

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing

Home from Afghanistan

**A look back
at OEF ops**

'Welcome home'

By Col. Steve Arthur

Welcome home to all our Air Expeditionary Force warriors. I am very proud of your accomplishments, and firmly believe your contributions have improved the security of our nation and the world. You aptly demonstrated the Air Force Reserve's commitment to a single team fighting as a unified Air Force.

As we continue with our "welcome home" celebrations over the next month, I ask you to remember that the 442nd Fighter Wing still has more than 30 members deployed into combat that require our focused support.

My thanks to the following members for bringing credit to the 442nd Fighter Wing, and upholding the great reputation of our people...

- Capt. William McLeod, 442nd Maintenance Group and his civilian employer, Aquila Inc. – 2006 Air Force Reserve Command Citizen Airman and Employer of the Year Award
- Staff Sgt. Craig Alexander, 442nd Logistics Readiness Squadron – Vehicle Operations Technical School Distinguished Graduate
- Airman 1st Class Barry Culbreath, 442nd Mission Support Flight – Basic Training Honor Graduate
- 2nd Lt. Patrick Chevalier, 442nd FW Military Equal Opportunity office – AMS Distinguished Graduate
- Staff Sgt. Dustin Wright and Senior Master Sgt. Charles Pignotti, 442nd Maintenance Squadron – Exercise Tiger Award
- Senior Airman James VanGilder, 442nd Civil Engineer Squadron – AFRC Human Resources Development Council First Term Airman's Panel
- Senior Master Sgt. Rodney Kennedy, 442nd LRS – 442nd Fighter Wing Semi-Annual Senior NCO
- Staff Sgt. Van Swearingin, 442nd Security Forces Squadron – 442nd Fighter Wing NCO of the Quarter
- Senior Airman Bradley McCurdy, 442nd CES – 442nd Fighter Wing Airman of the Quarter



Col. Steve Arthur

We have many challenges ahead. The leadership of the 442nd is working to

- establish a timeline for conversion to 24 primary aircraft assigned
- prepare for Unit Compliance Inspection
- incorporate new guidance for accomplishing an Operation Readiness Inspection
- and continue current modifications to our A-10s.

All the above do not override our primary responsibility to be prepared for battle. The role of the reservist has changed dramatically over the last five years. We are no longer a "force in reserve." Please help me insure that we maintain the correct priorities as we execute this busy schedule. Thank you.

MOHAWK

442ND FIGHTER WING

'inside' 'inside' 'inside' 'inside'

Commentary page 2

BIVOUC

MSG takes it to the field
PAGE 5



HOME AGAIN

A-10s, troops back from Afghanistan.

PAGES 6 & 7



HISTORICAL FITNESS

'Evolving' fitness standards
PAGE 11



442nd TCG reunion page 5
Exercise Tiger awards page 9
AF marathon page 10

October 2006
Charge-of-quarters



SENIOR MASTER SGT. TIM STORMS
442ND MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

Call the CQ from on-base at 99-1 (660) 238-7428. From a local off-base number (i.e., Concordia, Warrensburg, Sedalia etc.), dial (660) 238-7428. To call toll free from off-base, dial (800) 260-0253 and press seven after the prompt.

COVER PHOTO: Master Sgt. Tammy Eddings, 442nd Mission Support Flight, greets her children after returning from an OEF deployment. See more on pages six through nine (Photo by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)

MOHAWK

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442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear

SENIOR AIRMAN JESSICA R. OTREMB
442ND LOGISTICS READINESS SQUADRON

This month's 442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear is Senior Airman Jessica R. Otremba, a 442nd Logistics Readiness Squadron Command Support Staff Administration Clerk.

A model Airman, she immediately became a huge asset to the unit during the wing's Air Expeditionary Force commitment. With seven AEF rotations in four months, she provided valuable administrative support to the 442nd LRS by processing more than 200 deploying personnel, working on squadron training and scheduling, as well as other administrative items. She also volunteered to work for the family support office and was instrumental with letters sent to the deployed members' families and newcomers. She assembled more than 375 packets of books and materials for deployed personnel's children, and welcome home and newcomers' packets. She is working with the Family Day Committee setting up and coordinating Operation Home Front Hero involving a children's deployment line for 150 children. She designed and made the children's and family support volunteer line badges.

Airman Otremba demonstrated extreme efficiency by assisting with the entire orders preparation process for more than 380 wing members. She logged hundreds of order requests organizing them for quick filing and retrieval. With minimal training and little supervision, she assisted employment and relocations with many basic military training and technical school issues performing each job with perfection.



(US Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)

442ND WARRIORS

OMAHA, Neb. -- Three 442nd Troop Carrier Group, World War II, veterans, Clarence Haberman, 305th Troop Carrier Squadron, Jim Payne, 304th TCS and Bill Woehr, 303rd TCS pose in front of a D-day invasion stripe painted C-47

at the Strategic Air Command Museum. During World War II the 442nd flew C-47s similar to this one. The three 442nd veterans were among fifty others at the museum as part of the 442nd TCG 63rd Anniversary Reunion.



IN THE FALL 2006 Airman

OUT OF LEBANON

**"AIRMEN TRANSPORT CITIZENS
FROM A NATION OF CRISIS"**

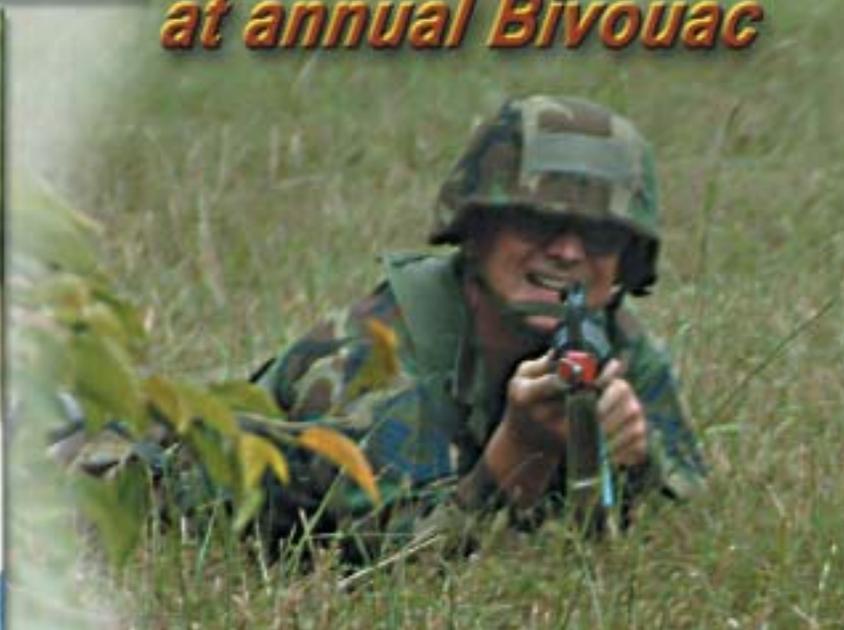
SOARING TO GLORY

**"MEMORIAL SYMBOLIZES SACRIFICE,
CELEBRATES SERVICE"**

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at Public Affairs**

FIELD TRAINING

Mission Support Group gets down and dirty at annual Bivouac



Top photo: During weapons familiarization training, Senior Master Sgt. Rick Heffron, 442nd Security Forces Squadron, trains Tech. Sgt. Aris Villamayor, 442nd Communications Flight, how to operate the M-240B 7.62 millimeter light machine gun during the September Unit Training Assembly.

Above: With attention to detail, Staff Sgt. Talaya Hill, 442nd Mission Support Flight, carefully cleans her weapon following a day of field training and tactics at the Annual 442nd Mission Support Group Bivouac.

Right: Tech. Sgt. John Vertreese practices his aim during weapons familiarization training.

Background photo: Taking cover after being "fired on" by the "enemy," Master Sgt. Terry Johnson, 442nd MSF, returns fire during a tactics exercise taught by members of the 442nd Security Forces Squadron at the 442nd MSG Bivouac held at Whiteman's "Cobra" site on the east side of the base.

(Photos by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)

Home



His family finally gathered around him, Col. Johnson revels in the home coming welcome his family gave him. Johnson was deployed to Afghanistan during the war on Enduring Freedom. Colonel Johnson had been deployed for 10 months.

Family members anxiously watch a C-17 carrying their loved ones, many of whom have been deployed for several months, approach Whiteman's aircraft parking area.

Background photo: Home from Afghanistan following a four-month deployment, 442nd Fighter Wing A-10 Thunderbolt IIs shut down on Whiteman's flight line Sept. 23.



me again!



Tony Johnson, 442 Operations Group commander, family had for him upon his return from Operation in deployed since May.



At the 442nd Fighter Wing homecoming Sept. 23, Tech. Sgt. Jim Gum, 442nd Maintenance Squadron, embraces his wife, Ginger, while Master Sgt. Rich O'Conner rushes to meet his family members.



Photos by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington

A look back at Afghanistan

442nd A-10s surge for summer offensives

By Maj. David Kurle

Editor's note: The following story is a recap of A-10 operations in Afghanistan this past summer.

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan—Six U.S. and Coalition troops peer out from a remote position on a ridge top in Afghanistan.

At sunset on the third day of their vigil, a large force of Taliban extremists carrying heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades surround and pin down the team.

By design, an Air Force joint tactical air controller is with the team. His job is to direct strike aircraft to targets on the ground.

The situation on the ridge line is desperate until an Air Force pilot flying an A-10 Thunderbolt II in the vicinity contacts him.

Helping the A-10 pilot find and target his attackers on the ground, the JTAC stays in radio contact, except when forced to pick up his weapon and fire at the enemy closing in.

The A-10 and its pilot hammer at the enemy with bombs and the plane's massive gun.

"Fifty minutes later the remaining enemy retreated and (the JTAC) and his team walked off that ridge to re-supply and fight again the next day," said Lt. Col. Keith McBride, commander of the 81st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron deployed here.

Colonel McBride, an A-10 pilot, uses this real-life story to illustrate his point that the A-10 is saving lives in Afghanistan.

"There have been numerous occasions where our troops have been taking heavy fire and we show up and either our presence ends the engagement or we employ against enemy positions and end the engagement," said Col. Tony Johnson, the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group commander and an A-10 pilot himself.

UP-TEMPO OPERATIONS

Flying hours and the amount of bombs and bullets used by A-10 pilots here have increased all summer due to two offensives by ground forces against the enemy.

Operations Mountain Lion and Mountain Thrust flushed Taliban extremists out of where they normally hole-up, exposing them to U.S. and Coalition forces



PHOTO BY MAJ. DAVID KURLE

Capt. Rick Mitchell, an A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan's 81st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, prepares for a nighttime combat mission in early August. Captain Mitchell is deployed from the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo. The 81st EFS flies combat sorties around the clock to provide close air support for U.S. and Coalition ground forces in Afghanistan.

on the ground, who called on A-10 pilots to provide close air support.

"The increase in weapons deliveries is primarily because U.S. and Coalition operations have carried the fight to the extremists," said Brig. Gen. Christopher Miller, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing commander. One of his jobs is to advise Combined Joint Task Force-76's U.S. Army commander on the use of combat aircraft in Afghanistan.

"Where extremists have attacked the Afghan people and their infrastructure, we have helped defend them, and we have carried the fight to the enemy, to push them back and reduce their ability to carry out further attacks," he said. "The whole A-10 team, from the Airmen who launch them to the pilots who fly them, should be proud. They are saving the lives of Americans and many others they don't even know—and in the big picture, they're enabling the security Afghanistan needs to rebuild into a society where terrorists can't flourish."

The A-10's ability to precisely hit targets also lends itself well to U.S. forces engaged in re-building Afghanistan, Colonel Johnson said. Preservation of infra-

structure and limiting damage on the ground are crucial, since the country of Afghanistan is not the enemy.

"We're also re-building a country," he said. "I don't know what other airplane would be better at this than the A-10."

WELL SUITED TO AFGHANISTAN

The A-10 was originally designed around its 30-mm gun, designated the GAU-8. The gun is more of a small artillery piece – firing huge bullets into target areas at a rate of 65 per second. The A-10 is the only Air Force aircraft designed specifically for close air support – providing firepower for ground troops in fights with enemy forces.

If the gun isn't enough, 11 stations underneath the plane hold up to 16,000 pounds of bombs, missiles and rockets.

"Our weapons effects make a decisive impact on the battle," Colonel McBride said. "Ground forces rely on our rapid response and our pin-point accuracy."

The GAU-8, with its 8-foot, rifled barrels, delivers bullets at a blistering 3,000-feet-per-second. When pilots pull the trigger, they aim using the plane's computer, which takes into account factors like speed, altitude, the distance from the

EXERCISE TIGER AWARDS

Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Col. (ret.) Donald Ballard presents Senior Master Sgt. Mike Pignotti, 442nd Maintenance Squadron, a book as part of the Exercise Tiger Association's "Adopt-a-Serviceman" Awards ceremony recognition at Columbia, Mo. Sept. 22. Sergeant Pignotti and Staff Sgt. Dustin Wright, also with the 442nd MXS, received Adopt-a-Serviceman awards for military excellence. Additionally, Col. (ret.) Dewayne Burgess, former 442nd Maintenance Group commander, was recognized for military service achievement. Other 442nd members recognized at the banquet included Maj. David Kurle, for outstanding Public Affairs and Master Sgt. Larry Washington, 442nd Mission Support Flight as the Outstanding Missouri Educator in Aviation.



PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. BILL HUNTINGTON

target and angle of the plane's nose. This combination of physics and software make the 30-mm gun on the A-10 extremely accurate.

"Just the large amount and type of weapons the A-10 can carry, combined with a long loiter time over our troops on the ground, makes up for the lack of organic, heavy weapons (carried by U.S. and Coalition forces)," Colonel McBride said.

But it's not just the A-10's firepower that makes it an excellent choice for supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. The plane is designed rugged – much like the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan. To enable twists and turns through low valleys and high peaks, the wings stick straight out, allowing small, sharp turns. It's heavily armored for the benefit of its pilots and is built to land and take off from the well-worn surface of Bagram's runway.

The A-10 combines some of the best of today's high-technology Air Force with a solid, low-tech foundation. The addition of a targeting and laser-designation pod was a huge boost to the plane's capabilities but still no substitute for the pilot's eyeballs.

"Most other aircraft rely heavily on (electronic) sensors to find and target the enemy," said Capt. Mitchell, 303rd Fighter Squadron. "In the A-10, it's not unusual for a pilot to use binoculars."

When Captain Mitchell flies, his preparation for the mission is extensive and can take more time than the actual combat sortie.

Once in the air, pilots can fly to pre-planned targets or fly in holding patterns above potential battlefields waiting to swoop down when ground forces encounter the enemy.

The Combined Air Operations Center, in Southwest Asia, generates missions for Bagram's A-10s. This high-tech command center runs air operations for both Afghanistan and Iraq.

"We work those guys pretty hard," said Royal Air Force Flight Lt. Matthew Adamson-Drage, a fighter controller who helps assign missions to the A-10s at the CAOC. "The A-10s are pretty much the backbone of (air operations in Afghanistan) because they're flying all the time every day."

MAINTENANCE MAGIC

To keep the A-10 in fighting form and meet this summer's sweltering pace, the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group had to get creative to keep the aircraft ready for missions.

Airmen in the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, commanded by Maj. Tim Coger, work around the clock on two aircraft at a time in Bagram's A-10 "phase hangar." Every 400 flight-hours, an A-10 requires a thorough inspection of certain essential parts.

"We're flying off 400 hours here faster than we do at home station," Major Coger said. "The maintenance tempo is driven by the flying. Since the pilots are flying the jets more, it has caused us to do more maintenance."

And they're not just keeping aircraft

flying. Maintainers also load the weapons A-10s need to support ground troops.

That's where Master Sgt. Dennis Peterson, from Spangdahlem AB, comes in. He is the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's chief weapons loader.

"It's been steady work ever since we touched down here," he said. "Rarely a day goes by when (the A-10s) don't come back empty. To see that airplane come back empty is the hallmark of being a weapons loader."

The load teams at Bagram keep a running score of the bombs, rockets and bullets used by A-10s since arriving here in May by posting the tallies on a mural painted next to the group's lounge to remind Airmen about the gravity of their mission.

"Our maintenance troops have performed magnificently," Colonel McBride said.

The sum of maintenance and flying efforts enables the A-10 to be an effective protector of U.S. and Coalition ground forces on the front lines against extremists whose goal is to drag Afghanistan back to the Taliban's repressive brutality and again let the country be used as a haven for terrorists.

"The A-10 is employing lethal firepower when it's needed most by troops on the ground," Captain Mitchell said. "There's nothing more rewarding to a close air support pilot than knowing the firepower you employed just saved the lives of guys on the ground."

Marathon

442nd members run in 10th Annual AF Marathon

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio -- With the venerable A-10 Thunderbolt II as its featured aircraft this year, the 10th annual Air Force Marathon took to the streets here, Sept. 16, with three present and one former member of the 442nd Fighter Wing joining the ranks of the more than 5,000 runners.

Chief Master Sgt. (ret.) Gary Fields, Senior Master Sgt. Mark Mock, Tech. Sgt. Todd Best and Staff Sgt. Amy Cottrell started the run in the pre-dawn hours just outside the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

Chief Fields and Sergeants Mock and Best took on the full 26.2 mile marathon, while Sergeant Cottrell opted for the half-marathon. Besides the full and half marathons, the event included three and five kilometer runs. For recently-retired Chief Fields, formerly with the 442nd Civil Engineer Squadron, it was his sixth Air Force Marathon.

"I've only missed one Air Force Marathon since I started running them," Chief Fields said. "That was the one that was cancelled in 2001 after the attacks on Sept. 11."

Sergeant Cottrell, 442nd Medical Squadron, used the half marathon to test herself to see if she was ready for a full marathon later. She started with the two-hour pace team member and surprised herself by finishing the half marathon at one hour and 50 minutes.

"I'm going to be running the full marathon next year," Sergeant Cottrell said, soon after crossing the finish line.

For experienced marathoner Sergeant Best, 442nd Security Forces Squadron, things went well until the 21 mile mark. After scaling the 165 foot hill within a mile and a half of the start of the race, the relatively rolling level of the course as it passed historic Huffman Prairie Flying Field, known as the birthplace of aviation, the flightline at Patterson Field and finally returning toward Wright Field, trouble set in.

"I started getting leg cramps in both legs," Sergeant Best said. "They started getting really bad and it took me to a walk."

Despite the pain, Sergeant Best climbed the final hill and descended back toward the finish line at the museum.

Sergeant Mock, 442nd Maintenance Squadron, noted that last portion of the race which included the hill was particularly formidable.

"The last two and a half miles were pretty hard," Sergeant Mock said. "You got to the point that you were passing the walkers, but that was about it"

While each of the four reservists had different personal reasons for wanting to do the marathon, Sergeant Mock, had a special, more sentimental reason.

"It was my first Air Force Marathon," Sergeant Mock said. "The only reason I went up there was because the A-10 was the featured aircraft. I've been working on the A-10 since I was 18."

At the conclusion of the race, during the Marathon's awards ceremony, two A-10s made passes over the crowd assembled at the birthplace of aviation.



Above: Tech. Sgt. Todd Best, 442nd Security Forces Squadron, checks his watch just before the start of the 10th Annual Air Force Marathon Sept. 16.



Left: Having just completed the Air Force Marathon, Staff Sgt. Amy Cottrell, 442nd Medical Squadron, rewards herself with a leg massage.

Historical fitness

**By Tech. Sgt. Mike Morrison
442nd Fighter Wing Historian**

Recently I received an e-mail, explaining the expansion of the Fit-to-Fight Air Force Fitness Management Program from the 442nd Fighter Wing Director of Staff, Lt. Col. Sherry Howard. Attached to the e-mail was a Healthy Living Program for Reserves (HLPR) Participant Guide.

After reading the introduction to the guide, I began thinking about the emphasis the Air Force Reserve is placing on ensuring its fighting force is physically ready to meet any challenge placed before it.

As a member of the Air Force Reserve I am well aware that fitness programs have been, in one form or another, an integral part of the Armed Forces for years.

As the wing historian I wondered how these programs have changed over the years. To find out, I began a quick search of past issues of the Mohawk.

I was not searching for any particular policy change or directive from higher headquarters insisting that members perform a certain number of push-ups or crunches; instead I focused on the actual event at the wing level. I found what I was looking for in the November 1970 edition of the Mohawk.

In an article titled "Run for Your Life," the anonymous author recounted a wing "fitness run" held on Oct. 4 of that same year.

What struck me about the 36-year-old article was the emphasis placed on the mile and a half run and what it meant to the participants.

The article began with an admonishment that it was the duty of all members of the 442nd to "...run a mile and a half at least twice a year."

Having established the length and frequency requirements in print, the author continued with a light-hearted account of how wing members dealt with the "cheery rejoinder" of an air crew encouraging their fellow runners on to the finish.

The article ended with another admonishment to wing members meant to spur members to fitness; "More consistent and persistent jogging and fast-moving can eliminate being so badly out of shape, and help a reservist keep more trim and feel better, not to mention being 'more ready' to serve his country."

As I read the last part of the article I was reminded of the truth of the Latin phrase, "nihilum neophytus amo sol."

There is nothing new under the sun.



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Below: Capt. Aaron McEwen, 303rd Fighter Squadron, signals a thumbs up as he prepares to climb down from his A-10 Thunderbolt II after returning from Afghanistan Sept. 23. See related information on pages six through nine.

TO THE FAMILY OF:



"Welcome home to all our Air Expeditionary Force warriors. I am very proud of your accomplishments, and firmly believe your contributions have improved the security of our nation and the world."

**-- Colonel Steve Arthur
442nd Fighter Wing commander**