

June 2011

Kherwar Pass

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Bagram Air Base, OEF XI

Alpha Company Task Force Phoenix



Guardians of Freedom

...AN AVALANCHE PRODUCTION

Commander & First Sergeant Corner

Bagram Airbase

Another month comes to a close and we are all on the edge of our seats with anticipation to see our family and familiar places again. As we enter the home stretch, less than 90 days from redeployment, the temperature here seems to be topped out around 95 degrees with a constant breeze (gusting to 45 knots). The OP-TEMPO keeps everyone very busy and with only the occasional opportunity to relax. June brought us a Task Force Organizational Day, complete with an iced dunk tank, karaoke, horseshoe competition, and BBQ eats. Everyone enjoyed the break and the ArchAngels admirably represented during the horseshoe competition.

The ArchAngels had another windfall month flying more than 775 hours in June. The experience that comes with this impossible hour level is evident in the progression of our "junior" aviators to the position of Pilot in Command. I say junior due to the relatively short time they have out of flight school, however I would put these terrific 'junior' aviators up against the highest time pilots in garrison. They continue to impress each and everyday and as they meet the challenges and demands of the mission, they will forge the future of the ArchAngels as Instructor Pilots, Maintenance Test Pilots, Safety Officers and Tactical Operations Officers in the ongoing war against terror.

June also brought the ArchAngel Family Readiness Group new faces of leadership. Reluctantly the ArchAngels must allow the Gonzalez Family to pursue new adventures, with their impending departure Mrs. Kimberly Gonzalez will pass the baton to Mrs. Shawnda Erb. Though new to FRG Leader responsibilities, Mrs. Erb has already proven she is equal to the task, completing all of the training required, suggested or available. Mrs. Kimberly Gonzalez has successfully carried the burden of being the ArchAngel FRG Leader for many arduous months while the majority of the families are displaced from Fort Drum during the deployment. She is a tremendous asset and has made the FRG a success, we cannot thank her enough. Additionally, Mrs. Michelle Kennedy is taking the reins of FRG Treasurer from Mrs. Iris Mitchell. Mrs. Mitchell has taken care of the FRG funds (informal and otherwise) with alacrity and dedication. Ladies please accept our heartfelt thanks for your sacrifice to make our unit FRG one of the best in the brigade.

Congratulations are due to Mrs. Heather Blile, her husband SPC Troy Blile and their new bundle of joy, Conner. Also to our new promotions, CPT Kyle Wilhelm, CPT Kyle Eberly and CW2 Clint Young. Life doesn't stop when we deploy, it just requires creativity to stay in touch and make sure to share those moments with our loved ones. As always, take care of each other and in a few short weeks we will be home to help share in those experiences together.

Sincerely,

CPT O'Dell

& 1SG Serrano

ArchAngel Newsletter

Editor: CPT Charity O'Dell

Publisher: the hardworking folks of A/3-10 GSAB

Photos provided by the pilots, crew and operators of the ArchAngels

Contact the editor to submit pictures, make corrections, or receive a digital copy of the monthly newsletter charity.s.odell@afghan.swa.army.mil

Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG) Website

1. Go to www.armyfrg.org
2. Top of the page (click on Find an FRG)
3. Bottom of the page (click on NEW YORK)
4. Scroll down and select ([3-10th GSAB / Task Force Phoenix \(New York, UIC: WHNRT0\)](#))
5. Fill out your information, (your sponsor is your Soldier)
6. If you have any questions please contact the Task Force 3-10 FRSA, Ms. Lisa Kadaraitis at 315-774-1274 or email lisa.dadaraitis@conus.army.mil
7. Complete the registration and wait for an email reply from the Sponsor

Facebook Us

1. Log onto www.facebook.com
2. Search (3-10 Task Force Phoenix)
3. Request to join the group

Flickr Us

1. Log onto www.flickr.com
2. Search people "Amanda Jo Brown" or type in http://www.flickr.com/photos/tf_phoenixrising/

NEWSLETTERS

1. Log onto <http://tfphoenixrising.volasite.com/newsletter.php>
2. Scroll down to the Archangels Newsletters and select a month





Above: The ArchAngels ride the magic scooby bus home from work with 1SG Serrano at the helm, the independent transportation does wonders for morale; Top Right: SPC James Posey briefs SPC Melina Gibson and SGT Michael Sewell on the latest Falcon Sends Message covering safety topics and command guidance; Right: CW2 Nate Halpin rides along as a passenger to FOB Shank to recover one of the company aircraft where it was under going phase maintenance; Lower Right: LTC McKernan socializes with the ArchAngels (pictured: CW3 Jesse Edwards, CW3 Jake Mondragon, CW2 Peter Erb, CW2 Keith Mitchell, CW2 Jeff Kennedy, CW2 Andrew Whitten, CW2 Greg Heckathorn, CPT Kyle Eberly) prior to sitting for the dunk tank at TF Phoenix Organizational Day; Left: CW2 Adam Busch puts ear plugs in and preps the aircraft for flight, Lower Left: thistle grow in the rocks at Goode HLZ in southern regional command east; Center: SPC Troy Blile receives an AAM for May 2011 Crew Chief of the Month.

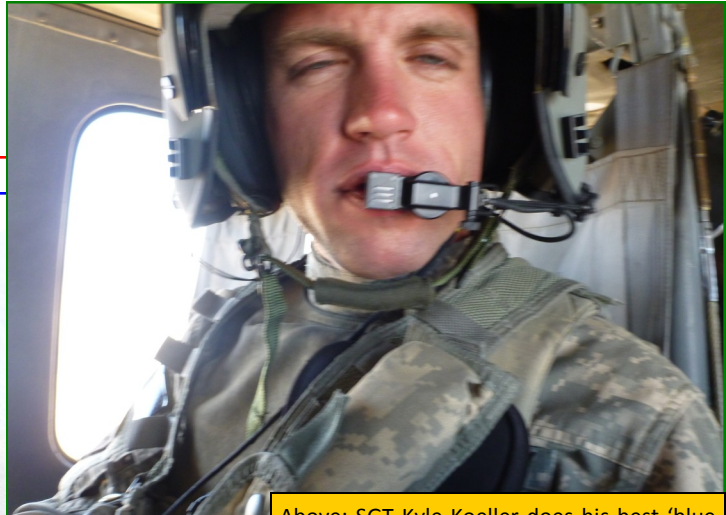


CREW CHIEF OF THE MONTH



SPC Matthew Last

SPC Matthew Last was selected as the Alpha Company Crew Chief of the Month for June! SPC Matthew Last goes the extra mile with a positive impact on any mission or task he undertakes. Even as we enter the 10th month of OEF XI, SPC Last brings his crew chief talent and detail oriented outlook to the team each and everyday, by remembering to arm/safe the aircraft survivability equipment on every take-off and landing, using the task specific manual for maintenance, always lending a hand with 40 hour inspections and excelling at his daily Soldier tasks. His SPC Matthew Last received the Army Achievement Medal in recognition of his efforts by 1SG Albert Serrano.



Above: SGT Kyle Koeller does his best 'blue steeler' impression for the camera.

Above: CW3 Nels Bergmark points out landmarks to his crew on a Pegasus 7 mission



Above: 'Look ma, no hands' CW3 Mike Fusilier goofs off for the camera; Left: SPC Troy Blile asserts his loyalty; Right: CPT Kyle Wilhelm serves Friday Night Seafood to the Troops; Lower Left: SFC John Tengel and SPC Patrick Rayburn plot significant reports on the map; Lower Right: SPC Ricardo Caletz shows of the spoils of war in the form of white chocolate Toblerone.





By SGT Brian VanSant



BAF Dust Bowl OEF XI

From the 25th of June through the 27th, Bagram Airfield experienced a rare dust storm that grounded most rotary wing flights for 48 hours. Although dust storms are common throughout Iraq, dust storms are not that common here at Bagram. Wind, however is very much a factor for this time of year and will continue to be so up until late August...hence the season called "the 120 days of wind." Catching everybody off guard and rolling in faster than anticipated, Dust Bowl OEF XI gave ArchAngel Aircrews a 3 day breather which allowed them to catch up on maintenance due on the aircraft. Unfortunately more than half of the company was stranded at Kabul International Airport (only 20 miles to the south of Bagram) for those 3 days. It was not a very comfortable stay for those crews, but they return with plenty of war stories about the experience.

On the 19th of June there was a Task Force Phoenix "Organized Fun Day." Featuring games, food and festivities in the Delta Company Maintenance clamshell. Missions were still accomplished as scheduled, but to mark the "beginning of the end" of our deployment, maintenance personnel and flight crews enjoyed some fun and leisure with the rest of the Battalion.

Congratulations to Alpha Company's SGT Matthew Jennings, SPC Troy Blile and CPT Chris Saager. This month marks the one year anniversary where our dedication to our Warrior Ethos of 'Never Leaving a Fallen Comrade Behind' was demonstrated to all with true grit by these three outstanding ArchAngels. The AH-64 that crash landed on the side of a 12,200 foot mountain in near vertical terrain at Fort Carson High Altitude Training Flight Area was a costly accident totaling 1.2 million dollars, however the survival of the crew was worth every dime. While the sun was setting over the Rockies, these three Soldiers made multiple trips climbing up and down wooded and vertical terrain to the crash site for more than 6 hours to attend to the injured pilots, quite literally giving him the shirt off their backs to stave off hypothermia. Their dedication and self sacrifice to ensure the safety of one of their own was commemorated this month with the award of Army Commendation Medals.





Above: CW2 Andy Whitten and CW2 Jeff Kennedy watch as CW3 Jesse Edwards tried his hand at horse-shoes during the TF ORG Day.

Below: CW2 Clint Young and CW2 Andy Whitten take in some cool air before heading back out to the flightline



Below: SPC Chris Abrom, CW3 John Botto, SPC Ryan Baird, and SPC Matt Last try to cool off in the heat of Jalalabad, or JAFrica as the crew of Pegasus 8 calls it.



Right: CW2 Peter Erb rides along to Shank to pilot a phase aircraft back to BAF; CW2 Greg Heckathorn, PV2 Justin Rupe, and CW2 Keith Mitchell catch a ride home on the task force bus; Below: SPC Kevin Brunner, SPC Troy Biile, and SGT Brian VanSant are presented Good Conduct Medals by 1SG Albert Serrano.



Left: SPC Andrew Gonzalez stares in disbelief as SGT Kyle Koeller strikes another goofy pose for the camera, anything to keep the morale high as the Pegasus 6 crew stages at Mazari Sharif.





Greetings from 1st Platoon!

The month of June was a fast paced month for alpha company. Our crews continued to execute mission day after day in spite of hot weather and extreme wind. The company experienced a couple days of rest when a sudden sandstorm blanketed most of RC-East and air travel a non possibility for about two days. We had a couple crews get stuck out in Kabul (luxury living accommodations according to them) and for those two days the farthest you could see was about 10 feet in front of you.

The task force also had a almost home party/organization day and let me tell you I have never seen more enthusiastic and supportive warrant officers than at the organization day. I might dare say they were the life of the party.

June also brought the promotion of our newest warrant officer W01 Clint Young who is now CW2 Clint Young.

The thought of redeployment lingers in the back of everyone's mind and I can assure you that every crew member is deeply concerned with executing the remaining missions here safely and successfully and returning home to family and friends.

Thank you for your continued support!

*CPT Kyle Eberly
Archangel 16*

Family, Friends

& Furrries

Rock Wall at Parwan Governor's Palace



Clockwise (top-left): Mrs. Michelle and Collin Kennedy chill out together; Gavin and Karah Gonzalez send warm wishes to the ArchAngels and participate in the "Operation give a hug" with the ArchAngel FRG; Conner Blille perfects the happy bounce; Collin Kennedy is sporting a very cute jumper (Note the super-cute helicopter); Miss Madeline is already an accomplished rider (CPT O'Dell niece); SPC Troy Blille says his goodbyes to Conner before returning to the unit in Bagram.



June has come and gone in a hurry as the Archangels successfully complete an extraordinary amount of missions. Yet another chapter in our deployment has come to an end and leaves us all with one simple, yet very welcomed question; “where did the time go?” The sometimes painful abundance of work and mission sets has the added bonus of allowing the time to go by pretty quick. With any luck the remaining months in Afghanistan will pass just as quickly and we’ll be home with our families and loved ones in no time at all!

The passing of this month brought with it several noteworthy accomplishments within the Second Platoon Archangel ranks. CW2 Andrew Whitten passed his Pilot in Command (PC) ride this month and now holds the enviable title of PC. Additionally, the former WO1 Clint Young was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) Clint Young! Both of these accomplishments mark a significant achievement in the lives and careers of these two outstanding pilots; and their contributions to Alpha Company are irreplaceable. Additionally, I have had the tremendous honor of being promoted to the rank of Captain. These accomplishments and more continually serve as a constant reminder of how great it is to be a part of this unit. I, for one, could not imagine it possible to serve with a better, more professional, group of Soldiers and am extremely proud to be an Archangel.

Signing off for this month,

CPT Kyle Wilhelm

PROMOTIONS

Ckahar Dar Mountains



June 2011 brought us the recognition of potential for increased responsibility in the form of three promotions. CW2 Clint Young was promoted on June 27, 2011 by CW3 Jesse Edwards. Of course as the senior warrants proudly stood testament to CW2 Youngs' promotion there was plenty of wise cracks and frivolity throughout the group. Congratulations to Mr. Young and his family...we are truly blessed to have such dedicated people to continue the ArchAngel tradition.

Officially promotable on July 1, 2011, both ArchAngel platoon leaders eagerly pinned Captain by the Task Force Commander, LTC Dennis McKernan. With warm words of encouragement and positive influence, both CPT Kyle Wilhelm and CPT Kyle Eberly are ready and willing to accept the challenges presented with the increased rank...Congratulations guys!



Parting Shot

9,000 HLZ vic Spera (yeah that's high)



Above: The old Bagram ATC Tower silhouetted by a glowing sunset