

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing

**442nd MDS
deploys for
Patriot '06**

**Bagram
summer**

Changes, challenges bring exciting future

By Col. Steve Arthur

Thank you for the professional change of command ceremony and warm reception. It is a tremendous honor to be a part of the 442nd Fighter Wing, and I look forward to working with all of you. Please have patience as I learn your names and processes that make this unit so great.

The future of the 442nd FW and the Air Force Reserve Command are exciting. I firmly believe our command has the right people, in the right leadership positions, at the right time. Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiatives created bigger fighter squadrons to allow for increased AEF commitments while reducing overhead expenses.

Gen. John Bradley's focus on improving A-10 warfighting capability will become reality in September as we start to modify our aircraft with improved computer processing, color displays, moving map capability and data link. Gen. Richard Collin's recent 10th Air Force Combat Planning Council placed A-10 Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAM), global position system guided weapons, and beyond line-of-sight communications at the top of our Numbered Air Force's priorities. Our mission to provide combat-ready people and equipment continues to increase capability.

The transition to a 24-aircraft unit will also create new challenges. Our facilities need to expand, and we need to continue to recruit the experienced, highly skilled personnel that will support our dedication to the mission. Temporary buildings and construction sites will soon be the norm, and our recruiters will be working hard to bring new faces into the wing. I need all of you to



Col. Steve Arthur

help us stay focused on our mission, and provide world-class support to our personnel currently deployed into combat.

I am very proud to be a member of the 442nd FW, and thankful for the contributions each of you have made to the defense of our Nation.

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing

' Inside ' Inside ' Inside ' Inside '

September 2006
Charge-of-quarters

Commentary page 2



JAG

Legal troops
in Baghdad

PAGES 4

PATRIOT '06

442nd MDS takes it
to the field

PAGES 6 & 7



BAGRAM SUMMER

Reservists keep
A-10s flying

PAGE 8



Lodging program upgraded page 5
Heritage: Surviving a highjacking page 10
Reservist rights page 11



MASTER SGT. ERNIE FERGUSON 303RD FIGHTER 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: Senior Airman Richard Danford, 138th Medical Group, Oklahoma Air National Guard; and Tech. Sgt. Christopher E. Miller, 442nd Medical Squadron, perform an X-ray during Expeditionary Medical Support System training at Fort McCoy, Wis., as part of Patriot 06. For more on Patriot '06 see pages six and seven. (U.S. Air Force photo/Master Sgt. Chance Babin)



T 442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear

1ST LT. TERRELL EIKNER 442ND MAINTENANCE SQUADRON

This month's 442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear is 1st Lt. Terrell Eikner, a 442nd Maintenance Squadron maintenance officer.

Lieutenant Eikner joined the 442nd from the Air Force Reserve Command's maintenance officer training program in June 2004. Before entering the program he served for 12 years as an enlisted guidance and control technician on B-52, H-model, bomber aircraft at Barksdale Air Force Base, La.

While assigned to the 442nd MXS, Lieutenant Eikner created the Reserve Officers Association and Reserve Enlisted Association scholarship program. This program awards an annual \$500 scholarship to any 442nd FW family member.

The lieutenant is a firm believer in taking care of people. In fact, he personally eliminated the backlog of more than 100 overdue awards for individuals who had deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Lt. Eikner wrote, edited, and tracked approximately 135 decorations.

Additionally, he took the reins as the Wright Flight tour coordinator; set up tours and taught history of flight classes to more than 120 inner city youth.

On the war front, he was a key leadership member of the en-route support team that deployed 14 A-10 aircraft to Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Lt. Eikner is an outstanding asset to the 442nd Maintenance Squadron and September's Tip of the Spear for the 442nd Fighter Wing.

MOHAWK

Vol. 58, No. 9
September 2006

This funded Air Force Reserve newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services.

Contents of the Mohawk are not necessarily the official views of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Air Force.

The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 442nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs Office, 931 Arnold Ave., Whiteman AFB, MO 65305-5070.

All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

Deadline for article submission is 12:30 p.m. Sunday during the unit training assembly preceding the desired month of publication.

COMMANDER, 442ND FW
Col. Steve Arthur
CHIEF, PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Maj. David Kurle
PA NCOIC/EDITOR
Master Sgt. Bill Huntington
PA STAFF
Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown
Staff Sgt. Tom Talbert
Staff Sgt. Greg Frost

For more information, call Public Affairs at commercial voice number: (660) 687-3842 or fax at: (660) 687-2985. DSN: 975-3842/3844, or fax: DSN: 975-2985. E-mail submissions or questions to: william.huntington@whiteman.af.mil

This newspaper is printed on recycled paper.

Wing JA office practices law in Baghdad

**Contributed by Col. Joe Rosa
442nd Fighter Wing
Staff Judge Advocate**

Three members of the 442nd Staff Judge Advocate office, Lt. Col. Joe Rosa, Tech. Sgt. Linda Yeates and Staff Sgt. Kate Pina, are deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

They joined twelve other Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard and active-duty attorneys and paralegals deployed in late June on 60-day orders to Task Force 134, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I).

Task Force 134 is a joint service task force based in Baghdad responsible for detainee operations in Iraq with the three 442nd reservists working in the US Embassy ... one of Sadaam Hussein's former palaces ... in the International Zone.

Sergeant Yeates is assigned to the Combined Review and Release Board (CRRB) offices located in the north ballroom on the first floor of the Embassy, while Colonel Rosa and Sergeant Pina are assigned to the Central Criminal Court of Iraq Liaison office (CCCI) on the second floor.

"Having the CRRB and CCCI offices in one of Sadaam's palaces is ironic given that just a few years ago it was the center of his repressive regime," Sergeant Yeates said. "We are helping the Iraqi government establish institutions based upon the rule of law, not the rule of political parties, tribes or individuals. We hope we can soon return the palace to the people of Iraq."

The CRRB is a board consisting of MNF-I members and Iraqi government officials, and it continually meets to review the decision to detain individuals as security detainees.

The legal basis for holding someone as a security detainee is United Nations Security resolution 1546 which says that the coalition may hold an individual based upon the capturing unit's belief that there is probable cause to believe the individual has committed a crime or is a threat to the stability and security of



Lt. Col. Joe Rosa, Tech. Sgt. Linda Yeates and Staff Sgt. Kate Pina shortly before deploying to Iraq.

Iraq or otherwise poses an imperative threat to the security of MNF-I and the people of Iraq. The CRRB usually holds those who have attacked or attempted to attack coalition forces.

The CCCI is the new Iraqi criminal court system that the coalition has helped organize and equip. The CCCI is located in the Red Zone in a former museum dedicated to the glory of Sadaam Hussein.

"We refer detainee cases to CCCI when we think we have sufficient proof to proceed," said Colonel Rosa.

No classified material or intelligence material can be used at CCCI and once a detainee is convicted at a CCCI trial, he is moved into the separate Iraqi prison system.

"In some cases, we need to decline referral to the CCCI because we believe the Iraqi hearing or trial judges, using their own methods of evaluating evidence will not refer to trial and convict," Colonel Rosa said. "If we refer and the case is dismissed at the investigative hearing or at trial, the affected detainee has a good chance of being released so we want to make sure we take only solid cases to CCCI, otherwise keeping them in confinement as a security detainee is the best possible outcome."

Detainee operations in Iraq is a large and complicated mission. In addition to CCCI and CRRB, it includes all of the detention facilities around Iraq, all of the personnel required to guard and care for thousands of detainees and a transportation network to safely move them to and from court for hearings and trials.

"Ideally, hearings are scheduled shortly after an individual is detained so that our witnesses are readily available to testify in person," Sergeant Pina said. "In many cases, some or all of our witnesses have redeployed out of Iraq, and in those cases, we are able to have them testify through video teleconferencing facilities anywhere in the world."

"Working in a multinational forces environment is unique and exciting" said Tech. Sgt. Yeates. "Seeing all the people serving their different countries coming together to support the mission in Iraq is an amazing process. Just going to the dining hall can be an adventure by sharing a meal with someone from a different service or country. I have met so many people and listened to some great stories. I am happy I volunteered to be a part of this mission."



Above: The Central Criminal Court of Iraq is located in a former museum once dedicated to the glory of Sadaam Hussein.

Right: The interior of the main Central Court of Iraq court room.





PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. VICKIE CHAMBERS

Col. Steve Arthur, 442nd Fighter Wing commander, (right) presents Airman Basic Barry Culbreath, 442nd Mission Support Flight, an award for supporting the Command's mission by volunteering time to help with recruiting. Airman Culbreath gave tips and advice to new Airmen before they departed for basic training at

Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and helped with recruiting at the Wings Over Whiteman air show. The award, signed by Col. Francis Mungavin, director of Reserve recruiting, read: "the Air Force Reserve extends this expression of appreciation for outstanding contributions to the accomplishment of the recruiting mission."

Wing lodging program upgraded

*By Master Sgt. Travis Stickle
442nd Services Flight*

The Automated Lodging Reservation System (ALRS) has been upgraded and will now allow wing members to select a roommate while making a reservation.

Since May, wing members have been requested to share their thoughts and comments with the 442nd Services Flight Lodging manager to enhance the new ALRS. Hundreds of requests were collected and reviewed and upon completion of that review, the two most popular requests included to allow for a way for members to select their own roommates and to enable members who car pool stay to at the same location.

After coordination with the ALRS programmers a solution was reached.

An Airman identification number has been assigned to each member. That number is given to the desired roommate to input during their reservation process. Each roommate needs to do this process to complete the roommate reservation.

Below are simple instructions to secure a reservation and

have your roommate of choice. This process works the same for members who carpool.

Step by step roommate reservation instructions:

Step 1: Call the ALRS and select option seven to retrieve an Airman ID number. Be sure to have a pen or pencil handy to write down your Airman ID number.

Step 2: Both parties will call the ALRS and make their reservation. At the end of the reservation the system will ask you to input your roommate's Airman ID number. Make sure the desired roommate's ID number is entered and not your own.

What happens next? Upon completion the system will give you your location and dates of stay. At check-in a roster will be made available by the hotel front desk clerk to sign-in. Members must sign for their room and the roommate's name will be listed next to your name allowing check-in faster.

It is important to note that if the roommate does not complete their part, you will still keep your reservation but a roommate will be assigned by the 442nd Lodging manager. Changing roommates at the hotel will not be allowed unless the Charge of Quarters first sergeant has been notified and approved the move.

Patriot '06

Medics get EMEDS certification

Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Chance Babin
Air Force Reserve Command
Public Affairs

FORT MCCOY, Wisc. — A group of 60 Air Force reservists here, led by the 442nd Medical Squadron, got their hands dirty setting up and running an expeditionary medical support system, all the while gaining their required EMEDS certification during Patriot '06. Patriot ran.

Patriot '06 is a National Guard Bureau exercise which ran from July 15-28, including a capstone exercise taking place July 23-26, with members of the Air and Army National Guard and Air Force

reservists participating in joint operational environment.

With most of the more than 2,200 Patriot '06 players at the Volk Field Combat Readiness Training Center 30 miles away, the overall exercise simulated a real-world deployment, enhanced by the presence of reservists, active-duty troops and coalition forces from Great Britain, the Netherlands, Turkmenistan and Canada.

The EMEDS system was built in 1999, replacing large cumbersome air-transportable hospitals of the past. EMEDS allows treatment from first responder to Level III medical care and is the core ground medical system used in the Air Expeditionary Force and Homeland Security.

While the lead unit for the Fort McCoy EMEDS group was the 442nd MDS, the instructors were lead by Air National Guard people from Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center in Michigan.

"I've done many exercises with Alpena," said Lt. Col. Joanie Peterson, commander for EMEDS at Fort McCoy and the 442nd Medical Squadron's chief of training. "They are excellent, professional and keep you motivated to a succinct schedule. And you walk away with experience that you can take with you to war, if that should happen. They give you all the tools and experience you'll need."

While Alpena is the lead, the cadre is also represented by instructors from Sheppard AFB, Texas, and Brooks City Base, Texas. Sheppard is the home of Reserve EMEDS, while Brooks is the active duty's EMEDS home.

"The students get their EMEDS certification out of this and they later play a role in Patriot '06 as a medical field hospital and a triage to prepare them for aeromedical evacuation," said

Tech. Sgt. Chris Keller, an Alpena CRTC instructor.

The task of the EMEDS is to

triage p
them fo
Tech. S
ray tech

Aft
student
which i
months

The
bonded
Sergean

"I o
Sergean
been gr

tive an
there an

The
setting
experie
perature
enheit.

"It
said. "V

took br
Bu

out to a
and can
joyed.

"It
said Ser
informa
a short t

"T
istic as
able us

plym
is



patients, treat them and prepare for aeromedical evacuation, said Sgt. Christopher E. Miller, an X-ray technician from the 442nd MDS. After one week of training, the medics receive their certification, which is a requirement every 40

days. The Air National Guard and Reserve medics joined together quickly, according to Sgt. Keller.

"I can't tell one from the other," Sgt. Keller said. "The group has a great team spirit. They show a lot of initiative and are very willing to get out there and work hard."

During the first two days the group was setting up the EMEDS, Wisconsin was experiencing a heat wave, with temperatures reaching 100 degrees Fahr-

enheit. "It was really hot," Sergeant Keller said. "We had to make sure people were hydrated and kept safety in mind." But the one thing that has stood out for all participants is the teamwork and camaraderie the group has en-

joyed. "There's been some intense training," Sergeant Miller said. "There's a lot of physical training they are throwing at you in a short time."

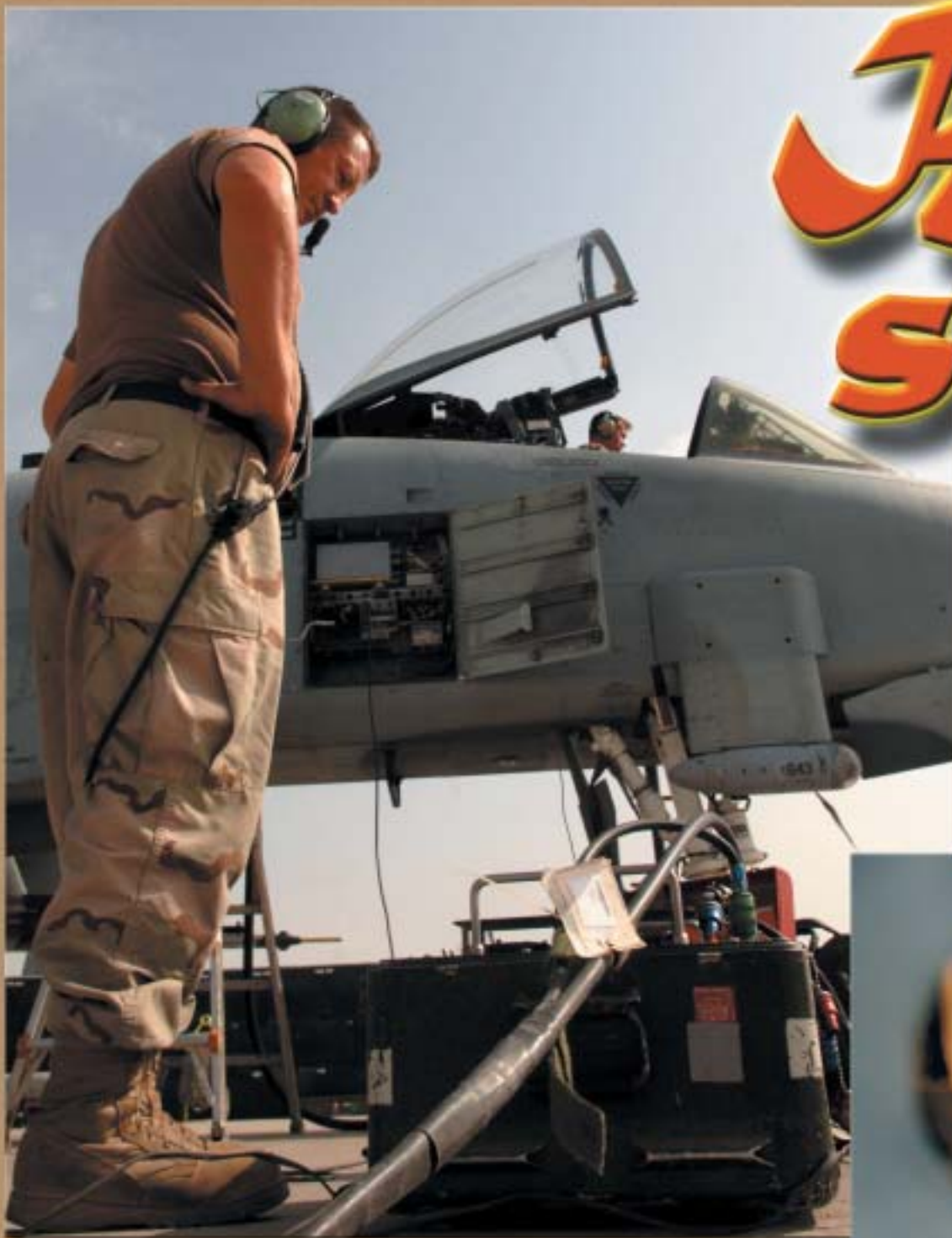
"They are trying to keep it as realistic as possible, which is going to ensure we are better prepared for a deployment," he said. "The best thing about this is the good teamwork. Everyone has chipped in and done their part. We're all on the same page. We are a cohesive unit."

(AFRC News Service)



Above: Air Force Reserve Tech. Sgt. Tim Grant (left), 442nd Medical Squadron, Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., and Tech. Sgt. Dion Duenas, 704th MDS, Kirtland AFB, N.M., carry Senior Airman James Young, also a reservist in the 442nd MDS, into the emergency room of an Expeditionary Medical Support System at Fort McCoy, Wisc., during Patriot '06.

Left: A combined team of Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard medics set up an Alaska tent as part of the Expeditionary Medical Support System, EMEDS certification training at Fort McCoy, Wisc., as part of Patriot 06, an Air National Guard-lead exercise.



Bag sum

Wing rese
keep A-10s

Above: Tech. Sgt. Carl Clark, left, and Master Sgt. Dan Abrams, in the cockpit, do an altimeter check on an A-10 Thunderbolt II on Aug. 17 on Bagram Airfield's flightline. Both sergeants are in the Air Force Reserve's 442nd Fighter Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. A-10s at Bagram have supported two offensives this summer, Mountain Thrust and Mountain Lion. (U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Orville F. Desjarlais Jr.)

At right: Senior Airman Lauryn Boberg repairs a nut plate on the nose-wheel landing gear door of an A-10 Thunderbolt II at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, Aug 6. Airman Boberg is an Air Force Reserve sheet metal specialist deployed to the 455 Expeditionary Maintenance Group at Bagram from the 442nd Fighter Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. Maintenance Airmen at Bagram are working around the clock to inspect A-10 combat aircraft every 400 flight-hours in what is called a "phase inspection." The A-10 provides close air support to U.S. and Coalition forces fighting extremists in Operation Enduring Freedom. (US Air Force photo by Maj. David Kurle)



Team mer

ervists
s flying



PHOTO BY MASTER SGT. ORVILLE F. DESJARLAIS

Capt. Jason Weiser rides a bike during a foreign object damage walk Aug. 1 on the flight line at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. The captain's section built the bike while

they've been deployed here. Captain Weiser is a member of the 455th Expeditionary Maintenance Group.

442nd Maintenance officer honored at Bagram

*By Maj. David Kurlle
455th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs*

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – A maintenance officer deployed here from the 442nd Fighter Wing was named the top company grade officer for the month of July in the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing here.

Capt. Jason Weiser, the officer in charge of the A-10 Aircraft Maintenance Unit, received the honor Aug. 1 during a promotion and awards ceremony from the 455th AEW commander, Brig. Gen. Christopher Miller.

"I was actually surprised, with all the competition from throughout the wing," Capt. Weiser said.

He competed against nominees from four other groups deployed throughout the Afghanistan Theater.

Among the actions credited to Capt. Weiser was the establishment of a weekly tour of the A-10 Thunderbolt II for U.S. and Coalition members deployed here. He also produced 346 combat A-10 sorties through his leadership in the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, which resulted in full-time close air support to U.S. and Coalition ground forces.

The 442nd FW has Air Force Reservists deployed here flying and maintaining the wing's A-10 aircraft until the end of September.

Capt. Weiser credits his impact on the morale of his maintenance Airmen with helping him get the award.

"I just try to have a positive impact on the flight line," he said. "I try to keep the aircraft moving and everyone in high spirits."

442nd member First Officer on hijacked airliner

Reprinted from the November 1969 issue of the *Mohawk*

Editor's note: According to the on-line encyclopedia, Wikipedia, "in August 1969, leaders in the Palestinian left-wing organization, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, learned that Yitzak Rabin, then Israeli Ambassador to the United States, was scheduled to be aboard TWA flight 840. Two operatives, Leila Khaled and Salim Issawi hijacked the plane. The operation was successful, although Rabin was not aboard. The hijackers demanded that the pilot land in Damascus. The hostages were released and no one was injured, although the nose section of plane, a Boeing 707, was blown up." A 442nd member, then Captain Harry Oakley, was first officer on the flight and related his ordeal for the Kansas City Times.

TWA Flight 840 from Rome through Athens to Tel Aviv began as a "routine flight in every respect," according to Capt. Harry Oakley, a [Boeing] 707 copilot who also flies C-124 [Globemaster IIs] for the [442nd Military Airlift Wing's 304th Military Airlift Squadron].

But the "routine" character of the flight changed abruptly over the east coast of Italy.

"The hostess opened the door," Captain Oakley said in an interview for the *Kansas City Times*, "and a guy about six-feet two-inches tall carrying a .38 caliber automatic pistol in one hand and a grenade in the other burst into the cockpit. A woman, armed the same way, was right behind him. We had no doubt in our minds about what was going on."

The hijackers identified themselves as members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

"The man didn't speak very good English but the woman did," Captain Oakley said. "She told us to do as she commanded or they would blow up the plane. They looked like they had the wherewithal to do it too."

"The Captain [Dean Carter of New York] said, 'Where do you want to go and what do you want to do?' We were going to go anywhere they wanted as long as we had the fuel and we could do it safely.

"The woman started a little harangue about who they were. She said they wanted to make some broadcasts over Athens, Rhodes, Nicosia, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Beirut and Damascus, and she wanted to go to Tel Aviv.

"She had a little propaganda spiel written out on separate sheets of paper for each place. As we went over we got hold of the control tower and handed her the microphone."

Fuel was a major concern for the crew.

"Under the circumstances we were pretty sure they didn't want to land at Tel Aviv. We picked three alternates we thought they might be interested in—Beirut, Damascus and Cairo," Captain Oakley said. Cairo would have been tight if we had to make the others.

"The woman knew how about much fuel we had. They had apparently got hold of one of our manuals. But they had an exaggerated idea of our fuel.

"The woman ordered us to drop 12,000 feet and to circle the airport in Tel Aviv once while she broadcast. Approaching Israel,



PHOTO BY K. K. PIAR, KANSAS CITY STAR

Capt. Harry Oakley

we called the tower at Tel Aviv and told them what we were going to do. They just sat and listened while the woman broadcast. Both of the [the hijackers] were pretty excited. That woman really cussed out the control tower people. We circled the airport once and she said to fly to Damascus. I think she was beginning to believe we were getting short on fuel.

"She pulled out a map, a TWA navigation chart. It had a line penciled from Tel Aviv to Damascus. We headed northeast. We called the Beirut tower and talked to them but headed on to Damascus. The woman told us to use the call signal

'Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine,' and they [Damascus control tower] seemed to get the message. We didn't tell them we had been hijacked, but I think they understood. They spoke good English.

"We told them we were very short on fuel and wanted to land immediately. They cleared us for the runway we wanted—a good runway, 10,000 feet long and 150 feet wide. The airport is brand new.

"The captain landed the plane. He really greased it in. It was just beautiful. He stopped it fast and we shut everything down. The fuel tanks were about dry. We might have been able to make it around the traffic patten once; I don't know.

"The cabin crew had the plane cleared in less than a minute. We stayed in the cockpit with the hijackers; then we made a quick check of the plane to make sure everyone was out, then bailed out separate exits ourselves. About 20 or 30 seconds later the hijackers came out.

"Some of the crew milled around the plane for about 10 minutes. I looked it over carefully. The hijackers walked about 80 yards away. The army was coming out on the field. They didn't seem to know who we were. They were suspicious. Some greeted the hijackers like blood brothers but most headed toward the groups of passengers.

"Then I saw the man [hijacker] run to the plane and throw something in the front door. There was a bang, not very loud. I thought it was a hand grenade that was a dud.

"A little later—I don't know just how long it was—he made a second trip to the airplane. He climbed up to the right galley door. When he got down, he fired two clips of bullets into the right wing. I couldn't get the [Syrian] army to do anything. They didn't seem to understand. Then I got an army colonel who had just arrived and he finally told his men to get the man and the woman [the hijackers]. [Then] the plane exploded. It tore off the nose."

Captain Oakley said their treatment while they were stranded in Damascus was neither good nor bad; "They didn't do anything against us, but they didn't do anything to help us either."

On the next night most passengers and all of the crew but the aircraft captain, were flown out on a chartered Italian airliner.

U.S.E.R.R.A.

Justice Department Web site explains military rights

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Department of Justice has launched a Web site to protect servicemembers' rights, said the attorney general.

Alberto R. Gonzales, speaking to the Disabled American Veterans annual convention in Chicago, said the Justice Department has made it a priority to enforce civil rights laws for American servicemembers.

"The law recognizes that although we can never thank you enough for your service, we can take away some of the worries that Soldiers might face when they are deployed," he said in prepared remarks.

The government promises that servicemembers' jobs will still be theirs when they come home, and that they cannot be discriminated against by their employers because of their military service. The United States vows that servicemembers will be able to vote and that their vote will be counted. And it promises that servicemembers "will have procedural protections in civil actions, like lawsuits or property re-possession, when serving overseas."

The Justice Department Web site, www.servicemembers.gov, outlines the rights servicemembers have under the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act, the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act and the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

"These basic civil rights are enforced by the Department of Justice, and I can assure you that the department's staff and prosecutors are deeply committed to these enforcement efforts," Mr. Gonzales said. "We feel that it is an honor to serve those in uniform in this way. It is our way of saying thank you for your service."

The attorney general said these are not just "pie in the sky" rights, but issues that directly affect people.

In one case, Justice Department officials filed its first complaint alleging that American Airlines violated rights of employees who also serve as military pilots. The case was brought on behalf of three military pilots employed by American Airlines. It states that the airline reduced the employment benefits of pilots who had taken military leave, while not reducing the same benefits for pilots who had taken similar, non-military leave, Mr. Gonzales said.

"In another vivid example of the people for whom we enforce these laws, the department recently won a consent decree from an employer who terminated employment of a serviceman named Richard White the very same day that Richard told his boss he was being called to active duty," the attorney general said. "The consent decree requires the employer to pay back wages to Mr. White."

"What leads an employer to treat a Soldier like an inconvenience is something for a higher power to judge. But here on Earth, we have USERRA, and we'll use it for Richard White and for soldiers like him, as often as is necessary."

Voting is another servicemember right the Justice Department guards.

"Earlier this year, (the department) addressed long-standing structural issues affecting uniformed military personnel posted both in this country and overseas who wished to vote in North Carolina, South Carolina and Alabama," Mr. Gonzales said.

These states had run-off elections too close to the primary elections to allow these voters to receive and return ballots. With cooperation from state election officials, the department was able to redress each of these violations.

"As the 2006 general election approaches, we will continue vigilant protection of the voting rights of servicemembers, their families and other overseas citizens," he said.

Mr. Gonzales also addressed the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act.

"Thanks to this law, men and women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan have procedural protections in place that will allow them to be less distracted by litigation back home — by someone trying to repossess a leased car, evict their spouse and children, sell their house at an auction or run up penalties on credit cards with 21-percent interest rates," he said. "It's hard to respond to a civil lawsuit while you're focused on improvised explosive devices, and the law protects servicemembers for that reason."

Enforcement of this law is a readiness and morale issue, he said.

"Men and women in uniform, like all Americans, have to honor their obligations," he said. "However, Congress long ago decided, wisely I think, to provide protections to them against lawsuits while deployed overseas on active duty."

Gonzales urged any servicemember with questions to go to the Justice Department Web site. Military lawyers can help servicemembers and their families navigate through the laws.

U.S.E.R.R.A.
Know your rights

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

**An 442nd Fighter Wing
A-10 Thunderbolt II
based at Bagram
Airfield, Afghanistan,
takes on fuel from a KC-
135 Stratotanker from
the 22nd Expeditionary
Air Refueling Squadron.
The 22nd EARS is based
at Manas Air Base,
Kyrgyzstan. (U.S. Air
Force photo/Airman 1st
Class Lonnie Mast)**

TO THE FAMILY OF:



**The future of the 442nd Fighter Wing
and the Air Force Reserve Command are exciting.
I firmly believe our command has the right people,
in the right leadership positions, at the right time.**

-- Col. Steve Arthur