

SnapShot



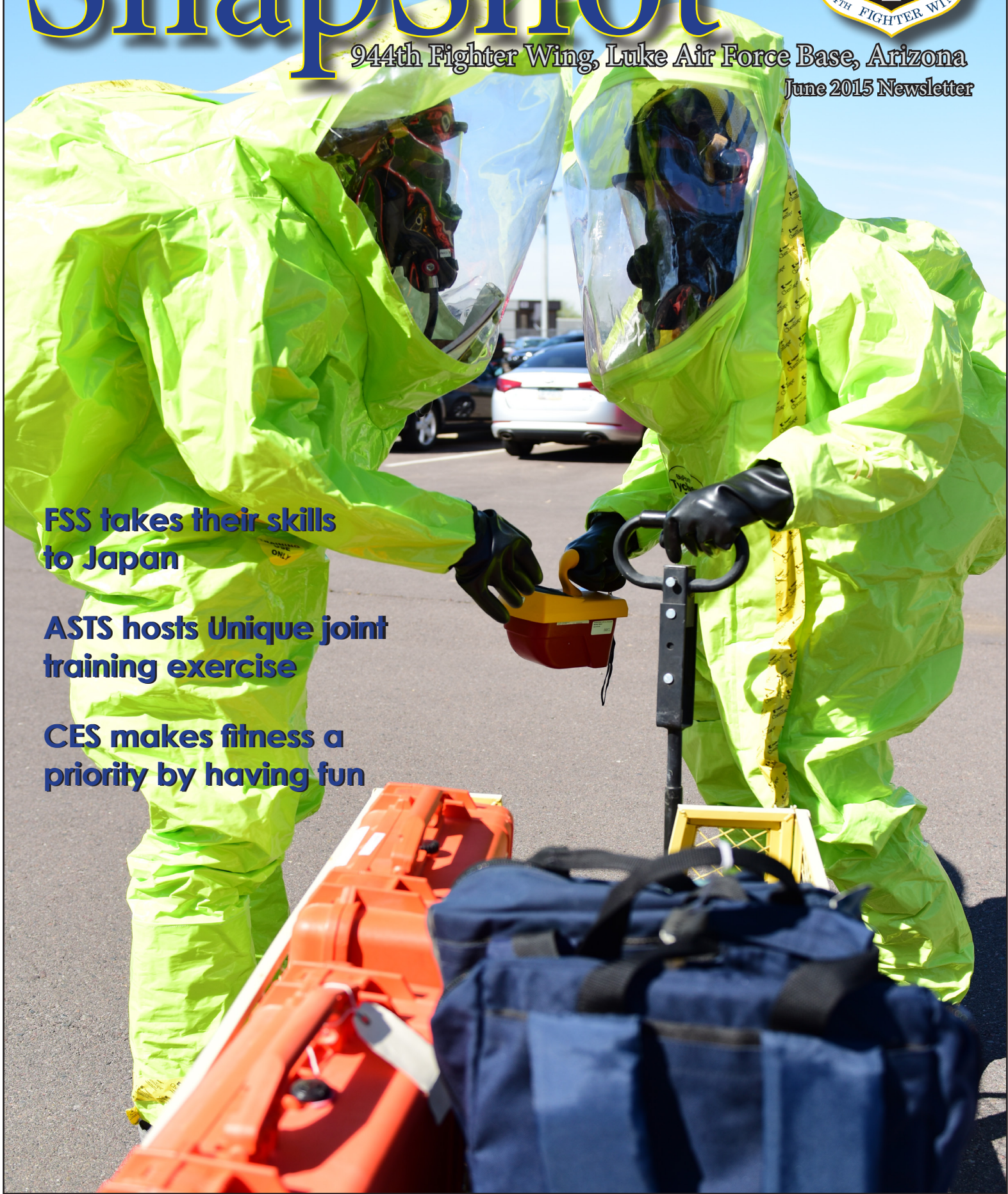
944th Fighter Wing, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona

June 2015 Newsletter

**FSS takes their skills
to Japan**

**ASTS hosts Unique joint
training exercise**

**CES makes fitness a
priority by having fun**





944th Fighter Wing

Monthly SnapShot

www.944fw.afrc.af.mil

Bringing the Heat

June 2015

944 FW KEY LEADERS

Commander

Col. Kurt J. Gallegos

Vice Commander

Col. Robert D. Whitehouse

Command Chief

CMSgt. Rhonda L. Hutson

944th Fighter Wing Electronic Monthly SnapShot

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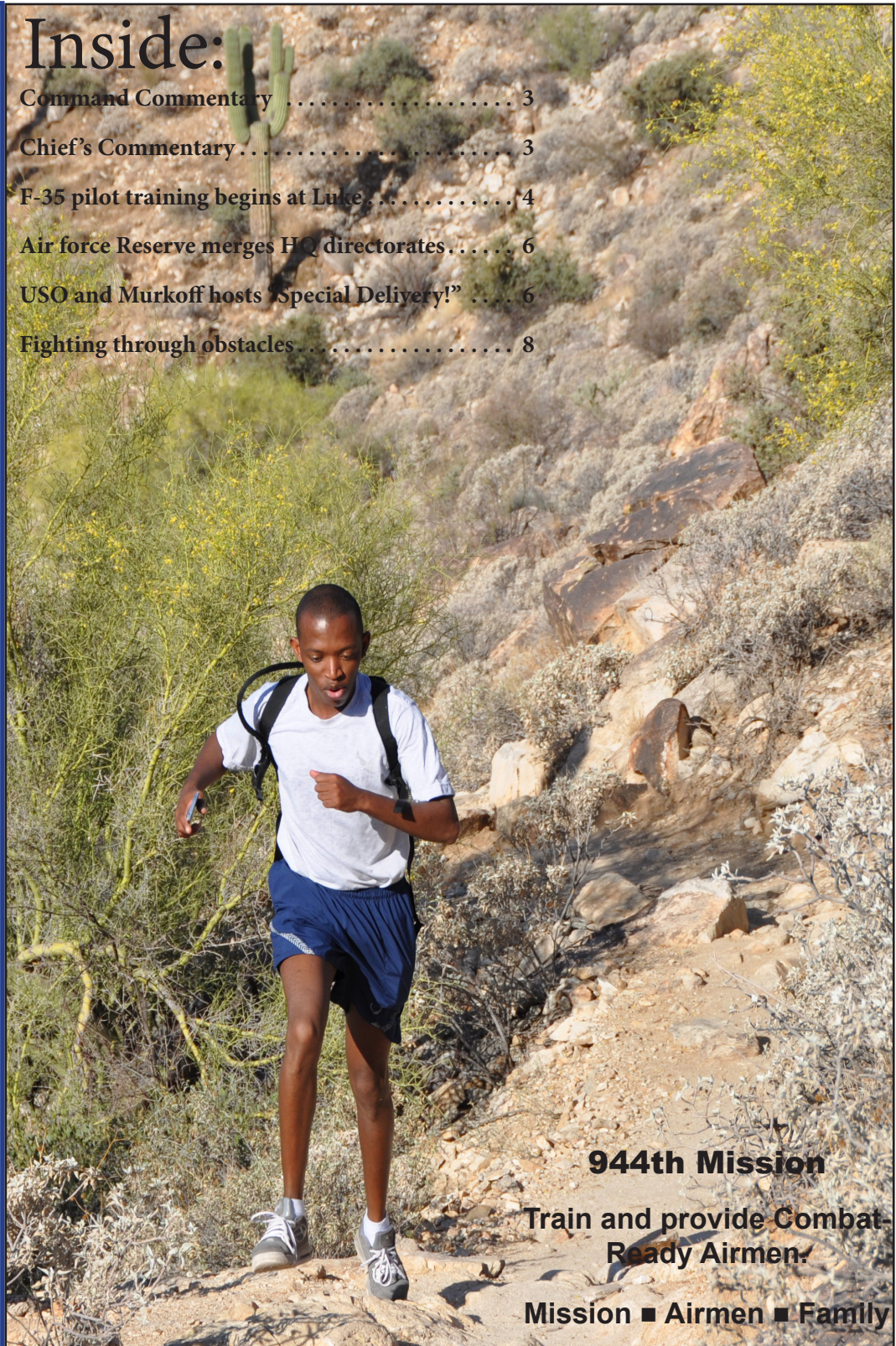
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944th Mission

Train and provide Combat-Ready Airmen.

Mission ■ Airmen ■ Family



Command Commentary

944th FW's Quest for Zero

By Colonel Kurt J. Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing Commander

Welcome back for our June Unit Training Assembly. This year seems to be flying by!

It is hard to believe that we are already 15 days into the Critical Days of Summer (CDS) campaign. I know we all get tired of hearing and talking about safety all the time but it really is because we care about each and every one of you that we put such an emphasis on it.

Even with all the safety information pushed out we lost 17 Airmen last year during the CDS. Poor decisions or lack of planning can have a life changing impact not only for you but for everyone around you.

It is an unfortunate fact that most mishaps are preventable. By putting a little thought into the things we do each day and having a plan or stepping in when something doesn't sound or look right could potential save or change a life. This applies to both on and off duty activities.

Most of the mishaps tend to be motor vehicle accidents when individuals are driving too fast, drinking and driving, or driving distracted (texting). By using some of the risk management skills we use every day completing our mission maybe we can save a life. Being a good wingman is more than being a good friend or a drinking buddy. It is extremely important to (1) recognize when things are getting out of hand and (2) not be reluctant to step forward and intervene when the situation calls for it. After the fact, it is too late.

I ask that each of you to make the commitment to stay safe in our Quest for Zero mishaps.

Stay safe and enjoy the extra time with your family in July, and we will see you again in August. Have a great UTA!

More information on safety initiatives or helpful tips can be found at www.afsec.af.mil.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Nason

Together we will win this fight

By Chief Master Sgt. Rhonda Hutson, 944th Fighter Wing Command Chief
944th Warriors!

Wow, summer is hot here! It was snowing at home in Colorado just three weeks ago. As different as the various parts of our country are, we all share a few common experiences. Patriotism is high on the list of those commonalities. In a few weeks we will celebrate our Nation's independence and we will honor those brave Founders who dared to dream of a Nation based on the unalienable rights of all its citizens and the Patriots who fought to make that dream come true. Just two weeks ago, we took time to pause, remember and honor the thousands of brave Americans who have, since 1776, given their lives to ensure *our* unique way of life endures.

I want to take a few minutes to talk about a very serious issue; Suicide. This year, across our military services, the number of our members ending their own lives is at an alarmingly high rate; greater than it has been in many years. What a tragic trend. That our noble fraternity, our band of brothers and sisters, who so often in combat make the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our way of life, should lose a single member at their own hand is unconscionable.

You will all receive formal suicide prevention training. It will give you awareness and the basic tools you will need to fight this foe. In the end, this is about taking care of yourself and your Wingmen. Over the last year, I have stressed mental resilience. I have urged you to think positively, to remain hopeful and to get connected with friends and family. These are critical actions toward achieving mental resilience, toward overcoming trials you face and realizing suicide is not an answer but an escape. I count on each and every one of you to be present. Without you, our Wing lacks combat effectiveness and is useless. If you are suffering, if you think your problems are overwhelming or that you have no hope, seek help. There are many resources available to help you and every person in this Wing will help you. Be proactive; seek help before issues become overwhelming, address your problems and overcome them. We are here to help you, and as always, I am always available.

The responsibility to defeat this lies with all of us. Together, we will win. But it requires courage. You must be willing to risk a friendship or strain a relationship in order to provide help to one who is suffering and is considering suicide. Ask the question plainly and directly and demand an honest answer. And then help the person get the care they need. The only shame to be felt in this is the shame of not saving a Wingman.

One last point. Suicide is not a junior enlisted issue. It spans the entire spectrum of our force. A few years ago, the Chief of Naval Operations, a four star Admiral, took his life. Never believe that a person is immune to suicidal thoughts because of their rank and never think you can't address the issue if you see it regardless of who the person is. Be aware, understand the signs and be proactive. Together, we will win this fight.

Til next month



Luke AFB/Wing News

F-35 pilot training begins at Luke



Travis Byrom, a Lockheed Martin instructor pilot, briefs students in the first F-35 Lightning II training class May 5, 2015, at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. Upon completion of training, the students will assume the role of instructor to teach future classes of F-35 students. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman James Hensley)

By Senior Airman James Hensley, 56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The first ever F-35 Lightning II pilot training class was held at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, May 4.

Two F-16 Fighting Falcon instructor pilots and two A-10 Warthog instructor pilots were selected for the class, making them the first students to learn how to operate the fifth-generation fighter.

"Luke's Academic Training Center focuses on the academic and simulator training and the 61st Fighter Squadron will train on the flying piece," said Lt. Col. Matt Hayden, the 56th Training Squadron director of operations. "It's a buildup approach training, where we start with academics, move to hands-on training with the simulators, and finally to the aircraft. The F-35 is built in a way to introduce students to the basic overall aircraft handling of its systems and what makes up the F-35."

The students will learn various systems throughout the aircraft and how they work together. Hydraulics, electrical, engine and flight controls are systems every pilot must understand prior to taking their first flight.

"Initially the training will be focused on understanding the airplane: how to take off, land, fly formation and how to interact with all the sensors on the aircraft," Hayden said. "As the training progresses we look at a tactical approach, as far as how to employ

the airplane air-to-air, air-to-ground, what the capabilities and limitations of the aircraft are, and how to communicate.

"The tools in the ATC are set up to help immerse the students in the aircraft environment in an academic way," Hayden said. "The student stations in each of the classrooms have large monitors and a stick and throttle. In addition to that, the instructor at the front of the classroom has a couple of projectors which enable him to bring up a console, or any of the students' consoles, to talk about what the student sees on the displays."

The displays are a panoramic touch screen and can be customized to every scenario.

"The displays can also be manipulated using the stick and throttle which gives students a way to familiarize themselves with the glass display and build comfort with the 'switchology' of the aircraft," Hayden said. "We want to get the students familiarized with all of these things long before they get into the aircraft or even the simulator. It helps them understand how that interface works between the pilot and the airplane."

The training in total, from academics to simulators to flightline, takes approximately three months. This first class is training to become flight ready with the F-35, but to also become instructors upon completion of the course.

"The pilots going through the training right now are going to be staying here at Luke to

June 2015 promotions: Congratulations to the following 944th Fighter Wing promotees

From Airman:

A1C Erika M. Godwin, 414th MXS

From Airman First Class:

SrA Juan M. Gutierrez, 924 MXS

SrA Camden B. Spruce, 924 MXS

SrA Alyssa Salazar, 924 FG Det2

From Senior Airman:

SSgt Vanessa Amendocira, 944 MDS

SSgt John M. Spence, 944 FSS

From Staff Sergeant:

TSgt Timothy R. Legler, 944 LRS

TSgt Moses H. Rivera, 924 MXS

TSgt Nicholas L. Werts, 944 CES

TSgt Adriana Brimmer, 944 FSS

TSgt Fred D. Draper, 924 MXS

From Technical Sergeant:

MSgt David D. Barrett, 944 CES

be instructors," Hayden said. "When they graduate they may very well turn around in a matter of days to instructing students in what they just learned, which is why we chose previous fighter pilot instructors to be in the first class to have that tactical experience."

The students have many challenges ahead of them to become F-35 pilots, as well as become knowledgeable enough to lead and instruct future classes.

"It's exciting to be the first class at Luke," said Maj. Eric Puels, a 944th Operations Group Detachment 2 student. "A couple of us have been part of this program since 2008 and we're looking forward to hitting the ground running. It was extremely competitive to apply to become an F-35 pilot, let alone to be accepted. My father was a fighter pilot, he flew F-4 Phantoms, so I always wanted to fly the best fighters and the F-35 is the best."



Wing News

944th FSS takes their skills to Japan

By Lt Col Debra Tofil, 944th Mission Support Group deputy commander

The 944th Fighter Wing continues as a role-model for total force integration in the Air Force with active duty and Reserve members working together, seamlessly achieving the mission at hand.

This was highlighted during a recent 944th Force Support Squadron annual tour deployment to the 18th Fighter Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan, where they worked with the largest Force Support Squadron in the entire Air Force.

The 18 FSS is significantly larger than the 944 FSS being comprised of 2,500 Active Duty, Department of Defense civilians, contractors and Japanese National employees with an operating budget and capital assets of \$119 million. They provide direct community wellness activities and support during war and peacetime to over 24,000 members at Kadena AB, Japan.

Members of the 944 FSS, including Air Reserve Technicians and Traditional Reservists, gained invaluable experience, both professionally and culturally, during their two-week annual tour deployment.

The 18 FSS welcomed them immediately upon arrival with an open mind, professionalism and the utmost respect.

“My active duty NCOIC took the time apart from my flight kitchen duties to mentor me on enlisted performance report bullet writing even though I’m a senior airman,” said Senior Airman Michelle Nobles, 944 FSS service technician. “It was very valuable to me and I learned a lot from her.”

944 FSS personnel were assigned to augment various offices through out the 18 FSS supporting sections in personnel readiness, lodging, recreation/fitness, dining facilities, customer service,

personnel systems and force management. They also provided 24-hour coverage in some sections and participated in a local chemical gear exercise.

“I was originally in the dining facilities but the 18 FSS needed me to augment mortuary affairs during the exercise,” said Tech. Sgt. Keisha Mason, 944 FSS, services journeyman. “I was able to experience processing remains from start to finish and now I know where I fit in the process and how important what I do, really is.”

In addition, members obtained essential resiliency training and certification which will benefit all members of the 944 FW.

“Being one of only three members now trained in the 944 FW, we will be able to contribute effectively to resiliency programs such as wingman and suicide prevention day,” stated Master Sgt. Jeff Braselton, Chief, 944 FSS chief, personnel systems management.

Some Reserve members were even given a unique opportunity to work at Okuma recreation area.

“It was a completely different aspect of services from what I had ever worked in,” said Tech. Sgt. James Oberhaus III, 944 FSS program manager for development and training flight. “I learned very quickly how important team work was and that working outside your career field was how the personnel stationed at Okuma survived with only a small team of seven stationed there.”

Only 27 personnel were on the annual tour deployment, however, they made a huge, positive impact on the nearly 2,500 personnel squadron.

“The 944 FW team worked seamlessly with ours and we even have a couple of them playing along in the exercise,” said Mr. Mark Johnson, 18 FSS deputy commander. “We just wish they had more than a couple weeks here. We’re thankful for what we can get just the same.”



Staff Sgt. Samuel Olivas, 944th Force Support Squadron services, prepares a meal during his annual tour deployment to Kadena Air Base, Japan. (U.S. Air Force photo by Lt. Col. Debra Tofil)



Senior Airman Alec Andsager, 944th Force Support Squadron services, prepares food during his annual tour deployment Kadena Air Base, Japan. (U.S. Air Force photo by Lt. Col. Debra Tofil)



BOSS'S DAY NOV. 7, 2015

Register your boss by Aug. 31! -- <http://tinyurl.com/ojwgf4g>





Air Force Reserve merges HQ directorates

By Jaimi L. Upthegrove, Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs
ROBINS AIR FORCE BASE, Ga. -- The Air Force Reserve Command headquarters is merging its A4 Logistics and A7 Installation and Mission Support directorates.

AFRC's new A4 Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection directorate was approved by Headquarters Air Force May 19. The merger will be conducted in phases over the next several months.

The change at Headquarters AFRC is part of the Future Air Force Organization initiatives. Headquarters Air Force realigned its A4 area of responsibility Oct. 1, 2014.

"Our merger is going to happen in phases to ensure the highest level of customer support possible," said Brig. Gen. Curtis Williams, AFRC installations and mission support director at Robins AFB. "The work and customer service will not change. This merger will have minimal impact on our day-to-day operations, and we are working to ensure a seamless transition."

Williams said that although some positions will be eliminated, most reductions are being accommodated through attrition.

"We have vacancies and people retiring in addition to contracting becoming its own entity, which will account for some of the manning reductions," said Williams. "Some offices may be relocated, titles may change, but leadership is doing everything we can to ensure we take care of everyone."

This change is a natural progression aimed at better aligning the Air Force Reserve with the Air Force staff organization construct. It is part of ongoing efforts to reduce overhead and achieve greater efficiencies through the Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center.

"This is a small indicator to the bigger change that's happening across the Air Force to ensure we meet the challenges outlined in

our leadership's 'A Call to the Future' 30-year strategy," said Timothy Bridges, Air Force assistant deputy chief of staff for logistics, engineering and force protection, Washington, D.C.

The A4 mission will continue to focus on strategy, policy, oversight, career field management and some programming and budgeting within four divisions. Those divisions are:

- Civil Engineers (A4C), which includes installation strategy and plans, facility management, energy and environmental management, readiness and sustainment. The directorate leads Air Force Reserve civil engineers in providing, operating, maintaining and protecting sustainable installations.

- Logistics (A4L), which includes logistics plans, logistics readiness, munitions and maintenance branches. The directorate ensures the readiness of the single largest element of manpower supporting Air Force Reserve combat forces.

- Resource Integration (A4P), which includes portfolio advocacy management, information technology policy and strategy, resources, executive services, weapon system sustainment and logistics transformation. The directorate is responsible for Air Force Reserve logistics, installations and mission support long-range planning, strategic support planning and associated policies.

- Security Forces (A4S), which develops security forces policy and strategy. This directorate has oversight for protecting Air Force Reserve resources from terrorism, criminal acts, sabotage, acts of war and ensuring Security Forces are trained, equipped and ready to support contingency and exercise plans.

"We must align our efforts to be able to meet the demands of tomorrow," Bridges said. "That means we must think differently about what we need to do, how we need to do it, and that may not necessarily be the way we've always done them in the past."

USO and Murkoff hosts "Special Delivery!"



By Staff Sgt. Lausanne Kinder, 94th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The United Service Organizations along with Heidi Murkoff, author of the "What to Expect When You're Expecting" series, hosted a free baby shower May 16, for local expecting military and military spouses.

More than 80 moms-to-be attended the "Special Delivery" event and were welcomed with a gift bag which had essentials for mom and baby. They also enjoyed games, raffle prizes, lunch, a question and answer session

with Murkoff, and a book signing.

"It was really nice even for not being a first time parent... they let people with three or four kids come," said D'Anne Carter, wife of Master Sgt. Daniel Carter, 56th Medical Group first sergeant, expecting their third child. "It was [also] a great way to meet people and I was pretty enthralled that we got to meet the author."

Murkoff was first asked by Operation Homefront, a national nonprofit organization providing support to service members and their families, to donate books for an event. Not only did she provide books, she and her husband ended up attending.

"I was completely addicted," Murkoff said after the first event. "Soon after that we were meeting with all the different branches and went to the pentagon and they suggested the USO as a partner."

Murkoff and the USO have hosted 26 baby showers around the globe since then. The next event will be held in Okinawa, Japan, in June.

Not having a military background herself,

Murkoff's always said that "motherhood is the ultimate sisterhood" and understands that the military is a family too.

"I think one of hardest parts [of being military] is being away from that network of family and friends... let's face it, no one wants to go through pregnancy alone," said Murkoff. "This is a way of not only me getting to meet [the moms] but bringing them together and making new friends and contacts."

Carter felt the same way.

It's different being with other moms who have a military background and with an environment where we're all brought together, we were able to connect and share experiences and talk about the places where we've been, she explained.

The moms were grateful that such support was given and that all of it was free.

"I just love to get to know the moms," said Murkoff. "I only have one rule; nobody can leave without a hug."

Along with the gift bag each mom received, a hug and a signed copy of the latest editions of her books.



944th ASTS hosts unique joint training exercise

By Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante, 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

“Operation Patriot Bluebird,” a mass casualty exercise, kicked off Friday at Luke Air Force Base with a passenger bus being hit by an IED blast causing several injuries and a possible bio chemical hazard to test members of the, 944th Fighter Wing, 56th Fighter Wing and Veterans Affairs Health Care System personnel.

944th Aerospace Staging Squadron hosted the exercise as part of the Joint Medical Operation Training Initiative Program which began developing over two years ago as the brain child of a former Senior NCO from the 944th ASTS. “The program brings together many military and civilian agencies embracing the “purple” concept and making 944th ASTS members a more valuable tool available for the Air Force,” said Master Sgt. Johnathan Bartram, ASTS Medical Readiness superintendent.

“This type of training is essential to keep our skills up and provides the opportunity to work with the 56th and VA personnel. We want to work with them as much as possible so they can see our talent and capabilities in case of a real world incident,” said Lt. Col. Paul Duntley, 944th ASTS Flight Surgeon and incident commander for the exercise. “This exercise will really help strengthen those relationships.”

The evaluation team designed an exercise scenario that would provide personnel the opportunity to acquire, develop and refresh medical skills necessary for duty performance in their assigned Air Force specialty code. Additionally, the training was planned to enhance readiness capability so that members can effectively perform their expeditionary mission.

Individuals were assigned roles accordingly to their AFSC and worked side by side with their counterparts from different agencies. The exercising members were at all different levels of knowledge and proficiency and some have full-time civilian jobs similar to their military AFSC while others do not.

“Having a joint exercise puts it all together,” said Colonel Constance Jackson, 56th Medical Operations Squad-



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.

ron commander. “ASTS moves the patients, then the Medical Squadron takes care of them. This puts the entire picture together so all the pieces merge to give a full response to any situation. This really gives us the opportunity to see how everything works together like when we deploy,” said Jackson.

Working as one team with joint forces and performing patient movement was a large aspect of this training exercise. As a huge bonus the VA brought in their Dual Use Vehicle, a bus which converts to a patient evacuation vehicle and provides for the transportation of passengers and patients including ambulatory, wheelchair and litter born during disasters or emergencies.

“We have taken advantage of the VA’s DUV equipment to enhance our training here today,” said Colonel Michael Chesser, 944th ASTS Hospital Services Flight chief and lead physician on the VA’s Emergency Management Committee. “This is critical for our people as it gives them exposure to patient movement and to see state of the art equipment,” he added.

“This training was definitely helpful. We don’t get to do this all that often and it was great to see the process in motion,” said Senior Airman Vanessa Amemdorira, 944th Medical Squadron lab technician.

All of the training objectives were met today and there was excellent participation from all of the partners.

“The best learning experiences can be developed by executing exercises and intergrading our personnel and resources. Over all the exercise today was a success because we worked so well together. This is a great way to build trust and confidence amongst all players,” said Capt. John Lewis, 944 ASTS Medical Readiness and Logistics officer.

Lewis mentioned that there were some bench mark successes and some areas for improvement, however.

“This is exactly the reason for exercises and training to see where our strengths and weakness occur and then build and develop those area areas,” he added.



CES makes fitness a priority by having fun



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante

By Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante
944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Just as the sun was coming up Sunday morning, over 100 Airmen from the 944th Civil Engineer Squadron were preparing to hike the Mesquite Trail in the White Tank Mountains during the May Unit Training Assembly.

Supporting physical fitness is a priority for the commander of the CES squadron. His intent is to encourage Airman to get fit and stay fit.

“The goal here today is to be safe, have fun and assess your personal physical fitness,” said Maj. Orren Squires, 944th CES commander.

Being fit is a requirement to be an Airman. The Air Force fitness program is designed to motivate Airmen to participate in a year round physical conditioning program that emphasizes total fitness.

According to Squires, he thinks hiking can be enjoyable and help individuals evaluate their physical fitness readiness.

“This is the kind of missions that CE members are doing while deployed. It’s not uncommon

for an Airman to be in the area of responsibility, with 100 pounds of gear they have to carry. Fitness doesn’t have to be hard, I want them to have fun, but if they are unable to do this hike they will want to reassess their current fitness status,” he added.

To further push themselves and ensure they are fully preparing for real world missions members of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal flight put on full combat gear and carried additional equipment adding approximately 100 pounds to their frame.

“This is business as usual for us; being fit is a must for an EOD troop,” said Tech. Sgt. Brandall Selestewa, 944th CES, EOD team leader.

The commander’s intent was met today; the Airman had fun and became actively engaged in a good work out.

“This provided a whole different level of fitness for us; it was fun, very challenging and beneficial,” said Senior Airman Jacobi Goodman, 944th CES operations manager.

My story: Fighting through obstacles

By Staff Sgt. Perla Tapia Cordero, 69th Fighter Squadron

Growing up, I always dreamed of continuing my education and having a professional career. Ever since I can remember, I have always worked hard and strived for excellence in everything I did. Because of my academic achievements in high school, I was awarded the Presidential Scholarship, which gave me the opportunity to earn my associates degree from any Maricopa Community College for free.

I knew that my parents could not afford to pay for my education so this was a huge relief and tremendous opportunity for my family and me. Not only was I the first one to graduate from high school out of my family; I would now be the first to attend college.

After completing my first semester of college in the fall of 2006, Proposition 300 passed in Arizona which affected all undocumented students in the state of Arizona. The bill prevented all undocumented students from receiving any type of financial aid and they were required to pay out-of-state tuition.

Sadly, I was one of the many undocumented students affected by this proposition which led me to discontinue my education. However, after much persistence I received my permanent resident card and I decided to join the Air Force Reserve to make the naturalization process go faster. I needed to help legalize my family since I was afraid they would get deported. Little did I know the sacrifice I made in 2010 would only bring blessings into my life.



While at Air Force basic training, I was recognized as the top female in Physical Training and was also an honor graduate. Then in 2011, I became a naturalized citizen and in 2013, I was recognized as the Airman of the Year for 10th Air Force. I didn’t accomplish this by myself; I have to give many thanks to my family, my friends, my unit and most importantly all of the great mentors who have supported me throughout the years.

It took nine years to achieve my education goal. But I have defeated the obstacle I was faced with back in 2006.

I finally had the privilege of walking across the stage May 15, 2015 and received the diploma I have worked so hard to get over the past four years. Not only did I receive my Bachelor’s degree in chemistry, I also had the honor of wearing the Magna Cum Laude honors cord. It is true that America is the home of opportunities and it is most visible when you accomplish them yourself. After all that I have been through I decided to

become a teacher so I can teach my students the beauty of all of the great things one can accomplish when we are determined and disciplined.

What’s next for me? Well my next goal is to become a commissioned officer through a deserving Airman program within the Air Force Reserve. Also, I plan on completing the Educational Leadership Master’s program through Arizona State University. My vision is to continue to lead and inspire others so I can make the community I live in a better place.



Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr., 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs operations chief, captures action around the wing. Watch out for him, he'll make you famous! (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Lausanne Kinder)



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