

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

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RELEASE #2008-08-22-01

August 22, 2008

### TASM-E provides critical maintenance support to 12th CAB

Story and Photo by Sgt. Maj. Cameron Porter, 21st Theater Sustainment Command Public Affairs

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany – As the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade's 15-month rotation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom winds down, logistical maintainers under the operational control of the 21st Theater Sustainment



Command are making sure the brigade's equipment is maintained to the highest standards of readiness.

Sgt. Maj. Cameron Porter  
Bernie Mitchell and Richard Phelps, mechanics contracted by the Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance – Europe, repair a Humvee belonging to the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade. The Humvee is left behind equipment (LBE) from the 12th CAB. In addition to 12th CAB's LBE, more than 16,000 pieces of equipment will be reset by the Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance – Europe when the 12th CAB returns from its deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Our primary aviation support that we provide to the 12th CAB is through the Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance – Europe (TASM-E),” said Sandy Sanders, chief of the Aviation Logistics Branch, 21st TSC.

TASM-E, which is assigned to the Aviation and Missile Command, falls under the operational control of the 405th Army

Field Support Brigade and under further control of the 21st TSC. TASM-E provides field, sustainment and limited depot-level aviation maintenance to aircraft and aviation ground-support equipment.

“When a unit like the 12th CAB deploys, TASM-E does reset and preset on their equipment and aircraft to get them back into the fight,” said Sanders.

During the deployment phase, TASM-E reconfigures the aircraft for shipment, removing some components for stowing. TASM-E will load the helicopters and equipment onto strategic aircraft and vessels, and they will conduct any necessary maintenance as needed.

The reverse is true when the unit redeploys.

In preparation for the redeployment of 12th CAB, TASM-E has recently added an additional 161 contractors to their roster. Every aircraft maintenance contractor assigned to TASM-E is required to have an Airframe and Power Plant license and at least five year's experience, said Lt. Col. Kye Allen, the TASM-E commander.

TASM-E assumed the major mission of theater aviation maintenance when the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Aviation Regiment inactivated about two years ago. TASM-E is comprised of a combination of Soldiers, Department of the Army civilians, and civilian contractors, said Allen.

"Some of these (contractors) have 20 to 30 years of experience, so that's a huge plus," Allen added.

With more than 16,000 pieces of equipment being brought back into Europe as the 12th CAB redeploys, the experience the contractors bring with them will surely pay high dividends for TASM-E and the 12th CAB. An item as simple as an M-9 bayonet to a much more complex piece of equipment, such as the CH-47D Chinook helicopter, will be reset to the highest of Army standards, making these items fully mission capable and ready to return to the fight.

Another support mission provided to the 12th CAB while the unit is deployed is the maintenance of the unit's left behind equipment or LBE. TASM-E is charged with inspecting and maintaining the unit's LBE, which primarily consists of ground equipment such as vehicles, generators and trailers.

"Based on the mission set the deploying unit receives and their mission analysis, a percentage of their equipment will not deploy," said Lt. Col. Lance Burton, chief of the Material Readiness Branch, 21st TSC. "We take that equipment and maintain it for them."

TASM-E conducts preventative maintenance on the LBE to ensure the equipment remains fully mission capable, added Sanders.

"Vehicles I've worked on are at varying degrees of readiness," said Stephen Cassidy, a TASM-E contracted mechanic. "A lot of (the vehicles) are not to standard when they are brought in for inspection and service. Sometimes we find

20 pages worth of gigs, but it's up to us to fix all these issues. It's up to us to make sure every piece of equipment leaves here fully ready and fully mission capable."

Currently, the 21st TSC is operating under what Burton terms legacy LBE, which is primarily vehicles only. However, the 21st TSC is moving toward a more complex LBE, where the command would take complete control of equipment from the deploying units. Additionally, most of the equipment would be moved to Kaiserslautern to the Theater Logistics Support Center-Europe for service.



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