

MOHAWK

April 2011

442nd Fighter Wing

www.442fw.afrc.af.mil

Whiteman AFB, Mo.

PHYSICAL



MENTAL



SOCIAL



SPIRITUAL



**Wing focuses
on fitness, resiliency**

FOUR POINTS OF A RESILIENT PERSON:

1. SELF CARE
2. KNOW YOUR LIMITS
3. CALL FOR BACKUP
4. KEEP PERSPECTIVE

MORE INFORMATION ON THESE POINTS AND RESILIENCY CAN BE FOUND IN THE WINGMAN DOWN DAY VIDEO, WHICH FEATURES SEVERAL MEMBERS FROM AROUND THE WING, INCLUDING COL. ERIC OVERTURF, 442ND FIGHTER WING COMMANDER, AND HIS WIFE, MRS. KARLA OVERTURF (PICTURED).



Cover story

8 Airmen participate in Wingman Down Day

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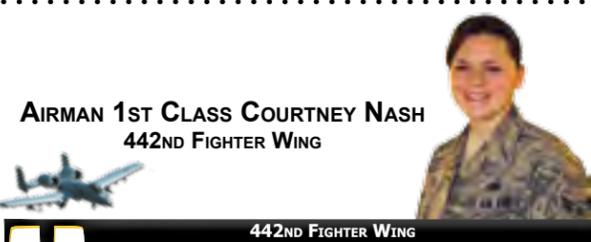
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Tip of the Spear: April 2011

Airman 1st Class Courtney N. Nash is the exceptional knowledge operations manager for the 442nd Fighter Wing Safety Office. Her perseverance and commitment to excellence makes her stand out and most deserving of this month's Tip of the Spear.

Airman Nash joined the wing in 2010 and quickly became an integral part of the safety office. Her expertise in computer programs and data management has accelerated the office's productivity and heightened support to members of the unit.

She worked tirelessly, as a team member, preparing for the Air Force Reserve Command's assessment of the wing's safety programs resulting in a "Best seen to date!"

While taking advantage of the seasoning training program, she created multiple Sharepoint sites and was asked to teach others on these advanced technical networks.

Airman Nash excels in all she does, recently completing her career development courses in record time.

Outside of work, she is a full-time student who currently maintains a 3.7 grade-point average, while staying fit to fight on multiple volleyball and soccer teams.

Airman Nash exceeds all standards in appearance, conduct and military bearing. She serves as a stellar example to all Airmen.

Focus on resilience: Commander talks about Wingman Down Day

By Col. Eric S. Overturf
442nd Fighter Wing commander

This month we will take part in Wingman Down Day activities that focus on stress and resilience.

This event was directed by Gen. Norton Schwartz, chief of staff of the Air Force, to ensure that all active-duty, National Guard, and reserve Airmen take time to think about ways to effectively deal with the stress we encounter every day at work and at home.

While stress can come from a variety of different sources, I know many of you are feeling stress from your job as a reservist. With our high ops tempo and constant inspection cycle, we're living in a fast-paced world. This isn't going to change for a few more months until we complete the operational readiness inspection, phase I – but that's also the upside – it's only a few more months!

What we can change is the way we deal with stress. Over the course of the Wingman Day events, you're going to hear a key word: Resilience.

Resilience refers to the ability to bounce back from stress, and it is a critical skill we need in order to succeed in difficult situations. Keeping a positive mental attitude is not always easy, but with resilience, we can recognize when things are headed down a negative path and metaphorically bounce ourselves back onto a path that will keep us, and our wingmen, safe.

The wingman concept is a key part of our resilience. As a pilot, I've grown up counting on my wingman to help me fly safely and effectively. A good wingman sticks by your side, no matter what, to see you through the clouds or stormy weather.

This concept is not just for pilots, however, because all Airmen can and should look out for each other, keep each other safe and accountable and let someone know when a fellow Airman is headed down the wrong path.

Reservists face pressure from balancing their military careers with their civilian jobs and families, and we don't want anyone to feel like they have nothing to live for, which can happen if resilience drops to the point where stress seems to be unmanageable. We're going to take time on this Wingman Down Day to reflect on ways to increase

our resilience and improve our mental, spiritual and emotional health.

One of the tools that we will use during our Wingman Day activities is a video produced by the 442nd Safety and Public Affairs offices that features 442nd FW members from across the wing talking about the stress they face right here at Whiteman.

You'll see Airmen talk about stressors they face at work and at home, ways they deal with these stressors, what resilience means to them and specific examples of how they've been resilient in their own lives. Hopefully you'll hear things that you can directly

relate to, and it will inspire you to think about what causes the most stress for you.

Communication barriers, fitness and high ops tempo are among the issues most talked about in the video.

My goals for this video are to highlight some of the common stressors we all deal with on a daily basis, and to identify ways to effectively deal with that stress.

Most importantly, I want you to know that you don't need to face stress alone, because there is always someone available to talk to you. Your supervisors, first sergeants, and commanders are great options, and our chaplains are also a fantastic resource to talk to about your personal life or military career. Military One Source offers free, confidential counseling 24 hours a day to all military members, spouses and families and even pays for sessions with a local counselor for you and your family members.

Finally, remember that asking for help shows strength and courage. As General Schwartz said during his town hall meeting at Whiteman last month "no one will look down on you for seeking help."

Thanks for all you do to make this a great place to serve our country. I'm looking forward to hearing your ideas from Wingman Down Day so we can make it even better.





The heart of a pararescueman

By Staff Sgt. Andrea Thacker
23rd Wing Public Affairs

Master Sgt. Robert Disney performs a rendition of Seether's "Break-down" Feb. 24 at his home. Sergeant Disney began performing at local venues in town during his first assignment to Moody AFB, Ga., from 1998 to 2004. Sergeant Disney is the 347th Rescue Group standards and evaluations superintendent.



Sergeant Disney and his wife, Tess, gather their dogs, Sasha, Minnie and Wall-E, for a photo at their home.



Sergeant Disney strikes a pose with Wall-E, one of his three dogs. He said Wall-E is his favorite because he is the only male.

MOODY AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. – When many people hear the odds are against them, they simply give up. But for Master Sgt. Robert Disney, he does just the opposite and says “challenge accepted.”

Nearly 14 years ago, when a 19-year-old Robert Disney walked in to the Air Force Recruiting office and told the recruiter he had dreams of becoming a cross between a doctor and a Navy SEAL, the recruiter sent him to the back of the office to a stack of dusty pararescue pamphlets.

He said, “I think I have exactly what you’re looking for, but don’t get your hopes up kid. No one I’ve sent has made the cut, and you probably won’t either.”

“That’s all I needed to hear and I was hooked,” Sergeant Disney said. “Once I dusted off that flyer and saw a dark-haired, handsome-looking, Italian guy in a maroon beret on the cover, I read through it. I immediately knew it was something I wanted to do. I didn’t stop talking about it all summer until I left for basic training.”

Of the 86 students in his course, only six had what it took to overcome this challenge and graduate to become a pararescue-jumper: Sergeant Disney was one of those six. That was the first of many challenges he has met.

“I walked into the 38th Rescue Squadron, brand new, two stripes on my arm, and this big, tall, muscular guy walked in, and I recognized him immediately as being the guy from the pamphlet,” Sergeant Disney said. “He said to me in a New York accent, ‘Is that Bobby Disney? I hear you’re a real goofy guy,’ and kind of chuckled to himself for his Disney joke. That’s how I met Mike (Maltz). He was the best.”

That was Sergeant Disney’s first encounter with the man who would eventually become his mentor and impact his career in more ways than one.

Aside from currently being known as the 347th Rescue Group’s standards and evaluations superintendent, Sergeant Disney is also branded in Moody Air Force Base’s rescue community as the “Black Cloud.”

He gained this nickname by fellow PJs after what he called the “series of unfortunate three.”

Rewind to August 2002. Seven thousand and five hundred miles away in the mountains of Afghanistan, then-Staff Sgt. Disney was

on his second real-world rescue pick up.

They went to pick up two men who had been involved in a firefight and transported them to a tiny post in the middle of nowhere, Sergeant Disney said. Since they were at such a high altitude, the helicopter had to do a marginal power take off.

He said unfortunately, they were asking more than what the engines were capable of, which caused them to not have enough altitude or airspeed to avoid a “brown-out,” conditions caused by the Afghanistan’s extremely fine soil, known as ‘moon dust’, being spun up in the air creating a dust cloud and dramatically decreasing visibility. The helicopter browned-out and he was sitting in the left-side door and began to see the ground racing toward them.

“It felt like we were coming down and fast,” said Sergeant Disney with an intense stare. “So I determined it’d be best if I wasn’t sitting in the doorway if we did impact the ground. I moved inside the helicopter then I heard the left gunner yelling ‘STOP LEFT, STOP LEFT.’ About that time I felt a really hard impact.

“Somehow, I don’t know how ... I wasn’t in that door when it slammed shut. Angels on my shoulder, right?” Sergeant Disney said.

“The rotors were chewing into the ground and there were no blades on it anymore,” he said. “The engines are full power and it was just getting louder and louder, higher pitched, and higher pitched, and I’m just laying there with everything on me and it’s very, very calm ... serene. It wasn’t a struggle to get out. There wasn’t anything I could do. It was just laying there until all the violent motion stopped. Knowing what might have been coming was the worst part.”

Finally the pilots shut down the engines and Sergeant Disney said he recalls everything going quiet to the point of deathly quiet and then completely soundless unless the helicopter’s team leader snapped everyone back to reality by yelling out “SOUND OFF BY CREW POSITION.” Once they sounded off the team lead yelled “GET OUT.”

Something saved the whole crew that night, maybe it was Sergeant Disney’s ‘angels’ but whatever it was, one pararescueman thought he’d already survived the worst and reenlisted seven days later.

Six weeks later, a different enlistment, on a different aircraft and

in a different country, Sergeant Disney would witness an event that would rock him to the core.

“We starting hearing radio chatter of a boy and girl who fell down a hill,” he said. “We started referring to this rescue as Jack and Jill. In a C-130 Hercules, we launched out of Uzbekistan, and two helicopters launched out Afghanistan. It was one of the darkest nights I’ve ever seen through night vision goggles. Dark as can be ... could barely see the ground. We refueled both helicopters by colored light signals because of how dark it was.”

He said he was watching through the side window of the C-130. He could see the ground through his night-vision goggles then he would lose it again. He could swear they were punching in and out of clouds even 400 feet above the ground. Then he felt a familiar tug of the second helicopter disconnecting from the refueling hose.

“Not five seconds later, I saw a bright flash of light that flooded out my NVGs,” he said. “Then, all I heard was blood curdling screaming coming from the loadmaster. It looked like an explosion. It lit up the whole country side. I thought someone had been hit by a surface-to-air missile, and we were next. Then I heard ‘helicopter crash, seven o’clock.’”

The wheels in the veteran PJ’s head began turning, knowing they were at 400 feet and configured to jump, he was ready. The combat rescue officer aboard the C-130 made the decision not to jump until they knew more because the second helicopter was performing self search and rescue and already found three of the six crash victims.

Because the area in which the crash happened was unknown and determined by the Joint Personnel Recovery Center to be hostile, the crew was recalled back to home base and Sergeant Disney had to leave the crash site against his will.

“When I got back on the ground, I got the word of the guys who were on the bird,” Sergeant Disney said. “One of them was Mike Maltz. I can’t tell you how I will always feel about that night. I mean, the Airmen’s Creed says ‘I will never leave Airman behind’ ... and we had to leave guys behind, on the ground that night. Everything in me wishes I could have jumped in, I could have done something.

“It was like losing a father, losing a mentor and losing a friend all at the same time,” said a choked-up Sergeant Disney. “It was

one of the hardest moments, it was hard.”

A few months passed since the tragic event of losing the iconic figure who graced the cover of his recruiting pamphlet, and Sergeant Disney was yet again deployed and back in the mix of things. Little did he know he was about to stumble upon the last event in his series of unfortunate three.

“It was April 18, Good Friday,” Sergeant Disney said. “I know the date because I had been practicing to play my guitar at the Easter Sunday service. We were going on a training mission or exercise. It was about a 45-minute flight to get where we were going. When the pilots said it’s out there, when I looked out I saw what looked like people.”

By the time they were committed to land, the people were gone, Sergeant Disney said. Then he heard two sounds, the second sound confirming they were taking gunfire from at least four people.

“I racked my weapon. As I moved to sit down, I brought my weapon up, and I can see flashes now coming out the back now and (with) one of those flashes there was a weird disturbance of air,” he said. “Then came a sensation of two things at the same time. It was like someone swung a baseball bat in my face and the other was a shockwave that rippled through my whole body.”

Defending the helicopter and killing the bad guys who were shooting at them was he said was his only thought at the time.

“I looked over at the guy across from me and yelled ‘I’M SHOT!!! I’M HIT!!!’ and then I moved into a position to return fire. He yells ‘shoot back shoot back shoot back,’” Sergeant Disney said.

Within seconds of the helicopter touching down, three people were wounded. Through the barrage of gunfire Sergeant Disney, with a gunshot wound to right side of his cheek, returned fire to the enemy. By the time they departed the scene, only 30 seconds had lapsed since initial contact.

Much like the first helicopter crash that occurred not even a year prior, all the crew survived and returned to base to seek medical care.

Upon his return to Moody AFB, the Purple Heart recipient said he could have counted the number of people who weren’t there to greet him. Now being back stateside, Sergeant Disney could

SEE PARARESCUEMAN, PAGE 11



Bouncing back: Who is your wingman?

By Senior Airman Wesley Wright

Wingman Day 2011 is April 1, and the focus is building resilient Airmen through the wingman concept.

The Pentagon sums up wingman concept as thus:

“A culture of Airmen taking care of Airmen 24/7, 365 days a year.”

Building resilient Airmen, who can bounce back after setbacks, is an important part of life in the 442nd Fighter Wing. The genesis of wingman day was originally general safety days, which promoted physical safety and safe practices, said Lt. Col. Patrick Murphy, 442nd FW chief of safety.

Colonel Murphy said he has seen the integration of mental health and suicide prevention and operational risk management into the safety message.

Colonel Murphy said the information will be combined this year in order to deliver a more comprehensive message on the current issues including physical, mental and social stressors affecting our Airmen today.

Airmen do not have to do it alone, Colonel Murphy said,

“We never fly alone; that’s a wingman’s purpose. We look out for each other,” he said.

Communication between unit members and situational awareness is central to spotting and preventing dangerous signs in

fellow Airmen, he said.

“When you work with someone, you can tell when they are having a bad day,” he said.

Colonel Murphy said in addition to self and peer monitoring, common-sense tools are useful to help combat stressors. He also said these tools are not just for Airmen, but for everyone, whether military or civilian. Simple steps, such as getting enough sleep, eating right, taking time for physical fitness and avoiding dangerous situations, go a long way toward preventing issues before they happen.

Colonel Murphy said while the method of delivery for the Reserve is different from active duty as the 442nd FW will take time throughout the unit training assembly, April 2-3, the message is the same; Airmen looking out for one another, getting back up when knocked down and being resilient.

Master Sgt. Justin Johnston, 442nd FW ground safety manager, recognized the importance of relationships.

“Having the right people around you and having a support team around you both in family and work helps keep you motivated,” he said. “It’s Airmen taking care of Airmen.”

Sergeant Johnston described the 442nd FW as a family and said when he is out and about handing out safety packets, the

message wingman safety day delivers on safety, mental health and risk management must be relevant to Airmen to have maximum impact. He cited stressors such as: divorce, fitness, loss of family or unit members, single parenting, or civilian job as issues Airmen today could relate to.

“Resiliency is the key word,” Sergeant Johnston said, “You have to relieve stress.”

Col. Eric Overturf, 442nd FW commander, said he knows something about stress. He oversees approximately 2,100 people, including three geographically separated units. To combat stress, the colonel said he takes time to work out, spends time with his family, and gets plenty of sleep.

The colonel said Citizen Airmen in today’s operational reserve are busier than ever.

“Balancing work, family and civilian job commitments can be difficult,” Colonel Overturf said.

The colonel also said the first step in stress-management is to acknowledge stress, ask for help and use the wingman concept.

Colonel Overturf said he hopes as a result of Wingman Day 2011, all 442nd personnel are aware of the resources available to them including counseling, financial advice, unit social action, friends and coworkers.

RESILIENCY IN ACTION

VIDEOGRAPHY BY SENIOR AIRMAN TRACY BROWN

ABOVE: SEVERAL RESERVISTS WILL BE FEATURED IN A VIDEO TO BE SHOWN AROUND THE 442ND FIGHTER WING APRIL 2-3. THE VIDEO TALKS ABOUT SOME OF THE STRESSORS AIRMEN WITHIN THE WING DEAL WITH ON A DAILY BASIS AND HOW THEY MAINTAIN RESILIENCY. THE VIDEO SHOWS ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS WITH AIRMEN AND CLIPS FROM A FOCUS GROUP THAT MET TO DISCUSS RESILIENCY.

Qualities of well-rounded Airmen



'Jack of all trades'

AGE technicians support aircraft with vital equipment

By Tech. Sgt. Kent Kagarise





PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. KENT KAGARISE | AGE
The 442nd AGE flight is responsible for equipment that supports the A-10 Thunderbolt II and equipment required to keep the aircraft powered.

AGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

There is a long list of equipment required to keep the A-10 Thunderbolt II powered – both on the ground and in the air.

The 442nd Fighter Wing Aerospace Ground Equipment Flight keeps it all working and in order.

From month to month, Airmen who work in the AGE shop encounter new challenges on the unit training assembly weekends.

The Airmen who work in AGE have the tremendous task of making sure the flight line has operable equipment, and they work diligently to accomplish their mission.

“It’s tough to list – all the things we are responsible for,” said Tech. Sergeant Buck Roberts, AGE technician. “We provide auxiliary power, rather than putting time on the plane’s expensive components. We also perform inspections, make necessary repairs and find needed parts.”

The A-10 Thunderbolt II has been in use since 1975, so the plane and many of its parts are aging, which keeps the AGE shop in a constant state of awareness in effort to keep the 442nd FW mission-ready.

“Much of this equipment has been here since I got here 24 years ago, so the bulk of what we do is preventative maintenance, which allows us to fix things before they’re broken,” Sergeant Roberts said.

He said everything gets inspected at least twice a year in order to avert inopportune malfunctions, and he is proud of the role AGE plays in the wing’s success.

“There’s no air power without ground power — that’s us,” he said.

Sergeant Roberts said he remembers being a young Airman at his first duty assignment when a first sergeant explained to him that to work in AGE meant to be a, “Jack of all trades and a master of none.”

Because AGE technicians work in so many different facets, they were called once to help out when an Airman locked his keys in

his car.

“They called us because we usually have the answer,” Sergeant Roberts said.

Senior Airman John Marceron, AGE technician, said the biggest challenge for an AGE technician can be simply tracking down a piece of equipment through the system – then finding replacement parts if he runs into a supply limitation.

“You run the part number, the stock number and then you might have to wait for it to be delivered, and the next thing you know, something that could’ve taken minutes is taking you hours,” Airman Marceron said.

Senior Master Sergeant Michael McQuain, aerospace ground equipment flight chief, pointed out that AGE is not just about generators and power.

“It’s everything that’s needed to fix an airplane and get it in the air,” Sergeant McQuain said. “We supply everything needed to maintain that aircraft.”

There are times that the AGE workload increases and crucial decisions have to be made.

“Equipment can start breaking left and right and you have to figure out which jobs are most mission-critical,” Sergeant McQuain said.

In some cases the equipment AGE technicians are searching for is no longer being manufactured, which poses an impressive obstacle.

“If it can’t be replicated we’ll come up with ideas and ask the item manager and engineer to get it authorized. If it can be used we’ll share that information with fellow units,” Sergeant McQuain said.

Whether parts are being inspected, in need of repair or no longer exist, AGE technicians are on the scene with personnel that are apt to leap almost any hurdle placed before them.

“This shop has some of—if not the best – AGE technicians I’ve seen in my 28 years in the AGE world,” Sergeant McQuain said.

PARARESCUEMAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

were wounded. Through the barrage of gunfire Sergeant Disney, with a gunshot wound to right side of his cheek, returned fire to the enemy. By the time they departed the scene, only 30 seconds had lapsed since initial contact.

Much like the first helicopter crash that occurred not even a year prior, all the crew survived and returned to base to seek medical care.

Upon his return to Moody AFB, the Purple Heart recipient said he could have counted the number of people who weren’t there to greet him. Now being back stateside, Sergeant Disney could focus on getting back to normal and performing with his guitar in clubs around Valdosta.

Jumping to two years later, the only thing that was missing in Sergeant Disney’s life was a little romance. After searching, he found Tess, a local girl from Nashville, Ga. The two soon fell in love, but the Air Force had other plans, sending the master sergeant to RAF Mildenhall, England.

Knowing that Tess was the one, Sergeant Disney had but one choice and that was to ask for her hand over the phone.

“I asked Tess to marry me on Christmas day over the phone,” Sergeant Disney said. “I sent her a ring in the mail. The company sent her both of the rings at the same time and she opened the wedding band first and was like ‘Awww.’”

Tess Disney laughed and said, “It was messed up,” as she continued to tell the story. “This is a wedding band, this isn’t an engagement ring ... I was like, wait a minute that’s for later on.”

Now nearly six years later, back at Moody AFB, the Disneys are living happily with two horses and three dogs.

When asked how Tess handles her husband’s many deployments, knowing that his nickname is Black Cloud, she responded “I’m a strong wife and I have strong faith. Worrying isn’t going to help anything.

“This is what I tell people, I imagine Robert is off staying at some resort,” she said laughing. “I know he has someone watching out for him. He’s been through all that already. He’s here for a reason.”

So after all that has happened in his life, this PJ still has one ongoing challenge to face and that is living up to his name.

“Someone I looked up to once said to me, ‘When people meet you, you’re either going to be one of two things,’ Sergeant Disney said. “You’re either going to be a big disappointment, a dirt bag who got shot in the face, or you’re actually going to be that guy, the one people can look up to.”

These words were something that Sergeant Disney said changed his life and since then, he hasn’t stopped saying, “Challenge accepted.”

Reservists participate in phase-one exercise

By Staff Sgt. Charles White
 442nd Maintenance Squadron

After having surpassed the phase II operational readiness inspection, the 442nd Fighter Wing began preparing for the Phase I ORI, March 5–6.

The world is an ever-changing environment, which provides the 442nd FW an opportunity to use the Phase I ORI to train and deploy ready reservists.

Senior Master Sgt. Kevin McMenemy, 442nd Maintenance Squadron egress flight chief said he was very impressed with how well the different shops meshed together.

“It takes an exponential amount of teamwork across the shops to accomplish the mission,” he said. “It’s amazing to

me how much we can actually accomplish with the proper amount of coordination and cooperation.”

The exercise in March was only one step in a long process of perfecting the wing’s actions prior to the August inspection.

“I think everything is a learning process,” said Maj. Christina Manning, 442nd Maintenance Squadron commander. “We will take the results of this exercise and adapt and overcome any shortfalls.”

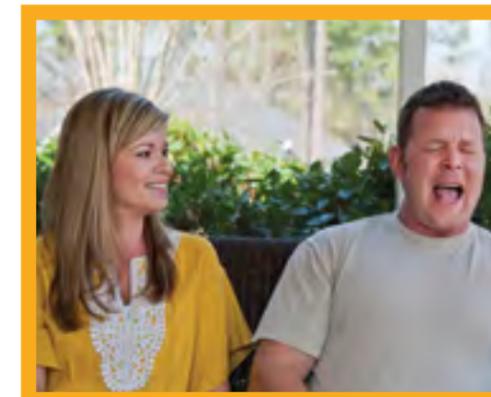
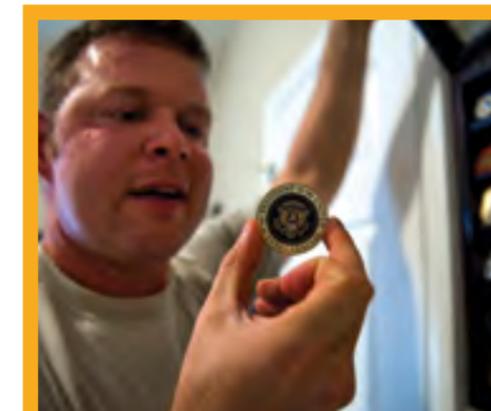
The wing demonstrated its ability to perform its war-time function during the phase II ORI portion of this inspection in July 2010.

Like the phase II inspection, the maintainers aren’t the only ones being tested; it’s the entire wing that’s involved, and it’s the wings cohesiveness that and ability to

(Below) Master Sgt. Robert Disney shows off a coin that he received from President George W. Bush. Sergeant Disney earned it while performing personnel recovery alert for the president in 2004.

DATING

(Bottom) Master Sgt. Robert Disney and his wife, Tess, Feb. 24, 2011, tell the story of their first phone conversation. After a year of dating with a deployment separating them for six months, the two got married one week after Sergeant Disney returned in 2005.



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PHOTO BY TECH. SGT.
KENT KAGARISE

MEMORIAL

Tech. Sgt. Chris Hinote, 442nd
Maintenance Operations
Flight, plays a song during the
memorial for Tech. Sgt. Lanny
Rex, March 6.



THE 442ND FIGHTER WING IS AN AIR FORCE RESERVE UNIT AT WHITEMAN AFB, Mo.

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