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'BAD COMPANY' MAKES SURE IT'S ALL GOOD FOR AIRCRAFT OF V CORPS' 12TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE

By Sgt. Brandon Little

12th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs Office

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA

ANACONDA, Balad, Iraq -- It's a great honor for Soldiers to be considered the best at what they do, but the Soldiers of B Company, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, have taken a different approach to this philosophy.

The 223 Soldiers has become known as "BAD Company" throughout V Corps' 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, and they wouldn't have it any other way.

"It's like the words in that 80s rap song: 'Not bad meaning bad, but bad meaning good,'" said Maj. H. Craig Demby, the commander of B Co. "Our area here is even called 'The Badlands.'"

The helicopter maintenance company got its unusual nickname because it was formed from a combination of the battalions B and D Companies.

"Not only are we larger than an average maintenance company, but we also are the only maintenance company that is authorized to work on all three types of helicopters flown by the 12th CAB," said Demby. "We can repair any part of



SGT BRANDON LITTLE

Specs. Buddy Wilson and Randall Hogan, aviation mechanics with V Corps' B Company, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, help perform phase maintenance on a CH-47 Chinook in "The Badlands" at Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq.

a helicopter, from its engine to its wheels.”

There are two levels of helicopter maintenance performed by aviation mechanics in the 12th CAB. The first is unit maintenance which is performed by the battalion’s maintenance company. The second level is aviation intermediate maintenance which is done by “BAD Company.”

“D Company is the helicopter maintenance company in each of the battalions in 12th CAB, but we take care of the maintenance that is either too time-consuming or above the unit level,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Patrick Francis, B Company’s production control officer. “If we can’t fix it, we coordinate with the civilians from L3 Communications to get it fixed.”

In addition to the sections that make up a normal Army company, the unit also has different divisions to aid each other with helicopter repair. Each section has a key role in aircraft phase maintenance.

Phase maintenance on an aircraft is similar to work done on an automobile after it has been driven a set number of miles. This maintenance is done on a CH-47 Chinook after it has flown 200 hours and 400 hours; an AH-64 Apache at 250 hours and 500 hours; and an UH-60 Black Hawk at 360 hours and 720 hours.

When ‘BAD Company’ first receives an aircraft, it is logged in by the production control section. Next it goes to the phase team and all removable parts on the inside, such as seats and straps, are taken out.

“We inspect the aircraft from front to rear for damage, cracks, and any parts that need to be replaced,” said Sgt. Lenny Higgins, the phase team leader.

If parts are needed, they then are requested through the supply section.

“The supply section is hub of logistics for B Company,” said Francis. “Without them, an aircraft that needed a 50-cent washer or screw would be grounded.”

If there is an engine problem or a type of maintenance that needs more in-depth knowledge, the shops section has personnel with specialties ranging from engines to hydraulics.

After the aircraft is repaired, the quality control section checks to ensure that work has been done in accordance with aviation standards.

“By the time units get their aircraft back from us, it is in near-perfect condition,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Ralph Gilgenast, a maintenance examiner and UH-60 senior test pilot. “It usually takes three to four days to get aircraft off the ground, because we check for everything from leaks to vibration levels.”

After a helicopter is cleared by quality control and production control, it is then returned to the unit. It's a busy place -- shortly after one aircraft leaves "The Badlands," another will arrive.

"Every day you can find a Chinook, Black Hawk or Apache here," said Demby. "It's because of the great Soldiers and non-commissioned officers we have that 'BAD Company' is as great as it is."



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