

Tandem Notes

Volume 9, Issue 1

— Phrog Phorum —

First Quarter, 2002

‘Night Stalkers’ honor fallen Americans

Story courtesy U.S. Special Operations Command, Public Affairs Office

While flying missions in support of the war on terrorism, members of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, Fort Campbell, Ky., carried with them many symbols of those individuals who were killed by the tragic events on Sept. 11.

The “Night Stalkers,” as members of the unit are called, proudly wore and displayed flags, patches and other items as a show of unity and a tribute to America’s fallen heroes.

The tributes began when a service member who volunteered to help remove wreckage at ground zero gave the 160th pieces of that wreckage to be buried in Afghanistan. He also gave members of the unit dozens of New York City fire and police department patches.

The pilots and crews sewed the patches on their uniforms, symbolically bringing the NYC fire department with them on their flights into Afghanistan. They also painted “NYFD” and various New York fire department logos on their helicopters.

“Wearing the patches constantly reminded us of what started this whole war,” said one 160th pilot. “They wanted us to wear them in honor of their fallen comrades. When this whole thing is over, we’re planning on meeting the firemen and exchanging a few stories.”

On the very first helicopter flight flown into Afghanistan, the crew carried with them two American flags. Before departing, the flight leader took out a piece of paper and wrote a simple note to President Bush. “Sir, with all our respect, sense of duty, honor and patriotism for our great nation, we are honored to carry this precious cargo. God bless the United States of America and God bless the U.S. military.”

Each crewmember then signed the letter before walking out in the darkness for their mission into the unknown.

“You were going some place that no one else had been,” the air mission commander

said later. “There was an intense level of uncertainty and such an adrenaline rush.”

They successfully returned and immediately following the debriefing session, a commander read that letter aloud.

“Everyone stood a little taller after that first mission,” said a Night Stalker pilot. A Special Forces team later raised one of the flags at the U.S. embassy in Kabul. The second flag made its way to the White House.

Perhaps most touching though was honoring a special request made by a father in memory of his daughter, a flight attendant who was serving on one of the hijacked planes.

“Would it be possible,” the father wrote, “to have some soldier, some good man or woman, carry these wings with them in our war against terrorism? These wings were pinned on me by our daughter’s wingmate on the day of her memorial. I wore them that day and as we closed out our daughter’s apartment and her life. I wore them to ground zero, where the evil invaders of our country and our lifestyle hurled themselves into hell and killed 5,000 innocent civilians. They are of sturdy metal, having resisted a lot of tears and sweaty palms, without tarnishing. My intent was to return them to her wingmate, but I want them to travel to action first for my daughter.”

A solemn “hoo-ah” filled the briefing tent after the letter was read. A crew chief immediately asked if he could wear the wings.

“After hearing the letter, I thought it would be a real honor to fly with them,” said Staff Sgt. Mark. “I’d just like to thank her father for giving me that privilege.” While pinned on his body armor, the flight attendant’s wings flew into action more than 20 times.

As soldiers and citizens of America, the Night Stalkers said it was a true privilege to carry the precious cargo, to wear the patches and to fly with the fire and police department logos, and they thank those who sent them the symbols and tributes. America can take heart in their military and especially the 160th SOAR whose motto says it all, “Night Stalkers don’t quit.”

Dear Chinook and Sea Knight User

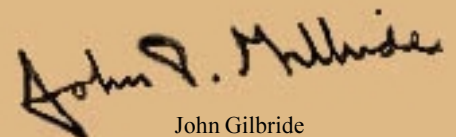
It’s rare to turn on the news nowadays and not see a Chinook or Sea Knight hovering about the snow-capped mountains of Afghanistan, landing on a makeshift landing zone or darting across the screen during any number of transport missions. My sense of pride grows each time I see them doing what they do best—carrying our troops to and from the battlefield.

Although the tandem rotor community has good reason to celebrate, we’ve experienced several unfortunate reminders that this is a war. We’ve lost nearly 20 of our troops during intense fighting in Afghanistan and an accident in the Philippines.

Several aircraft have been heavily damaged or destroyed by enemy fire, but our troops remain confident that these aircraft are the best option for the hostile terrain and climate that they encounter. The stories on the following pages serve as examples of their unwavering support for the aircraft.

Information about the aircraft’s missions and roles is starting to surface. You’ll find the first set of released photos in this issue of Tandem Notes. We’ll continue to provide stories and photos as they become available.

We’re always looking for customer-related news, “tales from the field” and photographs, so please submit them to: Jack Satterfield, Boeing Philadelphia, P.O. Box 16858, M/S P30-18, Philadelphia, PA 19142-0858. Ph: (610) 591-8399; Fax: (610) 591-2701, e-mail: john.r.satterfield@boeing.com; or Doug Holmes (same mailing address and FAX number), Ph: (610) 591-4901, e-mail: william.d.holmes@boeing.com. Keep the stories coming and God Bless America!



John Gilbride
Director, Aerospace Support
Boeing Philadelphia



During Exercise New Horizons, the "Prairie Riders" ferried personnel, supplies, building materials and fuel from Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay, to Concepcion, the base of operations for the mission. Above, a CH-47D prepares to lift an abandoned fuel tank.

From the Field: 'Prairie Riders' perfect in Paraguay

By WOC Steve Galvin

The Prairie Riders, Det 1 Co F 106th Aviation, Davenport, Iowa, recently completed another successful overseas deployment. The unit played a major part in "New Horizons," a joint exercise conducted in Paraguay, South America.

The goal of the exercise was the enhancement of the medical and school conditions for the people around Concepcion—the base of operations for the exercise. This was the fourth deployment of personnel and equipment in the past five years.

The unit, assisted by Missouri-Aviation Classification and Repair Activity Depot, deployed two CH-47Ds on C-5A aircraft for the mission. The Chinooks were instrumental in ferrying personnel, supplies, building materials and fuel from Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay, to Concepcion.

By using the aircraft, the unit cut out more than four hours from the amount of time it took to get back and forth between the two cities. Since there is no direct route between them, it would have taken at least five hours to make the trip by bus or truck. This maximized the

time that was eventually used to construct new facilities around Concepcion.

The deployment to Paraguay enabled the soldiers of Det 1 Co F to see two very different sides of Paraguay. Asuncion is a city with a lot of people, cars, buses, trucks and tall buildings. Concepcion is the exact opposite. It's kind of like going from the "New World" to the "Old World." Concepcion is a city that operates at a much slower pace, with open-air markets, people using horse and bull carts for transportation and many different uses for motorcycles, such as a family of four on a 125 Yamaha.

A few of Det 1 Co F personnel also were called upon to assist the Paraguayan Air Force. They were in the process of completing the reassembly of UH-1 helicopters that were given to them by the Taiwanese government.

They taught Paraguayan Air Force personnel how to properly track and balance the UH-1H rotor system since they used to be an UH-1 unit before acquiring the CH-47D.

The "New Horizons" exercise in Paraguay gave the unit members a new sense of pride. Way to go, Prairie Riders! Keep up the good work.

News and Notes

Columbia announces latest model of Boeing 234 Chinook

Columbia Helicopters, Inc., recently announced the newest configuration in its fleet of Boeing 234 Chinook helicopters. The Boeing 234 "Combi" Chinook features a modified soft-paneled interior that provides seating for 19 passengers, their luggage and equipment, as well as the aircraft's two fuel tanks.

"We feel this combination takes advantage of everything the Chinook has to offer," said Mike Fahey, president, Columbia Helicopters, Inc. "This aircraft can still carry the massive loads for which this workhorse is known around the world. At the same time, we are able to offer transportation for up to 19 people, making this an incredibly versatile aircraft."

The aircraft is expected to be used extensively in fighting forest fires and remote petroleum operations. In the case of the forest fires, the helicopter can deliver a crew to the front lines of the fires, then drop 3,000-gallon loads of water or retardant to assist in the fire fighting efforts.

In the oilfield, the helicopter can carry rig crews to exploration sites and deliver supplies and components to petroleum exploration rigs.

For more information about Columbia Helicopters and its array of services, visit www.colheli.com.

War on Terrorism strains MH-47E fleet, says SOCOM

Recent MH-47E losses in Afghanistan and the Philippines are putting a strain on U.S. Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) small and increasingly overstretched transport fleet.

This is prompting the U.S. Army to look at acquiring additional helicopters, while at the same time, pushing ahead with the upgrade of existing aircraft to MH-47Gs.

Although the armed forces are using other rotorcraft, the Chinook is being heavily used because it is better suited to operating at the 10,000 ft-plus altitude of the mountainous battlefield. Twenty-six MH-47E Chinooks have been built and delivered to USSOCOM. Approximately 20 aircraft remain in service today.

‘Phrogs’ stir up the sand in Afghanistan

The CH-46E Sea Knight, or “Phrog,” has successfully conducted numerous sorties in and around Afghanistan as part of the ongoing effort to combat terrorism. The Vietnam-era aircraft, known for its durability and reliability, has been instrumental in troop insertion/extraction missions.

Capt. Scott Trail, a CH-46 pilot and QA officer for the Marine Helicopter Squadron HMM-163 (Rein) has family ties to The Boeing Company and provided several photos of their “Phrogs” in action in Afghanistan.

In an accompanying letter, Trail testified to the durability and performance of the venerable Phrog in which he stated, “I am enclosing some pictures of the ageless CH-46 in action in Afghanistan. That venerable bird served us very well. It was the only model helicopter that did not break down one single time in the field...My hat goes off to the brilliant engineers who designed and built that beautiful and timeless machine.”



A CH-46E Sea Knight from Marine Helicopter Squadron HMM-163 (Rein) lands at Camp Rhino after a mission in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (Story and photo courtesy Ken Seigle)

U.S. Navy extends service life of ‘Phrog’ unit



Helicopter Combat Support Squadron FIVE (HC-5) is utilizing a group of H-46 “Sea Knights” for continued Search and Rescue support missions. (Story and photo courtesy Rich Bronson)

As the Marines of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Iwakuni station Search and Rescue (SAR) began the disassembly of three green and orange SAR H-46 “Sea Knights” for a C-5 ride to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Helicopter Combat Support Squadron FIVE (HC-5) began preparations for accepting the aircraft to assist the

“Providers” in supporting the fleet.

This was made possible because the Japanese Defense Force assumed SAR support in the Iwakuni area. This brought an end to the continuous presence of the “PEDRO” SAR unit at MCAS Iwakuni. Their torch of SAR support was passed along to HC-5 with much gratitude. HC-5 originally expected to

receive the “new” MH-60S “Knight Hawk”—as dubbed by the 46 community—by May 2000. The delay in the H-60R/S program forced HC-5 to delay the long-awaited transition.

HC-5 is grateful to have the 7,000-hour “young” airframes compared to the 13,000-hour (avg.) airframes the unit currently flies. Boeing/Vertol engineers built a robust aircraft that can exceed their original 10,000-hour life expectancy. Following an extensive Airworthiness Inspection by Naval Aviation Depot Cherry Point engineers, the H-46D will be allowed to exceed 14,500 flight hours.

Without these “new” airframes from MCAS Iwakuni, HC-5 would have a tough time meeting fleet needs in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Ironically, history has a way of repeating itself. In 1967, the USMC transferred several H-46s to the Navy to test out a new mission called Vertical Replenishment, and the rest is history. It will be several more years before the last “Sea Knight” logs its last landing in support of the United States Navy.

**Back issues of
TANDEM NOTES
can be found online at:**
<http://www.boeing.com/rotorcraft/military/ch47d/tandemnotes/>

Chinooks continue to play key role in Afghan ops



U.S. Army, Special Operations and Royal Air Force Chinooks have performed countless missions in Afghanistan in continuing efforts to combat terrorism. Their success is due, in part, to the the ability to fly in high altitudes and adverse climates.

Photos courtesy 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Ft. Campbell, Ky.

