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## Soldiers race to rescue downed aircraft

CPT. KATHERINE ZYLA  
TF 449



**CAMP STRIKER** – Aircraft maintainers, with 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, can be called upon to find a downed aircraft at any time or anywhere in Iraq.

These maintainers are part of a Downed Aircraft Recovery Team, a team comprised of five to eight Soldiers, who are sent to where the wrecked aircraft is and responsible for recovering it.

“Our job is to get the aircraft back here (to the hangar) safely,” said Sgt. Gilbert R. Santos, an AH-64D Apache helicopter maintainer, who has been repairing aircraft in the Army for 10 years.

There are two primary missions of a DART- intermediate and delayed missions. When an aircraft is inoperative, whether due to a mechanical failure or enemy contact, the flight crew immediately assesses the situation and radios for the appropriate help.

Soldiers answering the call are 4/3 ACR maintainers, some are UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter repairmen and others work on AH-64Ds. These Soldiers are assigned to DARTs depending on their expertise.

If an aircraft can be repaired on-site then it is an intermediate mission. However, if the aircraft is beyond repair then it is a delayed mission, which requires a DART to remove the helicopter out of the area and take it to a place to be repaired.

Santos, a San Antonio, Texas native, and the Soldier who supervises how the entire aircraft is rigged, said “I rig the aircraft the best way I see fit, whether it will be transported out of the area by an air asset or ground vehicle.”

An intermediate mission involves maintainers, who are part of the Avia-



Courtesy photo

**Soldiers with 4/3 ACR's Aviation Maintenance Section work together and rig the main rotor of an inoperative UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter, so it can be ready for transport to a location to be repaired.**

tion Unit Maintenance section, whereas the delayed mission calls for Soldiers who work in the Aviation Intermediate Maintenance section.

The 4/3 ACR is unique in that it has the ability to support itself from an aircraft maintenance perspective. The unit is equipped with aviation intermediate maintenance capability, which includes extensive and time consuming maintenance, and an aviation unit maintenance capability, both allow 4/3 ACR to be self sufficient and respond to DART missions in a timely manner.

Maintainers on both teams have a challenging mission and must work together. A downed aircraft does not happen often; however, teams routinely practice their recovery procedures.

Soldiers with experience share their knowledge, review training manuals with maintainers and run them through recovery scenarios.

Santos has conducted more than 10 recovery missions in a combat theater throughout his three deployments to Iraq. During this deployment, he led a team of maintainers on 4/3 AVIM's only recovery mission, which occurred Christmas Day.

“It was most of the Soldiers first time on a downed aircraft recovery mission,” said Santos, “Before leaving (for the mission), we practiced what we knew, did a dry run here at the hangar and hooked up an aircraft flawlessly.”

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# Docs visit health clinic in Dujaylah

**SGT. FIRST CLASS JOE THOMPSON**  
41ST FIRES BDE.



FOB DELTA – Doctors from the 41st Fires Brigade Cooperative Medical Engagement Team visited the Dujaylah Health Clinic to validate known challenges in healthcare faced by the Iraqi Ministry of Health, Jan. 8.

The visit is part of operation Gunner Med, a joint medical civil-military operation between the Wasit Director General of Health and the 41st Fires Bde. designed to restore the medical capacity in Wasit Province and to bring clinics up to the regional health care standard.

“Cooperative medical engagements allow us to experience the challenges first hand that our Iraqi partners face every day in providing healthcare,” said Col. Italo Bastianelli, 41st Fires Bde. surgeon. “We address these challenges with process improvement projects in the areas of infrastructure, equipment and medical education in order to build and sustain medical capacity in Wasit.”

The CME visits help to identify each clinic’s problems so the Iraqi health care system can fix those problems and bring the healthcare standards up to the same level as the other gulf region countries, said Bastianelli.

One of the problems mentioned by an Iraqi woman waiting to be seen was that there are no female doctors at the Dujaylah clinic, and for emergencies, people have to travel 20 kilometers west to the hospital in Kut.

“Women’s health is one of many problematic areas facing the Iraqi health care system,” said Bastianelli.

Operation Gunner Med is working



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson

**Pfc. Serena Wagner, medic with Co. C, 589th Brigade Support Battalion, escorts a girl to the Dujaylah clinic during a cooperative medical engagement, Jan. 8. U.S. and Iraqi doctors saw over 250 patients at the clinic.**

with the Director General of Health for Wasit province to improve access to quality health care for women.

Recent initiatives include sponsorship of the mobile health clinic allowing rural areas access to health care with a priority focus on women’s health and wellness, a maternal-child conference held last November and sponsorship of midwifery training for women from rural communities.

“We also help the clinics with facility improvements, for example some of these facilities don’t have good labs, guard shacks, air conditioners or drink-

able water and we’re able to help by identifying those things,” said Sgt. 1st Class Shane Waite, Surgeon Cell operations sergeant.

Depending on how much work a clinic may need, funds may be available under the Commanders’ Emergency Response Program or the Iraqi Commanders’ Emergency Response Program to fix some of the problems.

“CERP and I-CERP projects are identified to support improving the infrastructure, equipment, training and

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## THE Mountain View

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Task Force 449

Media queries please contact TF Mountain Public Affairs at MND-Center\_PAO@iraq.centcom.mil

## DOCS

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educational opportunities that will increase the medical capacity supporting the DG of Health's objectives for improving his system," said Bastianelli.

The cooperative medical engagement also helps to build a rapport with the staff at each clinic, said Sgt. 1st Class Shane Waite.

"Most of these patients are already being treated by this Iraqi doctor here at this clinic, and they get reassurance that the Iraqi doctors are doing the right thing when they see the American doctors agreeing with a diagnosis," said Waite.

"Iraqi doctors are well trained but their ability to provide care is limited because of the lack of critical resources," said Bastianelli.

One critical resource is the lack of medical providers.

Nearly 8,500 physicians fled Iraq in 2003, resulting in a doctor-to-patient ratio of six providers for every 10,000 people, well below the regional standard of 18 providers per 10,000 people.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Joe Thompson  
Patients wait in line at the Dujaylah clinic for their screening by U.S. and Iraqi doctors during a cooperative medical engagement, Jan. 8. U.S. and Iraqi doctors saw over 250 patients at the clinic.

"Security has improved which has stopped the mass exodus of physicians and the medical conditions are improving through the efforts of the Ministry of Health and Coalition forces," said Bastianelli.

"Now is the time to recruit these physicians back to their home country," he added.

Iraqi and U.S. doctors saw over 250 patients at the clinic during the cooperative medical engagement.

## RESCUE: Soldiers find, recover downed aircraft

From page 1

Santos said the DART arrived on-site and worked as a team to recover a Black Hawk in the most efficient and safe manner.

"The Soldiers listened, worked together and did what they had to do," said Santos, "The mission was a success and probably one of the most memorable recovery missions I have been part of, being out there on Christmas."

The infrequency of recovery missions is not the only challenging factor for DARTs.

"DART is not something you do every day," said Spc. Christopher E. Kiser, a Black Hawk maintainer for seven years.

"Getting all of the information, weather, condition of the aircraft and parts needed to fix it, terrain and security can also make a DART mission challenging," said the Merritt Island, Fla. native.

Kiser is responsible for rigging the tail section of the aircraft. "It is great to go out there, get the bird out and see it carried off safely, said Kiser. "The feel-

ing 'I did this' is always a good one."

Another important role in preparing the aircraft to be removed is the Soldier, who is responsible for rigging the main rotor, the head, of the helicopter.

Pfc. Luis J. Rodriguez, a Black Hawk maintainer and in charge of rigging the main rotor on DART missions, said "I feel trusted, the aircraft is lifted by slings hooked to the main rotor, which supports the entire helicopter."

The Colorado Springs, Colo. native said he will never forget the Christmas mission.

"We spent Christmas in a helicopter, eating ...croissants and Meals, Ready to Eat," said Rodriguez. "The Soldiers on the DART mesh really well and all work together to accomplish the task, it is a good crew and definitely made the mission better."

Rodriguez also said when the DART returned from the mission at 2:00 am, the rest of his section greeted them with Christmas dinner, apple cider and eggnog.

The section worked as a team and unloaded the aircraft together.

The Soldiers' spirits are high, and



Courtesy photo  
Aircraft maintainers with 4/3 ACR rig up a broken UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter in Iraq.

they are proud of their achievements in Iraq.

"I feel great knowing I got to do my job and help helicopters return to flight, which supports passengers moving safely throughout Iraq and gets others the equipment they need," said Rodriguez.

Kiser said he values the Army training and experience of helping recover aircraft in a combat zone. "I am excited to return home, share my experience and knowledge with other Soldiers; train those who have never had the opportunity to recover a helicopter," said Kiser.

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**Staff Section Round-up**


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## Chaplain's Corner -- Escaping the heat

In my first tour of Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom I, there was many times I would go out with convoys to see my troops. The trips were most uncomfortable in the summer, when I would be in full battle rattle, sitting or driving the vehicle, with no air conditioner. The windows were zipped down (cloth doors back then) and all I could get any comfort from was hot air. However, the greatest comfort at that time was knowing that the trip would eventually end, and I would be in a more comfortable environment.

Sometimes we are faced with difficulties that are much like that hot air coming through the window, not comfortable at all. But we often sit through them and patiently put up with them until the end of the trip because we have to do what we have to do. Sounds like a pretty mundane existence doesn't it? Just when you think you can't take the heat anymore, there is an oasis waiting for you.

Sometimes we have to create our own oasis. This could be spending some time meditating based on the faith group of our choice. We can choose to have some relax-

ation time and refresh ourselves briefly for a few moments during the day. We can also take our Mountain Time seriously and just relax and veg out during that time.

We can also choose to spend some relaxing time communicating with our families, and sharing our love with them. It is always good to begin a great exercise plan and allow yourself the opportunity to become more healthy and focus on something other than the daily stressors of the job. Sitting back and reading a book or picking up a hobby or other relaxing activity that has long been ignored is also a wonderful way to enhance one's ability to take the heat.

Sometimes it takes seeing the end of the road by faith, and understanding that the trip you are on does not last forever. This instills hope and resilience while making the journey. The ability to stop at that occasional oasis is rest for the body and for the spirit. Therefore, whenever possible, choose to escape the heat.

CHAPLAIN (MAJ.) PAUL RAMSEY  
DIVISION FAMILY LIFE CHAPLAIN

## Safety office ensures electrical safety in CHUs

In the next few weeks the Multi-National Division-Center safety office will be receiving around 100,000 13 amp power strips, 100,000 German power adapters and 150,000 U.S./U.K. power adapters that will be hand receipted to all MND-C Soldiers for their containerized housing units.

Power cords and surge protectors sold at AAFES and the little shops throughout the country are counterfeit and not grounded properly resulting in numerous fires.

To prevent this hazard Multi-National Forces-Iraq incorporated a new standard for the country and the MNF-I safety office developed a one-for-one program to exchange

power cords, said Raymond Dalinsky, MND-C safety director.

According to standards each CHU is only allowed two power cords one for each occupant. Once the shipment of proper cords arrives a system will be set-up to make sure every Soldier in the MND-C area receives a power cord.

During health and welfare inspections, Commanders and first sergeants will take the new power cords and hand receipts with them, added Dalinsky.

They are going to take the bad power cords for disposal, give new power cords to each person and have the Soldiers sign the hand receipt form.

The MND-C safety office will keep a running tally of how many have been handed out.

They have a head count of every Soldier in the MND-C area.

Once all the Soldiers have proper cords for their rooms, the MND-C safety office will start replacing power cords in work areas.

All power cords will be considered an accountable item, which will be handed off to replacing units, Dalinsky said.

Soldiers should not go to supply looking for these cords, they need to wait until the cords are handed out or instructed to do something different by their chain of command.



Looking for back issues you might have missed? Here are two easy ways to retrieve them.

~NIPR~

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# Headline Round-up

## Health News:

The salmonella bacteria that has sickened more than 400 people in 43 states has been conclusively linked to peanut butter, Minnesota health officials announced Jan. 12. Federal officials said the outbreak may have contributed to three deaths. State health and agriculture officials said last week they had found salmonella bacteria in a 5-pound package of King Nut peanut butter at a nursing facility in Minnesota. Officials tested the bacteria over the weekend and found a genetic match with the bacterial strain that has led to 30 illnesses in Minnesota and others across the country.

## U.S. News:

An Army Black Hawk helicopter crashed into a field on the campus of Texas A&M University during a field training exercise Jan. 12, killing one person and injuring four others aboard. The Army UH-60 helicopter crashed Monday near the Corps of Cadets field on the school's College Station campus, about 100 miles northwest of Houston. No students were among the injured. A crew of four from the Army National Guard and an Army lieutenant assigned to the school's ROTC unit were the only ones aboard the Black Hawk, Texas A&M spokesman Lane Stephenson said.

## World News:

Construction workers in northern Poland have unearthed a World War II-era mass grave containing what are believed to be the bodies of 1,800 German men, women and children who disappeared during the Soviet Army's march to Berlin. Poles digging at the site of a planned luxury hotel in Malbork — which was called Marienburg and was part of Germany during the war — excavated a bomb crater at the foot of the city's famous 13th century Teutonic Knights fortress, authorities said Jan. 12. After resuming work weeks later, the workers turned up dozens, and then hundreds, more corpses. They believe more may be found.

## Odd News:

An Australian state is offering internationally what it calls "the best job in the world" -- earning a top salary for lazing around a beautiful tropical island for six months. The job pays 150,000 Australian dollars (105,000 US dollars) and includes free airfares from the winner's home country to Hamilton Island on the Great Barrier Reef, Queensland's state government announced on Tuesday.

## Quote of the Day

*"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty." – Mahatma Gandhi*

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For the answer to today's puzzle, go to:



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## WHO DO YOU WANT TO SEE PLAY IN THE SUPER BOWL?



Photo by Sgt. David Turner

"Pittsburgh and the Eagles. It would be a good showdown; Pittsburgh's defense versus Donovan McNabb," said Senior Airman Andrew Mullins, from Ft. Drum, NY, 20th EASOS



Photo by Sgt. David Turner

"I'd like to see the Cardinals and the Baltimore Ravens, but I know that's not going to happen," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Sanders, from Fayetteville, N.C., 20th EASOS