
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Secretary of the Air Force visits Bagram Airmen

By Staff Sgt. Rachel Martinez
455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Secretary of the Air Force, Michael B. Donley, visited with Airmen from Bagram Air Field Oct. 15 during his first visit to the country since being confirmed by Congress earlier this month.

During his visit, Secretary Donley held an Airman's call for approximately 400 Airmen stationed here.

"Since I became your acting secretary four months ago, I've been looking forward to the opportunity to get down range here with you and find out first hand what our Airmen are doing in theater," he said. "I want to let you know that your new chief, Gen. Norton Schwartz, and I come from a joint background and from an



Secretary Donley speaks at an Airman's call where he introduced himself to the Airmen and talked about the future of air power.



U.S. Air Force photos by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse

Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley visits with the newly-created 455th Expeditionary Communications Squadron here Oct. 15.

interagency background. We value all the things you are doing here to make the Air Force a unique player as part of a joint team supporting the Army, the Department of State, and other agencies, in a joint effort to defeat these enemies around Afghanistan."

The secretary used the Airman's Call as an opportunity to share some insight on a few key issues and what is on the horizon for the Air Force.

"First, (we need to) get the Air Force refocused on this nuclear enterprise," he began. "We have lost focus on that mission over the last 10 to 20 years. The secretary of defense asked the (chief of staff of the Air Force) and me to work

on that. We are going to roll out a roadmap which will get the Air Force recommitted to this important mission."

The second issue the secretary addressed was the global war on terror.

"The SECDEF asked us to make sure the Air Force is doing all it can to support the global war on terror," he said. "I believe we are doing that."

He went on to explain how the global war on terror effort starts with the Air Force providing airlift for troops and cargo into theater. Once in theater, troops are met by aerial port personnel who are

See **SECAF**, Page 2

SECAF from Page 1

managing the air bases and aircraft. Throughout the Central Command area of operations, the Air Force is providing overwatch and fire power with specialized airframes.

“We provide armed overwatch over the battle space in this theater, with air-to-ground capability just a few minutes away from any call for overwatch or airstrike from an Army or Marine unit on the ground,” he said.

Unmanned aerial systems operated by the Air Force provide additional support to the joint fight, he said.

“This new technology has been a help, has been rapidly produced, and rapidly fielded in ways that are (expanding) the situational awareness commanders have prior to ground missions,” he said. “Commanders have figured out they want it and they want more of it. The Air Force has been working with our other partners in the DoD to ramp up the (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) support in this theater.”

The secretary also commended the efforts of Air Force and joint areomedical evacuation teams.

“We’re getting casualties from the battlefields, through these hospitals, in an intensive care unit, to an airborne intensive care team, back to Germany, back to CONUS, faster than we’ve ever done,” he



Lt. Col. William Andersen, Kapisa/Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team commander, presents Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley here Oct. 15. Secretary Donley learned about current and upcoming projects for the PRT and commented on how crucial their mission is for the betterment of Afghanistan.



Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley looks at the inner workings of an A-10 Thunderbolt II here Oct. 15.

said. “The survival rates here are higher than they have ever been in the military in any previous conflict.”

Based on the what he has seen and heard during his recent travel around the Central Command area of responsibility, Secretary Donley said his idea of the Air Force’s efforts in the war were reconfirmed.

“I’ve seen it now. I’ve touched it. I’ve seen the Airmen that are doing it,” he said. “I can go back to the secretary of defense and I can say, ‘Mr. Secretary, with respect to the global war on terror, the Air Force is all in’.”

Additionally, the secretary spoke on the importance and future roles of space and cyberspace in the Air Force.

“The Air Force has an important role to play in space; it is one of our primary domains,” he said. “Another issue that drives the importance of the Air Force is cyber. All these networks that you are operating, these systems in existence, need to be protected. Cyber warfare is for real and the United States is under attack 24/7 in cyberspace.”

Secretary Donley finished his Airman’s call by thanking the deployed Airmen.

“I just want to say how much I appreciate all you are doing downrange,” he said. “Know you are getting great support back home. Congress is providing great support to the war fight. Your families are very proud of what you are doing and you have the full support of the American people.

“It is a humbling experience to work with all of you in support of the greatest air force in the world,” he concluded.

First Afghan baby born at Bagram Air Field

By Staff Sgt. Rachel Martinez
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BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — It was the middle of the night and hospital staff's pagers were going off. Inside Craig Joint Theater Hospital there was a scramble to pull together the people and equipment needed for a successful procedure. It wasn't a coalition servicemember's life they were trying to save; they were bringing a new Afghan baby into the world.

Just after 5 a.m. Oct 4, the hospital staff successfully delivered, by cesarean section, the first Afghan baby at Craig Joint Theater Hospital, Bagram Air Field.

The mother is a patient who was brought in five weeks ago after an explosion in her home. Despite sustaining major injuries to her upper and lower extremities, she was able to continue with her pregnancy.

"We were primarily following this patient for her traumatic injuries, but the fact that she was

also pregnant was always on our radar," said Capt. Ron Carr, an obstetrics nurse deployed from Travis Air Force Base, Calif. "The obstetrical team of this AEF rotation had just recently begun talking about the specifics of how we would manage an active labor patient with her significant injuries and planning for the possibility of her delivering the baby while she was a patient here."

"Because the standard of obstetrical care is different here than what we'd expect in the States, we were not even sure how far along she actually was," Carr added.

Before the hospital staff could acquire additional obstetrical equipment, the woman quietly went in to labor in the early hours of Oct 4. During a normal delivery, the hospital staff would use a TOCO transducer to monitor contractions and an external fetal monitor to measure the baby's heartbeat. With neither piece of equipment available the team had to make due with only a Doppler ultrasound capable of intermittently picking up the baby's heartbeat.

"We came together and made it work for us," said Carr. "We had to intermittently monitor the baby with our ultrasound and then feel for contractions with our hands. We had



*U.S. Air Force photos by
Staff Sgt. Rachel Martinez*

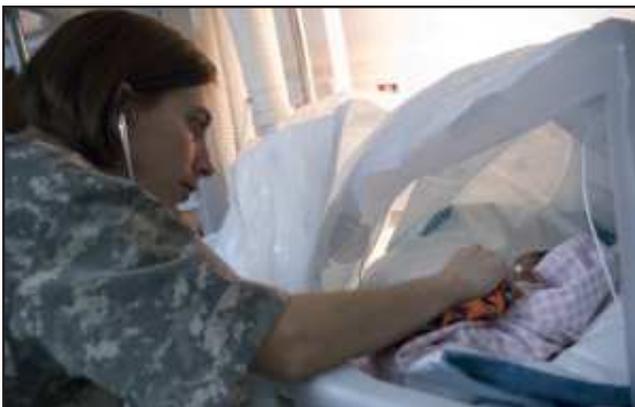
Capt. (Dr.) Brian Hearn, an obstetrics/gynecology physician, checks on Zahra, here, Oct. 8.

to use traditional medical techniques and teach the nurses how to put their hand on her belly to feel for the contraction so that we could then convey it to the doctor."

Over the course of an hour and a half, the woman's contractions progressed from every 10 minutes down to every three minutes.

"At that point, we knew it was time to call the doctor and have him check her cervix; she was six to seven centimeters dilated when he did," said Carr. "So she was very close to having her baby."

Due to the extent of the woman's injuries, the doctors decided a vaginal delivery would present too many complications, and decided to proceed with the more controlled environment of a cesarean section.



First Lt. Michelle Pierson, an Intensive Care Unit nurse, listens to Zahra's heartbeat here, Oct. 6.

See BABY, Page 4

News Briefs

A.C.E. MEETINGS

Airmen Committed To Excellence meets Fridays at 1700L/1230Z in front of Town Hall. The meetings are open to all Airmen in the rank of E-1 to E-4.

ATTENTION ALL JUNIOR NCOS

The Bagram AF Route 5/6 meets Thursdays at 1800L/1330Z at Camp Cunningham's Town Hall. The meet-

ings are open to all staff sergeant selects, staff sergeants and tech sergeants.

RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOP

The 455th AEW Chapel team is hosting a relationship workshop beginning at 1900L Oct. 18 in Town Hall. This workshop is designed for all dating and married individuals, specifically for first time deployers. The workshop will focus on communication skills, dating and intimacy. For details or to RSVP, contact Chaplain

Brian Nierman at 431-6111 or e-mail brian.j.nierman@afghan.swa.army.mil.

COMBAT O

Combat Orientation is Thursday at 0930Z/1400L 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 two week of their arrival. Accountability is tracked and will be forwarded to the 1st Sergeants at the end of the Week.

BABY from Page 3

Craig Joint Theater Hospital is not equipped with an obstetrics department, however many of the Airmen deployed here have obstetric and neonatal experience. Airmen working as medical technicians in the emergency room and intermediate care ward were pulled to assist with the delivery. Obstetrics nurses and doctors, working in general medicine at the hospital, came together and prepared for the historic delivery.

"For the C-section, we had most of the equipment we needed, because it's a standard OR procedure," said Carr. "We gathered together a C-section set out of instruments from other trauma sets we would use. We had a lot of the medications that we would use to stave off some of the more common OB complications, as well as the medications that we would routinely use post-partum. Some of it was luck, some of it was planning."

The biggest challenge was the lack of neonatal equipment. One key piece of equipment missing was a baby warmer.

"We needed something to keep the baby warm when she first arrived - we had about 15 minutes to come up with something to use in the emergency room" said Tech. Sgt. Jeremiah Diaz, a medical technician deployed from Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. "First we were thinking lights, then we ended up using a Bair hugger (a warming blanket used for post-surgical patients). We made a little tent for the baby with coat hangers and an egg crate mattress."

A healthy Afghan baby girl was delivered that morning, and ever since "her presence has been a ray of light", said Carr.

"We get to see so much trauma on a daily basis, to see something positive like a baby is awesome," he said. "It's been very affirming of why we're here. We know we are here to help remedy the injuries of war, but for a lot of us, this made things kind of feel very normal because this is what we do back home. It was very encouraging to see that the hospital could get together that rapidly to make it happen; everything went incredibly smooth."

That same sentiment is echoed by most of the staff. Tech. Sgt. Roopa Schoop works in the emergency room as a medical technician. As a labor and delivery technician back at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Shoop was interested in assisting with the delivery since hearing about the woman's pregnancy. Even though it was her day off, she helped in the delivery room and performed the initial assessment on the baby.

"I'd been thinking that it would be an amazing experience to help with the delivery, she said. "I'm a mom, so I enjoy babies. I think its good therapy to hold a baby - most of us that were involved in the delivery have come back to hold her because it is a good feeling"

The baby girl's mother did not name her for a few days, so the nurses in the ICU started calling the baby Savannah. When the mother and grandfather heard the staff call her by that name, they would laugh. Three days after her birth, the mother decided to name the baby Zahra, which means "white flower" in Arabic. She has exceeded the doctor's expectations and acts like any healthy baby would.

"I wish the baby well," said Shoop. "We will leave and hopefully she grows up a healthy and responsible girl."