



**KAY IVEY**  
GOVERNOR

(334) 242-7100

STATE OF ALABAMA

TO: All State Agencies

FROM: Governor Kay Ivey 

DATE: Tuesday, March 17, 2026

RE: Flags Lowered for Fallen Members of 99<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron,  
117<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing, Sumpter Smith Joint Air National Guard Base,  
Birmingham, Alabama

On Thursday, March 12, 2026, six United States military personnel lost their lives during an accident involving their KC-135 Stratotanker refueling aircraft operating over western Iraq while in support of Operation Epic Fury. Three of the six fallen military personnel served in the 99<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron of the 117<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing located at Sumpter Smith Joint Air National Guard Base in Birmingham, Alabama. They include:

**Major John A. “Alex” Klinner**, 33, a resident of Trussville, Alabama and graduate of Auburn University, served as chief of squadron standardization and evaluations. An eight-year Air Force veteran, Maj. Klinner’s awards include the Air Medal with oak leaf cluster, the Aerial Achievement Medal, and the Air and Space Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster. He is survived by his wife, Libby, and their three young children.

**Captain Ariana G. Savino**, 31, served as chief of current operations. A native of Washington state, Capt. Savino was a graduate of Central Washington University and Air Force ROTC, with over 300 combat hours. Her awards include the Air Medal and Air Space Commendation Medal.

**Technical Sergeant Ashley B. Pruitt**, 34, served as an assistant flight chief of operations. A native of Kentucky, Pruitt received two associate's degrees from the Community College of the Air Force and had over 900 combat flight hours. Tech Sgt. Pruitt is survived by her husband, Gregory, a young daughter and stepson.

To honor these brave military personnel who gave their lives in service to our country, I am directing all flags be lowered *on the day of interment* of Alabama native **Major John A. Klinner**. *This flag memo will be updated once Maj. Klinner’s date of interment is announced.*

KI/ml