
Bagram News Express



Fighting Terror, Building Peace

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Afghan media learn about close air support

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455th Air Expeditionary Wing

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — The 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, together with the Bagram Media Operations Center, hosted its first Afghan media day Jan. 5.

Fourteen journalists and cameramen from various Afghan news agencies received an up-close look at close air support in Afghanistan, complete with tours of the F-15E Strike Eagle and the A-10 Thunderbolt II and a briefing



Photos by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse

Brig. Gen. Mike Holmes, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, takes a question from an Afghan reporter during Afghan Media Day here Jan. 5. Following the general's briefing on close air support, many reporters asked about the Air Force's effort to minimize civilian casualties.



Capt. "Curly," a weapons systems officer, explains some of the features of the F-15E Strike Eagle to a group of Afghan reporters during Afghan Media Day here Jan. 5.

from Brig. Gen. Mike Holmes, 455th AEW commander.

According to General Holmes, the conflict in Afghanistan is just as much an information war as it is a kinetic one. Department of Defense Public Affairs strives to provide timely and accurate information; however succeeding at the information war becomes a challenge when competing with an enemy who is not concerned with facts. Since the insurgents are good at getting their story out, in order for balanced media coverage it becomes essential for U.S. and coalition forces to engage the local media.

"To our knowledge, the Afghan

media had not been engaged like this before," said Army Capt. Jennifer Martin, from the Bagram Media Operations Center. "It's really important we engage the Afghan media because we're in their country. They need to understand what we are doing, how we are doing it, where we are doing it and how it affects them."

The BMOOC hosted multiple Afghan media days in the past year, however this was the first time the event focused on air power. The day's events were intended to provide the media representatives with a better

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Wing recognizes promotees, award winners

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, 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 Jan. 1.

The January promotees were:

To Airman 1st Class: Daniel Camacho.

To Senior Airman: Scott Buecker, Casey Carroll, Patrick Cross, Samantha Daniels, Dustin Hartje, Cory Muncy, Bryan Popke, Rhianna Rahsheed, Devin Taylor, Robert Webber, Matthew Wierzba and Erman Wray.

To Staff Sergeant: David Cook, Joel Duprey, James Epley, Paul Humphries, Brandon McCurley, Cody Murray, Daniel Norkus, Frances Pineda, Shawn Rohde, Jerry Simpson, Jeffery Swafford, Travis Swanson and John Wernke.

To Technical Sergeant: Charles Crawford, Roberto Gonzalez, Jeffery Lapanne and Brian Ororke.

To Master Sergeant: Alexander Bryant, Richard Ellison, Anthony Mathews, Christopher Prommier, Donna Rybicky and Paul Sassenberg.

To Senior Master Sergeant: William Cash and Donald Hawk.

To Captain: Jodi Danter and Thomas Naughton.

To Lieutenant Colonel: Jon Julian.

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, Company Grade Officer and civilian categories for December. The winners in their respective category were:

Outstanding Contributor: Petty Officer 1st Class Dariuz Dzuira, 455th Expeditionary Operations Group.

Airman of the Month: Senior Airman James Dobrynski, 755th Air Expeditionary Group.

NCO of the Month: Staff Sgt. Anthony Robbins, 455th EOG.

Senior NCO of the Month: Master Sgt. Jeremy Unterseher, 755th AEG.

CGO of the Month: 2nd Lt. John Legloahec, 755th AEG.

Civilian of the Month: Mr. Keith Harris, 455th EOG.

Finally, the wing recognized its "Start Right, Finish Strong" honorees. This category recognizes Airmen who have best exemplified the wing's motto. The honorees were:

— Senior Airman Shamika McNair, 455th Expeditionary Medical Group

— Tech. Sgt. Timothy Beachy, 755th AEG

— Master Sgt. Carla West, 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group

— Capt. Amanda Hutchinson, 455th EOG

— Maj. Brian McCullagh, 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group

Post Deployment Health Assessment

Redeploying individuals must complete a DD Form 2796, Post Deployment Health Assessment. The DD Form 2796 must be completed electronically or via a web-enabled format.

Each individual who requires a DD Form 2796 must be complete for a face-to-face health assessment (screening) with a trained health care provider during in-theater medical out-processing.

The purpose of this screening is to review each service member's current health, mental health or psychosocial issues commonly associated with deployments, special medications taken during the deployment, possible deployment-related occupational/environmental exposures, and to discuss deployment-related health concerns.

For more information about the DD Form 2796 check out the

following

www.PDHealth.mil or
www.pdhealth.mil/dcs/post_deploy.asp

To review a sample of the DD Form 2796 go to: <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2796.pdf>

For more information contact TF Medical Public Health at 431-4426

links:

www.PDHealth.mil or
www.pdhealth.mil/dcs/post_deploy.asp

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understanding of how the 455th AEW executes its close air support mission.

“A lot of coverage is slanted in a negative nature against us,” said Army 1st Lt. Meagan Newsom of the BMOC. “It’s not that they are trying to make us look bad but how can they report fairly on something they don’t fully understand?”

As the media representatives had a chance to see the jets up close and ask questions, they gained a better understanding of CAS execution.

“There are many civilian casualty concerns, but I have learned how the Air Force tries to avoid it and how much they make the aircraft effective in fighting the insurgents,” said Sharif Khoram, an Afghan reporter with Agence Free Press News Agency. “It was all explained to me.”

With plans for additional Afghan media days and more engagement with local news agencies, the 455th AEW and BMOC hope to build trust among the Afghan population through media coverage on the U.S. and coalition missions.

“We want (the media) to know so they can go out and tell the Afghan people what the Air Force is here to do,” said Lieutenant Newsom. “It’s very important to tell the coalition story through the Afghan eyes -



Lt. Col. Derek Oaks, an A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot, is interviewed by a reporter from the Kabul division of BBC here Jan. 5. As part of Afghan Media Day, local reporters had a chance to see fighter aircraft up close, interview air crew and learn about the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing's close air support mission.

they tell it best.”

Before ending media day, General Holmes thanked the group for their time and interest in the Air Force.

“As a wing, we are proud and happy to host a media day,” the general said. “The media helps us do our job by keeping us in check and reporting on what we do. It’s important the people of Afghanistan understand how we operate, how we are here to help - and the media plays a key role in accomplishing that.”



Photos by Staff Sgt. Samuel Morse



Above: A report from Noorin TV, an Afghan television station, asks a weapons systems officer a question about the F-15E Strike Eagle capabilities during Afghan Media Day here Jan. 5.

Left: Capt. Tom Wenz, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing public affairs officer, briefs Afghan media on close air support while an F-15E Strike Eagle is disarmed in the background.

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.

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 445EMSGPERSCO@afghanswaarmy.mil

GOING TDY?

All Air Force members are required to in and out-process through PERSCO for TDYs, Emergency Leave or R&R Leave/Pass. The PAX terminal will not

manifest you until they have documentation stamped from PERSCO. All personnel assigned to the 455th are required to complete the AOR Travel Authorization Memo for any type of TDY. Please direct questions to PERSCO, 431-4409/2070.

COMBAT PUSH

Effective 22 Dec 08, Combat Push has extended their hours to accommodate the surge. New times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the Camp Cunningham Rec Tent from 0900L-1100L and from 2230L-0030L. Services and PERSCO will be available to sign outprocessing checklists. Personnel must complete their out-processing checklist entirely, complete their Post Deployment Health Questionnaire online and pick up their medical records at Flight Medicine/Public Health before coming to Combat Push. For more information contact PERSCO, 431-2070/4409.

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 arrival. Accountability is tracked and will be forwarded to the 1st Sergeants.

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 visit PERSCO located in the Pax terminal. Call PERSCO 431-2070/4409 with any questions.

A.C.E. MEETINGS

Airmen Committed To Excellence meets Fridays at 1700L/1230Z in front of Town Hall. Meetings are open to all Airmen 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 Expeditionary Chapter 1657 holds meetings bi-weekly on Saturdays. The next meeting is Jan. 17 at 1700.

EAGLECASH

All deployed personnel (military, civilian and contractors) utilizing Air Force finance office services within the USCENCOMAOR 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. Sign-up for your EagleCash Card today.

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.