



# BAGRAM NEWS EXPRESS

*Start Right, Finish Strong*

Vol. 2 Issue 11, May 10, 2009

## Bagram adds four squadrons for Airmen on front lines



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Jason Lake

Col. James Reed, 755th Air Expeditionary Group commander, explains the role of four new squadrons, the 655th, 755th, 855th and 955th Air Expeditionary Squadrons, to new commanders during an assumption of command ceremony at Bagram Air Field, May 5.

**By Staff Sgt. Jason Lake**  
*455th Air Expeditionary Wing*

The 455th Air Expeditionary Wing added four new squadrons to its growing list of units during an assumption of command ceremony here May 5.

More than 1,200 Joint Expeditionary Tasking and Provincial Reconstruction Team Airmen deployed

to more than 40 forward operating bases and camps throughout Afghanistan will now be assigned to 655th, 755th, 855th or 955th Air Expeditionary Squadrons under the 755th Air Expeditionary Group.

“As our mission roles have increased, it became obvious we needed to reorganize the 755th AEG,” explained Col. James Reed, 755th

AEG commander, before unfurling the new unit guidons. “These squadrons will be instrumental in taking care of our Airmen working side by side with the Army, coalition forces and the Afghan people fighting terrorism in Afghanistan.”

Colonel Reed said the leadership, management and expertise of the new squadron commanders and

staff will provide greater accountability, administrative control and support for Airmen.

The four squadrons coincide with International Security Assistance Force’s regions of responsibility and provide support for Airmen in more than 130 different Air Force specialty codes.

**See ASSUME, next page**

# ASSUME

Continued from Page 1

· Lt. Col. John Neal, assumed command of the 655th AES located at Forward Operating Base Sharana and will oversee more than 200 JET and Individual Augmentee Airmen at more over 20 locations within Regional Command East.

· Lt. Col. Daren Sears assumed command of the 755th AES located at Kandahar Air Field. He will command approximately 300 JET and IA Airmen in Regional Commands South and West.

· Lt. Col. Bob Fournier assumed command of the 855th AES located at Camp Phoenix where he will lead more than 525 JET and IA Airmen in the Regional Command Capital area in and around Kabul.

· Maj. Rosalind Abdulhalik temporarily assumes command of the 955th AES that is charged with leading more than 600 JET and IA Airmen in Regional Command North to include Bagram Air Field. Lt. Col. William Wade, who is wrapping up an assignment at the Pentagon, is slated to take command of the unit this summer. Major Abdulhalik will then become the unit's operations officer.

"I'm honored to have this opportunity," Colonel Neal said shortly after the ceremony. "I didn't think I would get another opportunity to command a



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Jason Lake

**Colonel Reed addresses dozens of Bagram's leaders during the assumption of command ceremony. Four new units, the 655th, 755th, 855th and 955th Air Expeditionary Squadrons, were stood up to provide support and oversight of more than 1,200 Airmen serving in more than 40 forward operating bases and camps throughout Afghanistan.**

unit in a combat zone."

Major Abdulhalik said her first priority is to ensure Airmen under her command will have everything they need to complete the mission.

"This job is about taking care of the Airmen out there and making sure they are equipped and well-trained to carry out the mission," she said.

Lt.Col.ErnestDrake,755th

AEG deputy commander, said the squadrons will ensure better oversight as the group increases by 25 percent from approximately 1,200 to 1,600 Airmen in the coming months.

"[These Airmen] are instrumental in supporting ISAF operations across Afghanistan to strengthen security, enhance governance and increase development of a healthy infrastructure

here," he said.

Since 2003, Airmen assigned to provincial reconstruction teams have provided funding, engineering expertise and security for construction projects aimed at improving infrastructure of surrounding communities. The Air Force manages six of 26 U.S. and coalition PRT outposts located throughout the country.



Air Force/Senior Airman Erik Cardenas

**ABOVE:** Colonel Reed unfurls the 955th Air Expeditionary Squadron guidon flag held by Chief Master Sgt. Rodney Reyes, 955th AES superintendent.

**RIGHT:** Until about a century ago, guidons and colors were taken into battle as the distinguishing symbols and rallying points for fighting units. The word derives from the Italian guidone meaning 'guide' or 'marker'.



Air Force/Senior Airman Erik Cardenas

"They are producing great results as new schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and water well projects are completed," Colonel Drake explained.

Air Force embedded training teams mentor government civilians, Afghan National Army and National Police, as well as, medical and legal teams working throughout the country.

Airmen assigned as IAs within multinational, joint service and sister service branch organizations lend their career field skill sets to accomplish specific missions.

"Our Airmen are 'all in' to help Afghans provide good governance, promote justice and take on increased responsibility in the planning and execution of security and stability operations across the country."

The assumption of command ceremony was the third of its kind held here this year. In January, Lt. Col. Frank Flores assumed command of the first expeditionary aerial port squadron in theater.

The 455th EAPS was stood up to focus on the increasing airlift demands

here as a result of a new strategy outlined by President Barack Obama and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to dramatically increase American military forces in Afghanistan.

In March, U.S. Air Forces Central also stood up the 504th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Group here to provide command and control over more than 125 air liaison officers, tactical air controllers and combat weather Airmen supporting missions throughout the country.

# NEWS BRIEFS

**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: Staff Sgts. Melinda Rowe, Lauren Taylor or Master Sgt. Carey Lambert at 431-2070/4409 or email 445EMSG.PERSCO@afghan.swa.army.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 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. Accountability is tracked and will be forwarded to the first sergeants.

**COMBAT PUSH:** Combat Push hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday at Bldg. 700 from 0900L-1000L and from 2230L-2330L. 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 call PERSCO at 431-4409.



Air Force/Senior Airman Erik Cardenas

## **Dedication for a fallen warrior**

Members of the 1st Special Operations Maintenance Squadron, lower the flag at a building dedication ceremony for Staff Sgt. Casey Crate at Bagram May 1. Sergeant Crate was killed in a aircraft crash May 30, 2005, in central Iraq. The flag was folded and presented to Lt. Col. Brett Nelson, 23rd Special Tactics Squadron commander and will be flown back to the United States and presented to Sergeant Crate's mother.

set-up a full-service EagleCash Card Center at the Friday Bagram Bazaar for your use. Sign-up for your EagleCash Card today.

## **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, visit Finance in the crow's nest tower on Camp Cunningham. If you know for a fact that you did not inprocess with PERSCO, please visit PERSCO located in Bldg. 700 near the passenger terminal. Call 431-2070/4409 for more information.

## **MEOCONTACTINFO:**

The Camp Cunningham Military Equal Opportunity Office at Bldg. 726 can be reached by calling 481-6226 or call the Air Force Discrimination/Sexual Harrassment Hotline at 1-866-229-7074.

**EAGLE CASH:** 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. Sign-up for your EagleCash Card today.