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Team Chinook

Chinook News

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2005 Relief Around the World Special



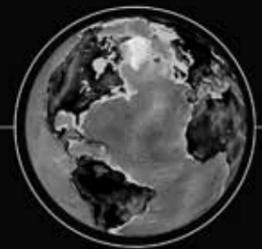
Photo: U.S. Army
26 September 2005

Local civilians form a chain to expedite the unloading of 100 floor-loaded meals, ready to eat (MRE), in addition to the six pallets of water and MREs unloaded by forklift from a U.S. Army CH-47D Chinook in Livingston, Texas. The U.S. Army is contributing to the Hurricane Rita humanitarian assistance operations being led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in conjunction with the Department of Defense.



Photo: U.S. Army
31 October 2005

Pakistanis watch as U.S. soldiers unload earthquake relief supplies from their CH-47 Chinook, near Panjkot, Pakistan.





Jack Dougherty,
Director,
Chinook Programs

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Chinook News*. From the program side, it has been an incredible year – the production line delivered two aircraft per month to the military. CH-47F production is well under way in Philadelphia. In fact, planning is in process for the official

roll out ceremony for the first new build CH-47F, scheduled for delivery in June. The new Chinook will provide aircrews with a modernized airframe and a state-of-technology cockpit. This aircraft is special, not only because it is built using the latest manufacturing techniques, or that it features the latest equipment, but because it is the realization of so many people’s vision.

The development of the CH-47F is the culmination of hard work of the pilots and crews, the program office, engineers and men and women on the factory floor. Pilots and crews wanted greater capability. The Cargo Helicopter Program Manager Office focused on meeting the needs of the users now and into the future and worked tirelessly to incorporate advancements that would meet these mission demands. Men and women on the factory floor were relentless in the

pursuit of improving production. The result of all these people working together with a common purpose is the CH-47F aircraft – built with pride.

We will keep you informed on the aircraft’s status in upcoming issues of the *Chinook News*. As for this issue, we have suspended its typical format to pay tribute to Chinook crews worldwide who play a central role in the humanitarian and rescue missions from the shores of the Gulf Coast region in the United States to the mountains of Pakistan. Chinook crews and support teams led the way in humanitarian relief efforts of unprecedented proportions. Crews from the U.S. Army, the Army Reserve and National Guard and from the United Kingdom and other countries flew hundreds of hours delivering tons of supplies and recovering thousands of victims.

This issue, which highlights only a fraction of the stories of that service, is a testament to all who serve.

Jack

Welcome to AAAA 2006

From COL William T. Crosby
U.S. Army Project Manager for
Cargo Helicopters



The Cargo Helicopter program continues to provide exceptional capability to the warfighters who employ the Chinook. Whether we are at war or peace, the Chinook is there to support our mission. The Cargo Project Office, along with the many other dedicated members of Team Chinook, continues to improve and sustain the CH-47D fleet, and is well on it’s way to fielding the most capable cargo helicopter in history, the CH-47F.

The Program Manager Cargo team operates with a total focus on one primary goal: reducing the burden on the soldier. Our soldiers depend on the Chinook as a critical combat, combat support, and combat service support asset. This year they continue to employ the Chinook in Operation Iraqi Freedom civil support missions for Hurricane Katrina relief and earthquake relief operations in Pakistan and in anti-terrorism operations in Afghanistan and around the world. The team supports the soldiers through three prime initiatives; field the CH-47F, develop and integrate improvements to the CH-47D that are compatible with the CH-47F, and

sustain and maintain the existing fleet through an integrated and proactive approach.

The latest model of the Chinook, the CH-47F, continues testing and qualification with the integration of the Common Avionics Architecture System digital cockpit and the Digital Advanced Flight Control System this year and is on track for first unit equipped in May 2007.

The dedicated soldiers conducting Chinook operations throughout the world deserve our praise and admiration for their exceptional professionalism. As essential warfighters, they strike fear into those who threaten the U.S. interests. Delivering aid to those affected by natural disasters, the Chinook aircrews are symbols of salvation — on the Gulf Coast of the United States or in Pakistan. The members of Team Chinook resolve to support these soldiers wherever and whenever they are needed.

Production begins in Philadelphia on the new Boeing CH-47F Chinook for the U.S. Army

Production has started at the Boeing Philadelphia facility on the new CH-47F Chinook heavy-transport helicopter as part of the U.S. Army Cargo Helicopter modernization program. The new Chinook will incorporate improved survivability features, advanced avionics and a new airframe.

“The inclusion of the new airframe in the remanufacture program will greatly reduce required maintenance on the existing Chinook airframes, which in some cases are almost 40 years old,” said COL Tim Crosby, U.S. Army Product manager for the Chinook.

The new airframe is constructed using advanced manufacturing techniques in which large, single-piece components replace built-up sheet metal structures and aluminum honeycomb formers. These components reduce operating and support costs while improving the structural integrity of the aircraft, extending the overall useful life of each Chinook. Structural improvements include air transportability modifications, which reduce time necessary to prepare the aircraft for cargo transport and advanced corrosion protection. In addition, the implementation of lean manufacturing processes on the factory floor and use of employee involvement teams have reduced manufacturing costs and improved production efficiency.

“Utilizing today’s technology expands the range of improvements in this aircraft,” said Jack Dougherty, Boeing Chinook program director. “This configuration with the Army’s Common Aviation Architecture System cockpit



makes the Chinook fully compliant with digital battlefield requirements and allows for greater and easier growth in systems.”

Improved avionics provide enhanced situational awareness for flight crews with an advanced digital map display and a data transfer system, which allows storing preflight and mission data. The Digital Advanced Flight Control System replaces the existing analog system, allowing

future expansion. Survivability features include a common missile warning and improved countermeasure dispenser systems.

Powered by Honeywell engines, the new aircraft can reach speeds in excess of 175 mph and can transport up to 21,016 lb. With its internal auxiliary fuel tanks, the CH-47F is capable of a mission radius greater than 400 miles.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world’s largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Integrated Defense Systems is a \$30.5 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; the world’s largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world’s largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense; NASA’s largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.

CJTF-76 continues Pakistan earthquake relief efforts

By Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Lane

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Army News Service, Oct. 19, 2005)—Ten days after a devastating earthquake shook Pakistan, killing an estimated 40,000 people, relief supplies and personnel from the Combined Joint Task Force-76 continue to flow into the country.

Initially eight helicopters, five Ch-47 Chinooks and three Uh-60 Blackhawks, were sent to Islamabad to assist with relief and rescue efforts there.

Since their arrival, the aircraft have flown more than 73 missions accumulating more than 78 hours of flight time and lifting more than 966 multi-national rescue personnel to various areas affected by the quake. The helicopters have delivered about a quarter of a million pounds of relief supplies and have carried nearly a thousand injured Pakistanis.

“This is truly a joint effort,” said Lt. Col. Andy Rohling, Combined Joint Task Force-76 Chief of Operations. “Soldiers from all services and from all coalition nations are here at Bagram voluntarily working to prepare these supplies for Pakistan. They are working 24 hours a day; seven days a week to make sure these items are ready to be airlifted. Relief effort is something we have a lot of experience with. We’ve been doing these kinds of missions here in Afghanistan for a very long time.”

Rescue personnel, including five U.S. Army medics and one physician’s assistant, arrived in country shortly after the earthquake. The medics accompanied the helicopters carrying supplies to inaccessible areas and treated the wounded individuals who were brought to civilian hospitals on the return flight.

In addition to the six medical personnel, a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital is being moved to Pakistan to assist Pakistan medical facilities with the treatment of the wounded. The hospital has a staff of more than 190 medical personnel and can treat more than 30 inpatients at a time.

Eight U.S. Army engineers from the Combined Joint Task Force-76 are also in Pakistan conducting aerial reconnaissance of damage to major roadways and other infrastructure.

More than 80,000 pounds of relief supplies have been flown into country since the start of relief operations. Of those 80,000 pounds, 20,000 were dropped by

parachute to remote regions made inaccessible by the earthquake’s damage.

The relief supplies consist of such items as tool kits, hygiene kits, tarps, blankets, stoves, rice and health kits. In addition, more than 3,500 prepared meals and nearly 2,500 gallons of bottled water were flown into the effected areas.

“Relief efforts are being coordinated with the government of Pakistan to ensure that the people there effected by this terrible tragedy are getting exactly what they need,” said Lt. Col. Edwin Hernandez, Combined Joint Task Force, Logistics.

“Ever bundle we make and every pallet we load onto an aircraft has the items that Pakistan officials have told us they needed the most. These supplies not only help the survivability of those who have lost everything in the quake but will also provide much needed protection against the upcoming winter months.”



Photo: Capt. James H. Cunningham, USAF

The first relief supplies from the United States were ready for departure aboard a C-17 Globemaster III from Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, less than 48 hours after the devastating earthquake that left thousands dead and thousands more injured. The C-17 delivered about 90,000 pounds of food, water, medicine and blankets.

(Editor’s note: This article was supplied by Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Lane, PAO, CJTF-76 Public Affairs)

Cav Delivery Helps Clear Roads

By Spc. Joshua McPhie
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

PATTIKA, Pakistan – Most of the missions the Soldiers of Task Force Quake go on are similar, dropping off food, tents, blankets and clothing to towns affected by the earthquake. Occasionally though, they get a mission that’s unique. The crew of one 1st Cavalry Division Chinook got a break from their usual deliveries when they were assigned to deliver a bulldozer instead of the usual load of supplies. They, and another Chinook crew, would be delivering a pair of bulldozers to an area just outside of Pattika. “They told us they were going to be used to help clear out the roads,” said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Eugene Santos, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, one of the pilots on the mission. The bulldozers weren’t at the usual supply pick-up point at the Chaklala airport, but the Chinooks had to fuel there so the crew loaded up with tents before flying to Muzaffarabad to pick up the bulldozers.

The landing site had been a stadium before the earthquake, now it is a major hub for delivering supplies to the damaged city. “We set down in the stadium in Muzaffarabad while they prepared the load, a generator and a small bulldozer,” said the mission’s other pilot Chief Warrant Officer 2 M.A. Kemp Jr., 2-227th AVN. In Muzaffarabad, Pakistani soldiers unloaded the tents from the Chinook and helped load the bulldozer and generator aboard the aircraft. Once the bulldozers were loaded on the two Chinooks, the flight headed out for Pattika where they would drop off the bulldozers at two different locations. The plan was to have the bulldozers start clearing the road from opposite sides and eventually meet in the middle, Santos said. Pattika wasn’t hit as hard by the



Pakistani soldiers unload a generator from a 1st Cav. Chinook. The crew delivered the generator and a small bulldozer so they could be used to clear the road.

earthquake as Muzaffarabad, but the damage was still extensive so the bulldozers would help. “Things are not as bad now but you can tell they were bad,” Kemp said. “It feels pretty good to help.” “We don’t want to be away from our families, of course, but it’s good to be bringing this stuff to the people who need it,” Santos said. “It’s hard to see who to help, there are so many people out there.”

RAF Chinook humanitarian mission success

By Patrick Allen

The rapid deployment of three RAF Chinooks to Pakistan was a text book example of the flexibility, versatility and operational skills found in today's modern Royal Air Force/ Joint Helicopter Command. To be able to successfully deploy and operate three Chinook helicopters in a new theatre of operations within the space of a few weeks was a tribute to both the logistical and operational personnel involved.

It also clearly demonstrated the high airmanship standards within the RAF Chinook Force and the reasons why aircrew need to train so hard for every eventuality including extreme environmental training (Arctic/ Jungle/Desert) and mountain flying training. The fact that 27 Squadron had recently deployed three aircraft to Morocco to undertake mountain and desert flying training helped in the logistical planning for this mission and provided the aircrew with some recent operational experience of mountain flying.

Deployment

Within days of notification Wing Commander Steve Shell, Officer Commanding 27 Squadron flew to Islamabad with a small advanced party to prepare for the arrival of the Chinooks and plan for the first aid missions. Wing Commander Shell said: *"My main priority was to get the aircraft operational as quickly and safely as possible and start getting urgently needed aid to where it was needed. Once operational, we could then concentrate on maximising our efforts. Within days of arrival my team, including members of the Joint Helicopter Support Unit (JHSU) were already honing their collective operational skills and experience to increase our productivity to maximise our lift capability to get as much aid delivered as possible. This we successfully achieved. During our 28 days of operations we delivered over 1,650 tons of aid and flew 324 sorties.*

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) deployed the three 27 Squadron Chinook HC2s, with accompanying personnel at the request of The Department for International Development (DFID). As a DFID asset, the Chinooks were tasked in support of the United Nations and various other charitable foundations.

Operations

Based at QASIM airfield, located Southwest of Rawalpindi, two Chinooks would depart daily for Chaklala airfield, about seven miles to the Northeast every morning having received their tasking from DFID/UNHCR. Chaklala Airfield was the humanitarian aid logistical base where the Chinooks could load their cargo. The majority of loads were carried internally and fully loaded the Chinook initially carried around five tons of supplies which were increased to seven tons by reducing fuel after the routes, terrain, weather, landing sites and unloading times became familiar. The loads comprised predominantly, food, tents and blankets, but also included tools, plastic sheeting, corrugated iron and baby care equipment, all in desperate shortage within the affected region. The RAF Chinooks evacuated some 328 personnel, 36 of whom were casualties, from areas that could not be reached by road. The majority of sorties were to deliver humanitarian aid in the mountains to the North and East of Islamabad along the Kashmir border region. This required the Chinooks to operate in mountains rising up to 11,000 ft and at ranges extending over 200 kilometres.

The Chinooks could fly five sorties per day which equated to fifty tons of aid. The two RAF Chinooks flew over 333 flying hours with much of the servicing done at night. Many of the missions were undertaken at high altitude requiring the Chinooks to land on improvised landing sites close to devastated villages.

Wing Commander Shell said: *"Our previous mountain flying training and corporate experience of operating in the mountainous regions of Norway and Afghanistan helped us commence operations with minimal familiarisation. Frequently we would need maximum (ten minutes) power from our Lycoming T55-L-712 engines to get over high ridges and overall the aircraft performed admirably. We occasionally encountered bad weather but used our experience of these types of conditions to avoid problems and continue our missions. One of the more unusual hazards was kites. Kite flying (up to 1500 ft) in Pakistan is a national pastime and these along with large birds such as Eagles were prevalent near built up areas."*



RAF No 27 Squadron Chinook HC2s with a double load of tents and equipment heading toward the mountains of Kashmir.

Photo: MACM Aaron (Rhino) Neal / 27 Squadron

stunning performance and I am immensely proud of the team from RAF Odiham and what they achieved".

A DFID statement read: The success of this co-ordinated approach can be contrasted to the original operational tempo of the DFID/RAF Chinooks in the relief effort. The combination of only lifting pre-positioned cargo from Muzaffarabad and utilising sling nets increased the number of sorties flown in a typical day on average, by a factor of five. The actual daily number of rotations varied from 16-29 rotations with a peak of 234 tonnes delivered in one day alone; in contrast, the previous operational routine averaged approximately three to four sorties and 40 tonnes per day when carried internally. Approximately 75% of the cargo delivered was non-food items, including shelter repair kits, tents, blankets and kitchen sets that together with food allowed people to sustain themselves over the winter until the reconstruction can begin in the spring.

The last RAF Chinook flights took place on 25 November and the first aircraft and crews arrived back in the UK on Monday 28 November with the remaining two aircraft following on 30 November. As the Minister for the Armed Forces, Adam Ingram said during his visit to RAF Odiham and 27 Squadron: "A big thank you for a job well done".

MUZAFFARABAD Operations

Over six days from 16 November the combined expertise of the Chinook crews and Joint Helicopter Support Unit (JHSU) was admirably demonstrated when they moved over 850 tonnes of vital humanitarian supplies for IOM, UNHCR, WFP, Tear Fund, ICRC and MSF Holland using underslung netted loads (USL). With the help of the RAF Chinooks several weeks' worth of supplies were pre positioned to help vulnerable areas, ensuring that these people were securely sustained for a longer period. Group Captain Sean Reynolds (Station Commander, RAF Odiham) said: *"The Chinook Force provided an essential niche capability to the relief effort. The Joint Helicopter Support Unit (JHSU) was the only organisation that had the skills and experience to provide site and load clearances. Essentially this meant that they could prepare loads of equipment into suitable packages (netted loads) to exploit and maximise the utility of the limited helicopter lift available and ensure the aid was delivered and accessible on the landing site. The Deployment was a*



Louisiana

National Guard units finish filling levees with sandbags

By SPC Sarah B. Smith

BELLE CHASSE, La. (Army News Service, Oct. 17, 2005) — Soldiers and Airmen finished filling levees with sandbags Saturday, after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita destroyed the levees and any sense of security from the devastating waters of the Mississippi River.

Sandbags from a CH-47 Chinook were used to fill the holes in the Braithwaite Scarsdale levee system in northern Plaquemines Parish, La. The levee system once served as a shield from the same waters that damaged it.

Winds and storm surges created holes in the levees, and the five breached levees no longer prevented flooding. Without aid, the flooding continued.

“It looked like lumber yards where the houses are pushed up in a line,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brian Koegler, Flight Training Company, Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training Site, Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa. “All natural barriers are broken. Roads, bridges and train tracks are blown all over the region.” The devastation was worse than shown on television.

This served as a great chance for different states to come together for one mission. “We are all making a difference,” said Koegler.

Alabama, Michigan and Pennsylvania’s Army National Guard and a California Army Reserve unit traveled to the stricken state and worked for over a week to fix the levees.

“We were trying to get the sandbags attached to the Chinooks as fast as possible so they can go drop them,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Chablis Carroll 189th Airlift Wing, Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. “We needed to do as much as we can before it rains.”

Soldiers and Airmen used fork lifts to move four-foot-tall bulging, white sandbags, which weighed 5,000 to 7,000 pounds. Thick, metal cables enabled easy retrieval by the Chinooks. Each Chinook’s load of sandbags weighed approximately 20,000 pounds and it dropped 15 to 20 loads a day.



Photo: SPC Sarah B. Smith

The Chinooks played a key role to stop the flooding of water.

“What I did see is water where it’s not supposed to be – surrounding people’s houses,” said Sgt. Kyle Miller, flight engineer, F Co., 131st Aviation Regiment, Birmingham, Ala.

Homes, businesses and other structures were severely damaged by flooding. When the water gets pumped out, citizens in the area will be able to rebuild their lives.

“I can foresee it taking a year before it ever gets back to the way it was here,” said Miller.

“I am glad to be here. I can’t imagine having nothing to come home to,” said Spc. Neil Bryant, F Co., 131st Avn. Regt.

It takes time to rebuild. No one knows exactly how long, but this process, for some, goes faster than others, said Staff Sgt. Jason A. Loveday, A Co., 5159th Avn. Regt., Fort Lewis, Wash. Either way, the levees need repairs.

“This is something worthwhile,” Loveday added. “This is a needed temporary patch to enable the levees to get fixed permanently.”

Parts of the Braithwaite Scarsdale remain closed due to the flooding. Every day, as the levees are repaired the flooding reduces. “For right now, the main job is sandbags and making sure we are doing all we can do to help,” said Sgt. 1st Class James Scott, F Co., 131st Avn. Regt.

Editor’s note: SPC Sarah B. Smith serves with the 105th MPAD.

Sandbags sway below a CH-47 Chinook to fill the holes in the Braithwaite Scarsdale levee system in northern Plaquemines Parish, La. Soldiers and Airmen finished filling levees with sandbags after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Saturday.

Commentary: Cavalry makes difference in New Orleans

By Spc. Joshua McPhie

NEW ORLEANS (Army News Service, Sept. 14, 2005) —

The damage caused by Hurricane Katrina is almost too much to comprehend. Homes are surrounded by water, stretching as far as you can see, punctuated by the occasional smoldering shell of a burnt-out building.

But some things in the grief-stricken city have changed for the better in the last few days. Overpasses, rooftops, the convention center and stadiums are no longer the islands of huddled refugees they were following the brutal storm, thanks in part to Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division’s 1st Air Cavalry Brigade.

More than 200 Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry’s Warrior Brigade along with over 300 Soldiers from 4ID and other Army aviation units make up Task Force Warrior. They have been working to help the hurricane survivors by joining forces with aviators from the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard and several civilian agencies working around the clock to relieve the suffering.

Since they arrived here Sept. 1, the Cav air crews have been shuttling Soldiers into the city, moving stranded refugees to safer areas, airlifting injured people to hospitals and delivering much needed supplies.

“We’re still in crisis response,” said Col. Dan Shanahan, commander of the Task Force. “The bulk of the force is doing humanitarian relief.” He said the aircrews’ immediate concern was to help evacuate everyone and help sustain life. “For the most part we’ve been doing passenger movements,” Sgt. Kendrick Scott, Bravo Company 2nd Battalion 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, said of his Chinook crew’s missions.

Much of their work has been transporting people who have had to abandon their homes, the Louisville, Kentucky native said. Scott, a flight engineer, estimates their crew has also moved 5,000 pounds of cargo, food and supplies to the Superdome in their first three days. Several of their missions have included dropping off pallets of supplies. “Usually it takes about two hours of prior work for that operation, which is only about 20 minutes,” Scott said.

Before the Chinook picks up the supplies, Soldiers lay out cargo netting, put pallets on top of them, pile the supplies on top, wrap it all with the cargo net and position a hook on the top of the load, Scott said. “We’ll hover over the pallets, hook up to the hooks and we’re off,” Scott said. Flying over New Orleans made it even easier to see the devastation caused by the storm. Scott said he could see the damage and knew that people had lost everything. “It’s kind of hard to watch,” Scott said. “You’ll see a lot of houses with the word ‘help’ painted on the roof.”

Now that many of the city’s residents are out of



immediate danger, the aviation leaders are developing a plan of action for the next phase, Shanahan said. “The initial phase was moving people from their homes to high and dry areas,” he said. “We will move into a more logistical role soon.”

Let’s hope with the new role that the cavalry continues to make a difference in helping the hard-hit city recover.

Editor’s note: Spc. Joshua McPhie serves with 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs.

Soldiers rush supplies, repair canals after Hurricane Rita



82nd Airborne troops and local law enforcement officials attempt to move a house from the middle of a flooded road in Vermilion Parish, La., following Hurricane Rita.

Photo: PFC Jacqueline M. Haw

Bird's-eye view determines needy

Aviation reconnaissance missions have been extremely helpful in determining which communities need help first. "We get a real 'bird's eye' view," said Lt. Col. Michael Mahony, the operations officer with the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade. "You get an entirely different perspective [on the damage done by a hurricane] from the air." Mahony said his unit will continue to fly "scout mission," but that supply missions are the top priority for now.

JTF All American plowing thru high water

Working with light amphibious vehicles and about 70 high water trucks, JTF All American troops are able to get through the flooded areas of western Louisiana to conduct their missions, said Maj. Gen. Bill Caldwell.

Since Sept. 3, Caldwell has been the commander of 5,000 active-duty troops, including 350 Marines, charged with search and rescue operations, humanitarian relief efforts and evacuation of displaced Americans in New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina.

"Task Force All American received orders to move west and establish a headquarters in Lafayette, with missions in New Orleans almost complete," said Caldwell, adding that as of early Monday morning, remaining missions in New Orleans had been handed over to the National Guard. "Time is critical in this type of situation," said Caldwell. By responding quickly to the Hurricane-affected areas, JTF All American is able to conduct search and rescue missions, saving people in need, he added. "The areas are flooded because the locks to the Louisiana canal broke in the Hurricane," said Lt. Troy Hebert, Vermilion

Parish Sheriffs Office. "Once the current shifts the opposite direction, the flood waters should recede."

LAFAYETTE, La. (Army News Service, Sept. 26, 2005)

– Thousands of Soldiers are providing food and water to stranded residents along the Texas-Louisiana border following flooding from Hurricane Rita.

Meanwhile, in New Orleans, the Army Corps of Engineers worked throughout the weekend to repair a breach in the Industrial Canal. About 400 huge sandbags and tons of rock, placed primarily with military helicopters, have stopped the inflow of water into the lower 9th Ward, officials reported. They said pumping operations have already begun to remove the floodwaters from the area. Less than 12 hours after Hurricane Rita struck the southwest region of Louisiana, "Joint Task Force All American" Soldiers left New Orleans to begin search and rescue missions through the Vermilion and New Iberia Parishes. About 5,000 Soldiers from elements of the 82nd Airborne and 1st Cavalry divisions comprise JTF All American and are helping National Guard troops provide humanitarian assistance in western Louisiana.

In Texas, the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade and the National Guard are making supply runs to southeastern counties hit hardest by Hurricane Rita.

Jasper gets needed supplies

The town of Jasper, Texas, was one of the stops for a 1st Cavalry Division CH-47 Chinook Sunday. This town of 9,000 suffered through two hours of winds gusting up to 120-miles-an-hour, according to their chief of police. "We had six hours of winds up to 90-miles-an-hour," added Roy Todd Hunter, the city's police chief. Hunter said his town, just off Interstate Highway 95, ended up with nearly 2,000 evacuees as traffic jams coming from the coastal cities knotted the Texas highways. "A lot of them just ran out of gas," he said. "We had to put them up here during the storm." When the Chinook helicopter landed at the tiny airfield in Jasper, Hunter was elated. He said the pallets of food and water were the first support his town had seen. Even with this first delivery, Hunter said his town has many more needs in the coming days. "We need fuel," he stated. "We need generators, and we need thousands of meals a day until the power comes back on."

Fuel before the storm

Before the storm, the Texas National Guard refueled 260 buses being used for medical and civilian transport in Beaumont and Houston. The Guard was also given the mission of refueling privately owned vehicles that ran out of gas on highways outside of Houston. In order to complete the refueling of POVs, the State made 650,000 gallons of fuel available to the Texas National Guard. Immediate support to evacuees included 25 fuel trucks and 500 Texas National Guard men and women who distributed fuel at no charge at the direction of Department of Safety and Texas Department of Transportation. Now the Guard Soldiers are also delivering food and water to people waiting to continue their journey back home.

Corps fixing New Orleans canal

In New Orleans, water in the Industrial Canal has receded more than five feet since Friday's overtopping and pumping operations have already begun to remove floodwaters from the area. "We are working around the clock to once again dry the area," said Col. Duane Gapinski, commander of the Corps' Unwatering Task Force. "Working with the city sewer and water board, we were able to pump water from the area this weekend. We are also barging in additional temporary pumps today to the area near Florida Avenue that will help us quicken the unwatering of the area." The area is expected to be pumped dry within the next seven days, Gapinski said. Work will continue on shoring up the emergency repairs throughout the week. No additional helicopter sandbag placements are expected in the area, he said.

Other temporary repairs hold

Other temporary levee repairs throughout New Orleans continue to hold. Teams from the Corps continue to monitor the repairs made after Hurricane Katrina.

The steel sheetpiling installed at the mouth of the 17th Street and London Ave. canals last week should be removed within the next 48 hours if lake levels continue to stabilize, Corps officials said. The temporary pilings provided protection from storm surge during Hurricane Rita's approach preventing water from endangering the temporary repairs made to the canal walls in the area. Using sheetpiling on the Industrial Canal was not possible because of the canal's depth and width, Gapinski said.

The Corps is taking a three-phase approach to the levees in New Orleans, Gapinski said:

First, the Corps is charged with removing the water from the city and assessing the structural integrity of the levee.

Second the Corps will provide an interim level of protection to see the city through this storm season and the traditional high water months of winter.

Lastly, the Corps is charged with returning the system to a pre-Katrina strength by June of next year.

Southwest of New Orleans, the Corps is currently responding to a parish request for assistance to fill a breach in a local levee in Terrebonne Parish near the city of Montagut. Eight helicopters will begin placing large sandbags on the damaged levee, officials said. Work there is expected to take two to three days.

Editor's note: PFC Jacqueline M. Hawe of the 82nd Public Affairs Office and MSG Dave Larsen of the 1st Cavalry Division, which also includes summaries of news releases from the Corps of Engineers and Texas National Guard.

Hillclimbers go in search of ‘H’ in Pakistan

CHAKLALA, Pakistan (Army News Service, Nov. 22, 2005) — In addition to delivering relief supplies to remote Pakistan villages and towns, the mission of the 25th Infantry Division “Hillclimbers” includes evacuating casualties and transporting displaced persons to camps where they will be better equipped to survive the harsh winter weather as it approaches.

Pilots leave Chaklala flight line at Quasim Airbase with a helicopter full of supplies and an approximate grid coordinate for their delivery destination from the Operations Center. Once in the air, they look for landing zones marked with a large, white letter “H.” However, many of the landing zones marked with an “H” are not official and have been made by desperate people in desperate need of supplies.

Capt. Michael Sines, a pilot and the commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Aviation Regiment, has flown relief missions almost every day since he arrived in Pakistan.

“Being a pilot, up front, we don’t really get a chance to be a part of everything that goes on when we land,” said Sines. “It’s the crewmembers who really get to get up close and personal with the people we’re helping. It’s still a great feeling you get at the end of the day, though, knowing what we’re accomplishing over here.”



Photo: SPC Mary Simms
Soldiers unload relief supplies from a CH-47 Chinook of Company B, 2-14th Aviation, in Pakistan.

Hillclimbers saving lives

Acting first sergeant for the Hillclimbers, Sgt. 1st Class Steven Wyllie, wants to make sure all his Soldiers get a chance to experience every aspect of the mission.

“From the mechanics who work at night when the birds land — to make sure they can fly the next day -- to the commo [communications] specialists who work all day at base camp, everyone plays a vital role here,” he said. “I think people will get worn out if they stay at Quasim and don’t get a chance to see the human side of the mission here.”

After being “on the ground” in Pakistan, one Soldier’s words mirrored exactly what life was like for the pilots and crewmembers of the who were delivering relief supplies to victims of Pakistan’s deadly Oct. 8 earthquake.

“Everything that you do over there, you’re either saving someone’s life, feeding children or making someone warm; that’s the mindset you have to have,” said the Combined Joint Task Force 76, Task Force Griffin, Command Sgt. Maj. Hector Marin as he spoke to a group of Soldiers from Hawaii, Kansas and Texas while they were staging in Bagram, Afghanistan.

5 tons of relief in 10 minutes

The 60-person team of Hillclimbers has become a part of the larger Task Force Quake, which is comprised of Soldiers from U.S. Army units in Hawaii, Kansas and Texas. Joining them are European Chinook counterparts from the British Army and the Royal Air Force hailing from Great Britain.

An amazing flurry of organized chaos takes place when the Hillclimbers come into view at each landing zone. For the most part, the American helicopters, which are marked by an American flag on either side, only land where there are Pakistani military soldiers already on the ground.

The “Pak Mil,” as they are affectionately called by U.S. Soldiers is playing a huge role in maintaining civil crowd control, so that approaching relief helicopters are not mobbed. As the crews and Pak Mil unload more than 10,000 pounds of relief supplies in less than 10 minutes, crowds of locals slowly emerge to watch with engrossed eyes. Tents, rice, sugar, blankets, and sometimes even baby food are unloaded.

One Pakistani man gave excited praise through his broken English for his family’s rescue by the Hillclimbers.

“Thank you, thank you, America, yes, thank you,” he said as he shook hands with American Soldiers.

Editor’s note: Spc. Mary Simms serves with 25th ID & USARHAW PAO

Cavalry Aviators Providing Assistance

By Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins
1st Air Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs

QASIM AIR BASE, Pakistan – It is 5:45 a.m. and the pre-flight briefing has just ended. Showtime is at 6:30 a.m. and take off is scheduled at 7 a.m. Although not covered in the media much anymore, the relief effort in Pakistan in the aftermath of the massive earthquake last October is still an every day effort. Soldiers of Task Force Quake II, comprised of elements from the 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment and 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division are heading up the last leg of U.S. support in the humanitarian relief effort in Pakistan by providing food via their CH-47D Chinook helicopters.

It is Feb. 21. Just three days earlier, with their boots barely on the ground, TFQ II troops are already taking over missions in the relief effort.

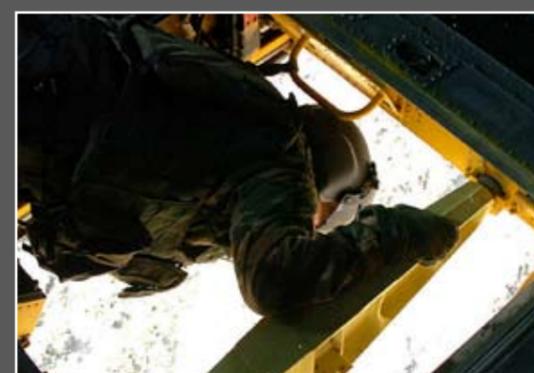
There are reasons why the Chinooks are used as opposed to other aircraft in the Army’s inventory. “Chinooks are used because of the altitude that we can operate at and the amount of weight we can carry,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Ryan, a Chinook pilot from Company B, 2-227th.

Both of these factors are important because of the terrain the Chinooks are being flown over. Pakistan, unlike Iraq, is very mountainous and the loads that are being carried could not be taken by a Black Hawk helicopter, Ryan said. The Chinook can handle 17,000 to 18,000 pounds at a comfortable maximum. While the helicopters could carry more in some circumstances, Ryan said it’s not normally done. The pilots and crew work an eight-hour day taking about eight loads out to the people in remote areas of Pakistan.

The normal day for the pilots and crew starts with a briefing early in the morning around 5:30 a.m., lift-off by 7:30 a.m. and return around 4 p.m., Ryan said. They head out to a pick-up zone to retrieve their load then go drop it at specified coordinates given to them earlier that morning.



Spc. Chance Harper, a Chinook crew chief from Task Force Quake II, sits at the edge of the ramp on the back of a CH-47D Chinook on its way to drop off supplies Feb. 21 to the people of Pakistan. TFQ II makes numerous trips out to remote locations, dropping off food and supplies where other vehicles cannot reach. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs)



A helicopter crew member leans out the bottom hatch of a CH-47D Chinook while closing in on a pick-up zone Feb. 21 in northern Pakistan. At the pick-up zone, food and supplies are sling-loaded to the bottom of the Chinook and carried to the Pakistani people in regions less accessible by ground vehicles. Chinooks are used because of their immense load-bearing capabilities in higher altitudes. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs)



Pakistan

U.S. earthquake assistance arrives in Pakistan



Photo: SSG Ken Denny

A Pakistani soldier directs a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter as it touches down on Qasim Army Airfield, Pakistan, to assist in the humanitarian aid effort Oct. 10. Helicopters were diverted from Operation Enduring Freedom to assist in Pakistan after a 7.6 earthquake caused enormous damage.

KABUL, Afghanistan (Army News Service, Oct. 11, 2005) — U.S. forces are assisting with rescue, recovery and relief operations in Pakistan following an earthquake that killed between 20,000 and 30,000.

Five CH-47 Chinook and three UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters with U.S. Soldiers and supplies from Afghanistan arrived in Islamabad, Pakistan, Oct. 10 to assist with recovery operations in the wake of Saturday's devastating earthquake.

The helicopter crews were from the 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, and 2nd Battalion, 6th Cavalry Regiment, at Bagram Airfield and Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.

Additionally, a C-17 and its crew from the 7th Airlift Squadron, McChord Air Force Base, Wash., delivered 12 pallets — weighing almost 90,000 pounds — of food, water, medicine and blankets from Bagram. So far, 18 pallets of relief supplies have been transported by air to Pakistan along with essential personnel needed to assist with recovery operations.

The helicopters took off from Bagram Airfield again this morning to ferry supplies to earthquake-stricken areas and evacuate those injured.

Additionally, C-130 Hercules and C-17 Globemaster aircraft from Afghanistan will transport 30 pallets of relief supplies to a Pakistan Army Airfield near Islamabad, officials said.

“Our total focus is on relieving the suffering in Pakistan, help them stabilize and, in the longer term, recover,” said Lt. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan commanding general.

Editors note: Information provided by Combined Joint Task Force-76 Public Affairs in Afghanistan.

Reserve pilots continue flying Pakistani lifeline

By Chuck Prichard

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (Army News Service, Dec. 20, 2005) — Logging hundreds of flying hours to remote Pakistani villages over the past two months, Army Reserve Chinook pilots have delivered hundreds of tons of supplies ranging from baby formula to roofing materials.

The Pakistani government calls this relief effort following October's earthquake “Operation Lifeline.” Co. B, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment continues to provide a large percentage of the flights ferrying supplies into mountain villages and evacuating residents who are unable to withstand the austere conditions.

Unit slated for Afghanistan

Members of Company B, an Army Reserve unit from Olathe, Kan., had just arrived at their mobilization station in October to prepare for a deployment to Afghanistan when their mission was literally shaken up.

Instead of training up and heading into the Afghan war zone later, the unit's 200 Army Reserve Soldiers and 14 Chinook helicopters were sent almost immediately to the other side of the Safid Mountain range to help provide relief to the victims of a powerful earthquake that struck Pakistan in early October 2005.

The earthquake, registering 7.6 on the magnitude scale, struck the area on Oct. 8, 2005, killing 86,000 people, injuring 69,000 and leaving an estimated 4 million homeless.

Co. B arrived on the scene a couple of weeks later.

Chinooks moving mountains

“This mission was tailor made for us,” said company commander Maj. Walter Bradley. “The roads are impassable. The only way to move anything is by aircraft. And our Chinooks are the aircraft best suited for these conditions.

“It is difficult to find words to adequately describe the destruction,” Bradley said. “We go some places that don't look too bad. But there are some villages that don't have a single building left standing. It is absolutely incredible. Yet, these people have the resolve to pick up the pieces and move on with their lives.

“Every mission that we fly is at max weight and max capacity. If you can name it, we have probably hauled it,” Bradley said before rattling off a list of supplies his aircraft have carried. “Baby formula.



Photo: MSG Greg Deimel

Tents are unloaded from an Army Reserve Chinook in Jarid, Pakistan. Co. B, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment is still flying a majority of Pakistan earthquake relief missions to remote mountain villages.

Tents. Roofing materials. Medical supplies. Flour. Grain. Construction materials. The list goes on and on. We have hauled hundreds of tons of cargo and it shows no signs of letting up.”

No rest for crews

There are no days off for his crews, Bradley said. “We have to keep flying because there is still a critical need for everything,” he said. “Our maintenance crews are doing a fantastic job of keeping us in the air.”

While it might seem boring to haul an endless stream of supplies, Bradley begs to differ. He classifies each mission as an adventure. “The conditions are constantly changing. We have flown into a village in the morning and had a hard time landing because of the brown out from the dust. Then, when we went back to the same village in the afternoon, we had to contend with white-out conditions because of snow,” he said.

Mountain flying requires skill, training

The mountain elevations also call for skill flying, Bradley said. “Our ceiling is 14,000 feet. We can't fly above that altitude without oxygen. Many of our missions are just below or right at that threshold.”

Lt. Gen. James R. Helmly, Chief of the Army Reserve, characterized this as “one of the tough and demanding missions that the Army Reserve increasingly has to be prepared to do.”

Given the abrupt mission change and rapid deployment following mobilization, he said Company B Soldiers adapted well to the situation.

“The real key was training under demanding conditions prior to mobilization,” Helmly said.

No end in sight

It is unclear how long the unit will be involved with the relief effort or whether it will eventually be sent to its original mission in Afghanistan, Bradley said.

“We'll see how that plays out,” Bradley said. “But, for right now, we have a robust mission and are loving every minute of it,” Bradley said.

“I don't think any other mission could be this rewarding for us. We have large American flags painted on both sides of all of our Chinooks,” Bradley said. “When we land in these villages the people point to the flags and let us know how grateful they are that we have come to help.”

Editor's note: Chuck Prichard is a journalist for the Army Reserve.

Aircrews quickly respond to Hurricane Rita

By SPC Joshua McPhie

FORT HOOD, Texas (Army News Service, Sept. 26, 2005) — Just hours after Hurricane Rita made landfall, 1st Cavalry Division aircrews were on their way to the Houston area to lend a helping hand.

The division's 1st Air Cavalry Brigade sent 12 helicopters from the 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment to provide relief from the second hurricane to hit the Gulf Coast in less than a month.

"We're going to go down and work for FEMA and Fifth Army and see what we can do to help," said Lt. Col. Chris Joslin, 2-227 AVN commander. "We provide a tremendous capability being able to move people and supplies quickly, especially where other transportation is rendered incapable."

His battalion sent the first of the six CH-47 Chinooks and six UH-60 Black Hawks to Conroe, Texas, just hours after the storm passed and the rest quickly followed.

Helping after a hurricane is nothing new to the First Team aviators. They spent nearly three weeks in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

"It's kind of like déjà vu," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Lance Oldham, a Black Hawk pilot from 2-227 Aviation. "We just got back less than a week ago from Katrina, now we're having to turn around and go right back out to Rita. We kind of have it down pat now. Hopefully it won't be as bad this time."

Oldham isn't the only Soldier giving a repeat performance. Many of the troopers who went to aid relief efforts are veterans of Hurricane Katrina. "I know what to expect this time," said Staff Sgt. Antaune Collier, a crewmember with 2-227 AVN.

Despite the similarities, there are some unknowns for the humanitarian helpers. Oldham said he isn't sure exactly what kind of damage, or relief efforts, to expect. "I don't know if the damage will be quite the same as seeing the flooding around

New Orleans," the Plano, Texas native said. "There's going to be a lot of aircraft flying around, that was one of the challenges when Katrina hit. There were massive amounts of aircraft fling around trying to rescue people. I don't know what the rescue efforts are going to look like this time."

One thing he is sure of though is his desire to help.



"This is one of the most rewarding jobs out of everything we have done," Oldham said. "I spent a year in Iraq and felt like I was really doing my job but when you come out and do this and you get to help people and move people around and help in the relief efforts ... that's when you really get a sense of accomplishment and reward and a feeling of pride for what you do."

He's not alone in that sentiment.

"Probably the most fulfilling thing that you can ever do is to save people's lives and know that you're having a positive impact," Joslin said.

"I'm excited to help in any way possible," said Collier, a Jackson, Tenn., native. "I look at this as part of the job. Wherever duty calls, I'll go help."

Editor's note: SPC Joshua McPhie serves with 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs.

On 29 August 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the City of New Orleans and much of the surrounding area. CH-47 Chinook helicopters from several U.S. Army National Guard units and from the country of Singapore assisted in the disaster relief operation. A few weeks later, Hurricane Rita rain-soaked the already flooded out areas, wreaking further havoc.

*Flood Waters caused by breaches in the levees around New Orleans inundated sections of the city, halting surface transportation and polluting water stocks.
Photo: U.S. Army*



*U.S. Army National Guard Warrant Officers Charles Woodward and Lance Brennan, pilots of a CH-47D Chinook assigned to the 131st Aviation Regiment of the Georgia National Guard, fly over areas that were flooded when Hurricane Katrina devastated parts of New Orleans, La. The humanitarian assistance operation is a joint effort led by the Department of Defense in conjunction with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
Photo: U.S. Army*



◀ The crew of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter uses a water basket to drop water on two house fires in downtown New Orleans, La., on 6 Sept. 2005. The Chinook was part of a joint military and civilian effort to assist firefighters on the ground fighting the blazing house fires.

Photo: Department of Defense

▶ Soldiers from Company B, 5th Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, help FEMA search-team members carry their boats into a CH-47 Chinook helicopter after looking for survivors who wish to be rescued from the flood-ravaged town of Empire, La.

Photo: www.army.mil.



◀ A CH-47 Chinook maneuvers into position earlier this month to drop sandbags into a levee that was demolished when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans.

Photo: Photographer's Mate Third Class Greg Pierot

Pakistani earthquake victims crowd around a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter delivering disaster relief supplies to the earthquake-devastated area surrounding the town of Oghi, Pakistan, on 17 Oct. 2005. The Department of Defense is participating in the multinational effort to provide humanitarian assistance and support to Pakistan and parts of India and Afghanistan following a devastating earthquake.

Photo: DOD, Tech. Sgt. Mike Buytas, USAF



A CH-47D Chinook from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, a part of Task Force Quake II, flies over a fog-covered valley on 21 Feb. near Muzaffarabad, Pakistan. The Chinooks are headed to a pick-up zone where food and supplies are waiting to be distributed to the victims of a massive earthquake that occurred last October.

Photo: SPC Nathan J. Hoskins, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs



A pair of RAF No 27 Squadron Chinook HC2s off loading supplies at a remote hilltop village.

Photo: MACM Aaron (Rhino) Neal / 27 Squadron