



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE FY03 KOREN KOLLIGIAN, JR., TROPHY

TO

MICHAEL L. MATESICK

Captain Michael L. Matesick distinguished himself by outstanding achievements in airmanship in safely coping with an in-flight emergency on 24 June 2003 while participating in aerial flight as a 421st Expeditionary Fighter Squadron F-16 Flight Lead supporting Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. On that moonless night at 25,000 feet and approximately 35 miles from Baghdad International Airport, his aircraft began shaking violently. Captain Matesick's F-16 suffered a stage #4 engine bearing failure and engine seizure was imminent. Applying the appropriate critical action emergency procedures, he determined the throttle could not be advanced above idle power without increasing the intensity of the vibrations and exacerbating his situation. Verifying he was over unpopulated terrain, Captain Matesick jettisoned his external fuel tanks and bombs. He then established the required glide ratio to maneuver for a flameout landing at Baghdad International Airport, a hot bed of surface to air missile activity. During his steep descent towards the airfield, tower controllers informed him that the only suitable landing surface available was a dimly lit, 90-foot wide taxiway. Captain Matesick had zero capability for defensive threat reactions and zero margin for error since a go-around/missed approach was impossible. Captain Matesick masterfully glided his crippled aircraft to a flawless power-off landing. His quick actions prevented loss of a valuable combat asset and potential loss of life.

Captain Matesick's superior airmanship and ability to perform under extreme circumstances reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.


JOHN P. JUMPER, General, USAF
Chief of Staff