

# MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing



## Homecoming



## Letter to Airmen

**Michael B. Donley**  
Secretary of the Air Force

### Recommitting to Our Own High Standards

I am honored to be back serving with you in the world's finest Air Force. You deliver Global Vigilance, Global Reach, and Global Power, defending and protecting the United States and its global interests. You excel in the domains of air and space, and you are growing a critical capability in cyberspace.

My immediate focus has been on gaining a clear sight picture on key Air Force issues and meeting with the Headquarters Air Force staff. I have also visited with our wounded comrades at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Their personal courage and determination to return to active duty is inspirational.

Right now, we need to direct much of our attention to the Air Force nuclear enterprise, which is facing cultural, systemic and institutional challenges. To begin restoring our inner confidence and credibility, I have directed the establishment of a Nuclear Task Force to examine the nuclear enterprise through the lens of Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel Leadership and Education, Personnel and Facilities. We will deliver a clear vision and strengthened performance - as an Air Force and as Airmen - to the President, Secretary of Defense, and the American people.

Recommitting to our own high standards is the foundation for our success in every mission area, not just our nuclear enterprise. To this end, I charge the Air Force to:

- Continue leaning forward in every respect in support of Joint operations
- Ensure that our core values of Integrity First, Service before Self, and Excellence in All We Do underpin every action, by every Airman, at all times
- Commit to individual and organizational accountability
- Critically examine our internal processes, restore discipline, identify weaknesses, and aggressively solve problems
- Overcome any challenge that impinges on our credibility, readiness, or the trust placed in us by others
- Do our mission for the Nation, and do it well

America's Airmen are known the world over for upholding high standards of excellence. From the Berlin Airlift to Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, our Air Force has served with distinction and honor. I am absolutely confident in your ability to strengthen our performance, rebuild our nuclear enterprise, win today's fight, and prepare for tomorrow's challenges. Integrity, Service, and Excellence are our hallmarks - past, present, and always.

*Michael B. Donley*  
**Michael B. Donley**  
Acting

# MOHAWK

442nd Fighter Wing

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August 2008  
Charge-of-quarters



**MASTER SGT. HEATHER SELLS**  
**442ND MAINTENANCE OPS 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: Maj. Todd Riddle embraces his family members following his return to Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., after a deployment to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, June 26, 2008. For more on the homecoming see pages six and seven. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Vertreese)**

**MOHAWK**

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**COMMANDER, 442ND FW**

**Col. Steve Arthur**

**CHIEF, PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**Maj. David Kurle**

**PA NCOIC/EDITOR**

**Master Sgt. Bill Huntington**

**PA STAFF**

**Tech. Sgt. John Vertreese**

**Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown**

**Staff Sgt. Tom Talbert**

**Staff Sgt. Kent Kagarise**

**Staff Sgt. James Emerich**

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: 442fw.pa@whiteman.af.mil

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## 442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear

**STAFF SGT. JENNIFER KEHRLÉ**  
**442ND MEDICAL SQUADRON**

Staff Sgt. Jennifer Kehrlé is the Non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge of the 442nd Medical Squadron's Bioenvironmental Engineering section. Her "can do, will do" attitude exemplifies her dedication to service before self and selection as the 442nd Medical Squadron's Tip of the Spear.

In support of the wing's recent deployment to Afghanistan, Sergeant Kehrlé had a direct and positive impact on the 303rd Fighter Squadron's readiness and ability to deploy. As nearly 100 percent of the squadron's gas masks were condemned, a new mask was issued to each deploying member.

To satisfy readiness deployment requirements and increase member confidence in their masks, a Quantitative Fit Test needed to be accomplished. Staff Sgt. Kehrlé loaded her equipment and set up a temporary testing site at the squadron. She spent the entire day, well past close of business at the 303rd, testing the fit of each new mask to the deploying member. Her dedication to mission accomplishment not only facilitated mask testing, but allowed the nearly 50 deploying members to complete other mandatory predeployment flying and ground training events during the day. Sergeant Kehrlé's outstanding response to mission needs, typifies her professionalism and dedication to duty.



**U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. William D. Andersen, Kapisa-Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team Commander, salutes U.S. Army Col. Jonathan Ives upon uncovering the sign dedicating a Dining Facility on Bagram Air Field to Senior**

**Airman Jonathan A.V. Yelner. Yelner was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated underneath his vehicle April 29 in Tag Ab Valley, Kapisa Province, Afghanistan.**

## Bagram dedicates DFAC to fallen Airman

*By U.S. Army Capt. Elizabeth Casebeer  
Task Force Cincinnatus Public Affairs*

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan — In a sea of digital camouflage, he definitely stood out amongst the crowd of mostly-Army service members, and those who knew him best often tried to top one another in stories.

‘He’ was Senior Airman Jonathan A.V. Yelner - a Coalition warrior, an Airman and a friend, and he was killed instantly, April 29, when an improvised explosive device detonated underneath his vehicle after conducting a battle damage assessment with local Afghan tribal leaders outside the village of Bedreau in Tag Ab Valley, Kapisa province, Afghanistan. Now, his name will be honored for years to come here.

On July 6, a Bagram Air Field dining facility was dedicated to the fallen Airman. Flanking either side of the walkway is a sign depicting the brief timeline of the events that day and of a snapshot of Yelner right before a mission, grinning from ear to ear.

Several high-ranking officers, non-commissioned officers and more than 200 fellow service members attended the dedication and there was hardly a dry eye during the ceremony.

Airman Yelner, who was affectionately called “Wingnut” by his team, because they say the senior airman rank resembles the wingnut at the end of a screw, already had a deployment to Iraq under his belt when he volunteered to redeploy, this time for one year.

So, again he departed Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D., and, this time, with a Provincial Reconstruction Team headed to Afghanistan. His team, commanded by Air Force Lt. Col. William D. Andersen, was comprised of Airmen and Soldiers from around the country.

Army Capt. Casey McCausland clearly recalled driving Airman Yelner to his Friday-night temple services and how the younger man would act a bit cocky on the ride to and from. It wasn’t until the team arrived in Afghanistan, after nearly two months of training, that Captain McCausland noticed how much Airman Yelner was beginning to excel.

“He volunteered to go to Tag Ab Valley as my driver,” said Captain McCausland, who acknowledged the majority of his team is comprised of tactically-trained Soldiers, a group of men used to “roughing it” on forward operating bases. This did not seem to deter Airman Yelner, who jumped on board and quickly proved himself worthy.

# Award winners

**SNCO OF THE QUARTER**  
**MASTER SGT. ROBERT SAFELY**  
**442ND OPERATIONS**  
**SUPPORT FLIGHT**



**NCO OF THE QUARTER**  
**STAFF SGT. KENNETH CLIBURN**  
**442ND SECURITY**  
**FORCES SQUADRON**



**AIRMAN OF THE QUARTER**  
**SENIOR AIRMAN JENA HAYES**  
**442ND MEDICAL SQUADRON**



## Depot technicians using new automatic test station

by Amanda Creel  
78th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

**ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga.**  
(AFP) — The Versatile Depot Automatic Test Station, or VDATS, was put to the test here as it examined its first production asset as an Air Force and Department of Defense Family of Testers member.

Operators used VDATS to test a decoder assembly from the Pave Penny pod, which is a targeting device used in the A-10 Thunderbolt II. This item previously had been tested using the Computer-Operated Multifunction Electronics Test System, or COMETS. This 1968-vintage tester has become increasingly difficult to maintain and keep operational.

Air Force technicians developed VDATS to support multiple weapon systems. This tester is designed to eventually replace most of the legacy testers currently in use by the Air Force depots.

According to Michael Hunt, lead test station operator, the addition of the VDATS to the test station will relieve some of the workload off the COMETS. Mr. Hunt said he hoped the VDATS would lead to fewer mechanical malfunctions.

John Dunn, deputy director of avionics and instrument flight, described the unveiling of the first VDATS in the production arena as a great start toward retiring COMETS.

Mr. Dunn said the biggest blessing for the team would be the availability of other VDATS testers if there was a mechanical malfunction. When the COMETS breaks down, it can mean their line has to shutdown.

He said another plus to the new tester would be the reliability factor.

"We will have faith in this one," Mr. Dunn said. "With COMETS, we had to double-check everything."

"I think the most important thing to remember is the tester is not only going to be important to the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center, but it is going to be used Air Force-wide and it will affect everyone in the Air Force world-wide," said Bob Pennington, VDATS 402nd Software Maintenance Group lead engineer.

According to Dempsey Ventress, VDATS depot program manager, the ultimate goal is to get all the legacy testers out of service and have one uniform tester for the depot.

Officials say they expect about 20 test programs to be in production by the end of fiscal 2008.

# WELCOME

## Members return from

*Clockwise from right: A small boy awaits the arrival of Citizen Airmen from the wing returned home to their families in a contracted DC-10 aircraft. (Photo by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)*

*Tech. Sgt. Nicholas Norton greets a young fan at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo. The reservists participate in Operation Enduring Freedom. Sergeant Norton is on flight. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Vertreese)*

*Col. James Mackey, at left, embraces his family among the reservists and the colonel is the vice commander. Senior Master Sgt. Michael McQuain embraces his family those on hand to greet them. Sergeant McQuain is in the Maintenance Squadron. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Vertreese)*

*Background photo: 442nd FW members and their families home as the sun sets, literally and figuratively. (Photo by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)*



# ME HOME

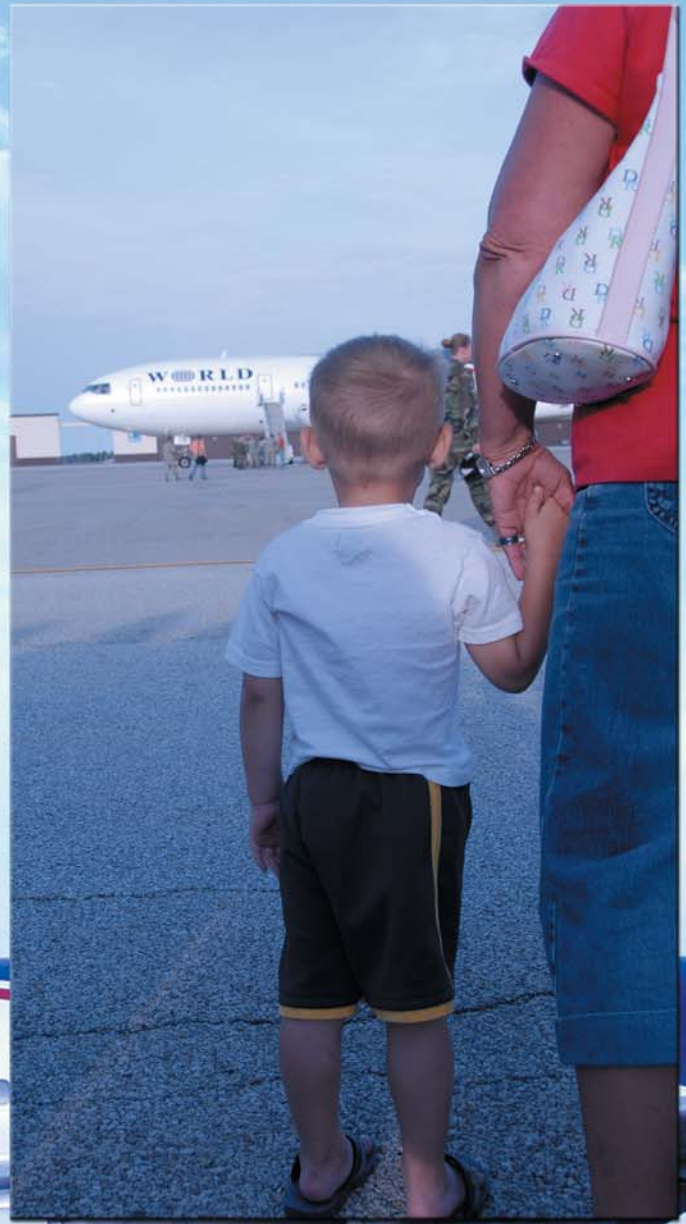
## om Afghanistan deployment

pearance of his deployed family member, June 26. Approximately 250  
Whiteman from a 51-day deployment to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan,  
ter Sgt. Bill Huntington)

family member upon his return from Afghanistan June 26, 2008, at  
rovided A-10 Thunderbolt II combat aircraft to support ground forces  
rton is a member of the 442nd Maintenance Squadron's Munitions

members after returning home. Colonel Mackey was the senior officer  
commander of the 442nd FW. (Photo by Master Sgt. Bill Huntington)  
is family member amidst a crowd of returning 442nd FW reservists and  
uain is the Aerospace Ground Equipment Flight chief in the 442nd  
John Vertreese)

their families turn away from the Whiteman AFB flight line and toward  
, on another successful 442nd Fighter Wing deployment. (Photo by



# Warrior Reintegration

## Part 3: Keeping the homecoming happy

By Tech. Sgt. Leo Brown

Time heals all wounds. However, according to a psychiatrist who counsels military victims of post-traumatic stress disorder, that isn't necessarily true.

Dr. Thomas Demark, M.D., staff psychiatrist in the Kansas City Veterans Affairs Medical Center's PTSD program, said asking for professional help can be one of the toughest things a military member faces.

Seeking such help is made much easier, he stressed, if spouses and children of Airmen returning from deployments recognize and properly deal with PTSD's symptoms, thus making their home lives as peaceful and productive as possible.

"A lot of the mindset of a soldier is one of toughness and bravery," Dr. Demark said. "Emotional difficulty is a sign of weakness and this is a huge barrier for a lot of soldiers to get over. A lot of times, this is the biggest barrier."

The doctor said the disorder's warning signs include anxiety, irritability, anger and a depressed mood.

"Generally, these are the things families will notice," Dr.

Demark said. "For example, (the military member) may snap at someone because there's one sock on the floor. It's a combination of 'battle mind,' which is a mind-set a soldier is put in before combat and that's suitable for keeping him alive. But all the qualities of 'battle mind' might not be suitable for family life. During combat, you don't have time to process traumas and that can come out in irritability or anger – yelling at the wife, yelling at the kids for small things. That can escalate to verbal, emotional or physical abuse."

Dr. Demark said family members' constructive re-

sponses to such symptoms are usually simple, but potentially challenging. The bottom line, he said, is to point the military member in the direction of getting professional help, if needed.

"Family members can be supportive and understanding, and

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*“About 50 percent of the vets I see are from Iraq and Afghanistan and about 50 percent are from Vietnam. If you don't get help, it doesn't go away. PTSD isn't a sign of weakness. It shows you're human. It's OK to ask for help.”*

*— Dr. Thomas Demark, M.D., staff psychiatrist in the Kansas City Veterans Affairs Medical Center's PTSD program*

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## PTSD — KNOWING THE SIGNS

According to an Air Force Reserve's "Reunion and Reintegration" pamphlet, the four main types of PTSD symptoms are:

- **Re-experiencing the trauma:** flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive memories and exaggerated emotional and physical reactions to triggers that remind the person of the trauma.
- **Emotional numbing:** feeling detached, lack of emotions (especially positive ones), loss of interest in activities
- **Avoidance:** avoiding activities, people or places that remind the person of the trauma
- **Increased arousal:** difficulty sleeping and concentrat-

ing, irritability, hyper vigilance (being on guard) and exaggerated startle response.

PTS may be behind such things as newly arising cases of domestic violence and the abuse of alcohol. For more information on this pamphlet, go to [www.quickseries.com](http://www.quickseries.com) and click on the "government" link, then go to "latest publications."

Other websites that offer resources and information include: [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com), [www.afcrossroads.com](http://www.afcrossroads.com), [www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil](http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil), [www.nmfa.org](http://www.nmfa.org), [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org), [www.esgr.org](http://www.esgr.org) and [www.afrc.af.mil](http://www.afrc.af.mil).



encourage the person to get help,” he said. “They feel bad for (the military member). They want to help and they can feel helpless. The way they can help is to be understanding and supportive.

“PTSD’s a spectrum condition,” Dr. Demark said. “There can be a little bit to a whole lot with a whole spectrum between. A little bit might not be noticeable to an individual and involve some anxiety and maybe a little sleep disturbance. The most extreme is where a person won’t leave his house or goes to live in the woods.”

The doctor said the disorder often begins while a military member is still in-theater.

“The symptoms aren’t always real evident, because a lot of other guys have it, too,” he said.

Dr. Demark noted that for a person to exhibit PTSD symptoms largely depends on “if he has been exposed to traumas. Generally, the traumas come from being in combat. There are levels of combat and they will have some symptoms to some extent.”

Dr. Demark said a member can feel an “emotional numbness” when he returns home.

“The member may not feel an emotional attachment to his or her spouse or children,” he said. “It’s an emotional isolation. If you’ve lost close buddies, you want to avoid those feelings down the road. It’s a self-protective mechanism. There may be disturbed sleep, waking up multiple times, bad dreams. A wife may say, ‘My husband is punching me and choking me in his sleep and he doesn’t know

what he’s doing. There can be depression and sad feelings. Maybe tearful or weepy reactions. Part of this is normal. You’re grieving after combat for loss of life.”

The doctor said an Airman should feel no embarrassment about such symptoms since they show that he is “a caring human who has a conscience. If (combat) doesn’t bother you, there’s a problem.”

Dr. Demark said the Kansas City VA center offers support groups for wives, families and significant others. For more information on these programs, call the center at (816) 861-4700 and ask for the “PTSD program.” The center’s website is [www.kansascity.va.gov](http://www.kansascity.va.gov).

“About 50 percent of the vets I see are from Iraq and Afghanistan and about 50 percent are from Vietnam,” Dr. Demark said. “If you don’t get help, it doesn’t go away. PTSD isn’t a sign of weakness. It shows you’re human. It’s OK to ask for help.”



# CES returns from Iraq, gains new CC

By Master Sgt. Bill Huntington



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TOM TALBERT

442nd Civil Engineer Squadron Airmen deployed to Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, from mid-January to June to help maintain that base's infrastructure and carry out several building projects there. Their collective efforts garnered the Engineers a Meritorious Unit Award.

The deployment included the majority of the squadron's command group and many of the tradecraft sections such as structures, heating ventilation and air conditioning, and plumbing.

Upon arrival, the Whiteman reservists joined Airmen from other bases around the Air Force. HVAC troops kept busy installing and repairing air conditioning units for Kirkuk while others took on projects designed to expand Iraq's growing Air Force.

"We did a lot of work with the Coalition Air Force Training team," said Maj. Ross McAfee, operations officer. "Their job is to help the Iraqis stand up their own Air Force, both training-wise and operational."

A project allied to this mission included the construction of a 34,000 square foot aircraft parking ramp for the Iraqi Air Force to use for parking their aircraft. The ramp accommodated 17 aircraft, enabling the training of 100 additional Iraqi pilots annually.

Master Sgt. Andy Weeks, one of the "dirt boys," had a scare as he cleared a five-acre site strewn with debris remaining from previous combat actions. His D-8 bulldozer unearthed some unexploded ordnance.

"As I went along I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, a fin of some type kick up in the air," Sergeant Weeks said. "As I looked down at it, it rested on top of my track. It was the fin of a 120 millimeter mortar."

After some tense moment, Kirkuk's explosive ordnance disposal team arrived to remove the UXO.

**Above: 442nd Mission Support Group commander Col. John Larson, passes the 442nd CES guidon to new commander, Maj. Mark Davison.**

**Below: 442nd CES heavy equipment operators clear debris from a Kirkuk AB, Iraq, work site during the squadron's deployment there.**



COURTESY PHOTO

## Air Force selects reservist as top first sergeant

**ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga.** — The Air Force has selected a traditional reservist as its First Sergeant of the Year for 2008.

Master Sgt. Jeffrey A. Gray of the 328th Airlift Squadron, Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, N.Y., is reportedly the first member of the air reserve components chosen for the annual award.

“It’s all about helping people,” said Sergeant Gray, describing his military and civilian jobs.

Sergeant Gray recently deployed to Afghanistan for eight months as first sergeant of the 755th Expeditionary Mission Support Group.

While there, he cared for more than 1,000 Airmen at 20 remote locations.

They performed a unique mission - the provincial reconstruction, security and training of local Afghan national army soldiers in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. His concern for the welfare of his people directly helped them perform their wartime mission.

Sergeant Gray began his military career as an aircraft electrical systems specialist. He has since taken assignments in combat communications, satellite communications, wing history and



**NIAGARA FALLS AIR RESERVE STATION, N.Y. - Air Force Reserve Master Sgt. Jeffrey Gray, 328th Airlift Squadron, was recently named the Air Force First Sergeant of the Year for 2008.**

a first sergeant in services, communications and operations.

He is a veteran of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and a 12-year veteran firefighter with the City of Buffalo, certified as an emergency medical technician and fire service instructor.

“I’m assigned to a rough neighborhood, so I’ve seen a lot,” said the firefighter. “I’ve seen stabbings, shootings, watched buildings burn down and saved them. I’ve saved babies and had them die, seen my fellow fire fighters hurt and brought them back from the edge.”

The Air Force established its first sergeant of the year award in 1985 to recognize the important contributions and

leadership qualities exhibited by Air Force members in the first sergeant special duty career field. Nominees are considered in the areas of leadership and job performance in their primary duty, significant self-improvement, and base or community involvement.

The Air Force Sergeants Association will present the award to Sergeant Gray during an awards banquet at its annual convention in August in San Antonio, Texas. (AFRC News Service)

## Reservist among Air Force’s 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year

**ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga.** — An Air Force reservist from Hill AFB, Utah, is one of the Air Force 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2008.

Staff Sgt. Eric Eberhard is an explosive ordnance disposal specialist with Air Force Reserve Command’s 419th Fighter Wing.

He served in the Marine Corps Reserve for eight years before joining the Air Force Reserve. Although he is finishing a degree in architecture from the University of Utah, his choice for a military career was EOD. He graduated from the joint service course in 2005 and performed duty at the White House in support of the president.

When Sergeant Eberhard went to tech school, he left when his first daughter was 4 months old. His second daughter was born while he was serving a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan.

“I called my wife every day but one while deployed,” he said. “She is my personal hero - dedicated, supportive, faith-

ful, loving, charitable - an unrivaled wingman.”

An Air Force selection board at the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, Texas, considered 33 nominees who represented major commands, direct reporting units, field operating agencies and Air Staff agencies. The board selected the 12 based on superior leadership, job performance and personal achievements.

The nominees are authorized to wear the Outstanding Airman of the Year ribbon, while the 12 winners will wear the bronze service star device on the ribbon. The winners will also wear the Outstanding Airman of the Year Badge for one year from the date of formal presentation.

The Air Force Association will honor Sergeant Eberhard and his fellow Outstanding Airmen during its Air and Space Conference and Technology Exposition in Washington, D.C., this September. The Airmen will also serve as members of the AFA’s enlisted advisory council for the next year. (AFRC News Service)



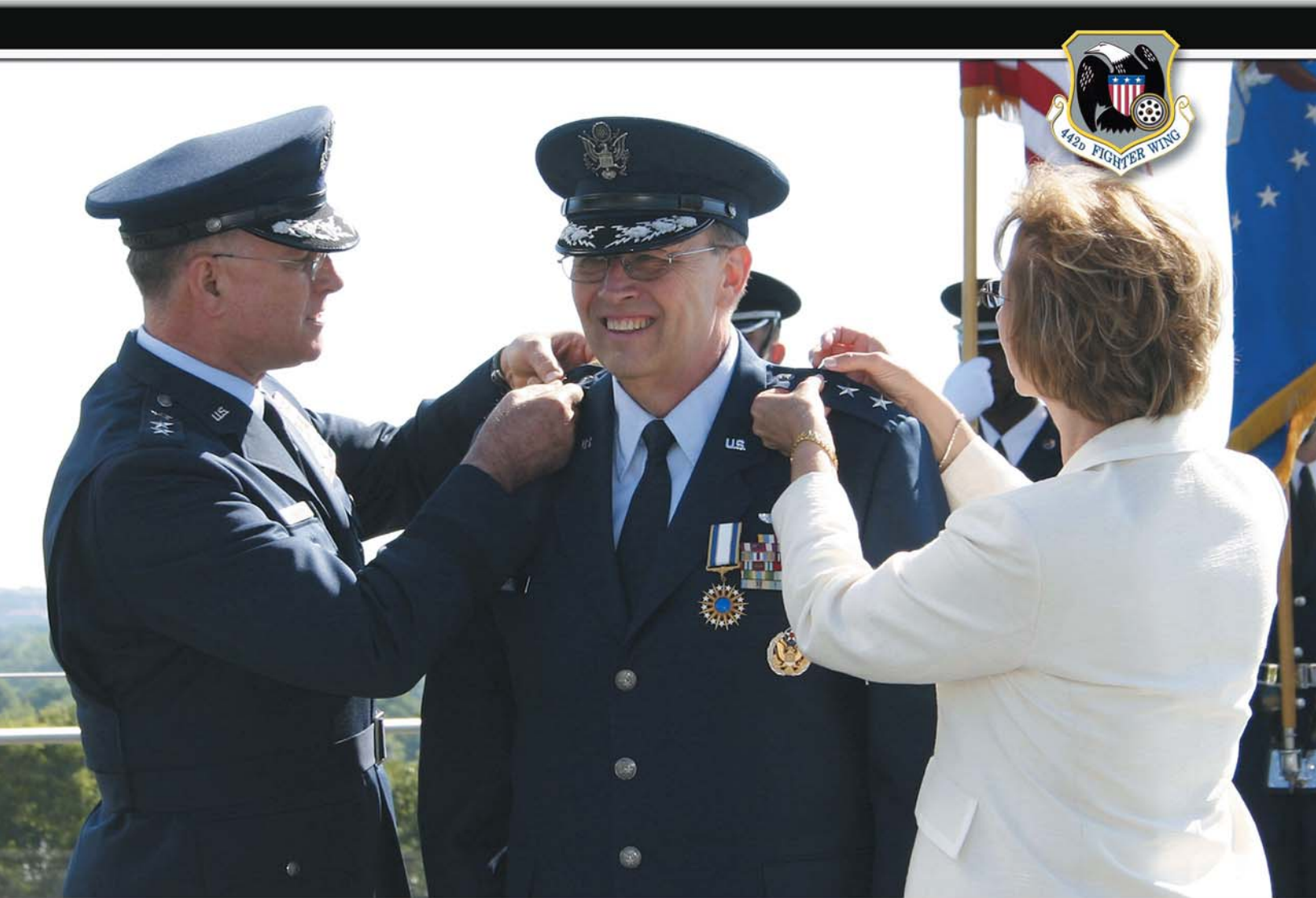
**Staff Sgt. Eric Eberhard  
419th Civil Engineer Squadron,  
Hill Air Force Base, Utah.**

*Lt. Gen. John A. Bradley, left, outgoing chief of Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, pins a third star on the epaulet of Lt. Gen. Charles Stenner while Mrs. Dee Stenner pins the epaulet on the other side. The promotion ceremony took place at the Air Force Memorial in Arlington, Va., June 24., prior to the AFRC change of command.*

*(U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Master Sgt. Raymond Sarracino)*

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

## **TO THE FAMILY OF:**



**"I'm excited to lead the finest group of warriors I have ever known. These are Airmen who have to maintain a balance with their family, their military commitments, their civilian career and their community."**

**- Lt. Gen. Charles E. Stenner, Jr., AFRC commander**

**442nd Fighter Wing on line -- [www.442fw.afrc.af.mil](http://www.442fw.afrc.af.mil)**