

# Wings of the Eagle

4-101 Aviation Regiment

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## History

“The Wings of the Eagle” proudly traces its history back to the Korean War. On 7 December 1950, the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Aviation Section was constituted in the Regular Army and was assigned to the Eighth US Army in Korea where it remained until deactivated on 5 November 1954.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Light Aviation Section was reactivated on 1 July 1956 as the 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Company and assigned to the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. On 3 December 1962, as the Army’s aviation force structure continued to grow, the 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Company was redesignated as the 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Battalion.

Company A deployed to the Republic of Vietnam on 11 April 1965 and became the first element of the division to see combat since World War II. The remainder of the 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Battalion deployed to Vietnam in December 1967 and served with distinction there until the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division redeployed to Fort Campbell in February 1972. The 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Battalion was redesignated the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 16 October 1987 when the 101<sup>st</sup> Aviation Regiment was activated.

In 1990 and 1991 the Battalion served with distinction in Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, completing over 3000 hours of accident free flying while conducting combat operations. The Battalion’s record of excellence includes planning, leading, and execution on the longest Air Assault in history to the Euphrates River in Iraq.

In light of the world-changing events of 11 September 2001, the unit rededicated itself to preparing and training the best assault helicopter pilots in the world. The year started quickly as the

Battalion was given two short-notice missions to deploy elements in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) while simultaneously conducting Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) Rotation 02-04. Deploying 29 January 2002 for OEF, the battalion prepared and strategically deployed 5 UH-60L aircraft and 6.5 aircrews to Kandahar, Afghanistan. These soldiers executed aviation operations during Operation Anaconda while conquering the difficult environment of Afghanistan. The Battalion strategically deployed another 5 UH-60L aircraft and 6.5 aircrews to Bagram Air Force Base, Afghanistan on 3 May 2002. Throughout the period of deployment, the Battalion had to maintain the remaining 20 Uh-60L with limited line company maintenance personnel and aircrews. In September 2002, two elements of A Company, 4-101 Aviation Regiment (AVN REGT) redeployed from Afghanistan where they supported OEF in the fight against the Taliban.

In September 2002, the Battalion aggressively prepared for an upcoming Joint Readiness Training Center Rotation (JRTC) 03-02 in Fort Polk, Louisiana by supporting both the Leadership Training Program and Eagle Gate 03-02. From 1-21 November 2002, 4-101 AVN REGT again made history by supporting the longest JRTC rotation on record while spending over 21 days in the maneuver box in support of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team. With only a very short and hastened recovery from the rotation at Fort Polk, the Wings of the Eagle participated in the Division Deployment Exercise (DEPEX), which commenced before the Christmas Holidays and lasted into the first month of 2003. The DEPEX prepared the Battalion for deployment to Kuwait in support of follow-on combat operations in Iraq. 4-101 AVN REGT was one of the first units of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) to arrive in Kuwait for OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) at the end of February 2003.

On 23 March 2003, 4-101 AVN conducted not only the first Air Assault Operation in support of OIF but also the longest in history of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division (Air Assault) moving C/3-187 IN deep into enemy territory to establish site security for FARP SHELL.

On 06 May 2003, the entire Battalion moved to Baghdad International Airport in order to link up with 3 BCT. From that point on 4-101 AVN REGT was tasked organized under 3<sup>rd</sup> BCT to provide direct support. 159<sup>th</sup> AVN BDE moved north to the city of Mosul, while the Battalion moved 50 miles west to Tallafar, Iraq, along with 3 BCT.

The high operational tempo of the Battalion did not diminish with the official closing of combat operations in May 2003. Since AO Rakkasan encompassed such a large territory to include strategically important border regions, 4-101 AVN REGT continued to support not only 3<sup>rd</sup> BCT but also 159<sup>th</sup> AVN BDE and the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division with daily flights ranging as far south as CAMP DOHA, Kuwait, as far north as the Turkish border, as far west as the Syrian border and as far east as the Iranian border with Northern Iraq. The unit averaged approximately 950 flight hours every month while experiencing aircraft maintenance parts supply shortages and a diminishing pool of experienced pilots. By the end of the deployment in January 2004, 4-101 AVN REGT had flown over 10,000 hours in combat.

Up to this point, as an Air Assault Battalion with UH-60L Blackhawks, Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and enlisted personnel, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion served as the nucleus of a dedicated Aviation Task Force and major component of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Task Force.

In June 2004, the Battalion will gain a line company and will be task organized solely to 159<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade. As always, the "Wings of the Eagle" battalion continues to serve with distinction within the Air Assault Division.