



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.

Honoring Independence Day

Members of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing celebrate Independence Day here by participating in a flag ceremony July 4. For more about the ceremony, see Pages 2-3.

Aircrews drop treats to Soldiers on 4th

by Maj. David Kurlle
 455 AEW public affairs

BAGRAMAIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Aircrews from the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron airdropped something special on the Fourth of July for Soldiers at some of

the most remote forward operating bases throughout Afghanistan.

The 230th birthday of the United States proved to be another hot, dusty day here, but thanks to the C-130 Hercules crews and the Army senior leaders of Combined Joint Task Force-76, Soldiers on the ground knew

they weren't forgotten.

In all, 14 container delivery system bundles, weighing 1,500 pounds each, were airdropped to seven locations in Afghanistan, said Lt. Col. Blake Gettys, the 774th

“DRO” continued on Page 5

INSIDE:

Air Force helps transport ill Afghan boy to and from United States for treatment

Page 4



Independence Day speech

Founders of nation got it right

by **Brig. Gen. Christopher Miller**
455th AEW commander

We are celebrating something that even we, who defend the nation every day, sometimes take for granted.

Two hundred thirty years ago, we Americans were given a precious gift.

Today, that gift is ours to have, to enjoy, to preserve and to prosper. That gift is not a

piece of parchment. It is the spirit of independence, of liberty, the firm knowledge and preservation of the worth of every man and woman.

It is what makes our nation strong.

It is what we embody to the world, when we act as Americans should.

The gift of independence is what our enemies fear and reject; the value we place on life and liberty is at the very center of our daily combat with

them. It is beyond my words to place a price on the values our forefathers enshrined when they created our nation.

The men who founded our nation began work on the 11th of June, 1776.

The Continental Congress began debating the draft on July 1, and adopted the declaration on July 4. That was the beginning of the story — not the end — and our nation has evolved continuously ever since, but we started on high

ground.

Although the language is old-fashioned, the thoughts are timeless and the words of the declaration speak for themselves:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of

“JULY 4” continued on Page 3



U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. David Kurle

Members of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing take part in an Independence Day ceremony held here July 4.

Bagram Bullet
Editorial Staff, Disclaimer

Brig. Gen. Christopher D. Miller..... Commander, 455th AEW
Maj. Dave Kurle Chief, Public Affairs
Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.Editor, NCOIC



This newspaper is an authorized publication for Airmen and Sailors deployed to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Contents of the Bagram Bullet are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense. The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs office.

Inspiring freedom in a country at war

“JULY 4” continued from Page 2

Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

Our declaration is about the people, not about the rulers!

We all know many of the words I just read, but the concerns that caused these patriots to write the declaration are bold and clear.

Those concerns, and the founders’ views of the king of England’s governance, led them establish many of the concepts that we today take for granted. They were concerned because:

◆ [The King] has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

◆ He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance,

◆ He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures

◆ He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the civil power.

These concerns of a day 230 years ago point today to the foundation of our America and of our total Air Force: A faith in the power of law, not personal preference, in society; a strong sense that governors must be able to govern; a sense that our legislature must oversee our standing armies; and that we are subordinate to civil authority in every case.

Perhaps as a result of these profound concerns, we are a force that believes in standards; that is both composed of both federal and state servants; that is regulated by the Congress and obedient to our president and the Constitution that underpins his authority.



Brig. Gen. Christopher Miller

“Today, as we look around at the mountainous beauty surrounding this place, what we do not see reminds us that principles matter and that people with principle acting together can build much.”

Today, as we look around at the mountainous beauty surrounding this place, what we do not see reminds us that principles matter and that people with principle acting together can build much.

In Afghanistan, in Iraq, in many of the war-torn nations around the world, how much better their fortunes might be if they had had such brilliantly inspired principles at their founding!

We have truly been given a precious gift; it is ours to preserve. In their own way, in their own time, we are working to let Afghans and others say something like our forefathers did:

“We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States,. . . And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine

Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”

Fellow warriors, we, too, have mutually pledged our lives. As evidence of that, on this Independence Day in 2006, we stand on the soil of a land where we are fighting to share our principles but not impose our politics.

We do it together, in a spirit of trust and as part of a team.

When Gen. George Washington received word on the ninth of July that Congress had declared independence, he called his troops together.

He said, “The general hopes this important event will serve as a fresh incentive to every officer and soldier, to

act with fidelity and courage, as knowing that now the peace and safety of his country depends under God solely on the success of our arms...”

Today, we are a force of both

men and women, and the peace and safety of our country does not depend solely on the success of our arms, but we remain at the center of the defense of our way of life. Our success on the flight line is as important as Washington’s success at Yorktown, and our spirit is just as strong.

This morning, I am overwhelmingly grateful to be an American. I hope you feel that way, too.

As our star-spangled banner climbs to glory this morning, think of the place you call home.

Think of the peace that you and those you love enjoy there.

Think for a moment of the wisdom of our founding fathers, their sacrifice, and the sacrifice of generations of patriots who built the vision of government by the people, of the people, and for the people.

Today, we are honored to carry the torch they lit. Together, as brothers and sisters in arms, we will build Enduring Freedom.

Thank you for your service away from family and home on this special day; and may God continue to bless America!



Air Force transports young Afghan heart patient to U.S.

By Maj. David Kurle
455th AEW public affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – An Air Force C-17 cargo plane carried a young boy here recovering from desperately needed heart surgery who will know that his future was made possible by the efforts of the U.S. military.

Most aircraft arriving here bring the supplies needed to sustain U.S. military forces endeavoring to ensure a decent future for Afghanistan, but on July 2 an aircraft call-signed Reach-262 delivered hope.

On board the C-17 flight from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, was Omar Muhammed, who left here aboard another Air Force plane in May, bound for Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He suffered from a heart defect that seriously lessened the chances he would see adulthood.

"This is a birth defect that is normally fixed within the first year of birth," said Capt. Kristen Zebrowski, a flight nurse with the 86th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron at Ramstein.

The captain attended to Omar on his return flight to Afghanistan.

But nothing in Afghanistan occurs "normally."

More than one year ago, Omar's father, Fathi, brought his sick child to Forward Operating Base Salerno, where U.S. Army physician Maj. Sloane Guy diagnosed the heart problem, which prevented an adequate supply of oxygenated blood to Omar's small body.

After securing sponsorship, finding a doctor to per-

form the needed surgery to correct Omar's condition and arranging transportation, which had to be approved by the Secretary of Defense, Omar and his father were flown to the U.S.

Reach-262, a C-17 from March Air Reserve Base, Calif., closed the loop on Omar's journey.

"He was definitely jovial and in good spirits," Capt. Zebrowski said. "I think he definitely developed a liking to some American things like Pepsi and chips."

The flight crew of Reach-262, a mix of reservists and active duty from three different bases, welcomed the change from their usual mission of hauling cargo and troops.

"Cargo is important ... but to carry someone who's injured and return them home is priceless," said Tech. Sgt. Alec McGuyer, the loadmaster on the flight. "We're helping this Afghan family."

The flight crew and medical crew alike were charmed by the boy during the flight from Ramstein.

"He eats like a healthy little boy," said Flight Medic Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Weir, a reservist deployed to Ramstein from the 908th Airlift Wing at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

"I was running out of apples for that kid," Sergeant Weir said.

When Staff Sgt. Kevin Allen, an 86th AES flight medic, flies on missions, he is usually bringing wounded people out of Afghanistan.

"It was surprising when I went in the crew brief and they said we had a patient going



US Air Force photos by Maj. David Kurle

U.S. Air Force and Army medics carry 8-year-old Omar Muhammad from an C-17 Globemaster July 2 after an Air Force aircrew flew him from America where the boy underwent life-saving heart surgery. U.S. Army doctors

back," he said. "I have children, and it stirs my heart that we were able to give care to this child."

Capt. Zebrowski wondered if she would ever know the eventual ending of Omar's journey.

"It's great that we were able to get him the care he needed," she said. "You just kind of wonder what's going to happen to him here, I would just like to know how he's doing."



Eight-year-old Omar Muhammad watches as U.S. Air Force and Army medical medics prepare to carry him to a waiting ambulance.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Rautio

Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, left, and Army Col. Larry D. Wyche, lift a parachute on a bundle here July 3. Air Force C-130 Hercules aircrews dropped the Independence Day bundles for Soldiers spread across remote areas of Afghanistan.

“DROP” continued on Page 1

commander and a pilot on one of the airdrop missions.

“The Soldiers wished us a happy Fourth of July over the radio, and we wished them a happy Fourth of July,” he said.

Attached to the bundles were American flags, which unfurled as the CDS loads left the cargo planes, adding a patriotic touch as they fell to the ground underneath parachutes.

Each of the bundles contained goodies requested by the Soldiers, including sodas, cookies, beef jerky, CDs, DVDs, footballs, soccer balls, socks, T-shirts, personal hygiene items and an assortment of other treats.

“As a small token of appreciation for serving on freedom’s frontier, I hope you find the items in this bundle drop enjoyable,” wrote Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, CJTF-76 commander, in a letter on each bundle.

“I am proud of your service and thank you again for the amazing spirit you display everyday on this battlefield,” the general wrote. “May God Bless You and our great Nation.”

In addition to the treats, each bundle was packed on top of 20 cases of bottled water, which is always needed in Afghanistan.

C-130 crews here fly combat missions every day, often airdropping supplies to



US Air Force photo by Maj. David Kurle

Staff Sgt. Anthony Redding loads a special container delivery system bundle on a C-130 July 4 here.

Soldiers in the field, a mission the C-130s haven’t performed in a war zone, on this scale, since the Vietnam War.

“Every time we go fly, we do everything in our power to get the drops off,” Colonel Gettys said. “Whether it’s ammunition, water or Fourth of July goodies.

“There’s probably no better way that I could’ve spent my Fourth of July than by supporting the troops on the ground,” he said.

Brief Bullets

Put OPSEC in forefront

Operation security should be on the minds of everyone assigned here, according to 1st Lt. Kimberly Peters, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing OPSEC program manager.

The lieutenant said to prevent people from becoming a target, they should deny the enemy critical information. Airmen should also maintain situational awareness when conducting personal conversations, she said, and think before sending email. She also reminds everyone to shred all sensitive paperwork. For more information, call Lieutenant Peters at 231-2106 or contact your unit OPSEC manager:

- 455th EOG: Staff Sgt. Nicole Heine, 231-2106
- 4455th EMXG: Capt. James Sabol, 231-2113
- 455th EMSG: 2nd Lt. Bryon Turner, 231-3259
- 451st AEG, Master Sgt. Edmund Krasinski, 463-1300.

Services July events

All events begin at 1900L, unless otherwise noted.

Today	Tuesday
Bingo	Spades
Saturday	Wednesday
Texas Hold'em	Texas Hold'em
Sunday	Thursday
Pizza & movie	Dominoes
Monday	
Horseshoe tournament 1800L	

Name correction

The June 30 Bagram Bulletin incorrectly spelled the name of Amanda Kokx.

Chapel schedule

Weekly services:

Muslim	
Fridays	1700L (1230Z)
Jewish	
Fridays	1930L (1500Z)
Seventh Day Adventist	
Saturdays	0930L (0500Z)
Roman Catholic	
Saturdays	1945L (1515Z)
Sundays.....	1000L (0530Z)
Weekdays.....	1130L (0700Z)
Liturgical Protestant with Communion	
Sundays	0830L (0400Z)
Contemporary Protestant	
Sundays	1200L (0730Z)
Latter Day Saints	
Sundays	1300L (0830Z)
Church of Christ	
Sundays	1400L (0930Z)
Korean Protestant	
Sundays	1545L (1115Z)
Gospel Protestant	
Sundays	1730L (1300Z)
Traditional Protestant	
Sundays	2000L (1530Z)
KBR Protestant Service	
Sundays	2130L (1700Z)



Changing command

Col. Michael Mounts, left, accepts the 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group guidon from 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Commander Brig. Gen. Christopher Miller July 5. Colonel Mounts, who is deployed here from Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, N.Y., is the new 755th commander.



Spouses overseas get funding to pursue college degrees

Spouses are allotted up to 50 percent of tuition or a maximum of \$300 per semester term

by Lori Burling Alves
39th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

INCIRLIK AIR BASE, Turkey (AFPN)

— Diane Rhinehart is ready to compete in the job market once she and her active-duty husband return to the United States next summer. During her stay here, the mother of four has completed her master's degree in education from the University of Phoenix with the help of the Air Force.

Mrs. Rhinehart is one of several military spouses who are using the Air Force's Spouse Tuition Assistance Program for overseas families. Through the program, she has received \$1,500 a year in tuition for her master's degree.

"It's a great opportunity to get financial

assistance for an education, especially for people who don't qualify for educational grants, which I didn't," said Mrs. Rhinehart, who completed her student teaching last month at Incirlik Elementary School.

The Spouse Tuition Assistance Program, or STAP, is part of the Air Force Aid Society, which provides funding for Airmen and families for education, emergency leave, child care for PCS, scholarship programs and more.

"I wish more people would take advantage of (STAP)," said Jim Kenney, an assistant for the Air Force Aid Society at Incirlik. "If we used all the money we could probably get more. But, it is a financial obligation. We're only offering help; they still have to cover the cost of the rest of their tuition and books."

Under STAP, spouses are allotted up to 50 percent of tuition or a maximum of \$300 per term and must attend one of the universities and colleges who are contracted with the program.

"It's really easy to get the money," said Shay Tull-Cook, 39th Mission Support

Squadron education technician. "You basically submit some paperwork to us and we send the money to the school you've been accepted to."

The paperwork includes the STAP form, a copy of the active-duty spouse's leave and earning statement, a copy of the applicant's earning statement and a copy of all financial aid documents an applicant may have qualified for from the government.

Students receiving funding are expected to pass the courses. An undergraduate student must receive a grade of C or better and a graduate student must receive a B or better. If not, the student must pay the Air Force back. Funding from the program is distributed to enlisted spouses first and officer spouses second. Also, applicants who are working on their associate's or bachelor's degrees get first priority.

"It's a question of if you would rather earn \$8 an hour or \$19 an hour," Mr. Kenney said. "Earning that college degree is going to put you a step ahead and open up more and better jobs for you."



Bagram Prime BEEF builds better bases

by Maj. David Kurle
455th AEW public affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – The more than 10,000 people deployed here may not have heard of the 755th Prime BEEF engineers, but nearly all have benefited from their work.

For six months the base engineer emergency force, deployed from Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, has not only kept Bagram in the fight against extremists, but has made life better for the base's residents.

Senior Master Sgt. Michael Irons, the superintendent for the

55-person engineering team, credits his Airmen for the huge amount of work done in Afghanistan during the unit's deployment.

"It's the E-6s and below who made this happen over here," Sergeant Irons said. "They really have accomplished an amazing amount of stuff. It's hard to describe."

The 755th Prime BEEF team deployed in January for an "in-lieu-of" mission, which means Airmen fill a requirement on behalf of Soldiers. While the team reports to the 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group, which manages the Air Force's

in-lieu-of missions in Afghanistan, the engineers work on projects assigned by the Army.

From constructing living quarters, called "B" huts, to improving more than 25 miles of roads, to expanding dining facilities to finishing electrical and plumbing jobs, the 755th Prime BEEF has completed or started numerous projects.

"We definitely made people's lives better, especially here in Bagram," said Tech. Sgt. Todd Anderson, in charge of the electricians on the team.

As the team gets ready to re-deploy and turn their efforts over to a new group of Prime BEEF engineers, the Airmen know they have made an impact not only at Bagram, but around Afghanistan.

"Last month, they sent some of us to (Forward Operating Base) Gardez to make four sea huts for the Army," Sergeant Anderson said. "They were very appreciative because we provided a bigger chow hall. We're giving a better life to people who are deployed."

The team constructed 12,000-square-feet of living and dining space for Soldiers at Gardez.

"Gardez was probably the most challenging because of what we went through to get supplies to them," Sergeant Irons said. "It's in the middle of the mountains, so everything has to go by truck."

Staff Sgt. Todd McAda, a structures craftsman, said the team had to raise the ground seven to eight feet to level the building site before construction.

"This is the first time any of us had gone and done this large of a structure at a forward operating base," Sergeant McAda said.

The team was short on construction specialists for the project so Airmen from other specialties, such as plumbers, pitched in and helped do a lot of

the building, according to Sergeant McAda.

"We had 19 of the best workers you could have," he said.

Other recently-completed projects include a 10-foot wide sidewalk that runs the length of Bagram's main thoroughfare. The Prime BEEF team cleared the ground for the sidewalk then managed the contract for a local company to lay down the pavement.

The team also practiced some good old fashioned diplomacy during their deployment, teaching Afghans how to operate newly-acquired heavy equipment.

One of Prime BEEF's last projects was re-wiring the electrical service to a field hospital run by the Egyptian military. A lot of the exterior lighting consisted of bare light bulbs hanging by an electrical wire over the tents that make up the hospital complex.

With bare bulbs touching the fabric of the tents, the potential for a fire was very real, according to Senior Airman Phillip Esmeli, an electrician working on the hospital project.

"We're improving the lighting for everyone and eliminating the fire hazards," Airman Esmeli said. "When we got here, I was amazed at the wiring. I didn't even know anyone could do that."

"I feel really good working this kind of a job," he said. "It's satisfying because we're giving them something they really need."

Attitude is everything when working engineering projects, especially in the extreme hot and cold weather of Afghanistan, according to Sergeant Irons.

"Their attitudes have been super," Sergeant Irons said. "They've overcome every obstacle put in their path."

"Nothing was ever handed to them that wasn't completed, usually ahead of schedule," he said.



U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. David Kurle

Airman 1st Class Steven Land hammers in a nail to make way for an outdoor light fixture at a field hospital run by the Egyptian Military at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Airman Land is part of the 755th Prime BEEF engineers deployed to Bagram from Kadena Air Base, Japan.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Lonnie Mast

Refueling over Afghanistan

A KC-135 Stratotanker from the 22nd Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron prepares to refuel an A-10 Thunderbolt II from the 442nd Fighter Wing, deployed for Operation Enduring Freedom from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., over Afghanistan. The 22nd EARS is part of the 376th Air Expeditionary Wing, Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan.

Wing promotions, recognizes monthly award winners

Members of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing gathered in the A-10 clamshell July 1 to recognize promotes and monthly award winners.

Promoted to:

Airman first class: Joel Deleon, Tristan Nunn

Senior airman: Daniel Smith, Jessy Brown, Christopher Martinez, Larry Lucasa, Bobby McCrary, Richard Reeves, John Harmon

Staff sergeant: Anthony Redding, Tony Andres, Victor Morales

Technical sergeant: Joseph Brownell

Master sergeant: Steven Brooks, Scott Williams

Senior master sergeant: James Epps

Wing award winners for May were:

Airman of the Month: Airman 1st Class Matthew Hulsman, 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group

NCO of the Month: Tech. Sgt. Edward Nin, 455th Expeditionary

Mission Support Group

Senior NCO of the Month: Master Sgt. Shane Murphy, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group

Company Grade Officer of the Month: Capt. Jason Kneuer, 455th EMSG

Civilian of the Month: Timothy DeCoste, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group

Outstanding contributors: Tech. Sgt. Jerry Girvan, 1st Red Horse Group, and AD3 Danny Figueroa, Navy.



4 Airmen find home at remote international base

By Maj. David Kurle
455th AEW public affairs

CHAGHCHARAN, Afghanistan – When Staff Sgt. Sean Schuster found out he was deploying here from MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., he was told he'd be working with three other Airmen in the petroleum, oil and lubrication shop.

What he didn't know was that he and the three other Airmen would be the only American military presence at this forward-operating base run by the Lithuanian military.

"I thought it would be four POL people, not four Air Force or U.S. people period," Sergeant Schuster said.

Sergeant Schuster, along with Senior Master Sgt. Philip Welsh, Master Sgt. Robert James and Staff Sgt. William Cook arrived here May 8 with a mission to refuel helicopters that might be needed to medevac Coalition personnel from this remote, central region of Afghanistan.

In almost two months, they have not had the opportunity to provide fuel to even one helicopter, but they maintain the quality of the aviation fuel and their equipment should the need arise.

"We're basically here for emergencies," said Sergeant Cook, deployed here from Scott Air Force Base, Ill. "If one of the (military liaison and observation teams) members get injured, they have to be evacuated out so we have to refuel the medevac helicopter."

This base is home to almost 200 Lithuanian, Danish and Croatia soldiers, as well as a security force from Iceland and civilian contractors. The mission is to support military liaison and observation teams that patrol the Ghor Province, assist Afghan civilians and keep a wary eye out for extremists.

Instead of isolating themselves, the four Airmen embraced their international counterparts and became involved in camp life, acting as quasi-ambassadors for the Air Force.

"It's been a great pleasure working with such professional soldiers," said Col. Vilmas Satas, the Lithuanian officer in charge of the base.



U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. David Kurle

Staff Sgt. William Cook checks a fuel sample he collected from an R-22 fuel pumping unit at Chaghcharan Forward-Operating Base, Afghanistan, to make sure it has the proper color, clarity, as well as free of water and particulates. Sergeant Cook is one of four Airmen deployed to Chaghcharan, which is run by the Lithuanian military and conducts International Security and Assistance Force missions from the base.

Lithuania, once part of the Soviet Union, provides the bulk of the military people based here. Colonel Satas used to serve in the Soviet Army during the Cold War and said he never imagined serving beside Americans one day in Afghanistan.

The admiration is mutual.

"Twenty years ago, the U.S. and Soviet armies were trying to annihilate each other, and now we're over here working with some of them," said Sergeant Welsh, an Air National Guardsman from Buckley Air Force Base, Colo. "I think we've all made some new friends out here, some good friends."

Sergeant Welsh, a vehicle mechanic, has made inroads with his camp-mates. The Afghan terrain is not kind to vehicles, and he has been helping with routine maintenance and repairs.

"We really appreciate Phil's help fixing vehicles," said Capt. Bo Jepson, an MLOT commander from the Danish Army. "I have only good things to say. I think they're all very professional, and they try to mix in with the camp. They have the multi-national spirit. They don't just keep to themselves."

Despite the differences, the camp has formed a tight-knit community,

everyone doing their part to accomplish the mission of the International Security Assistance Force, which is helping re-build Afghanistan.

The four Airmen credit their international counterparts with making them a part of the international community at the base.

"A lot of it's due to the people we work with," Sergeant Welsh said. "It doesn't matter that they don't speak English or come from a different culture. You just mix in with them and show them you're interested in what they do."

A team goal is to work themselves out of a job by teaching the Lithuanians about POL. The Lithuanian government sent a truck to replace the pumping equipment used by the Americans.

Unfortunately, the 1970s truck is in need of repairs, to which the Airmen are happy to lend their collective expertise.

After solving the truck's initial problems, the team is still looking for seals and O-rings to repair the truck completely.

And when they do, it could very well be the beginning of the end for the Air Force deployment here.

While the team teaches soldiers from Lithuania to take over the fuels mission, the four Airmen also learn from their students.

"It's quite diverse," Sergeant Cook said. "We learn a lot of things from each other."



Courtesy photo by Shahla Hammond

The \$90,000 Shutol micro-hydro power plant project also includes retaining walls to channel the water to the turbine housed in a small building, utility poles and insulated conductors to distribute the electricity.

Shutol district dedicates new micro-hydro plant , government center

by Air Force Capt. Joe Campbell
Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction
Team Public Affairs

PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan

— Governor Haji Bahlol and provincial leaders dedicated a new micro-hydro power station and governance facility at separate ceremonies in the Shutol District here June 28.

The two projects, which have an important link, are provincial reconstruction team initiatives undertaken at the request of the governor. The governor is the lead agent for all reconstruction projects in the province and the PRT works closely with him to be responsive to his priorities.

“The micro-hydro power plant provides the electricity for the new Shutol District Center where there will be a law office and offices for the district manager, director of administration and police chief,” said Governor Bahlol.

The 9,000 sq. ft. facility is known by some as the flagship project for the district.

“The Shutol District Center is one of the first projects a traveler will notice while coming into the valley and it is quite a value at a cost of about \$16 per sq. ft.,” said Air Force 1st Lt. Chris White, Panjshir PRT engineer.

The contractor hired local villagers to do much of the construction which adds a sense of pride and ownership of the facility.

“The opening of a district center is new for us and it will provide good service to the people who needed a meeting place,” said Mr. Sayeed, a resident who served as a Mujahideen general fighting against invading Soviet troops more than 20 years ago.

The Shutol micro-hydro power plant, located along the Panjshir River, not only powers the new district center’s offices from a clean and renewable energy source, but

also supplies electricity to the police station and the entrance to the valley, known as Lion’s Gate.

“There were some ‘firsts’ for this area on the micro-hydro project including the use of steel utility poles and porcelain insulators on the cross arms,” Lieutenant White said.

The \$90K project also included retaining walls to channel the water to the turbine housed in a small building, utility poles and insulated conductors to distribute the electricity.

“I thank Governor Bahlol for his leadership, partnership and friendship with the PRT,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Neal Kringel, Panjshir PRT commander. “These projects are not only functional, beautiful and welcoming to the Panjshir Valley, but they are yet one more step toward the future and peace for Afghanistan.”



by Maj. William Conley
455th Expeditionary Mission
Support Squadron
commander

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of being a host to a great American military hero during the "Gathering of Eagles" event at Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

Retired Col. Ralph S. Parr flew in five tours in three wars (the last eight weeks of World War II, two tours in South Korea and two tours in Vietnam), is a double ace in Korea and he's credited with the last shoot down of that war. During Vietnam, he served as the operations group and wing commander of the 12th Fighter Wing. He's the only American aviator to be awarded both the Distinguished Service Cross and the Air Force Cross for valor.

As part of the program, I had to write a paper about Colonel Parr's accomplishments and his legacy. When I got to the legacy part, I ask him how he survived to tell his story.

He said, "I safeguarded my blue chips."

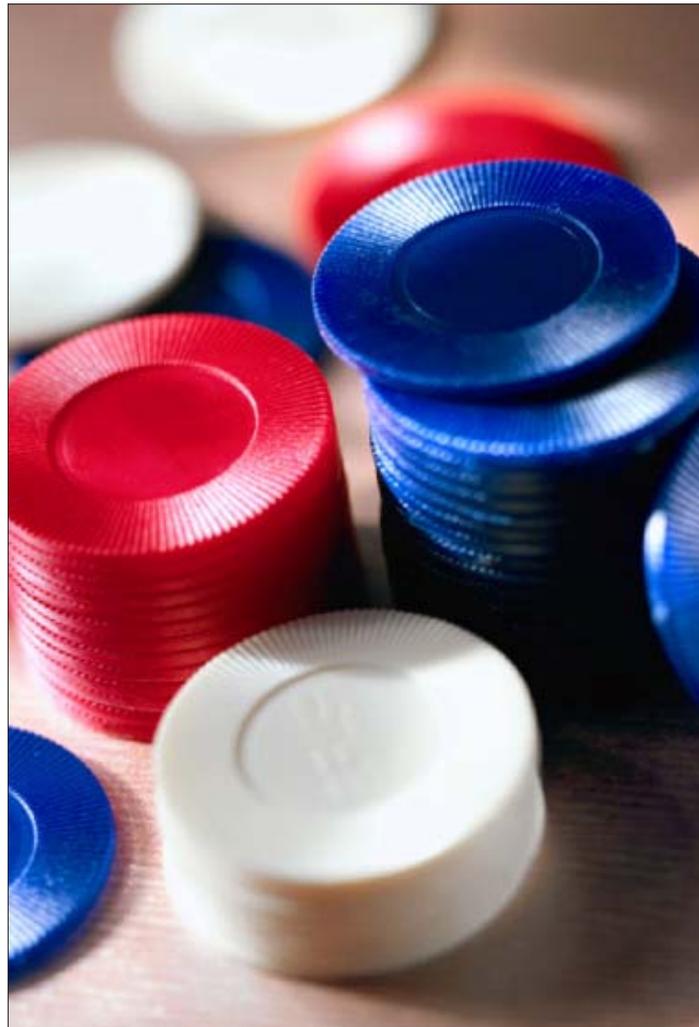
When I inquired about these blue chips, he told me he believed everyone is given a certain amount of blue chips, or chances, and it's up to them how to spend them, either wisely or foolishly.

He believes he survived based on this philosophy:

- ◆ Be more proficient than your enemy.
- ◆ Play it smart and don't take unnecessary chances. He may be a better gunner than you think.
- ◆ When flying, pay close attention. Don't take short cuts or cut corners.
- ◆ Do the best you can. The rest will take care of itself.
- ◆ If you are a leader, be the best leader.
- ◆ If you are a wingman, be the best wingman."

For him, the blue chips represent an accident or death. He said the reason he believes he survived his 680-plus combat missions was because he wasn't

Spend your blue chips wisely



complacent and he didn't cut corners.

"It's when folks don't train or cut corners that you tend to expend your blue chips," he said.

As we reach the halfway point of our rotation, we must fight the urge become complacent, as well as ensure our comrades in arms don't become complacent and begin to cut corners.

How can this be done?

I can think of many ways. Go around the perimeter to remind yourself why you are here and what potentially lies beyond the wire. Read up on the intelligence reports that provide summaries of the activities taking place in the area. These things will enable you to keep sharp about the dangers that exist in and around here and hopefully will enable you to maintain constant vigilance.

After you've established the security foundation, look around your work and living areas and ask yourself, "Have I improved what I inherited and made it better for my replacement?"

If you answer "yes," dig a little deeper to see what else you can do to make it that much better. If you answer "no," then you have something to work on, like continuity books, projects, etc. Completing this step will help you focus on the requirements of your work area and bring you back in line if you've begun to cut corners to get the job done.

Also, get involved and learn about something else...either through academics, volunteering, athletics and fitness, or asking questions about other work centers to gain an understanding about how the big picture Air Force operates and how your piece fits in. Doing this will keep your mind sharp and energized.

Colonel Parr's enduring quality of training and not becoming complacent holds a shared meaning in today's environment. By acting on some of his suggestions, as well as abiding by some of your own, your remaining time here will be as successful and rewarding as the first part...and you'll save your precious "blue chips."

FINAL FRAME



U.S. Air Force photos by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.



 Staff Sgt. William Doughten hangs on for dear life during a July 4 tug-of-war competition here. Sergeant Doughten's Aerospace Ground Equipment flight team lost. The 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron won.

 Airman 1st Class Bryce Zabric entertains the crowd at the Bagram Clam Shell. The Air Force's Tops in Blue performed here July 1.