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Yellow Ribbon Reintegration

Airmen, families reunite during 3-day event



MSG names new commander

Col. Alan Teauseau tells the Mohawk about his military experience and aspirations for the 442nd Fighter Wing.

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MASTER SGT. DON BUTLER
442ND MISSION SUPPORT FLIGHT
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COVER PHOTO: Tech. Sgt. John Kelsall and his son, Cole, work together with the rest of the family to create a structure made out of snacks for the family teambuilding exercise during the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event in March. (Photo by Senior Airman Danielle Wolf)

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T 442nd Fighter Wing Tip of the Spear

STAFF SGT. STACEY EDWARDS
442ND MEDICAL SQUADRON

Staff Sgt. Stacey Edwards serves as the 442nd Medical Squadron Career Advisor. Sergeant Edwards volunteered for the position after serving as the noncommissioned officer in charge of the enlisted/officer performance report program, and he was instrumental in the success of the transition from paper to the Virtual Personnel Center-Guard Reserve within the medical squadron.

Sergeant Edwards has emulated the same type of success in his role as squadron career advisor. He is diligent in seeing that members are advised of their options when considering re-enlistment. Sergeant Edwards is the first member of the medical squadron to welcome newcomers to the unit and to explain the inner workings of weekend drill. After giving the newcomers a tour of the unit, he introduces them to their work sections and supervisors. He also advises the squadron commander on unit issues. Sergeant Edwards additionally serves as medical command and control coordinator during the operational readiness exercises and inspection. In this role, he was nominated and recognized for his outstanding performance in the coordination of all casualty movement and disposition.

His continuous work ethic is beyond compare. He is highly respected by both officer and enlisted. The 442nd Medical Squadron is proud to honor Sergeant Edwards as May's "Tip of the Spear."

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PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. TOM TALBERT

A-10 community guides civilian pilot to safe landing

By Senior Airman Danielle Wolf

Thursday began as a typical day for Maj. Steve Nester, 303rd Fighter Squadron A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot. He suited up and boarded his aircraft, doing all the typical checks and preparing for flight. When his wingman had to make a last-minute abort, he didn't think much of it.

It wasn't until he was headed from Whiteman AFB to Springfield, Mo., for a routine training mission, that he realized it wasn't going to be a normal flight.

"On my way to Springfield, I called Maj. (Dax) Hayes and Maj. (Todd) Riddle to let them know what the weather was like there," Major Nester said. "They were about a half-hour behind me, and that's when Major Riddle told me there was a civilian pilot in trouble who they were talking to on their frequency."

Major Nester switched to that frequency on his radio in time to hear Major Hayes, fellow A-10 pilot, talking to the civilian

pilot. There, he found out that the pilot was flying a Mooney airplane, a single-engine, general aviation aircraft. The man was not an instrument-rated pilot, meaning he was not qualified to be flying above the clouds and he only had about an hour's worth of fuel left.

"When I started talking to him, he was pretty worried," Major Hayes said. "He had been on the radio with the controllers at Whiteman. I asked them what they were doing for him, and they said they were trying to find him good weather to land in, but they said it was going to be hard because there wasn't really good weather anywhere."

It was at that point Major Hayes asked the pilot about his situation.

"He said he only had about one hour of instrument flight time," Major Hayes said. "I'm not sure how he got that high in the first place, but it is possible that he was flying and then the clouds moved in below him."

Unfortunately he's on top of this overcast layer and we can't find an airport that has any scattered or broken layers that he can get through; he's got about an hour of fuel left.

- Whiteman controller to A-10 pilot



Maj. Stephen Nester was on a routine training mission when he heard about a civilian pilot in distress. He used his Air Force training to assist the pilot in landing safely and averted what could have been a devastating event.

COURTESY PHOTO

The major began asking the pilot about the type of instruments he had in the flight deck as well as further information on the pilot's flight experience.

Major Hayes had also been on a training mission that day, but it was one where he was acting as an instructor, working with Major Riddle in the new A-10 Thunderbolt II C-model aircraft.

"I decided to get Major Nester on the radio too. It made more sense for him to escort the pilot so I could finish my upgrade training, but for awhile, the pilot did have three A-10s flying with him to help," Major Hayes said.

Back at Whiteman, the control tower and the operations group were working to assist the pilot also, searching for clear skies and runways in the nearby area for the pilot to land.

"Finally, we were about 20 miles south of (Whiteman AFB) and decided that Springfield would be the best place to land," Major Nester said. "It had the best weather and it was our best chance to help him down."

At that point, Major Nester took the next few minutes to practice descents from above the clouds.

"We practiced descents in the clear skies at about 6,000 to 8,000 feet," he said.

Major Nester was able to give the pilot accurate approach information so he could line up with the runway coordinates from 50 miles out, all while still above the clouds.

"I was trying to stay right there with him, but it was hard because the fastest he could go about 160 knots (about 184 mph) and the slowest an A-10 can go is about 130 knots (about 150 mph)," Major Nester said. "My plan was to stay on his wing, close to him, in case he accidentally turned into the clouds."

Disorientation when flying is extremely common, Major

Nester said. Not only does it take keen instincts, but for those who lack sufficient experience, it can be easy to get off track.

Once he was ready for his first descent, the major realized the pilot would need a little more coaching.

"He was only going about 100 knots and that can be really dangerous," Major Nester said.

The pilot, who had accidentally pulled up while turning, was back above the clouds and no closer to a safe landing.

"I coached him back to the runway and eventually he got through the clouds; he had to descend through about 3,000 feet of weather, which normally isn't that bad, and eventually he made it to the runway."

At that point, Major Nester knew the pilot was safely on the ground and he headed back to Whiteman. While he did not complete his original training mission that day, Major Nester assisted a stranded pilot in what could have turned into a devastating event. With the assistance of the entire A-10 community, the pilot was able to make a safe landing.

"It was really our formation-flying training and situational awareness that made it easier for us to help him down," he said. "Formation flying teaches us to fly close to each other even through the clouds. In our one year of pilot training, about 15 to 20 percent of it is practicing just that. Also, we have training in many of the things (the pilot) had not thought of – like checking the weather, having an alternate game plan for saving fuel and navigational training."

The A-10's primary mission is close air support, and in many ways, this mission surely proved that. That day Major Nester was one of many teammates in the A-10 community who used his Air Force Reserve training to assist a fellow "wingman."



Together again

Families and Airmen reunite during Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event after 6-month deployment



Tech. Sgt. John Kelsall, his wife DeAnna, and children Olivia and Cole work together to create a structure made out of snacks during a family team building exercise during the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event in March.

Photos and story by Senior Airman Danielle Wolf

Fourteen members of the 442nd Security Forces Squadron had the opportunity to attend the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration event with their families in Excelsior Springs, Mo. March 5-6.

After a six-month deployment in Iraq, a two-day family event at The Elms Resort and Spa was just the remedy.

“It was reassuring to see people still smiling,” said Senior Master Sgt. Robert Smith, 442nd SFS noncommissioned officer in charge. “This time I think it was harder to dump the stress of the deployment. You go over there so many times and you think you have (deployment) down to an art, but it actually gets harder.”

For Sergeant Smith, the event was about reconnecting with fellow Airmen from the deployment. Because he isn’t married and doesn’t have children, he said his main purpose at the event was to make sure his fellow wingmen were adjusting to life back home.

“This time, we got to our (area of responsibility) and we hit the ground running,” he said. “There were periods where things were going smoothly, but then it’s hard to hear what people are going through back home.”

For Tech. Sgt. Bryan Byler, 442nd SFS Airman, the most difficult part of the deployment, he said, was being away.

“I feel guilty leaving, and leaving (my wife) with all the responsibilities,” he said.

While the Bylers don’t have children, they have several pets to care for, and Sergeant Byler said he knew that was a difficult enough task.

“I am glad we had this event because I have been afraid to call (the other Airmen),” Sergeant Smith said. “It was like we got back, and I didn’t want to bother them because they’ve been away from their families for so long, and for them, it was family time.”

While the Yellow Ribbon event was intended to bring families together, it enforced one thing that many of the Airmen learned while on their deployment – the 442nd SFS is a family of its own.

“Our squadron is super close,” Sergeant Smith said. “Sometimes I get e-mails from people who are going through stuff, so it helped me to see that everyone is O.K.”

Unlike previous 442nd Fighter Wing Yellow Ribbon events, the amount of members and their families who were eligible to attend was much smaller.

“I have helped organized two yellow ribbon events,” said Master Sgt.

Vickie Chambers, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 442nd Airman and Family Readiness office. "One (event) had over 300 people and one had 14. I can honestly tell you that even though the larger group was able to reach more people, the smaller group was able to help the members. In my opinion the smaller group was more effective."

Previous yellow ribbon events had much of the same material presented: Financial planning, parenting, marital communication, Tri-Care, Veteran's Affairs benefits and education. Along with that information however, the group was able to take advantage of the small number of attendees by having round-table discussions and an opportunities for the parents and the children to participate in team-building activities together.

"With smaller groups, members are able to get the one-on-one attention and questions answered that are needed to truly reintegrate into life," Sergeant Chambers said. "All the participants and spouses seemed like they were truly excited to be there and to hear what the speakers had to say."

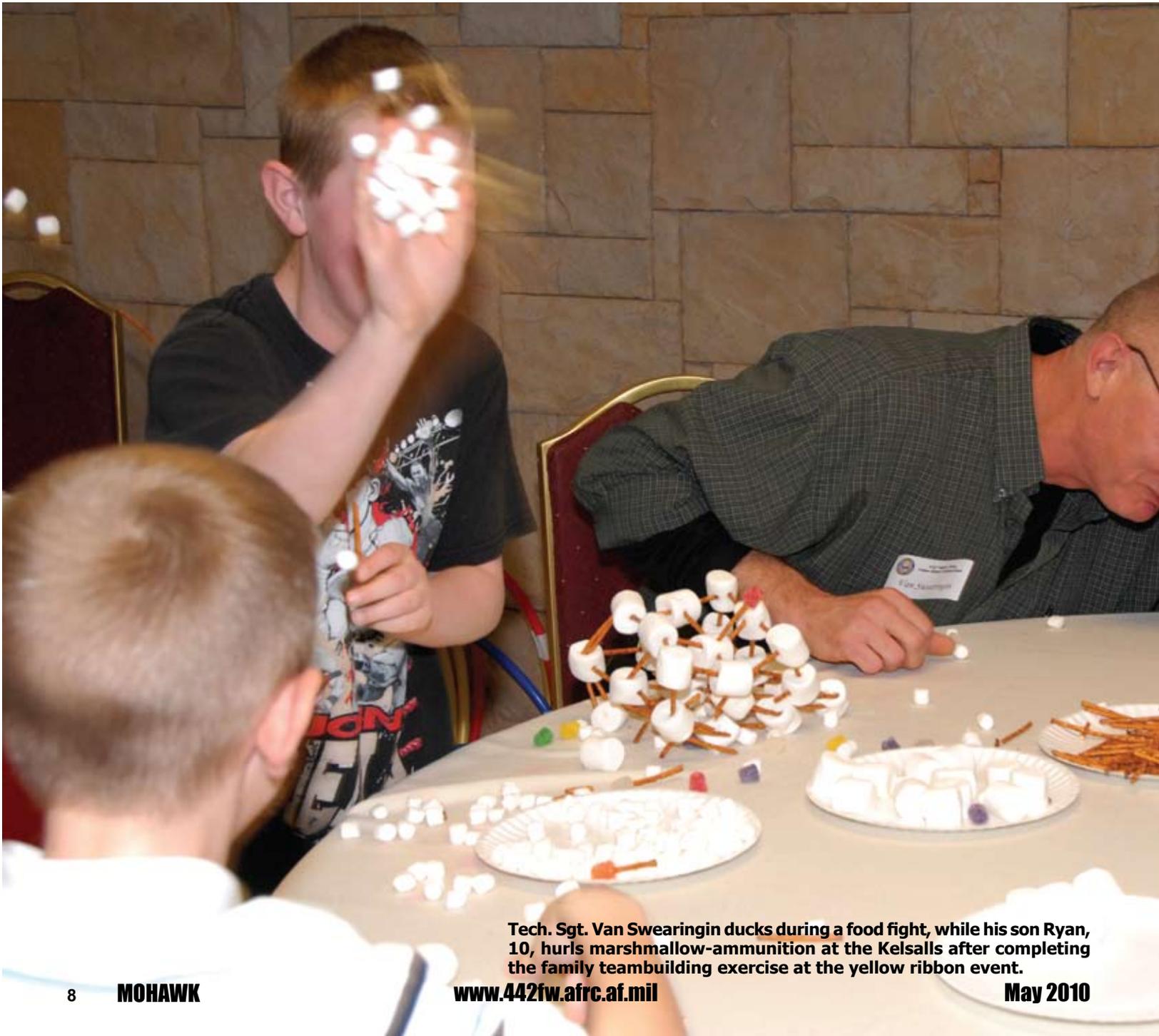
"Statistically," she added, "if you have more than 20 people in a group, you will not have as much participation."

The members weren't the only ones the yellow ribbon team geared the event toward though.

"This event gave the families time to step out of their lives," Sergeant Chambers said. "I know when I returned from a deployment, everyone wanted to talk to me and see me. It was so hard to give my immedi-



Chaplain (Maj.) James Buckman conducts Sunday morning during the yellow ribbon event.



Tech. Sgt. Van Swearingin ducks during a food fight, while his son Ryan, 10, hurls marshmallow-ammunition at the Kelsalls after completing the family teambuilding exercise at the yellow ribbon event.



...acts an optional devotional
...bon event.



The Kelsall family worked together to create a structure made of marshmallows, pretzels and gum drops during the family team-building exercise taught by the military and family life consultants.

ate family the attention they deserved. Having this event within 30 days of the return home allows the family to step back, take a breath and truly hear the message from the speakers.”

It also allowed the children to participate in family, team-building exercises such as building structures out of snack food. While the construction was an event that was exciting for the children, it allowed the families to bond and work together as a team.

For many of the spouses, Sergeant Chambers said, the round table discussion seemed to be a highly effective way to communicate.

“The situations the spouses and the members are dealing with were completely different,” she said. “Separating them into two groups gave them

each the courage to speak in confidence without hurting the other one’s feelings. This was a huge step in helping the spouses with the reintegration period.”

Maj. Todd Riddle, yellow ribbon event coordinator, said it was important to have a small group of people attending the event and participating.

“It helped promote the members’ connectedness and gave each person an opportunity to share their experiences with the group,” he said. “(The commander’s welcome barbecue the first night) helped build some trusting relationship for the level of communication in the follow-on workshops.”

Major Riddle said the yellow ribbon team plans to host future events for members who have been deployed for more than 90 days.



PHOTO BY SENIOR MASTER SGT. JOSEPH HODGES

442nd CES firefighters receive NFA certifications

*By Tech. Sgt. Eric Hartman
442nd Civil Engineers Squadron*

Ten 442nd Airmen headed to Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga. March 1-5 to participate in a variety of supervisory-level incident management training programs.

For the 442nd Civil Engineers Squadron Citizen Airmen who attended, the training took place at the Air Force Reserve Command Expeditionary Combat Support Training Certification Center.

During the week-long training, members received instruction on basic supervision and expectations, the national incident management system, essentials of firefighting jeopardy, and an instructor development program. Additionally, students were given the opportunity to apply these incident-management skills during live-fire training evolutions, which included vehicle and structural fires.

Students were required to serve as initial, first arriving, incident commanders, relay information to additional, responding units and assign tactical objectives in support of their strategic goals in order to mitigate the hazards.

All 10 members also successfully completed two National Fire Academy training programs, and received NFA certifications. The programs were “Firefighter Safety-Calling the Mayday” and “Calling the Mayday Hands-on Training for Firefighters.” These programs are designed with the primary focus of firefighter safety in mind.

Many firefighters are injured or killed each year in the United States because they become trapped or disoriented in a fire, and wait too long to call for help.

This training focuses on recognizing the parameters when firefighters need assistance and how to properly call for the assistance.

In addition to classroom instruction and a written examination, the program also incorporated a practical-skills evaluation where crews are put into multiple trapped firefighter situations, requiring the members to call for help and initiate self-rescue actions under duress.

The 442nd CES had four noncommissioned officers at the University of Alabama Fire College attending the Fire Officer III and Fire Officer IV advanced certification program as part of their Air Force specialty code upgrade training.

Fit to fight, even without a gym

Commentary by Senior Airman
Danielle Wolf

Finding time to work out can be difficult. Despite the looming fear for some Airmen that the new physical training standards will be implemented quickly, it's every Airman's responsibility to remain fit.

For full-time students, members with families or Citizen Airmen with demanding jobs, this can often mean getting fit in a less-than traditional way.

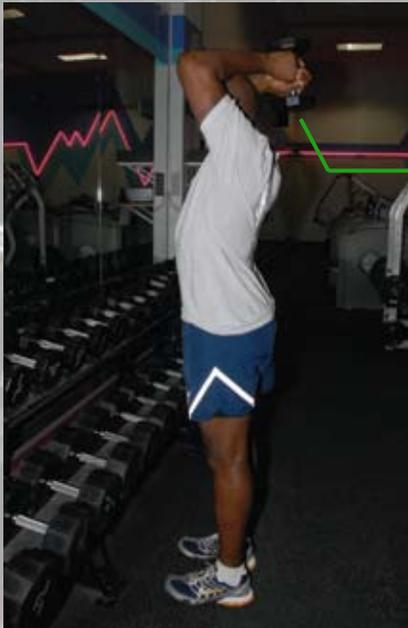
As a full-time college student and full-time employee, I spent last year taking every last opportunity I had to fit in a few extra minutes of PT time. Often that meant taking my dog for a jog to the end of the street rather than simply opening the back door for her to go out, wearing ankle weights to and from my classes and work, and even using jars of spaghetti sauce as weights while waiting for my noodles to boil.

Some people may think this was extreme, but for me, it was a way to burn a few extra calories without heading to the gym.

Staff Sergeant and fitness specialist Vern Ivy, 442nd Services Flight, showed the *Mohawk* a simple exercise to help tone your triceps – no spaghetti sauce needed.

Always take caution when conducting any exercise routine.

- 1 Begin by holding the weight directly above your head with both hands.
- 2 Carefully drop the weight behind your head making a 90-degree angle with your elbow.
- 3 Slowly raise the weight again, repeat.



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TO THE FAMILY OF:

Tech. Sgt. Joshua Burr,
a vehicle operations
dispatcher, currently
deployed from the 442nd
Logistics Readiness
Squadron to Iraq, prepares
to tow a HMMWV. (Courtesy
photo)



**I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to
study mathematics and philosophy.**

- John Adams