

U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

contact: paoci@eur.army.mil
phone: 49-6221-57-5815 / DSN 370-5815
fax: 49-6221-57-6376 / DSN 370-6376



RELEASE #2008-06-16-03

June 16, 2008

WITH THREE MONTHS TO GO, 12TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE PASSES ANNUAL RE-ENLISTMENT GOALS

By Sgt. Brandon Little

12th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs Office

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- Some 12th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers have chosen to re-enlist on the flight line, some from the top of a building and others have done it in aircraft in flight.



COURTESY 12TH COMBAT AVIATION BRIGADE
Staff Sgt. Jose Olivo, career counselor for 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment (right), recites the re-enlistment oath with Lt. Col. Jay Macklin, commander of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade's Task Force Storm, during a ceremony at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. With more than 500 Soldiers re-enlisted, the 12th's retention team has already exceeded its goals for this fiscal year.

Regardless of the location, those Soldiers who chose to stay in the Army did something else -- they helped the 12th CAB retention program to reach its reenlistment goals ahead of the rest of U.S. Army, Europe.

With more than three months left in this fiscal year, the 12th's career counselors and retention NCOs have already reenlisted 539 Soldiers -- and they're still going strong -- while dishing out nearly \$5 million in bonuses.

“We normally get the retention (goals for the fiscal year ahead) Oct. 1, and we have until Sept. 30 of the following year to accomplish that mission,” said Master Sgt. Joseph Organ, the 12th CAB senior career counselor. “Normally it takes everyone the whole fiscal year to do it, but we reached our goal June 6 -- right around nine months.”

“The 12th CAB retention group has done a phenomenal job, and they are second to

none,” said 12th CAB Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy. “They make every effort to go that extra mile to make sure they’re taking care of Soldiers.”

The retention numbers include all the deployed 12th CAB units as well as those supporting the brigade’s Families and missions in Europe. Nearly 40 percent of the Soldiers who took the reenlistment oath chose to remain part of the 12th, retention officials said.

“Each battalion has a great career counselor or a retention NCO, and they’re the ones out there talking to the Soldiers,” said Organ. “Command involvement and NCO leadership has also played a huge part in our success, because they are the ones who are getting those Soldiers to go talk to the retentions NCOs.”

The retention NCOs and career counselors in 12th CAB have traveled all over Iraq to take care of reenlisting Soldiers in person, Kennedy said.

The Soldiers who reenlisted chose options that ranged from current station stabilization to reclassification in new military occupational specialties.

“I was stuck in an military occupational specialty that wasn’t good for my career, and my retention NCO, Sgt. 1st Class Eboni Britton, got me the MOS I wanted and a class date before I signed any papers,” said Sgt. Matthew Bowles, an automated systems maintainer in Company C, 412th Aviation Support Battalion. “They are always about trying to get Soldiers what they want, not what’s best for statistics.”

Even though cash bonuses and duty stations of choice might be tempting offers, some of the brigade’s Soldiers decided to reenlist just because they love being in the Army, Organ said.

“A lot of people are quick to assume that it’s the money that makes all these Soldiers reenlist, but that’s not always the case,” he said. “Nearly 100 of our Soldiers reenlisted for (the) needs of the Army, and they didn’t get a bonus or a duty station.”

There have also been several unique reenlistment ceremonies, such as spouses reenlisting together and one spouse reenlisting the other. But Organ said the retention team isn’t just sitting back enjoying them.

“Even though we have met our retention goals, we’re far from done,” he said. “We will probably do nearly a third of the number of reenlistments we have done so far over the final three months. However, we shouldn’t forget that it’s important not to treat the Soldiers who are getting out of the Army any different and to thank them for their outstanding service as well.”

“My favorite part of this job is that you get to deal with the brigade’s finest Soldiers,” Organ said. “There’s nothing more satisfying than a Soldier asking you for a hard-to-get

assignment, and you match that Soldier's wants along with the Army's needs and you get that assignment for them."



www.hqusareur.army.mil