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ABOUT THE STINGER

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Commander's Comments



Leading America's Finest Fighter Wing

By Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

23 years of service, five duty assignments, four combat tours, nine combat sorties totaling 47 combat hours round out his more than 3,500 flying hours and have all played a significant role in leading Col. Chad Holesko to his most current position, Commander of the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing.

Though these are just a few of the accomplishments that have helped to prepare him to lead Ohio's one and only F-16 fighter unit, it all started with a dream of flying.

"I always knew I wanted to be an officer and a pilot," Holesko said. "And I was accepted into the U.S. Air Force Academy, which was my number one school of choice."

Holesko's career spans 23 years and includes service in both the active duty and Air National Guard. He was commissioned through the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1999. His first duty assignment was at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. He was then assigned to Kunsan Air Base, Republic of Korea, followed by Sheppard AFB, Texas. Col. Holesko joined the Ohio Air National Guard's 178th Wing in 2008 and was assigned as instructor for the Royal Netherland air force at Springfield ANGB. Col. Holesko transferred to the 180FW in 2010 where he has served in various roles, including Director of Opera-

tions, Aerospace Control Alert Commander, Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Commander and Maintenance Group Commander.

"I've had many mentors throughout my career and have learned so much, mostly from former commanders, both good and bad," said Holesko. "But the position that has taught me the most was my assignment as Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Commander. It was not only a crash course in aircraft maintenance and aircraft generation, ensuring mission capable aircraft are ready and available, but also in organizational leadership in one of the largest squadrons and groups assigned to the 180FW."

Assuming command of the wing in October, 2022, Holesko is ready for the task of leadership, bringing big goals and expectations for himself and 180FW Airmen.

"My goals are to maintain our high level of performance as a fighter wing, continue to develop leaders who will preserve our culture of excellence and meet future challenges with the same success and positive attitude we have always displayed," Holesko said. "My expectations are that every Stinger Airman is fully proficient in their primary duty while working toward the next skill level or

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180FW Trains with Sun Downers

Story & Photos by Staff Sgt. Gregg York

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Benjamin Preston, a crew chief assigned to the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing, and U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Allison Garcia, a munitions specialist assigned to the 180FW, stand next to an F-16 Fighting Falcon, assigned to the 180FW, before morning training flights at Naval Air Station Key West, Fla., Nov. 3, 2022. The 180FW deployed to Key West to train with VFC-111, the Navy's premier adversary squadron, providing realistic training scenarios that ensure the 180FW is prepared for homeland defense and contingency operations around the globe.



180FW Trains with the Sun Downers in the Sunshine State

More than 150 Airmen and 10 F-16 Fighting Falcons from the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing deployed to Naval Air Station Key West, Fla., to train with the Navy's Fighter Squadron Component (VFC) 111 in late October, 2022.

Key West, Florida is a popular vacation spot. With consistently great weather and vast ocean space, it's a great spot to relax. Those same things that draw in tourists also make it a great place for military aviation.

"Besides just being in a sunny place in November, the airspace out here is unlike the airspace we have back home," said U.S. Air Force Maj. Jake Laginess, 180FW F-16 fighter pilot and project officer for the training. "It's a lot closer to where we're operating out of, it's a lot bigger and there's fewer restrictions, so it allows us to fly closer to how we would in combat."

While at Key West, the 180FW made the most out of their training by accomplishing two different training objectives simultaneously.

"We're working with another F-16 unit, out of Homestead Air Force Base, and we're also flying with dissimilar F-5s," said Laginess.

The F-5N Tiger IIs that the 180FW trained with are part of the Navy's VFC-111, which provides quality adversary training to Navy and Air Force units.

"VFC-111 is an adversary squadron," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Lee Smallwood, a member of VC-111s leadership, "so we simulate the bad guys day in and day out."

According to Smallwood, the VFC-111 assesses current adversary

tactics, then replicates them for U.S. fighter pilots to exercise combat maneuvers against.

"One distinctive advantage we have is that we are pretty well-versed in what the good guy tactics and capabilities are," said Smallwood, "so if they want us to be as difficult as possible, we can tailor our presentations to try to make it as difficult as possible for the good guys, since we know what they're going to do, and we can build our reactions to preempt some of those."

According to U.S. Navy Cmdr. Matt Gibson, another member of the VFC-111 leadership team, the F-5 pilots can even replicate maneuvers and tactics of different types of aircraft, giving other fighter pilots the chance to practice facing adversary aircraft before ever actually encountering one in a real-world situation.

"The F-5s are not as capable of an aircraft as the F-16," said Laginess, "but those guys are really good at what they do, as far as being adversaries. They've really learned what the threat out there does and what they're like, so they're good at it."

Facing these experienced fighter pilots isn't the only challenging thing about going up against the VFC-111. According to Laginess, who's also a former U.S. Navy pilot, one of the biggest challenges lies in the differences between the services.

"The biggest challenge is actually going back to fly with a Navy unit," said Laginess. "When we're flying with them, we just speak different languages. We do the same job, we're just using different words to get there. So, the challenge is trying to translate between the two and figure out what each of us means."

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A Matter of Life or Death: Seeking Help and Overcoming



Story & Photos by
Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

“I was highly suicidal and I told my husband that if he didn’t take me to the hospital, I wasn’t going to continue to live.”

For Tech. Sgt. Jilayne Michelsen, a Command Post Control Operations Specialist, assigned to the Ohio National Guard’s 180th Fighter Wing, having the ability to ask her husband for help during her darkest hour, saved her life, her family and her military career.

“I did not know what I was experiencing when it initially happened,” said Michelsen. “It was my first panic attack that sent me into a never-ending spiral.”

Michelsen knew something was wrong shortly after the birth of her second child, in 2015, and with the support of her husband, she was admitted to a local-area hospital and diagnosed with severe postpartum depression, anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

“To be completely candid,” Michelsen continued, “It was a matter of life or death. Because I hold a top secret security clearance, I knew I might be jeopardizing my career by having myself admitted, but I really wanted to live and I simply didn’t know how to continue on in the state I was in. I needed help.”

Following in the footsteps of her three older sisters who also serve in the active duty Air Force and Air National Guard, Michelsen enlisted into the ANG in 2007, with plans to use the ANG’s tuition assistance program to put herself through college.

As a command post controller, Michelsen is responsible for ensuring the success and continuity of the 180FW’s NORAD Aerospace Control Alert mission, as well as maintaining command and control of and reporting on the wing’s assets and personnel to state and national higher headquarters, during day-to-day operations and during crisis situations such as natural disasters and aircraft mishaps.

“My favorite part of the job is the importance it holds,” said Michelsen. “In the event of an emergency, we serve as an information hub, responsible for time-sensitive activities. As an operations center, our role is critical to the success of many major affairs. Some days can be monotonous, but when something significant happens, you know your actions play a vital part in the bigger picture.”

Passionate about her job, Michelsen knew there was a good chance she could lose her security clearance and her position as a command post controller after sharing her story with her chain of command.

“I wanted to be completely honest and I knew I had to tell my supervisor what had happened,” Michelsen said. “I don’t regret that decision at all. I believe my honesty helped my supervisor to better understand my situation during my months of recovery as I worked with our Director of Psychological Health and a civilian mental health practitioner.”

Today, Michelsen continues to focus on her mental health while successfully balancing fulltime military service with the 180FW command post and raising her family.

“I’ve learned to recognize that maintaining wholesome mental health is a lifelong process that we need to continue to nourish,” Michelsen said. “And that may look different for everyone.”

“I have to prepare myself, on a daily basis to meet my life and military requirements,” Michelsen continued. “I try to take at least 30 minutes each day to do something that makes me happy. Sometimes it’s reading a book or scrolling through social media. Sometimes it’s meditating or just taking a long shower. I give myself that small window of time to settle, start or reset.”

Along with taking the time for self-care each day, Michelsen utilizes a variety of coping techniques to balance any stressful

situations that come her way, including a favorite mantra, reminding her that things will always get better.

“A big mantra, or affirmation, I like to remember is that nothing in life is permanent,” said Michelsen. “No matter how terrible things may get, they won’t always be that way. Time will pass, things will change and nothing I’m feeling, or dealing with, will stay that way forever.”

While the topic of mental health in the military was often considered taboo in the past, that culture has changed, in a positive direction, in recent years, most notably with the 2010 decision to assign fulltime Directors of Psychological Health to ANG bases across the country.

The 180FW’s DPH, Mrs. Alina Fuller, came on board in early 2011 and has been safeguarding the mental wellbeing of our Airmen as her top priority. Mrs. Fuller continues to provide support, services, referrals, training and resources to the wing’s nearly 1,300 members, as well as providing continuous education to senior leaders across the wing to recognize struggling Airmen and ensuring the wing maintains a supportive environment for those seeking help.

Working with the DPH and her civilian mental health provider, Michelsen learned that she was not alone in her struggles and makes every effort to share her story so that other Airmen will know they are not alone either.

“I believe that my experience with mental health issues impacts how I interact with other service members,” explained Michelsen. “I have always been very open and honest about my struggles, in an attempt to help others know they are not alone. I also think it’s important that the people you work with are aware of your history, or current situation, so they can keep an eye on you and be there to help when needed.”

Michelsen says that her mental health journey has impacted her life in many ways, both positively and negatively, with the positive far outweighing the negative.

“My mental health struggles have definitely impacted my life,” Michelsen said. “On the negative side, I still carry a lot of guilt from that period of my life. I don’t remember much of the time spent with my children during that first year after my son was born. I’m certain I was unpleasant to be around and I had several strained relationships during that time.”

“However, I wouldn’t change a single moment of it,” continued Michelsen. “I have had so much positivity come from the events surrounding my diagnosis. I have developed a multitude of coping mechanisms to address my anxiety, depression and OCD. I have gained the ability to help others by being open with my struggles. I have taught my children ways to recognize and mitigate feelings of anxiety and depression. Most importantly, I have proven to myself that I am stronger than I ever knew imaginable.”

As a noncommissioned officer who has also battled mental health struggles, Michelsen knows how important it is to look out for her fellow Airmen, recognize when someone may be struggling and how to support them when needed, using the three simple steps provided during annual suicide prevention training, A.C.E – Ask. Care. Escort.

“As leaders, it is important to be able to recognize when someone may be struggling,” said Michelsen. “We need to be able to sit down with them, ask what is going in and listen. We need to assure them that there is no need to fear negative repercussions for seeking help. And we need to be able to identify what type of support they may need and help them get to the proper professionals who can provide them

with the resources needed.”

Michelsen hopes that by sharing her story and struggles, others will know they are not alone. There is hope and not to fear seeking help.

“I have one piece of advice for Airmen who may be struggling with potential mental health issues,” said Michelsen. “Do not wait until your struggles become too much for you to carry on your own. Seek help as soon as you feel you need it and know that the military is so much more understanding and supportive today. Know that your mental wellbeing is something you will carry with you for a lifetime and it should be your number one priority.”

“If you are, or think you may be struggling,” continued Michelsen. “Find your DPH, your chaplain or your primary care practitioner. Utilize Military OneSource. Just don’t wait or it could be a matter of life or death.”

If you or someone you know may be struggling with a mental health issue please consider using the following resources to seek help and treatment.

Military/Veteran Crisis Line: 1-800-273-8255 press 1

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jilayne Michelsen, a command post controller, assigned to the Ohio National Guard’s 180th Fighter Wing, shares the story of her darkest hours, her mental health diagnosis and overcoming the stigma of seeking help. Michelsen hopes that her story will help others know they are not alone and seek help when needed. U.S. Air national Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker).

180th Fighter Wing Participates in ARCTIC

Story & Photos by Staff Sgt. Kregg York





More than 100 Airmen and eight F-16 Fighting Falcons, from the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing, deployed to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, in early March to take part in ARCTIC EDGE 22.

First taking place in 2018, ARCTIC EDGE is a routine U.S. Northern Command exercise scheduled every two years. This exercise is specifically designed to provide realistic and effective training for participants using the premier training locations available throughout Alaska, ensuring the ability to rapidly deploy and operate in the Arctic.

"You have to take into account the mountainous terrain," said Maj. Jacob Laginess, an F-16 fighter pilot assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing, when asked what makes training in Alaska different than Ohio. "The weather can get colder here, so that is more of a concern, especially the farther north you go. It's not quite like home."

As a multi-national, multi-service exercise, ARCTIC EDGE also provides Airmen with the opportunity to work closely with other units, in a joint environment.

"It's always awesome is to come here to a place like this," said Senior Master Sgt. Mark Close, maintenance lead for the 180FW during ARCTIC EDGE, "to work with multiple services, Navy, Marines, and other Air Force entities, putting our unit on display, showcasing our talents and what we bring as the Guard and as the 180FW. That's huge for us."

During the three week exercise, ARCTIC EDGE will have approximately 1,000 participants, including U.S. and Canadian service members, U.S. Coast Guardsmen, and government employees from the U.S. Department of Defense and Canada's Department of National Defence. 🇺🇸



Black History Month: 180FW Airman creates her own trail

Story & Photos by
Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

“Don’t follow the path. Go where there is no path and begin the trail.” – Ruby Bridges.

This powerful mantra is one Staff Sgt. Taleiya Jackson lives by and attributes her success to.

As an African American woman, serving with the Ohio National Guard’s 180th Fighter Wing as a Flight Services Center Representative with the Logistics Readiness Squadron, Jackson works hard to be the best she can be and shatter stereotypes often associated with the color of her skin.

“As a child, I was the only African American, or one of the only few African Americans, involved in various activities such as clubs and sports,” said Jackson. “It wasn’t until I got older that I realized, and could even describe, the feeling of always having to work harder and put more effort into everything I do. Being African

American, and a female, can be challenging. Often times it’s easy for people to overlook you due to stereotypes and simply the way world has been conditioned to view people who look like me.”

With dreams of reaching her full potential, while defying the many societal norms often surrounding her race, Jackson took advantage of the 100% paid college tuition benefits offered by the Air National Guard, enlisting in the 180th Fighter Wing in 2015, and began pursuing her degree in recreational therapy at the University of Toledo, graduating in 2019.

“I always had an interest in serving,” said Jackson, “but learning that the ANG could help me go to college, with the tuition benefits, was the deciding factor.”

Her decision to serve in the ANG not only allowed Jackson to earn her degree, but also provided her with the confidence to

work toward her dream job as a recreational therapist at a local behavioral health hospital, while also continuing to serve her country.

As a Flight Services Center Representative, Jackson is responsible for providing customer service and assisting Airmen with the ordering and turn-in of equipment and supplies needed to execute the flying mission.

“Day-to-day operations are important, but it’s the problem solving aspect that I like the most,” said Jackson. “Without the proper equipment and supplies, our maintenance personnel can’t maintain the jets properly, which can result in the pilots’ inability to fly them safely. So when I can assist with a discrepancy or use my skills to help my fellow Airmen, it makes me happy.”

As Jackson continues to create her own unique trail in life, she leans on her role models, pulling her motivation from the



“There is enough room, and so many opportunities for success in this world, for everyone to be great, regardless of their race or background. Go for it and be the best at it because there is somebody, somewhere who is going to need your story as their motivation.”

examples they set, along with their hard work and dedication.

“Lt. Marisa Shipman, who has now commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army, was my first military role model,” said Jackson. “She always worked hard and accomplished so many things, all while having a family. I admire her assertiveness and confidence in her value system.”

“Tech. Sgt. Gabreale Turner, who serves fulltime at the 180th Fighter Wing, is someone I can be myself around,” explained Jackson. “I can discuss personal matters with her, receive work advice and bounce ideas around with. She and I share characteristics that are scarce in the military, and to be able to watch someone who looks like me

work so hard and accomplish so much is motivation all in itself.”

Military service is more than just a short-term commitment for Jackson who says she plans to make a career out of serving with the 180th Fighter Wing, aiming for a 20 year retirement, while at the same time working to fulfill her dreams of becoming a fulltime entrepreneur as a private recreational therapist.

“There is enough room, and so many opportunities for success in this world, for everyone to be great, regardless of their race or background,” said Jackson. “Go for it and be the best at it because there is somebody, somewhere who is going to need your story as their motivation.”

Photo: U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Taleiya Jackson, a Flight Services Center Representative assigned to the Ohio National Guard’s 180th Fighter Wing Logistics Readiness Squadron, inventories parts and supplies on-hand for day-to-day aircraft maintenance operations, Feb. 24, at the 180FW, in Swanton, Ohio. The 180FW LRS personnel support the flying mission by delivering parts and supplies, on time, ensuring the wing’s aircraft are fully mission capable and deployable. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker).



180FW Conducts CDDAR Training

Story & Photos by Tech. Sgt. John Wilkes

Crashed Damaged/Disabled Aircraft Recovery Training

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the Ohio Air National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing and 200th RED HORSE Squadron worked together for a Crashed Damaged/Disabled Aircraft Recovery training event April 23-24, 2022, in Swanton, Ohio.

"CDDAR training consists of both classroom and hands-on training that allows Airmen to practice alternate aircraft lifting and towing procedures," said Senior Master Sgt. Jeff Axe, a phase maintenance dock chief assigned to the 180FW. "This includes lifting an aircraft with inflatable lift bags, hoisting with a sling and crane, pulling an aircraft that may be stuck, and performing composite material recovery and mitigation."

CDDAR is a crucial capability and enables Airmen to respond to aircraft emergencies when needed. Though the RED HORSE, a self-sufficient, highly mobile, rapidly deployable civil engineering response force, is a separate squadron located in Port Clinton, Ohio, joint training exercises build partnership and ensure Airmen are ready to respond at a moment's notice.

"If a pilot declares an inflight emergency, the CDDAR team assembles and prepares to handle the emergency once the aircraft is on the ground," Axe said. "This could include something as simple as towing the aircraft back to the flightline once he lands safely, or in the worst-case scenario, responding to a crashed aircraft. In the event of an in-flight emergency, the long, loud siren on base is activated. That is the indicator that lets everyone know there is an emergency and lets the CDDAR team know to assemble."

The team is made up of Airmen from across the maintenance

group, including electricians, egress, weapons, avionics, aerospace ground equipment, engine shop, quality assurance and more.

"The team is a mix of specialized and diverse skillsets, ready and able to respond to any aircraft recovery scenario," said Axe. "There are currently seventeen primary team members, and sixteen augmentee members."

Realistic training relies on various groups working together, ensuring they are ready to respond to a real-world scenario if an aircraft crashes or becomes disabled.

"Exercising CDDAR capabilities prepares Airmen to recover aircraft effectively, allowing flying operations to resume as quickly as possible," Axe said. "In addition, it is the CDDAR teams' responsibility to preserve evidence of the incident if an investigation is needed. It is important that as the aircraft recovery operation progresses, any evidence of what might have caused the incident is preserved. Preservation of the crash site aides the investigation team in determining what happened and may help prevent other similar incidents."

During the two-day training event, Airmen successfully recovered an F-16 Fighting Falcon and an F-84 legacy aircraft, used to introduce variety.

"The training was great for us as well as the RED HORSE," said Axe. "We were able to develop critical skillsets and build cooperation in the event of a real-world operation. We met all the goals we set for the training event." 🛩️



180FW Changes Commanders

Col. Holesko takes command of 180th Fighter Wing

Col. Chad Holesko assumed command of the 180th Fighter Wing from Col. Michael DiDio during a change of command ceremony in Swanton, Ohio on Oct. 15, 2022. Holesko previously served as the 180FW maintenance group commander.

Following the ceremony, Col. Michael DiDio retired from military service. Congratulations to both families!

Col. Michael J. DiDio has served as commander of the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing since Nov. 2019. In his next role, Col. DiDio will serve as a First Officer for American Airlines.

Col. DiDio was commissioned in 1995 as a graduate of the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Kansas State University. Col. DiDio joined the Ohio National Guard in 2013 as the 112th Fighter Squadron Commander, after serving 13 years on Active Duty and five years at the 132nd Fighter Wing, Des Moines ANG, Iowa.

Col. DiDio's career spans 27 years and includes service in both the active duty and Air National Guard. Col. DiDio is a graduate of the U.S. Air Force Weapons School, where he also went on to become an instructor of air-to-air tactics and serve

as the assistant director of operations. His prior assignments include 112th Fighter Squadron Commander, followed by 180FW Operations Group Commander. Before his assignment with the 180FW, Col. DiDio was assigned to the Des Moines, Iowa Air National Guard, Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho, Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina and Kunsan Air Base in the Republic of Korea. He is a command pilot with more than 3,600 hours, combined, in the T-37, T-38, and F-16, including 44 combat missions, totalling more than 185 combat flight hours. Prior to assuming command of the 180FW, Col. DiDio was assigned as the 180FW Operations Group Commander.

His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters, an Air Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with 10 devices, Combat Readiness Medal with six oak leaf clusters and the National Defense Service Medal.

Col. Holesko's career spans 23 years and includes service in both the active duty and

Air National Guard. He was commissioned through the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1999. His first duty assignment was at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. He was then assigned to Kunsan AB, Republic of Korea, followed by Sheppard Air Force Base, TX. Col. Holesko joined the Ohio Air National Guard's 178th Wing in 2008 and was assigned as instructor for the Royal Netherland air force at Springfield ANGB. Col. Holesko transferred to the 180FW in 2010 where he has served in various roles, including Operations Support Commander, Aerospace Control Alert Commander and Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Commander. Prior to assuming command of the 180FW, Col. Holesko was assigned as the 180FW Maintenance Group Commander.

His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Aerial Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with nine devices, Combat Readiness Medal with five oak leaf clusters and the National Defense Service Medal. 🇺🇸



What Makes a Great Wing

By Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

When Col. Michael DiDio assumed command of the Ohio National Guard's 180th Fighter Wing in November, 2019, his goals, visions and expectations were one in the same: communicate, listen and empower.

While it is expected that serving as commander of an operational fighter wing comes with challenges, DiDio's time in command came with multiple, highly unique challenges.

Through it all, his goals, visions and expectations remained the same and he attributes the success of the wing to those three words: communicate, listen and empower.

In his three years as wing commander, DiDio navigated leading during a global pandemic that shut down the world for months, while ensuring his Airmen were ready to deploy. More than 200 Airmen deployed in support of a large force aviation package and 200 individual Airmen deploying around the world along with more than 100 supporting state-side COVID-19 taskings. Overall 50% of Stinger Airmen were deployed and away from home during the first two years of his command in 2020 and 2021.

"The most enjoyable part of being a commander is getting out and meeting our Stinger Airmen, but COVID-19 took away much of that time," said DiDio. "It was a unique situation, trying to manage public health considerations while generating aircraft to meet the mission and preparing for the Aerospace Expeditionary Force aviation package deployments alongside the individual Agile Combat Support deployments."

Working throughout the pandemic to meet the demands of both our federal aviation mission of providing combat capabilities to combatant commanders, and our state mission of domestic operations by providing support in hospitals, prisons and vaccine clinics, was a heavy task load for everyone.

"Our number one priority has always been our federal mission, providing combat capabilities and homeland defense," said DiDio. "COVID really highlighted our domestic capabilities and showed our resiliency, flexibility and adaptability while we simultaneously balanced both mission sets. When the rubber meets the road, our wing does great. Adding COVID to the mix showed us that we can do anything."

After successfully completing all deployments across the globe and here at home, DiDio focused on his Airmen and their families once again. Working with the 180FW Airmen and Family Readiness team, the wing put on a family day event, in 2021, with more than 3,000 Airmen and families in attendance.

"One of the things I really wanted to improve was the culture of the Air National Guard family and family values," DiDio said. "As the world began to reopen toward the end of the worst of the



pandemic, our Airman and Family Readiness team worked hard to host a family day event at the base. The deployments and COVID taskings put a lot of additional strain on our families and this event was a way to thank and celebrate our families. We could not do what we do without them. It was great to see so many families on base, enjoying the day with their Airmen."

By 2022, with the deployments and COVID taskings complete, the wing continued to focus on mission readiness by expertly executing a Large-Scale Readiness Exercise in 2022, once again highlighting the Air National Guard and 180FW as an effective and efficient operational force.

"While the wing made me proud during my entire time as commander," said DiDio. "Outside of the deployments and pandemic taskings, the thing that made me the most proud was how well we performed during the exercise."

"Leading up to the exercise, I wanted to disprove the active

duty mentality that the guard takes months to mobilize and deploy while the active component can be ready to deploy at a moment's notice," said DiDio. "If the 180FW was tasked to deploy with no notice, could we really do it? We absolutely did it!"

There have been many challenges and obstacles to overcome, leading to overwhelming success with anything the Airmen of the 180FW take on. DiDio attributes every success to the Stinger Airmen along with his goals, values and expectations to communicate, listen and empower.

"We have worked hard to communicate, both up and down the chain, through deployments, policy changes and a pandemic with ever-changing public health guidelines," DiDio said. "We have listened to each other, from the top down and bottom up, and tried to collaborate and make informed decisions to improve the wing or affect change locally and up through higher headquarters. And when the leadership team is not the subject matter expert, we have empowered those who are, at all levels, to provide the input needed to make decisions and affect change."

"I could not have been more impressed with this wing during my time as commander," DiDio said. "I would love nothing more than to showcase what we did, over the past few years, to the active component. What we have done and accomplished should be the model that every unit follows."

"Above all else, I want our Stinger Airmen to know that it isn't the grade that matters or how many sorties we execute," continued DiDio. "Looking at our Airmen, after any requirement or challenge they are presented with, I can see that they know they were successful and that is my scorecard and what really matters. I am so proud of our Airmen and the 180th Fighter Wing."



From Refugee to Lawyer

Story & Photos by Tech. Sgt. John Wilkes

"I could never imagine a better life."

U.S. Air Force 1st Lt. Igor Petrovich is no stranger to adversity. Born and raised in Travnik, Bosnia in 1989, just two years before the Yugoslav Wars broke out in the region, he lived with his parents and grandparents in a traditional farming community.

His family and heritage are diverse and consisted of members of three warring sides of the Yugoslav Wars; Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia.

"I think everyone faces challenges growing up, and I was no different," said Petrovich, a Deputy Judge Advocate at the 180th Fighter Wing. "Although no one wants to grow up in a war zone, my family stuck together through it all."

Petrovich has many memories of growing up in Bosnia and remembers the small town where he was born, surrounded by mountains. He can still remember the natural beauty of it.

"Among my favorite memories are walking with my grandfather to our farm and picking berries off of wild bushes, building snow forts with the neighborhood kids and having snowball fights," he continued. "A lot of people don't realize just how ordinary life can be, especially for kids, in extraordinary situations."

When the war started, his parents began exploring their options. Six years later, in 1997, the possibility of moving to the U.S. became real and they applied for refugee status.

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, refugee status or asylum may be granted to people who have been persecuted or fear they will be persecuted on account of race, religion, nationality or

membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

"My family sought, and were granted, refugee status due to my mom being Bosnian and my dad being Serbian and Croatian," said Petrovich. "From a kid's perspective, it was all very odd. I knew that my parents wanted to leave Bosnia and to move to either Canada, the United States, or Australia. Then, one day, we got in the car and I never went back home."

Moving to a new country changed everything.

"I think culture shock doesn't begin to describe it," he said. "Everything is new; language, food, music. We had TV, of course, but seeing small snippets of American life on TV is much different than living the not-so-glamorous life of a refugee."

Petrovich and his mom, dad, brother, aunt and uncle landed in New York City, New York in 1999 and ultimately settled in Akron, Ohio.

"It was really hard to process and I remember not believing that it was forever," he continued. "When we first arrived, I just wanted to go back home. I missed my grandparents who chose to remain in Bosnia. I didn't know the language or anyone in the entire country."

In a matter of days, Petrovich and his family went from living in a small town in the foothills of a mountain to New York City and then living in Akron.

"I really can't put into words how different it was," said Petrovich. "It was like being dropped on a different planet."

Fortunately, his 4th grade teacher, Mrs. Way, made him feel at home and invited his family



[Continued on pg. 27](#)



We're proud to announce the recipients of our annual Outstanding Airmen of the Year award.

The Outstanding Airman of the Year recognizes our outstanding Airmen at each level of leadership from Airman, Noncommissioned Officer, Senior Noncommissioned Officer, and Company Grade Officer. Airmen must maintain the highest levels of personal readiness to meet mission requirements. An Airman must be technically, physically, mentally and spiritually ready to accomplish the mission.

Our 2022 Airman of the Year is Senior Airman Skyler Pachell.

Assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing's Medical Group as an Aerospace Medical Technician, Pachell's responsibilities include assessing medical qualifications for more than 1,000 Airmen across the wing, validating individual medical readiness for each Airman, ensuring they are fit for world-wide deployment.

Throughout 2022, Pachell executed her duties and assigned tasks with an 86% self-inspection accuracy rate, which directly contributed to the 180FW ranking in the top 10% in the Air National Guard for overall wing individual medical readiness.

In addition to her assigned duties, Pachell was activated to support COVID-19 missions across the state, from Oct. 2021 through March 2022. In this capacity, Pachell provided assistance in area hospitals, including patient transport and the assessment and monitoring of more than 1,400 patients. Her capabilities provided needed relief for overwhelmed hospitals and medical personnel during a local surge in COVID-19 transmission.

Pachell also supported mobile COVID-19 vaccine missions where she was tasked with preparing more than 2,000 vaccines and administering over 675 vaccines to local-area residents to minimize the spread of the virus across Ohio.

In her off-duty time, Pachell continued to work toward the completion of her Bachelor of Science in nursing, maintaining an impressive 3.19 grade point average, while continuing to volunteer for state COVID missions. Pachell also volunteered in local-area foodbanks in an effort to continue serving families in need as area foodbanks saw a decrease in state emergency support as the COVID-19 pandemic began to ease.

Our 2022 Noncommissioned Officer of the Year is Technical Sgt. Brady Harlett.

Assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing's Logistics Readiness Squadron as the Mobility Readiness noncommissioned officer in

charge, Harlett is responsible for managing mobility readiness spares packages that support the F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft.

During the 2022 Large-Scale Readiness Exercise, he was responsible for preparing critical aircraft parts, valued at more than \$4.5 million, ensuring aviation mission maintained high mission capable ratings. Also during the readiness exercise, Harlett was tasked with overseeing the build-up of more than 700 deployment mobility bags with more than 9 thousand pieces of equipment, valued at more than \$1.2 million. The efforts of Harlett and his team ensured that more than 300 Airmen were mission ready and worldwide deployable.

Overhauling the Individual Protective Equipment program, Harlett managed 300 line items, consisting of more than 52 thousand pieces of equipment, totaling more than \$12.5 million, while maintaining 100% accountability. His efforts resulted in a significant decrease in time required to issue protective equipment to deploying Airmen by 40%.

Harlett was charged with leading the small arms and light weapons inventory team, accounting for more than 300 rifles and 100 handguns, totaling more than \$250 thousand, resulting in zero discrepancies and 100% accountability.

In his off-duty time, Harlett volunteered more than 300 hours as a U-14 baseball coach and an additional 30 hours each month, coaching a local youth football team, while also donating time to his local church, enhancing community bonds and promoting a positive military image.

Our 2022 Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year is Senior Master Sgt. Pete Smith.

Assigned to the 180th Operations Support Squadron as the Aircrew Flight Equipment Superintendent, Smith is responsible for the management of 13 personnel, more than \$11 million of critical operational and life-saving equipment, and executing more than \$1.3 million in annual funds.

His diligent management of the Aircrew Flight Equipment program directly contributed to the readiness of more than 40 aircrew, resulting in more than 2,500 flying sorties, totaling over 4,000 flying hours and the continued execution of the wing's 24/7 homeland defense mission.

Smith reinforced the section's quality control program, directing the inspection of over 300 assets, ensuring the integrity of a program crucial to managing \$2.5 million in life-saving equipment and

identifying potential life-threatening discrepancies. His inspection identified four faulty universal water activation release systems, that could potentially impact aircrew survivability in the event of an over-water ejection.

Smith coordinated an Air Combat Command Classroom Instructor's course to be conducted at the 180FW, bringing 13 Airmen from across the country to receive critical technical training and instruction. This effort increased the 180FW Operations group ability to deliver Aircrew Flight Equipment technical training by 250%, while also saving an additional \$12,500 in travel costs to receive the training elsewhere.

Smith was also assigned as the Operations Group Senior Enlisted Leader during the 2022 ARTIC EDGE exercise at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. His leadership resulted in the execution of more than 70 joint training sorties alongside F-22 Raptor fighter jets, KC-135 Stratotankers and C-21 cargo aircraft.

In addition to his assigned duties, Smith also serves as the vice president for the wing's Top 3 Council, working to develop future leaders and enhance morale across the wing.

In his off-duty time, Smith dedicates his time volunteering in his community as assistant coach for the Perrysburg Big Gold 5th and 6th grade football teams, where he coaches 20 youth players.

Our 2022 First Sgt. of the Year is Master Sgt. Brent Centers

Assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing's Medical Group as a First Sergeant, Centers is responsible for the readiness, health, welfare, morale and quality of life for more than 50 Airmen assigned to the group.

His duties include representing the enlisted force as an advisor to commanders on topics including personnel programs, administrative and disciplinary actions and ensuring overall health of the force. Centers is a critical link between commanders and Airmen, providing advice and mentoring, not only to Airmen assigned to him, but also new first sergeants by sharing his knowledge and experiences, resulting in increased capabilities and readiness.

As a dedicated First Sergeant, Centers utilizes all available resources to enforce Airmen resilience and morale, regularly consulting with support agencies to ensure all Airmen have the care and support needed to execute the mission.

In addition to his duties within the Medical Group, Centers is a trusted agent for leadership across the wing, assisting in personnel actions at both the wing and group levels, while backfilling for other deployed first sergeants. During this four-month, high operations tempo period, Centers provided support to more than 500 Airmen and their commanders.

Centers was also assigned as the First Sergeant during the 2022 ARTIC EDGE exercise, at Joint Base Elmendorf, Alaska. During this three-week deployment, Centers was responsible for the deployment and welfare of 117 Airmen, directly contributing the execution of more than 70 sorties and 198 flying hours.

In his off-duty time, Centers serves his community as mayor of Franklin City, Ohio, where he is dedicated to bringing new jobs to the community and state of Ohio. Centers also volunteers for several committees throughout his community, including Warren County Regional Planning Commission and the Franklin Historical Society.

Our 2022 Company Grade Officer of the Year is Capt. Josh Utter.

Capt. Joshua Utter is assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing's 112th Fighter Squadron as an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot flight lead and mission planner for local-area flight training requirements.

As mission planner, Utter was charged with preparing academic materials and sessions for more than 40 F-16 Fighting Falcon

aircrew, teaching mission planning tactics, miniature air launched decoy and joint air-to-surface standoff missile tactics. His efforts resulted in 39 aircrew receiving more than 1,500 hours of instruction and enabled the wing to deploy two new aircraft weapons systems.

Responsible for planning local-area training sorties Utter built, loaded and maintained go-to-war designed operational capability statements, resulting in more than 3,500 local hours flown.

He was also tasked with all mission planning for the three-week ARTIC EDGE exercise at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, directly contributing to the execution of more than 70 operational sorties alongside F-22 Raptor fighter jets and C-21 cargo aircraft.

Working in the weapons and tactics section, Utter was tasked with building target packs, developing air-to-air missile simulations and maintaining removable data cartridges, ensuring mission success for more than 2,500 training sorties continuous debrief capabilities.

Always striving for excellence, Utter completed the Flight Lead Upgrade training program, flying 15 sorties, one month ahead of schedule, resulting in combat-ready four-ship flight lead capabilities.

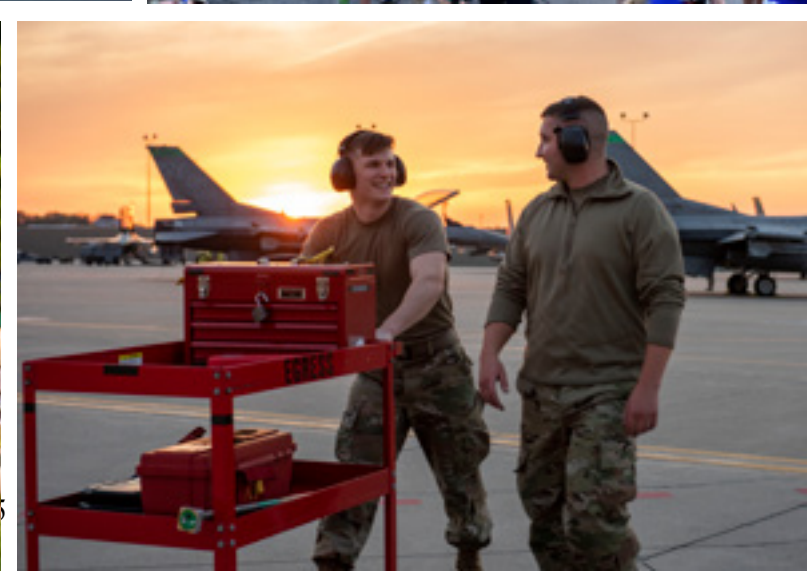
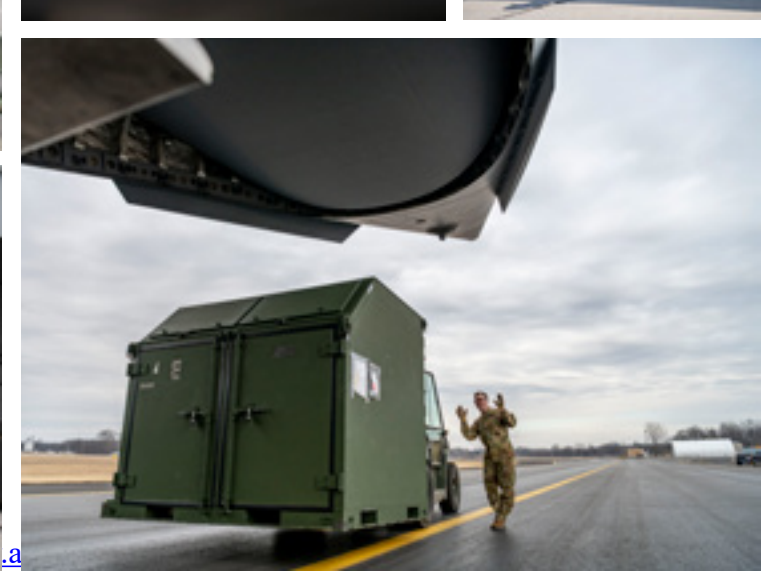
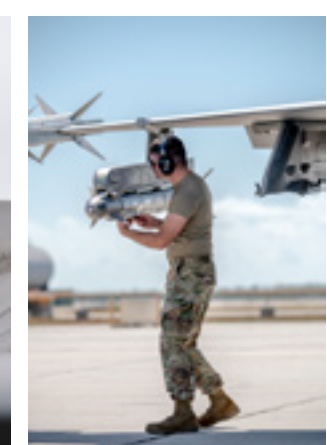
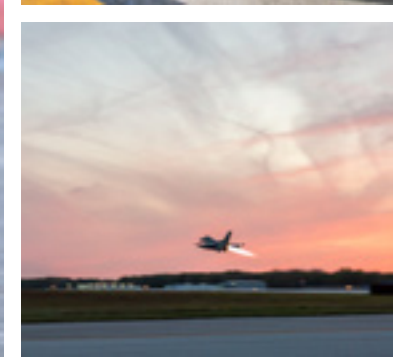
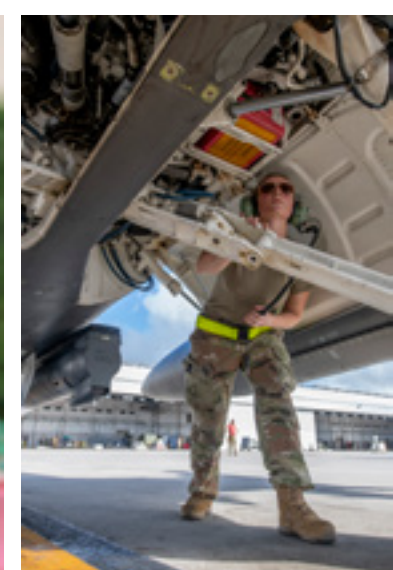
Committed to building and enhancing community relationships. Utter represented the 180FW and its missions at both the Thunder over Louisville Airshow, Kentucky and the London, Canada Airshow to crowds of more than 900,000 spectators.

Utter also participated in the Air National Guard softball tournament, helping the 180FW team to win two championship titles and enhancing esprit de corps, moral and unity among 180FW members and the Air National Guard.

Our 2022 Chief's Award Winner is Staff Sgt. Jennifer Price. Assigned to the 180th Fighter Wing's Maintenance Group as an F-16 Fighting Falcon mechanic, Price is responsible for ensuring that every component of the wing's high-performance F-16 fighter jets are maintained to standards and ready to fly at a moment's notice. Throughout the year, Price expertly managed a \$250,000 spare landing gear program, guaranteeing aircraft parts were serviceable and available, minimizing aircraft downtime. Price was also responsible for monitoring more than \$40,200 in spare parts stock, providing continuous availability of mission critical parts. Price completed 11 complex whole-aircraft inspections, providing combat ready aircraft and enabling aircrew to successfully execute more than 4,400 flying hours for the year. In addition to her maintenance responsibilities, Price spearheaded a major training program update by developing a streamlined training plan, providing relevant and timely career field specific training, producing highly qualified maintainers. Along with focused on-the-job training plans, Price developed a continuity book to manage additional ancillary training requirements, enhancing overall readiness of maintenance personnel. In her off-duty time, Price regularly participates in 5k charity running events, raising money and awareness for local organizations and causes. She volunteers at a local elementary school, reading to students, encouraging growth and development for area youth, while also enhancing community bonds and promoting a positive military image.

Congratulations to each of our 2022 Airmen of the Year! 🎉

2022 Year in Photos



[COMMENTS from pg. 3](#)

qualification. But above all else, I expect professionalism. Always.”

Along with the U.S. Air Force Core Values of Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence in all we do, Holesko has his own list of values that he brings with him as commander: hard work, productivity, self-improvement and decisiveness.

With his goals and expectations in place and his focus on growing Airmen and continuing the ongoing success, Holesko is excited to lead the 180FW.

“The 180th Fighter Wing is America’s finest,” said Holesko. “And I am looking forward to the opportunity to be the lead advocate for our wing and the incredible work our Stinger Airmen accomplish each and every day in support of the mission and our community. But most importantly, I want our Stinger Airmen to know that their success and development are my highest priorities.” 🇺🇸



[SUN DOWNERS from pg. 4](#)

“Training with the VFC-111 provides exposure to operating with the Navy,” said Laginess. “If we were ever to have a big war with a near peer, we’re going to have Navy and other assets out there, so it’s nice to get out of our bubble and learn to interact and integrate with other units.”

Despite the cross-service language barrier, the 180FW was still able to accomplish its mission.

“They are absolutely professional in the air and on the ground,” said Gibson, when asked about working with the 180FW pilots, “absolutely professional.”

It takes more than pilots to ensure the 180FW can accomplish its mission. A pilot’s main concern is flying their aircraft, so having fully mission-capable aircraft is essential.

“From a maintenance perspective, our goal here is to provide combat-ready aircraft for the training that the pilots need to be doing up there,” said Maj. Jason Logsdon, 180FW maintenance officer in charge of the maintenance portion of training. “It doesn’t matter how much you prepare and plan, there’ll always be some hiccups that happen, and we just work through those. We’re flying great. Other than the humidity, the weather’s been pretty awesome. The pilots are having great training out there.

Through the combined efforts of the pilots in the air and the Airmen on the ground, the 180FW was able to fly 128 sorties, totaling 170.3 flying hours, enhancing mission capabilities of aircrew, ground and support personnel. 🇺🇸

[Lawyer from pg. 21](#)

identity,” Petrovich said. “What did it mean to be American? Was I American? Was I Bosnian? Serbian? Croatian? I have come to accept that I am all of the above and that to deny any part of me is to deny the people who made me, me.”

Petrovich graduated high school and went on to college. After a long journey and years of hard work he graduated from the Georgetown University Law Center.

“I always wanted to be a lawyer because I saw what life without rule of law was like,” he said. “My time at Georgetown allowed me to meet extraordinary people, and opened so many doors for me, including working at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague. My education opened every door for me and as cliché as it sounds, made my American dream come true.”

Even after everything Petrovich had been through and accomplished, he still felt there was something missing.

“I had always been interested in public service and especially military service because I saw it as a way to give back to the country that gave me everything,” said Petrovich. “Life kept getting in the way and I kept putting it off. Finally, everything fell into place for me in 2020 and I reached out to a recruiter.”

A few months later, Petrovich was contacted by the Ohio Air National Guard and his military career began.

“I have just been blown away by the quality of people I have met in my short time with the 180th Fighter Wing,” Petrovich said. “Whether it’s on base or at training, I have already made lifelong

friends and have met some of the most incredible people I have ever known. I think it is a true credit and testament to the U.S. Air Force and shows the quality of the people who answered our nation’s call.”

Petrovich has enjoyed seeing the impact he has on Airmen and it has been very rewarding.

“Recently we had an Airman facing eviction,” said Petrovich. “We were able to get the issue resolved and keep that Airman in their home.”

Petrovich also helped a fellow Airman obtain their U.S. citizenship.

“My biggest goal is to just make a difference in any way that I can,” he continued. “I would love to go overseas and get an opportunity to serve in an active role. I am also greatly looking forward to being involved with our State Partnership Program with Serbia and Hungary.”

Still, he has more aspirations to come and you can sense the gratefulness in his voice when he tells his story.

“One thing I like to point out to people is the difference between is and was,” said Petrovich. “On Wikipedia, Yugoslavia was a country. The United States is a country. Freedoms are never guaranteed. They are fought for and protected. I am honored to serve my country and to serve alongside people who ensure that our freedoms remain.

When I look at my wife and three children, I am forever grateful that my parents chose to bring me here and to give me the life they gave me,” he continued. “I could never imagine a better life.” 🇺🇸



CONGRATULATIONS

to the following Airmen on their recent promotions

To Airman:

- Andres D. Blanco Pino -- Force Support Squadron
- Samuel A. Blanco Pino -- Medical Group
- Michael A. Bonitati -- Communications Flight
- Zachary S. Brotherton -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Colton J. Eckert -- Maintenance Squadron
- Samantha E. Elder -- Mission Support Group
- Ashton M. Gates -- 112 Fighter Squadron
- Chandler M. Harvey -- Communications Flight
- Dawson R. Hoeffel -- Force Support Squadron
- Hunter L. Jefferson -- Mission Support Group
- Sidney R. Plott -- Civil Engineer Squadron
- Sierra R. Pyman -- Force Support Squadron
- Joseph A. Schnipke -- Maintenance Group
- Kathryn E. Spradlin -- Force Support Squadron

To Airman First Class:

- Jacob L. Allison -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Corey J. Amspaugh -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Alexander J. Strang -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Michael A. Bonitati -- Communications Flight
- Michael A. Bowdidge -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Mallory H. Brace -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Zachary S. Brotherton -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Braden R. Chittum -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Mia I. Digby -- 112 Fighter Squadron
- Tyler J. Dockery -- Security Forces Squadron
- Samantha E. Elder -- Mission Support Group
- Mark A. Garcia -- Force Support Squadron
- Devyn C. Hamen -- Force Support Squadron
- Maya M. Harmon -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Sherita M. Ingram -- Force Support Squadron
- Hunter L. Jefferson -- Mission Support Group
- Baylee M. Joice -- Medical Group
- Alec J. McKenzie -- Maintenance Squadron
- Leta I. Oliver -- Logistic Readiness Squadron
- Maxwell A. Phillips -- Maintenance Squadron
- Sydney L. Raab -- Force Support Squadron
- Taylor D. Shephard --Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Colton J. Smith -- Civil Engineer Squadron
- Kathryn E. Spradlin -- Maintenance Squadron
- Kody V. Sprow -- Force Support Squadron
- Hayden J. Victorian -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Clarissa L. Young -- Security Forces Squadron

To Senior Airman:

- Derrick M. Angiletta -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Gabriel W. Barrow -- Maintenance Squadron
- Samuel J. Berry -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Emma J. Blum -- Medical Group
- Jonathan O. Burns -- Maintenance Squadron

- Jocelyn M. Camposano -- Medical Group
- Ryan D. Caster -- Force Support Squadron
- Virginia R. Cherry -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Megan I. Currier -- Logistics Squadron
- Emilio V. Dibenedetto -- Maintenance Squadron
- Sean T. Donovan -- Maintenance Squadron
- Angel N. Esparza -- Maintenance Squadron
- Ethan M. Fisher -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Justin T. Finley -- Force Support Squadron
- Jenna M. Flanigan -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Blayne T. Flickinger -- Medical Group
- Allison K. Garcia -- Maintenance Squadron
- Luke N. Garza -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Kailyn R. Grant -- Civil Engineer Squadron
- Jackson R. Gault -- Maintenance Squadron
- Dylan J. Gilsdorf -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Jordyn B. Halcomb -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Cameron L. Harmon -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Madison J. Harmon -- Security Forces Squadron
- Olivia R. Harmon -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Rylee G. Harrington -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Noah J. Hetick -- Maintenance Squadron
- Austin J. Hess -- Maintenance Squadron
- Daniel R. Hoffman -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Maxwell J. Hughes -- Maintenance Squadron
- Kayla E. Jacob -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Luke D. James -- Civil Engineer Squadron
- Megan I. Johnson -- Mission Support Group
- Nathan T. Keller -- Maintenance Squadron
- Zachary A. Keller -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Aidan P. Kelly -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Dominic J. Kendrioski -- Maintenance Squadron
- Cortni L. Kertesz -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Darrin M. Kirchner -- Security Forces Squadron
- Ian M. Kress -- Maintenance Squadron
- Kody J. Kuhnheim -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Craig M. Latty -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Tyler A. Litten -- Security Forces Squadron
- Nicole M. Lloyd -- Civil Engineer Squadron
- Keagan G. Maynard -- Operations Support Squadron
- Liam G. McDonald -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Cortney M. McIntyre -- Civil Engineer Squadron
- John K. McKenzie -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Stephanie R. Michalski -- Security Forces Squadron
- Brandon A. Mitchell -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Bradley M. Montion -- Maintenance Squadron
- Connor M. Morris -- Medical Group
- Colton A. Munger -- Medical Group
- Javen J. Newton -- Maintenance Squadron
- Craig C. Nimigean -- Operations Support Squadron
- Kyle A. Ordway -- Maintenance Squadron

- Korah R. Overfield -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Skyler R. Pachell -- Medical Group
- Benjamin F. Perrine -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Benjamin L. Peterson -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Maxwell A. Phillips -- Maintenance Squadron
- Nicolas R. Pitzen -- Maintenance Squadron
- Emily J. Potridge -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Daisha N. Rigo -- Maintenance Group
- Cannon T. Ritzler -- Maintenance Squadron
- Drew M. Rodkey -- Security Forces Squadron
- Kasyn T. Schaffner -- Civil Engineer Squadron
- Brandon L. Steinbaugh -- Security Forces Squadron
- Samuel R. Stickels -- Maintenance Squadron
- Matthew J. Tateman -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Jason J. Utter -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Parker L. Victorian -- Security Forces Squadron
- Sean E. Welch -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Mitchell R. Wolfrum -- Maintenance Squadron
- Jessica L. Wright -- Maintenance Squadron
- Nicholas A. Zeigler -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

To Staff Sergeant:

- Austin A. Bachman -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Jacob J. Benson -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Mara J. Biggs -- Maintenance Squadron
- Derek J. Blue -- Maintenance Squadron
- Mariah E. Brazzil -- Medical Group
- Zane A. Compston -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Timothy D. Cousino -- Maintenance Squadron
- Kyle T. Custer -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Lucas L. Dearsman -- Maintenance Squadron
- Kathryn M. Dobbs -- Fighter Wing
- Zachary S. Donnelly -- Maintenance Squadron
- Hunter S. Duby -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Sean R. Fischnich -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Nicole M. Geiger -- Medical Group
- Madelyn k. Griffin -- Security Forces Squadron
- Matthew A. Hardin -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Hannah E. Haviland -- Medical Group
- Jon M. Hegemier --Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Alex M. Howard -- Security Forces Squadron
- Mark D. James -- Maintenance Squadron
- Raymond D. Kendzierski -- Maintenance Squadron
- Chase A. Kirk -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Austin J. Klein -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Zachary J. Fink -- Security Forces Squadron
- Sophia R. Lombardo -- Operations Support Squadron
- Cameron D. Mack -- Maintenance Squadron
- Garrett G. Mapes -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Tori N. Martin -- Operations Support Squadron
- Romeo P. Martinez -- Comptroller Flight
- Justin T. McCamey -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Abigail N. McCluer --Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Davis P. Molnar -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Blake C. Montaine -- Maintenance Squadron
- Quintin L. Niese -- Maintenance Squadron
- Mackenzie Nighswander -- Maintenance Squadron
- Liyaquat A. Qurbanali -- Force Support Squadron
- James D. Sanderson --Maintenance Squadron
- Darren B. Simmons -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

- Jordan R. Sparks -- Maintenance Operation Flight
- Logan W. Stultz -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Noah P. Tegtmeier -- Maintenance Squadron
- Alana M. Tumbush -- Force Support Squadron
- Nicole L. Tye -- Comptroller Flight
- Lucas E. Vermilyea -- Maintenance Squadron
- Seth A. Walters -- Security Forces Squadron
- Claire E. Weber -- Force Support Squadron
- Landon R. Whiteman -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Jacob A. Yunker -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Korrin C. Zollweg --Logistics Readiness Squadron

To Technical Sergeant:

- Valentine F. Ballesteros -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Anthony W. Barrow -- Maintenance Squadron
- Shannon R. Batch -- Force Support Squadron
- Megan N. Bennett -- Maintenance Squadron
- Justin T. Busch -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Andrew D. Denucci -- Maintenance Squadron
- Austin D. Engfer -- Maintenance Squadron
- Jared J. Fox -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Daniel B. Hall -- Maintenance Squadron
- Steven M. Jacobs -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Ryan M. Keel -- Fighter Wing
- Cody G. Keil -- Force Support Squadron
- Tyler J. Klotz -- Maintenance Operations Flight
- Jordan T. Gonzalez -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Hope N. Geiger -- Fighter Wing
- Asher F. W. Harmon -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Joelle L. Hughes -- Fighter Wing
- Brooke E. Logan -- Maintenance Squadron
- Alexa C. Long -- Medical Group
- Benjamin A. Maciejewski -- Maintenance Operation Squadron
- Connor B. Phillips -- Maintenance Squadron
- Nathan M. Rumbaugh -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Justin A. Spencer -- Force Support Squadron
- Joshua A. Straka -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Ryan S. Struffolino – FW
- Olivia S. Tusko -- Maintenance Squadron
- Justin S. Urbanczyk -- Communications Flight
- Armando G. Vargas -- Security Forces Squadron
- Mary E. Vitte -- Maintenance Squadron
- Valerie L. Warren -- Force Support Squadron
- David A. Watson -- Maintenance Squadron
- Achsa F. Weber -- Security Forces Squadron
- Zachary R. Westrick -- Fighter Wing
- Michael R. White -- Force Support Squadron
- Jacob C. Yeckley -- Operations Group

To Master Sergeant:

- Steven M. Artz -- Maintenance Squadron
- Joseph S. Boyer -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Patrick G. Cowan -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Corey J. Eubank -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Joel M. Figmaka -- Maintenance Squadron
- Brian L. Fleckaller -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- David A. Gentile -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Joshua D. Hartle -- Security Forces Squadron
- Scott J. Hartzell – Fighter Wing
- Andrew K. Jenkins -- Fighter Wing

- Jilayne M. Michelsen – Command Post
- Alexander J. Parton -- Operations Support Squadron
- Bradley R. Rasar -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- David S. Raney -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Jerrie L. Reeder II -- Maintenance Squadron
- Ryan N. Rober -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Ashley C. Schmidt -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Barrett C. Trail -- Maintenance Squadron
- Zachary J. Yeckley -- Force Support Squadron
- Aaron C. Zenz -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Ashley R. Zuchowski -- Logistics Readiness Squadron

To Senior Master Sergeant:

- Eric M. Driftmyer -- Maintenance Squadron
- Keith D. Holliker -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Aaron R. Rozek -- Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Jody L. Smith -- Communications Flight
- Kevin A. Steinke – Fighter Wing
- Peter J. Smith -- Operations Support Squadron

To Chief Master Sergeant:

- Joseph M. Ceglie -- Maintenance Group
- Kevin A. Burdick -- Fighter Wing
- David S. Chandler -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Norman J. Drzewiecki -- Communications Flight
- Barry A. Fawcett -- Maintenance Squadron

To Second Lieutenant:

- David Alan Bousonville -- Force Support Officer
- Charles Thomas Deraedt -- Aircraft Integrated Avionics

To First Lieutenant:

- William David Boyer -- Maintenance Squadron
- Libby Lynn Mathewson -- Medical Group
- Paul Douglas Roub -- Bioenvironmental Engineering

To Captain:

- Brandon Dominic Cole -- Maintenance Squadron
- Jonathan Yeager Lightfoot -- Fighter Pilot
- Jacob Lawrence Moore -- Fighter Pilot
- Igor Damien Petrovich -- Judge Advocate
- Andrew Trey Youngberg -- Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

To Major:

- Alex Davis Johnson -- Fighter Pilot

To Colonel:

- Dennis Brian Warburton -- Mission Support Group Commander

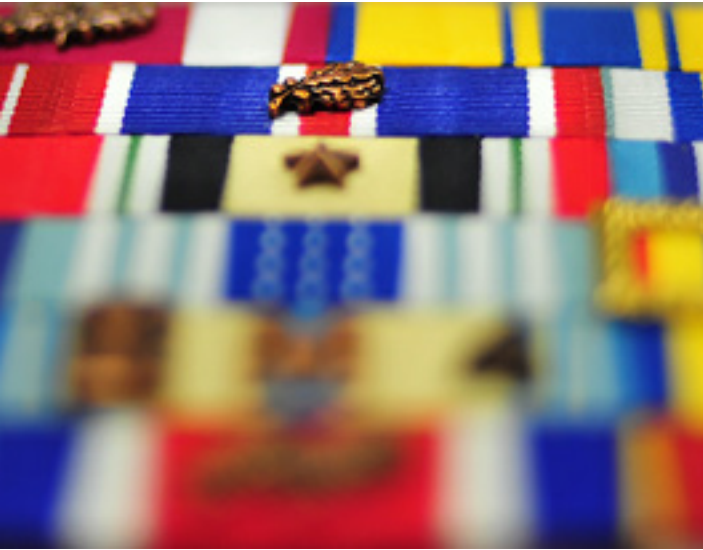
“It is with great excitement and pride that I can announce that we, once again, were awarded the U.S. AIF FORCE OUTSTANDING UNIT AWARD. This is the 6th time winning this award in the last 7 years, and it is solely because of the hard work and dedication you put to make the 180FW great. As we close out this calendar year and have succeeded during the hardships of the last 18 months (deployments, COVID, etc.), I ask that you keep your intensity, professionalism and hard work as we move into 2022.”

- Col. Michael J. DiDio

This is the 10th time our Stinger Airmen have earned this prestigious award!

Retirements:

- Tech. Sgt. Nicholas Antonides
- Senior Master Sgt. Robert Atherton
- Master Sgt. Joshua Behnfeldt
- Chief master Sgt. Michael Bratton
- Tech. Sgt. Michael Brewster
- Tech. Sgt. Douglas Brim
- Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Burke
- Master Sgt. Leroy Caplinger
- Master Sgt. Jason Cappelletty
- Senior Master Sgt. Steven Chapa
- Chief master Sgt. Joy Chittum
- Chief master Sgt. Gregory Chonko
- Master Sgt. Rodney Degrie
- Master Sgt. Daniel Denig
- Tech. Sgt. Anthony Dominique
- Master Sgt. Terrence Eisenhauer
- Master Sgt. Jacob Falk
- Master Sgt. Jeremiah Gallaher
- Master Sgt. Anthony Garver
- Master Sgt. Daniel Goble
- Lt. Col. Brian Hoose
- Master Sgt. Cathleen Kania
- Capt. Benjamin Laubender
- Senior Master Sgt. Brett Lohman
- Master Sgt. Todd Metcalf
- Master Sgt. David Mills
- Lt. Col. Brian Moran
- Lt. Col. Ronald Nabors
- Master Sgt. Scott Nadeau
- Chief master Sgt. Roger Newsome
- Master Sgt. James Raabe
- Tech. Sgt. Derek Ringler
- Master Sgt. Tony Rohrer
- Senior Master Sgt. Marcus Sautter
- Master Sgt. Brian Studer
- Lt. Col. Shawn Thompson
- Tech. Sgt. Michael Victorian



Stinger Nation: The 180FW has been recognized by the Air Force for outstanding and meritorious service for the period of Oct. 1, 2019 through Sept. 30, 2020 with the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award - for the 5th consecutive year!

ALWAYS ON MISSION



180th Fighter Wing


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