
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Chief of staff answers Bagram Airmen's questions

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — The 19th Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Norton Schwartz, accompanied by Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney McKinley, made his first official trip to Bagram Air Field Oct. 21.

General Schwartz toured the 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group to learn more about the growing efforts to support the mission here, and the Craig Joint Theater Hospital to visit staff and injured service members. A prior C-130 pilot, the general also visited the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron and the 41st Expeditionary Electronic Attack Squadron.

Before departing Bagram, General Schwartz hosted an Airman's Call where he shared his vision of the Air Force's role in the war on terrorism.

"What is happening here is profoundly important," he said. "Frankly, what has been over time an economy of force operation here in Afghanistan, is about to change. The main focus of activity in Central Command area of responsibility is going to be right here. What you have done - what



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

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz holds an Airman's Call at Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, Oct. 21

your predecessors have done - to establish this location as the engine of certainly Air Force activity and other mission activities in this country on behalf of the United States armed forces, is so very, very important."

"This is about the United States Air Force finding new and better ways to contribute to the fight," he added. "There are obvious ways we do it, and there are less obvious ways. My basic point here is that everyone here is all in. It doesn't matter what discipline you are in, what job you have or what specialty you share — everybody matters, everybody contributes. We all do our thing because this is a team sport."

The chief of staff also took

questions from Airmen in the audience.

"This is the kind of feedback we need to have," he said. "The battlefield is a more complicated place. If there is something we are doing that you consider not value-added, pass that to me."

Questions for General Schwartz ranged from the status of the CSAR-X development to civilianization of jobs to the way we fight. One question concerned pre-deployment training and ensuring the right people received the appropriate training to prepare them for the work they will be doing in theater.

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Airfield operations flight keeps airfield operational

By Staff Sgt. Thomas Tedone
455th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Managing one the busiest airfields in Afghanistan can be challenging - it involves more than controlling air traffic and coordinating flights in and out. The crucial responsibility of keeping Bagram Air Field operational falls to the 455th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron Airfield Operations Flight and the many contractors involved.

The Airfield Operations Flight is responsible for two distinct areas — air traffic control services and airfield management.

The air traffic control function is similar to that of any other Air Force base or commercial airport, but more hectic due to the many different aircraft here. Bagram is home to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing and its fleet of A-10 Thunderbolts, C-130 Hercules, EA-6 Prowlers, F-15E Strike Eagles, HH-60 Pave Hawks, as well as a number of different Army and coalition aircraft. In addition to the diversity of the aircraft and pilots, air traffic control at Bagram is complicated by the high volume of flights arriving and departing this combat zone everyday.

“The contractors and their experience make the job easy and the air traffic control services run smoothly,” said Lt. Col. Kevin Virts, who serves as a liaison between the contractors and military personnel for the 455th EOSS.



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

Department of Defense contractors monitor the airfield from the air traffic control tower here Oct. 21.

Perhaps the most visible responsibility for the airfield operations flight is a i r f i e l d management for the expanding base. There are three types of airfield construction for the



Lt. Col. Kevin Virts, 455th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron Airfield Operations Flight liaison, visits a construction sight on the flightline here Oct. 22.

constant expansion and maintenance currently going on at Bagram. The first is called indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) and consists of contracts focused on important and ongoing small projects like fixing minor problems around the airfield. The second type of construction falls under operations and maintenance contracts. These are larger and more expensive than IDIQ contracts. One example of the many O&M contracts is the replacement of large slabs of deteriorating concrete. The third and most significant type of contracts are called military construction and includes construction projects with values more than \$750,000.

According to Colonel Virts, there are four major MILCON contracts currently underway, totaling around \$45 million. These include runway expansions and completion of two taxiways. In addition to the significant amount of expansion currently underway for Bagram Airfield, he indicated that there are plans for more than \$130 million in MILCON contracts in the coming fiscal year.

“The expansions will keep the runway clear to get aircraft into the skies faster to support coalition forces and help defeat the enemies of Afghanistan,” he said.

Through the construction projects, the 455th EOSS Airfield Operations Flight continues to expand Bagram’s capabilities, transforming the once aging and neglected Soviet airfield into the modern combined and joint air operations hub it is today. As the busiest airfield in Afghanistan, the Airfield Operations Flight will long remain a critical component of the effort to keep our Airmen flying, fighting and winning the war against terror.

“I would argue to everybody here, our Air Force isn’t sitting in Alconbury, and Bentwater, and Ramstein and Mildenhall anymore ready to go fight—we’re here, we’re in Baghdad,” he said. “One hopes we did the right thing preparing them for that role. I would not be doing my job if I did not prepare you to do it, inside or outside the wire. I certainly agree that those folks who have less likelihood of going outside the fence need a different curriculum than those who do.”

General Schwartz was also asked about his feelings toward the Airman’s Creed.

“What’s embedded in the creed is a fundamental notion that we have obligations to one another, to our Air Force teammates, to our other service’s teammates, and certainly to the country. These obligations are profound. This is what the creed suggests - that we are a member of a warrior team, all of us have obligations to one another, and we keep our promises. That is what makes us different.”

Finally, General Schwartz talked about getting the Air Force back to basics and ensuring the right things are done right.

“For everybody here, this is really about the success of the joint team,” he said. “Take satisfaction in knowing that people depend on you for what you do. Make sure the people who depend on us turn out to be our greatest champions. That is the way for all of us to be more successful.”

Military members prohibited from participating in Sears ‘Heroes at Home Wish Registry’

Per the Department of Defense Standards of Conduct Office, current military personnel are not permitted to participate in the Sears Heroes at Home Wish Registry Program as such participation would violate applicable government ethics regulations.

The ethics regulations prohibit government employees, including military personnel, from (directly or indirectly) soliciting or accepting gifts from a prohibited source, or given because of their official position. After reviewing the available details of the Sears program, the Standards of Conduct Office has determined that participation in the wish registry results in an improper solicitation.

News Briefs

A.C.E. MEETINGS

Airmen Committed To Excellence meets Fridays at 1700L/1230Z in front of Town Hall. 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 meetings are open to all staff sergeant selects, staff sergeants and tech sergeants.

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.

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.

EAGLECASH

The Bagram Finance Office has set-up a full-service EagleCash Card Center at the Friday Bagram Bazaar for your use and convenience. The Center has an EagleCash kiosk and a cashier to sign-up new card applicants and to exchange a check for uploaded EagleCash funds. Please sign-up for your EagleCash Card today.