

August 2011

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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

August was a month of reflection. We reflect upon our losses and our gains, the good times and the times of great trial. Our hearts and prayers go out to the families, friends and love-ones of Extortion 17, the call sign of the CH-47 that was shot down on August 6, 2011 belonging to the Kansas Reserve unit attached to Task Force Phoenix. It was the single largest loss in Army Aviation History and it brings home the very real fact that each time we fly we are entrusted not only with the lives of our fellow crewmembers, but with the safety of our passengers. Following this tragedy, we have done what any great aviation unit does, we have insulated our stricken friends, we have mourned our losses, and we have picked up the pieces and driven forward...onward and upward. As we approach the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001, we are also reminded of the great sacrifices the American people both military and citizen have made in the name of Operation Enduring Freedom. This is a time not for sorrow, but of remembrance and solidarity. **United We Stand!**



August was also a month of big visitors. Major General Terry, the 10th Mountain Commander stationed at Kandahar in RC South, visited the troops here at Bagram Air Base. He and CSM Greca were all smiles and jokes with the Soldiers, handing out several Division Coins of Excellence (they joked that if you ever started to "suck" give it back) and speaking candidly with the unit about making the long haul with safety in the forefront of their minds. The ArchAngels had the opportunity to fly the Afghan President Hamid Karzai on an unexpected VIP mission around Kabul. Brigadier General Volesky, made an appearance for the reenlistment of his designated crew chief, Sergeant Ricardo Caletz. And most important of all, the 82nd All American Medevac arrived to relieve 3-10th Dustoff Medevac, which means our own relief in place is not far behind.

August saw many successes, I proudly announce that our own SGT Michael Sewell, through his efforts both professionally and educationally, was given the nod by our senior enlisted corps to move to the next rank of Staff Sergeant! SPC Sabrina Posey, wife of SPC James Posey, earned one of the highest scores during this month's Promotion Board and was given the promotable status for Sergeant. As we lean forward for the final push of setting our replacements up for success, we are all so very eager to see our family and friends again. We each have someone or something special that drives us to be a better person each day. For that and for the many things you do while we are away, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Sincerely,

**CPT O'Dell
& ISG Serrano**

ArchAngel Newsletter

Editor: CPT Charity O'Dell

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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

Contact Us!



1. Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG) Website

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

2. Facebook

- Log onto www.facebook.com
- Search ('ArchAngels A/3-10') for the company page or ('3-10 Task Force Phoenix')
- Request to join the group

3. Flickr

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

4. Newsletters

- Log onto <http://tfphoenixrising.yolasite.com/newsletter.php>
- Scroll down to the ArchAngels Newsletter and select a month

ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE



Left: SGT Andrew Gonzalez of the P6 crew greets a VIP at FOB Fenty; Right: Sunset over the Bagram Bowl with M240H in foreground; Lower Right: Arch-Angels manage a very tidy cockpit; Below: Unexpected CDS drop by the Air Force; Lower Left: SGT Michael Sewell enthusiastically saddles up for another mission.



CDS Drop

Cargo Plane



Left: SPC Last, CW2 Busch and CW2 Greg Heckathorn perch in the shade of the aircraft while shutdown at Goode PZ; CW3 Mike Fusilier chills out in portable comfort during a shutdown at Methlam; SPC James Posey paints blades; post-flight shenanigans with CW2 Josh Reborchick, SGT Kyle Koeller, SGT Andrew Gonzales, and CW2 Andrew Whitten.



Left: CW2 Adam Busch attempts to keep cool at JAFrica; Above: CW2 Busch and CW2 Jeffrey Kennedy give a thumbs up on mission; Right: SPC Patrick Rayburn and SPC Matthew Last catch a cat nap while waiting for container load up.





Clockwise from top left: CW3 Nathan Brown and SPC James Kelley take a moment to collect their thoughts between maintenance tasks; ArchAngel PV2 Justin Rupe crews; SGT Michael Sewell maxes his push-ups during the Promotion Board as 1SG Erica White grades; CSM Dvorsky speaks highly of PV2 Rupe during the end of tour awards ceremony; CPT O'Dell presents CW3 Jake Mondragon with the Air Medal; PV2 Rupe and SGT Matthew Jennings stand ready on mission.



By SGT Brian VanSant

Afghanistan's Air Force One

ArchAngels had the unique opportunity to fly the President of Afghanistan, President Hamid Karzai at the latter end of August. It came as a surprise to the crew as they were expecting just another typical VIP flight for our International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Commander Marine General Allen, who replaced General Petraus. The mission was kept quiet for security reasons, of course until our very important passenger was on board. A very gracious and appreciative VIP, the President saluted and waved as he boarded and exited our UH-60L aircraft. A nice change from the normal military VIP missions that the ArchAngels fly, and one that will certainly stick in my mind.

We said goodbye at the end of August to A Company 1-169th National Guard, "the Smugglers". The ArchAngels are grateful for your helping hand you extended throughout your 10 month tour. Taking the reins for the Smugglers is A Company 2-211th National Guard affectionately dubbed "the Mustangs". The Mustangs mobilized out of the great state of Utah and will help with the continuity of training as the ArchAngels start our Relief in Place (RIP) next month. In an effort to get the Mustangs trained up during their RIP, the ArchAngels have inter-mixed air-crews to mitigate risk and give the Mustangs the grand tour of RC East during the month of August.

Closing another month here at Bagram, ArchAngels will be anticipating the arrival of the 82nd "All American" out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. As we begin to fold and break down our 10 aircraft to ship home we expect to start seeing the first wave of our replacements. Believe that every ArchAngel will have an extra long stride to reach this goal of successfully training our replacements as it brings us that much closer to friends and family back home.

Until Next Month,
Sgt Van Sant

The testament of great aviation units, like the ArchAngels, is not how they operate when everything is going well, its how the unit reacts to the bumps in the road. This month, the fleet developed a number of mechanical issues that the Aircraft Mechanics (15Ts) and Maintenance Test Pilots from both the ArchAngels and Task Force Shooter rose to the challenge of overcoming on the "fly." The ability for numerous individual units to all be pointed at the same objective of mission accomplishment at the same time is an incredible quality of Army Aviation; from the battle captain redirecting assets in order to support the mission; to the rapid response of the Task Force Six Shooter Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART); to the quick thinking and troubleshooting of the aircraft mechanic on the crew, all were essential to the successful repair and return to duty in each instance. Don't worry folks, these birds are the best maintained aircraft in the Army inventory, but even the best break on occasion.



Above Left: TF Shooter helps out the crew of Pegasus 6 to tackle a drain and flush (note the oil on the side); Above Right: TF Shooter DART changes a starter in record time at Gamberi; Left: SGT Ricardo Caletz and CW3 Nathan Brown fix a position light; Lower Left: SGM Dvorsky, crew chief for the day, helps troubleshoot the issues; SPC Matthew Last takes a breather; Below SFC John Tengel checks on progress.





2ND PLATOON

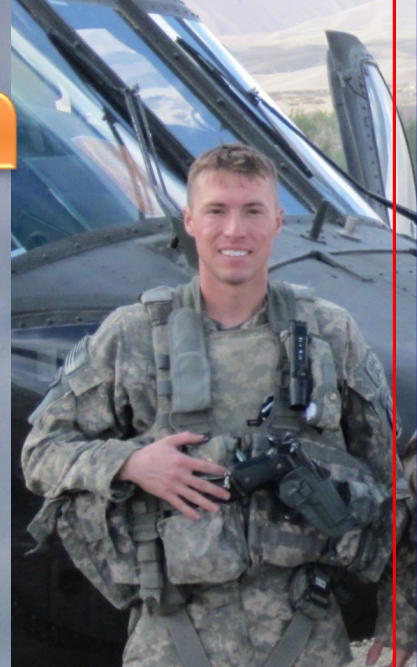


Greetings from 1st Flight,

Another month has passed here in Afghanistan. The month of August brought some of the hottest temperatures of the entire deployment. We also saw the departure of two of our own back to the states, CW3 Mondragon and PV2 Rupe. We wish them the best of luck and look forward to seeing them. We also saw the departure of A/1-169 "Smugglers" and with their departure we welcome A/2-211 "Mustangs". We are flying mixed crews with the Mustangs as we orient them to RC-East and do our best to train them so they can perform missions on their own and mentor the incoming 82nd CAB. In addition seeing new faces around the command post I think hits home just how close we are to leaving. With just a few short weeks until the incoming ADVON for the 82nd our Archangels members continue to perform day and day out. I am extremely proud to see how hard we work every day.

Archangel 16
CPT Kyle Eberly

2nd Platoon



For those who have been refusing to check their watch throughout this deployment, we are definitely at the beginning of the final countdown. August brought with it a climate shift with cooler temperatures and thunderstorms, as well as an increase in the number of Soldiers from replacing units. All of which have been a very welcomed change and have served as a constant reminder of our fast approaching redeployment!

The first from the Archangels have already departed Bagram and will be arriving back home early September. CW3 Jake Mondragon and PV2 Justin Rupe were early deployers at the beginning of the deployment, and have now paved the way for the rest of us to follow as they caught a flight late August; marking the end of their 12 month tour. Their contributions will be sorely missed during these final stages of the deployment, but their departure also serves as a positive reminder that we will soon be following. Our normal work routine of flying and maintenance has been sharing a growing increase in redeployment preparation. From organizing our containers to sending ahead a shipment of personal items, the excitement of going home is mounting! We welcome September with open arms as we say farewell to August.

Hello August,

CPT Kyle Wilhelm



Reenlistments

Methalam Mountains



Our very own Sergeant Ricardo Caletz took the plunge this month and signed on for another couple of years with the US Army. SGT Caletz is one of our may fast rising stars who Alpha Company has the privilege of calling their own. Of SGT Caletz's many adoring fans, the highest ranking one we know of is his priority passenger, Brigadier General Volesky, the Commanding General of Maneuvers for CJTF-1. Seen on the left speaking of SGT Caletz's merits and much deserved praise, he also attended the reenlistment. SGT Caletz chose one of his mentors to reenlist him, CW2 Nate Halpin, seen below officiating the ceremony. Congratulations to Sergeant Caletz we know you will go far!



Parting Shot

