

# **Mohawk** **MOHAWK**

442nd Fighter Wing



**Pilots go 'feet-wet'  
for water-survival course**



SENIOR MASTER SGT. ANGELA BRYANT  
442ND SECURITY FORCES SQUADRON

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**COVER PHOTO: Maj. Aaron Linderman, 303rd Fighter Squadron A-10 pilot, boards a 10-man life raft during water-survival training in Key West, Fla., Nov. 5. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Danielle Wolf)**

**MOHAWK** Vol. 62, No. 12  
December 2010

This funded Air Force Reserve magazine 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.

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**Editor's note: The public affairs staff would like to thank Lt. Col. David Kurle for his years of service with the 442nd FW and wish him luck in his next venture. He has been a valuable asset to the wing and the Air Force Reserve.**

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# MOHAWK

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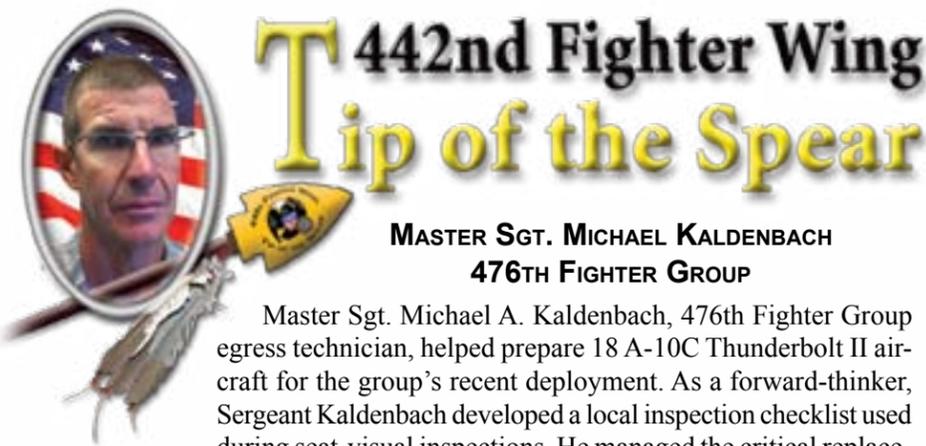
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## T 442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear

MASTER SGT. MICHAEL KALDENBACH  
476TH FIGHTER GROUP

Master Sgt. Michael A. Kaldenbach, 476th Fighter Group egress technician, helped prepare 18 A-10C Thunderbolt II aircraft for the group's recent deployment. As a forward-thinker, Sergeant Kaldenbach developed a local inspection checklist used during seat-visual inspections. He managed the critical replacement of 415 explosive time changes for A-10 ejection seats with 100-percent scheduled maintenance-effectiveness. Sergeant Kaldenbach contributed to restructuring 36-month ejection seat inspection process and slashed aircraft downtime from 72 hours to 48 hours. He provided supervision and leadership for 20 assigned active-duty and four Air Force Reserve egress technicians. Additionally, he managed the staff car and mini-van program for the group, as well as acting as the lodging coordinator. He developed and managed billeting accommodations for personnel during unit training assemblies. Sergeant Kaldenbach acts as a squadron sports representative, who rallied members to join intramural sports, which bolstered teamwork and unit cohesion. His keen inspection abilities and attention to detail make him this month's tip of the spear.



PHOTOS BY MAJ. DENNIS SAUGSTAD



Fighter pilot chic (note the flip flops!)

Tech. Sgt. Fair showed me how to cover my individual life raft to prevent hypothermia and keep cover in unfriendly waters.

## Surviving water-survival training

By Staff Sgt. Danielle Wolf

Aside from my A-10 "certification" on the flight simulator at the Mall of America in Minneapolis, Minn., I don't have much experience piloting aircraft – or surviving in the water after an emergency ejection.

As a former student-hire with the 442nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, I worked in the support and debrief sections for about a year. I often heard how our pilots made their way through poor weather at home and deployed, numerous bird- and coyote-strikes, and even assisted a civilian pilot down through low-visibility to a safe landing.

Nov. 5, I had the opportunity to train with some of the most talented pilots in the Air Force Reserve. But it wasn't until I jumped into a bay in the Gulf of Mexico in an oversized flight suit, with a harness and life-preserver unit strapped to me, that I realized how important and challenging their jobs are – and how necessary this training could be to their survival.

As I attempted to swim in the extremely buoyant LPU with low-visibility from a helmet strapped to my head, I began to imagine what it would be like to do this in an ocean – after ejecting from an A-10. Alone. In unfamiliar waters. With no immediate relief other than my hand-held survival kit and individual raft.

I've never disregarded my own imagination, or the ability to convince myself I'm in a situation simply for the cause of hypothetical decision-making. The more I realized what a scary situation it would be – the more I realized how important it was that our air-flight-equipment crew and pilots knew exactly what to do in the event of an emergency.

As I rolled out of my individual life raft and swam the 100 yards to the 20-man life raft, I found myself having to control my breathing – both for the physical intensity I encountered and the insidious panic of my hypothetical situation.

### A public affairs perspective

Because I was experiencing this simply to gain a reporter's perspective, I tried to be very observant of how my wingman was reacting. I've interviewed this particular pilot a couple times before, and years ago, even did the maintenance debriefing on dozens of his sorties – so I have an idea what his personality is like. Like many of our pilots, he appreciates a good joke and makes a fair share of them himself – but when it came to this training, he was completely focused. It was clear to me that he understood the information could be vital to his survival, if ever an emergency were to occur.

More importantly, he listened to what the air flight equipment crew had to say, and he asked questions. Like many of the pilots I observed, there was a clear respect for the position and knowledge possessed by the AFE technicians.

For me, experiencing water-survival training with our pilots did two things.

First, it showed me that the Air Force offers some of the most valuable and life-saving training I've ever encountered. I might never teach a pilot how to blow up a 20-man life raft and use it to survive (although I did hear that briefing enough times that day to give it a good shot,) but like every other Citizen Airman, I have knowledge and skills that I can use to bring depth and experience to my job.

Second, it reminded me how valuable training is to success in our jobs. I've interviewed several Citizen Airmen in the last year to get their story how they used self-aid and buddy care or situational awareness to help car-accident victims and civilians with unexpected health problems.

So now I know – if I ever decide to become an officer, go to A-10 pilot school, get deployed, fly the Warthog over water and have to eject and survive until help is available – I'm totally ready!



**COMMAND** PHOTOS BY LT. COL. DAVID KURLE  
**Maj. Joe Walter will command the wing's newest squadron, the 442nd Force Support Squadron.**

FSS commander," Major Walter said. Major Walter has been pleased with the willingness and desire of the teams to come together and said there has been excitement about the process without him having to request it, but he is vigilant when it comes to the potential challenges ahead. "The supervisors will need to have a good understanding of each others' mission so we can support one another," Major Walter said. "I plan to go through some training to get up to speed on the challenges that services faced that now confront FSS," he said.

Major Walter said the change will primarily be at the supervisory level and for most services-oriented Airmen, their mission will remain the same. "We're taking all the support functions and putting them under one command so we'll be able to accomplish the mission more efficiently and effectively," said Senior Master Sgt. Travis Stickels, services superintendent for the new 442nd FSS. The 442nd FSS mission is one that will not only impact Whiteman Air Force Base but will have a worldwide impact. "It's important for us to become a

team and collaborate in order to meet the Air Force's needs here, as well as internationally," said Staff Sgt. Zach Walker 442nd FSS services journeyman. As these forces join, the exterior changes should be few as Airmen in various career fields around the wing conduct their duties. "The change will be absolutely transparent," said 442nd Command Chief Master Sgt. Allan Sturges. "They were two great flights and they've joined to make one outstanding squadron, with seasoned leadership serving under a qualified commander."

## New commander appointed for MXS

## Taking charge • SVS Flight and MSF combine

By Staff Sgt. Kent Kagarise



**GUIDON**  
**The 442nd FSS guidon is unfurled for the first time Nov. 6.**

The 442nd Fighter Wing's mission support flight and services flight combined to form the 442nd Force Support Squadron under the command of Maj. Joe Walter, Nov. 6. The unification was mandated Air Force-wide and brings two missions together under one cohesive squadron. The 442nd Fighter Wing Mission Support Group commander, Col. Alan Teauseau, described the unification of the two flights as a merger rather than a hostile takeover. "The biggest challenge I see is Airmen will need to overcome apprehension with new bosses and different ways of doing things," Colonel Teauseau said. "They're already doing an outstanding job of working through the process and it's exciting to watch two services-oriented units work together." During the stand-up and assumption-of-command ceremony, Colonel Teauseau spoke of the confidence he has in Major Walter and acknowledged him as the right person for the job. "There is so much talent from top to bottom in each organization, which makes it an absolute honor to have been chosen to be the first 442nd



**COMMAND**  
**Maj. Christina Manning assumed command of the 442nd Maintenance Squadron Nov. 7, during a ceremony in the 442nd Maintenance Group's 5-bay hangar.**



## AFE, pilots conduct water-survival training in Key West

**RAFT**  
Col. David Closen boards a 20-man life raft during water-survival training.



**ALL ABOARD**  
Maj. Bryan Stone and Maj. Aaron Linderman learn how to board their individual life rafts during water-survival training in Key West, Fla. Nov. 5.

**LIFE SUPPORT**  
Master Sgt. Phil Youngblood, life-support technician, instructs pilots how to reinflate the life raft, if necessary.

**SNORKEL**  
Safety swimmer and A-10 pilot, Maj. Bryan Shelton, assists with training while donning a snorkel and wet suit.

Photos and story by  
Staff Sgt. Danielle Wolf

NAVAL AIR STATION, KEY WEST, Fla. – Approximately two years ago life support and survival equipment technicians combined forces to create the aircrew flight equipment shop, part of the 442nd Operations Group.

AFE technicians are now responsible for every piece of life-saving equipment pilots use during missions.

“Thanks to the merger of the two (shops,) we now have our hands on every piece of equipment that protects and aids a pilot’s survivability in the event of an emergency in flight or an ejection in combat,” said Master Sgt. Phil Youngblood, AFE technician and NCOIC of training.

The crew is responsible for inspecting and maintaining more than 13 pieces of survival equipment – most of which contain dozens of components. With the merging of the career fields, AFE technicians are also now responsible for sewing and repairing pilots’ flight gear.

### WATER-SURVIVAL TRAINING

All survival training pilots are required to complete is conducted by the AFE crew, including the water-survival training the A-10 Thunderbolt II pilots of the 303rd Fighter Squadron re-

ceived Nov. 5 in Key West, Fla.

“Training in an environment like that is more realistic – in fact, that’s as real as it gets,” said Senior Master Sgt. Joe O’Daniel, AFE superintendent. “Our crew was also able to learn by observing those who are instructor-qualified and assisting with the water-survival training.”

At the same time, the AFE crew was able to conduct a mass water-survival training, which is required every three years, for all 303rd FS pilots in one day.

“It’s important to make sure the equipment is well-maintained and that pilots are trained, because if needed, it will mean that the pilot’s life is in danger due to an in-flight emergency or an ejection,” Sergeant Youngblood said. “If this occurs over a combat zone or in hostile territory, then pilots will have to recall and put to use their survival skills.”

Col. David Closen, 442nd Operations Group commander, participated in the water-survival training in Key West.

“It’s important that we come out here and do this training so we feel confident our equipment works and we know how to use it,” he said.

Normally, Colonel Closen said, a helicopter would drop pilots off in the ocean and they would be required to use their water-survival equipment for several hours before “rescue” was available. Due to high winds, resources did not allow for the use of helicopters Nov. 5. Instead, pilots used a bay located at the marina at Sigsbee Park, Naval Air Station Key West.

“It’s beneficial for us to train in salt water, rather than a lake or a pool, because it is more realistic with its buoyancy,” said Lt. Col. Brian Borgen, 303rd Fighter Squadron commander. “It’s good to make our training as realistic as possible so we’re prepared. Our (AFE crew) is well-equipped and fully prepared for our training – I think our (AFE technicians) are some of the best in the world.”

The AFE crew began the training by ensuring pilots were suited up as they would be if they had to emergency-eject from an aircraft – wearing the nearly-35-pound torso harness with life-preserver unit and helmet.

After inflating the LPU and jumping in the saltwater bay, they swam to Tech. Sgt. Michael Fair, AFE technician, who met them at individual life rafts 50 feet from the dock. He explained

information about the LPUs, including inflation, deflation and temporary maintenance, then instructed them to board the individual life rafts. Once they boarded, Sergeant Fair taught the pilots how to use the rafts to prevent hypothermia and how to roll off the rafts, when necessary. He also instructed them to deflate one side of the LPU for better mobility when stranded on the individual life raft for a long period of time.

At the next station, a swim of about 350 feet, Master Sgt. Phil Youngblood, AFE technician and noncommissioned officer of training, instructed pilots how to board the 10-man life raft. He explained how to maintain proper inflation in the raft, how to inspect it and repair air leaks, how to maintain cover in unfriendly waters and how to signal rescue aircraft. He also taught pilots how to inspect themselves for sharp objects before boarding the raft so as not to damage their best means for survival.

“Our old motto used to be ‘Your life is our business,’” Sergeant O’Daniel said. “Just like every crew chief is responsible for making sure the pilot has a good airplane, we’re responsible for

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## SURVIVAL

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making sure every pilot has good equipment.”

Water-survival training is only one of the many required certifications pilots must refresh annually. Sergeant Youngblood said AFE also conducts egress training, hanging-harness training and Advanced Concept Ejection Seat (ACES II) training.

### EGRESS

Egress training allows pilots to sit in a replicated flight deck and actually practice pulling ejection handles.

“It’s important that they actually pull the handles, because ejection procedures vary in different aircraft,” Sergeant Youngblood said. “We also have to make sure they maintain the proper position when ejecting so as not to injure themselves in the process.”

Sergeant Youngblood said, to his knowledge, no 303rd FS pilots have had to eject in flight. However, many of them have had to manually raise the A-10 canopy for other emergencies, he said.

“When we give the pilots egress training, we create scenarios such as bird

strikes or canopy-light malfunctions so (the pilots) have to practice using their checklists and lifting the canopy.”

Although the new c-model brought the A-10 into the digital age, Sergeant Youngblood said pilots need to know which altitude display to reference in order to safely escape the airplane – and this egress training teaches that.

### HANGING-HARNES

Hanging-harness training teaches the pilots how to fix parachute malfunctions. Using a virtual simulator with five different malfunction scenarios and 15 target locations, the pilots can eject and begin their drop from 3,100 feet. Although A-10 pilots wouldn’t normally eject at this altitude, Sergeant Youngblood said the simulated height gives them nearly 1,600 feet more of training.

Pilots are harnessed a few feet above the ground and have a virtual simulator attached to their helmet. This 360-degree simulator adjusts based on which direction they are looking and allows them to aim toward a particular target, accounting for wind direction and speed. They are then rated based on their accuracy and precision.



### ACES II

The ACES II kit is a survival package that is packed underneath the seat. In the event of an ejection, the kit is attached to and deploys with the pilot. The kit has dozens of items, all of which can be used to survive in any environment for several days.

AFE technicians must inspect the equipment in the ACES II kit annually to verify there is no damage and that equipment has not expired.

“The ACES II (kit) was developed by trial-and-error method,” Sergeant Fair said. “When **Scott O’Grady** ejected, he gave a lot of feedback as to what should be included in the kit to make it the most effective.”

The AFE crew is also responsible for maintaining and inspecting the night-vision goggles used weekly by the pilots during night sorties as well as the pilots’ chemical warfare equipment. Although, by Air Force instruction, the shop only requires a 10 percent quality assurance check, the 442nd AFE crew has chosen to inspect 100 percent of its product.

Sergeant O’Daniel said that when the two career fields merged, the 100-percent QA check was effective in ensuring everyone was trained adequately while maintaining the security of fail-proof equipment.

“Now we have four eyes on everything we produce instead of two,” he said. “Everything gets inspected by the person who fixed the item, as well as our quality assurer. These pilots rely on us daily to make sure they are safe in flight – and we take our jobs very seriously.”

“Inspecting and maintaining things doesn’t seem like a very important job until the equipment is needed – and then you want to ensure it’s correct,” Sergeant O’Daniel said.

# Maintainers support flying operations in Key West

Photos by Staff Sgt. Danielle Wolf



### ASSIST

Airman 1st Class Kenny Vaughn helps Maj. Bryan Shelton secure his torso harness before a flight back to Whiteman AFB.



### TAKE-OFF

Maj. John Schriever, 303rd FS A-10 pilot, prepares for take-off.



### FORMS

Tech. Sgt. Nick McRoberts, 442nd AMXS crew chief, updates the aircraft forms after performing a pre-flight inspection on the A-10.



## SURVIVAL: THE SCOTT O’GRADY STORY

On June 2, 1995 during Operation Deny Flight, Bosnian Serb Forces shot down Capt. Scott O’Grady, a 555th Fighter Squadron F-16 pilot, behind enemy lines. Captain O’Grady ejected over Bosnia after his aircraft was hit by a missile from the Bosnian Serb Army.

Captain O’Grady spent the next six days evading Bosnian Serb Forces by moving during the night and hiding during the day. He eluded capture for five days before being picked up by

a U.S. Marine Corps rescue helicopter.

Sergeant Youngblood and Sergeant Fair said the captain’s experience has contributed to the AFE career field greatly by examining which components should be added and modified in the ACES II survival kit. His experience also reinforced the need for dedicated life support and survival technicians who are determined to perform their jobs with accuracy and commitment.

The kit has changed over time to include items that are needed based on mission location and requirement.

Today’s kit includes: - Compass

- Individual life raft
- Ruck sack
- Hat
- Socks
- Flex packs for drinking water
- Sponges
- Knife
- Sunblock
- Fishing kit
- Tourmiquet
- Signal flare and kit
- Mirror
- First aid kit
- Radio
- Survival manual
- Aluminum blanket
- Battery
- Whistle
- Sea dye marker
- Plastic bag
- Raft repair kit



ACES II SURVIVAL KIT



## Airmen embrace fitness culture

50 percent score 'Excellent'

PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN COREY HOOK

By Tech. Sgt. Amaani Lyle

Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

"Readiness," said the chief master sergeant of the Air Force, "is the primary purpose of developing the new fitness standard, and so far Airmen are stepping up to the challenge as the program normalizes."

The new physical training standard is a way to ensure Airmen are prepared to do the nation's work and encourage them to embrace a culture of fitness, said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James Roy Oct. 28.

"Nearly 50 percent of Airmen are already reaching that 90 or above score, which is a significant accomplishment," he added. "It wasn't like that the very first month out of the chute."

The statistics reflect Chief Roy's assertions. According to Air Force senior leaders, the service has seen the percentage of the total force passing the test increase from 77.9 percent to 82.6 percent in three months since the July 1, 2010, launch of the revised fitness program. Additionally, the rate of Airmen scoring 90 points or greater has nearly doubled since 2009.

A review of recent Air Force Basic Military Training fitness test results underscores the conclusion that Airmen can quickly train to a standard and excel in physical training. Male and female trainees significantly increased their scores at the

end of the eight weeks for sit-ups, push-ups and the 1.5 mile run times.

"Our Airmen in basic training are leading the way with fitness; right now we're proud to say that the fitness pass rate is approximately 98 percent by the time they graduate," said Chief Master Sgt. Mark Long, enlisted promotions, evaluations and fitness chief.

"We're seeing improvements through every portion of the test as a direct result of constant exercise and fitness," Chief Long said.

Chief Roy credits leadership involvement, unit cohesion and the wingman concept for the uptick in passing numbers across the board.

"We're already seeing a cultural change, even for Airmen engaged in combat operations in extreme environments," Chief Roy said. "I see individuals or entire commands working with each other, helping their wingmen through team building and esprit-de-corps sports activities."

Following the review of the fitness program last year, greater emphasis was placed on the aerobic portion of the test. Abdominal circumference measurement is a very clear indicator of health and fitness, but the abdominal circumference is now worth 20 points to allow more points for the run, Chief Long said.

The new fitness standard also mandates that Airmen must pass each portion of the test to earn an overall passing score,

and fitness assessment cell monitors said a long-term health commitment is critical to success.

"Fitness is not just something you do for six months or once a year, but something that can sustain you over different duty titles or different locations," said Sinclair Bayard, fitness-testing technician, Pentagon, Washington. "It's really about bringing an awareness of total health and wellness."

Chief Long said the Air Force's long-term fitness goals are simple.

"We want to continue to emphasize a fitness culture for the Air Force and create a better warfighter by having healthier Airmen," he said. "Injuries or health problems take our Airmen away from the fight."

A fit force reduces not only overall health-care costs, but helps keep Airmen invested in their wellness, even beyond the parameters of duty, he said.

"Leaders at all levels need to emphasize fitness year round," Chief Long said. "When Airmen see that we care from the top, I believe they'll want to take control of their fitness."

The chief noted since Airmen have already surpassed the Air Force's projected 75-80 percent passing rate, he predicts the service will continue to raise the bar.

"We still have more opportunity for improvement, but so far Airmen have risen to the challenge," he said. "We're very pleased."

## When suicide happens in your unit

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SENIOR AIRMAN COREY HOOK

Commentary by Lt. Col. Roberta Smith

10th Air Force Public Affairs

Suicide has been the focus of Air Force leadership recently and is an issue we must pay close attention to and learn more about.

We don't want to think it will happen to someone we know, are close to, work with or even love. But unfortunately it does happen and when it does, the result can be pain, sorrow, guilt and regret.

It's hard to think someone you care about will actually complete the act, even when troubling signs are evident. When a co-worker, friend or loved one exhibits signs of depression or stress in his life, we absolutely must take action. Follow-up is very important and we must not let our concern be overcome by other events.

It happened recently to someone I worked with, cared about and considered a friend. Many of us who saw the signs tried in vain to help, but, deep down we never really thought it would happen. There is no way to put into words the pain and sorrow we feel. I will tell you ... it hurts and doesn't go away overnight.

We have got to take suicide prevention seriously and take action to help someone in need. Asking someone if he is "OK" is not enough – they will more than likely give an upbeat answer even though they are deeply troubled.

We must continue training Airmen to recognize when a person is troubled by depression or thoughts of suicide. Leadership should acknowledge that those who they command will more than likely never, ever

tell them they are depressed or are having suicidal thoughts. They must look to those who are close to the person for help.

A person committed to taking their life is not thinking clearly and is in no way selfish or wanting to inflict pain on anyone else. They may believe they have let everyone down and his life is not worth living. Of course this is not true! They have no idea, at that moment, how many people care about them and how sad those who know them would be if they were gone. Once they have made the decision, one of the signs exhibited is to express to you and others how great things are and what a bright future is ahead for them. Do not be fooled by this!

I write this to encourage all Airmen to take suicide prevention seriously. You never know if the actions you take will save the life of another. Help is available in many ways. The first person to turn to is your chaplain.

I wish my friend had not taken his life, and wish I could have done more to help. He served his country honorably, and I am proud to have served with him. I pray he is at peace now and in a much better place.

Being a good wingman is critical and can save the life of someone you care about. Don't think it can't or won't happen to someone you know. My co-workers and friends can tell you it does. Please take suicide prevention seriously.

If we don't, the results could be devastating.

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Members of the 442nd Fighter Wing gather for a memorial service for Master Sgt. Chris Sullivan and Tech. Sgt. Hardford Carre Nov. 6, in the 5-bay hangar at Whiteman Air Force Base. (Photo by Lt. Col. David Kurle)

## TO THE FAMILY OF:



**From my perspective, every man and woman in this wing is vital to providing combat capability and combat support to our nation.**

**- Col. Mark Clemons, 442nd Fighter Wing commander**

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