
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Your piece of the mission

Never lose focus on it

By Maj. Shawn Mann

455 EMSS commander

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan -- For those on 120-day Air Expeditionary Force rotations, the midpoint for most has come and gone. It's easy to let yourself become complacent, think about reunions with family and friends, and lose sight, unintentionally, of the reason why we are here.

Our collective mission is to fight terror and build peace. My units "piece" of this mission is to ensure our warfighters are properly accounted for, have adequate lodging and personnel services, morale and recreation opportunities, and superior communications support.

What is the end result of my 'piece' and your 'piece' of the wings mission? The end result allows our operators, maintainers, and support personnel to complete their 'piece' of the mission and either put bombs on target or help rebuild the nation of Afghanistan...that is the bottom-line.

What allows this to happen you ask?

Unity of effort, mission, and focus – all of which are closely related. It is the element of focus that all must continually strive to keep in check and properly vectored throughout their AEF rotation. We do this day in and day out by maintaining strict adherence to technical orders, checklists, Air Force instructions, maintaining a "wingman" frame of mind, building and improving continuity folders and ensuring adequate crossover with our replacements.

All of this is done in order to ensure we complete our part of the wings mission and leave it better for those that follow. It is this commitment to maintaining an unfaltering focus on our individual 'pieces' of the mission that allows the collective 'engine' of our wing to operate successfully.

I challenge you to steadfastly maintain focus on your 'piece' of the wings mission in the waning weeks of this AEF. Keep pressing with the mission, always giving it 100 percent of your attention and ultimately leave Bagram and the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing better than you found it.

Airman donates hair to Locks of Love

By Tech. Sgt. James Law

455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan -- She had long hair all of her life, but during a deployment here she decided to donate 13 inches of it to Locks of Love.

"I never had short hair," said

Staff Sgt. Jenet Akerson, 451st Expeditionary Communications Flight Network Control Center technician. "I was raised in Hawaii; my mom has long hair, so it's part of my heritage."

Sergeant Akerson said the decision was difficult to make, but one influenced by her admiration for her mother-in-law after

learning she had alopecia. Alopecia is a condition of patchy hair loss, most noticeably on the scalp.

"I never would have even thought to do something like that had it not been for her being an influence in my life," said Sergeant Akerson. "She has a heart of

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gold and is the strongest woman I know, so really it was a dedication to her.”

She explained she wanted to be with her mother-in-law when she cut her hair, but decided to cut it while deployed because she wanted to donate healthy hair and the water here was damaging hers.

Although she was unable to be with her mother-in-law at the time, her husband was deployed with her and cut her hair.

“It meant a lot to be apart of it and to actually be the one to cut her hair,” said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Akerson, 451st ECF planner. “I know (from) being around her family the heritage with her hair and cutting it was a big deal.”

Sergeant Jenet Akerson said it took her awhile to learn how to work with short hair, but it is something she will get use to.

“We’ve decided that as long as my hair grows healthy, as soon as it gets up to a decent length, we’re going to cut it off every year,” said Sergeant Akerson. “I don’t color my hair, so I guess they will have some white streaks in it when I get older.”

“She has a heart of gold and is the strongest woman I know, so really it was a dedication to her.”



KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Staff Sgt. Jenet Akerson, 451st Expeditionary Communications Flight Network Control Center technician, holds 13 inches of her hair she recently cut off to donate to Locks of Love. Sergeant Akerson is deployed from the 435th Communications Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, Germany. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy Akerson)

Sergeant Jeremy Akerson explained it was coincidence and luck they were both deployed at the same time to the same location, especially since they have not been stationed together since December 2006.

The couple met May 2005 at Ramstein Air Base, Germany where they were stationed together. The two were married in September 2007 after he was reassigned to Sheppard Air

Force Base, Texas in December 2006.

“It has put a different view on my deployment,” said Sergeant Jeremy Akerson. “Time has just caught on fire, and I don’t want to leave because I am leaving my wife.”

The two are hoping to be reunited on a joint assignment in March 2009 after Sergeant Jenet Akerson meets the time on station requirement and can be reassigned.

Rapid Runway



BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan - Members of the 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron work together to repair the runway here April 8. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)

News Briefs

JAIL AND BAIL

Airmen Committed to Excellence and Route 5/6 are sponsoring Jail and Bail April 16. A member is voted to sit in jail 5/6 patio or maintenance sheet metal area for 15 minutes for \$5. The "inmate" cannot stay jailed for more than one hour. The member can buy themselves out for double the amount pledged against them to sit in jail. If the member chooses not to self-bail, they must sit in jail for the amount of time placed against them. The top five and bottom from each unit will be selected to go to jail unless they buyout. Contact your unit rep to participate.

BIBLE STUDY CLASSES

Camp Cunningham's Chapel staff is offering two bible study classes at

Town Hall. "The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here for?" is Monday at 1100L/0630Z. "The 360 Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization" is Saturday at 0930L/0500Z and 1830L/1400Z. For more information, call 481-6111 or 6677.

MUSIC NIGHTS

Stop by the Camp Cunningham Recreation Tent to listen to your favorite genre of music...there's something for everyone. R&B Music Night is Friday at 2100L/1630Z. Country Music Night is Sunday at 1800L/1330Z. Salsa Night is Monday at 2030L/1600Z.

LAUNDRY CLAIMS

If you have lost or damaged laundry you may be wondering what to do.

The first thing is to take inventory. If something is damaged or missing contact Staff Sgt Peter Wong at 455 EMSS/SVS as soon as possible. SSgt Wong is the Camp Cunningham Key Liaison between the laundry facility and KBR. KBR has 14 days to locate your missing items, if after 14 days they do not locate your goods, KBR is liable for your lost items. Liability will not exceed AAFES pricing, regardless of name brand. KBR is not liable for any loss or damage due to your own negligence. This includes, but is not limited to loss due to improper categorization, damage due to your items bleeding onto each other. Any "special" non-military items such as Under Armour or Thorlo brand clothing should be listed separately.

'March Madness' Bagram Style

By Capt. Toni Tones

455 Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan – “Get off me!”

There was music blaring, ball slapping, pump fakes, and of course, a lot of trash-talking at the 455th Expeditionary Services Squadron-sponsored 3-on-3 basketball tournament here April 6. The tournament began March 30.

But it was teamwork and pure hustle that led a 24th Ordinance Battalion four-man squad to victory after beating 44 other teams in a double-elimination bracket system. The team who scored 15 points first or outscored the other team in 15-minutes walked away victorious and advanced to the next bracket.

The team of Clinton Jefferson, Jose Green, Damontae Griffin and Brandon Burton based out of Hunter Army Air Field, Ga., now have bragging rights as Bagram’s “kings on the court” and the prizes – a plaque and \$50 AAFES gift card for each player – that go along with it.

“It (the win) means a lot to us and the company,” said Jefferson. “We’ve been here for 14 months so it’s a nice going away gift.”

“Not to mention it’s a great boost for morale,” added Green.

Second place winners each received a \$30 AAFES gift card and were Albert Banks, Sam



BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan - Senior Airman Eric Wooten, 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron force protection escort, drives past Staff Sgt. Kevin Clark, 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Squadron services journeyman, in the 3-on-3 March Madness basketball tournament held here April 6. Wooten is deployed from the 81st Communications Squadron, Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., and Clark is deployed from the 919th Services Flight, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)

Roberts, Jaime Blye, and Samuel McIntyre, a team of Air Force members and contractors assigned here.

“We wanted to win and set out to give our all,” said Banks. “They had a good team, and we just couldn’t kick it off at the end. Everyone loses at some point, but this was good exercise...especially for me because I’m mad out of shape.”

Promotion of fitness, morale, and esprit de corps are the underlying missions for each Services event.

“Although we’re deployed and removed from a lot of the basket-

ball excitement stateside, this was our version of ‘March Madness’ for the Airmen,” said Senior Airman Courtney Blich, event coordinator. “This gave the players an opportunity to exercise and build esprit de corps, while boosting the morale for the spectators.”

This year, 455 ESVS has sponsored more than 300 events for Airmen deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.