



From expeditionary to enduring: Civil Engineer crews improve Bagram infrastructure

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

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — Seven years into the war on terror, the U.S. military is transitioning operations here from an expeditionary mindset to an enduring one. Airmen of the 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron work around the clock to improve Bagram Air Field's infrastructure and support this enduring mission.

There are 25 active construction projects valued at more than \$73 million. More than \$221 million in construction is scheduled for next year.

"Our mission is to maintain and repair the airfield," said Master Sgt. Brent Sheehan, 455th ECES superintendent deployed from Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D. "This base and mission is growing like at no other time in the history of Bagram. There is a huge push for expansion. This is well known in the squadron and the pressure and focus is on us to get it done."

While there are a few projects designed to improve living and working conditions for the nearly 2,000 Airmen assigned at Bagram,



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

Airmen of the 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron lay concrete on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27., here.

the majority of the construction projects center on improving and expanding the airfield. Projects at the top of the list involve expanding three ramps, increasing space for rotary and fixed wing aircraft and constructing a parallel taxiway. In addition, an arm/de-arm ramp and hot cargo ramp are being constructed to allow for safe and secure handling of aircraft ammunition. Most of these projects involve pouring massive amounts of concrete.

"The record for pouring concrete or concrete projects (in one deployment rotation) was 2,200 cubic meters," said Sergeant

Sheehan. "Since August we have completed 2,075 cubic meters and are set to do another 1,500 before the end of December. This will give us a grand total of 3,575 cubic meters - 1,375 cubic meters more than any other rotation in history."

As an expeditionary unit, the 455th ECES doesn't have the manning and equipment CE units back home have. To keep up with construction demands, many projects are completed as a joint effort between CE, the 1st

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

Staff Sgt. Michael Warner, a 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron structures journeyman, cuts concrete on one of the many construction sites here Nov. 25. Sergeant Warner is deployed from Barksdale Air Force Base, La.

Expeditionary RED HORSE Group, the Bagram facility engineer team and local contractors.

“This is a partnership - you work together to get the mission done,” said Sergeant Sheehan. “You are so dependent on materials, equipment, local contractors - there is a marriage that happens between you and all those other things. If there is no harmony

then it is hard to get things done.”

Another key element in getting things done is the 455th ECES force protection escorts. These Airmen, deployed from a variety of career fields, have one of the most underappreciated jobs according to Sergeant Sheehan. The force protection escorts monitor airfield construction sites and the local nationals who work there.



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

Staff Sgt. Edward Sells, a 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron “dirt boy,” smooths freshly poured concrete on the flightline here, Nov. 25. Sergeant Sells is deployed from Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.



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

Staff Sgt. Shelton Jamison, 455th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, scoops away excess concrete on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27., here. Sergeant Jamison is deployed from Barksdale Air Force Base, La.

“There are people on this base who want to hurt us and their targets are high value assets like those on the airfield,” said Sergeant Sheehan. “None of the construction work would be going on without the FP escort’s blanket of vigilance.”

Staff Sgt. Laura Duquain, aerospace ground equipment technician deployed from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., helps manage the flight of FP escorts. Sitting at a construction site watching workers may not sound like an exciting job, but she said the Airmen realize how important it is.

“We are helping security forces because they can’t be everywhere,” she said. “We help manage the airfield and keep it safe. We’ve had Airmen confiscate cell phones that weren’t allowed and even detain people who were breaking the rules. So I think it is really important we are there.”

As 455th ECES superintendent, Sergeant Sheehan is impressed by the Airmen’s ability to adapt and get the mission done.

“What I’ve noticed and what brings a lot of pride is no one in the squadron pulls the union card - no one says, ‘I’m just an electrician,’ or ‘I’m just a plumber,’” he said. “We have five utilities guys who have rolled right in with the dirt boys. They go at it with tenacity and willingness that is amazing and have become a valuable asset.

“The squadron understands what the mission is and collectively works to get it done,” he added.

As they complete projects providing more space for aircraft, 455th ECES proves a valuable part of the enduring mission in Afghanistan.

Bagram Airmen use “Dragon” to ready Hawg fire



Staff Sgt. James Jerrell inspects 30mm round as they are processed through a GFU-7 “Dragon” here, Dec. 2. He also makes sure that they are re-inserted into their linked tube carriers correctly with no gaps. Sergeant Jerrell is deployed from Moody Air Force Base, Ga., and hails from Ft. Smith, Ark.



Airman 1st Class Jeb Snow, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron munitions systems apprentice, prepares linked tube carriers for processing in a GFU-7 “Dragon” here Dec. 2. Due to the offset of the GFU-7, empty carriers are needed fill the gap. Airman Snow is from Wasilla, Alaska



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

Above: Airman 1st Class Jeb Snow (right) feeds linked tube carriers into a GFU-7 “Dragon” while Staff Sgt. Erik Thomas repacks the processed carriers, containing 30mm rounds here, Dec. 2. The two, part of the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, ensure the rounds are packed correctly for easy uploading into the A-10 Thunderbolt II. Both are deployed from Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho. Sergeant Thomas is from Bennington, Vt.

Right: Senior Airman Juan Rea, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron munitions system journeyman, operates the controls of a GFU-7 “Dragon” here, Dec. 2. Manual control of the machine allows him to stop it if there is a miss-feed or jam. He is deployed from Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, and hails from Brownsville, Texas.



News Briefs

COLD WEATHER GEAR

Per the USAFCENT Commander: effective 1 Oct 08, the only authorized uniform in the AOR is ABUs (w/exception of Civil Engineering AFSCs - 3E0X1, 3E0X2, 3E1X1 and 3E8X1). However, since the cold weather months are quickly approaching, it is imperative we outfit our Airmen with the proper cold weather gear. Because All Purpose Environmental Clothing System (APECS) demand continues to outpace existing inventory and projected production levels, the DCU Gortex jacket w/liner and the DCU field jacket are authorized for wear with the ABU in the AOR until 1 May 2009. Additionally, those Airmen who process through an Army Power Projection Platform and are issued ACU patterned cold weather gear may wear the uniform items inside the wire, as determined by their commander.

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 Airmen in the rank of E-5 and E-6.

AFSA MEETINGS

Air Force Sergeants Association Expeditary Chapter 1657 holds meetings bi-weekly on Saturdays. The next meeting is Dec. 20 at 1700.

NATO MEDALS:

The NATO Medal typically takes approx. 90 days upon arrival for approval and distribution back to PERSCO. PERSCO has a spreadsheet posted to the SIPR public drive which you can view to see the status of your medal. If you notice any errors, please contact the following POCs: SSgt Amethia Dandy or MSgt Jesse Rouse at 431-2070/4409 or email 445EMSG.PERSCO@afghan.swa.army.mil

EAGLECASH

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. Additionally, the Bagram Finance Office has set-up a full-service EagleCash Card Center at the Friday Bagram Bazaar for your use and convenience. Please sign-up for your EagleCash Card today.

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.

NEWCOMERS INPROCESSING

All Air Force members are required to inprocess with PERSCO. The inprocessing will start your combat pay entitlements. If you have been in the AOR for at least 30 days and you are not receiving combat pay, please stop by Finance located in the tower on

Camp Cunningham. If you know for a fact that you did not inprocess with PERSCO, then please visit PERSCO located in the Pax terminal. Call PERSCO 431-2070 with any questions.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Are your immunizations up to date? Active duty members are required to stay current on all immunizations during their deployment. Report to your nearest medical treatment facility to check your status and get vaccinated. For questions, contact TF Med Public Health.

COMBAT PUSH

Combat Push times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Camp Cunningham Rec Tent from 0900L/0430Z to 1000L/0530Z. Effective 22 Dec 08 through 6 Feb 09 Combat Push hours will be extended one hour to reflect the following days/times: Monday, Wednesdays and Friday from 0900-1100 and 2230-0030 hrs. 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 info call 431-4409.

REINTEGRATION WORKSHOP

The chapel is hosting a Reunion and Integration workshop Dec. 20 from 0900-1000 and Dec. 21 from 2100-2000 in the Camp Cunningham Town Hall. This workshop will introduce the skills needed to make a happy and successful reunion. For more info or to RSVP e-mail Chap. (Capt.) Brian Nierman at brian.j.nierman@afghan.swa.army.mil.