

Holyoke native Bryan Elder pins on lieutenant colonel

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

During a ceremony held May 1 at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia, Brigadier General Robert Givens presided over the official ceremony as Holyoke native Bryan Elder was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Held at Air Combat Command Headquarters in Virginia, the ceremony included fellow military members of the A8Z, weapons requirement team, friends and family to include Elder's parents Jim and Dorinda Elder, grandmother Darlene Danner and wife and children Shannon, Benjamin, Izabelle and Elliana.

Elder began his career in 1998 when he graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs with a Bachelor of Science in behavioral science. He was married to his wife Shannon at the Air Force Academy Chapel in July 1999.

Elder then began pilot training at Vance Air Force Base in Oklahoma where he graduated third in his class and returned as a first assignment instructor pilot in the T-38.

Following T-38s, Elder transitioned to flying the F-16 fighter aircraft at Luke Air Force Base where he graduated as a distinguished graduate from F-16 FTU. His assignments in the F-16 included Cannon Air Force Base in New Mexico and Luke Air Force Base in Arizona.

While flying the F-16, Elder deployed to Misawa, Japan; Balad Air Base, Iraq; and Camp Victory, Iraq. He was able to earn the Army Commendation Medal and Air Medal during his most recent deployments to Iraq for his actions supporting ground troops engaged in enemy fire while flying his F-16 aircraft.

During one specific mission, Elder was able to drop four 500-pound weapons in order to neutralize enemy fire while enabling a U.S. special operations team to successfully capture a high value individual.

Elder most recently completed Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in

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Alabama where he graduated as a distinguished graduate in the top 10 percent of 508 U.S. officers, civilians and international officers, earning a master's degree in military arts and science.

He currently is on the Air Combat Command staff in Virginia as the weapon system team lead for direct attack requirements for the Air Force.

The lieutenant colonel will be moving this summer to Enid, Okla., where he has been selected to be the next director of operations for a T-6 undergraduate pilot training squadron.

Elder is the grandson of the late Rex and Dorothy Elder.

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