

U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Tod "Popeye" Fingal

Spotlight On

U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Tod "Popeye" Fingal

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Posted Feb 10, 2003 at 3:55:PM

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Anaheim, Calif. native, U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Tod "Popeye" Fingal, is the Chief of the Air Operations Division for the United States Northern Command. "I joined the Air Force in order to pursue a career in flying fighter aircraft. I spent most of my career as an operator, (F-16 Pilot), and that is the expertise I brought to the Implementation Planning Team for the creation of the new United States Northern Command. As we designed the initial architecture for the command, I was there to ensure it made "operational" sense. Our goal was to create a command with the warfighter in mind." Although Fingal's job is in the Air Operations Division, he is involved with building the command and control architecture for all the domains (air, land, maritime, and military assistance to civil authorities.) "USNORTHCOM supports homeland defense as the Department of Defense's single point of contact for orchestrating the air, land and maritime defense throughout our area of responsibility. Additionally, we provide military assistance to civil authorities when requested from another lead federal agency," Fingal said. "I can't emphasize enough the important role each and every member of NORAD and NORTHCOM plays in the defense of our homeland...every job is equally important, and it is truly a team effort. The United States was caught "flat-footed" on 11 September 2001, and we are all dedicated to preventing this from happening again." Fingal's role model is Colonel Larry "Snake" Wells, an F-16 pilot currently working a staff job at Air Combat Command Headquarters at Langley AFB, Va. "Col Wells is the most gifted officer and leader I have ever met, and his leadership concept is simple: Col Wells focuses his efforts on supporting/promoting the men and women who work WITH him. I emphasized the word "with" because he creates a sense of teamwork every time he commands, and this is why the organizations he leads are highly successful." Fingal has been at Peterson AFB since June of 2001, and said, "although I enjoy the challenges my current job provides, I am looking forward to returning to the F-16."



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