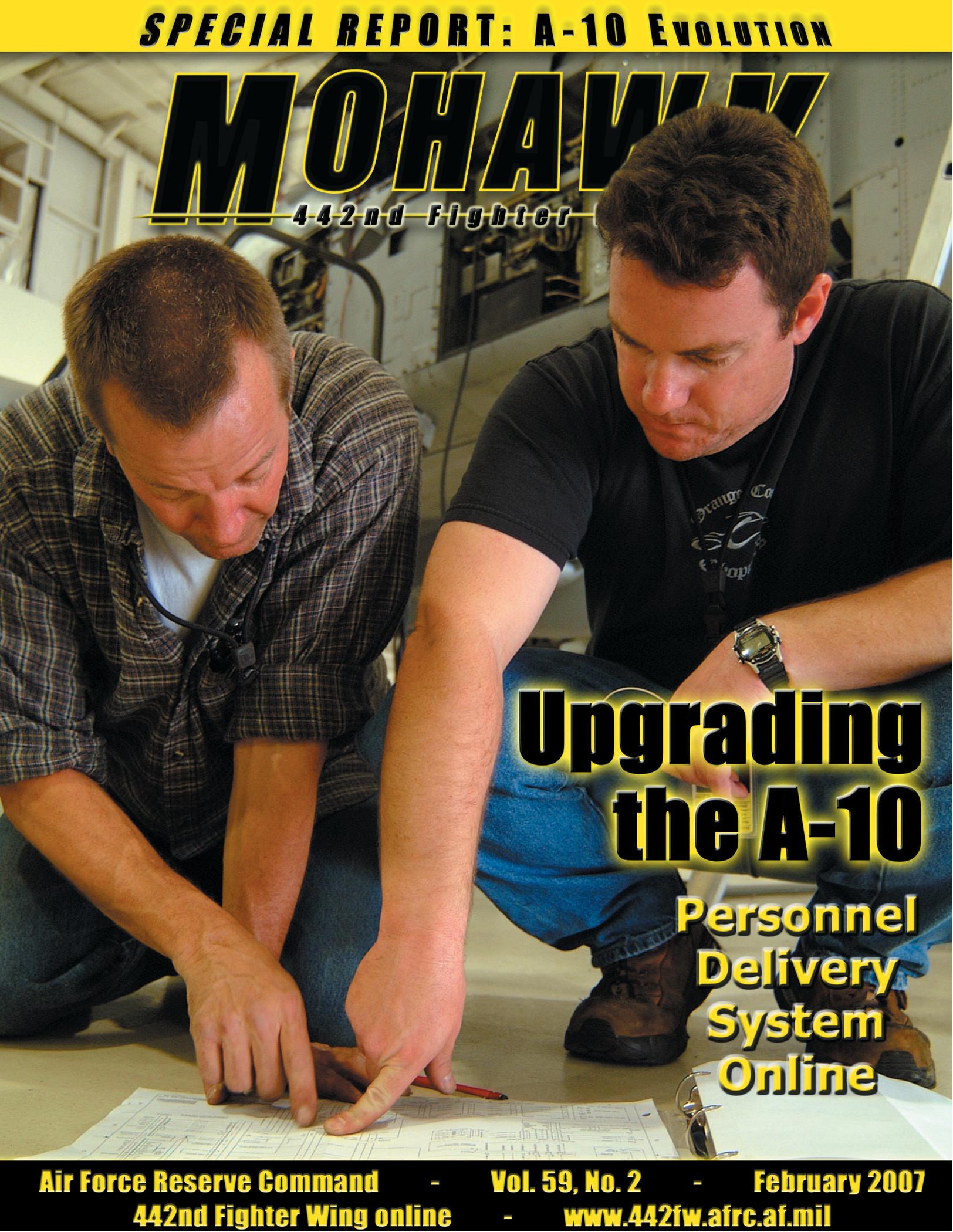


SPECIAL REPORT: A-10 EVOLUTION

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter



Upgrading the A-10

**Personnel
Delivery
System
Online**



The Enlisted Perspective

By CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley

8 January 2007

Weekly Roll Call

I'm extremely proud of the tremendous dedication and sacrifice each of you make everyday to ensure the security of our Nation. Our Air Force is the greatest on this planet because of your professionalism, dedication and ability to get the job done right. America's air, space and cyberspace power is second to none.

One way we can continue to add to our effectiveness is by increasing our communications. Information flows at an incredibly rapid pace today and electronics have too often replaced people talking to people. We all have access to good information on email, on our Air Force web sites and through the television media. However, many Airmen work long shifts and then have to share an office computer to check email or military web sites. This doesn't make it easy to keep up with the information you really need to know. Even though we are all busy, it's vital our civilians, officers and enlisted (CEOs) stay informed on the latest topics.

Our Chief of Staff recently mandated weekly Roll Call for supervisors at every level. These weekly meetings should help keep Airmen informed on current issues, clear up confusion and dispel rumors, and provide additional face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams. A weekly product, called "Roll Call" highlights the topics that supervisors should include in the weekly meetings. "Roll Call" is posted on the Air Force Link (www.af.mil) every Friday. This makes it easy for supervisors to print it, and any other documents released by our Air Force Senior leaders, and then share this info with their co-workers. Back in my time as an aircraft maintainer, we had a daily Roll Call that allowed current information to be shared with everyone.

Getting together once a week where we can discuss the current hot topics and have a chance for face-to-face contact with everyone is invaluable. If there are still questions about a particular issue, then there's a great opportunity to address this up the chain of command for clarification.

We have the best educated, trained and motivated Airmen in our Air Force history. Roll Call helps everyone appreciate the opportunities and challenges our Air Force faces. The tried and true statement, "knowledge is power," is more accurate today than ever because of the changing and challenging environment. Keep up the great work and take advantage of your Roll Call to ensure you understand how today's Air Force issues will affect you.



Rodney J. McKinley
RODNEY J. MCKINLEY
Chief Master Sergeant
of the Air Force

MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing

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Tip of the Spear

SENIOR MASTER SGT. CHARLENE RHOADS 442ND COMMUNICATIONS FLIGHT

Senior Master Sgt. Charlene M. Rhoads, 442nd Communications Flight, is the superintendent of a 17-member flight. She created a one-stop intranet Web site that allows the wing's unit fitness program managers, physical training leaders and commanders to get Air Force fitness information and accomplish their responsibilities accurately and efficiently. In addition to the site including all applicable Air Force instructions, forms, policies, guidance and procedures, it also provides templates used by the UFPMs and PTLs, allowing easy fill-in applicability. She accomplished this within a week of the tasking.

Known for her computer skills, Sergeant Rhoads customized and implemented the Base Attack and Recovery Tracking System in preparation for the wing's Operational Readiness Exercise, Phase I, in January. This program provided real-time status reporting to all unit and wing command centers.

She also designed, programmed and implemented the Reserve personnel appropriation, readiness management periods and unit training assemblies request process, including tracking logs for the 442nd Mission Support Group. The system enables all units to track orders by type, name, unit and date while summing expenditures and forecasting run rates for the remaining portion of the fiscal year providing the most accurate system employed to date.

Sergeant Rhoads is definitely one of the wing's top senior non-commissioned officers who consistently demonstrates service before self.

www.442fw.afrc.af.mil

February 2007
Charge-of-quarters



MASTER SGT. LARRY WASHINGTON 442ND MISSION SUPPORT FLIGHT

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: Tech. Sgts. and air reserve technicians Paul Hanson, left, and Mike Price consult a wiring diagram while testing a newly-installed smart multi-function color display on A-10 number 605. Members of the 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's Specialist Flight typically spend one day installing the system and another full day testing it. See related story starting on page six. (Photo by Maj. David Kurle)

MOHAWK

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February 2007

"May I help you?"

Personnel center transforms MPF customer service

By Master Sgt. Bill Huntington

"The times, they are a-changing" may say it best for the Air Reserve Personnel Center, based in Denver, as it attempts its biggest change in personnel services yet through its Personnel Services Delivery transformation.

Department of Defense and Air Force leadership mandated the change to centralize personnel functions through Web-based applications. Their bottom line was to have the Web replace most in-person contacts with a Military Personnel Flight and thereby realize the advantages of accuracy, expanded capability and cost savings.

According to ARPC figures, 10 percent of personnel transactions now occur online with five percent of transactions handled by phone and 85 percent handled face-to-face at unit MPF customer service desks. The goal is to nearly reverse those figures with 85 percent service online, 10 percent by phone and five percent face-to-face.

"It's a way of re-thinking the manner in which Air Force members receive their personnel services," said Senior Master Sgt. Cesar Ortiz, 442nd Military Personnel Flight superintendent.

The most visible and utilitarian means to accomplish the PSD quest, the virtual Personnel Center-Guard and Reserve portal, known as vPC-GR, is slowly but surely taking on a life of its own.

First brought to life in March 2006, vPC-GR is being rolled out in phases with each successive phase adding more capability to the system.

In vPC-GR's first months, reservists could correct duty history online. As the system matured in capability, members could, among other things, find out and correct current points, obtain a 20-year letter re-issue, choose a Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan and sign up for Tricare Reserve Select.

An awards and decoration request page is the latest feature added to the site and on the horizon, functions for separations, re-enlistments, promotions, retraining and more are slated to be added.

"It's an evolving process," said Tech. Sgt. J.C. Woodring, ARPC Public Affairs. "It never [remains static] because we are always trying to make it easier for the users."

Help, if needed, is available. Sergeant Woodring encourages users to review the site as it is a convenient, first-line tool for solving problems.

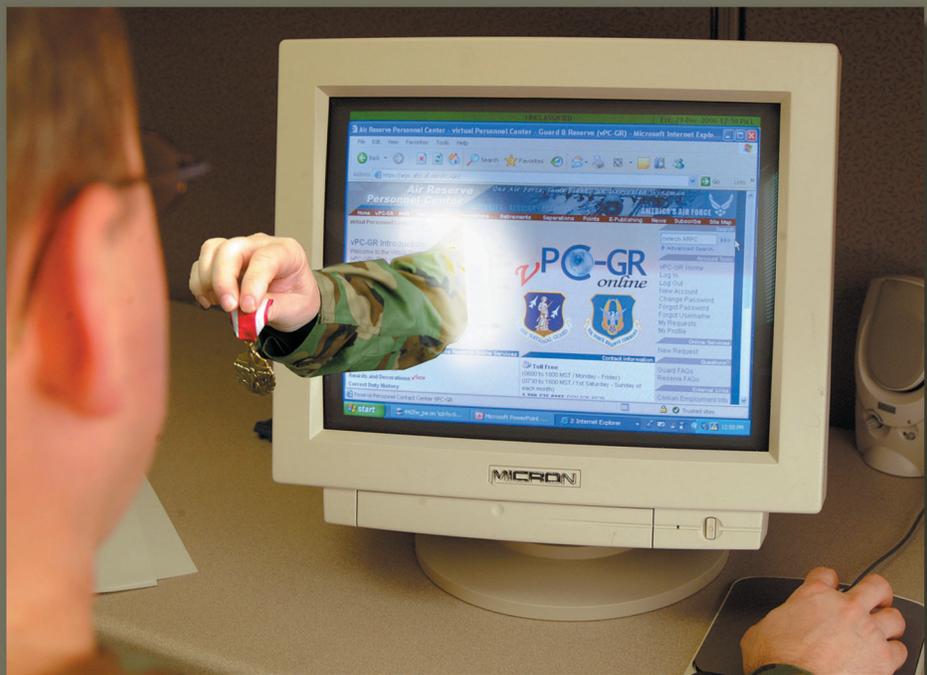
The human element has not been removed from the system and members experiencing difficulties can call the vPC-GR Con-

tact Center at (880) 525-0102, DSN 926-6528, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. mountain standard time, Monday through Friday and 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. MST, on the first Saturday and Sunday of each month to talk with customer service counselors.

According to Sergeant Woodring, members shouldn't worry about their inquiries getting lost if the matter can't be quickly resolved as the information received at the Contact Center goes into a database that can be accessed by all of the center's counselors.

"[All of the representatives] should know what steps have been taken to try to resolve the problem," Sergeant Woodring said of the database. "They'll also be able to see the status of an unresolved issue."

A third avenue of support is the unit commander's support



One of the services currently available on the Air Reserve Personnel Center's Virtual Personnel Center Guard and Reserve portal is the electronic processing of requests for awards and decorations.

staff, commonly known as the orderly room.

"The CSS has taken over more of helping the member get on line; helping the member reach the contact center; helping the member get the gist of what to scan or get faxed in; whatever the case may be," Sergeant Ortiz said. "For instance, the member may not know that of these five documents they have, that only two

Transforming the methods

of them are what they need to send in. So the CSS can really help in that regard.”

The vPC-GR is a reflection of the changes in the nature of the Air Force.

“In today’s Air Force we are all over the world,” Sergeant Ortiz said. “Members have to have a viable way of getting their personnel service no matter where they are. They are not always going to be at an Air Force base and even if they are they are not always going to be at their own home base. The Web site and the call center serve to give members a continual avenue no matter where they may be in the world.”

Both Sergeants Woodring and Ortiz agree that the biggest challenge to the system becoming relevant to all members is breaking them out of the “but that’s the way we’ve always done it” comfort zone.

“There are always going to be people who like it the way it has always been,” Sergeant Woodring said. “But the whole process is to get you what you want quicker and easier than the way you’ve had to do it before.”

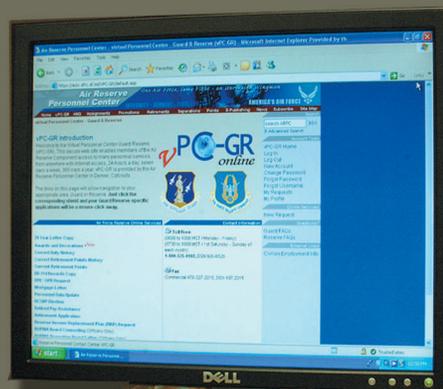
“You are going to have members who have been accustomed to going to a person and having someone they can reach out and touch for their concerns,” Sergeant Ortiz said. “Instead most of us ‘old timers’ are going to have to be acclimated into going to a Website. But I think that in time they will become proficient in using it.”

Sergeant Ortiz advises members to not wait for a need to arise before logging on to the system. He said it’s important to become familiar with the site and avoid the frustrations of learning how to navigate vPC-GR while embroiled in a crisis.

Another step in the PSD process is transferring records to an electronic format and scanning the Unit Personnel Records Group. It’s a process that began for active-duty Airmen in October and is slated to start for Guard and Reserve members in April 2008.

According to Jo Hogue, Chief of master personnel records at the Air Force Personnel Center it’s an important step.

“Right now there is only one copy of the UPRG, which is kept at each unit,” she said. “If something happens to that hard copy there is nothing we can do about it. Converting the records from paper to an electronic format also provides an additional



backup version of each record.”

Sergeant Woodring said that while the process of converting the records is substantial it is being done with an eye toward accuracy.

“It’s not going to happen overnight,” he said. “The records section scans in the records and then they look at the record to see if it is correct before they certify that is now an electronic version.”

At the end of the electronic transition, vPC-GR will be merged into the Department of Defense’s DIMHRS, Defense Military Integrated Human Resource System, which, according to Sergeant Woodring, will eventually centralize all pay and personnel issues.

Access to the vPC-GR can be made through the 442nd Fighter Wing’s public Web site at www.442fw.afrc.af.mil. The link is under the Reserve resources tab on the right side of the page. Upon reaching the site, establish a new account by clicking on the “New account” link under the “Account tools” tab and following the instructions.

Wing's warthogs

New A-10 electronics provide better communication, awareness

By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown
Public Affairs

You can build just about anything on a good foundation. Air Force Reservists of the 442nd Aircraft Maintenance and 303rd Fighter Squadrons are being reminded of that as five of the 442nd Fighter Wing's A-10s are being equipped with "smart" color multi-function color display systems.

This technology, new to the A-10, is manufactured by the Raytheon Company, headquartered in Waltham, Mass., and will provide a host of cutting edge capabilities for pilots, including increased awareness and communication.

"The A-10 was designed as a bare-bones airplane," said Maj. David Kurle, 442nd FW chief of public affairs. "It wasn't designed with all these modifications in mind. When it came into the inventory in 1975, no one had any idea it was going to last as long as it has." (Currently, the A-10 is scheduled to be in the Air Force inventory more than 20 years into the future.)

Lt. Col. Mark Ernewein, the assistant director of operations in the 303rd Fighter Squadron, said, "The original A-10 was just an aircraft with weapons systems on it. It wasn't integrated to the Army or to the battlefield at all."

The 442nd AMXS began installing the systems in 2006 and the technology, according to Colonel Ernewein, "is a huge jump for the A-10s."

COMBAT MULTI-TASKING

"We are now joining the data-link world," he said. "(This) is just like the Internet for the armed forces. That's the number one asset this brings to us. The Army has about half their assets as part of the data-link world."

"The data-link is just one aspect of what it does," Colonel Ernewein said. The system also serves as a display monitor for the Litening II targeting pod and Maverick missiles.

"It runs the targeting pod and captures images that can be sent to personnel on the ground," he said. "It lets us pass targeting information, imagery and video between ground personnel and fliers, as well as to command and control with increased resolution.

"We're replacing a (black and white) monitor built in the 1970s," Colonel Ernewein said.

Tech. Sgt. Rik Davis, an avionics technician with the 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's Specialist Flight, said, "It helps (pilots) pinpoint targets instead of having to say, 'It's the building to the right of the white gate' or something like that."



get smart

PHOTO BY MAJ. DAVID KURLE

An A-10 Thunderbolt II, or "Warthog," from the 442nd Fighter Wing takes off Jul. 4, 2006, on a combat mission from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. A new smart color multi-function display for the A-10 is designed to help pilots communicate better and provide greater situational awareness over battlefields in the Global War on Terror.





PHOTOS BY MAJ. DAVID KURLE

Tech. Sgts. and air reserve technicians Jim Wilson, left, and Paul Hanson, check a test pattern on a smart multi-function color display on the right side of the cockpit in A-10 number 605 in December. Members of the 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron's Specialist Flight must operationally check the system after installing the components.

As a pilot who will use the new system in the A-10, Colonel Ernewein had high praise for the technology.

"It's a network that's modular so not everybody has to be in a line of sight with everyone else," he said. "It's just like the Internet. I see a target and I can make that my sensor point of interest. My wingman will see my call sign (on the screen in another A-10) and I can capture his sensor's point of interest. I can fly his targeting pod from my aircraft. It's much more streamlined, efficient and much more complex.

ENHANCED SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

"It has a situational awareness page. It has moving maps, as well as imagery and range rings," the lieutenant colonel said. "The system has its own processors in it. It's two of the fastest processors in any aircraft. It's modular and inexpensive and can be linked with any modification of the aircraft.

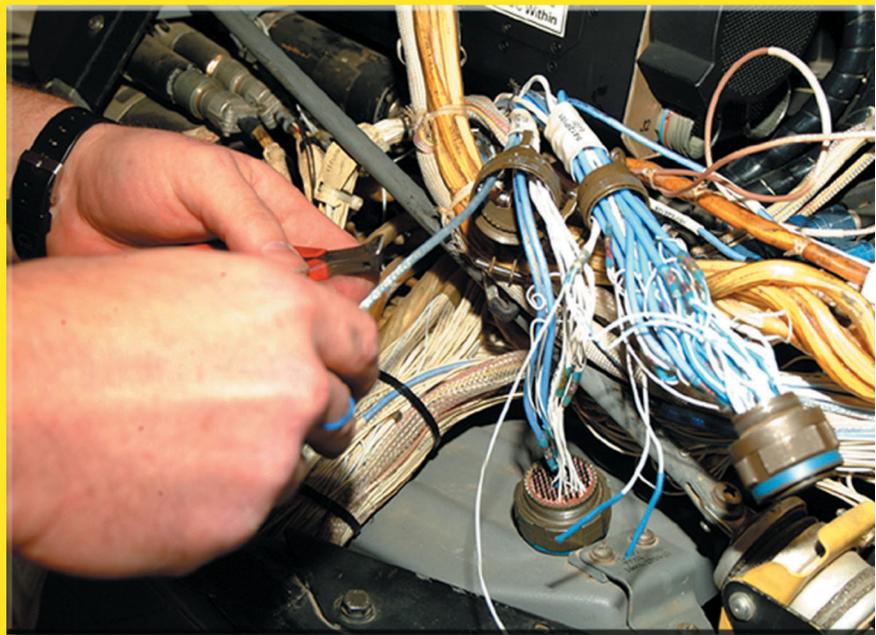
"I used to carry all my maps to the aircraft and now everything is on (my USB thumb drive)," Colonel Ernewein said. "When I get a target, I can sort out where the nearest friendlies are located, which is important for reducing fratricide." Along with imagery, it can overlay the "order of battle" on the ground.

Colonel Ernewein also noted that the system allows pilots, through the "situational awareness data link," which the Army also possesses, to see friendly and enemy locations.

The increased technology is a bit of double-edged

sword, according to Colonel Ernewein, in that it can be "overwhelming.

"We're developing tactics, techniques and procedures for how to use this system," he said. "There're so many capabilities in it, you have to narrow down specific tasks for our mission on which to focus."



MAINTENANCE MAGIC

None of this capability would be possible, however, were it not for the know-how and dedication of the maintenance Airmen installing the MFCD.

“Once you run and install the wiring and the line-replaceable units, you have to do all the follow-on operational checks,” Sergeant Davis said. “A whole new control stick has to be installed with new buttons. There are dozens of checks and that involves three or four shops. Crew chiefs have to put the aircraft on jacks and do landing-gear retraction. The armaments shop does gun-function checks.”

This process, according to Sergeant Davis, typically takes more than 200 hours.

Maintenance troops also have to contend with the simple mathematical problem of currently possessing only five systems for the wing’s fleet of 24 A-10s.

As planes go in for phase inspections or other repairs, the systems must be taken out and re-installed in other aircraft to train pilots and keep them current on the system.

“We’re learning as we go,” Sergeant Davis said. “I think from what I’m being told, though, we’re having luck.”

While such work can be tedious and frustrating, Sergeant Davis said it simply must be done.

“We have to do it,” he said “There are no ifs, ands or buts. For a modification, it hasn’t gone too bad. We’re getting it done and they’re flying with it.”

On the flipside, Sergeant Davis said pilots, after flying A-10s with the system, provide feedback to maintenance by describing what they experienced in the air. Also, additional systems are scheduled to arrive in the future and will be installed in the wing’s entire fleet of A-10s.

“The pilots will say, ‘It’s actually doing this,’” he said. “So we use that information to troubleshoot (the system). It’s a lot of playing with buttons and figuring out what they do.”

As bugs are worked out to make the A-10 more effective, Sergeant Davis said the 442nd is not alone in this process.

Four other A-10 wings are at various stages of implementing this system.

(Left) Tech. Sgt. and air reserve technician Mike Price attaches wires for the new smart multi-function color display to their connectors while installing the system in A-10 number 605 in December.

(Right) Tech. Sgt. Paul Hanson, an Air Reserve Technician avionics specialist, uses an infrared “ray gun” to heat-shrink wire connectors during the installation of a smart multi-function color display system in A-10 605.



442ND FIGHTER WING

NEW CHAPLAIN MAKING HIS PRESENCE KNOWN

By Staff Sgt. Tom Talbert

Seeing him for the first time – the burly build, broad shoulders and athletic demeanor – you know this man is something special.

Engage Captain James (Jim) Buckman in conversation, and it's confirmed. "Special" is the operative word.

"I spent five of my 10 enlisted Army years as a special-forces Morse-code operator," Captain Buckman said. "My job was to jump out of an airplane with about 120 pounds of radio gear hanging between my legs, an M-16 strapped on my left thigh, and 70 pounds of parachutes and collect mechanical intelligence."

So, how does one journey from the adventuresome lifestyle of an "enlisted-type" Army "snake-eater" to 442nd Fighter Wing Chaplain?

It turns out it was more of a journey back than forward.

"I was raised in West Africa as an M.K. (Missionary Kid), with two other missionary families and 50,000 villagers," he said. "I learned the importance of culture, relationships and serving people."

"As a kid, I read all I could about the U.S. Military and the ideals that our Nation was built around just spoke to me," the chaplain said.

Buckman's inspiration led to action, as he spent his 18th birthday at the St. Louis Military Entrance Processing Station enlisting in the U.S. Army.

After ten years of active duty, he enrolled in undergraduate work at Valparaiso University in Indiana and eventually on to

ASSISTANTS HELP MEET WING'S SPIRITUAL NEEDS

By Staff Sgt. Tom Talbert

Did you know that in a combat zone, parts of the Chaplain Assistant's duties are to be the armed protection for the Chaplain? Chaplains are considered non-combatants, so are unarmed during combat.

"The Chaplain Assistant acts as the eyes and ears for a Chaplain", according to Staff Sgt. Allen Haas, 442nd Fighter Wing Chaplain Assistant. But it's just one aspect to a seldom-discussed job that is probably far more involved than the average observer might suspect.

"Of course we are the administrative portion of the office, but most people aren't aware, we try to observe and report the unit's spiritual needs to the Chaplain," said Master Sgt. Chiquita Wilson. "We do this through various questionnaires, needs assessments and just being aware."

Probably the most challenging aspect of the job, according to Sergeant Haas, is the level of diversity the Chaplain Assistant must be prepared to handle.

"You are not a Protestant or Catholic Chaplain's Assistant," he said. "You assist the entire Chaplain corps, which could be Muslim, Jewish or any number of religions. I need to be sensitive to the beliefs of all Airmen and informed about those beliefs."

graduate studies at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.

After starting a new church in Columbia, Pastor Jim Buckman had the growing desire, once things settled down in his hectic pastor's schedule, of becoming a military reserve chaplain.

Once he assumed responsibility in 1997 for River of Life Lutheran Church in Springfield, a church of about 250 members, he made the move to become an Army Reserve chaplain with the 10th Psychological Operations Battalion in St. Louis.

"In February of 2006 I transferred to the Air Force Reserve and my duties here with the 442nd Fighter Wing began," Chaplain Buckman said in his modest office.

"Chaplain Buckman is the kind of guy you instantly warm up to; a magnetic personality," said Master Sgt. Chiquita Wilson, one of the wing's two chaplain's assistants. "Everyone quickly learns to be comfortable around him."

Staff Sgt Allen Haas, the other chaplain's assistant added to those sentiments.

"He has some incredibly innovative approaches to ministry and making worship and himself accessible to the Airman in ways never before tried," he said.

Chaplain Buckman's main innovation is what he calls his "ministry of presence."

"My focus is for our chaplain program to get out of the office and be with the Airmen," he said. "On a UTA weekend, we visit the 10 different locations where our Airmen work. After spending time building a rapport with them, we ask them when it would be convenient to bring a 15- or 20-minute worship service or Bible Study."

"Our goal is to eventually have 10 different worship services in 10 different work locations," Chaplain Buckman said. "But first we spend time getting to know them and address their needs."

"The days of crowding into a chapel with 20 chairs are over," he said. "We now come to you."

So far, the new approach seems to be working. Currently four worship services are being conducted throughout the wing at different locations, with more in the works.

But the ear-to-ear smiling chaplain doesn't stop the revolutionary innovation there.

"I understand I am an officer, but my primary purpose is to be a religious servant here," he said. "We just did a marriage enrichment workshop and the results were phenomenal. We are now going to do quarterly workshops for the wing with topics like parenting, divorce recovery and singles. The workshops are a day long and the wing pays for lodging and provides meals and materials free."

Wing Chaplain Buckman recently conducted a wedding in the wing conference room.

"I am flexible and available to the Airmen," he said. "The chaplain is the only person in uniform in which airmen have complete confidentiality. You don't have to be religious to talk to the chaplain. I like talking to anyone and everyone is welcome in my office."



F'S
OWN

"Holy Warrior"



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TOMMY TALBERT



The 442nd Fighter Wing chaplain, Capt. Jim Buckman.

(Above, left) Wing chaplain, Capt. Jim Buckman, right, performs a marriage ceremony for Staff Sgt. Sandra Rougeau and Senior Master Sgt. Morris Findley Jan. 6 in the 442nd Fighter Wing conference room. Both sergeants are reservists in the 442nd FW.

PHOTO BY MAJ. DAVID KURLE

Senior Airman Bernie Conrad, 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, hands his personnel readiness folder for review to Charlyne Rojas, a civilian contractor with the 509th Mission Support Squadron, as he works his way through the various stations of base's deployment processing center. Airman Conrad, and nearly 300 fellow reservists, helped flex the 442nd Fighter Wing's deployment muscles during an exercise, Jan. 5-7, which focused on the Wing's readiness to deploy in support of wartime taskings. (Photo by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)

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TO THE FAMILY OF:



"It is an honor, and a humbling responsibility, to take the helm of this Department in a time of war and to lead men and women who have dedicated their lives to protecting our country." -- The Honorable Robert M. Gates

442nd Fighter Wing Online -- www.442fw.afrc.af.mil