

## U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army

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### U.S. ARMY EUROPE AVIATORS MOVING TO NEW DUTY LOCATIONS IN IRAQ

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**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** -- After seven months of service as Multi-National Division – Baghdad's aviation brigade, Task Force XII is on the move to other locations and missions in the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater following a relief-in-place with the incoming 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division from Fort Hood, Texas.



SGT 1ST CLASS CHRIS SEATON

A UH-60 Black Hawk from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation -- known as Task Force Storm during its current deployment in Iraq -- passes over Baghdad on a mission in March. After months of deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 3-158th and other elements of its parent unit, Task Force XII, are moving to new missions in Iraq.

TF XII originally formed at Camp Taji in December 2007. The task force is comprised of approximately 700 Soldiers from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, including the brigade's headquarters, most of its 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, and a forward logistics element from its 412th Aviation Support Battalion. The CAB originally deployed to Logistical Support Area Anaconda in Balad, Iraq in July 2007.

The Soldiers of TF XII were joined by the troops

of the 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, which also deployed from Fort Hood, and an air traffic services company from 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment from Fort Campbell, Ky.

“This has been the finest performance by an aviation unit I’ve ever seen,” said Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, commanding general of MND-B and the 4th Infantry Division, during a small ceremony to recognize the accomplishments of some of the Soldiers.

“If I had my way, you wouldn’t be going anywhere,” Hammond said.

Besides an already heavy flight schedule taken on by the task force to support passenger travel and air assault missions for the brigade combat teams within MND-B, Hammond credited TF XII with playing an integral role during a spike in violence in Baghdad’s Sadr City in late March and most of April.

In support of heavy fighting in the area, the 4-3rd ACR -- the task force’s attack aviation element -- flew more combat hours during that period than any other attack formation during OIF, said Col. Timothy Edens, TF XII commander.

“Sadr City will go down in history as a turning point in this war,” said Hammond. “You were a big part of that.”

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, TF XII, will return to LSA Anaconda to reassume the role of command element for Multi-National Corps – Iraq aviation assets. The remaining elements of TF XII currently assigned to Camp Taji, including the 4-3rd ACR, much of 3-158th Aviation, and a forward logistics element from 412th, will move to Baghdad International Airport in support of Multi-National Division – Central, following their relief in place with units of the 4th CAB.

All elements of the U.S. Army Europe–based 12th Combat Aviation Brigade currently serving in Iraq will return to Germany in early fall at the completion of their 15-month combat tour.

Hammond gave the aviators one piece of advice as they prepared to move on to other missions: “Be brave, bold, aggressive and smart,” he said. “Then, get a little rest -- and start it all back up again.



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