
Bagram News Express

Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Strasburger takes helms of EOG

By Capt. Toni Tones

455 Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – “Sir, I assume command.”

After uttering the four-word sentence every commander states, Col. Tim “Donk” Strasburger took the helm of the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group during a change of command ceremony here June 21.

Colonel Strasburger, an A-10 command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours, accepted the group’s guidon from Brig. Gen. Mike Holmes, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander. In concert, he accepted responsibility for more than 700 personnel executing the following combat missions on behalf of the wing and Joint/Coalition forces: airdrop/airland, electronic combat, combat search and rescue/medevac, operations support/airfield management, aeromedical evacuation and close air support.

“The operations group call sign is thunder, which signifies noise, both audible and electronic,” said General Holmes. “It brings hope and support to the Afghan people through shows of force. It also brings



BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Col. Tim “Donk” Strasburger (right), 455th Expeditionary Operations Group commander, accepts the guidon and responsibility of the group, from Brig. Gen. Mike Holmes, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, here June 21. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sergeant Demetrius Lester)

fear and doom to the enemy through the same shows of force as well as CAS and electronic warfare. Thunder is always there and always ready; we can count on it to roll across Afghanistan.

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‘Falcon’ lands at Bagram Air Field

By Master Sgt. James Law

455 Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – The U.S. Air Forces Central band “Falcon” showcased their musical talents for audiences both large and small here June 20 through June 22.

The band’s first performance entertained the early-morning at-

tendees of the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group change of command ceremony with a variety of pop music before and after the ceremony. During the formal procedure, the band played Ruffles and Flourishes, the General’s March, the national anthem, and the Air Force song.

“It was really exciting for us to do a change of command to begin with, but to do one in the AOR

(area of responsibility) at a place like Bagram, where this is the tip of the spear, was really a thrill,” said Senior Master Sgt. James Weber, the band’s superintendent.

Later in the afternoon, the band gathered their acoustical gear and set out to reach the Airmen assigned the aircraft maintenance squadrons remotely located on the opposite

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“Colonel Strasburger is the right guy for the job...he’s a CAS expert and an A-10 pilot,” added General Holmes. “He brings a tireless enthusiasm to every task and is excited about what he’s doing. He’s also setting the trend as the first one-year operations group commander.”

The colonel saluted former commander, Col. Art McGettrick for his service and sacrifice and thanked him for leaving him “the most lethal combat group in the U.S. Air Force.”

He also thanked General Holmes for “entrusting me with this mission and our most precious asset—our magnificent Airmen.”

“Airmen of the EOG—we have a mission to accomplish. That mission is timely and accurate support

to U.S. and coalition forces, to protect innocent civilians and killing our nation’s enemies...everything else is secondary,” said Colonel Strasburger. “And never forget, everything you do represents those you are sworn to defend—to your dying breath if necessary—the people of the United States of America.”

The group oversees the day-to-day operations of a C-130 airlift squadron, an HH-60 squadron, an aeromedical evacuation squadron, an F-15E fighter squadron and an A-10 fighter squadron. Additionally, the EOG maintains administrative control over an EC-130 electronic combat squadron and supports a U.S. Navy EA-6B electronic attack squadron. Through the Operations Support Squadron, the group also oversees a range of combat support functions at both Bagram and Kabul airfields including airfield management, air traffic control, intelligence and weather.

Website assists troops obtaining replacement eyewear

Imagine you are 300 miles from any large Enduring Post in Afghanistan. Your Combat Eye Protection insert is scratched. Your eyeglass frame is bent and the right lens keeps popping out. You don’t have your prescription, and you really don’t want to leave your squad to go on some flight or arduous convoy to Bagram AFB, where you heard you can get new optical items

Until recently, when eyewear needed to be replaced due to damage or loss, Service Members had to fly or convoy to a FOB with optometry support in order to request replacement frames. Today thanks to improved technology, ordering new eyewear is just a mouse-click away.

The military’s new G-Eyes web-based replacement eyewear system allows all service members, regardless of branch, to order eyewear from the comfort and security of their own office or even quarters.

This innovative idea was turned

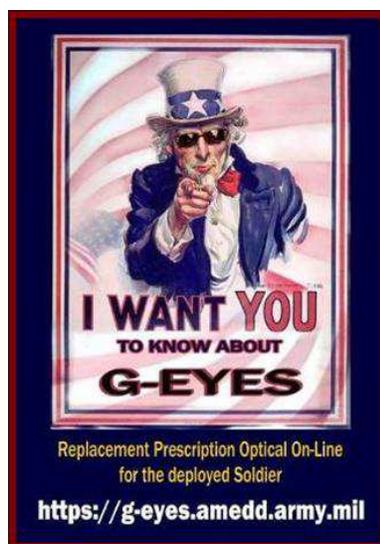
into reality by the team of computer experts that manage the Spectacle Request and Transmittal System (SRTS). Mr. Thomas Brannon, the SRTS administrator, credits his small team of four individuals for working overtime, tackling bureaucratic red tape, and creating this remarkable system within a few months. Since its creation, G-Eyes has become an important part of optical readiness throughout Iraq,

Afghanistan, and Kuwait.

Early OIF and OEF rotations found concern over the risk of sending service members via convoy or air simply to get a replacement pair of spectacles. Previously, this process would have taken the service member out of commission for an untold number of days while he/she traveled, and then waited for the eyewear to be delivered. With G-Eyes service members typically receive their orders back in about 10 days from the time they place the optical order.

Here’s how it works. The service member goes to the G-Eyes website at <https://g-eyes.amedd.army.mil> and goes through a series of screens to confirm that they are in an authorized location to use the program. After these initial screens, the user will be asked to enter their SSN, and then the system looks for the service member’s previous optical orders.

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side of the base.

“Sometimes there are folks who are unable to get to the entertainment that’s offered on the bases...because of their schedules,” said Sergeant Weber. “What we try to do is to go out with our acoustic instruments and play for those small work centers.”

In addition to the small performance, the band hosted a two-hour concert open to the base’s population. After opening with ‘The Sweet Escape’ by Gwen Stefani, the music varied from country and rock to rhythm and blues. In the mix of variety, Brig. Gen. Mike Holmes, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, was invited to make a guest performance picking the tunes to Lynyrd Skynard’s ‘Sweet Home Alabama.’

“The general is a great musician,” said Sergeant Weber. “If he ever decides to give up commanding, we have a spot for him.”

As the show progressed, random members of the audience were called on stage to join the band by shaking maracas, a tambourine and dancing and singing chorus lines.

“When we do our larger shows, we try to turn it around and make the audience the show,” said Sergeant Weber. “When we leave our shows, what we want people to remember is their part of the show.”

When the band finished what they thought was the



BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Brig. Gen. Mike Holmes, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, delivers a ‘star’ performance as Senior Master Sgt. James Weber, U.S. Air Forces Band ‘Falcon’ vocalist and guitarist, looks on during the band’s show here June 22. ‘Falcon’ travels throughout the area of responsibility positively promoting troop morale, diplomacy and reach out to host nation communities. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)

last song, the crowd vocalized their appreciation chanting “one more song.”

“They are the reason why we are here,” said Sergeant Weber. “We are trying to uplift people and let them know they are not forgotten, that they are loved and we try to bring a little bit of home to them.”

These dynamic musicians perform and tour in small ensembles throughout the AOR to positively promote troop morale, diplomacy and outreach to host nation communities.



On the rise

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan - Members of the 1st Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers Group work together to build a new fitness center on Camp Cunningham here June 24. The new 2,400 square foot K-Span will replace the existing gym and cardio tents. The RED HORSE Airmen are deployed from the 823rd RED HORSE squadron, Hulburt Field, Fla. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Demetrius Lester)

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If eyewear has been ordered through a military optometry clinic within the past two years, those orders will appear on the screen. The patient may then choose from those previous optical orders and request a replacement. The frame cannot be altered or changed from what has been ordered previously except that a comment can be added to change Combat Eye Protection in-

serts if a different insert is needed. The user then types in the APO mailing address and submits the order. The fabrication laboratory takes it from there.

In Afghanistan, the Task Force optical laboratory at Bagram AFB is responsible for fabricating most of the G-Eyes orders. The orders are received through the lab's SRTS computer system, fabricated, and then mailed directly to the service member via the Military Postal Sys-

tem. In some cases, when the theater optical laboratory does not have a unique frame, the laboratory will substitute with a common "Frame of Choice" item that fits comfortably under Sand, Wind, and Dust Goggles. Complex optical orders and bifocals that cannot be made by the theater laboratory are forwarded to Germany for fabrication, thus may take additional time to receive.

News Briefs

4th OF JULY CELEBRATION

The 455th Expeditionary Force Support Squadron, and Bagram's Air Force Top Three, Route 5/6 and Airman Committed to Excellence organizations will be hosting a 4th of July Celebration at the Camp Cunningham recreation tent July 4 from 10:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. local.

Hamburgers, hot dogs, grilled chicken, ribs and "The Fixings" will be served from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

There will also be a Live Band performing from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The events scheduled to take place are as follows in local times: (Rewards for 1st - 3rd place)

5K Fun Run (6-7 a.m.)

Football Throw-QB + Receiver (11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.)

Frisbee Throw (1-2 p.m.)

Basketball Free Throw (noon to 2 p.m.)

Balloon Toss (1-2 p.m.)

Egg & Spoon Race (1-2 p.m.)

Dunk Tank - \$1 for 3 balls (11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.)

There will also be Flight/Squadron "Postcards From Home" challenge. The flights/squadrons can use their imagination to create an Independence Day theme "postcard" on two feet by three feet or larger sheet of plywood or cardboard. All entries are to be displayed outside the recreation tent before 10:30 a.m. Winners will receive \$100 Visa gift card and a personalized plaque.

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.

COMBAT O

Combat Orientation is Thursday at 0900Z/1330L at

the Enduring Freedom Chapel. This is a mandatory briefing for all Air Force personnel assigned to Bagram Air Field. Newcomers must attend the briefing within a week of their arrival. Accountability is tracked and will be forwarded to the 1st Sergeants at the end of the Week.

COMBAT PUSH

Combat Push times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Camp Cunningham Rec Tent from 0900L/0430Z to 1000L/0530Z. Services, Comm and PERSCO will be available to sign outprocessing checklists. Personnel must complete your Post Deployment Health Questionnaire on-line and pick up your medical records at Flight Medicine/Public Health before coming to Combat Push. For more information call 431-4409.

ATTENTION ALL JUNIOR NCOS

The Bagram AF Route 5/6 meets Thursdays at 1800L/1330Z at Camp Cunningham's Town Hall. The meetings are open to all staff sergeant selects, staff sergeants and tech sergeants. Contact Tech Sgt. Scott Snedeker, 431-4404 or Staff Sgt. Tamesha Cobb, 431-4404 for more information.

BAGRAM AIRFIELD FLIGHTLINE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron reminds all service members that the Bagram Airfield flightline is a "controlled area" and all personnel require either specific inclusion on a certified entry authorization list (EAL), a restricted area badge issued by the 455 ESFS Pass & Registration section, or an authorized escort. Additionally, personnel driving vehicles onto the flight line must have both a restricted area badge and an authenticated AF Form 483 (Flightline Driving Competency Card) on their person to enter. For additional questions or concerns, please contact Air Force Security Forces operations at 481-6018.