

Vice Presidential visit - FM making things count - Recruiting award

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing



**442nd MXS
Heavy Metal**

**A-10
Reconstitution**

AFRC commander: Thank you and happy holidays

By Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley
Commander of Air Force Reserve Command

WASHINGTON – As we look forward to this holiday season and the New Year, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude to each of you, your families and employers for the sacrifices you’ve made for our country each and every day.

Our Airmen have answered the call to service during a critical time in our nation’s history. Many of you are preparing to deploy overseas, perhaps for the first time in your military careers, while others are deploying for another tour. This courage and willingness to defend our freedom is a beacon for all Americans.

The New Year promises challenges and changes as we continue our mission to defend our nation and the cause of freedom around the world. Please know that our contributions as “Unrivaled Wingmen” make us valued and respected members of the Total Force.

Jan and I salute you, and wish you and yours Happy Holidays and a safe and joyous New Year. We are proud of your patriotism and loyalty to our great nation.



Lt. Gen. John Bradley is the commander of Air Force Reserve Command and a former commander of the 442nd Fighter Wing.

CMSAF: Be proud of the title 'Airman,' you've earned it

By Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley

WASHINGTON – Pride in being an Airman in the United States Air Force takes many forms – the way we wear our uniform, the effort we put into our jobs, the attitude we display and the respect we show for our fellow Airmen.

All of us, whether officer or enlisted, came into our Air Force after meeting rigid mental and physical recruiting standards, and being aligned with skills our service needed. Serving as an Airman is an honor that thousands of young Americans want, but do not attain; they are turned away for various reasons at recruiting offices. Those who make it through that door then train hard to develop skills that earn them the right to be called an “Airman.”

Nowhere is this transformation more dramatic than Basic Military Training. Earning the title of “Airman” is commemorated with a coin ceremony and the chance to don the Air Force blue uniform for the first time. This emotional event gives the trainees an identity within our organization – they are now Airmen in the greatest Air, Space and Cyberspace force in the world.

The sought-after title of Airman is one that each of us has worked hard to earn. Why then do we sometimes refer

to our fellow Airmen, both officer and enlisted, as “troops” or “kids?” Our level of professionalism must equal the immense responsibility each Airman carries as we continue to fight the Global War on Terror. We don’t send “kids” into battle; we send highly-trained and motivated Airmen.

Today, more than 30,000 are deployed worldwide with many more deployed in place, and more than 4,000 Airmen protecting America’s skies. In the Global War on Terror, we fly more than 250 missions a day, 45 of which are strike missions against the enemy. We conduct vital airlift for equipment and fellow Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines with one mobility aircraft taking off every 90 seconds. We complete more than 450 satellite supports each day, providing vital data and links for wartime operations. In addition, we have more than 4,500 Airmen on the ground supporting Army taskings in detainee operations, convoys and as interrogators. If you couple that with our direct combat positions, search and rescue, medical and other combat support roles, it’s clear to see our Airmen are heavily engaged in winning this war. As Airmen, we have much to be proud of.

You represent our nation and service well. I’m incredibly proud of your professionalism and commitment. Let’s continue to respect our heritage and our future in this great United States Air Force by proudly calling each other “Airman.”

MOHAWK

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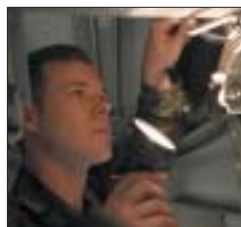
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MASTER SGT. JOHN DAVISON
442ND MAINTENANCE
OPERATIONS FLIGHT

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COVER PHOTO: Using a TIG welder
Tech. Sgt. Calvin Carter, 442nd
Maintenance Squadron Metals
Technology shop, constructs a drip
pan. See pages six and seven for
more. (Photo by Master Sgt. Bill
Huntington)

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T 442nd Fighter Wing
Tip of the Spear

TECH. SGT. LINDA YEATES
STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE OFFICE

Tech. Sgt. Linda Yeates, assigned to the 442nd Fighter Wing Legal office, performs above and beyond in her Air Force duties while working full-time as a substance-abuse counselor at the Department of Veteran's Affairs and conducting graduate studies at the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

In her duties as a paralegal, she has provided legal assistance to hundreds of wing members and their dependents as they prepared for deployments in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Her dedication to duty ensured all members deployed with necessary wills, powers of attorney and other legal instruments already completed ahead of departure. She consistently scores "excellent" on her fitness assessments and serves as a physical training leader for the staff.

In addition to her home station duties, Sergeant Yeates deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and served as a paralegal assigned to the Combined Review and Release Board, Task Force 134, Multi-National Force Iraq in Baghdad. During her deployment, she assisted CRRB attorneys in evaluating and preparing more than 1,000 case files for presentation to the CRRB. Her superb work and dedication to duty in combat conditions ensured only those detainees who posed no threat to Coalition Forces and Iraqi citizens were released from security detention. During her time in Baghdad, she earned the respect of team members from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Sergeant Yeates' professionalism and dedication to duty is an inspiration to her fellow Airmen.



Desert duty

442nd CES at Kirkuk

Tech. Sgts. Demetrius Nichols and Erin Hubbard, work with Senior Airman Darren Hardt, deployed to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, to re-arrange light fixtures in the base's old iCyber Cafe, which will be the future home for Force Protection, Safety and Public Affairs. Airman Hardt is one of 30 442nd Civil Engineers Squadron members deployed to the base for expeditionary combat support. US Air Force photo by Lt. Col Kerry Grimes

Senior Airman Matt Price and Staff Sgt. Mark Kuhaneck, 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineer, install new washing machines at the Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq self help laundry recently. Sergeant Kuhaneck is with the 442nd Civil Engineers Squadron. US Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. George Proctor

By Master Sgt. Bill Huntington

442nd Civil Engineer Squadron members are now on the downhill side of an expeditionary combat support deployment to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, but have shown no sign in slacking off of a full work schedule.

In typical 442nd CES fashion, the engineers have had a busy deployment providing base operating support at an airfield their wing mates help open during Operation Iraqi Freedom three years ago.

The Engineering Flight has programmed more than \$4.25 million in infrastructure projects to improve the base and airfield, as well as ongoing maintenance projects such as road repair.

The projects include runway seal and spall repair which involved closing an active runway and moving a Mobile Aircraft Arresting System and a project to improve the roads and drainage around the Army living area.

On the operations side of the engineering business, each of the shops are heavily involved in work projects.

The Electrical shop is converting existing systems from US style 110 volt, 60 Hertz power to European style 220 volt, 50 Hertz enabling the base to use native power, simplifying and standardizing power generation requirements.

The Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning troops are working hard getting things ready to keep folks warm while Structures, Power Production, and Utilities shops are busy filling work orders. Entomology is taking care of snakes and stray dogs.

Rounding out the group, the firefighters, also known as the "Fire Dawgs," have had a full plate too with controlled burns, fire prevention week activities and responding to calls.

The Engineers kept up the pace even when not on duty and typical of their "above and beyond" attitude was Staff Sgt. Mark Kuhaneck.

"(We) agreed to take on the project to improve the quality of life of the people – Army and Air Force – who used the (laundry) facility. We asked for volunteers and Sergeant Kuhaneck offered his assistance," said Senior Master Sgt. Eric Osen, 506th CES utilities superintendent.

"I had some experience in this type of repair work, so I volunteered," Sergeant Kuhaneck said.

He and his crew spent numerous hours over three days inspecting and cleaning each unit. They repaired the ones that could be "saved" and replaced those that couldn't. The group inspected 40 washers and 70 dryers, replacing 10 washers and repaired 29 dryers. During the inspection and serving, they also cleaned the dryer vents, eliminating a potential fire hazard and improving their efficiency.

"The work needed to be done," said Sergeant Kuhaneck. "So we stepped up and did it."

Tech. Sgt. Gene Lappe contributed to this story.





PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. FELICIA HAECKER

Vice President Dick Cheney speaks to more than 2,000 Team Whiteman members during a troop rally Oct. 27.

Vice president pays visit to Whiteman Cheney: War on terror is battle for future of civilization

by Senior Airman Jason Burton
509th Bomb Wing Public Affairs

“It’s a battle we are going to win,” said Vice President Dick Cheney about the war on terror.

That was the overall message he shared with more than 2,000 Whiteman members during a troop rally Oct. 27.

“This war is lengthy and difficult. Much has already been asked of us, and a great deal of work is still ahead,” Mr. Cheney said. “And yet the outcome is certain. We’ll prevail in the war on terror, and that victory will mean a better and safer world for our children and our grandchildren.”

He went on to explain what makes this war different from others.

“In this new era, Americans have learned that oceans do not protect us, and threats that gather thousands of miles away can now find us here at home,” he said.

“These enemies don’t assemble standing armies or navies to confront us. Instead they operate in small cells; they dwell in the shadows; and they hide in caves on the other side of the world. And yet they are driven by an ideology of violence, and they are absolutely determined to cause great harm to the United States of America.”

Mr. Cheney said that with these terrorists there can be no negotiations, or appeals to reason or conscience. “We only have one option, and that’s to take the fight to the enemy,” he said.

To carry on in this fight, Mr. Cheney said we need to project force across great distances, to hit targets with precision, and to move and maneuver without the enemy being able to track us.

“That’s exactly what we’re able to do with the stealth technology of the B-2 Bomber,” he said.

Many of Whiteman’s achievements during Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom were highlighted by the vice president.

“These aircraft remain essential to the continuing fight against terror, and to the defense of this nation in a world that still presents many challenges to the United States,” he said.

Mr. Cheney said we must always look to the challenges of the future, and prepare to fight any adversary, meet any contingency and overcome any obstacle that might present itself.

Freedom still has enemies, Mr. Cheney said. Those enemies use tactics of terror against Coalition forces and innocent civilians in hopes to intimidate us, but they will not succeed, he said.

“The war on terror is a battle for the future of civilization,” he said. “It is a battle worth fighting. It’s a battle we are going to win.”

While military and family members waved miniature American flags, Mr. Cheney thanked all of Team Whiteman for their contributions on the war on terror.

“There’s no way I could overstate how impressed I am with your work, or how much it means to your country and to the cause of freedom,” he said. “To be with you, and to know all that you do each and every day, makes me even prouder to be an American.”

Mr. Cheney closed his speech by saying that the war on terror is a test of the nation’s strength, capabilities and above all a test of our character. He said that he has never had more confidence in the nerve and will of the American people.

“We look at you, the men and women of our military, and feel a kind of gratitude and pride that is almost impossible to express,” he said. “America’s cause is right. America’s cause is just. And with you in the fight, America’s cause will prevail.” After his speech, Mr. Cheney presented Master Sgt. Mike Morin, 509th Security Forces Squadron, with a Bronze Star for exceptionally meritorious service during OIF while deployed to Camp Bucca, Iraq.

After the medal presentation, Mr. Cheney walked around the stage and shook hands with Whiteman members.



442nd MXS troops keep A-10s in shape working with

Heavy metal

story and photos by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington

Tucked away in the southwest corner of the 442nd Fighter Wing's maintenance bay hangar, Airmen from the 442nd Maintenance Squadron's aircraft metals technology and structural maintenance shops toil to ensure the wing's A-10s keep their "beautiful" shape and structural integrity.

With "attention to detail" more of a daily commandment than a trite phrase to be inserted in an enlisted performance report, these troops are an important reason why 442nd aircraft can be counted as the best maintained, and best looking, A-10s in the Air Force.

Senior Master Sgt. Mark Mock, 442nd MXS, Fabrication Flight chief, has responsibility over the two shops and he knows exactly the kind of efforts expended by the reservists in both of them.

"A lot of people have said our jets look nice," Sergeant Mock said. "What they don't realize is there a lot of things that go into making them that way."

He feels the aircraft put off a professional image that is a reflection of those that maintain them. It's an image that comes from that attention to detail and he offers something seemingly insignificant as a case in point from the structures shop.

"(They) paint screws," Sergeant Mock said. "After the screws are put in a holder, they paint the heads of them so that when the screws are installed on our planes, the screw heads are gray and not silver. They look a lot nicer."



Clockwise from upper left:

Tech. Sgt. Wesley Reeves, a metals technology reservist with the 442nd Maintenance Squadron, uses a milling machine to shape a piece of metal.

A second generation 442nd member, Senior Airman Cameron McWilliams, now with 442nd MXS Structures shop, has also worked in M-Tech.

Senior Airman Peter Young, 442nd MXS structures shop replaces a broken latch on a dispenser cover.

The same thing is done for any other part the shop sends out to be placed on the aircraft.

When the 442nd deploys elsewhere with another A-10 unit, as it recently did in Afghanistan, it's something their counterparts in other wings have been heard to marvel about.

The structural maintenance shop handles anything on the aircraft made of metal, fiberglass or composite material. Panels, covers, a variety of tubing and other materials both integral and incidental to the aircraft structure make up the world of the structures shop.

"Whether the aircraft takes a bird strike, a ding or just normal wear-and-tear, they take care of it," Sergeant Mock said about the "Structures Shop."

Seventeen Structures troops, Air Reserve Technicians and traditional reservists, fill the ranks of the shop and are led by Master Sgt. Brian Bass, an ART.

According to Sergeant Mock, the Structures troops are a mechanically-inclined group, able to look at a component, visualize how to take it apart and then put it back together again.

After completing a 16-week technical school, new shop members are trained to face a daunting list of tasks required of each of them to be fully qualified in their career field.

The aircraft metals technology shop, known among the maintainers as M-Tech, focuses on the air frame repairing aircraft components when they break, often manufacturing items such as brackets and bushings, which are no longer available from other sources. On the unit training assembly weekend, Air Reserve Technician Master Sgt. Larry Randolph keeps the M-Tech machinery and troops working and, during the week, he is assisted by Tech. Sgt. Calvin Carter, another ART.

Replacing damaged fasteners, repairing threaded inserts, welding certain engine parts and even manufacturing or repairing maintenance support equipment, such as the myriad stands all 442nd maintainers use, are standard fare for these metals technologists.

The reservists also manufacture special tools and other maintenance aids specific to the A-10. A project currently occupying M-Tech is the creation of a fixture for replacing canopies on A-10s.

"The canopy fixture is built so that when you pull the canopy you can then change the glass," Sergeant Carter said. "It holds the back bow at the right angle ... 81 degrees and 30 minutes ... for there to be an accurate seal (to keep the aircraft pressurized)."

M-Tech's "toolbox" includes special equipment such as the plasma cutter, which cuts through some metals like butter; TIG and MIG – Tungsten Inert Gas and Metallic Inert Gas – welders, each designed to weld metals and leave minimal impurities, a must for aircraft; machine lathes, where tolerances are measured with a micrometer; and a variety of other specialty tools needed to work on the wing's A-10s.

Besides having a good head for algebra and trigonometry and also attending a lengthy technical school, the metals technicians need to be able to read machine drawings and quickly visualize how things are supposed to fit together.

"Being a visionary is very important," Sergeant Carter said. "It's important to be able to look at a drawing and then at a blank piece of metal and have a vision of a finished product ... to be able to see the end."



Back from the front

Maintenance group provides support for Afghanistan A-10s tender, 10

Story and photos by Maj. David Kurlle
public affairs

Above, Tech. Sgt. Randy Magnuson, an A-10 crew chief, checks the accelerometers of an A-10 Thunderbolt II following a night combat sortie in support of Operation Enduring Freedom at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, in July 2006. Sergeant Magnuson deployed to Bagram during the summer. All of the wing's aircraft used in Afghanistan were thoroughly inspected upon their return to Whiteman for maintenance problems, which may have developed during the deployment.

Below, Staff Sgt. Michael Schuler inspects the left main wheel well of A-10 number 201 Nov. 5 during the 442nd Fighter Wing's unit training assembly. Sergeant Schuler is a phase inspection crew chief from the 442nd Maintenance Squadron whose job is to inspect A-10 Thunderbolt IIs for cracks, corrosion and wiring harness routes in need of repair during the phase inspection process. Aircraft 201 recently returned from a four-month deployment to Afghanistan.



When Air Force reservists from the 442nd Fighter Wing arrived home from a four-month deployment to Afghanistan in September, they were given time-off to recuperate and adjust to life back home.

The Air Force calls this time-off period "reconstitution."

The same is true for the wing's A-10 Thunderbolt II attack aircraft. Before they can be put back in a regular rotation of flying, the planes must be reconstituted after spending time in the combat zone.

"The deployment does put wear and tear on an airplane," said Tech. Sgt. Randy Magnuson, an A-10 crew chief whose job is to make sure A-10, number 201, receives the required maintenance it needs and is ready to fly in combat. His name is painted on the nose of the aircraft, which, in his mind, is like putting his signature on number 201 every day.

The first thing crew chiefs do when their aircraft return from a combat deployment is inspect every facet of the jet and clean out four-months worth of dirt and grime that Sergeant Magnuson calls "desert residue."

He pointed to the floor underneath the pilot's ejection seat, where beige, powdery dust had accumulated in the corners and recesses of the aircraft frame.

This is common to planes coming back from Afghanistan where the wind blows constantly, filling cracks and crevices with the dust carried through the air.

"It's a matter of unit pride," Sergeant Magnuson said. "We keep our planes neat and clean and in show-room condition."

Besides pride, there are two other reasons to be concerned about the "health" of the wing's A-10s.

"It's a limited resource," Sergeant Magnuson said. The company that built the A-10 is no longer in existence so replacement planes aren't exactly rolling off the assembly line.

"They're relatively old," he said. "So you have to work hard to extend the service lives."

The other factor is the human being sitting in the seat flying the airplane, the Sergeant said. "No matter what we do, we're always cognizant that there's a human life, a pilot, who's going to take this thing up in the air."

The job of keeping track of the health and well-being of the wing's 26 A-10s falls

ight es oving care

to Senior Master Sgt. Nori Turner and Tech. Sgt. Tami Goodhart, who run the 442nd Maintenance Group's plans and scheduling office.

"There are 76 parts installed on every aircraft that have a different frequency of when they have to be replaced, as well as 57 special, time-sensitive inspections," Sergeant Turner said.

If you do the math, that's 1,976 parts and 1,482 separate inspections the plans and scheduling office must keep track of – even while the airplanes are deployed to a combat zone.

The job of reconstituting the wing's A-10s began even before the planes left in May, according to Sergeant Turner.

"We monitored, on a daily basis, what was going on maintenance-wise in Afghanistan," she said.

The NCOs use a computer program called the Integrated Maintenance Data System to track repairs, inspections and flying hours to the wing's airplanes no matter where they might be.

"By keeping track of the aircraft in Afghanistan we maintain the integrity of our maintenance plan," Sergeant Goodhart said.

She and Sergeant Turner maintain a detailed plan to predict maintenance activities three months into the future and forecast some maintenance activities that occur every 13 years.

"We specialize in preventative maintenance," Sergeant Goodhart said. "The more we prevent the less we have to fix."

"We prevent a tire from going bald so something bad doesn't happen during landing," she said. "We prevent an ejection seat actuator from going bad so if (the pilot) has to use it, it will work."

The six A-10s deployed to Afghanistan flew more than 3,912 hours, the equivalent of one airplane flying non-stop for five-and-a-half months.

"We flew more hours in four months than the entire 442nd fleet flies in one year," Sergeant Goodhart said.

When the planes arrived back at Whiteman, crew chiefs and other maintenance specialists pored over the planes for a week before they were allowed back into circulation for home-station training missions, according to Sergeant Turner.

Sergeant Magnuson spent three days inspecting A-10 number 201.

"We want to get back here and find those spots where the desert has eaten away the O-rings and replace them," he said. The rings, made of rubber, seal connectors to hydraulic lines so the fluid inside doesn't leak.

Every 400 hours of flight time, an A-10 is torn apart for a "phase inspection" where the aircraft are closely inspected for defects, worn parts and fluid leaks. Normally it takes a 442nd A-10 18 months to fly that amount of time.

During the 120-day deployment to Afghanistan, two of the wing's planes required two phase inspections.

Sergeant Magnuson's plane, number 201, is currently undergoing another phase inspection.

After 201's new grey paint job, which makes it look like it just rolled off the factory floor, Citizen Airmen of the 442nd Maintenance Group are examining every square inch of the plane to keep the 26-year-old jet ready for the next time it may have to deploy.



Maintenance group honors its own at Hogfest

Col. Robert "Steve" Arthur, 442nd Fighter Wing commander, awards Tech. Sgt. Denise Brooks the 2006 Outstanding Achievement Award at Hogfest Nov. 4 at the Missouri State Fairgrounds.

The 442nd Maintenance Group holds the annual event to honor the best of its enlisted maintainers from throughout the year. The evening includes a dinner, awards presentation and dancing.

This year's other winners were:

- *Munitions and armament junior enlisted member, Senior Airman Michael Oehlert.*
- *Munitions and armament senior enlisted member, Senior Master Sgt. Russell Rackers.*
- *Maintenance squadron junior enlisted member, Staff Sgt. Dustin Wright.*
- *Maintenance squadron senior enlisted member, Senior Master Sgt. Gary Thornberry.*
- *Maintenance operations flight junior enlisted member, Airman 1st Class Sheila Cook.*
- *Maintenance operations flight senior enlisted member, Master Sgt. Charles Cousins.*
- *Aircraft maintenance squadron junior enlisted member, Senior Airman Andrea Bax.*
- *Aircraft maintenance squadron senior enlisted member, Master Sgt. Daniel Thessen.*
- *Maintenance group junior enlisted member, Staff Sgt. Dustin Wright.*
- *Maintenance group senior enlisted member, Senior Master Sgt. Gary Thornberry.*
- *Crew chief of the year, Tech. Sgt. Kellie Askew.*
- *Assistant crew chief of the year, Master Sgt. Jim McGilton.*
- *Load crew of the year, Master Sgt. Kenneth McKee, Senior Airman Phillip Trivalent and Staff Sgt. Lincoln McCoy.*
- *Community service award, Master Sgt. Jerry Nicas.*



PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. WILLIAM HUNTINGTON

Mr. Tim Storms, Ms. Wendy Santos, Ms. Toni Myers, Ms. Brenda George, Ms. Judy Sarrazin and Ms. Julie Gibbs make up the 442nd Fighter Wing's Financial Management Office. In addition to overseeing a budget of more than \$60 million, this staff of experts offers first-rate customer service to Reservists and civilians in the wing.

442nd's budget experts

Keep wing's financial fortunes flying

By Staff Sgt. Tom Talbert

Benjamin Franklin put it best when he said, "If your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep will be your downfall."

Everyone faces this economic reality on a monthly basis in their homes and businesses. For some, this might account for the reasons members entered the Air Force Reserve in the first place. But if managing the books creates a stress in an individual's life, imagine what it must be like to work in the Financial Management office for the 442nd Fighter Wing.

The staff of six's daily tasks include overseeing a colossal-sized budget that this year should exceed \$60 million.

"I love what I do, but when I get home the last thing I or any of my staff want to do is pay our own bills," said Mr. Tim Storms, the wing's chief financial manager.

This crowded office disperses expenditures for more than 1,200 traditional reservists, more than 260 civilians and 100 Individual Mobilization Augmentees.

Taking into account between 10 to 12 pay transactions for every individual on active-duty orders, the monumental numbers of monthly paychecks that are issued to traditional reservists and the departmental budgets that need approval, it's not difficult to see that this could be one of the busiest agencies in the wing.

"My job ranges from the equivalent of being a conductor of a large orchestra, making sure everyone plays without missing a note, to herding cats," Mr. Storms said. The numbers this office deals with speak volumes for themselves.

Last year the finance office handled nearly 10,000 sets of orders and more than 11,000 travel vouchers. They paid out more than \$2 million for jet fuel, \$330,000 in clothing issue, nearly \$16 million in Reserve pay and travel entitlements. Don't forget that many times while they tackled these monumental fiscal issues, they probably dropped all that paper work to meet wing members with a big smile and great customer service as they walked in the office to ask questions important to them.

Rest assured this office is the most scrutinized and accountable of all in the fighter wing and the Federal government for that matter.

Next time the gas-per-gallon price increases, consider that the price of aviation fuel and items needed to run a fighter wing go up as well. These affect the already structured and allocated budgets of the 442nd Finance Office.

One figure Mr. Storms is glowingly proud of is the economic impact numbers of the 442nd FW. This is how the local economy is affected by the wing's existence. More than \$48 million is pumped into the economy annually, a benefit for the wing and its neighbors.

Heritage to horizon



Three years after 'superb actions' prevent detonation of munitions stockpile at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq

'Ammo' NCO awarded Airman's Medal

By Maj. David Kurlle

While running with scissors is considered dangerous, running with a live 120-millimeter mortar shell, while it emits smoke in your hand is considerably more hazardous.

Despite the risks, an NCO from the 442nd Maintenance Squadron's Munitions Flight "defused" a potentially lethal situation in Iraq by dousing a smoking, 120mm, white-phosphorous mortar round in a pond during the summer of 2003.

For his efforts, Master Sgt. Bob Jackson was awarded the Airman's medal by Lt. Gen. John Bradley, commander of Air Force Reserve Command, Oct. 23 of this year.

"I didn't have time to think," Sergeant Jackson said, recalling the experience three years later. "It's just action and reaction, that's the only way you can survive out there."

In August 2003 members of the 442nd Fighter Wing were deployed to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, supporting the invasion of Iraq. At Kirkuk they found huge stockpiles of ordnance, which included SA-2 surface to air missiles, high-explosive mortar rounds and rocket-propelled grenades.

Members of the munitions flight, who normally prepare, build and store bombs, rockets and bullets for use on the wing's A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft, were pressed into service to dispose of more than 300,000 pounds of munitions left over from the Iraqi military.

"The ordnance that had been stockpiled had been degraded," Sergeant Jackson said. "It was very unstable."

According to the citation for his Airman's Medal, Sergeant Jackson was supervising a team disposing of the munitions when he "noticed smoke coming from a 120-millimeter projectile.

"Realizing the material was white phosphorus and knowing

what would happen if it were to detonate, he quickly decided to render the highly flammable, extremely dangerous weapon inert by submerging it into water," the citation reads.

The brawny Sergeant Jackson picked up the mortar round, ran approximately 100 yards and dropped in a man-made pond used as a reservoir of water for fighting fires.

"If it had ignited, it would have set off the whole stockpile and would have propagated through the bomb dump," Sergeant Jackson said.

As an "ammo" troop, Sergeant Jackson works with white phosphorus frequently, as the A-10 fires "willy pete" rockets to mark targets in combat and uses it in some types of flares.

Since the material is so dangerous, Airmen in the munitions flight always take extra precautions when working with it.

"We either have to have a mode of egress or a way to get rid of the flare or rocket," Sergeant Jackson said. "When you cut the oxygen off of white phosphorus, it will stop burning."

"His superb actions prevented the serious injury, if not loss of life, of all of his team members and 14 other military personnel in the immediate area," according to the award's written citation.

"The significance of this selfless act cannot be overstated."

According to the Air Force, the Airman's medal is awarded to an individual who has "distinguished himself or herself by a heroic act, usually at the voluntary risk of his or her life but not involving actual combat."

Sergeant Jackson's daring may have earned him one of the Air Force's highest honors, but he keeps everything in perspective.

"There's a lot of guys out there that put their life on the line all the time," he said. "I was just doing what needed to be done."

Master Sgt. Bob Jackson checks a trailer of 500-pound bombs in the munitions storage area at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, while deployed there in July. Sergeant Jackson, from the 442nd Maintenance Squadron's Munitions Flight, was awarded the Airman's Medal Oct. 23, for disposing of a smoking, 120-millimeter mortar shell in August 2003 while deployed to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq.



U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY MAJ. DAVID KURLE

An A-10 from the 442nd Fighter Wing flies a combat mission over Afghanistan in May. More than 300 Citizen Airmen and six A-10 Thunderbolt IIs deployed to the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing at Bagram Airfield from the Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., from May to September 2006 in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. (U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt. Jeffrey Ballenski)

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

TO THE FAMILY OF:



**"This courage and willingness to defend our freedom
is a beacon for all Americans."**

**- Lt. Gen. John Bradley,
commander, Air Force Reserve Command**