



944th Fighter Wing

Monthly SnapShot

www.944fw.afrc.af.mil

March 2013

944 FW KEY LEADERS

Commander

Col. Kurt J. Gallegos

Vice Commander

Col. Chris Yancy

Command Chief

CMSgt Thomas Brandhuber

Mission

Train and provide Combat-Ready Citizen Airmen in support of our national objectives.

UTA Schedule

Mar. 2-3, 2013

Apr. 6-7, 2013

May 4-5, 2013

Jun. 1-2, 2013

Jul. 13-14, 2013

Aug. 3-4, 2013

Sept. 7-8, 2013

944th Fighter Wing Monthly SnapShot:

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The SnapShot wants to highlight you and/or your unit. If you would like to submit an idea, article, or photo for the SnapShot, please e-mail 944fw.pa@luke.af.mil or call 623-856-5388.

Thanks for the warm welcome

By Colonel Kurt J Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing Commander

I would like to thank the 944th Fighter Wing for your warm welcome and generous hospitality from the time I attended the awards banquet in January, to the Change-of-Command in February. After traveling 1100 miles through the tumbleweeds of western Texas and the desolate plains of eastern New Mexico, I was relieved to see mountains, feel warm weather, and appreciate beautiful Sun Valley upon my arrival here to Luke this past weekend.

On December 21, just before heading to Utah for the holidays, I received one of the best Christmas gifts ever when Maj. Gen. Binger notified me I was going to be commander of the 944th FW. My initial thought after the elation and excitement was, "What an opportunity and challenge."

The Total Force Enterprise we have with the 56th Fighter Wing and other units here at Luke is outstanding! I look forward to working with some true professionals here in the 944th and 56th Fighter Wings.

My leadership philosophy is basic and simple. I intend to maintain a culture of motivation and inspiration, a culture where people look forward to, and enjoy coming to work every day. Enabling and supporting combat power for the U.S. Air Force is a great service to our nation. In this environment, everyone is treated equally, fairly, and given great opportunities to excel. My goal is to ensure every employee and every Airman knows we are going to operate here as one team. No matter what patch you are wear, or what unit you represent, we will strive to execute in a seamless manner.

The 944th FW is an exceptional unit with a legacy of history and tradition second to none. We will continue to foster this fine tradition of readiness and training into the future. Many challenges and opportunities face us with fiscal constraints, looming sequestration, and other uncertainties. The recent acquisition of two Geographically Separated Units, the 924th Fighter Group flying A-10s from Davis Monthan AFB, and the 414th Fighter Group flying F-15Es from Seymour Johnson AFB, will be assets as we continue to watch these units grow. The arrival of F-35s, and standing up two F-16 squadrons at Holloman AFB, are events that will require our expertise and leadership through their development.

Everyone in this organization is critical to success. We are all responsible for the accomplishments of the mission, and it is through our collective efforts we will overcome all obstacles. With a common vision, each Airman can make decisions that move us closer to our objectives. Without such common vision, coordinated leadership becomes difficult, and frustration can build in our ranks. With that in mind, I share with you my commander's vision statement.

(For the Commanders Vision Statement please see page 2.)



Welcome Home!!

TSgt Olivia Wanzo from the 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron returned home from Ramstein, Germany





Commander's Vision Statement

By Colonel Kurt J Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing Commander

I would like to share with you my commander's vision statement.

1. **PEOPLE FIRST: MISSION ALWAYS:** The Airmen in this wing are its most vital assets. America's warriors can overcome monumental odds as they have done throughout our history. We build on this record of achievement by encouraging **TEAMWORK** and by looking after one another. At the same time, we must never take our eyes off accomplishing our mission. We are at war, and our nation deserves nothing less than excellence. Fortunately, these two goals are not mutually exclusive. If we want excellence - we must give excellence. This is my pledge to all of you.

2. **COMPETENCE:** The trust placed in our Air Force by the American people demands we never grow complacent in our abilities. We are the defenders of our nation and her interests. Never forget the responsibility that comes with that. Always give your best and continue to seek improvement. Good is never good enough.

3. **COURAGE:** During your career, you will be placed in harm's way. This requires physical courage. We must be willing to sacrifice for each other and for America. We can take comfort in the fact we will not face the threat alone, as our wing mates will stand beside us. In addition to physical courage, each of us must exhibit moral courage. Wing members are obligated to stand up for their beliefs, to provide candid opinions at the risk of being unpopular, and maintain loyalty once decisions are made.

4. **INTEGRITY:** This is a core value and the basis for the trust we put in one another. Say what you mean and do what you say. Your word is your bond and you are accountable for your actions.

5. **FORTITUDE:** This is our willingness to endure hardship for the accomplishment of our mission. Our job is rarely easy and we must remember that attitudes are contagious. Make sure your attitude is setting the right example for those around you.

6. **FAIRNESS:** This is my promise to you. Everyone in the 944th Fighter Wing will be treated with dignity and respect. The environment in our wing will be one that encourages excellence and recognizes the value of each contributor.

7. **INITIATIVE:** Lead by example! Your initiative **WILL** make the difference. I will provide my objectives and intentions, and then I will get out of your way. I trust each of you to make the right decisions and to get the job done. With this trust, comes the responsibility to keep me informed on your projects. Let me know immediately if I need to reengage in order to remove obstacles to your success.

You have my promise of complete devotion, and my commitment to always act in the best interest of this wing. I expect the same from all of you! Let's get to work!

In January, during the Wing Statigic Planning meeting, commanders issued a new wing mission statement. The 944th Fighter Wings mission is to:

**Train and provide Combat-Ready Citizen Airmen
in support of our national objectives.**

Blue Jean Drive

The Wing is hosting a blue jean drive for local homeless veterans. Bring your gently used blue jeans this UTA and drop them off. Boxes will be located throughout the wing or bring them by the Public Affairs office in building 988, room 120.



Col. Anne Gunter, commander, 944th Mission Support Group, threw out the first pitch during the Chicago White Sox opening Spring Training game Sunday at Camelback Ranch stadium in Glendale, Ariz.

"I am so proud to be a member of our military and to represent our men and women here at Luke Air Force Base," said Gunter. "It was wonderful to be able to get out and share in the great American past-time of baseball. It was my first time pitching and I'm excited my pitch made it to the catcher."





Do the best you can and don't sweat the stuff you can't control

By Chief Master Sgt. Thomas Brandhuber, 944th Fighter Wing Command Chief

March is upon us, Spring Training is back, soon the refreshing triple digit temperatures will be back.

I know if you're a civilian employee for the Department of Defense or an Air Reserve Technician you have heard of sequestration. Your local leadership along with 10th and Air Force Reserve Command is working hard to implement a plan that meets the needs of the Department of Defense, while attempting to minimize the effect upon you. There is no way around the fact that there is going to be an impact. I don't think anyone knows the overall affect, and I certainly can't pretend to know how this will effect individuals as sequestration evolves.

In December I wrote about the following: Family, Civilian Job, Resiliency, and Professionalism, these components are essential now more than ever. The stress personnel are going to feel will be increased but the requirements to mission will not change. Some personnel will think there is mixed messaging going on with the fiscal crisis: Why are we still doing inspections, why are we pushing professional development, etc. The bottom line is that we have to press on and continue our mission, which is determined by our civilian leadership. A big reason why we in the military are respected so much is the way we handle any situation presented to us.

That being said, it is imperative to be a good Wingman, on and off duty. First ensure you are taking care of yourself, and then make sure you are taking care of your Wingman. Any time additional stress occurs having good Resiliency strategies will help deal with the stress.

Resiliency: This encompasses physical, mental, and spiritual. Spiritual is whatever it is to you there is not a defined method or manner, this could be church, could be meditation, or might even be chanting. Mental is critical, the number of suicides or suicide attempts within the Department of Defense is unacceptable, and it is an AFRC issue as well. There are many programs in place to offer the assistance that all of us need at one time or the other. Yes that even includes me; believe it or not, sometimes I feel overwhelmed and stressed out. It is ok to ask for help or talk to someone. A good Wingman cares, even when it is uncomfortable, they tell someone when they need help. Physical, as we know is not going away, and is not debatable. In addition to the mandatory requirements of physical levels, it does have the added benefit of helping the mental and spiritual aspects of Resiliency.

Keep balance in your life. Ensure your family is taken care of first, do the best you can and don't sweat the stuff you can't control. Ask your leadership questions, be informed, and understand that you have leadership who is committed to helping you keep the balance you need.

I truly appreciate the sacrifice that you and your families make in being a Reservist. Keep our deployed members in your thoughts and prayers. See you around the wing.

"Go Irish!"

Promotions:

The following members were promoted 1 March 2013:

- AB Austin L. Fifield to the rank of Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron
- Amn Antonio M. Rosas to the rank of Airman First Class, 944 Medical Squadron
- Amn Taquan D. Williams to the rank of Airman First Class, 414th Maintenance Squadron
- A1C Joshua V. Magnus to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron
- A1C Quanlesha Staton to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron
- A1C Javier Caballero to the rank of Senior Airman, 944th Medical Squadron
- SrA Tiffany Bechtold to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 414th Maintenance Squadron
- SrA Zachary DeJesus to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 944th Security Forces Squadron
- SrA Roxanna Moya to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 944th Medical Squadron
- SSgt Justin W. Folk to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 924 Maintenance Squadron
- SSgt Benjamin F. Fox to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 924 Maintenance Squadron
- SSgt Joseph L. Neveu to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 924 Maintenance Squadron
- SSgt Joseph C. Willis to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 924 Maintenance Squadron
- SSgt Erwin A. Zamora to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 924 Maintenance Squadron
- TSgt Kirk D. Finkbeiner to the rank of Master Sergeant, 924 Maintenance Squadron



Check us out on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/#!/944thFighterWing.LukeAFB> or on our web page at <http://www.944fw.afrc.af.mil/>



Graydon Williams award winner recognized

By Maj. Elizabeth Magnusson, 944th Fighter Wing, Public Affairs

Senior Master Sgt. Gloria Portillo-Leanos, superintendent of health services, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, was recognized as the 2012 Graydon Williams Award winner at a luncheon here Wednesday.

The Tempe Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee presented the award at Club Five Six.

“I feel a great sense of pride knowing that Senior Master Sgt. Portillo-Leanos has received this prestigious award,” said Col. Curtiss Cook, commander, 944th ASTS. “All of this year’s nominees represented some of the best the 944th Fighter Wing has to offer. She truly and consistently has achieved the Air Force ideals of integrity, service, and excellence.”

According to her leadership, Portillo-Leanos is a strategic thinker who manages the unit during the week and ensures the care of more than 100 traditional Reservists. She is responsible for establishing a state of the art medical skills training center, including the procurement of a top of the line mannequin Laerdal SimMan 3G. Portillo-Leanos is the unit resource advisor and is responsible for the squadron’s budget of more than \$200,000; managing, planning, organizing, training, and equipping the unit to be mission ready.

Outside of her duties here at Luke AFB, Portillo-Leanos is extremely active in the community. She volunteers for the annual Vi-

king Challenge, recently helping to raise more than \$103,000 for two Fisher Houses. She raises awareness for breast cancer by participating in multiple 5K runs.

“I am humbled being selected as the recipient this important award that has such a heartfelt heritage,” said Portillo-Leanos.

Portillo-Leanos was not only recognized for her contributions here at the 944th FW, but also achievements and mission impact while deployed to Ramstein Air Base, Germany. While deployed she was recognized as an outstanding performer, team motivator, and advocate for America’s wounded warriors.

“She always represents the 944 ASTS, the 944 Fighter Wing, the Air Force Medical Service, and the United State Air Force with dignity,” said Cook. “Senior Portillo-Leanos has always put the mission first, and she is the type of Airman that does honor to the spirit of the Graydon Williams Award.”

The Graydon William Award is presented annually to an Air Reserve Technician or Active Guard Reserve member who personifies the character and traits of the late Tech. Sgt. Graydon Williams, a 944th Fighter Wing maintenance ART who died at a young age of cancer. The essence of the award is based on superior performers who do not seek recognition, perform clearly above expectations, and have not been adequately recognized for their overall contributions and impact on the wing.



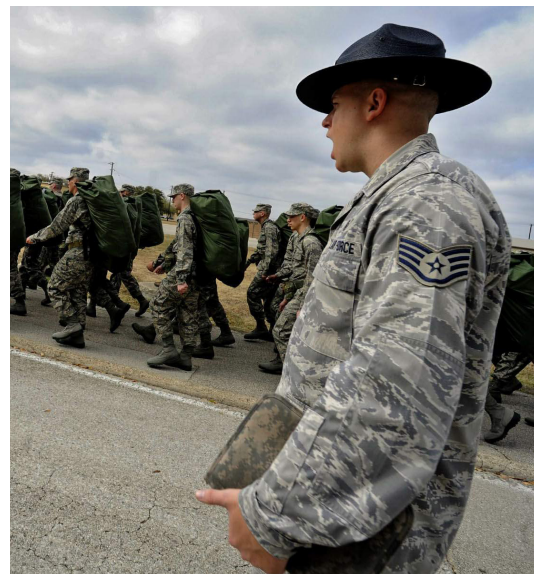
Mr. Al Shipley, Tempe Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee chair, presents the 2012 Graydon Williams Award to Senior Master Sgt. Gloria Portillo-Leanos, superintendent of health services, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, at a recent luncheon. (U.S. Air Force photo/SSgt Joshua Nason)

Do You Have What it Takes?

The Air Force Reserve Command is looking for Traditional Reservists, Staff Sgt. (with two years time in grade) to Master Sgt., who are interested in filling Military Training Instructor positions at 433rd Training Squadron, Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Currently, 40 Air Force Traditional Reserve members from around the country serve as MTIs. The 433rd TRS is in search of high-quality Airmen to fill 76 MTI vacancies. Some of the requirements are: Excellent military image and appearance, minimum fitness score of 80 on last two PT tests, ability to speak clearly, total Air Force military service of less than 16 years, minimum score of 49 in general area on ASVAB.

If you have what it takes to give back to the next generation, give us a call! TSgt Terri Taylor-Trapp at DSN 473-7336/2410, commercial(210) 671-7336/2410 or send an e-mail to 433TRS.RECRUITING@us.af.mil.





CSAF discusses impact of sequester

by Karen Parrish, American Forces Press Service

America's military superiority is founded on training and readiness, and the fiscal crisis facing the country threatens to strip away that edge, members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told Congress Feb. 26.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, along with Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. James F. Amos and National Guard Bureau Chief Army Gen. Frank J. Grass, testified before the House Appropriations Committee's defense subcommittee on fiscal challenges facing the Department of Defense.

The chiefs discussed the effects of sequester -- \$47 billion in across-the-board 2013 defense spending cuts that will take effect March 1 if Congress doesn't act -- and the continuing resolution, which guides government spending in the absence of an approved budget.

If sequestration occurs, "It will significantly undermine your Air Force's readiness and responsiveness today," Welsh said. "It will significantly impact our civilian workforce in the coming months. And its impact on modernization will clearly affect our future capa-

bility."

Welsh said two-thirds of Air Force combat units will curtail flying training starting



in March. "They'll drop below acceptable readiness levels, by our definitions, by mid-May," he added. "Most will be completely non-mission-capable as a unit by July."

If a 2014 budget is in place by October, he said, it will take the Air Force six months to regain its present level of training.

The chiefs asked for Congress' help in giving them some spending flexibility if the continuing resolution remains. Authority to move funds between accounts could help prevent the current unavoidable waste Greenert decried in the Navy. The shortfall created by

the continuing resolution, he said, "has compelled us to cancel ship and aircraft maintenance, reduce operations, curtail training for forces that will soon deploy, and [notify] 186,000 of our civilians of a possible furlough."

"We've lost \$600 million in February because of ... just lost opportunities," the Navy's top officer said. "Through the month of March, if we don't have that opportunity to reallocate funds, it would be another \$1.2 billion, and it just continues to grow and cascade as we go through the summer."

Greenert told the panel an appropriations bill for this fiscal year is necessary to allow the department to distribute resources in a deliberate manner.

The Army chief said he started his career in a hollow Army, and he doesn't want to end it there.

"We simply cannot take the readiness of our force for granted," he said. "If we do not have the resources to train and equip the force, our soldiers -- our young men and women -- are the ones who will pay the price, potentially with their lives."

(Staff Sgt. David Salanitri, Air Force Public Affairs Agency, contributed to this story.)



By Cheryl Pellerin, American Forces Press Service

Just before his private swearing-in ceremony as the 24th secretary of defense, Chuck Hagel and his wife, Lilibet, arrived at the

Pentagon this morning and were greeted by Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Thomas D. Waldhauser, military assistant to the secretary of defense.

Hagel said hello to waiting members of the Pentagon press corps as he hurried up the steps of the Pentagon's river entrance. From there, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little and other defense officials accompanied him into the building.

Family members and his immediate office staff attended the ceremony, during which Hagel was sworn in by Director of Administration and Management Michael L. Rhodes. Hagel then hosted the daily senior staff update meeting attended by DOD civilian and military leaders.

In a statement released after Hagel's Senate confirmation yesterday, Feb. 26, Little said the new secretary received congratulatory phone calls from his predecessor, Leon E. Panetta, congressional leaders, and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki.

In his conversation with Secretary Shinseki, Little added, Hagel "indicated his desire to meet as soon as possible to continue and deepen the strong partnership between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs on common priorities for serving our troops, veterans and military families."



AF releases criteria for new combat medal



By Senior Master Sgt. David Byron, Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

Air Force officials released nomination criteria for the new Distinguished Warfare Medal Feb. 15, following defense officials' announcement of the new decoration days prior.

The DWM will be awarded to

honor individuals for single acts of extraordinary achievement, not involving acts of valor, that directly impact combat or other military operations approved by the secretary of defense.

Unlike other combat-related medals, service members may be awarded the DWM for actions completed from either in or outside an actual combat zone.

The action must include hands-on employment of a weapons system, including remotely controlled assets, or any other activity, in any domain, that had a direct and immediate on-site effect on an engagement or operation against a target.

The domain is expansive in scope and includes air, land, maritime, space and cyberspace, according to Air Force Personnel Center guidance.

"In modern warfare, one individual can have a truly 'extraordinary' impact on combat operations, whether they are located on the front lines, elsewhere in the (area of responsibility) or half way around the world," said Lt. Gen. Darrell Jones, the Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services. "DOD has authorized the DWM, allowing the services to recognize their members, in our case Airmen, whose single act of extraordinary achievement directly and

significantly impacts critical combat operations."

Though involvement in a combat operation is required, the medal will not be awarded for acts of valor under any circumstances. Actions involving valor should be considered for other decorations.

Valor is defined as "an act or acts of heroism by an individual above what is normally expected while engaged in direct combat with an enemy with exposure to enemy hostilities and personal risk," said Senior Master Sgt. Diana Gonzalez, the AFPC awards and recognition chief.

The criteria needed to be considered for the medal requires that the extraordinary achievement must result in an accomplishment so exceptional and outstanding as to clearly set the individual apart from comrades or others in similar situations. The approval chain sets the bar high as to what meets the criteria.

"The approval level (service secretary), in our case the Secretary of the Air Force, testifies to the importance of this award and the importance of the action on combat operations," Jones said.

For Airmen, the final approval authority for the medal is the secretary of the Air Force. One step of the approval chain rests with the commander of air forces in the respective area of responsibility.

For an Airman nominated for action taken from outside the combat zone, the commander of Air Force forces will verify the direct impact of the action on the combat operation.

The DWM will immediately follow the Distinguished Flying Cross in order of precedence. Enlisted Airmen who earn the medal will receive five promotion points.

Eligibility for the medal is retroactive to Sept. 11, 2001.

Nominations for currently-serving Airmen will be processed through their respective chain of command.

"Former Airmen who have since retired or separated can contact us for information on how to submit the medal request," Gonzalez said. "The medal can also be presented posthumously, so family members can query us as well."

For more information and full eligibility criteria, go to the myPers website at <https://mypers.af.mil> and enter "DWM" in the search window.

2013 Luke open house is canceled

Luke AFB officials regretfully announce that Luke's 2013 Open House and Air Show, "Storm on the Horizon," originally scheduled for Mar 16-17, is canceled.

"While I value the importance of this event to both the Air Force and our local community, given the budgetary pressures and expected repercussions if sequestration goes into effect, we need to cancel this year's Luke Days. I cannot in good conscience spend some of our limited resources to host an Open House, while the Defense Department considers potential civilian furloughs," said Brig. Gen. Michael Rothstein, 56th Fighter Wing commander.

Luke is taking additional steps to continue to be good financial stewards of tax payer dollars. This includes working to gain efficiencies, deferring non-mission critical repairs and supply buys, significantly reducing flying not directly related to pilot training, as well as



reducing costs by curtailing non-mission critical services.

"I have been overwhelmed by the phenomenal community support shown to Luke in the short time I've been here. That support for our base is second to none, and made canceling our Open House a very hard decision for me. I believe it's important for Luke to open our gates to the public to enhance awareness of Air Force missions and military capabilities as well as the skills and professionalism of its people. I hope to continue our strong community alliance and resume special events like the Open House as soon as possible," said Rothstein.

No dates for future Open Houses have been set.



The opportunity to earn a CCAF is a real and valued commodity

By Master Sgt. Todd Morrow, first sergeant, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron

Approximately four days after the completion of March's Unit Training Assembly, I will earn my Community College of the Air Force degree. This will be my third degree and will reinforce that I have honored the opportunity to continue being educated as an adult.

While it will be good to be "with the program" and earn a degree that provides further career opportunities down the road, I have often wondered, like many, if setting the example remains in line with educational goal setting. To my point and many who have looked at what the CCAF does for our Airmen, is it really beneficial to say that our Airmen are not meeting educational excellence if they have a master's degree but do not qualify to have a CCAF which is the equivalent of an Associates Degree. It may mean a lack of an opportunity, promotion or a quarterly award. But if the goal is for our Airmen to be educated, it could be argued that the CCAF falls well short of where our Citizen Airmen are already.

My educational quest has become two-fold. First, I greatly desire, as a first sergeant, to try and "set the example" in my conduct of all phases of being an Airmen. But the second quest is after starting

the process of completing a college level math class some 25 years since my previous attempt at mathematics, I have become addicted to being successful at learning the concepts and mastering them. Wow! I never thought I would admit that to anyone. The CCAF will be earned. Opportunities will arise from there and having completed all other educational opportunities and PME through the E-8 level, I remain ready for the further challenges that may come along. More than that, I have become eager to meet the challenge of figuring out math problems, completing a lot of homework each week while realizing success when I meet the requirements of understanding and mastering the various concepts. It has become fun to be good at Math again and I never thought I would be able to admit that.

The opportunity to earn a CCAF is a real and valued commodity in today's Air Force. However, I suggest that while going through the process of earning this or meeting any other educational goals, embrace what the learning itself may add to the process. You may find that like me or a couple of other Master Sergeants that sit next to me in my college math class, you may have a lot of fun learning while you balance the rigors of work, family life and military service in the pursuit of educational achievement.

KEY NOTES:

Arizona StandDown, March 8-10: You still have time to support fellow veterans at the Arizona StandDown, March 8-10, at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum North Exhibit Hall in Phoenix, Ariz. Volunteers are needed to assist with set-up and teardown, as well as liaison duty for veterans. As a liaison, the volunteer will escort the veteran receiving assistance to various booths providing personalized care and assistance to those in need.

There are four and eight hour shifts available on Friday, March 8 and Saturday, March 9. The four-hour shifts are either 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., or 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The eight-hour shift is from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The attire for volunteers will be casual; jeans and a t-shirt are fine. Each volunteer will receive an Arizona StandDown t-shirt in appreciation for his or her service.

If you are interested in volunteering to work this event, please contact Staff Sgt. Joshua Nason at (480) 365-9149. For more information visit <http://www.arizonastanddown.org>.

70th Anniversary of the Cape Bon, Tunisia "Goose Shoot" event: The CAF Arizona Wing Aviation Museum, located at Falcon Field in Mesa Arizona, will host a special one-day event to commemorate the upcoming 70th Anniversary of the Cape Bon, Tunisia "Goose Shoot" during the Allied North African Campaign in 1943. The presentation will be made on Monday, March 4, starting at 1:00 PM.

Don Everly Smith, Commanding Officer of the 57th Fighter Group Association (WWII) will moderate a panel discussion with 57th Fighter Group pilots who flew P-40 Warhawk fighters against the German Luftwaffe and the Italian Regia Aeronautica during Operation Torch in the North African Desert (1942-1943); and, later, P-47 Thunderbolt fighter/bombers during Operation Strangle in Italy -- from March 1943 through June 1944. The panel will share stories and memorabilia highlighting their fathers' adventures in America's first Desert War through Accra, Khartoum, Cairo, Alexandria, El Alamein, Benghazi, Tripoli, El Djem and Tunis.

Seating is limited. The presentation is open to all Museum visitors. Normal Museum admission prices will apply and include admission to the Museum and attendance at the special panel discussion: Adults (13+), \$12.00, children (5-12) \$3.00, Seniors (62+) \$10.00, active duty military free.

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Message from ARFC/CC - MilPDS upgrade

Fellow Citizen Airmen,

Beginning on 4 March 2013, the AF will start upgrading the Military Personnel Data System (MilPDS). The upgrade anticipates a 23-day outage of MilPDS. Numerous DoD and AF staffs worked together to minimize the impact on individual Airman, especially basic pay and benefits.

For those individuals performing duty during the outage, AROWS-R and UTAPSweb will still be operational. Pay transactions will continue to be processed, although points will not be reflected in PCARS until those transactions can be caught up in MilPDS.

Other personnel actions such as promotions and reenlistments will still occur, but will not be reflected in the personnel or pay

system until MilPDS comes back online and the system updated. Lastly, pay increases will not take effect until the system is updated and retroactive pay is processed.

Your servicing MPS was given information and instructions for the upgrade and will be your focal point for questions or issues. Additional information and updates will be posted to the myPers website.

I appreciate your patience during this time.

Thanks for all you do,

JJ

JAMES F. JACKSON, Lt Gen, USAF
Commander

Family, Medical Leave Act expands protections for military families

By 1st Lt. Andre J. Bowser, 439th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

More support has been extended to military dependents through expansions of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, which include unpaid, job-protected time off for care of injured servicemembers or veterans, and activities arising from a servicemember's deployment.

While family members of the U.S. Armed Forces have enjoyed entitlements under the FMLA since 2008, when it was amended to include them, and again in 2010, when it was broadened, the latest changes refine and further extend leave entitlements to eligible dependents of servicemembers.

"Military families can find themselves facing great challenges. Caring for an injured service member, arranging for alternative childcare when a spouse is deployed to a foreign country, or attending arrival ceremonies when a loved one returns from a deployment may present family members with difficult decisions about time spent at work versus time spent with family," according to a statement published by the U.S. Department of Labor, the government agency responsible for administering and enforcing the entitlement. "The FMLA helps to ease the burden that can come with needing time away from work when faced with such commitments."

The amendment to the act, which was first signed into law by President Clinton in 1993, grants protections for eligible workers under the FMLA's Military Family Leave Provisions. This includes up to 12 workweeks of

unpaid, job-protected leave for dependents of a servicemember deployed to a foreign country. The leave may be used for such purposes as making alternative child care arrange-

ments, attending military ceremonies and briefings for family, and making financial or legal arrangements to address the military member's absence, according to the labor department.

honorable within the five-year period before the family member first takes military caregiver leave to care for the veteran. "In announcing this final rule, the Department of Labor is taking great steps toward protecting those families who have given so much of themselves to protect us," according to the labor department. "Provided that FMLA coverage and eligibility requirements are met, family members of current servicemembers and veterans will now have far greater abilities to attend to personal matters and medical needs related to their family members' service."

The FMLA makes it unlawful for an employer to interfere with, restrain, or deny, the exercise of any right provided by the act. The labor department's Wage and Hour Division is responsible for administering and enforcing the FMLA for most employees. To contact one of their offices, visit <http://www.dol.gov/whd/america2.htm>.

A FMLA mini-card that describes the basic benefits for military dependents is available at http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/2013rule/FMLA_Military_mini_English_readers.pdf.

For additional information about how the FMLA impacts servicemembers and their families, visit <http://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/2013rule/militaryFactsheets.htm> and http://www.dol.gov/WHD/fmla/2013rule/FMLA_Military_Guide_ENGLISH.pdf.

(Editor's Note: 1st Lt. Bowser works as a Regional Deputy Director for Public Affairs at the Dept. of Labor)



ments, attending military ceremonies and briefings for family, and making financial or legal arrangements to address the military member's absence, according to the labor department.

The FMLA also entitles eligible dependents to take up to 26 workweeks of military caregiver leave in a single 12-month period to care for a qualified, injured servicemember or veteran.

An eligible servicemember is either a current member of the Armed Forces, including regular, Reserve and the National Guard, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, is in outpatient status, or is on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness or a veteran who was discharged under conditions other than dis-