

Continuous improvement - Scholarship fund - Airmen reach out at Bagram

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing

An eye on LRS Fuels

Wing's
BRAC
impact
facts

Continuous improvement: Air Force's future

By Col. Patrick Cord
442nd Fighter Wing commander

The Air Force, as a whole, and our Air Force Reserve, as we know it, are going through dramatic changes, which will continue over the next 10 to 15 years.

I have preached "continuous improvement" during my tenure as the 442nd wing commander and that precept has never been more important than it is now.

As we go forward, we must look at every process and program we have in place. We need to make sure that if the process is necessary we are doing it the best way possible.

Our new secretary of the Air Force feels the same way and went one step further, formalizing a program called Air Force Smart Operations 21 (AFSO 21).

He penned a letter to Airmen that explains AFSO 21 and I hope you all read it carefully. Please don't get too concerned about the reference to "training" in his last paragraph. My goal for this program is to not let it mirror the "Total Quality Management" program of the early 1990s.

Starting today, I want us to focus on the incorporation into our processes the concepts of lean thinking, relevance, agility, productivity and value-added. I think we can do this with no initial training.

As I get smarter on AFSO 21 we may want to have some type of training, but we will cross that bridge when we come to it. I am asking for your help in implementing AFSO 21 within the 442nd Fighter Wing. Let's use this concept to take us to the highest level of efficiency and, most importantly, the highest level of combat capability.



Letter to Airmen

Michael W. Wynne
Secretary of the Air Force

8 Mar 06

Air Force Smart Operations 21

Our role as an Air Force is to provide an array of capabilities for the Combatant Commanders to use as directed by the President. These capabilities include the widest variety of joint operations from combat operations to humanitarian aid. Like any other organization, we must seek to constantly give value to our "customers." It's not only the right thing to do for the American taxpayer; it's the smart thing to do.

In my December "Letter to Airmen," I talked about expanding LEAN concepts beyond just depot operations. That effort has now grown into Air Force Smart Operations 21 (AFSO 21), a dedicated effort to maximize value and minimize waste in our operations. AFSO 21 is a leadership program for commanders and supervisors at all levels, looking at each process from beginning to end. It doesn't just look at how we can do each task better, but asks the tougher and more important question: *Why are we doing it this way? Is each of the tasks relevant, productive, and value added? In other words is it necessary at all? With AFSO 21, we will march unnecessary work out the door - forever.*

AFSO 21 signifies a shift in our thinking. It is centered on processes (groups of tasks) rather than tasks alone, which allows us to gain insights into the value, or lack of value, in each task we perform. For example, why does an EPR take 21 days at some bases to process, and only 8 at another? We must do better across the entire Air Force, and no process is immune from this critical review. AFSO 21 is built on successful principles from the corporate world, and has already yielded results in the Air Force. AFMC has used the tenets of AFSO 21 to put an extra 100 tankers back on the line each day. AFSO 21 is about working smarter to deliver warfighting capabilities.

We must continue to meet our worldwide requirements even with the continued pressure on our budget. But AFSO 21 is not about cost cutting; it enables our service to take our warfighters of today and grow them into the most effective and efficient thinkers for 2010 and beyond. The continuous process improvements of AFSO 21 will be the new culture of our Air Force. We will look at innovative ways to use our materiel and personnel more efficiently. For example, we're already planning on using the Guard and Reserve differently under the concept of Total Force Integration, capitalizing on their inherent strengths.

As AFSO 21 training comes to your base, ask yourself, "What have I improved today?" *Every* idea is worth talking to your supervisor. To learn more about the AFSO 21 program, visit the AFSO 21 website at <http://www.afso21.ba.af.mil/>. I have full faith that by implementing AFSO 21 together, we will make our Air Force not only more effective, but will drastically improve our combat capability.

Michael W. Wynne

"Starting today, I want us to focus on the incorporation into our processes the concepts of lean thinking, relevance, agility, productivity and value-added."

-- Col. Patrick Cord, wing commander

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing

' Inside ' Inside ' Inside ' Inside '

April 2006
Charge-of-quarters

Commentary page 2



AN EYE ON FUELS

442nd LRS Fuels keeps jets flying, vehicles moving

PAGES 6 & 7

BRAC IMPACT FACTS

With an AEF deployment looming, Wing gains nine New Orleans A-10s

PAGE 4



AIRMEN REACH OUT

Airmen at Bagram provide service to nearby Afghans

PAGE 9



Cell phone use restricted while driving on base page 8
Maintenance officer builds local scholarship fund page 8
Unit heritage easier to access page 10



MASTER SGT. CHARLES ROLLER 442ND MEDICAL 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: Working in the fuels lab testing jet fuel, Tech. Sgt. Jim Bishop, NCOIC of Quality for the 442nd Logistics Readiness Squadron's Fuels section, peers through a refractometer to determine the content of the fuel system icing inhibitor in JP-8. See story on pages six and seven. (Photo by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)



T 442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear

TECH. SGT. KATHLEEN HAWKINS 442ND MEDICAL SQUADRON

Tech. Sgt. Kathleen Hawkins has been a medical services technician with the 442nd Medical Squadron since 1997. She spent six years working in the immunization clinic where she created and implemented the current tracking system used by the 442nd Fighter Wing. This system tracks wing members' currency rates ensuring worldwide duty qualifications. She also supervised immunization augmentee training making sure that all backup technicians were properly trained and able to function with limited supervision.

Sergeant Hawkins also supports wing members by providing quality service in completing their annual physical exam requirements. Her effective planning and organizational skills enable the squadron to process more than 60 physical exams on Saturday mornings of unit training assemblies.

She deployed to Annette Island, Alaska, in 2005 in support of Operation Alaskan Road and provided medical coverage for over 100 military members at remote work sites as an independent medical technician. Her emphasis on safety helped identify several hazardous conditions that were corrected before an accident could occur. This safety-conscience attitude prompted her appointment as the squadron's safety noncommissioned officer in charge. Sergeant Hawkins performs inspections in duty sections and prepares monthly safety briefings. She is also currently enrolled in nursing school.

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Meeting the challenge of

BRAC.

Fighter wing looks toward solid future, plans integration of new people, aircraft

By Maj. David Kurlle

While the base realignment and closure process benefited the 442nd Fighter Wing with nine additional aircraft and an estimated 185 to 200 new jobs, the assimilation of these new assets comes at a very busy time for the wing.

With preparations underway for a deployment, modifications to A-10 Thunderbolts in progress and at least two inspec-



PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. BILL HUNTINGTON

A pilot from the 926th Fighter Wing walks away from an A-10 he just delivered to the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base Feb. 24. The A-10s from the New Orleans based-unit are on loan to the 442nd pending final acceptance procedures.

tions on the horizon, the integration of additional aircraft and people, while a welcome result of the BRAC, adds an additional challenge to the wing.

The nine aircraft are coming from the 926th Fighter Wing at New Orleans Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base, La., which lost its flying mission as a result of the BRAC process.

“We’re cramming three years of work into the next eight months,” said Col. Patrick Cord, 442nd FW commander. “I’m confident the wing is up to the challenge. We’re professional, we’re experienced and we’ve proven ourselves in combat.”

“The task we face now is deciding how we’re going to manage the integration of nine more aircraft and the additional people into our existing facilities and organization,” he said.

While the timeline for realigning the 926th is earlier than expected, officials at Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command, Robins Air Force Base, Ga., stress that an early move is necessary because Hurricane Katrina caused extensive damage to the New Orleans base.

“The timeline for moving aircraft and closing the 926th Fighter Wing is based on two key factors – the need to transform the military and the way we do business, and taking care of our personnel,” said Maj. Gen. Charles Stenner, director of plans and programs at Headquarters AFRC. “Mission demands dictate that timeline.”

After assessing the hurricane’s damage, it was determined that the 926th would not be able to maintain wartime readiness past a certain point.

The unit with a large share of completing the integration is the 442nd Maintenance Group, which will not only have to accept the additional aircraft, a process in and of itself, but will be expected to absorb the greatest number of new people.

“In the short term, it’s going to be extremely busy, accepting airplanes and accomplishing the flying mission short handed,” said Chief Master Sgt. Donald Shoop, 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron superintendent. “Our goal is to have all



PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. BILL HUNTINGTON

The first two A-10s from the 926th Fighter Wing arrive at Whiteman Air Force Base Feb. 24. The 442nd Fighter Wing has since received six additional A-10s as part of the base realignment and closure decision. A ninth aircraft is scheduled to arrive in June. The planes from New Orleans Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base, La., are on loan to the 442nd FW until final acceptance procedures are completed, including an environmental impact statement.

of our Air Reserve Technician positions filled by October.”

The 442nd Operations Group will gain the rest of the new positions and face an increase in its flying-hour budget to match the additional aircraft.

“(The flying-hour budget) is going to go up proportionally to what it is now,” said Lt. Col. Stephen Chappel, 303rd Fighter Squadron director of operations. “We will be flying a lot more jets on a day-to-day basis. We’re flying 13 sorties a day now and we’re looking at increasing that to 18 sorties.”

But it’s not just the efforts of the operations and maintenance groups that will result in the integration of the new aircraft and manning.

Almost every agency in the 442nd Fighter Wing, as well as agencies in the active-duty’s 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base’s host unit, will help complete the integration.

For example, the question of where to park nine new A-10s is being coordinated between elements of both wing staffs, and the maintenance, operations and mission support groups.

“The 509th Mission Support Group enables not only the 509th Bomb Wing, but also all tenant organizations on Whiteman Air Force Base,” said Ken Nugent, deputy commander of the 509th Civil Engineer Squadron, who is also the point of contact for supporting the 442nd’s integration efforts. “The 509th Civil Engineer Squadron is supporting the additional aircraft and personnel coming to the 442nd by planning, programming, design and construction of all facilities that are a part of the move.”

Eight of the aircraft from New Orleans arrived by March 16 and the remaining A-10 is expected in June when it will be released from the depot maintenance facility at Hill AFB, Utah.

“While the aircraft add to our already formidable combat capability, the A-10s are only one side of the equation,” Colonel Cord said. “We need to recruit and hire the people to support, maintain and operate those aircraft. Otherwise, these nine A-10s are nothing more than static displays.

“We are going to focus our efforts on recruiting experienced people to limit the time we would take to train people who are new to this mission or the Air Force,” he said. “People from the 926th Fighter Wing in New Orleans will get priority as far as hiring. It’s just a question of whether they would be willing to

relocate in order to take these new positions.”

Recruiters assigned to the 442nd work for the Air Force Reserve Recruiting Service, located at Robins AFB, Ga., but are tasked with recruiting for the Reserve units where they are assigned. The 442nd’s recruiting superintendent, Master Sgt. James Fritzen, just arrived at Whiteman AFB to replace the outgoing superintendent, Senior Master Sgt. Rob Gardner.

Sergeant Fritzen’s job will be to focus his office’s recruiting efforts on people needed most by the wing to complete the integration.

“We’re mainly focused on the maintenance career fields,” Sergeant Fritzen said. “Wing members can help us by contacting previous members of the unit to let them know about the available positions, both air reserve technician (full time) and traditional reserve (part time). If someone has an interest, people can load their names into the Get One program.”

To assist the wing with manpower issues related to the BRAC decision, a Site Activation Task Force (SATAF) team from AFRC visited Whiteman AFB March 7 to 9 to assess the needs of the agencies and units in the 442nd FW impacted most by the addition of nine aircraft.

“We are trying to identify all the required actions to comply with the BRAC directive to plus-up the 442nd to 24 A-10s,” said Lt. Col. Steve Parker, chief of fighter programs at Headquarters AFRC and the SATAF team leader.

The command is also providing full-time civilians and reservists new Web-based job placement services, called clearing houses.

“Keeping our highly-trained, highly-experienced people is vital to our command’s success,” said Steve Mann, director of personnel at Headquarters AFRC. “Our goal is to take care of our people.”

Colonel Cord is confident that AFRC will provide support during the integration process and that, in the long run, the wing’s workload will return to a more normal level.

“I believe the 442nd, in the short term, will be a very busy wing,” he said. “But as we work through the hiring process, over the long term, the activities of the wing will return to a more normal level.”

Good to the last



LRS Fuels keeps

By Master Sgt. Bill Huntington

While the “good to the last drop” phrase comes from a tag line for an old coffee commercial, the 442nd Logistics Readiness Fuels section “Hosers” strive to make their liquid products meet or exceed the same criteria.

It’s one thing to have a bad cup of coffee, quite another if you’re flying a jet with bad fuel.

“There’s a lot more to this job than meets the eye,” said Senior Master Sgt. James Hamby, 442nd LRS Fuels superintendent. “We’ve do a lot more than just pump in gas down here. We got to take that stuff from cradle to grave.”

While the most commonly-known product the Hosers handle is jet fuel, they are in the gasoline and diesel fuel business too. Oh, and by the way, they also handle liquid oxygen, more commonly referred to as LOX, and liquid nitrogen too.

All of their products are handled with an eye toward providing only the safest, most reliable product grades to their “customers,” and when the lives of anyone flying in a U.S. Air Force plane are concerned, it can be a matter of life or death.

“We are responsible for the quality of all the fuel,” Sergeant Hamby said. “We make sure it’s clean, dry, serviceable fuel. We take care of it from the time it gets on this base until it is put on an aircraft.”

JP-8 is the only grade of jet fuel on Whiteman AFB for aircraft. Diesel is provided to local military vehicles, government vehicles and power equipment using that type of fuel. Unleaded gasoline, also known as “Mo-Gas” is used in other vehicles and equipment. They basically take care of fuel for all of



Clockwise from upper left: Tech. Sgt. [Name], 442nd Logistics Readiness Fuels, [Name], Airman 1st Class Josue Santiago is [Name] Wing Fuels, on refilling a liquid oxygen tank from the Fuels offices.

Tech. Sgt. Don Murphy rewinds the hose for a refueling operation on the flight line. Background photo: 442nd Fighter Wing refueling truck, which hold two of the [Name] (Photos by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)

t drop

A-10s flying

the government vehicles on base.

Two other products they dispense are liquid oxygen for breathing purposes and also liquid nitrogen.

The nitrogen is primarily used for inflating aircraft tires. Regular air out of an air tank is not used because of moisture content and for compression reasons.

When aircraft get up to a certain altitude, nitrogen is a much more stable gas to use.

LOX is what the pilots breathe. It's what the pilots depend on to keep them alive and it's another very dangerous product. It's stored at more than minus two hundred degrees and it boils when it hits the air. It's also an explosion hazard, especially if it comes in contact with oil or grease.

Indeed for all of the products delivered by the hose there is a great need to maintain quality and safety.

"We receive our fuel from a contractor ... an outside agency ... and they add all of the additives that are required to meet military specifications," Sergeant Hamby said. Once it gets on this base, it's our job to ensure all of those additives were added in a proper amount.

"We have our lab guys pull a random in-line sample that's coming off the delivery truck and take the sample back to the lab to run specification tests. For JP-8 we'll confirm that it has a flashpoint of more than 100 degrees to make it safer for everybody to handle. We'll run a conductivity inhibitor test. This verifies that the product is less likely to ignite from random static electricity in a normal atmosphere."

See **'Fuels'** on page 11



Staff Sgt. Don Murphy and Airman 1st Class Josue Santiago, monitor A-10 refueling operations.

Staff Sgt. Mathew Sutton, 509th Bomb Squadron, is trained by Staff Sgt. Mathew Sutton, 509th Bomb Squadron, to handle the LOX storage facility across the base.

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442nd officer works to establish scholarship fund

By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown

You can't turn back the clock. Second Lieutenant Terrell Eikner, however, is hoping to do just that by repeating with the 442nd Fighter Wing what he accomplished with the 917th Fighter Wing at Barksdale AFB, La., in 2002.

Lieutenant Eikner, 442nd Maintenance Squadron, is working to establish an annual \$500 scholarship to assist enlisted wing members and the spouses and children of officers and enlisted Airmen in educational endeavors.

"I helped create a scholarship at Barksdale in 2002 and it's still going," Lieutenant Eikner said. "I want to get that process started here. Hopefully, it'll grow and mature into several scholarships, but you have to start small."

Lieutenant Eikner said he approached the Reserve Officer Association (ROA) and the Reserve Enlisted Association (REA) in January. Both groups supported the idea and Eikner began

writing the scholarship and creating its requirements.

"The scholarship is designed to help someone get an initial undergraduate degree or a technical certificate," he said. "I saw the need was there and it had never been done before and I thought it would be good for ROA and REA. Both organizations care about fighter wing members, so it's a win-win situation for ROA, REA and the scholarship winner."

Applicants are required to write a 250- to 300-word essay on "An Awakening – Terrorism At Home! How Has It Affected You?" Lieutenant Eikner said the essays will be evaluated by a five-member committee made up of ROA and REA members.

The ROA and REA plans to award a scholarship this year. Lieutenant Eikner said timelines and other information would hopefully be available by early April on the wing's homepage at www.442fw.afrc.af.mil. For more information, contact Capt. Jason Weiser at (660) 687-2736, Chief Master Sgt. David Isaacson at (660) 687-3831 or Master Sgt. Anita Bremberger at (660) 687-3527.

AFAF drive ends in April

By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown

The 33rd Air Force Assistance Fund (AFAF) drive ends April 29 for 442nd Fighter Wing members. The fund aids four organizations that provide assistance to Air Force retirees, as well as their spouses and family members.

Staff Sergeant Talaya Hill, the wing AFAF project officer, said the wing hopes to raise \$1,000 this year. "(The fund) is really helpful," Sergeant Hill said. "I've known people who've benefited greatly. This is a way for people to contribute to other Air Force people."

The four organizations are:

- The **Air Force Aid Society** provides Airmen and their families with worldwide emergency financial assistance, education assistance and other aid. For more information, visit www.afas.org.
- The **Air Force Enlisted Village Indigent Widow's Fund** near Eglin AFB, Fla., assists widows and widowers or retired enlisted people 55 years of age and older with rent subsidies and other support. For more information, visit www.afenlistedwidows.org.
- The **Air Force Village Indigent Widow's Fund** in San Antonio, Texas, aids retired officers and their spouses, widows or widowers, and family members. For more information, visit www.airforcevillages.com.
- The **General and Mrs. Curtis E. LeMay Foundation** helps officers' and enlisted members' indigent widows and widowers in their own homes. For more information, visit www.lemayfoundation.org.

For more information, contact Sergeant Hill at (660) 687-3349 or at talaya.hill@whiteman.af.mil or <http://afassistancefund.org>.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MASTER SGT. BILL HUNTINGTON

Unless using a hands-free device, cell phone use while driving on base is now a thing of the past. Violators could lose base driving privileges.

Cell phone use while driving now restricted on base

By Staff Sgt. Angela Blazier

If your cell phone rings while driving on base, you might want to think twice before answering, or the next sound you hear may be a patrol car siren.

According to a new Department of Defense joint-motor-vehicle regulation that took effect in February, drivers are prohibited from using cell phones on installations unless it is a hands-free phone (i.e., speakerphone) or the vehicle is safely parked. Ear pieces are allowed for cell phones, as long as it is in only one ear. Otherwise, headphones, hands-free ear pieces or other listening devices are prohibited, according to the 509th Security Forces Squadron.

"Use of those devices impairs driving and masks or prevents recognition of emergency signals, alarms, announcements, the approach of vehicles and human speech," the regulation states.

Violating the regulation is a primary offense, which means that violation alone is enough to warrant a stop. Three points will be assessed to the driver's record.

"The winner here is the base populace," said Master Sgt. Gloria Ornelas, superintendent of law enforcement for Air Force Security Forces, in an Air Force Print News article. "They will have more mobility while driving, a greater range of view -- in short, a safer driving environment for all."

Airmen reach out

Bagram troops help local Afghan village

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Jennifer Redente
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan (AFP) — More than 40 Airmen here recently visited a local village and gave basic necessities, donated by people throughout the world, to about 500 Afghans.

Members of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing drove seven kilometers to the village of Gadia to hand out materials including clothes, shoes, hygiene items, toys and school supplies, said Senior Master Sgt. Diana Brown, 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron first sergeant.

“A warm blanket, or a sweater, can make a big difference to some of the people that live in the villages here,” she said.

“None of this could have been possible without the cooperation of those who have sent the donations and those who organized the event,” said Master Sgt. James Biggerstaff, 455th Expeditionary Mission Support Group first sergeant.

Airmen assigned to the wing came together and spent three hours separating goods by gender and age into more than 400 bags. The materials were donated by servicemembers who have served in previous rotations, as well as churches and other civic organizations.

“Most of the donations are sent by various organizations and groups through word of mouth after Airmen returned to their home stations,” Sergeant Biggerstaff said.

“We get about 20 boxes of assorted goods per week from those who support the Adopt-A-Village here,” he said.

It’s a very rewarding experience to participate in the program, Sergeant Brown said. She encourages everyone to take the opportunity to be involved, whether it’s donating, sorting or handing out clothes.

“I was very honored to be part of the ongoing mission to improve relations with the local community and provide humanitarian aid,” Sergeant Brown said.



Young girls are given clothes during a recent Adopt-A-Village visit in Gadia in the Parwan Province, Afghanistan. Airmen with the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing sorted through donations and filled more than 400 bags with clothes, shoes, school supplies and hygiene items, which were handed out to the Afghans.



Wing history archives to go digital *Unit heritage easier to access*

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

The first “histories” of our wing were little more than well constructed photo journals divided by group and squadron functions. Surprisingly, there is little content in these early publications that cover the Normandy invasion, however, there are several photos depicting the unit’s role in the ill-fated Anglo-American-planned and executed Operation Market-Garden over Holland from September 17 to 21, 1944.

After World War II, the focus of wing or group periodic histories shifted from a pictorial to a technical format, which included log-type entries into a narrative or book format. These simplified histories constructed the foundation for the modern periodic history format that was used from the birth of the Continental Air Command in 1948, until the present.

Unfortunately, there are a lack of histories in the 442nd Fighter Wing archives between the end of World War II and 1958. However, attempts to reunite these histories with the unit are being made with the most promising being the transferring of information consolidated during this period from the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., to the 442nd via compact discs. The current library of wing histories spans from 1958 to 2003.

The next phase in the evolution of the recording of wing history is the newly-minted Issues Based Electronic History (IBEH). This all-electronic, computer-based format consists of the same information found in the traditionally printed versions of wing periodic histories, including all front matter such as a table of contents, preface and commander’s comments, and other relevant sections dedicated to mission, operations, support and general wing information.

One of the major differences between the traditional histories and the IBEH are the ease of collecting and recording information, and accessing this information after the history is submitted to AFHRA.

The IBEH is formatted with built-in hyperlinks that allow the reader to detour from the issues text to original source documents. This eliminates the need to shuttle between volumes of a hard-copy history. The ease of reading the electronic copy is further facilitated by the reader’s ability to determine what part of the document fits their research needs. In other words, while the IBEH is comprehensive in its construction, some information found in the history will not be relevant to the reader’s needs. Thus, parts of the history can be bypassed; a feature not available with traditional printed versions without the reader having to scan the entire text.

A fundamental reason for transitioning to the IBEH format is the ability for wing members to access the wing’s history. Unlike the limited number of hard copies available in the wing’s archives, which are maintained within the guidelines of the wing historian’s Air Force Instruction 84-101, the IBEH, with the exception of classified annexes, will be stored on the wing’s shared drive. This allows the reader to access the history as soon as it is posted.

As information sharing in today’s Air Force Reserve evolves from a paper-based system to one involving electronic communications, it is vital to allow wing members to have access to information about the wing’s history. The IBEH does just that. Through widespread availability and ease of use, annual wing histories will become not just a record of past activities and accomplishments but a tool used by wing members to fully appreciate the ability of the wing to meet its mission and that of the Air Force Reserve.



First quarter award winners announced



US Air Force photo

AIRMAN OF THE QUARTER
SENIOR AIRMAN GABRIEL MARTIN
442ND SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON



US Air Force photo

NCO OF THE QUARTER
STAFF SGT. CHRISTINE NICEWANDER
442ND AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

'Fuels' continued from page seven

Another very important test is for fuel system icing inhibitor. "A refractometer is the tool we use to determine the content of fuel system icing inhibitor in the fuel," Tech. Sgt. Jim Bishop, NCOIC of Quality, said. "The inhibitor lowers the freeze point of the small particles of water always found in fuel."

Once an airplane gets to certain altitudes, that water can turn to ice. When that ice starts going through the aircraft's filters, those ice particles can clog the filter screens, and in turn, an aircraft could be lost along with its pilot. The additive attaches itself to the water and keeps it from freezing. The water goes on through the engine to be burned with the fuel. Sergeant Bishop also scrutinizes the fuel for dirt and other contaminants.

Hamby's shop is a blend of new blood and proven experience. They range from brand new to more than 18 years of experience.

"We're a 12-person shop and we're fully staffed right now," Sergeant Hamby said, "We were short here last year. We were down to seven individuals but in the last three or four months we got four brand new troops as straight out of tech-school arrivals. We were getting to be kind of an older group here ... techs, masters and seniors ... we needed some young blood in here."

One of those newer troops getting trained on identifying bad LOX is Airman 1st Class Josue Santiago. To transfer LOX from the storage container to the LOX cart, he has to don protective gear including an apron and a plexiglass face shield.

"It's a pretty dangerous substance," Airman Santiago said. "If

you get any of it on you, it can freeze your skin."

Senior Airman Evan Michael agrees about the need for caution. "Liquid oxygen is around negative 297 degrees," Airman Michael said. "Also liquid nitrogen is negative 321 degrees so we are working with some extremely cold substances."

It doesn't take much imagination to envision what would happen to any flesh coming into contact with either product.

Another critical step when transferring LOX is the smell test. If liquid oxygen is bad it will have a rotten egg smell. Before it is ever issued they sniff out the tell-tale sign of bad product.

"It would be obvious if it was bad and we don't want our pilots going up there with bad oxygen," Sergeant Hamby said. "We also do a test for particles, dirt and discoloration but primarily it's the smell."

The 442nd Hosers maintain they have first-class support from their 509th Bomb Wing counterparts.

"We couldn't make it without the 509th (Bomb Wing)," Sergeant Hamby said. "They are here every day and they keep us in the loop as far as what's going on in the fuels world."

Airman Santiago is still fairly new to the Fuels game, and when asked about what it's like working with the 442nd Hosers, he has a positive answer.

"I enjoy working here a lot," he said. "Everyone is just great to work with."

Sergeant Hamby knows why.

"Fuels is a pretty tight-knit group no matter if you are from here or there," Sergeant Hamby said. "It's a big family that acts more like a small one. Even if you are POL from somewhere else you just take good care of each other."

Lt. Col. Eric Vander Linden addresses the 442nd Maintenance Group following a change of command ceremony on Saturday of the March unit training assembly that gave him command of the Group. He replaces Col. Dewayne Burgess who commanded the unit since January 2003. Colonel Burgess retired later that same day.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
442ND FIGHTER WING PUBLIC AFFAIRS
931 ARNOLD AVE.
WHITEMAN AFB MO 65305-5070**

TO THE FAMILY OF:



***"Our role is not to be No. 2
but to be the steadfast wingman,
efficiently delivering highly experienced personnel,
modern equipment and incomparable combat capability
to combatant commanders."***

***Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley
Commander, Air Force Reserve Command***