

# Brig. Gen. Randal Efferson | Military Leadership Award

Last Modified on 01/02/2020 2:03 pm EST

## A Legacy in the Sky

By Barbara Bryant

December 2017 was eventful for Randal Efferson. He was promoted from colonel with the Alabama Air National Guard to brigadier general and named chief of staff of the Alabama ANG, and his duty station, Montgomery Air National Guard Base/Dannelly Field Guard Station in Montgomery, was one of two ANG bases selected to host a squadron of the new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. Efferson had worked alongside a task force established by the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce to land the F-35.

Efferson was previously wing commander of the 187th Air Wing. His advocacy for guardsmen helped enact a law that provides 100 percent of tuition assistance for every member of the Alabama Air National Guard. He has also tirelessly saluted and promoted the 187th's ownership of the 100th Fighter Squadron, one of the all-black Tuskegee Airmen squadrons that flew with distinction in World War II.

"I came up with a saying at Dannelly that became our motto: 'Red Tails—we deliver!' Efferson said. "It tells the world that we're going to put bombs on target and bring the pilots back safely."

America's Defense Communities asked community leaders about Efferson's work. Here are portions of those conversations.

LORA MCCLENDON, director, military & federal strategies, Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce: General Efferson has long prioritized and maintained exceptional relationships and open communication with the community and public officials. People always knew how to reach him. He even gave out his cell number as his point of contact.

BRIG. GEN. (RET.) PAUL HANKINS, former 187th Fighter Wing commander; vice-chair, F-35 Task Force; member of Alabama's Military Stability Foundation: He has a great, self-deprecating sense of humor. After a deployment, during which he was flying combat missions, he'd always talk to members of the community about the rest of his unit's achievements, then with those of us who knew what he was doing, he'd sit down with a beer and share his stories.

Gen. Efferson accepted all of the advice and support we in the community made available, ranging from hiring consultants, to providing support for congressional delegations and welcoming former general officers to help him prepare for site visits. He was able to step aside and be part of a team to get things done.

TODD STRANGE, mayor, Montgomery, Ala.: Seven years ago, when Gen. Efferson contributed to writing “the book” on how to train pilots on the F-35, he gained valuable familiarity with this high-tech marvel. His dynamic leadership of the 187th, pushing it to remain one of the top units in the military, and in-depth knowledge of the F-35 were true assets in the campaign to bed down America’s next generation fighter jet in Montgomery.

An important factor in our success was Gen. Efferson’s steadfast embrace of the proud legacy of the 100th fighter squadron of Tuskegee Airmen. The tails of the Wing’s F-16s are red in homage to the bravery of the “Red Tails.” He worked diligently to incorporate the airmen’s continuing story into the 187th’s history.

LESLIE SANDERS, chair, F-35 Task Force: Gen. Efferson’s commitment to his country and especially to his unit, along with their families, is remarkable. Through his example of a strong work ethic, his unquestionable knowledge and great sense of humor, he has become an authentic leader among his peers and in this community. He is an integral part of why this region believes in and strongly supports our military and the missions of our United States Air Force.



"The family is the real combat power for America," said Efferson, pictured with his son Ethan, wife Meladie and daughters Emily and Elizabeth at this December 2017 promotion ceremony. "If my family isn't happy, I'm not going to do it."

---