
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Cost of freedom: Eternal vigilance

By Col. Jon Sutterfield

455 Expeditionary Maintenance Group commander

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Most of us grew up in America or as American citizens and enjoying the benefits of being an American, to include pursuing the American Dream—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But we took it all for granted...until September 11, 2001.

On September 11th our homeland and people were attacked. This was simply the start of something bigger that Osama Bin Laden and his evil mates had planned for us. Their intent was and remains to put an end to the American Dream. Thomas Jefferson once said and it continues to hold true today, “The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.”

We here at Bagram are doing our part to maintain the eternal vigilance necessary to protect our freedom so our families, children and their descendants can have life and liberty while pursuing or achieving happiness.

So why are we here in Afghanistan and not at home defending America from within?

The simple answer is if we don't take the fight to

the enemy and their accommodating associates like the Taliban on their home turf, we'll end up fighting them in the parking lot of our local Wal-Mart. No Americans I know, whether for or against the war, want to fight the enemy in America.

The more complex answer is we are not only making Afghanistan safe for democracy but providing the initial security to ensure democracy survives while taking the fight to the Taliban, Al Qaeda and other insurgents. If we can bring political stability and ensure the rule of law and respect for human rights here until the state is able to perform those matters itself, we won't have to worry about Afghanistan supporting terrorists training here to wreak havoc in America and the rest of the free world.

Freedom isn't free and the cost of maintaining it is eternal vigilance. As members of the U.S. military stationed in Afghanistan, we execute our combat skills, honed over the years at our home units, here in support of the Global War on Terrorism protecting the American Dream. We are doing our part to ensure

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Kyrgyz media visits Afghanistan PRT

By Capt. Jillian Torango

Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team

PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – One year ago, a Kyrgyz journalist had an idea to travel to Afghanistan to see how Manas Air Base, in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic [commonly known as Kyrgyzstan] fits into the bigger picture of Operation Enduring Freedom and International Se-

curity and Assistance Force efforts. Four Kyrgyz journalists recently got that chance.

Respected journalists from four major news media outlets in Kyrgyzstan, with an audience of up to eight million, traveled from their homes near Manas Air Base to visit the Panjshir Provincial Reconstruction Team based in North Eastern Afghanistan June 22-25.

“This was a very important trip and that is because I can't hide the

fact that the presence of Manas Air Base is not accepted by everyone in Kyrgyzstan,” said Azamat Tyanev, Editor-in-

Chief of the Komsomolskaya Pravda Kyrgyzstan newspaper.

The other journalists agreed.

“We needed to see how Manas Air Base works in relation to what is going on in Afghanistan,” said Azamat Kasybekov, a reporter with

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the Vechernyi Bishkek newspaper which is the only daily newspaper in Kyrgyzstan. “The people in Kyrgyzstan continuously hear how important the base is but we’ve never before seen how the two were connected.”

The people of Bishkek know about Manas Air Base but they don’t know much more than what they see and hear everyday: large aircraft continuously flying into and out of the base.

“That’s why I think these kinds of trips are necessary to balance the view of the role of the American Air Base in Kyrgyzstan,” said Mr. Tyanev. “It is important for us to show that there is another side to the story.”

The other side to that story is that Manas AB is of great importance to the coalition’s operations in Afghanistan.

“Everyone on this team and every other PRT in Afghanistan came through Manas Air Base,” said Lt. Col. Russell Kaskel, Panjshir PRT commander. “Having Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan is a logistical necessity to ensure we continue to support the reconstruction efforts not only here in Panjshir but throughout Afghanistan.”

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America is eternally vigilant. Have no doubt the sacrifice and service each of us is contributing makes a positive difference toward achieving the goals of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and ultimately protects America and preserves the American Dream for future generations. We are the protectors of the American Dream.

Ronald Reagan restated Thomas Jefferson’s idea into slightly different words toward the end of the Cold



PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Azamat Kasybekov, a reporter with the Vechernyi Bishkek, show students a photo he took of them in Khenj on June 24. (U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Jillian Torango)

The PRT took the journalists on missions throughout the province so they could truly understand the importance of the team’s reconstruction and development mission. The journalists observed PRT engineers’ assessments of two school construction projects and a micro-hydro power plant. From this they were able to see two of the main reconstruction focuses for the province: education and power.

The journalists also spent time in Panjshir meeting local leaders and interacting with its people. This gave the journalists an opportunity to understand one of the PRT’s other main tenets: governance.

They met with the Province’s

executive administrator, a provincial council member, and a district chief of police.

The journalists heard more about the importance of education, the role of the local government, and the rule of law in Panjshir. Then they were able to walk through the town of Anaba, shop in the stores, and interact with the people.

“When we were told we were coming to Panjshir we didn’t know what to expect but this four-day trip has really shown us a lot,” said Mr. Kasybekov. “Being able to see the people and how they live and interact in their country, with our own

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War saying, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it was once like in the United States where men were free.”

Let’s celebrate our freedom this Fourth of July by rededicating ourselves to proudly protecting the American Dream, for ourselves and future generations, and then taking the fight to the enemy until the job is done!

Wing recognizes new promotees, award winners

By Capt. Toni Tones
455 Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRBASE, Afghanistan – Members of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing honored the Wing's newest promotees, top performers and outstanding contributor during the monthly recognition ceremony here July 1.

The newly-appointed NCOs in attendance were administered the NCO charge by Master Sgt. William DeCrescnzo, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group.

The July promotees were:

To Senior Airman: Joseph Budig, Philip Cantley, Jacklin Esparza, Ryan Garland, Cooper Gibson, Manuel Herrea, Elizabeth Quinones, Philip Winston, James Worley and Maurice Dupree.

To Staff Sergeant: Jennifer Encalada, Tyson Johnson, Shawn Kennedy, Mark Ostrander, Austin Shippy and Manuel Gonzales.

To Technical Sergeant: William Shaw, Ruby Tilley, Bethany Lanski, Timothy Bayes, Dawnella Bowser and Deangelis Bright.

To Master Sergeant: Jodi William, Dale Deskins, Jr., William Ingram, Mark Simons, James Tadlock, and Sackoxayathi Raffensperger.

To Captain: Joel Villavert.

To Major: Michael Cuomo and Shanda Smith.

To Lieutenant Colonel: Jill Orear and Robert Morse.

The Wing also recognized its best of the best for outstanding contributor outside the wing and the Top Performers in the Airman, NCO, Senior NCO, CGO and civilian

categories for June. The winners in their respective category were:

Outstanding Contributor: Senior Airman Donald G. Carpenter, 19th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron

Airman of the Month: Senior Airman Jennifer B. Encalada, 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group

NCOs of the Month: Tech. Sgt. John S. Lineaweaver, 455th EMSG

Senior NCO of the Month: Master Sgt. Konrad J. Tucker, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group

CGO of the Month: Capt. Heidi A. Baker, 755th Air Expeditionary Group

Civilian of the Month: Aamil M. Karimi, 755th AEG

News Briefs

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.

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eyes was very important.”

Kyrgyzstan is no stranger to conflict and the journalists were able to empathize with the people of Afghanistan.

“In our country we had [ethnic fighting] when Uzbekistan attacked southern Kyrgyzstan,” said Batyrbek Mamyrkulov a reporter from the National Television and Radio Company which is the only television station to broadcast country-wide. “And having covered these events as a journalist, I kind of know what the people here have gone through.”

The journalists also got the opportunity to see first hand the history of the Panjshir Valley and its military significance during the last thirty years.

One important stop on the trip was to the Massoud Foundation and the tomb of Ahmed Shah Massoud, the famed martyr and national hero of Afghanistan.

“The Panjshir Valley is a very famous place for us and Ahmed Shah Massoud is a very famous person even in the Kyrgyz Republic,” said Anton Lamar, chief editor for Information Agency 24, in Bishkek.

Ahmed Shah Massoud was the leader of Afghanistan’s Northern Alliance and led the fight to keep the Soviet Army from occupying the Panjshir Valley and ultimately subduing Afghanistan.

“We always cover the activities at Manas Air Base,” said Mr. Kasybekov noting that most of what they cover is repetitious and relatively unimportant as far as the bigger picture is concerned. “But



PANJSHIR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Batyrbek Mamyrkulov a reporter from the National Television and Radio Company interviews Mr. Daqiq, Panjshir Provincial Executive Administrator , June 24 in Parakh, Panjshir.

now with what we learned here and the photos we took, we will be able to show the Kyrgyz people why Manas Air Base is important.”

“For me personally, what I found most interesting is how the service members live and work within the community and how they have been welcomed as neighbors,” Kasybekov continued. “How that relationship helps the reconstruction effort as well as the day-to-day interactions . . . these little details of daily life will be very interesting and important to the people of Kyrgyzstan.”

Photographs won’t be the only images of Afghanistan that the journalists will take with them.

“Our television viewers will know a lot more about Afghanistan and the coalition mission here,” said Mr. Mamyrkulov, whose station reaches about five million Kyrgyz viewers.

Throughout the trip some of the journalists could be heard explaining that what they had seen here reminded them of Kyrgyzstan right after independence. They stated

that Afghanistan still had a long way to go on its journey to complete independence, but they knew that it would one day come.

“During these four days I spent a lot of time with the PRT team and they have been nothing but kind and friendly, and the same goes for the people of Panjshir,” said Mr. Tyanev. “From this trip my world view and my attitude on life have become enriched and I now have hope for Afghanistan that everything really will be ok someday.”

This four-day media event sponsored in conjunction with the U.S. Department of State was the first of its kind for most of the journalists and each one stated that they hope it is the first of many.

Speaking for the group Mr. Tyanev stated, “We would welcome the continued openness of the U.S. Department of Defense to welcome journalists to cover the activities of the U.S. military—we are convinced that it is important, responsible and necessary.”