

# AERIAL PORTERS: BIG 'DAWGS' IN THE YARD



**455 EAPS**

**2011 VERNE ORR AWARD**  
**2011 NDTA AWARD**



**BEST OF THE BEST**

A wooden sign with a cartoon bulldog wearing sunglasses and a red collar with a white star. The sign is decorated with blue stars and text. The text on the sign includes '455 EAPS', '2011 VERNE ORR AWARD', '2011 NDTA AWARD', and 'BEST OF THE BEST'. The sign is leaning against a wooden structure.



## Aerial Porters: Big 'Dawgs' in the Yard

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Equipment, personnel, or life-saving supplies; if the military needs it, the "port dawgs" of the 455<sup>th</sup> Expeditionary Aerial Port Squadron move it. They coordinate the delivery of assets from the U.S. to Bagram, and from Bagram to the forward operating bases (FOBs).

Bagram is one of the busiest active taxiways in the world. The aerial port squadron supports this tempo by staying operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They handle an average of more than 100 missions per day.

"The airfield is why we are here," said Senior Master Sgt. Richard Bloxham, 455 EAPS Air Terminal Operations Center (ATOC) superintendent.

"Whether it be the A-10 supporting the troops in combat or us getting the bombs, bullets, food, and water to those who are at the FOB. If they don't sleep then we don't sleep. That's how it works."

ATOC has operational control of the aerial port. Its personnel are responsible for monitoring the schedules of all aircraft coming in and going out. They monitor the loads that go on and off the planes and oversee the passenger terminal mission. The ATOC is also responsible for finding the most

efficient way to move cargo and personnel swiftly and efficiently. One player in this goal is the load planning position.

Senior Airman Ricardo Reano, 455<sup>th</sup> EAPS ATOC load planner, said their job centers around two words: maximum utilization.

"We make it fit," said Reano. "For every inch of space, we try to put cargo, pallets, or passengers."

The load planners utilize as much space as possible in an aircraft in order to limit the number of flights to accomplish a mission, reducing overall expenses.

Reano said the load planner's calculated decisions on what cargo or passengers go in which plane dictate what the other sections of the unit do with the aircraft.

Once the ATOC has released seats and assigned aircraft to cargo, the Ramp Services section

begins their mission.

"Anything that gets on an aircraft, we put it there," said Senior Airman James Govro, 455 EAPS ramp specialist.

The Ramp Services team is responsible for uploading and downloading cargo from all aircraft that passes through Bagram's aerial port. They move more than one million pounds of cargo on an average day. This includes both joint service and international loads.

"It's a very high-paced job," said Govro. "Bagram has very short ground time for aircraft. So we have to move at high speed to get the aircraft downloaded and uploaded so they can get out of here and another aircraft can come down."



With such a swift flow of operations, the port dawgs on the ramp adopted a philosophy that allows them to maintain the high tempo, keep 100% accountability of all cargo coming in and going out, and ensure the safety of all yard personnel yard...

“Slow is fast,” said Master Sgt. Patrick Overly, 455 EAPS Ramp Services superintendent. “We have an excellent safety guideline that we follow and uphold. We want everyone to go back home safely. We take it upon ourselves that everyone meets mission capability, but in a safe manner.”

Concern for service members’ safety extends beyond the cargo yard for the port dawgs.

Overly said everyone in the unit is constantly aware that moving cargo is a vital effort in supporting the war in Afghanistan.

“When it comes to ammunition, food, water, and medical supplies,

someone’s life may depend on whether or not we can get it out the door in time,” said Overly.



Some items shipped to and from the FOBs in Afghanistan require specific processes, which is where the Special Handling team comes in.

“Special Handling takes care of the hazardous cargo, blood shipments, ammo and explosives, rolling stock, and vehicles,” said Master Sgt. William Hamm, 455 EAPS Special Handling superintendent. “There are

places that require those items right away. The people in the aerial port know that, and key into it.”

Tech. Sgt. Bradley Williams, 455 EAPS Ammo Movement noncommissioned officer, said that moving ammunition to the war fighter is one of the most important missions of the port dawgs.

“The last thing we want is for the guy at the front to be out of ammunition and not be able to complete his missions out in the valley or mountains,” said Williams.

Special Handling also has a major responsibility in supporting unit line movements. They recently supported a Relief in Place/ Transfer of Authority for the Army’s 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne division, the largest RIP/TOA in Operation Enduring Freedom history.

During the movement, the aerial port processed more than 4,000 tons of cargo and 17,000 passengers.

**Whether moving into the fight or returning from it, most personnel in Afghanistan must pass through Bagram's Passenger Service Center.**

**"The mission is to move people," said Tech. Sgt. Jeff Quenga, 455 EAPS Passenger Terminal shift supervisor. "We move war fighters to where they are needed. We move them safely, and as soon as possible."**

**The passenger terminal moves an average of 1,700 passengers a day. During a RIP/TOA, the terminal may support up to 2,500 passengers per day.**

**Quenga said the mindset at the passenger terminal is they know their role in the aerial port mission and are**

**dedicated to getting the job done.**

**Passenger representative duties vary from front counter, passenger manifest, baggage transfer, passenger transportation, and personnel loading to aircraft.**

**Senior Airman Erika Sidari, 455 EAPS Passenger Terminal representative said her goal is to get people where they need to go as smoothly and stress-free as possible. She said whether they are going to a different FOB or returning home, they try to make the traveling experience as pleasant as possible.**



**"It makes me feel good when you have troops who are waiting to go to the aircraft, knowing they are going home," said Sidari. "Their faces light up and you feel good as you get them to their families as quickly as possible."**

**The joy of directly supporting the needs of the war and its troops is motivation for a lot of the port dawgs on Bagram.**

**Williams said the aerial port is a major player in ensuring that every unit and every service member has what they need to complete their individual missions.**

**"Almost all of these assets come through Bagram," said Williams. "And it's a good feeling." —**

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## **RECORDS**

	<b>DAILY</b>	<b>MONTHLY</b>	<b>YEARLY</b>
MISSIONS	<b>164</b>	<b>3,686</b>	<b>39,749</b>
PASSENGERS	<b>3,023</b>	<b>59,327</b>	<b>537,950</b>
CARGO TONS	<b>1,590</b>	<b>25,846</b>	<b>235,037</b>
MAIL TONS	<b>51</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>5,335</b>
AIRDROP BUNDLES	<b>244</b>	<b>2,590</b>	<b>25,676</b>

AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER DAY

<b>TRAVIS AFB</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>DOVER AFB</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>CHARLESTON AFB</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>BAGRAM AIRFIELD</b>	<b>1,475</b>

AVERAGE SHORT TONS PER DAY

<b>116</b>
<b>459</b>
<b>92</b>
<b>600</b>

...sustaining the fight,  
**we** are the ones that got to  
**do it. We** have to  
**get the job done.**

-Senior Airman James Govro