

Major Ryan Aerni, formerly of Perkins County, recently completed an assignment at Travis Air Force Base and earned a Meritorious Service Medal for service from October 2004 until June 2009.

While at Travis, he flew the C-5 Galaxy, one of the largest aircraft in the world, and the largest in the Air Force inventory.

The C-5 is capable of carrying fully equipped combat-ready military units, up to 81 troops, anywhere in the world on short notice, and can take off and land in short distances.

The Meritorious Service Medal, signed by Mark C. Dillon, Brig. Gen. USAF, commends Aerni for his performance of outstanding service to the United States in various positions, outstanding professional skill, leadership and ceaseless efforts that contributed to the success of the Wing's Global Mobility mission.

It describes his leadership of 165 squadron members during the 2006 Expeditionary Operational Readiness Inspection, which earned an "Excellent" rating.

The medal also describes his flawless consolidation of five squadron support staffs into one group staff, reducing manning 75 percent without any loss of service, among other commendations.

It closes with, "The singularly distinctive accomplishments of Major Aerni reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."

Aerni, who has over 4,400 hours of flying, is currently assigned to Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and is attending Army Command and General Staff college.