
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Pave Hawks prove to be vital in medevac

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455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Flares and courage. When the Army's DUSTOFF medics take to the Afghan skies for a medical evacuation this is all they are equipped with. Sometimes flares and courage are not enough though. Under certain weather conditions, the UH-60 Black Hawks used by the Army are unable to perform medical evacuations. But that doesn't mean the mission stops.

The Airmen of the 33rd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron are able to step-in and perform medical evacuations with their HH-60G Pave Hawk. This was the case the night of Aug. 5 when low illumination from the moon and poor visibility due to dust prevented the Black Hawks from taking off here.

"It's a great opportunity to help out the DUSTOFF guys," said Tech. Sgt. "Mike," whose name is withheld for security reasons. "They've been doing this for a long time and if they need us to go, we'll help them."

In a 24-hour period the 33rd ERQS, deployed from Kadena Air Base, Japan, logged a total of 27 hours during five missions, saving nine lives.

"During periods of poor weather, the Army often calls upon the Air Force to conduct medevac missions," said Sergeant Mike. "We are always ready to use our capability to support the joint team."

The Air Force Pave Hawk is a highly modified version of the Black Hawk. It is equipped with a communications and navigation suite that allows for night and marginal weather flying. The Pave Hawk is also equipped with a forward looking infrared system and color weather radar.

"We went in when nobody else could go," said Sergeant Mike. "That night we showed why we are able to fly in marginal weather conditions. No one



An Air Force HH-60G Pave Hawk takes off for a medical evacuation mission as the sun sets over Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Aug. 16. Although primarily used for combat search and rescue, the Pave Hawk supplements the Army's UH-60 Black Hawks in medical evacuations during night and marginal weather conditions. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse/Released)

else could go out in those conditions."

The night actually began when the 33rd ERQS was called in for a day mission because weather grounded the Black Hawks. After the first two-hour mission, the crews continued to receive follow on calls for medical evacuations, sometimes while still conducting a previous mission. The night turned into a gas-and-go operation with few breaks.

"The last one was at an austere (forward operating base)," said Sergeant Mike. "The commander said we were the best suited in the (area of responsibility) to go get this guy, so we went. There was poor weather, but we were able to get him out of there. Our primary mission is Combat Search and Rescue, that is why we are here. Our training and experience easily translate to medevac."

The night turned into one of the longest surge operations the 33rd ERQS has experienced since deploying here this year. Sergeant Mike explained that

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455th Airmen selected for promotion to staff sergeant

The following senior airmen assigned to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing were selected for promotion to staff sergeant in the 08E5 cycle:

Clara Alcaide
Joshua Arends
Sean Barton
Keoni Brede
William Brennan
Raymond Caldwell
Dylan Charles
Kyle Cius
Carlo Delapena
Dale Driggs III
Dwayne Ferguson
Garrett Fillingham
Ryan Hall
Mark Hangsleben
Natalie Hill
Eric Hopp
Mark Jaojoco
Jared Jones
Jeanette Koch
Michael Lamonte

Brandon Lape
Justin Maxwell
Travis Miller
Samuel Morcom
Justin Murphy
Zachary Nichter
Christopher Ouderkirk
Micah Paulino
Jennifer Pemp
Jeremy Phillips
Christopher Premo
Bryan Reed
Ver Ringais
Justin Spritzer
Andrew Stevenson
Stephen Stewart
Eric Struck
Calvin Tang
Drew Vickers
Gayzhe Wagner
Mark Walker
George Weed
Robert Whorton
Darren Williams
Scott Williams

Redeploying? Be prepared for Customs

Airmen preparing to redeploy will need to process through customs. Knowing what you can and cannot take back with you will help expedite the customs process, and prevent you from having any of your items confiscated.

A list of prohibited items, and items permitted only in checked baggage is available from the Bagram Post Office.

People transporting knives and weapons are encouraged to check the Customs regulations on such items. Switchblades and gravity blades are prohibited. Switchblades for military use must have proper documentation. Other knives, Leathermans, and Gerbers must be placed in checked baggage.

If you have purchased an antique weapon from the Bagram Bazaar, stop by the legal office for information on transporting the weapon back to the states. Antique weapons are permitted, but must meet certain guidelines and have proper documentation.

For more information, contact Customs, the Bagram Post Office, or the legal office.

Services Info

- ◆ First Run Movies: Sunday, Wednesday and Friday at 1000L and 1500L.
- ◆ Jujitsu: Wednesday at 1330L.
- ◆ Abs Workout: Monday through Friday at 1215L.
- ◆ Capoeira/Brazilian Martial Arts: Sunday from 2000L to 2200L and Tuesday from 1630L to 1830L.
- ◆ Salsa: Monday from 2030L to 2230L.
- ◆ Texas Hold'em: Tuesday at 1900L, Thursday at 1330L, and Saturday at 1330L and 1900L.
- ◆ Dominoes: Tuesday at 2100L.
- ◆ Reggae Night: Wednesday from 2000L to 2300L.
- ◆ Spades: Thursday at 1800L.
- ◆ Blackjack: Thursday at 2100L.
- ◆ Bingo: Friday at 1900L.
- ◆ Hip Hop/R&B Night: Friday at 2030L.

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while the missions are long, the satisfaction of saving a life makes it worth the hard work and sacrifice. Job satisfaction is always high after a mission.

“We get to see the result of our mission - picking up people and bringing them home,” he said.

The patients they pick up are not always U.S. servicemembers. The medical operation here includes treating anyone with life, limb or

eyesight injury, even if that person is an insurgent.

“War has different levels - saving a kid, saving an (Afghan National Army member) or bringing back an (enemy prisoner of war). It doesn’t matter to me, either way he is a patient,” said Sergeant Mike. “The most satisfying is bringing home one of our own.”

Sergeant Mike serves as the aerial gunner on the Pave Hawk. He says the guns allow them to land in hot landing zones and gives

them the ability to defend themselves and the guys on the ground.

“A lot of people would ask us why we want to do this. It is easy - so that others may live. That pretty much sums up everything,” he said. “When everything else goes to hell, that’s what we’re here for.”

Editors Note: In 2006 while deployed to Kandahar Air Field in Afghanistan, the 33rd ERQS became the first squadron with a combat search and rescue mission and a medical evacuation mission.

News Briefs

FEMALES’ SELF-DEFENSE CLASS

Military and civilian women are invited to attend a sexual assault prevention class Aug. 22 from 1430L to 1630L at the MWR Clamshell. Come and learn how to better protect yourself. Bring a friend, wear PT attire and be prepared to get a little physical. The class will be taught by Capt. Mark Jennings, 382nd Military Police, who is a certified defensive tactics instructor. He has 20 years of experience as a martial arts instructor and is a Sergeant with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. There will be classes open to both males and females in the future.

WOMEN’S EQUALITY DAY LUNCHEON

All are welcome to attend the CJTF-101 88th Annual Women’s Equality Day Luncheon celebrating “Women’s Right To Vote”. The luncheon will be Aug. 26 from 1100L to 1300L at the Four Corners Clamshell. Guest speakers include Dr. Hussun Bano Ghazanfar, Minister of Women’s Affairs, and Capt. M. Kate Vogel, Task Force Troubleshooter. The event is sponsored by CJTF-101 Equal Opportunity Office.

SHOULDER HOLSTERS

Per CJTF-101, shoulder holsters in which the muzzle of the weapon points upward or toward the rear are not authorized. If the holster is modified so that the muzzle points down, it may be used.

HOMETOWN NEWS

Airmen who are deploying or redeploying can “get the word out” about notable events related to their service via the Hometown News Program. The process is easy - individuals simply fill out, sign and return the Hometown News Release (available on the Bagram website under “Other Links”) to Public Affairs (paper copy or scanned electronic copy) and PA will take care of the rest by marketing these events to their local media. Some

examples of events include: award of Afghanistan Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, arrival for deployment, completion of deployment, etc. For more information, contact public affairs at 455aewpa@swa.army.mil.

POST OFFICE HOURS

The Bagram Post Office is changing its hours. Starting Aug. 25, the Post Office will be open from 0900-1730L Monday through Saturday and 1200 - 1600L on Sunday to handle all your postal needs. If you are a unit that is departing the area and need to set up a time to mail out your personal gear or you are a unit mail clerk and need to set up an appointment to process Official Mail please contact the post office at (318) 431-3023/4679.

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 and from 2330L/1900Z to 0030L/2000Z. 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.

EAGLECASH

As of Aug. 1, all deployed personnel (military, civilian and contractors) utilizing Air Force finance office services within the USCENTCOM AOR are required to have an EagleCash Stored Value Card and highly encouraged to use it. Please sign-up for your EagleCash Card today.