

U.S. Army Europe battalion named Air Traffic Control Unit of Year

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By **Capt. Michael Barranti, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs**

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ANSBACH, GERMANY -- The Army Aviation Association of America named the 3-58th Airfield Operations Battalion as its Air Traffic Control Unit of the Year, Jan. 29.

The unit, part of U.S. Army Europe's 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, earned the award for outstanding performance in air traffic services, airfield operations and management, and overall support to aviation customers from all services and nationalities in 2012.

"These Soldiers and their families deserve this distinguished honor, and Sgt. Maj. Terri Clavon and I could not be more proud of what they have accomplished and what they stand for. They truly are the best of the best," said Lt. Col. Harold H. Whiffen, the 3-58th commander.



The battalion has been deployed to Tarin Kowt, in the southern region of Afghanistan, since June. There the unit is responsible for airfield operations on the multinational forces base.

The Army Aviation Association of America, or "Quad-A," is the professional society for Army aviators and their supporters. It is comprised of more than 20,000 members worldwide. Its mission is to create a forum for the Army aviation community and to represent their interests to the Army and the U.S. Congress.

"The Army Aviation Association of America provides stiff competition for each of its unit and individual awards. For Soldiers to receive this recognition is very special; it distinguishes them as the best of the US Army's 31 air traffic control units. It signifies public recognition that these Soldiers are the best air traffic controllers, the best airfield managers, and members of the best support staff that the Army has to offer. Most importantly, it says that they, as a team, are truly exceptional at what they do," said Whiffen.

Quad-A's recognition of the battalion noted the unit's:

-- significant efforts in the safety and efficiency of air operations in Afghanistan's Regional Commands South and West and its safe execution of more than 30,000 multinational manned and unmanned fixed and rotary-wing aircraft missions from Tarin Kowt and Farah, Afghanistan;

-- cooperative relationships in a joint and multinational environment that helped develop commercial civil aviation operations at both locations, providing safe and efficient operations and the infrastructure and procedural development necessary to prepare facilities for transition to Afghanistan's control;

-- philosophy of being "a family and a team" with support from the "home front" that embodied the spirit of the battalion's forward deployed Soldiers and is responsible for much of the unit's success.

The 3-58th AOB, stationed in Illesheim, Germany, has been part of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade since June 1992. Since then the unit has deployed as a whole or in part to several contingencies. Starting with Operation Restore Hope in Somalia in December 1992, the battalion has been deployed almost constantly in one form or another for the past 20 years. Its Soldiers have provided air traffic services during Operation Provide Comfort in Turkey and northern Iraq from 1992 to 1996; during Operations Joint Endeavor, Joint Guardian and other missions in the Balkans from 1996 to 2001; and during the Global War on Terror from 2002 to today.

The 3-58th has been deployed to Afghanistan since May 2012 and is expected to return next month.

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