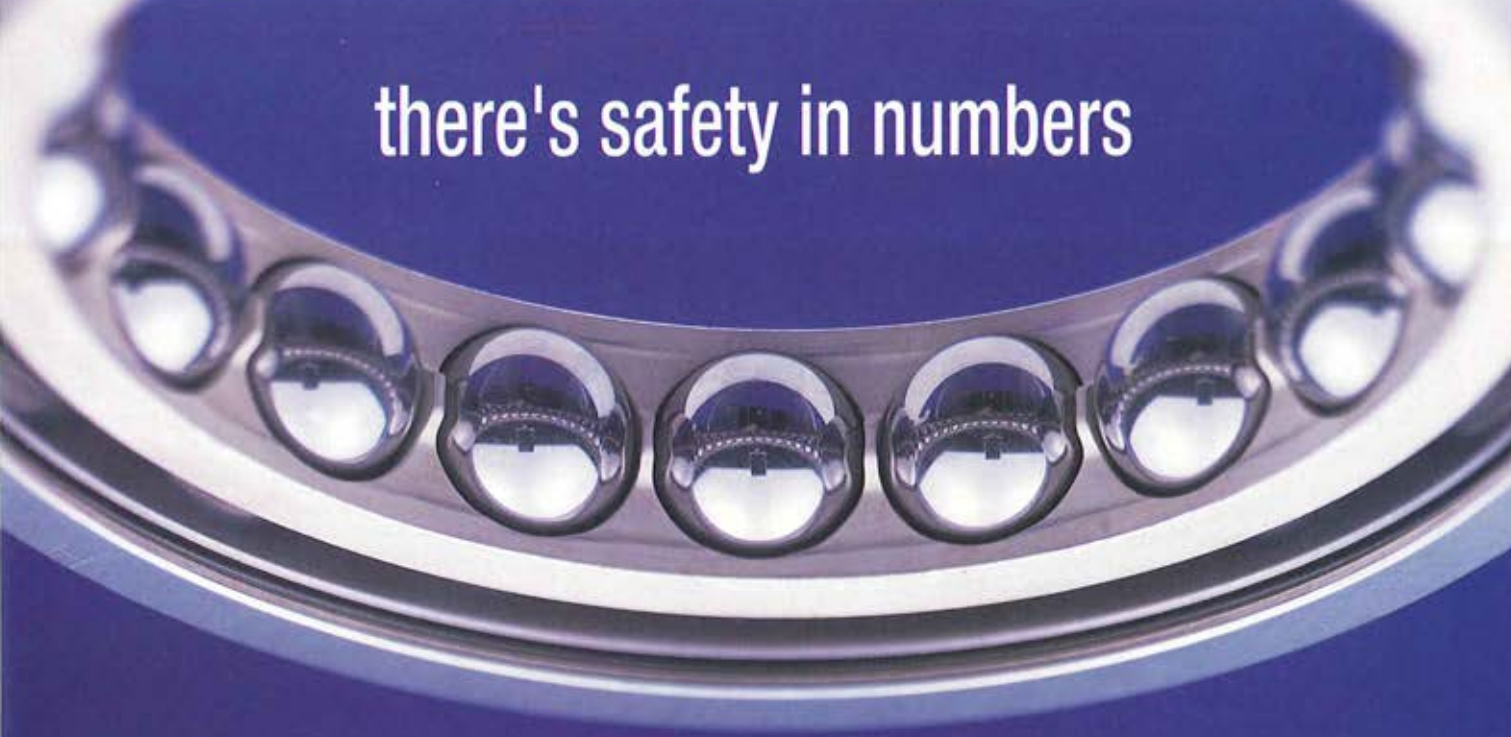
Aviation Spares

AMCOM has moved out aggressively to ensure support for our deployed forces while concurrently positioning the Army to have the capabilities in place to reconstitute our forces upon return from SWA. We've met this challenge, despite significant funding shortfalls in our spares accounts over the past five years, by employing both lean initiatives within our organic industrial base and cutting edge partnering strategies with the commercial sector.

For example, AMCOM has placed more than $3.8 billion in spares on contract in less than 24 months and these investments are making a significant, positive impact on the supportability posture to the field. On just rotor blades, engines, transmissions and auxiliary power units (APUs), AMCOM has close to $1.2 billion on contract with our industrial partners — with on-going deliveries for each. This represents growth in excess of 44 percent in just 90 days. Parts are reaching the field and the readiness trends for our deployed forces have steadily increased. Currently, all non-mission capable supply backorders for theatre are either in transit or will be filled within 90 days.

We have also implemented solutions that will significantly decrease demands for such high-cost items as main rotor blades and engines. AMCOM has developed a "desert kit" that employs several immediate solutions, and conservative estimates are that demands will be reduced by

there's safety in numbers



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at least 25 percent to 30 percent for both of these items.

Even though demands for all aviation components have increased over 91 percent in just 12 months, backorders and inventory have declined over the same period, and it is impossible for this to happen if we weren't investing in the right parts.

Other trends reinforce the fact that support to our troops is improving. Over the past six months, backorders for units deployed to operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) have declined by 15 percent for Apache, 31 percent for Black Hawk and 57 percent for Chinook. Worldwide backorders for 701C engines have been reduced 35 percent, with no backorders for any unit deployed to OIF/OEF. Serviceable Black Hawk APUs have increased 86 percent while backorders have been reduced 66 percent. Serviceable main transmissions available to issue for both the "A" and "L" model Black Hawk have doubled, and APUs for the Chinook have realized a doubling of serviceable assets and a 22 percent reduction in backorders.

Industry Support

Our industry partners have continuously demonstrated an outstanding commitment in supporting increased demands for spares and repairs during the war. There are numerous examples of this support across industry. Specific examples regarding Army aviation include the support provided by General Electric (GE) and Sikorsky Aircraft.

As a result of the total commitment by GE, engines are rapidly being overhauled both at Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD), Texas, and at GE's facility. GE has been instrumental in providing the technical and engineering support and 100 percent of the material required for CCAD to complete overhaul of the T700 engine line. Turn-around time has improved dramatically and engines are completed in less than 60 days in many cases.

Sikorsky is the prime supplier for Black Hawk, and demands have significantly increased as a result of OIF. Sikorsky has consistently demonstrated its total commitment from the assembler on the line all the way up to the company's president, Steve Finger. Critical needs for main rotor blades resulted in Finger personally walking the blade line to identify lean processes that resulted in an improvement in yield of more than 100 percent. Sikorsky has stepped up on other critically needed items such as spindles and tail rotor blades, accelerating deliveries and increasing yields to the maximum extent possible. This type of commitment among industry demonstrates the difference between a supplier and a partner.

RESET

Short of combat maintenance conditions, Reset proves to be the most challenging and technically difficult Army aviation maintenance operation in more than a decade. Reset will posture the fleet to be returned to combat readiness quicker than Special Technical Inspection and Repair (STIR), with a better aircraft as a by-product.

Reset differs from STIR in several important aspects. During STIR, all U.S. Army Aviation and Troop Command players received parts through a centralized supply system. During Reset, the various sites input parts requirements locally. This system allows for a more efficient, timely establishment and tracking of requisitions. Regional managers are able to interact with local site logistics representatives on long lead-time items, instead of wading through all requisitions. Likewise, site logistics representatives can keep regional logistics representatives aware of what they see as showstoppers.

The following is a day in the life of a Reset team at Fort Campbell, Ky., as related by Gary Adams, chief of the post's Aircraft Logistics Maintenance Division.

"The planning template for the Reset of the Screaming Eagle fleet is 'Problem, Plan, People, Parts, Tools, Time and Training (P4T3)' analysis. Aircraft, regardless of Mission Design Series (MDS), are backplanned within the P4T3 framework. Typically the Reset crews work up to six, 10-hour days within the template. During the STIR effort following Operation Desert Storm, we discovered that multiple shifts on aircraft did not pay the desired dividends due to duplication of effort and shift changes.

"The template at the 101st has Army and contractor teams working side by side to support the AH-64, CH-47 and UH-60 Reset efforts. Aircraft mechanics at the backshop level provide backup Aviation Unit Maintenance (AVUM), Aviation Intermediate Maintenance (AVIM) and limited depot support to feed parts that are not readily available in wholesale supply to the Reset aircraft. Over 200 logisticians, whose prime task is to get the part to the aircraft, support all of these teams.

"At the mechanic level, technicians generally work the same areas of the aircraft, but they also rotate to other areas to provide redundancy to the effort. All operations above the technician must exist solely to support his effort to return the aircraft to a combat-ready condition. The standard for this operation is that all parts going into the backshop repair cycle will be removed and work ordered within the first five days of the aircraft Reset. Likewise, when a mechanic recognizes the need for a part that is not in stock, the document number for that part will be established within 24 hours.

"Thus, the level of effort to support the technicians, wrench turners, tin benders and wire heads is very complex, and can be described as a soccer match being played concurrently with a football game, on the same field. While trying to move the aircraft linearly down the playing field, a plethora of related tasks with second- and third-order effects happens concurrently.

"In order to support the technicians, the logistics personnel have to integrate efforts to obtain the raw materials that are eventually turned into the lethal weapons systems that our fine Screaming Eagles ride into battle. The logistics of getting the parts to the right place, at the right time, is a challenge. On any given day, the Fort Campbell Reset Team will deal with representatives from AMCOM, the Defense Logistics Agency, the Army Materiel Command, Boeing and Lockheed Martin."

With people like Gary Adams and all of the hard charging people in AMCOM and industry working around the clock, I am confident that Army aviation will stay in the fight today and be ready tomorrow.

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BG(P) Jim Pillsbury is commander of the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command at Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

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Aviation Materiel Development: The "State of the Union"

By MG Joseph L. Bergantz

Much has happened in the world over this past year. Army aviation, as one of our new chief of staff's major focus areas, has undergone a thorough review and is beginning to restructure itself across the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Leadership, Material, Personnel and Facilities elements to meet the challenges of the future.

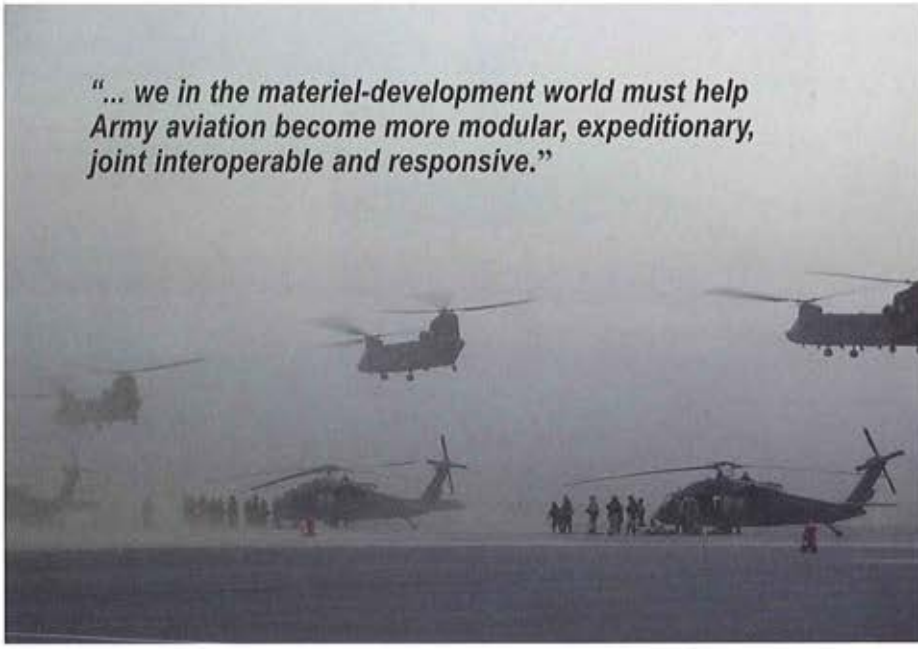
In support of this transformation, we in the materiel-development world must help Army aviation become more modular, expeditionary, joint interoperable and responsive. As always, Army aviation is a critical piece of the future force and the way that force will fight. As part of this restructuring, the Comanche program has been cancelled in favor of undertaking many near-term efforts that absolutely need to get done. This was a tough decision to make, and now we must refocus our efforts on the current force and on bringing technologies forward to make the current force even better.

In each of our major weapon-system platforms, the project managers (PMs) have made adjustments to their programs to make their products more suitable and useful in the near term, while providing the capabilities that are envisioned for the future force. What has made the PMs' jobs harder is the fact that they must also balance their ongoing recapitalization efforts with the requirements to reset the units that are returning from the fight overseas, while continuing to provide those forces committed to the global war on terrorism the best equipment and capabilities they can.

APACHE

The Apache PM, COL Ralph Pallotta, and his team have done yeoman's work developing near-term capabilities that help aircrews in the current fight. A blade-folding kit has been designed and bought that allows our Longbow Apaches to be prepared and loaded onto strategic airlifters much faster and, after arriving in-theater, to be unloaded and put into the fight much faster as well. These kits will also help get aircraft back from operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom faster, allowing them to start the reset process sooner.

Other examples of improvements made to the Apache and pushed forward to our deployed units include an improved boresight device that helps aircrews boresight their weapons faster and more accurately; an internal Robertson belly fuel tank, which provides approximately 45 minutes additional fuel while allowing the Apache to still carry 300 rounds of 30mm ammunition; and a newly designed stabilator that can be removed for transit and replaced without requiring a maintenance test flight on the other end. Within the next several months the modernized,



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second-generation FLIR will finish qualification and begin production, with fieldings beginning in fiscal year 2005.

CHINOOK

In the Chinook fleet, COL Tim Crosby has several initiatives moving forward to improve both the cargo fleet and Army aviation across the board.

Soldier-focused logistics initiatives are taking root in several key areas. First, in order to organizationally integrate logistics personnel, engineering experts, contract specialists and Foreign Military Sales specialists with organic cargo program personnel, we are physically moving people to lash up that way. The cargo program is the first to undergo this reorganization, which will put these functionals elbow to elbow and place them under the operational control of the PM, leading to more efficient life-cycle management and execution.

A second noteworthy initiative that is maturing is the aviation maintenance-management information system. A recent decision was made to move away from ULLS-A and to adapt the Common Transitional System-Army (CTS-A), developed by the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), to be an interim maintenance/logistics module that Army aviation will use until the Global Combat Support System-Army system is available.

Complementing CTS-A, the Aviation Maintenance Aid Concept (AMAC) is also under development. AMAC will improve both scheduled and unscheduled maintenance, work with the standard TAMMS forms of today and provide a comprehensive database that maintenance managers

can use to develop trends over the Web. AMAC will be fielded initially to CH-47 units as a pilot effort. A third initiative being developed is the part marking van, which allows the marking of all required parts in compliance with the latest Department of Defense direction.

BLACK HAWK

Team Black Hawk, under COL Bill Lake, has made significant strides to become even more relevant. Latest efforts include gaining the airworthiness release of an engine barrier filter, similar to that used on the Kiowa Warrior, in order to protect our T700-series engines from the sand and grit that our aircraft are facing. In addition, the qualification of the Crashworthy External Fuel System (CEFS) is nearly complete, which will take the 230-gal. external tank and convert it to a completely crashworthy system.

Team Black Hawk is also in the midst of demonstrating a Health and Usage Monitoring System (HUMS), which will lead to the future fielding of a HUMS capability, based on what's learned in the demo. In addition, the Black Hawk will soon get cockpit airbags and a new Improved Hovering Infra-Red Suppression System (IHIRSS), both of which will enhance crew and platform survivability.

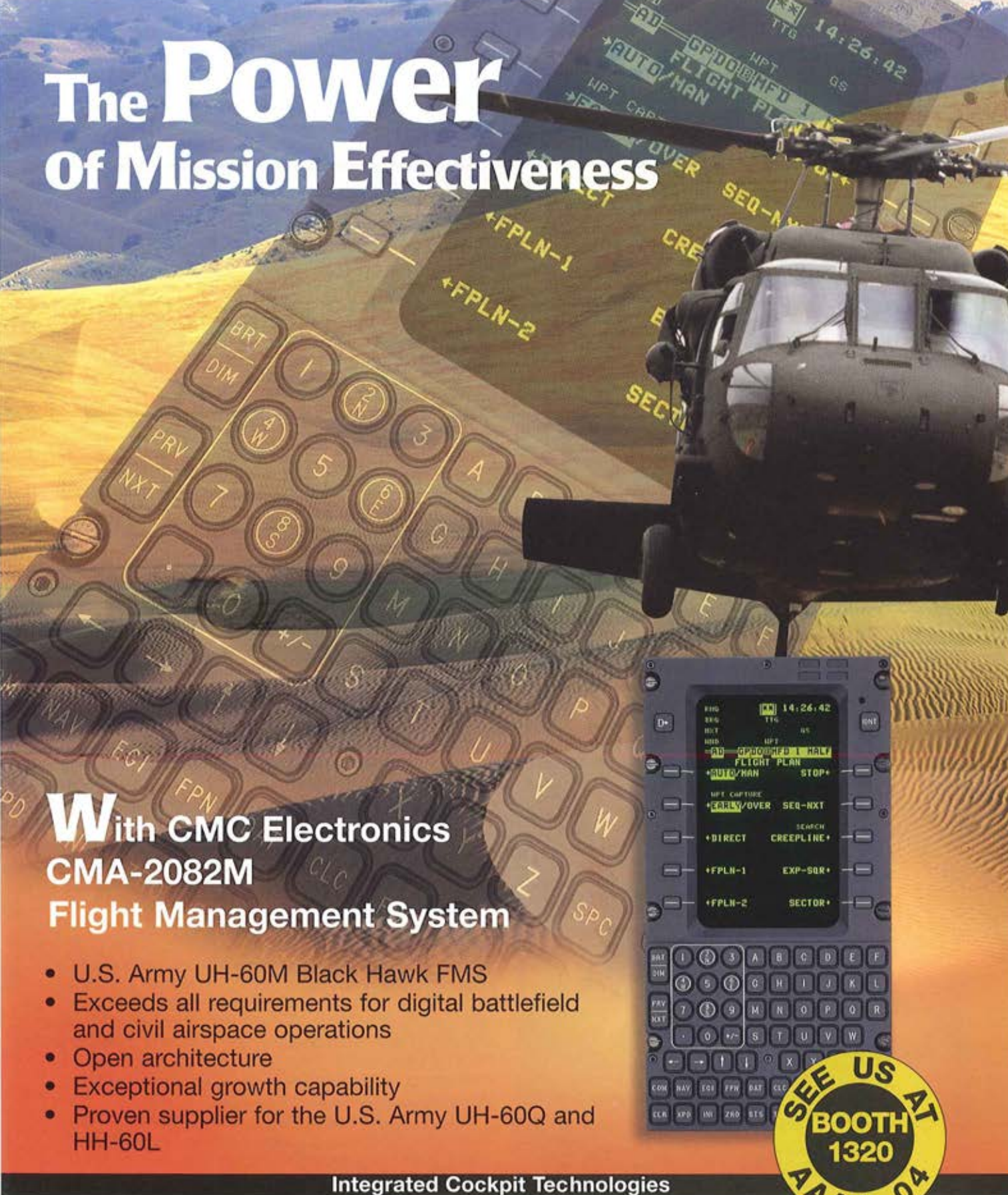
AVIATION SYSTEMS

As PM for Aviation Systems, Gary Nenninger has his team working on many different fronts.

For example, his Kiowa Warrior team, under LTC Jeff Crabb, has installed engine barrier filters on deployed and deploying aircraft. These kits have saved the removal and

PEO Aviation cont'd on page 58

The Power Of Mission Effectiveness



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Blue Force Tracker and Army Aviation Operations in Afghanistan

By MAJ Nathan K. Watanabe

Blue Force Tracker at use in the task force tactical operations center.

Army aviation has a new technology that enhances battle command, improves over-the-horizon communications, and assists with airspace deconfliction. The Blue Force Tracking-Aviation, or BFT, component of the Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) system is a novel but efficient tool to assist the commander with his situational understanding and command and control, and is proving itself over the extended distances in the vastness of Afghanistan.

The 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment (2-10 AVN), was first introduced to the BFT system late in its preparation for deployment to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. All deploying aircraft were equipped with the BFT mounting hardware and wiring — or "A" kits — and operations personnel and UH-60 crew chiefs received initial training on the system. Other units attached to 2-10 AVN also received their A-kits and training, so that by the time Task Force Knighthawk assumed the aviation task force mission in southern Afghanistan, all aircraft — AH-64, UH-60 and CH-47 — were outfitted.

Blue Force Tracker mounted in the back of the UH-60L Black Hawk.

B-kits, consisting of the computer itself and antennas, were installed in-country and task force personnel underwent further training provided by on-site DynCorp-Europe and ElmCo contractors. The task force also received a tactical operations center (TOC) ground station for mission planning and for monitoring mission execution. The skepticism of the previous task force was soon replaced with confidence as operators became familiar with the system and command emphasized its employment. Among its strengths, BFT enhances situational understanding, facilitates command and control, and assists with airspace deconfliction.

As an aid to situational understanding, BFT enables users to monitor the location of other BFT-equipped aircraft and vehicles. Assault, lift and medical-evacuation (medevac) aircraft are equipped with an 8 inch x 9 inch LCD screen, while the TF Knighthawk TOC system is augmented with a 28 inch x 48 inch plasma screen prominently located so the entire battle crew can immediately track locations of BFT-equipped aircraft, other friendly unit vehicles and other ground stations. This is as simple as looking at a unit (or vehicle) icon on a map, but instead of a map on a wall and some "sticky notes" being moved by a radio monitor, an electronic icon is displayed on a scalable Falconview map and positions are automatically updated by satellite at specific user-defined time intervals. The result is a near-real-time picture of friendly BFT-equipped vehicle locations that helps with tracking mission progress and could provide a last known point, should the need arise, to assist with lost or downed aircraft.

Without Air Force AWACS aircraft support, communications over the extended distances in Afghanistan have been a significant challenge. The size of the TF Knighthawk area of responsibility, roughly equal to half the size of Texas, easily negates traditional FM, UHF and VHF communications. As a command-and-control (C2) tool, BFT-A allows the commander to track the locations

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of his aircraft and provides an alternative means of over-the-horizon communications.

The best means of communications is the Tactical Satellite (TACSAT) net, but aside from the medevac and command console-equipped aircraft, TF Knighthawk aircraft are not equipped with this system. In addition, TACSAT channel availability is constrained and HF radio, while available, has proven less than reliable. BFT-A fills the communications gap by providing the capability to pass text messages between stations. Code words and similar short-text transmissions are easily passed to supplement, or even replace, radio calls. Medevac aircraft often use the system to send patient vital signs ahead to the awaiting medical facility.

In planning, BFT enhances C2 by enabling the common operational picture (COP) to be readily shared between headquarters and among aircraft. Graphic control measures such as pickup zones, flight routes, restricted-operating zones, landing zones and fire-support control measures can be developed, plotted and shared with other BFT-equipped units as a computer-graphics overlay file. These graphics can be downloaded to each BFT station, whether stationary or aircraft- or vehicle-mounted, to enable viewing by the crews. This is especially useful in the command console-equipped aircraft, where the scalable Falconview map displays aircraft positions in relation to battlefield control measures and replaces several hard-copy maps.

The display of aircraft locations while in flight is particularly helpful in deconflicting air traffic. More than a few times, TF Knighthawk aircraft have been alerted to oncoming traffic in the narrow passes and valleys throughout the region. BFT displaying positions and relaying location prowords provides a measure of positive airspace control to supplement procedural controls such as "rules-of-the-road" flight and assists with aircraft avoidance.

A recent aerial extraction of U.S. and coalition forces by TF Knighthawk illustrates the capabilities and utility of BFT. As air routes and control measures were developed during mission planning, battle staff NCOs constructed an overlay using the TOC base station. During premission brief back, this overlay was sent as a computer file to the aviation brigade, located more than 300 miles away in Bagram, via the BFT messaging function and was also shared with the infantry brigade TOC and all aircraft via the Mission Data Loader, a small, hand-held device used to transfer BFT data between systems.

During aircraft run-up, BFTs were switched on and began transmitting location signals, monitored in the Knighthawk, infantry brigade and aviation brigade TOCs. En route, aircraft locations were automatically updated and displayed and, as serials passed predetermined checkpoints, code words were passed from the C2 aircraft to the TOCs via both TACSAT and BFT text messaging. At one point, a change in pickup zone was passed from the infantry brigade to TF Knighthawk, relayed via BFT text messaging to the C2 aircraft, which in turn relayed the new PZ location to the rest of the flight. Approach to and departure from the PZ was constrained through a single valley since it was located in a bowl surrounded by high peaks, but as the first serial departed the PZ for its egress back down the valley, the C2 aircraft easily monitored the location of the inbound second serial on BFT and advised the first serial of the oncoming traffic. Airspace deconfliction was simple, utilitarian and effective.

Still in its infancy, BFT-A is not a panacea; it has its shortcomings, from poor ergonometry to the limitations of satellite systems, to its limited fielding and distribution. These problems can be overcome, or at least tolerated, and the effort will yield significant results.

Perhaps the biggest drawback of the BFT is its aircraft-mounting system. Hardwired and static mounted inside the AH-64 aft stowage compartment, BFT is totally inaccessible by the crew during flight. Thus configured, the AH-64 BFT is a location transmitter only. In the UH-60, the system faces aft between the two crew chief seats. This location also makes it inaccessible to the point where it, too, is more often just a location transmitter unless a crew chief repositions himself to access the system or a fifth crewman is added to operate the system. Although the CH-47 mount allows easiest access, its use still requires another dedicated operator or a crew member to leave his station.

Task Force Knighthawk has enjoyed most of its success with BFT mounted in the command console-equipped UH-60. Mounted with a flexible cable mount, the BFT laptop can be passed from person to person or operated on the console itself, supplementing any mounted maps. A similar setup is what is needed in all aircraft — a flexible, airworthy mount that allows easy access for the flight crew from their current stations, whether left seat or right, front seat or back.

BFT-A is a satellite-based system and, as such, is sub-

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ject to the limitations of a space-based communications system. Because the system is susceptible to deadspace, blackouts and solar interference, current locations are not always updated and messaging functions are disrupted when BFT signals are blocked from satellite receivers by terrain, satellite position or both. Lengthening the duration of the display and shortening the frequency of updates helps alleviate this drawback, but then presents less timely information. Consequently, users must still have back-up tracking systems, usually a map and graphics, in the TOC and in the aircraft.

Another drawback of the BFT is that it is only a near-real-time feed and not a 100-percent accurate picture of where units and aircraft are located. The lag between the time the signal was sent and the time the signal was received is negligible; however, the time lag between reception and display is user-adjustable and may be considerable, to the effect that when an icon location is updated and displayed, the aircraft may have already moved several kilometers.

The distribution and fielding of BFT is another drawback to the system. It is not distributed force-wide, nor is it a joint system. Not until it is improved and fielded throughout the Army and totally integrated throughout the joint force will it be a true COP tool able to assist with "fratricide" prevention. Fiscal constraints, interservice rivalry and parochialism will unfortunately take their toll on the system before it is widely fielded.

Despite BFT-A's drawbacks, Task Force Knighthawk is employing the system to great effect and is proving it to be a valuable tool to help provide clear situational understanding and assist with command and control. Keys to the successful employment of this system are contractor support, command emphasis, and a willingness and hunger to experiment.

Another key to success is personnel, from the pilots and crew chiefs who start up the aircraft systems to the flight operations personnel who labor to perfect data loading. They have to be willing and technically able to experiment and work with the system to employ and perfect its use. TF Knighthawk was fortunate in having several soldiers who eagerly — and adeptly — waded into the mire of computer and satellite procedures and jargon to establish a user-friendly base of training and make the system reliable and fairly benign. Countless hours were spent developing shortcuts and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) to improve BFT usability and form a core of "BFT pros" to man the TOC ground station and the airborne C2 system.

All told, Blue Force Tracking-Aviation is a command-and-control system and situational-understanding tool still in its infancy but with great potential. Near-real-time position reporting, two-way text messaging, air-traffic avoidance and friendly graphic sharing are all enhanced through the capabilities of BFT. Given the right emphasis, this system holds great promise, and today, here and now, it is an option that provides great capability over the extended mission distances encountered in Afghanistan. Given the right command climate and emphasis, and operated within its limitations, it is a system that adds immensely to Army aviation operations.

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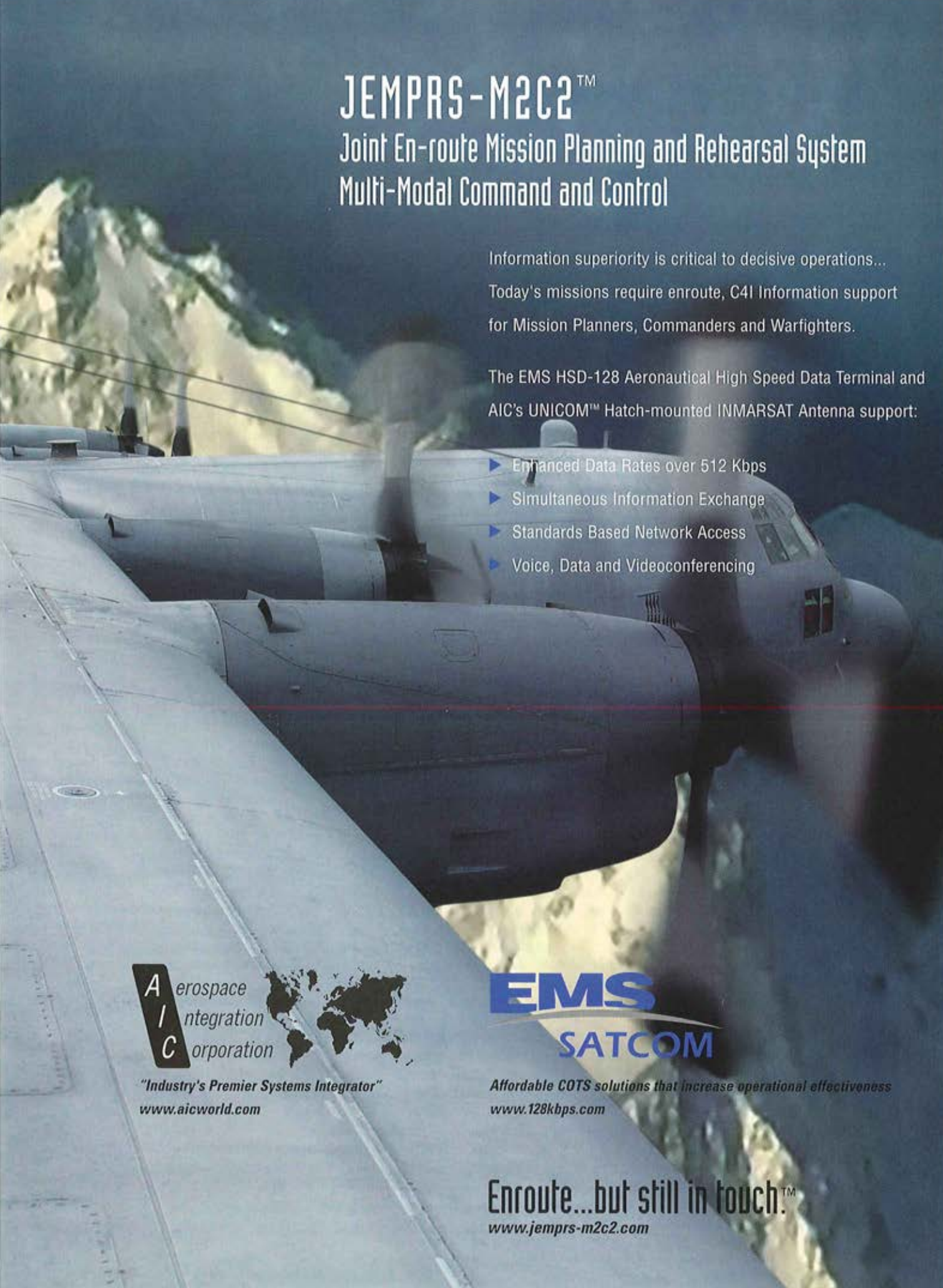
MAJ Nathan K. Watanabe is the executive officer of 2nd Battalion, 10th Aviation Regiment.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PERSONNEL RECOVERY and the Path Ahead for Army Aviation: Combat Lessons Learned from OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

By CPT Jason Hester

Personnel recovery (PR), more commonly referred to as combat search and rescue (CSAR), is a mission profile for rotary-wing aviation long associated with the Air Force — and for good reason. The Air Force has earned a name for itself in the PR arena, beginning with the daring combat rescues conducted by crews of H-3 and CH-53 "Jolly Green Giants" in the jungles of Vietnam.

Their prowess continues today with dedicated support from para-rescue jumpers (PJs), CH-53s, HH-60Gs, A-10s and fixed wing tanker aircraft for all players. To this day, the sound of the "Jolly" call sign crackling on radio waves over the battlefield triggers immediate priority handling among airspace managers, and calms the desperate anxiety of downed aircrews and other stranded service members in distress.

The Air Force's historical need and motivation for such a CSAR capability is obvious. For decades, front-line airmen have exposed themselves to the possibility of being downed over enemy territory on every mission. But as modern warfare continues to evolve, it is clear that the Air Force is not the only service placing such a large percentage of its combat power at risk of isolation behind enemy lines. On a linear battlefield with a defined Forward Line of Troops (FLOT), the Army places enough of its own aircrews and ground troops in harm's way beyond the FLOT that we must consider participation in the resolution when things go awry.

During recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, a clearly defined FLOT did not exist, increasing even more the chances of our soldiers' isolation from any ground-recovery capability. We can certainly expect these types of situations more often in future fights. Accordingly, defining the Army's participation in the complex, joint task of PR is increasingly important.

The Army — and Army aviation in particular — stands at a crossroads with respect to PR. It is time to leave the crossroads, choose a path and commit to it. Some will say we should simply rely on the Air Force's proven capabilities, but others argue that whether it is an ejected F-18 pilot, a downed AH-64 crew, a compromised long-range surveillance (LRS) team or a lost Humvee driver, we have a moral imperative to get in the game — and our Army's capabilities naturally center on the Army aviation community.

The Army — and Army aviation in particular — stands at a crossroads with respect to PR.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION

Except for select special-operations units for specific missions, before Operation Iraqi Freedom Army aviation had never fielded an organized heli-borne force dedicated to 24-hour PR in the joint environment.

In accordance with a Department of Defense directive, the Army has taken this need seriously and enlisted the support of the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA), the training and advisory branch of the Department of Defense for all PR-related matters. V Corps' 12th Aviation Brigade, based in Germany, was tasked to provide a PR capability to V Corps and the European theater. The "Raptors" of Company C, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, a general-support UH-60 company, became the focal point for this task.

The Raptors' initial training began in October 2002 during Victory Strike III, a training exercise conducted in Poland under V Corps headquarters with the corps' attack aviation element, 11th Avn. Regt. The JPRA sends its subject-matter experts to training exercises and real-world contingency operations to advise field commanders on how best to utilize and train their assets to accomplish PR tasks, and the JPRA representatives played a significant role in the PR training events at Victory Strike. Through the course of the training event in Poland, 12th Bde. executed numerous JPRA-driven PR scenarios, from staff planning all the way through operator execution.

At the operator level, crews adjusted their flight profiles and planning considerations to accommodate the specific tasks required in the PR mission. Much progress was made in the development of tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) for the ground-security element and its work in conjunction with the UH-60 aircrews. The unit also got a taste of the integration of AH-64s in the package, but only on a couple of missions and never as a consistent member of the team.

At the staff level, 12th Bde. also made huge strides during Victory Strike. A need was identified for a conduit agency between the Corps Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) and the operators at the aviation-company level. Through trial and error, it was determined that the brigade and battalion staffs are not the best agencies for this task. Both staffs manage a myriad of competing missions on a daily basis in support of the corps, of which PR is only one. The focus required in managing the high priority and rapidly changing PR information and events is not conducive to

> THE PLATFORM MATTERS

In combat support aircraft as in tactical jets, the platform matters: Higher, farther, and faster is better than lower, closer, and slower. Just good enough is not good enough when safety is at stake and lives are on the line. The Swedish and Israeli air forces have recently chosen Gulfstream for their state-of-the-art ISR platforms for the same reason. Gulfstream best meets their full operational requirements and at the lowest life-cycle costs available today. Gulfstream special mission aircraft have it all: World record altitude, speed, and range performance, award-winning reliability and product support, the best warranty in special mission aviation, and a decades long heritage of proven and reliable special mission experience.

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To better bridge the gap between the RCC and the aviation company, 12th Avn. Bde. developed the concept of the Aviation Brigade Command and Control Element (ABCCE).

The ABCCE is a small staff cell resourced by brigade personnel but collocated with the corps RCC and able to process and plan PR specific information in a timely manner for use by the operators. Once the communication gap between the ABCCE and the aviation company is bridged, the information flow can be timely and precise. Additionally, the ABCCE can serve as a forward liaison team for certain other tasks managed by the brigade — such as LRS insertions and extractions. Because of the inherent potential for LRS missions to evolve into PR events, this dual role of the ABCCE makes sense.

The 12th Bde. returned from Victory Strike with a better understanding of PR challenges and requirements at both the staff and operator level. While back in Germany, C/5-158 AVN aggressively pursued training opportunities with A-10 aircraft based at Spangdahlem Air Base. Flights with A-10s were conducted to training areas in Germany to rehearse in-flight procedures and improve coordination between the A-10s and our own helicopter rescue forces. These training events enhanced the understanding of the layers of support available to PR missions and the methods of operation in each layer.

Task Force Gabriel

In early February 2003, C/5-158 AVN deployed to Kuwait under 11th Avn. Regt. primarily to provide 24-hour PR coverage to the entire V Corps area of responsibility (AOR) during the impending conflict with Iraq. Once established in a training camp in Kuwait, the package for the V Corps Personnel Recovery Task Force (PRTF) assembled. The PRTF centered on the company-level headquarters of C/5-158, which received the attachment of AH-64 crews from 11th Avn. Regt., a ground-security element of infantrymen, medics and two Air Force ETACs.

While the core of personnel in C/5-158 AVN remained the same throughout the training exercises in Poland and Germany, the assembly of the PRTF in Kuwait brought entirely new faces among the AH-64 and ground-security elements. With the timing of the commencement of combat operations uncertain, there was certainly no time to waste in training.

The team immediately pursued development of TTPs for the efficient employment of each element's unique capabilities in the PR mission profile in a desert environment. Through trial and error in daily training flights, a serial composition was set and procedures devised for contingencies and actions on the objective. Priority was placed on maximizing the optics, ASE and weaponry capabilities of the AH-64s and the NVG, communications, Personnel Locator System (PLS) and lift capabilities of the UH-60s to accomplish the overall task. Redundant teams of ground personnel rode in each UH-60, including a team leader, shooters, a medic, an ETAC and equipment associated with those personnel.

The PRTF made a conscious effort to pursue the most demanding conditions under which to train while in a con-

***Personnel Recovery** cont'd on page 60*

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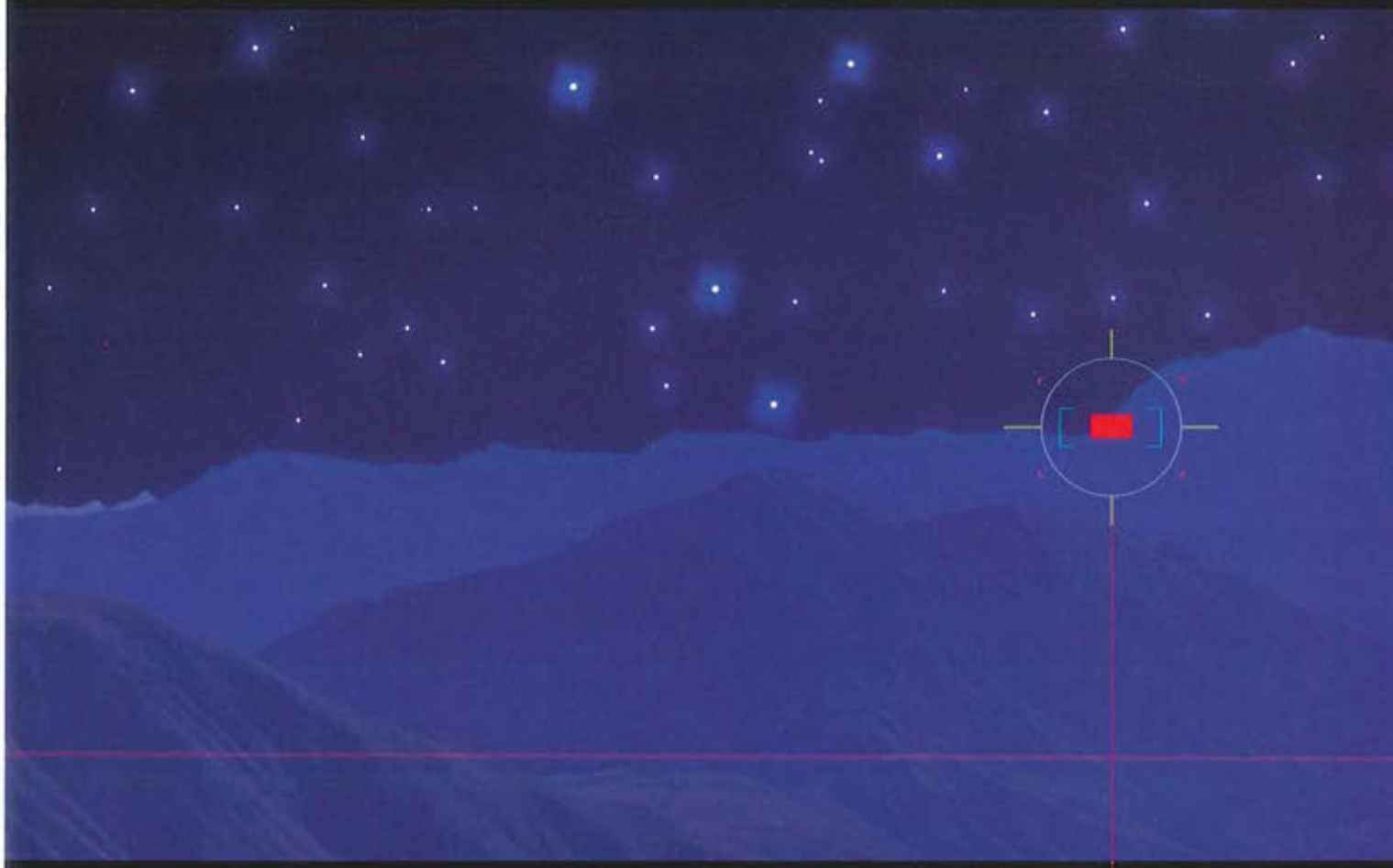

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TUESDAY, MARCH 23, 2004

7:30 - 18:00 Springhouse Golf Club
AAAA Air Assault Chapter Golf Tournament

13:00 - 17:00 Governors Ballroom A, Opryland
AAAA Registration Center Open

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, 2004

8:00 - 19:00 Governors Ballroom A, Opryland
AAAA Registration Center Open

10:00 - 12:30 Governors Ballroom C, Opryland
AAAA Scholarship Board Meeting

14:00 - 16:30 Governors Ballroom C, Opryland
AAAA National Executive Board Meeting

16:30 - 17:30 Governors Chamber E, Opryland
Awardee & Inductee Briefing

18:00 - 20:00 Exhibit Hall, Opryland
Early Birds Reception & Grand Opening of Exhibits

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2004

7:00 - 16:00 Governors Ballroom A, Opryland
AAAA Registration Center Open

7:30 - 8:30 Delta Ballroom CD, Opryland
Eye-Opener Refreshment Break

7:30 - 8:30 Governors Chamber E, Opryland
Speakers Breakfast

8:00 - 17:00 Governors Chamber A, Opryland
Press Room Open
(Sponsored by GE Aircraft Engines)

8:30 - 11:00 Delta Ballroom CD, Opryland
Professional Opening Session
Presentation of AAAA Individual Awards

8:30 - 9:00 **AAAA President's Welcome**: MG Andy Andreson, Ret., AAAA President
9:00 - 9:30 **Aviation Branch Opening Remarks**: BG E.J. Sinclair, Aviation Branch Chief, Commanding General, U.S. Army Aviation Center
9:30 - 11:00 **Keynote Address & Presentation of Individual Awards**: LTG Richard A. Cody, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3, U.S. Army

9:30 - 15:00 Country Music Hall of Fame
Spouse Tour
Country Music Hall of Fame & Studio "B" & Lunch
Buses depart from the Presidential Portico

11:00 - 16:00 Exhibit Hall, Opryland
AAAA Exhibits Open

11:00 - 16:00 Exhibit Hall Briefing Area, Opryland
Briefings in Exhibit Hall
11:00 - 11:30 **OIF Commanders**
11:20 - 11:40 **Apache Attack**: COL Ralph G. Pallotta
11:40 - 12:00 **Umanned Aerial Vehicle-UCAR**: COL John D. Burke
12:00 - 12:20 **Utility Helicopters**: COL Cory Mahanna
12:40 - 13:00 **Aviation Systems**: Mr. Gary S. Nenninger
13:00 - 13:20 **Scout/Attack Helicopters**: LTC Jeffrey A. Crabb
13:20 - 13:40 **AVCATT-A**: COL Kevin Noonan/ LTC Allen L. Borgardts
13:40 - 14:00 **Cargo Helicopters**: COL William T. Crosby
14:00 - 14:20 **AATD**: COL William M. Gavora
14:20 - 14:40 **Air Warrior**: LTC Michael D. Wills
14:40 - 15:00 **ATEC/AEC**: COL Carl J. Kreisel/ MAJ Wayne S. Smith
15:00 - 15:20 **DCMA**: LTC Mark Ballew

11:00 - 11:30 Bayou D, Opryland
Professional Session: Soldier Update
CSM Walter Beckman

11:00 - 11:30 Bayou B, Opryland
Professional Session: Warrant Officer Update
CW5 Stephen T. Knowles II

11:00 - 16:00 Exhibit Hall Booth #2239, Opryland
USAHRC Career Guidance

12:30 - 14:30 Delta Ballroom B, Opryland
AAAA Annual Meeting & Luncheon
President's Annual Report, National Elections, Presentation of AAAA Membership Awards
MG Andy Andreson, Ret., AAAA President

17:30 - 19:00 Tennessee Ballroom Lobby A, Opryland
Hall of Fame Ticket Pickup

18:00 - 19:00 Tennessee Ballroom Lobby A, Opryland
Hall of Fame Reception

19:00 - 21:00 Tennessee Ballroom CDE, Opryland
Hall of Fame Dinner

21:00 - 1:00 Delta Ballroom BC, Opryland
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FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2004

8:00 - 16:00 Governors Ballroom A, Opryland
AAAA Registration Center Open

7:30 - 8:30 Delta Ballroom CD, Opryland
Eye-Opener Refreshment Break

8:00 - 16:00 Governors Chamber A, Opryland
Press Room Open (Sponsored by GE Aircraft Engines)

7:30 - 8:30 Governors Chamber E, Opryland
Speakers Breakfast

8:30 - 11:00 Delta Ballroom CD, Opryland
Professional Session

8:30 - 9:00 Host Command: MG David H. Petraeus, CG 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault
9:00 - 9:30 LTG Anthony R. Jones, DCG, TRADOC
9:30 - 10:00 MG(P) John M. Curran, Dir., TRADOC Futures Cener
10:00 - 10:30 MG Joseph L. Bergantz, PEO Aviation
10:30 - 11:00 BG(P) James H. Pillsbury, CG AMCOM

9:30 - 16:00 Historic Falcon Manor
Spouse Tour:
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Buses depart from the Presidential Portico

11:00 - 16:00 Exhibit Hall, Opryland
AAAA Exhibits Open

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14:40 - 15:00 **ATTC**: COL David B. Cripps
15:00 - 15:20 **DCMA**: LTC Mark Ballew

11:00 - 11:30 Bayou D, Opryland
Professional Session: Future Combat Systems

11:00 - 16:00 Exhibit Hall Booth #2239, Opryland
USAHRC Career Guidance

12:00 - 13:30 Delta Ballroom B, Opryland
Luncheon
GEN Paul J. Kern, CG, Army Materiel Command

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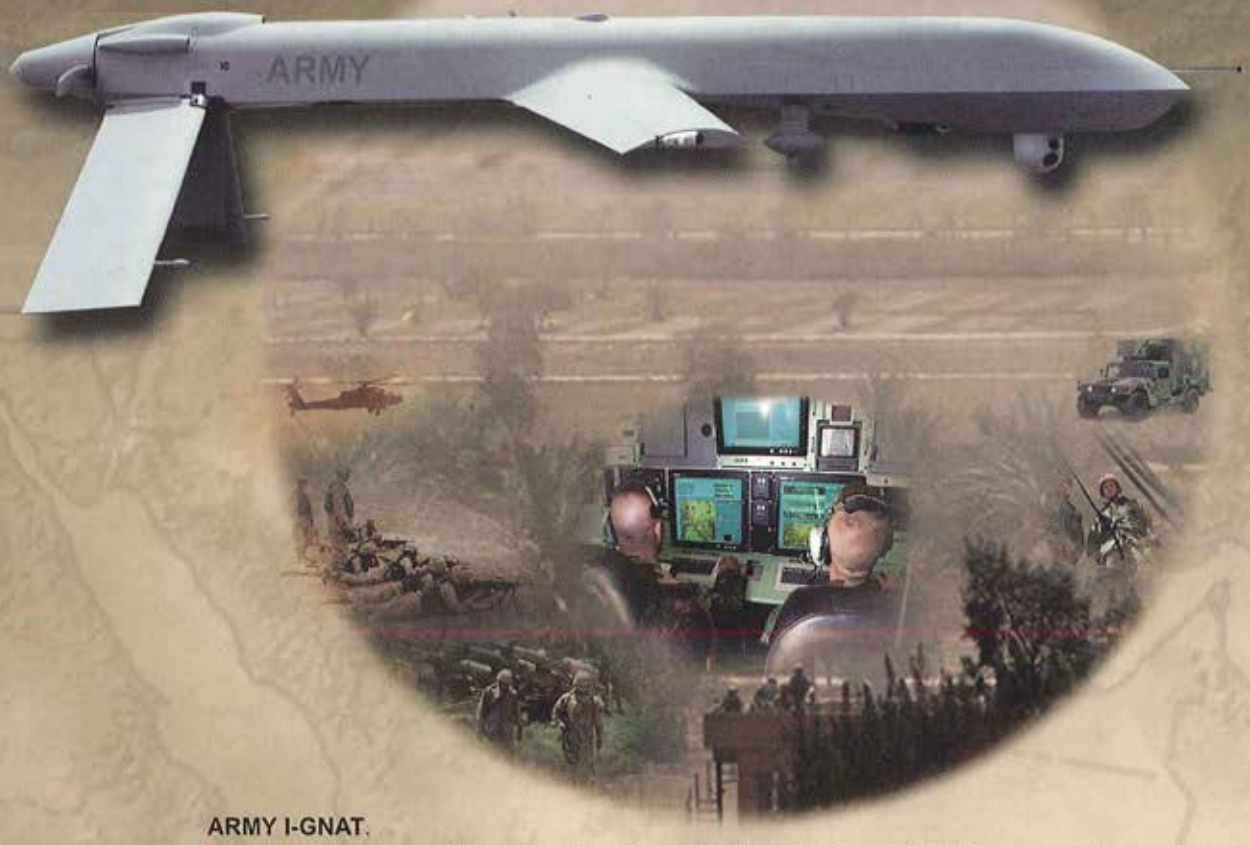

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FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2004 *(Cont'd.)*

15:00 - 16:00 Governors Ballroom C, Opryland
AAAA NEB & Chapter Presidents Session

16:30 - 18:00 Presidential Suite G6060, Opryland
Cub Club Reception

21:00 - 1:00 Delta Ballroom BC, Opryland
AAAA Chapter Reception
"Winning for Freedom"
Hosts: Aviation Center, Arizona, Colonial Virginia, Jimmy Doolittle, Lindbergh, Monmouth, Morning Calm, Savannah, Southern California, USAREUR & Washington-Potomac

SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2004

7:30 - 15:00 Governors Ballroom A, Opryland
AAAA Registration Center Open

7:45 - 9:00 Governors Ballroom D, Opryland
First Light Breakfast (By Invitation Only)
Speaker: Hon. Claude M. Bolton, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology

8:00 - 9:00 Delta Ballroom CD, Opryland
Eye-Opener Refreshment Break

8:00 - 15:00 Governors Chamber A, Opryland
Press Room Open
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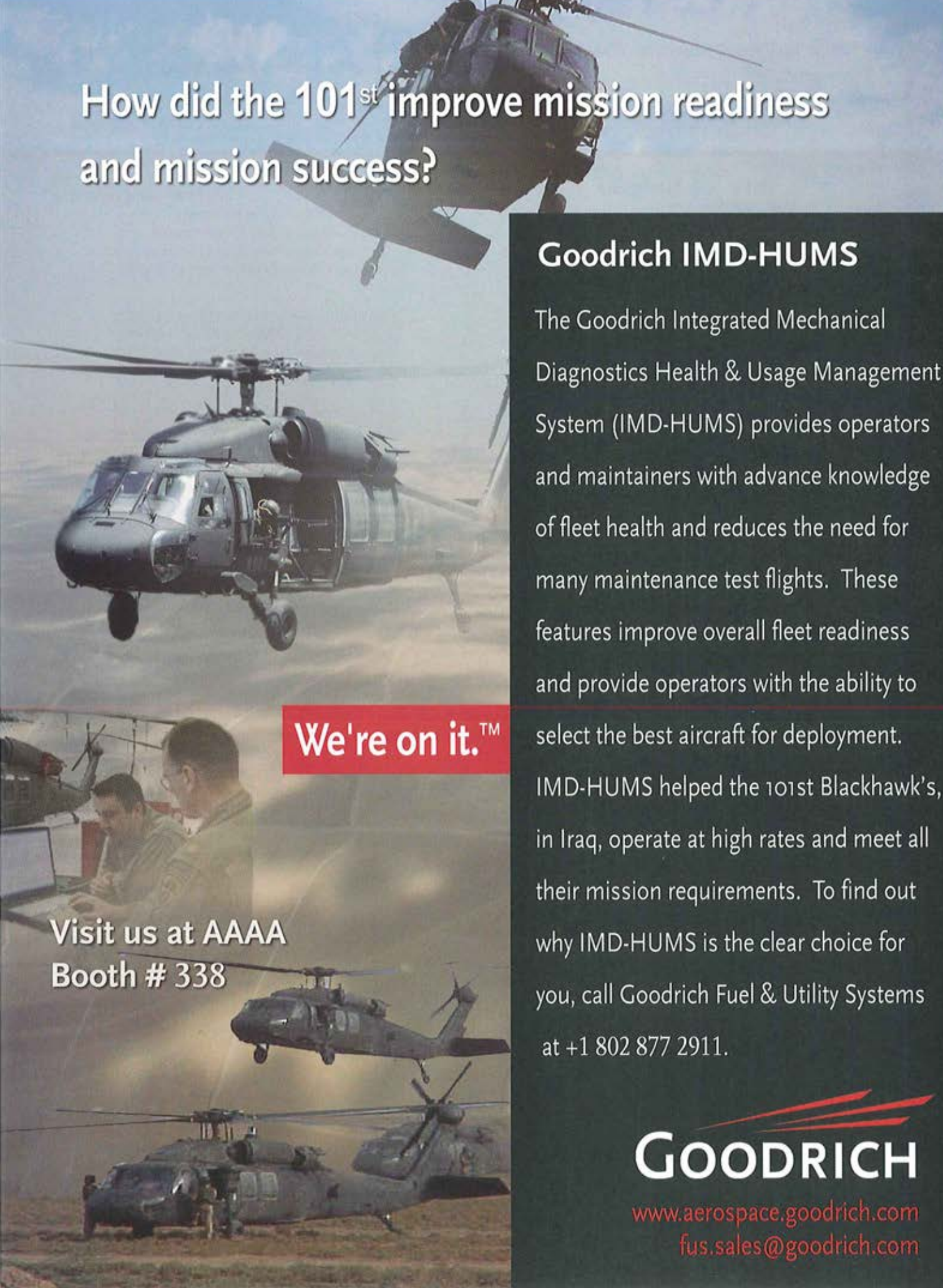
9:00 - 10:00 Delta Ballroom CD, Opryland
Professional Session: Panel #1
Preparing for the Future: Lessons Learned Become Techniques, Tactics, and Procedures:
Chairman: BG E.J. Sinclair, Aviation Branch Chief
COL Joseph Anderson, Cdr 2nd Bde, 101st Abn Div
COL D. Mark Ferrell, Director, DOTDS
COL William H. Forrester, COS, USAAVNC
COL Gregory P. Gass, Cdr 101st Avn Bde
COL Ben Hodges, Cdr 1st Bde 101st Abn Div
COL Curtis Potts, Cdr 3ID Avn Bde
COL Gregory M. Williamitis, TSM-Attack
LTC Robert O. Bannon, Cdr, 2-3 Avn, 3rd ID

10:00 - 11:00 Delta Ballroom CD, Opryland
Professional Session: Panel #2
Aviation Task Force: Where Are We Now & Where Are We Going?
Chairman: MG James D. Thurman, Aviation Task Force Chairman
COL Thomas H. Evelyn, FIST
COL George J. Gluski, Chief Aviation & Safety Div., NGB
COL Ellis W. Golson, Dir., Combat Development
COL Daniel T. Leslie, DAC, ARNG
COL Rickey L. Rife, G8



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SATURDAY, MARCH 27, 2004 *(Cont'd.)*

11:00 - 15:00 Exhibit Hall, Opryland
AAAA Exhibits Open

11:00 - 15:00 Exhibit Hall Briefing Area, Opryland
Briefings in Exhibit Hall
11:00 - 11:20 **OIF Commanders**
11:20 - 11:40 **Apache Attack**: COL Ralph G. Pallotta
11:40 - 12:00 **Umanned Aerial Vehicle-UCAR**: COL John D. Burke
12:00 - 12:20 **Utility Helicopters**: COL Cory Mahanna
12:40 - 13:00 **Aviation Systems**: Mr. Gary S. Nenninger
13:00 - 13:20 **Scout/Attack Helicopters**: LTC Jeffrey A. Crabb
13:20 - 13:40 **AVCATT-A**: COL Kevin Noonan/ LTC Allen L. Borgardts
13:40 - 14:00 **Cargo Helicopters**: COL William T. Crosby
14:00 - 14:20 **AATD**: COL William M. Gavora
14:20 - 14:40 **Air Warrior**: LTC Michael D. Wills
14:40 - 15:00 **AVTD**: COL Jeffery G. Gregson

11:00 - 15:00 Exhibit Hall Booth #2239, Opryland
USAHRC Career Guidance

12:00 - 13:30 Delta Ballroom B, Opryland
Luncheon
GEN Crosbie E. Saint, Ret.

17:45 - 19:00 Delta Ballroom Lobby B, Opryland
AAAA Banquet Ticket Pickup

18:00 - 18:45 Delta Ballroom Lobby B, Opryland
AAAA Awards Banquet Reception

19:00 - 22:00 Delta Ballroom, Opryland
AAAA Awards Banquet
Presentation of AAAA Unit Awards
Guest Speaker: GEN Bryan D. Brown
Commander, Special Operations Command

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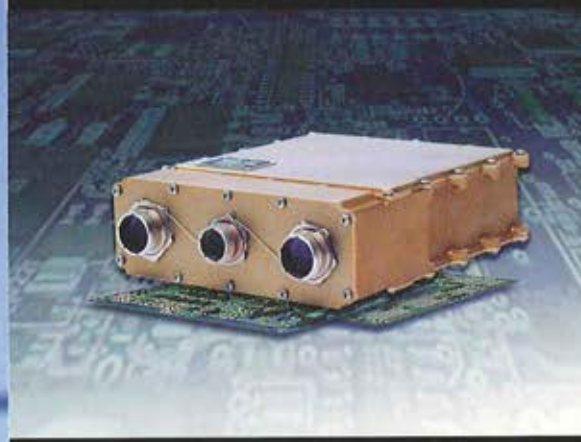

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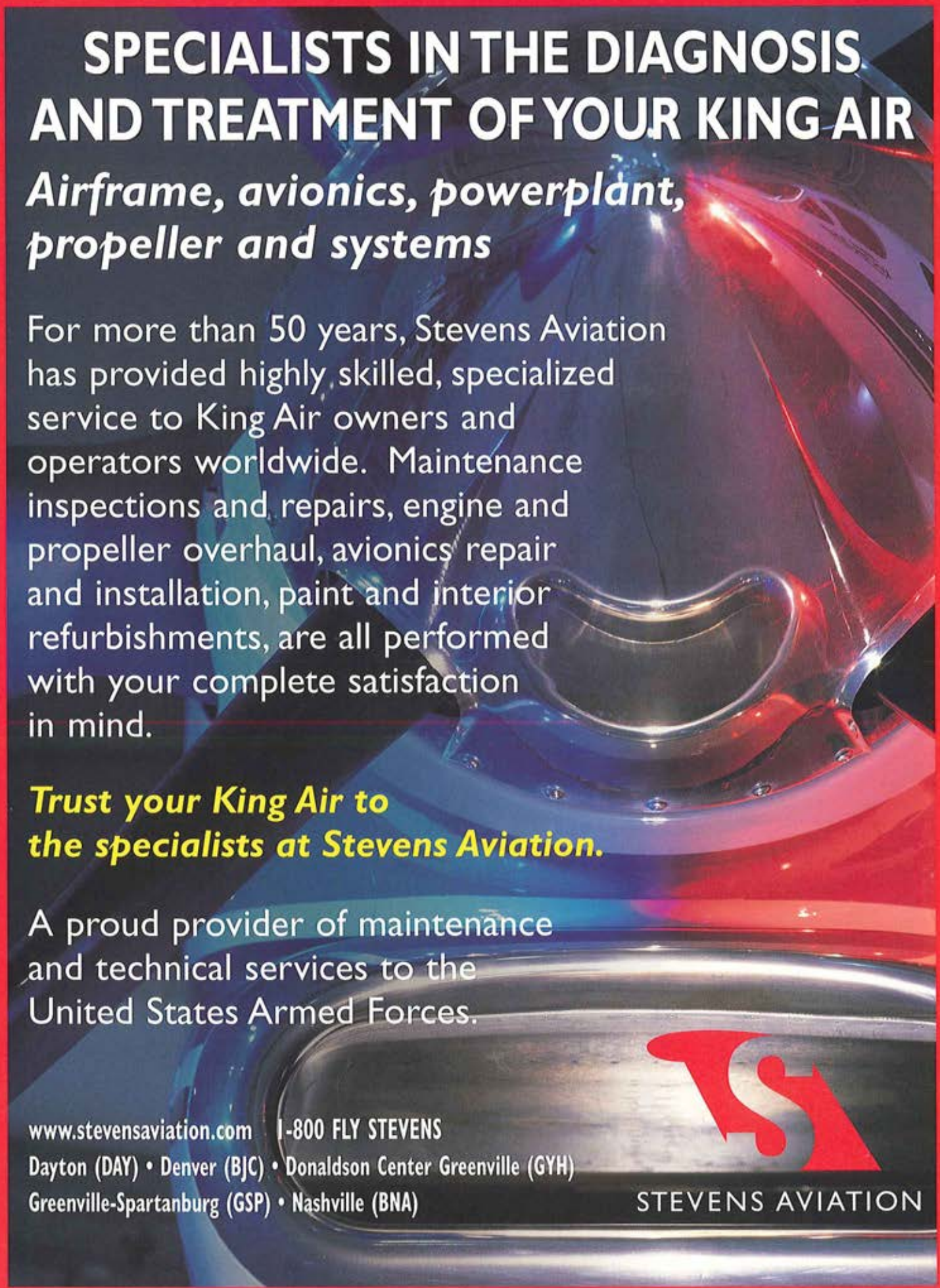
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EXHIBIT HALL HOUR

Weds., March 24, 2004
Early Birds
Reception &
Opening of Exhibits
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

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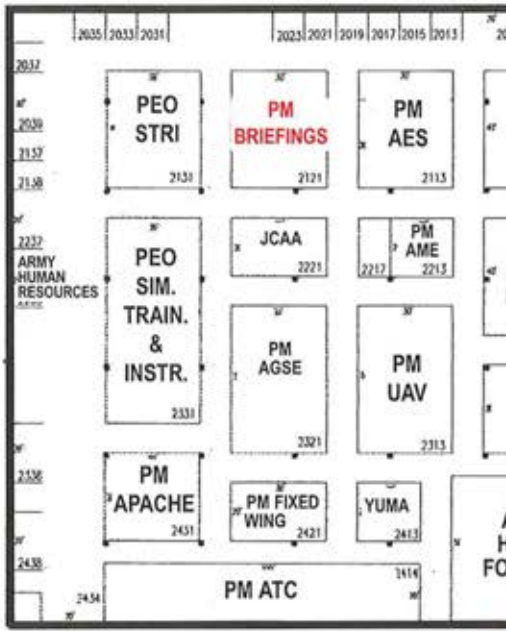

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As of February 24, 2004, membership in AAAA's 65 Chapters totalled 12,616 members, or 86% of the Association's 14,713 members. The 65 chapters are divided into three categories.

*The Master Chapter category includes the 17 largest Chapters with 170 or more members and covers 9,394 members.

** The Senior Chapter category of 15 Chapters with 80-169 members, equaling 1,740 members.

***The AAAA Chapter category of 33 Chapters having 25-79 members comprising 1,482 members.

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Outstanding Aviation Unit (USAR) of the Year

Sponsored by Honeywell, 244th Aviation Brigade, Fort Sheridan, IL.

The 2003 Army Reserve Aviation Unit of the Year, the 244th Aviation Brigade, excelled in providing rotary- and fixed-wing support to joint and coalition forces during operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. The brigade's mission profile covered operations in Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and several other countries.

The brigade experienced an extremely high operational tempo immediately upon arrival in theater. The requirements for aviation support, logistics, command and control, and maintenance led the 244th through a myriad of transitions. Units quickly adjusted to and relied heavily on theater aviation to move supplies and troops back and forth instead of using the established Air Force C-130 flights.

The magnitude of the 244th Avn. Bde.'s success was a direct result of the collective drive and determination of the officers, NCOs and soldiers to meet every challenge. The 86 Army and nine Air Force personnel assigned to the brigade headquarters shared 50 Bronze Stars, one Air Medal and 43 Army Commendation Medals for excellence of performance and service.

MAJ David Ernest Wood

ISG Dell Lynn Christine

Outstanding Aviation Unit (ARNG) of the Year

Sponsored by Honeywell, G Company 104th Aviation Regiment (Pennsylvania and Connecticut Army National Guard)

AAAA's Army National Guard Aviation Unit of the Year for 2003 is Company G, 204th Aviation Regiment, a CH-47D heavy-lift helicopter unit with headquarters in Pennsylvania and a flight detachment in Connecticut.

The entire unit was alerted for deployment on Feb. 10, 2003, and departed home station in each state for the mobilization station at Fort Dix on Feb. 18 with 100 percent of personnel and all 14 CH-47Ds. After a stay in Kuwait, all of the unit's soldiers, equipment and aircraft finally arrived in Afghanistan in the first week of June.

Operating out of Kandahar and Bagram, the unit has logged more than 2,200 flight hours, carried more than 7,000 passengers and hauled more than 500,000 pounds of equipment. The company has also maintained an operational readiness (OR) rate of 92 percent throughout the deployment, and has operated throughout the mobilization without serious accident, incident or injury. Unit aircraft fuelers have pumped more than 2,500,000 gallons of JP8 and all activities have been accomplished without accident or injury.

The unit remains deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, serving proudly, and representing the National Guard in a truly outstanding manner.

LTC Timothy A. Jones

CSM Michael R. Marler

Outstanding Aviation Unit (Army) of the Year

Sponsored by The Boeing Company, 9th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment (Assault) 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

The Fort Campbell, Kentucky-based 9th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, is AAAA's Outstanding Aviation Unit of the Year for 2003.

During the award period the battalion trained for war, deployed all its vehicles and equipment to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility and helped defeat the Iraqi army, and today continues to conduct stability and support operations (SASO) in northern Iraq.

Operation Iraqi Freedom took the battalion across the spectrum of conflict. Initially providing less than a company for a battalion air assault, the 9th Bn. was augmented with elements of two other assault battalions and a medium-lift battalion to form an aviation task force of 50 UH-60s and six CH-47s to assault the 101st Airborne Division's 1st and 2nd brigade combat teams deep into Iraq. With less than two days to plan and rehearse, Task Force 9-101 air assaulted nearly 1,000 soldiers from Camp Udari, Kuwait, to an objective southeast of An Najaf, a distance of more than 250 miles.

The battalion went on to move nearly 2,000 soldiers and supplies into positions along the V Corps main supply route; conducted critical sling-load missions to resupply the forward forces with food and water; established and operated a forward refueling and rearming point more than 250 miles beyond the Iraqi border with Kuwait; and led the planning and execution of the longest air assault in the history of the 101st Abn. Div.

The battalion achieved these exceptional results while maintaining a remarkable safety record. Despite the incredible number of flight hours and missions, more than 6,700 soldiers air assaulted and hundreds of tons of supplies moved, the battalion recorded only one Class C aviation mishap, attributed directly to the extreme environmental conditions.

The work ethic and esprit de corps exhibited by every member of the battalion puts the unit on the cutting edge of aviation operations and truly represents the very best of Army aviation.

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ESSS, U.S. Army Aviation Applied Technology Directorate (AATD), Fort Eustis, VA.

The 2003 winner of the Leich Award is the U.S. Army's Aviation Applied Technology Directorate (AATD) at Fort Eustis, Va.

AATD has been supporting soldiers for more than 50 years and has provided some of the most innovative technical solutions to aviation challenges. It develops, demonstrates, and applies those critical technologies that improve the capability, readiness, safety and affordability of our Army rotorcraft and tactical unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) systems. AATD also provides quality and timely engineering and rapid prototyping support to Army Program Executive Offices, the U.S. Special Operations Command and others. And, finally, AATD supports worldwide contingency operations through the fabrication and support of unique material solutions.

AATD continues to be engaged in many efforts that will usher in the future of Army aviation. AATD will continue to be the recognized leader within the Department of Defense for the development and engineering of rotorcraft and tactical UAV systems and technologies, and will be known not only for the quality of its work, but also for the excellence of its people.

Joseph P. Cribbins Department of the Army Civilian of the Year

Sponsored by The Boeing Company, Co-Winners Mr. Alvin A. Abejon, PM Tactical Operations Center, Madison, AL and Mr. George Dimitrov, Chief, Rapid Prototyping Division (RPD), U.S. Army Aviation Applied Technology Directorate (AATD), Fort Eustis, VA

Mr. Alvin A. Abejon

Alvin A. Abejon has been tapped as co-winner of the 2003 Department of the Army Civilian Award.

Abejon was recognized for his vision, leadership and management skills in extending the network-centric management of friendly forces to Army rotary-wing aircraft, a capability that became known as Blue Force Tracking-Aviation, which was a truly vital component of the American victory over Iraq.

Abejon's experiences in the Balkans with a satellite-based variation of Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) helped formulate his vision to expand management of friendly forces through a shared network architecture to aviation platforms. Directed by the vice chief of staff of the Army, and coordinated through the Army G-6, Abejon and his team designed, fabricated, tested, certified, acquired and installed the system on more than 200 aviation platforms before hostilities commenced.

Abejon exemplifies the professionalism, dedication and technical excellence that are the hallmark of the civilian members of the Army aviation team.

Mr. George V. Dimitrov

George V. Dimitrov has been named co-winner of the 2003 Department of the Army Civilian Award.

Dimitrov, the chief of the Rapid Prototyping Division (RPD) of the U.S. Army Aviation Applied Technology Directorate (AATD) at Fort Eustis, Va., was recognized for his leadership of RPD's successful execution of critical Army aviation projects in direct support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, as well as those supporting AATD's core science and technology mission area.

The projects that benefited from Dimitrov's leadership included satellite communications, Apache Instrument Flight Rules, Blue Force Tracking-Aviation, Enhanced Position and Location Reporting System, Army Airborne Command and Control Systems, Apache Air Transportability and brownout solutions for both cargo and utility aircraft. Each of these programs significantly enhanced Army aviation's operational effectiveness and survivability.

Dimitrov exemplifies the professionalism, dedication and technical excellence that are the hallmark of the civilian members of the Army aviation team.

CW3 Daniel S. Dotson

James H. McClellan Aviation Safety Award Sponsored by GE Aircraft Engines,

CW3 Daniel S. Dotson, Aviation Safety Officer, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), Fort Campbell, KY.

AAAA is proud to name CW3 Daniel S. Dotson of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) as the 2003 winner of the McClellan Aviation Safety Officer of the Year Award.

As the 2nd Battalion's safety officer during a period of unprecedented combat operations, Dotson implemented and supervised an aggressive safety program for a battalion deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan. In both areas the unit carried out all missions without incident, an amazing achievement when measured against the brutal environmental conditions — extreme temperatures, high altitudes, zero illumination, zero visibility and brown-out landings. CW3 Dotson's leadership and proactive safety programs were individually responsible for the battalion's successes in both theaters of war.

In addition to his safety officer duties during the award period, Dotson flew more than 60 MH-47E combat missions in Afghanistan. He planned and led complex joint missions requiring flight in zero illumination under night-vision systems, air refueling, terrain-following radar flight in zero visibility, altitudes in excess of 16,000 feet and extreme temperatures. When he returned from Afghanistan, Dotson used the lessons learned in combat to further refine the unit's safety program.

Dotson's leadership, talent and expertise in aviation safety directly contributed to the safe and successful prosecution of combat operations during the ongoing war against terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq. His accomplishments distinguish him as uniquely qualified to be the Aviation Safety Officer of the Year.

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AAAA NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

SPC Joseph M. Buffinton

Army Aviation Soldier of the Year Sponsored by Bell Helicopter Textron

SPC Joseph M. Buffinton, TF 12th Aviation, Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, APO AE.

AAAA's Aviation Soldier of the Year for 2003 is SPC Joseph Buffinton. A member of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, he was selected in recognition of his continued contributions to Army aviation.

Buffinton joined his unit just before it deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and upon arrival in Kuwait had an immediate positive impact on unit training because of his past experience in the desert environment. He crossed into Iraq on D-Day, and as the primary crew chief assigned to aircraft 674 flew more than 500 hours in support of combat operations. Buffinton's hard work and dedication ensured that the aircraft was ready to fly every day with an operation rate of 88 percent despite the adverse environmental conditions and extremely high operational tempo.

Buffinton's work ethic and maintenance knowledge are second to none, and his initiative and patience are acknowledged by all. His sense of discipline, his pride in his work and his dedication mark him as an exemplary aviation soldier.

SGT Shawn Hope

Army Aviation Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year

Sponsored by Lockheed Martin

SGT Shawn Hope, 507th Medical Company (AA), Fort Hood, TX.

AAAA's 2003 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, flight medic SGT Shawn S. Hope of the 507th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), distinguished himself with exceptionally meritorious service during the award period.

During five weeks of battle in Iraq Hope logged more than 77 combat hours and saved the lives of more than 40 people, including American soldiers, Iraqi soldiers and Iraqi civilians. His dedication and professionalism are perhaps best exemplified through the events of one mission, that of April 3, 2003. During a flight into Objective Lyons (Baghdad International Airport) Hope rendered medical aid during a very intense flight that required the pilots of his aircraft to constantly perform evasive maneuvers to avoid fire from enemy rocket-propelled grenades, anti-aircraft artillery and small arms. Hope was credited with saving two 3rd Infantry Division soldiers from permanent disabilities and/or death.

Hope exemplifies the tenets of the NCO Creed and ensures that common goals are achieved through initiative and teamwork. He is trusted; he is mature beyond his years of experience; and he is the consummate professional.

CW4 Curtis Phipps

Army Aviator of the Year Sponsored by Sikorsky Aircraft

CW4 Curtis R. Phipps, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (AASLT), Fort Campbell, KY.

CW4 Curtis R. Phipps of 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, has been named AAAA's 2003 Aviator of the Year. While the award recognizes his professionalism and leadership, it makes special note of Phipps' outstanding accomplishments as master gunner for his unit. In that position he developed and implemented a realistic and tactically challenging aviation gunnery training program for the squadron's 76 aviators, a program that focused in large part on urban combat techniques for the OH-58D aircrews.

Phipps demonstrated the capabilities of the OH-58D in the Close Combat Attack (CCA) role to every infantry battalion in the 101st Airborne Division, conducting training and live-fire exercises both day and night. He also implemented a new target handover format that simplifies the calls both ground and air would conduct when calling for Squadron support. And, finally, Phipps implemented target and friendly marking techniques for use in combat that continue to be used today.

During combat operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) — in which Phipps flew more than 500 combat hours — the Kiowa Warrior quickly became the aircraft of choice for the ground commander in urban terrain. Under the harshest of combat conditions the tactics, techniques and procedures Phipps developed and implemented proved to be extremely effective in the close fight, and helped the squadron and the division achieve tremendous success.

The consummate professional officer, soldier and aviator, the 2003 Aviator of the Year has proved time and again that he represents the very best that Army aviation has to offer.

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2004 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

SSG Roy P. Benavidez

SSG Roy P. Benavidez, Medal of Honor Recipient

SSG Roy P. Benavidez saved a special forces unit in Vietnam in spite of a broken jaw, 37 bullet wounds and bayonet puncture wounds while assigned to Detachment B56, 5th Special Forces Group.

On May 2, 1968, a 12-man special forces reconnaissance team was inserted by helicopters in a dense jungle area west of Loc Ninh, Vietnam. The team met heavy enemy resistance, and requested emergency extraction. Three helicopters attempted extraction, but were unable to land due to intense enemy fire. Benavidez volunteered to assist in another extraction attempt. He jumped from the hovering helicopter, and ran approximately 75 meters under withering small arms fire to the crippled team.

Despite severe wounds and under intense enemy fire, he carried and dragged half of the wounded team members to the awaiting aircraft. Benavidez was severely wounded by small arms fire in the abdomen and grenade fragments in his back. At nearly the same moment, the aircraft pilot was mortally wounded, and the helicopter crashed. Benavidez made his way back to the wreckage and helped the wounded out of the overturned aircraft and formed a defensive perimeter. He was wounded again just before another extraction helicopter landed.

Upon reaching the aircraft, Benavidez spotted and killed two more enemy soldiers. With little strength left, he made one last trip to bring in the remaining wounded. Only then, in extremely serious condition from numerous wounds and loss of blood, did he allow himself to be pulled into the extraction aircraft. His refusal to be stopped despite numerous severe wounds saved the lives of at least eight men.

Benavidez died in 1998.

CPT Ed W. Freeman

CPT Ed W. Freeman, Medal of Honor Recipient

CPT Ed W. Freeman distinguished himself on Nov. 14, 1965, while serving with Company A, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

As a flight leader and second in command of a 16-helicopter lift unit, he supported a heavily engaged American infantry battalion at landing zone X-ray in Vietnam's Ia Drang Valley. The infantry unit was almost out of ammunition, fighting off a relentless attack from a heavily armed enemy force. When the U.S. infantry commander closed the helicopter landing zone due to intense enemy fire, Freeman risked his own life by repeatedly flying his unarmed helicopter through a gauntlet of enemy fire to deliver ammunition, water and medical supplies to the besieged battalion.

After the pilots of medical-evacuation helicopters refused to fly into the area because of the intense enemy fire, Freeman flew 14 rescue missions, evacuating some 30 seriously wounded soldiers. All flights were made into a small emergency landing zone within 100 to 200 meters of the defensive perimeter where heavily committed units were perilously holding off the attacking elements.

Freeman's selfless acts of great valor, extraordinary perseverance and intrepidity were far above and beyond the call of duty or mission.

CPT Jon E. Swanson

CPT Jon E. Swanson, Medal of Honor Recipient

CPT Jon E. Swanson distinguished himself on Feb. 26, 1971, while flying an OH-6A in support of South Vietnamese forces operating in Cambodia.

Swanson was tasked with pinpointing the positions of two enemy regiments. While flying at treetop level he engaged enemy bunkers with concussion grenades and machine-gun fire. After expending all his heavy ordnance, he marked an enemy machine-gun position with a smoke grenade and directed a Cobra gun ship attack. The weapon remained intact, however, and Swanson immediately engaged and destroyed it.

Under fire from a second weapon, Swanson engaged the position, marked the target, and directed a second Cobra gun ship attack. While flying toward a third enemy emplacement his aircraft exploded in the air and crashed to the ground, killing him.

Swanson's courageous actions resulted in at least eight enemy killed and the destruction of three enemy antiaircraft weapons. His extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

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2004 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

SP5 Dennis M. Fujii

Specialist Five Dennis M. Fujii

SP5 Dennis M. Fujii distinguished himself in February 1971 in Laos while serving as a crew chief aboard a he copter ambulance of the 237th Medical Detachment.

The team's mission was to evacuate seriously wounded Vietnamese military personnel from a battlefield. Wh approaching the heavily defended landing zone Fujii's helicopter was shot down. Another American helicopt extracted all the downed crewmen except for Fujii, who was unable to board due to intense enemy fire directed him. Rather than further endanger the lives of his comrades aboard the second helicopter, Fujii waved the craft o of the combat area and remained behind as the only American on the battlefield in Laos.

During the night of Feb. 19 and all through the next day, Fujii disregarded his own wounds as he administered first aid to the Sou Vietnamese casualties. When his position was attacked by a reinforced enemy regiment supported by heavy artillery, Fujii called American helicopter gunships to assist the small unit in repelling the attack. For more than 17 hours, Fujii repeatedly exposed hi self to hostile fire as he left the security of his entrenchment to better observe enemy troop positions and to direct air strikes agair them. On Feb. 20 he was evacuated, but the helicopter was shot down. Two days passed before Fujii finally was rescued.

For this and other contributions, Fujii was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Purple Heart, two Air Medals, a Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palms.

CW4 Jerry R. Riley

CW4 Jerry R. Riley

CW4 Jerry R. Riley exhibited outstanding courage, professionalism and dedication to Army aviation as an Arr aviator, contract civilian and Department of the Army civilian.

Riley amassed 950 combat hours as a UH-1H aircraft commander in the 101st Airborne Division during t Vietnam War, and his bravery and combat flying skills were recognized with the award of two Distinguished Flyi Crosses.

After leaving active duty in 1976 Riley became a contract flight instructor at Fort Rucker, Ala., becoming assista flight commander and winning an award for 3,000 flight hours without accident or incident. In 1977 he began a 20-ye career as an Army Reserve aviator with the 282nd Aviation Company. In that capacity he took part in deployments to Europe, su ported various units in the southeastern United States and took part in counterdrug operations.

As a Department of the Army civilian and Aviation Training Brigade standardization officer at Fort Rucker, Riley's professionalis had a profound effect throughout Army aviation.

CPT Hugh C. Thompson

CWO Hugh C. Thompson, Ret.

As an OH-23 pilot with the 123rd Aviation Battalion, CWO Hugh Thompson flew over the Vietnamese village of M Lai on March 16, 1968, as U.S. troops were murdering civilians.

When Thompson landed and tried to get 1LT William Calley to stop the killing, Calley said he was in charge a sent Thompson on his way. Continuing to fly around the area, he and his crew spotted some Vietnamese trying hide. He landed and, with crewmen Larry Colburn and Glenn Andreotta covering him, pulled out of hiding nine pe ple facing certain death and evacuated them from the area. Thompson then went to his aviation company comma der, MAJ Fred Watke, and reported what he had seen. Watke reported the massacre to the ground task force co mander, who ordered an immediate cease fire.

Thompson was shot down during a later mission and was evacuated in traction with a broken back. For his actions at My Lai was vilified by supporters of the massacre, both inside and outside the U.S. government.

Thompson later accepted a commission and attained the rank of captain, but served his remaining active-duty time as a warra officer because of post-war reductions in force. In March 1998 the Army recognized Thompson's heroic actions at My Lai with t award of the Soldier's Medal.

LTC Bruce Crandall

LTC Bruce Crandall, Ret.

LTC Bruce Crandall (Ret.) received his wings in the first aviator class at Camp Rucker, Ala., in 1955. He parti pated in mapping operations from Africa to the Arctic and in Central and South America, where he was director of t first project using military satellites for terrestrial mapping. He has been a fixed and rotary wing test pilot and help to develop and test the airmobile concept and doctrine he so effectively implemented in Vietnam.

Crandall served in the Dominican Republic and two tours in Vietnam. His 750 combat operations in Southeast As included the famed Battle of the Ia Drang Valley, during which he saved more than 70 wounded soldiers and provi ed ammo critical to the survival of the U.S. ground unit. In 1966, Crandall flew two more night rescue missions whi evacuated 12 wounded from a unit in heavy contact with the enemy. He received the 1966 Aviation and Space Writers Helicopt Heroism Award for this daring rescue.

In addition to his many military awards for gallantry and service, Crandall was the seventh Army inductee in the "Gathering Eagles," a U.S. Air Force organization honoring contributors to aviation, and he received the Silver DeFleury Medallion for his cont butions in engineering and aviation.

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2004 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

LTC Michael C. Grimm

LTC Michael C. Grimm (deceased)

A distinguished infantry officer recommended for the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War, LTC Michael C. Grimm graduated from flight school and returned to Vietnam as a captain assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry. He further distinguished himself as an aviation leader in the 101st Airborne Division.

In May 1980 the 101st Abn. Div. was tasked with creating a special operations helicopter unit, which Grimm was directed to organize and command. Under a veil of tight secrecy the unit developed tactics and equipment that formed the basis for what became the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment. These revolutionary tactics, techniques and procedures were later adopted by Army aviation, transforming it from a mainly day fighting force to the successful unique night fighting units of today.

Tragedy struck Army aviation when Grimm was killed while leading a long range, night vision assault mission on Oct. 7, 1981.

COL Harry W. Townsend

COL Harry W. Townsend, Ret.

COL Harry Townsend (Ret.) - a veteran of three wars, a master Army aviator with more than 8,000 hours (of which more than 2,000 are combat) and a master parachutist - began his military service with the Citizens Miiitary Training Corps. During World War II he was commissioned a second lieutenant and served in Europe.

In 1947 he applied for flight training. When there was no response he and 19 other black parachutists bought an Aeronca Chief and formed a flying club in Fayetteville, N.C. His outstanding service with the 555th Parachute Infantry was rewarded with a Regular Army commission. Townsend completed fixed-wing and helicopter training in 1950, and went on to fly hundreds of combat missions in Korea in H-13 and liaison fixed-wing aircraft.

Following seven years of important staff and command assignments, Townsend took command of the 268th Combat Aviation Brigade in Vietnam. He led the unit's largest air assault, inserting all combat elements of the 173rd Airborne Bde. and a battery of 155mm howitzers.

Townsend's last years of military service were in the offices of the Army's inspector general, the Secretary of Army and the Secretary of Defense. After retirement he served for seventen years on AAAA's National Executive Board, ten as trustee and treasurer of the Scholarship Foundation, and as international judge in national and international helicopter championships.

Mr. John L. Shipley

Mr. John L. Shipley

John Shipley has been a driving force behind the tremendous success of Army special-operations aviation (ARSOA). His leadership in bringing new, strategic capability to the Army continues to provide unprecedented capabilities for military operations around the world. Shipley is recognized by senior government leaders as one of the Army's finest acquisition executives, as well as being widely considered to be the founding father of ARSOA acquisition.

Over more than 30 years Shipley's efforts have resulted in the rapid development, procurement and fielding of such programs as the Armed Kiowa Warrior, the MH-60 Direct Action Penetrator, the MH-47D Adverse Weather Capable (AWC), and the mission enhanced MH-6M "Street Fighter." Under Shipley's steady direction, investment resources to support ARSOA have increased by more than $2 billion.

Shipley's numerous classified efforts, which must remain secret, are revolutionary for Army aviation. He is a true national asset.

MG Carl H. McNair, Jr.

MG Carl H. McNair Jr., Ret.

MG Carl H. McNair Jr. (Ret.) entered flight training upon graduation from the U.S. Military Academy, and has devoted the subsequent 48 years to building the Army's step-child into the highly respected Army Aviation Branch.

Following a tour as an infantry company commander in the 1st Cavalry Division in Korea, McNair went on to command aviation units in Vietnam. During the course of six campaigns, two Tet offensives and more than 1,500 combat hours McNair was awarded four Distinguished Flying Crosses, a Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars for valor and 53 Air Medals.

McNair commanded the Aviation Brigade at Fort Rucker, Ala., in 1974 and 1975, and was commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation Center from 1980 to 1983. During the latter tour he became the first chief of the Army Aviation Branch.

McNair's other important positions include time as an instructor at both the U.S. Military Academy and the Armed Forces Staff College; deputy for aviation in the Army Secretariat; executive officer to the chief of research and development; and, finally, chief of staff of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

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2004 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

LTG Teddy G. Allen

LTG Teddy G. Allen, Ret.

LTG Teddy G. Allen (Ret.) has commanded Army aviation units from platoon through division. In 1962, as a captain, Allen recognized the vast potential of armed helicopters in support of ground troops and worked tirelessly to expand their employment in all operations.

In 1974 Allen pioneered the use of night vision goggles in aircraft, and in 1980 organized and trained an aviation task force as part of Operation Honey Badger, an operation designed to free American hostages held by the Iranians. Hostages were released prior to commencing the operation, but the task force later formed the nucleus of the first aviation special operations organization. He also served as chief of the Aviation Division in the Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans. In 1986, as chief of the Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group in the Philippines, Allen evacuated President Ferdinand Marcos and his family flawlessly and without casualties.

As commander of the 101st Airborne Division from 1987 to 1989 Allen supervised the complex and arduous fielding of the AH-64A Apache. While director of the Defense Security Assistance Agency he managed programs that assisted more than 124 countries to modernize and professionalize their armed forces.

LTG John W. Woodmansee Jr.

LTG John W. Woodmansee, Jr.

LTG John W. Woodmansee Jr. (Ret.) entered flight school in 1957 as a second lieutenant and remained on flight status until he retired in 1989 as the Commanding General of V Corps. He is believed to be the first Army aviator to fly solo with night-vision goggles, doing this in 1963.

While serving in Vietnam in Huey gunships, Woodmansee was recommended by the Marines for the Navy Cross. On his second Vietnam tour, Woodmansee commanded the 7th Sqdn, 1st Cav in the Delta, the largest air cavalry squadron in Vietnam. During his two years of combat flying in Vietnam he logged more than 1,500 combat hours and was awarded the Silver Star, five Distinguished Flying Crosses and the Air Medal with valor device.

After serving as a White House Fellow for Secretaries of State Dean Rusk and William Rogers in the late 1960s, Woodmansee was assigned to U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command where he identified critical aviation organizational and material needs in Combat Developments. As the two-star DA DSCOPS Force Developer, he pushed these changes through the system. He commanded the 2nd Armored Division before being promoted to command of V Corps in Germany. After retiring from active duty, he served on the Defense Science Board, and continues to work critical aviation issues while serving on the Army Science Board.

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PEO Aviation cont'd from page 16

replacement of many engines since their installation. Gary's Air Traffic Control team, under LTC Greg Oelberg, has continued to modernize air traffic services units with the Tactical Airspace Information System, along with new airport surveillance radar and precision control radar systems. The fixed-wing PM, LTC Dot Tanneyhill, has been working hard to install aircraft survivability equipment (ASE) gear on C-23s and procuring other variants of new aircraft. Marvin Nichols, the mission equipment PM, has been modernizing the transponder, working software blocking, upgrading the improved data modem, and helping platform PMs get new navigation and communications gear on board. Lastly, LTC Chip Lunn, the acting PM for aviation ground support equipment, has been working with the field to get needed systems to our crew chiefs and mechanics sooner.

COMANCHE

COL Mike Cantore's Comanche program team is working to close down their efforts and transfer critical technologies to Apache and the other platforms. The program office and leadership have done extremely well this year. Their cost and schedule performance have been exemplary. The Comanche team members will strengthen the other aviation PMs by bringing their expertise and talents to them as they are reassigned within the PEO.

UAVS

COL John Burke and his unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) team have continued to field the Shadow tactical UAV (TUAV) and its associated ground Control systems and equipment. Both the Shadow and the Hunter have served well in Iraq, and John is ensuring that more systems are going in.

Another success was the limited urgent procurement of the Raven system. One hundred and seventy new systems are being bought, with each system having three air vehicles. COL Burke was also successful in working with the Navy to leverage the on-going Firescout contract for the Army's use to buy Firescout vertical takeoff and landing UAVs.

Lastly, Team UAV was successful in getting the Extended Range/Multi-Purpose (ER/MP) requirement document through the Army Requirement Oversight Council, and it is headed toward the Joint Requirements Oversight Council this spring. The ER/MP will fill the Class IV requirement for the Unit of Action, as well as UAV requirements at the Unit of Employment echelons.

KEEPING BUSY

As you can see, PEO Aviation and the subordinate PMs are quite busy. We will remain busy for the next several years as we recap, reset, modernize and support the warfighting elements of the current force, while transforming to the future force.

As we continue to move forward, I am confident that Army aviation is as strong as ever and will remain a critical element of the future force.

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MG Joseph L. Bergantz is the Army's program executive officer; aviation.

Electric Long Line Improves Logistics

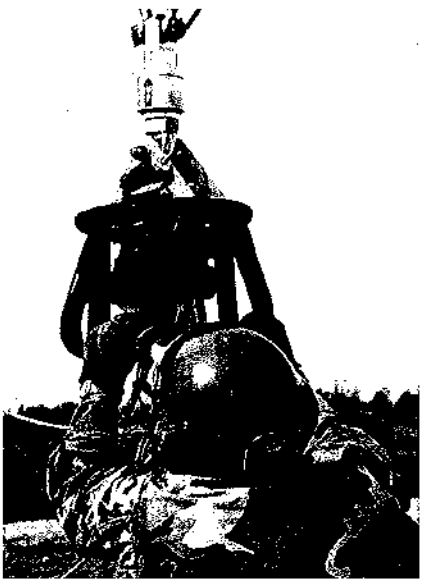
US Army issues AWR for Electric Long Line System– Seventy Blackhawks outfitted.

AMCOM issued an air worthiness release for an electric long line system that improves the logistics of external load transport missions. Army National Guard Blackhawks are the first to be outfitted with the technology.

Consisting of a swivel and an electrically operated remote hook on the end of a long line, the static free ELL system allows helicopter pilots to hover out of ground effect while inserting or extracting an external load.

As a result, the ELL provides immediate access while eliminating the negative effects of brownouts, whiteouts, and FOD – important safety and maintenance considerations. The system also eliminates landing zone requirements (LZR), rigging entanglements, and other ground obstacle considerations.

Plus, with no static discharge to contend with, the ground crews can readily grasp and guide the in-line swivel/hook combination. Furthermore, not being



impacted by the rotor wash, ground crews are safer, can communicate more freely, and are liberated from the blasting effects of brownout conditions.

With a 6.7 safety factor and a 10,000 lb. working load limit (25,000 lb. available), this multipurpose load beam hook accommodates a wide spectrum of chokers, ropes, chains and cables. As an additional safety feature the ELL utilizes both an electrical and a mechanical release. Also, the system takes up little room when stored. *For more information on the ELL System, please call Precision Lift Inc. at 406-236-5361 or email them at: pli@direcway.com.* ■

ELECTRIC LONG LINE FEATURES:

- Immediate access to external loads.
- Eliminates brownout/whiteout effects.
- 6.7 safety factor.
- Safer for ground crew, less rotor wash.
- No static discharge to ground crew.
- Eliminates rigging entanglement.
- In-line electrical swivel adds stability.
- Decreases FOD & abrasive wear.
- Multi-purpose load beam.
- 10,000 lb working load (25k available).
- No landing zone requirement (LZR).
- Electric and mechanical hook release.
- Easily stored when not in use.

Personnel Recovery cont'd from page 26

trolled environment — zero illumination at low altitude over desert terrain with little or no references. Under these conditions, the AH-64's forward-looking infrared (FLIR) capability proved to be as important as its formidable armament. The standard mission profile developed by the PRTF exploited this capability, with the UH-60s tucked in close behind a lead AH-64, which often served as the principle visual reference available to the Black Hawk crews wearing NVGs. Later, during combat operations, this technique proved critical for obstacle and terrain avoidance.

The procedures utilized from the release point inbound and on the objective itself combined the unique capabilities of both airframes. PLS input allowed the Black Hawks to provide terminal guidance inbound, and the Apache's ability to precisely determine wind speed and direction allowed the UH-60s to choose a land heading while simultaneously locating the survivor. In the objective area, the PRTF optimized the close-in capability of the Black Hawk's door guns and the stand-off range of the Apache's weaponry.

For 27 days through February and March, the entire team lived and worked together conducting planning sessions, briefings, rock-drill rehearsals, nightly training flights and after-action reports (AARs) to solidify procedures and explore all possible contingencies. This training period resulted in a cohesive aviation company team with an unprecedented variety of capabilities — both air and ground. Unlike some instances of collaboration between Black Hawk crews and our Apache brethren, the PRTF experienced a real team bond and an in-depth understanding of the respective airframe capabilities, along with the thought processes behind their operations. This would also prove critical in combat.

The PRTF operated under the call sign "Gabriel," after the archangel known to deliver messages both of hope and of death and destruction. By mid-March, the AH-64s in the package stood ready to deliver death and destruction to ensure the success of the UH-60s and ground element in answering the hopes of isolated personnel.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

On March 18 Task Force Gabriel commenced 24-hour PR coverage for coalition forces inside Iraq from a camp in northern Kuwait. During the ensuing two months, the PRTF flew a handful of missions from various locations as the base of operations steadily moved north. On countless occasions the crews were stood down before receiving execution authority — often with crews already in the aircraft.

On March 23 elements of the PRTF launched in a nonstandard profile to locate a downed British Tornado. The search resulted in the discovery of the wreckage and the remains of the crew. On another occasion TF Gabriel crews recovered a corps LRS team in contact following, but the following events describe the first organized, joint PR event executed by Army aviation in combat.

The PRTF operated under the call sign "Gabriel," after the archangel known to deliver messages both of hope and of death and destruction.

On the night of April 3 the PRTF was providing 24-hour coverage from Objective Rams in the vicinity of An Najaf. On this same night many rotary-wing missions within the corps had not been executed due to the extreme visibility challenges under NVGs resulting from zero illumination and particularly low-contrast terrain and severe brown-out conditions in that specific region of the corps' AOR. Included in the canceled missions were the high-priority insertions of V Corps LRS teams. In fact, before the alert sequence that follows, the PRTF had been alerted and subsequently stood down for a UH-60 that had crashed in these harsh conditions.

The PRTF received notification of a downed U.S. Navy F-18, Dogwood 02, just before midnight. An exact location of the possible survivor was not known and minimal planning information was available. After receiving execution authority from the V Corps RCC, the PRTF departed from the assembly area as a flight of two UH-60s and two AH-64s. The difficult conditions in the parking area and en route were such that successful link-up of the flight was not completed until approximately 10 minutes along the ingress route. In coordination with the Air Force's Airborne Mission Commander (AMC), the PRTF arrived at the assigned objective area southwest of Baghdad as 3rd Infantry Division ground forces advanced through the Karbala Gap. After conducting an exhaustive search under the watch of the On Scene Commander (OSC) overhead, the flight reached critical fuel status and departed the area.

Throughout the mission, while maintaining 70 to 80 feet above ground level (AGL) for threat avoidance, the UH-60 crews under NVGs at times experienced absolutely no visible reference to the ground, sky or horizon. Under these conditions, the PRTF executed multiple link-ups and formation changes in a mixed multi-ship profile in order to facilitate search patterns and tactical en route formations. This can only be attributed to the training conducted in Kuwait and the ability to maximize the efficiency of each airframe's capabilities within the flight.

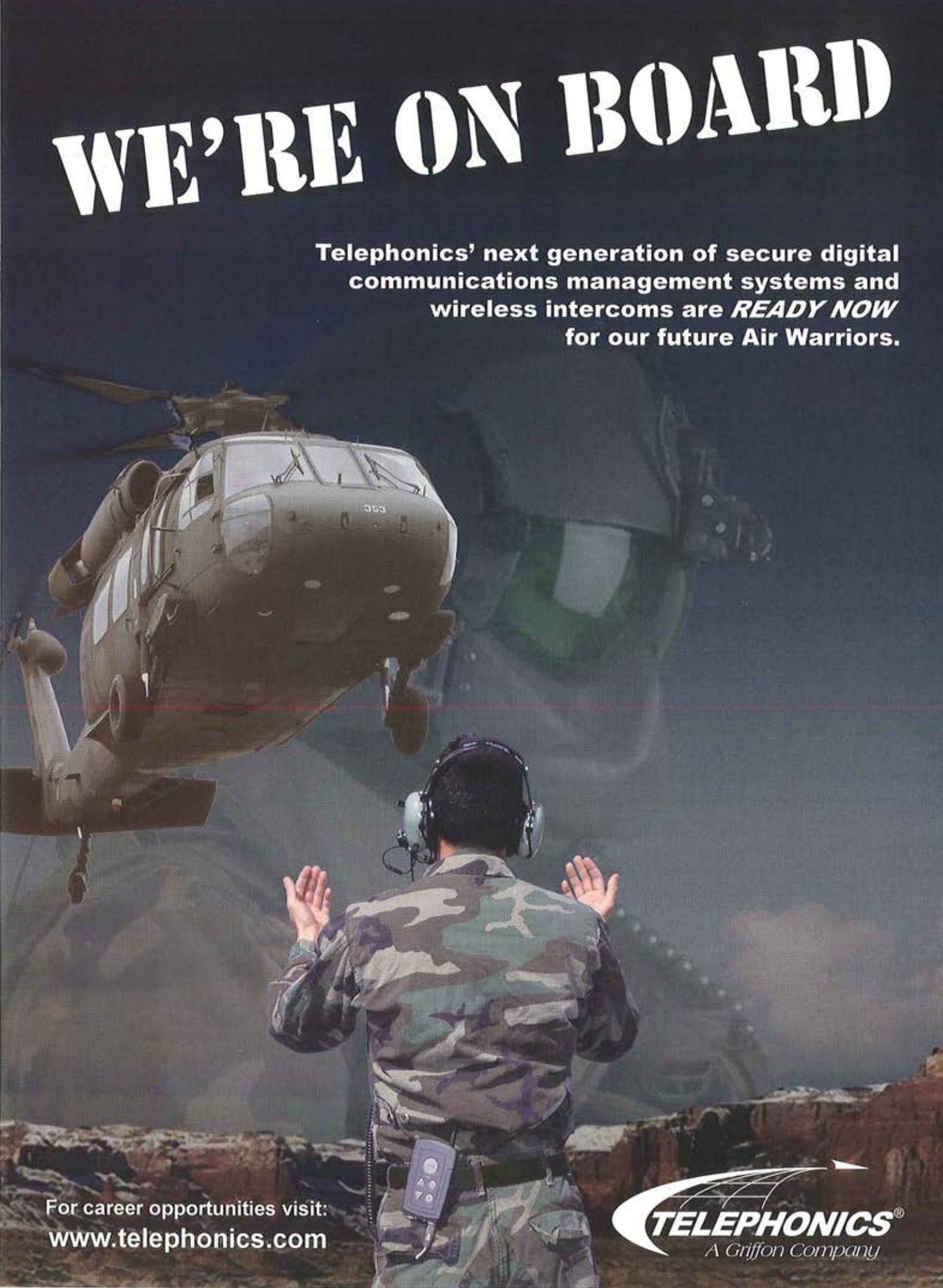
A subsequent search that night by Air Force assets also failed to locate the wreckage or possible survivor. In a joint effort with the Air Force, the PRTF later participated in daylight searches for Dogwood 02, whose wreckage and remains were eventually discovered underwater west of Karbala.

In mid-April the PRTF was relieved of 24-hour PR coverage in order to reallocate assets for a general-support role following cessation of major combat operations.

Lessons Learned

Through the course of our unit's involvement in PR operations both in training and combat, we have identified strengths and weaknesses in our capabilities and training status. The following are just a few examples.

In many cases, a comparison to the Air Force PR capability is made as a benchmark of success. This is not an attempt to strive for their exact resourcing, nor does it represent an expectation of unrealistic support. In fact, we have some differences that greatly benefit our capability over theirs — our forward location on the battlefield (we will always move with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the ground troops), and the mission flexibility provided by the presence of the AH-64 are but two examples.

However, the reality is that throughout combat operations we were often viewed in direct competition with Jollies and frequently "raced" them to a launch sequence. In any event, they have a comprehensive history of proven successes and failures in the PR arena. As such, it is useful to compare and contrast our respective capabilities to provide perspective on our current mission status.

Team cohesion and intensive collective training are critical in this mission profile. The benefits are easy to see in the description of the Dogwood mission in early April. The ability of the AH-64s and UH-60s in the package to act as a single entity on the battlefield became essential to mission success and survivability. This is difficult to achieve without repetitive training with the same faces in specific roles.

The same applies to the often overlooked role of the ground-security element, which must be intimately familiar with TTPs in the objective area in order to ensure rapid execution on the ground and situational awareness of the capabilities in the air around them. After working with different AH-64 personnel and ground-security elements in Poland and in Iraq, it is clear that this is not a profile easily conducted by pulling an SOP off the shelf prior to execution. There are too many PR-specific individual and collective tasks that we do not see or train in any other profile. Repetitive collective training is vital, and in this case allowed us to function as a single company entity rather than as an ad-hoc group put together for a specific task.

The notification, planning, and command-and-control (C2) chain from corps down to the operators must be as streamlined as possible. We found great success in the utilization of the ABCCE, which proved to be exactly the type of staff agency required to execute timely mission support. It is most effectively utilized by cutting the battalion and brigade headquarters from the chain, except through their participation in the manning of the ABCCE. The operators must answer to only one staff and that staff must be firmly integrated with the first level of RCC available — in this case the corps RCC.

This methodology vastly improves response time and ensures mission focus and resourcing at the lowest level. Reliable, secure communications and electronic data transfer between the ABCCE and the company are pivotal to ensure success of this architecture and best take advantage of our forward location. Traditionally, the locations of the RCC and ABCCE remain relatively constant while the executing company continues to move forward. We accomplished this through the MirC Chat communications medium (a secure, tactical, "chat room").

The integration of AH-64s in the PR package was a tremendous success. The capabilities they bring to this mission are critical in weaponry, optics and ASE. Specifically, the combination of FLIR and NVG capability in the desert environment allowed us to execute missions that would otherwise not have been possible. Unless our PR UH-60s receive upgrades in weapons (miniguns) and optics (FLIR), the Apache's presence in the PR package is not negotiable, and even with the UH-60 upgrades the participation of the AH-64s is preferred. Worthy of note is the fact that one night in early April, while en route to a survivor location, an Air Force unit utilizing FLIR and mini-guns specifically requested an in-flight rendezvous with Gabriel's AH-64 assets to escort the Air Force aircraft into the objective area.

The notification, planning, and command-and-control (C2) chain from corps down to the operators must be as streamlined as possible.

Our PRTF found that once airborne we had a very limited ability to communicate with required agencies. The placement of the UHF radio antenna on the UH-60 and the altitude at which we fly make it extremely difficult to maintain reliable communication with C2 assets (AWACS, AMC, OSC) during mission execution. The importance of this issue cannot be overstated. These agencies are the lifeline of the PRTF while in execution. They have the ability to provide

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routing, mission deviations, threat updates and guidance in the objective area, but only if we can communicate with one another.

We found that our UHF provided this reliability only in the objective area and at an altitude higher than we would like to fly due to threat and visibility considerations. HH-60G Jolly assets overcome this by utilizing satellite communications (SATCOM), giving them the capability to launch with very vague information but with confidence that AWACS will provide details, vectors and intelligence en route.

Fuel range was perhaps our single most critical limiter to PR operations during OIF. Without internal auxiliary fuel, our limited fuel range was a mission stopper on several occasions. On the night of April 2, with a confirmed location and positive communications with two downed F-14 crewmembers on their survival radios, we were forced to hand the rescue mission over to Air Force assets due to fuel range. We did so despite the fact that we were located in central Iraq, relatively close to the objective, and the Jollies executed the mission from Kuwait utilizing aerial refueling and internal auxiliary fuel.

The limitation in strict terms of range is obvious, but has second-order effects as well. It greatly decreases our flexibility to launch with vague information because we have little ability to flex our plan or search extensively due to fuel considerations. Instead, our response time is slowed as we are forced to compile detailed information we could otherwise adjust for after receipt during ingress. Even though based in Kuwait, the Jollies responded quickly to the isolated F-14 crew by launching with very little information and the fuel available to adjust their plan en route.

At various stages of the conflict the PRTF was given control of two medical-evacuation (medevac) aircraft and crews for PR mission support. The integration of these assets proved problematic and a distracter from their primary mission. Medevac assets have unique capabilities that should be recognized in the PR profile, but they are best used at a trans-load site on long-range missions — and only then when the survivor's medical condition requires it. In those rare instances they can easily be launched separately to a safe trans-load site from the nearest medical facility. This allows us to maximize the use of their valuable assets in the overall fight.

The Path Ahead

In contrast to the handful of missions flown by Task Force Gabriel during major combat operations, our sister service's Jollies flew more than 70 missions and rescued more than 30 coalition personnel. The differences in numbers are striking but the comparison is dangerous. Many experienced Jolly units were located throughout the theater and the above numbers represent their combined efforts. In a real sense, the Army fielded a single PRTF capable of "testing the waters" in PR — and that was accomplished. We refined notification and planning procedures, established mission TTPs for all elements of the package and got our foot in the door in the joint arena.

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Most importantly, we learned that we are not far off the mark. Relatively minor equipment upgrades and small changes in methodology would surely have resulted in a much higher number of successfully executed combat PR missions by TF Gabriel. The required equipment upgrades to the PR UH-60s are all in active use by the UH-60 community already (FLIR, SATCOM, internal auxiliary fuel, mini-guns or M-240, hoist, etc.). To further progress in our PR capability we must simply apply priority to the fielding of these systems in any PR-designated unit.

The architecture of notification, staff planning and C2 developed and implemented by 12th Avn. Bde. in control of TF Gabriel serves as an excellent model and could perhaps be implemented underneath each corps level headquarters in the Army, thereby ensuring an adequate PR capability provided by Army aviation in every theater of operations.

Ideally, each corps aviation brigade would contain an organic, robust company team including all assets required for PR execution. Perhaps more feasible, however, is to simply ensure that each participating element under the corps is assigned the METL task of PR in relation to the capabilities that element brings to the package. This would ensure that repetitive collective training is conducted utilizing habitual partners from within the corps' organic units.

The Army stands at a crossroads with respect to personnel recovery, and the arguments for each of the two paths are supportable.

With these changes in equipment and mission emphasis, along with our forward location on the battlefield and incredible variety in rotary-wing capability, the Army has the unique opportunity to take ownership of the recovery of all personnel isolated on the ground that we own. "Gabriel" might easily become just as popular a call sign on the battlefield as "Jolly."

We might instead choose to continue reliance on the Air Force and beef up their CSAR units to meet the rising, all-service PR demands of the modern battlefield. What we must not do is fill the gap with temporary PR teams not properly equipped or trained to successfully accomplish this complex task. To do so places our own crews and the survivors on the ground in unnecessary further jeopardy.

The Army stands at a crossroads with respect to personnel recovery, and the arguments for each of the two paths are supportable, but the paths themselves are clear — and the danger lies only in remaining at the crossroads.

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CPT Jason Hester commands Company C, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, 12th Aviation Brigade, based in Giebelstadt, Germany, and presently at Balad Airfield, Iraq.

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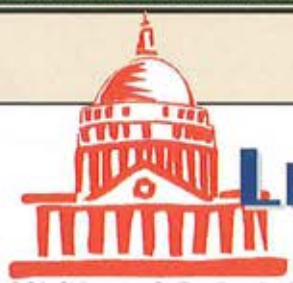


LEGISLATIVE REPORT

COL Sylvester C. Berdux Jr., (Ret.)
AAAA Representative to The Military Coalition (TMC)

FULL-COURT PRESS ON SBP

The Military Coalition (TMC), the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and other veteran's service organizations continued their push for Congressional action to eliminate the unfair reduction in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity paid to older military survivors.

In the last few weeks TMC representatives have visited almost every member of the House Budget Committee, seeking commitments to support authority for an SBP increase in this year's Budget Resolution.

Time is getting short, because the Budget Committee will be drafting the resolution during the first or second week in March. We need an all-out effort to convince the committee that helping military widows has to be one of its priorities. By reinforcing the arguments with a flood of e-mails from constituents, we can make SBP impossible to ignore. Please take just a few moments of your time to send a message to your legislators in support of this important effort. You can do this in two ways:

a. Use the "Support SBP Fixes Now" alert on MOAA's Web site to send your legislators a MOAA-prepared e-mail message **(http://capwiz.com/moaa/home/).**

b. Use MOAA's toll-free hot line to Capitol Hill (877 762-8762) to ask your legislators to ensure that the Budget Resolution includes authority to raise military widows' Survivor Benefit Plan annuities.

Your immediate e-mail and phone inputs are especially needed if your legislator is on the House or Senate Budget Committee. View lists of committee members at **www.house.gov/budget/members.htm and www.senate.gov/-budget/republican/analysis/members.pdf.**

MILLER INTRODUCES NEW SBP BILL

Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL) has introduced H.R. 3763, the Military Survivor Benefits Improvement Act of 2004. Backed by several fellow legislators and strong representation from TMC and MOAA, Miller again vowed to fight for an annuity increase for the more than 250,000 survivors and the 1.2 million military retirees enrolled in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP).

The new measure is aimed at winning Budget Committee approval by phasing out the age-62 SBP annuity reduction over ten years. It would also authorize a one-year open enrollment season to allow currently nonparticipating retirees to enroll, provided they pay an extra premium based on the number of years since they retired.

In a bipartisan show of support, a number of Miller's colleagues joined him at the podium, including Reps. Robin Hayes (R-NC), Walter B. Jones (R-NC), Alan Boyd (D-FL), Ken Calvert (R-CA), Mike Burgess (R-TX), Bob Filner (D-CA), Joe Wilson (R-SC) and Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX). Each representative emphasized that we must keep our promises to those who serve — and to their families and survivors.

MOAA President VADM Norb Ryan Jr. and leaders of nearly a dozen other associations pledged their full support to Miller and his efforts to remove the "widows' tax" that now negatively impacts the lives of so many survivors.

Improving SBP is a top priority for TMC as Congress begins deliberations on the fiscal year 2005 Budget Resolution. With an overwhelming show of support in the coming days, we hope to convince legislators to provide funding authority to end this terrible inequity.

TMC TESTIFIES ON VETERANS' BUDGET

At the House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing to preview the Bush Administration's Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) budget request for FY 2005, Committee Chairman Chris Smith (R-NJ) noted that over many administrations the VA budget request has fallen short of the needs of veterans.

The first witness, VA Secretary Anthony Principi, acknowledged that his department had sought $1.2 billion more than President George W. Bush's budget ended up recommending. The administration's budget request also proposes to raise drug copays for lower-priority nondisabled veterans, and to impose an annual usage fee of $250 for Priority 7 and 8 veterans. Committee members expressed anger and frustration at the administration's request. A second panel of veterans' advocates presented the views of the "Veterans Independent Budget," an independent blueprint of VA funding requirements.

COL Bob Norton (Ret.), MOAA deputy director for government relations, and Master Sgt. Morgan Brown (Ret.) of the Air Force Sergeants Association presented testimony on behalf of TMC. Norton and Brown co-chair the Coalition's Veterans' Committee.

Norton expressed TMC's strong support for full health-care funding for the VA system as recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Improving Delivery of Health Care for Our Nation's Veterans. Norton urged the Committee to provide the funding and oversight to ensure expansion and improvement of current VA and Department of Defense (DOD) initiatives aimed at smoothing the transition of wounded and ill service members from active duty to the VA system. He said "seamless transition" was a top priority for the Coalition, noting that the largest troop rotations since World War II are now underway.

Norton also thanked members of the Committee and Congress for enacting substantial concurrent-receipt legislation last year. However, he said more work remains on concurrent receipt, both to deliver the newly approved benefits and to extend them to the large number of disabled retirees not covered by last year's legislation.

Brown urged the Committee to authorize a Montgomery GI Bill enrollment window for active-duty service members who entered the service during the "VEAP" era (Jan. 1, 1977 through June 30, 1985) but who declined to enroll in that much-inferior program. Brown also urged the Committee to support needed upgrades to National Guard and Reserve educational benefits under the MGIB. TMC's complete statement is available at **www.moa.org/Legislative/Testimony/TMC_FY2005_VA.pdf.**

BUSH ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES FEES FOR VA HEALTH CARE

They're back and trying to do it again.

The Bush Administration's FY 2005 budget request proposes a $250 usage fee for about two million priority 7 and 8 veterans enrolled in VA care. Priority 7 and 8 veterans are those with no compensable disabilities, and who have incomes above a geographically adjusted means-test level.

The administration also proposes increasing pharmacy copayments from $7 to $15 for priority 7 and 8 veterans, while exempting disabled and indigent veterans (priorities 2-5) from all drug copayments. (Severely disabled veterans — Priority 1 — do not pay any copays).

Last year the administration sought approval for a $250 "enrollment" fee and drug copay increases from the newly created priority 8 category of veterans. Both proposals were dead on arrival at Capitol Hill.

In a House Veterans Affairs Committee hearing in early February, some members criticized the new request as "smoke and mirrors" because it masks the continuing resource vs. capacity mismatch in VA health care that caused lengthy waiting lists in recent years. The president's own VA health care task force report recommended last May that the VA system should be fully funded to meet the needs of all veterans enrolled in priorities 1-7, but administration budget officials seem to have ignored that message. Instead, they again propose charging some veterans to fund improvements for others.

TMC and MOAA fully support initiatives that free disabled and indigent veterans from any cost-shares. That's a good thing, but let's not forget what's really going on here. The government does not want to pay for the care of the veterans it has agreed to treat. Rather than stepping up to that funding obligation, it seeks to make them wait months for access and selectively impose usage fees and copays in the hope that this will drive some veterans away and lessen demand.

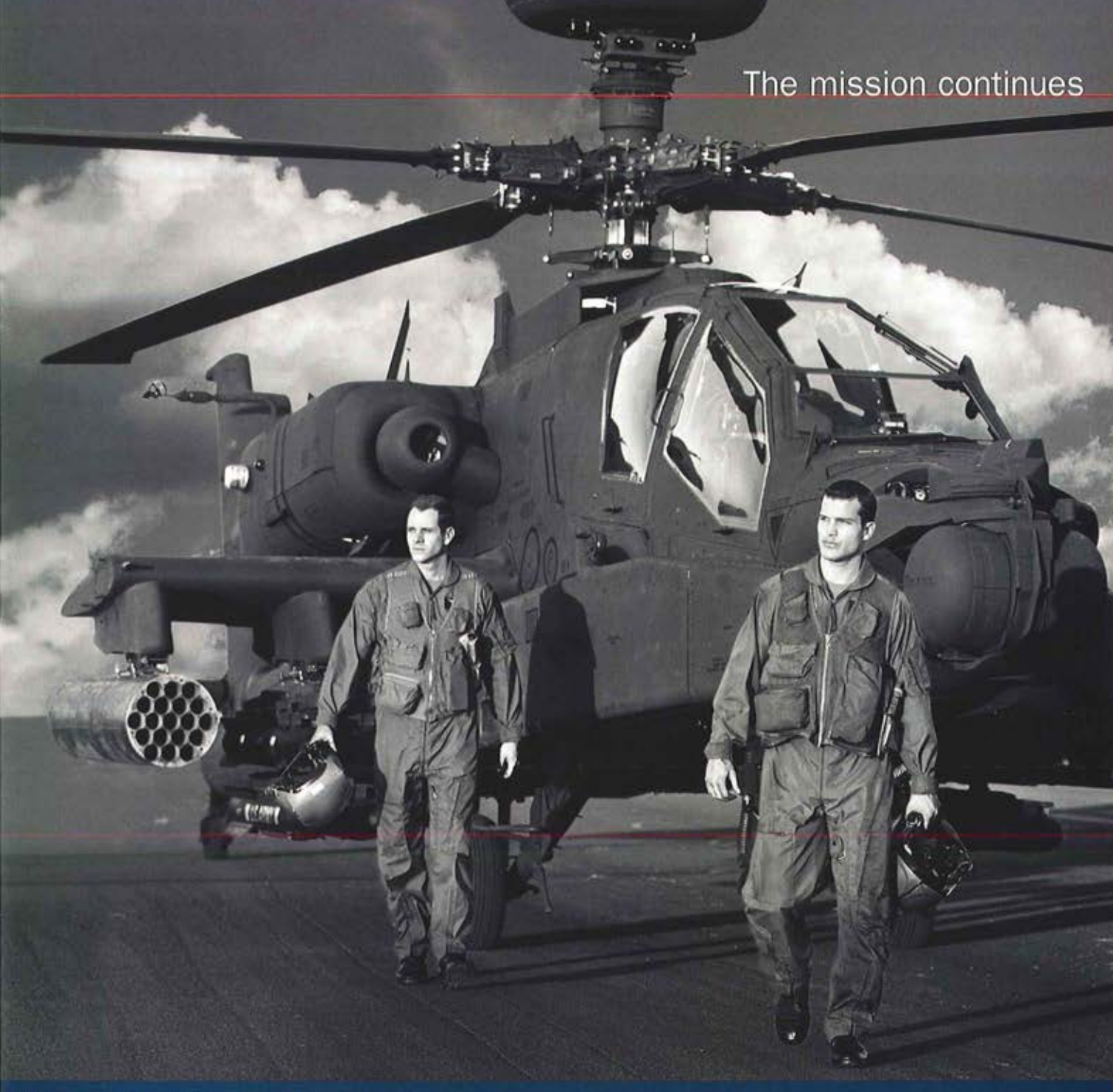
If the Bush Administration and Congress would acknowledge their own funding obligations to those who have fought the nation's battles in past, present and future wars, there would be no need to bring up this issue year after year.

GUARD/RESERVE GI BILL BENEFITS LAG BEHIND

As the largest mobilization of National Guard and Reserve troops since World War II continues, Congress has become increasingly sensitive to the needs of these service members and their families. But one benefit that's been left behind is the Reserve Montgomery GI Bill.

Last year, Congress enacted a pilot program to allow reservists to "buy into" TRICARE coverage; approved unlimited commissary visits; upgraded legal and economic protections under the Service Members' Civil Relief Act; and increased pay and survivor benefits (for details, see **www.moaa.org/Legislative/ActiveDuty/Reserve GuardGaina. asp**).

But education-benefit shortfalls for Reservists have



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not drawn the attention they should. When the modern Montgomery GI Bill was established in 1985, Guard and Reserve GI Bill benefits were set at 47 percent of active-duty benefits. For every $100 dollars that an active-duty service member or veteran received in GI Bill benefits a reservist would get $47. This ratio continued until the late 1990s, when Congress legislated substantial increases to the active duty GI Bill — but neglected to do so for the Reserve program.

As a result, Reserve MGIB benefits have slipped to 29 percent of active duty GI Bill benefits. A Reservist who initially signs up for a six-year hitch will see $282 in monthly GI Bill benefits, compared to $985 per month in basic MGIB benefits for active-duty service. Restoring reserve MGIB rates to the 47 percent benchmark would require raising Reserve benefits to $463. One approach is Sen. Susan Collins' (R-ME) S. 812, which would bring Reserve MGIB benefits to $473 by 2005.

With more than 350,000 Guard and Reserve members having been mobilized in the last two years, and many thousands more scheduled for deployment to Afghanistan and Iraq, it's past time to fix this problem. We must not leave our citizen-soldiers behind as they go into harm's way to fight the war on terrorism. Raising their GI Bill benefits to help their transition back to civilian life will be one important way to help.

GRAHAM INTRODUCES RESERVE BENEFITS BILL

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) has introduced S. 2035, a bill to improve health-care and retirement benefits for members of the National Guard and Reserve. Joined by senators Tom Daschle (D-SD), Mary Landrieu (D-LA) and 24 other senators, Graham made a strong case for needed compensation and benefit upgrades for the reserve components.

The health-care component of S. 2035 builds on the successes of the FY 2004 Defense Authorization Act. It would provide permanent authority for drilling Reservists to participate in TRICARE on a cost-share basis. A separate provision would authorize DOD to pay part or all of the premiums for activated Reservists who wish to remain on their employer-provided insurance.

The bill would also establish a graduated reduction in the Reserve retirement age based on years of service. Retirees with 20 years of service would continue to draw their retirement at age 60, while those with more time in service could qualify for retired pay up to five years earlier. Another bill, Sen. Jon Corzine's S. 1035 (**http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/bills/ ?bill= 4122751**), would lower the Reserve retirement age to 55.

The increased utilization of Reservists, particularly their vital contribution to military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, means that Congress is paying more attention than ever to the way reserve troops are compensated. We expect a spate of new bills on these and other Guard and Reserve issues over the next few months. If we can develop a groundswell of support among MOAA members, 2004 will be the year that we make huge gains on these much-needed improvements.

JOHNSON, MCCAIN OFFER "KEEP PROMISES" BILL

Senators Tim Johnson (D-SD) and John McCain (R-AZ) recently introduced S. 2065, the "Keep Our Promise Act" to America's Military Retirees Act of 2004. S. 2065 is a companion bill to H.R. 3474, introduced by Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) last November. Like its House counterpart, S. 2065 would waive Medicare Part B premiums for all military retirees (and their dependents) that entered service before Dec. 7, 1956. It would also authorize optional coverage for military retirees under the Federal Employees Health Benefit Plan.

All 35 TMC organizations strongly support S. 2065, and will work for its enactment. If you would like to send a message to your legislators in support of this bill, you can do so on MOAA's Web site.

TRI-CARE FOR LIFE LATE ENROLLMENT PENALTY RELIEF

One of TMC's significant legislative victories last year was a provision in the Medicare reform bill that will relieve many TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries from onerous Part B late enrollment penalties. The statute waives late enrollment penalties (as of January 2004) for all TRICARE beneficiaries who enrolled in Medicare between Jan. 1, 2001, and Dec. 31, 2004. It also provides a special enrollment period in 2004 for any TFL-eligible person who has been holding off enrolling in Part B.

Because that special enrollment period ends on Dec. 31, it is critical that this provision be implemented as soon as possible. Many potential beneficiaries of the legislation (including 12,000 who reside overseas) will be hard to find and inform, so every day counts. Please inform your friends.

TRICARE officials are working in collaboration with Medicare representatives to develop a communication plan for military beneficiaries who could benefit from this. They are considering a number of outreach strategies, including direct-mail and advertising campaigns.

FINANCE CENTER PAYS CONCURRENT RECEIPT

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) issued "concurrent disability payments" (CDP) to about 150,000 retirees on Feb. 1. As with any program of this magnitude, there will be some hiccups along the way that are delaying payments to some and causing some payment inaccuracies for others. These should be ironed out in time.

Some more complex payment cases are still pending. These include individuals whose retired pay is divided with a former spouse under the Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA), and those retirees with medical retirements from their parent services. DFAS decided to issue as many checks as possible and will sort out the others in the next few weeks. These checks should be forthcoming on March 1, with payments retroactive to Jan. 1.

In the interest of getting the new CDP payments to retirees as soon as possible, DFAS had to delay some computer programming required to allow personalization of the new program. For example, CDP payments can't yet be adjusted to allow individual tax rates or SBP premium deductions.

Forced into a "one-size fits all" mode for now, DFAS applied a straight 10 percent tax rate for all initial payments, even though DFAS officials understand that some retirees' CDP payments are supposed to be tax-free, and others would prefer to have more taxes withheld. In time, the computer will be programmed to allow individual withholding. In the interim, affected members can ask DFAS to adjust withholding on their regular retired pay to offset any over- or under-withholding on the new CDP payments.

Similarly, retirees who have been making separate payments to DFAS to cover their SBP premiums (usually because their disability offset eliminated all of their retired pay) will have to keep making those payments for now. Again, over the next few months DFAS will reprogram the computer to allow individual premium deductions from CDP.

On a related front, we are still awaiting the final guidance for the expanded combat related special compensation (CRSC) process, which extended CRSC to all qualifying combat/combat training related disabilities. As soon as we receive any implementation update, we'll publicize it through a special alert.

STOP-LOSS: THE NEW DRAFT?

The more TMC and MOAA think about DOD's plan to meet wartime requirements for the next few years, the more concerned we get.

The plan is to increase Army manning by 30,000 for the next few years. But that won't be accomplished through additional recruiting, as most of us tend to think when we hear those words. It will be accomplished mainly by barring current members from leaving when their terms of service are up — a policy known as "stop-loss." The plan is to keep stop-loss in place through 2005, for thousands of active duty, Guard and Reserve troops.

It's hard to see that as anything other than a reinstitution of the draft, imposed in the most ironic way possible. The only people being drafted are those who have already volunteered to serve in the first place. Many have already seen combat or hazardous duty in Africa, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq. Now their end-of-tour separations are being denied so they can be forced to fill manpower shortages and deploy again.

DOD is trying to put a good face on it, saying it will meet wartime needs through "increased retention" rather than increased recruiting. If stop-loss is being euphemized that way, somebody's kidding himself. You can't keep stop-loss in place for extended periods without risking negative retention consequences for the longer term.

Don't get us wrong. Sometimes stop-loss is the only way to meet the national-defense mission. But prudent planners know it should be a short-term tool, not an extended policy. The planning deficiency didn't start with current leaders. We should have started recruiting for a bigger force years ago, because the troops have been overstressed for more than a decade. But the fact that it hasn't been done yet is no excuse to keep putting it off.

Is anybody thinking about the situation this process is creating for whoever will be leading the DOD and the services two years from now? When the stop-loss policy ends, does anyone think there won't be a disproportional wave of "negative retention"? If we need a larger force for years to come — and everybody knows we do — prudent planning would seem to dictate that increased recruiting has to be part of the solution.

We don't think the need is lost on military leaders. They're doing their utmost to find the best solution to a huge manpower challenge within the "transformation" limits imposed upon them by politicians and political appointees. But there's also a limit to how much reality can be ignored, and a limit to the risks we should accept in planning military force levels needed to defend the country.

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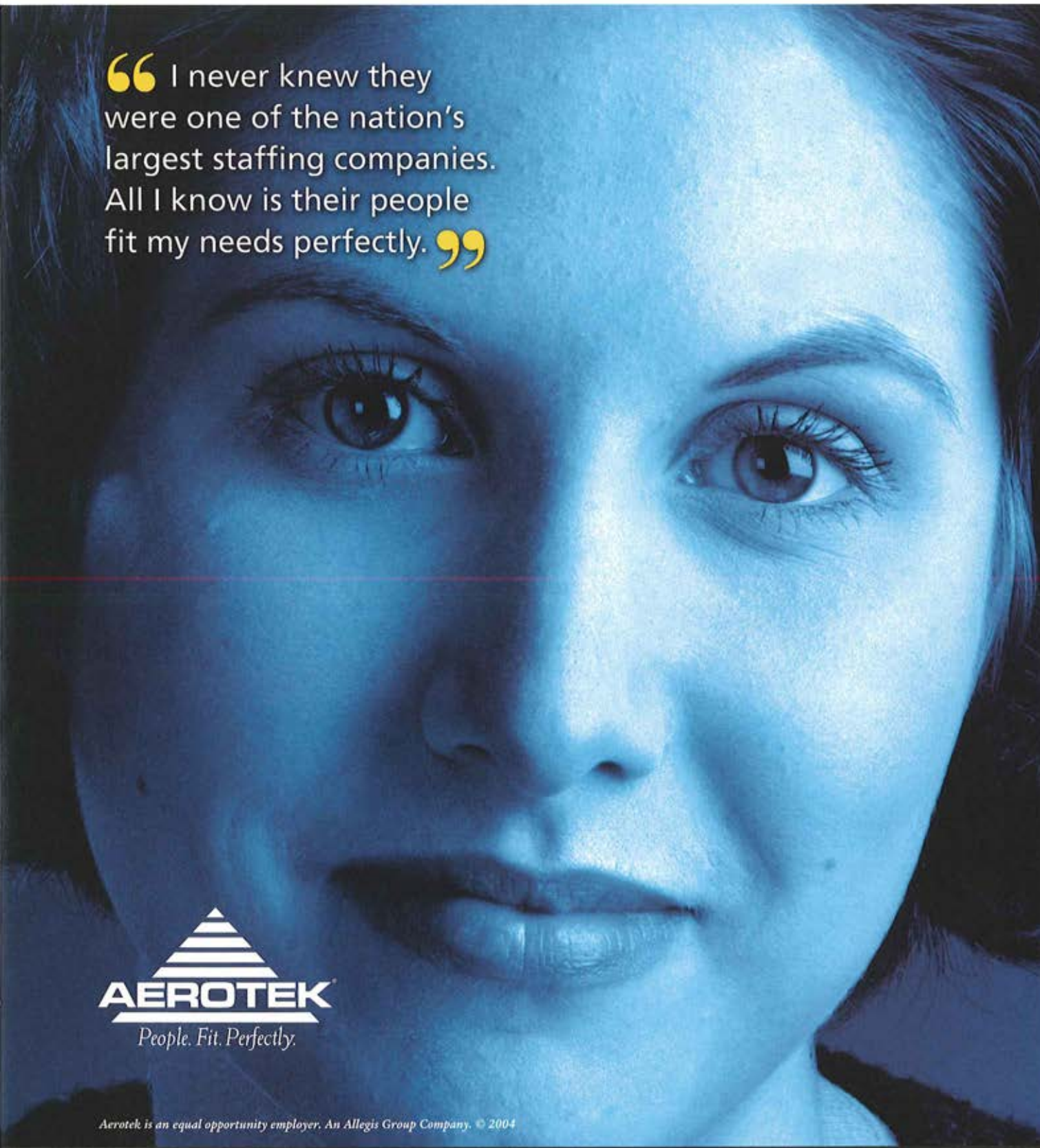

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AAAA NEWS

New Chapter Officers

Lindbergh:
Ms. Mary Pitliangas, Secretary.

Phantom Corps:
LTC Robert D. Mitchell, V.P. Scholarships.

Rhine Valley:
COL Steven J. Briggs, President; LTC Samuel S. Evans, Sr. Vice President; MAJ Roshawna M. Taylor, Treasurer; CPT Carl R. Ott, VP Membership Enrollment; CW4 Peter R. Johnson, VP Programs; SGM Norma J. Helsham, VP Enlisted Affairs; Mr. Ronald L. Clary, VP Civilian Affairs.

New AAAA Bronze Order of St. Michael Recipients

LTC Barney C. Owens
1SG Mark A. Kelley
Jerry G. Oliver
COL Earl M. Yerrick, Jr.
SSG William J. Kayfus III
LTC Paul N. Smith
CW5 William A. Scott
CW4 Phillip S. McCoy
CW3 Robert A. Pupalaikis
CW5 Patrick A. Hardy
MAJ Richard A. Wagen
SFC Donald A. Dawson
SGM Patrick L. Henson
SFC David Fales
MSG Walter Shontz
MAJ(R) Darrell D. Allman
CW4 Mark B. Ivey
CW3 Brian P. O'Connell
CW3 Andrew V. Smith
LTC Earl C. Myers II

New AAAA Life Members

COL Lyle D. Bender
LTC Jean L. Chase, Ret.
Mr. Keith B. Freitag
CSM Edward P. Ianonne, Jr., Ret.
CW3 Cynthia L. Nielsen
Mrs. Ruth E. Startzel
Mr. David J. Weller
Mr. Tyrus C. Wood, Jr.

Aces

The following members have been recognized as Aces for their signing up five new members each.
Mr. William J. Cannon
LTC Michael F. McClellan, Ret.
CW3 Richard H. Tanner

New AAAA Industry Members

Aeronautical & General Instruments Ltd.
Aerospace Filtration Systems, Inc.
Anark
Binghamton Simulator Co.
Carleton Life Support Systems, Inc.
Dillon Aero, Inc.
EDMO Distributors, Inc.
Enviro Systems, Inc.
Fastening Systems International, Inc.
FreeFlight Systems
Interface Displays & Controls
Logistics Services International, Inc.
MELT Manufacturing
Sensor Systems, Inc.
Sierra Nevada Corporation
Sigmatech Inc.
Snap-On Tools Corporation
Soilworks, LLC
Southwest Motorsports Ent. Inc.
Thales Avionics
Thomas Group

AAAA Soldier of the Month

A Chapter Program to Recognize Outstanding Aviation Soldiers on a Monthly Basis

SSG Chris Chambers
December 2003
(Jimmy Doolittle Chapter)

SFC Diane A. Crossley
January 2004
(Keystone Chapter)

SSG Peter W. Pfeiffer III
January 2004
(Narragansett Bay Chapter)

SPC Matthew Smith
January 2004
(Jimmy Doolittle Chapter)

SSG David A. Noffisinger
February 2004
(Oregon Trail Chapter)

PFC Eduardo F. Rodriquez
February 2004
(Narragansett Bay Chapter)

SFC Neal J. Spelman
March 2004
(Narragansett Bay Chapter)

PFC Dylan M. Moore
April 2004
(Narragansett Bay Chapter)

AAAA NCO of the Quarter

A Chapter Program to Recognize Outstanding Non-Commissioned Officers on a Quarterly Basis

SPC Mark A. Cinotti
1st Qtr. 2004
(Narragansett Chapter)

In Memoriam

MAJ Henry C. Fariss, Ret.

Lost Members

Help us find our Lost Members. We'll give you an additional month on your AAAA membership free for each member you help us locate. Simply write, call or E-mail us with the Lost Member's current address. AAAA, 755 Main Street, Suite 4D, Monroe, CT 06468-2830. Tele: (203) 268-2450; FAX:(203) 268-5870; E-Mail: aaaa@quad-a.org.

Backman, Jeff G., SPC
Bright, Daryl E., SFC
Burkert, Mathew P., 2LT
Cain, Phillip B., 2LT
Chavez, Cesar, SPC
Christianson, Mark T., CW3
Cornell, James R., CW2
Domenici, Evan M., SPC
Elwood, Bryan, WO1
Gilbert, Brian M., SSG
Green, Benjamin, 2LT
Hierl, Reinhard A., Mr.
Higman, Bruce, WO1
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Lee, Earl W., PVT
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Lundt, Nicholas E., WO1
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Roach, Jerry L., Mr.
Snipes, Tobaski, WO1
Sousa, Erika A., 2LT
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Spencer, Kristi J., 2LT
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Starr, Dean, WO1
Strohmeier, Helen, SGT
Torgerson, Sean E., 1LT
Trippodo, Dominic, 2LT
Vengrouskie, Edward, LTC, Ret.
Wallingford, Mary B., SGT
Walters, Olin L., 2LT
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Whitehead, James E., WO1
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Yochim, Jaysen A., CPT

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- **Jun. 8-10.** AHS 60th Annual Forum & Technology Display, Baltimore, MD.
- **Jul. 1-5.** The Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) 21st Annual National Reunion, Dallas, TX. Contact: Don Joyce (407) 870-5367.
- **Jul. 16.** AAAA Scholarship Executive Committee Meeting, National Guard Readiness Center, Arlington, VA.
- **Jul. 17.** AAAA Scholarship Selection Committee Meeting, National Guard Readiness Center, Arlington, VA.

Army Aviation Hall of Fame

The Army Aviation Hall of Fame sponsored by the Army Aviation Association of America, Inc., recognizes those individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to Army aviation. The actual Hall of Fame is located in the Army Aviation Museum, Fort Rucker, Ala., where the portraits of the inductees and the citations recording their achievements are retained for posterity. Each month Army Aviation Magazine will highlight a member of the Hall of Fame. The next triennial induction will occur in the spring of 2007. Contact the AAAA National Office for details at (203) 268-2450

MSG John Bae
Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2001 Induction

MSG John Bae has been a unique contributor for more than 30 years to Army aviation and the association that supports it. In fact, he has been Army aviation's ambassador extraordinaire to the Republic of Korea.

His knowledge of the inner workings of the Korean Government and his personal rapport with national leaders have enabled him to accomplish tasks beyond the reach of peers and seniors. From locating downed aircraft in a matter of minutes to providing sage guidance on protocol issues, he has been a repository of key information and ability that senior Army officials have turned to.

Bae's talent, dedication and unique qualities enabled him to rise from clerk in the 6th Helicopter Company to master sergeant at retirement. He then became operations chief at the Yongson Heliport that serves the highest officials of the U.S. and Korean governments. In 1984 he personally created the Korea Auxiliary of the Quad A Morning Calm Chapter. During the past 15 years the Auxiliary has given $350,000 in awards, assistance and grants to Army aviation soldiers.

While records are not sufficiently detailed for an accurate count, it is widely acknowledged that he has recruited over 9,000 members for Quad A. He has received the association's recruiting Top Gun Award for nine of the last 10 years.

It is doubtful that any single enlisted soldier has done more, year after year, than John Bae to impact positively on the lives of Army aviation soldiers and their families.

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