

445th AW hosts joint exercise Relentless Valor in Ohio

By Amanda Dick
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The U.S. Air Force's 445th Airlift Wing conducted joint exercise Relentless Valor June 6-7 at three geographically separated locations in Ohio to train various medical capabilities through different scenarios and stages.

Hosted by the 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, in coordination with the U.S. Air Force's 944th ASTS from Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, the large-scale exercise simulated medical operations post invasion in a contested space in the United States Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio; Springfield Air National Guard Base, Ohio; and Wright State University's Calamityville in Fairborn, Ohio, provided the backdrop for medical and security forces units to practice their capabilities.

"We wanted to do USINDOPACOM and simulate the geographically separated locations, the ACE [Agile Combat Employment] concept, a lot of maneuverability and patient flow from Role 1 to Role 2," said Capt. Jonathan Charles, 445th ASTS medical readiness officer and primary 445th planner for the exercise.

According to Charles, this meant going to smaller locations rather than one large, centralized location while maintaining the same capabilities, or in the case of the exercise, medical evacuations between the three sites.

The exercise scenario took place 40 days after an invasion where opposition forces located at Spring-



Jack Gardner

A soldier performs security during joint exercise Relentless Valor at Calamityville, near Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, June 6, 2025. The exercise was designed to enhance the Joint Force's ability to maneuver and conduct missions in contested, degraded, and operationally limited environments.

field and Calamityville were pushed back and there was a "limited window of space and time for air superiority to evacuate wounded out and get forces and supplies in," Charles explained.

The exercise also included a downed aircraft to train on long care when limited airspace and inferiority occur. At Wright-Patterson AFB, the medical teams dealt with larger scale patient care when patients from the geographically separated units were transferred in and out of their care.

"I really learned how the other branches operate, and their

tempo in their roles and responsibilities versus ours, because we don't get to see that every day – we don't get to see that during unit training assemblies very often," said Tech. Sgt. Mary Czarnecki, 445th ASTS aerospace medical technician. "It's very helpful to see that in a training and exercise environment, because we're going to be working with them when we deploy, and we're going to be working with them in different environments and emergency situations.

"I enjoyed getting to see how they operate," Czarnecki continued. "I enjoyed getting to see how we integrate into their plans and how they integrate into our plans."

Also built into the exercise was to have the Critical Care Air Transport Team embedded with the patients to provide "care for those critical patients you normally wouldn't get," Charles added. This was also the first

Fourth of July means freedom

By Chief Master Sgt. Gordon M.R. Wager
445th Airlift Wing Command Chief



Warriors- As we approach the Fourth of July, I want to say, "Thank you for defending America's freedom!"

What comes to mind when you think of Fourth of July? Do you think of the famous painting of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence sitting around the room waiting patiently to write their names on such a critical document in America's history? (While it is nice in concept, the painting falsely depicted the signing because 50 of the signers did not sign until August 1776.)

Maybe you think of Will Smith terminating aliens who attacked the U.S.? Maybe you think of a time with family to celebrate with a cookout, swimming, and as night begins you watch fireworks light up the sky. Perhaps you do not have any fond memories of July 4th, and seems regular day... OR maybe when thinking about the business we are in, the warfighting business, and you hear Fourth of July, you think "Freedom" with sounds in the background of gunfire, bombs connecting with their target, and that famous A-10, BRRRRRT yelling down: "Not today, insert expletive!"

For me, it is all the above. On my most cynical and crude of days, the Fourth of July is just another day! My lovely wife informs me that this side of me may come out far too often, especially around holidays and my birthday. Why do we celebrate Father's Day? I am a father every day. Why do we celebrate birthdays? It is nothing but a number. Christmas, don't get me started... The list goes on and she gets frustrated by it.

Moreover, I hail from Port Huron, Michigan and some of my best memories as a kid were when my family and I celebrated the Fourth of July. Almost every year, if not every year, with most of the community down on the "boardwalk" eating hotdogs and burgers, swimming or throwing a baseball or football, watching freighters drift by on the Saint Clair River passing under Blue Water Bridge and into Lake Huron. At night a barge filled with fireworks would float across the water and we would watch with amazement the display of bright lights and cover our ears as the loud booms would steal the show for 15-20 minutes.

To continue the point, our history has not been perfect and continues to mature, as we all do, but I am so grateful. Our Founding Fathers had tremendous foresight as they were forming a vulnerable collection of colonies, and their decisions must have felt like a painstaking deliberation over every final word. (Side-note- Roughly 50 wing senior leaders took three days to craft our mission, vision, priorities and for some, that was painful.) BUT the Declaration of Independence was a powerful vision meant to orient a new direction, inspire unity of action, and lay the foundation of American rights. While the interpretation and application of these rights have evolved over time, our core principles, as etched into our national identity, have not wavered.

Ultimately, the Fourth of July is a powerful symbol of freedom, a freedom that we, as warfighters, fight to preserve. This freedom, rooted in our history, remains both concrete and fragile. A legacy that demands constant vigilance. Ronald Reagan stated, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free."

If you take part in our Development and Training Flight or enlisted councils (Rising Six and Top Three), you have heard me discuss my "why" and how it has evolved. As a Delayed Enlistment Program trainee, I enlisted in response to the 9/11 attacks; driven to serve and protect on behalf of those who couldn't. I continue to serve because of my brothers and sisters in arms. For those who gave the ultimate sacrifice and died in conflict or succumbed of their inner demons of war after deployment. Now, my "why" is to ensure you, the warfighters are in the best position to confront our adversaries, when the time comes. Despite fiscal constraints and congressional mandates, our priority and what Col Perry and I consistently emphasize is simple- Focus on your job! Don't be distracted by the external noise. Trust us, and your squadron leaders, to mitigate risks. Focus on your readiness, core competencies, and Airmen warfighting knowledge. Freedom, as we know it, demands constant vigilance. It is a battle we must continuously fight for.

From a grateful Command Chief, THANK YOU for the continued dedication and relentless effort you provide defending our freedoms. Stay safe over the holiday, enjoy your time away with friends and family, and see you in August!

SPOTLIGHT

Rank/Name: Staff Sgt. Xavier Blurton

Unit: 445th Operations Support Squadron

Duty Title: Combat Crew Communications

Hometown: Dayton, Ohio

Civilian/Military Job: Air Guard Reserve (AGR) Airman

Education: Currently enrolled in classes for Information Technology at Arizona State University, Phoenix

Hobbies: Golfing, going to the gym and reading

Career Goal: Currently, my career goal outside of the military is to be an information systems security officer or a system administrator and to develop skills



that can put me in a potential leadership position in the information technology world. In the military, potentially commission after completing my degree and becoming a cyber officer.

What do you like about working at the 445th? One of the reasons I like working at the 445th, especially the OSS, is having

people around who are willing to help with career advice, personal life, or just offering to lend a hand even when I may not need it. The support that people can offer both professionally and on a more personable level is something I think is unique to my squadron. We do our best to make sure people know we are there for them and we have a good sense of camaraderie while excelling at executing the mission.

Why did you join the Air Force? I joined the Air Force for educational benefits and to help define a career path for myself as well as providing stability for my son. The Air Force also provided a solid stepping stone for opportunities outside of the military and gave a good baseline and skillset to help prepare me to move into more prosperous positions.

Resiliency check: Gratitude

By Master Sgt. Jason Cordle
445th Airlift Wing Resiliency Integrator

We are all busy, stressed and often focused on the next task, the next deployment, the next promotion. But taking a moment to appreciate what we do have, what we do accomplish, and the opportunities we're given in the Air Force can make a huge difference in our morale, our resilience, and ultimately, our effectiveness.

You are part of something bigger than yourself. You are contributing to the defense of our nation, working alongside some of the most dedicated and talented individuals you'll ever meet. You have access to resources, training and opportunities that many people can only dream of.

Gratitude isn't just about saying "thank you." It's about recognizing the value in the things you have,

both big and small. It's about being appreciative.

The opportunity to serve: Not everyone gets to wear this uniform. Be grateful for the chance to contribute to something meaningful.

Your wingmen: The bonds you forge here are unlike any other. Appreciate the support and camaraderie you share.

The challenges you overcome: Every obstacle you conquer makes you stronger and more resilient. Be grateful for the lessons learned.

The sacrifices of those who came before you: We stand on the shoulders of giants. Remember and honor their service.

Practicing gratitude can be as simple as taking a few minutes each day to reflect on what you're thankful for. When you approach your work with a sense of gratitude, you're more likely to be motivated, engaged and resilient. You'll be a better Airman, a better teammate and a better person.

So, take a moment. Reflect. Appreciate. And remember why you chose to serve. It makes all the difference.



News Briefs

Promotions

Master Sergeant

Joshua Knouff, AW
Dustin Seelig, FSS

Technical Sergeant

Steven Branham, AMDS
Casey Cash, MXS
Amber Cole, AMDS
Nathaniel Davis, MXG
Todd Gardner, CES
Benjamin Maxfield, CES
Rahching Switzer, FSS

Staff Sergeant

Andrew Blanton, CES
Rahassona Davis, AMDS
Jenna Kreiner, AMXS
Evan Majeski, AMXS
Miguel Martinez,, MXG
Garrett Mize, SFS
Kirby Stark, MXS

Senior Airman

Daniel Adams, AES
Kwabena Boateng, FSS
Haley Koehl, AES
Amit Phalke, LRS
Joseph Saa, LRS
Jayla Tremble, ASTS

Airman First Class

Francisco Garcia Arel-

Iano, APS
Wesley Faulkner, MXS
Jared Strong, AMXS
Corey Wells, CES

Airman

Pranil Biswa, CES
Lovelace Eshun, FSS
Shwun Oo, AES
Mia Soliz, AMDS

Newcomers

1Lt Falon Hawkins, 445
AES
SSgt Daniel Fey, 445
CES
SSgt Leandra McQueen-
ford, 87 APS
SSgt Robert Mineau, 87
APS
SrA Jerett Berger, 445
AMXS
SrA Jaden Boroff, 445
MXS
SrA Austin Johnson, 445
AES
SrA Carter Jones, 445
MXS
A1C Evelyn Asamoah,
445 ASTS
A1C Ernest Boateng, 445
LRS
A1C Kwanena Boateng,

445 FSS
A1C Raquel Dos Santos
Galrao, 445 AES
A1C Ronnae Hall, 445
ASTS
A1C Selina Miser, 445
FSS
A1C KB Martinez, 445
ASTS
A1C Joshua Mensah, 445
CES
A1C Shyal Rai, 445 CES
AB Cameron Andrade,
445 FSS
AB Exocene Baseme, 87
APS
AB Saroj Chhetri, 445
FSS
AB Josiah Gierman, 445
MXS
AB Roland Otchere, 87
APS
AB Caleb Richardson,
445 MXS

Kim Ebel at kimberly.
ebel.1@us.af.mil if you
have questions.

Buckeye Flyer

445th Airlift Wing
Editorial Staff

Col. Douglas A. Perry Jr.
Commander

Lt. Col. Cynthia Harris
Chief, Public Affairs

Stacy Vaughn
Amanda Dick
Public Affairs Specialists

Patrick O'Reilly
Public Affairs Assistant

5439 McCormick Ave.
WPAFB, OH 45433-5132
Building 4010, Room 171
937-257-5784

445AW.PA2@us.af.mil

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Family Day

The 445th Airlift Wing
will host its annual family
day event Saturday, Sept.
6, 2025 at Bass Lake.
More details to follow.
Please contact Lt. Col.

Wing announces captain promotions

Air Reserve Personnel Center officials announced
results for the Calendar Year 2024B Air Force Reserve
Line and Nonline captain promotions May
29. The boards selected 531 Citizen Airmen
for promotion.

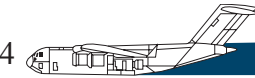
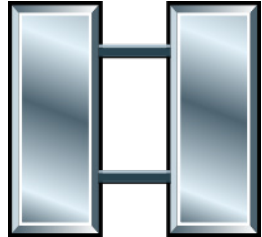
The selection boards convened at ARPC
Oct. 1-15, 2024, to determine those officers
best and fully qualified to assume the next
higher grade.

Categories considered during these pro-
motions boards were: Line of the Air Force,
Line of the Air Force Judge Advocate, Chap-
lains, Dental Corps, Medical Corps, Medical Service

Corps, Nurse Corps, and Biomedical Sciences Corps.
Nine Airmen from the 445th Airlift Wing were se-
lected for promotion to captain:

Jake Kester, Jacob Menser and Bradely
Smith, 89th Airlift Squadron; Kevin Mar-
kiewicz, Timothy Struska and Emyli Quain,
445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron;
Taylor Bone and Jimmy Montalvo, 445th
Aeromedical Staging Squadron; and Mi-
chael Poffenbarger, 445th Airlift Wing.

Congratulations to the 445th's newest
captains!



Around the wing ...



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

(left) Tech. Sgt. Jose Hamirez, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron crew chief, services a 445th Airlift Wing C-17 Globemaster III with liquid oxygen at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, May 28, 2025. Liquid oxygen is used by pilots, crew members and aeromedical evacuation patients.
(right) First Lt. Austin Schutte, 89th Airlift Squadron C-17 pilot, conducts a Personal Recovery exercise as a part of a Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) scenario at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, June 7, 2025.



Staff Sgt. Johnathan Quiñones



Courtesy Photo

(left) Tech. Sgt. Luke Barnes, 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron ground transportation training NCO in charge, demonstrates how to use front hydraulics on a lowboy trailer, a specialized type of semi-trailer designed for transporting oversized or heavy machinery, equipment and industrial loads at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, June 8, 2025.
(right) Staff Sgt. Miguel Martinez, left, 445th Maintenance Group analyst; Tech. Sgt. Zach Baird, center, 445th Maintenance Squadron crew chief; and Staff Sgt. Dan Garcia, 445th MXG analyst, prepare breakfast for residents at the Ronald McDonald House Charity in Dayton, June 8, 2025. Eight members of the 445th Airlift Wing cooked meals, tidied areas in the new facility and delivered treats to neonatal intensive care unit nurses at Dayton Children's Hospital. Considered a "home away from home," the RMHC Dayton currently serves over 40 families offering community, comfort and hope. This is the second time the Rising 6 Council has volunteered at the RMDH and plan to continue their relationship with more service projects in the future.



VALOR from page 1

opportunity the wing had to train on this concept of operation since being added to the Enroute Patient Staging System Mission Capabilities about a year ago.

“Prior to this, ERPSS could only care for patients requiring complex care, not critical care, and would have to rely on larger co-located Military Training Facilities,” Charles added. “However, under ACE, the need for smaller more agile footprints with similar capabilities necessitate this new use of embedding CCATT to support longer patient hold times and increased care capabilities.”

The exercise delivered exactly what was needed for the players.

“It helped me become better by providing real-world scenarios, which helped me sharpen my decision-making skills, and it helped improve teamwork in a high stress but controlled environment,” said Tech. Sgt. Agatha Castillo, 445th ASTS CCATT member and a respiratory practitioner. “Also, it provided me with a broader perspective. It increased my situational awareness and helped me anticipate challenges before they arose. Most of all, adaptability – it forced me to be flexible when things didn’t go a certain way.”

In the after-exercise hotwash, feedback was given that the U.S. Marine Corps’ 3rd Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company Joint Terminal Attack Controllers said they met all their core tasks and were appreciative of being able to be with the Air Force and Army units to see what they did.

Additionally, the feedback mentioned from U.S. Army’s 1st Battalion 148th Infantry Regiment mirrored the Marines, as they said it was great to work alongside the 445th in the exercise that included “interoperability and integration between the services.”

Charles mentioned during the hotwash there were some last-minute changes thrown in, and that the 445th adapted well. He also said the 180th Fighter Wing volunteered their F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft last minute to replace other unavailable Close Air Support aircraft, and the West Virginia Army National Guard’s 1-150th Cavalry Regiment provided their Blackhawks last minute – both instrumental in the success of the scenario.

“You guys performed outstandingly to adjust to these changes as they were coming, so great job,” he said addressing those at the hotwash.

Overall, the exercise was met with success and lessons learned to carry forward to other exercises.

I thought the exercise was amazing,” Czarnecki said. “There’s always confusion; there’s always chaos during exercises. But I think our ASTS, the other ASTS and the other branches all rose to the occasion. We all got our objectives completed, and I think we made some really good relationships with one another



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

Airman 1st Class Ronnae Hall, 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron medical technician administrator, provides medical care to a simulated casualty during Tactical Combat Casualty Care training for Exercise Relentless Valor at Wright State University's Calamityville, Fairborn, Ohio, June 6, 2025.

to pursue other different training in the future.”

For Capt. Yannick Tuwamo, 445th ASTS Commander Support Staff officer in charge, that organized chaos is what takes Airmen from knowledge to experience.

“There’s just enough stress for you to not only test the training but also be able to implement the regulations and lessons learned from previous training,” Tuwamo explained. “There were some limiting factors, but ultimately, it’s going to make us better Airmen and multifaceted when it comes to staying in the fight.”

In total more than 20 units and nearly 400 people participated. The additional 445th AW units included the 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron, 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron, 445th Civil Engineer Squadron, 445th Force Support Squadron, 445th Operations Support Squadron, 445th Security Forces Squadron and 89th Airlift Squadron.

Additionally, the remaining joint units included U.S. Air Force’s 178th Wing, 452nd ASTS and 932nd Medical Squadron; the U.S. Army’s 19th Special Forces Group, 848th Forward Resuscitative Surgical Detachment, and C Company 5th Battalion 159th General Support Aviation Battalion; the U.S. Marine Corps’ 14th Marine Regiment; the U.S. Navy’s En-route Care System; and U.S. Transportation Command.

Thirteen countries were in attendance to observe the exercise, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Thailand, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia.

Wing hosts Relentless Valor exercise



2nd Lt. Amber Mullen-Schweitzer



Master Sgt. Daniel Peterson

(left) U.S. service members gather around a medical tent as a Black Hawk helicopter flies overhead during Exercise Relentless Valor at Wright State University's Calamityville, Fairborn, June 7, 2025. The exercise enhanced the Joint Force's ability to respond rapidly and operate in contested, degraded, and operationally limited environments.

(right) U.S. service members transport casualties from a simulated aircraft crash site during Exercise Relentless Valor at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, June 7, 2025.



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly



Jack Gardner

(left) Members of the 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio and 944th ASTS, Luke AFB, Ariz. practice medical care on a simulated casualty during Exercise Relentless Valor at Wright State University's Calamityville, Fairborn, Ohio, June 6, 2025.

(right) Soldiers transport a simulated casualty from a Black Hawk Helicopter during Exercise Relentless Valor at WSU's Calamityville, near Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, June 6, 2025. The exercise was designed to enhance the Joint Force's ability to maneuver and conduct missions in contested, degraded, and operationally limited environments.

Understanding, handling your emotions

By Vera Ensalaco

445th Airlift Wing Director of Psychological Health

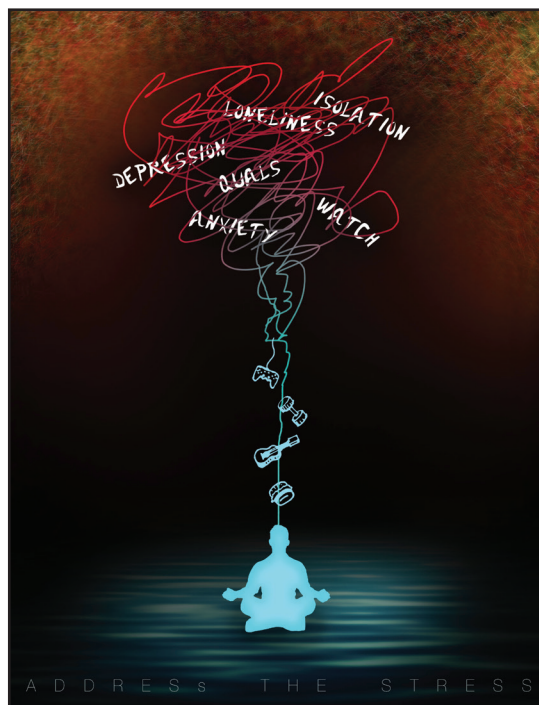
July is often a month of celebration, featuring occasions like Independence Day, summer vacations and the simple enjoyment of warm weather. While it brings joy to many, it's important to recognize that not everyone shares the same experiences.

Our emotions significantly influence how we perceive the world around us, and they can vary in duration. Interestingly, 2014 research by Verduyn and Lavrijsen from the University of (KU) Leuven, Belgium, indicates that sadness can persist for up to 240 times longer than most other emotions. It may take as long as five days to shift your mood.

Out of 27 studied emotions, sadness lasts the longest, while emotions such as shame, surprise, fear, disgust, irritation and relief tend to fade much more quickly. For instance, disgust lasts about 30 minutes, while shame and hatred last around 60 minutes. Joy, on the other hand, typically lasts about 35 minutes. The researchers found that longer-lasting emotions often arise from events with strong personal significance and major concerns.

What does this mean? Emotions can fade quickly or get stuck, leading to repeated thoughts and feelings. Just because sadness can last longer doesn't

mean it has to. If you feel stuck, it's a normal human experience. With the right tools, you can break this cycle and start healing. Understanding this can help you move on.



Graphic by Seaman David Rosinski

Overthinking can make sadness worse. Here are some ways to help.

- **Move your body:** Exercise, even a simple walk, can break the cycle of overthinking. Physical activity releases endorphins that can improve your mood.

- **Engage in activities you enjoy:** Hobbies or reading can help shift your focus.

- **Connect with others:** Talking to friends or just being around people you like can ease your emotional pain.

- **Journal:** Journaling can also help you process your feelings. Putting thoughts on paper makes them easier to manage.

Accept and deal with your emotions but remember there are steps to help you move through them. It takes practice. If you find yourself stuck in negative thoughts, remember that with practice, you can change that.

As always, if you are feeling overwhelmed, reach out to myself or one of the other helping agencies, a trusted colleague, friend, or social/spiritual support person.



445TH AIRLIFT WING/PA
BUILDING 4014, ROOM 113
5439 MCCORMICK AVE
WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB OHIO 45433-5132

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