



# 944th Fighter Wing Monthly SnapShot

[www.944fw.afrc.af.mil](http://www.944fw.afrc.af.mil)

December 2014

## 944 FW KEY LEADERS

### Commander

Col. Kurt J. Gallegos

### Vice Commander

Col. Robert D. Whitehouse

### Command Chief

CMSgt Rhonda L. Hutson

## Mission

Train and provide Combat-Ready Airmen.

Mission ■ Airmen ■ Family

## 944th Fighter Wing Electronic Monthly SnapShot:

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## Reflecting on an eventful year

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

As we wind down towards the end of the year I'd like to take a moment to reflect on all we have gone through and accomplished in 2014. I cannot express how much I appreciate all the effort and hard work each of you have put into the last year. I believe it shows in the faces of our Airmen and in our accomplishments Air Force Reserve Command wide.

This year we have had some challenges. We lost a valued member of the 944th when Mary Sprague passed away. The wing has had to do more with less due to the budgetary cuts and uncertainty, yet we haven't missed a beat. Other challenges we conquered this year include the Unit Effectiveness Inspection.

There was a lot asked of you, and you responded with results above and beyond what was expected and with a great attitude and sense of service.

You have done amazingly well this year as our accomplishments show. We developed a wing inspection team and received an effective overall rating during the UEI. We sent our Airmen around the world for deployments and Annual Tours and each time our members were constantly highlighted for their outstanding work. The wing added a new unit at Holloman, a new Maintenance unit here at Luke, and expanded our flying program to include the F-35 as we continue to grow.

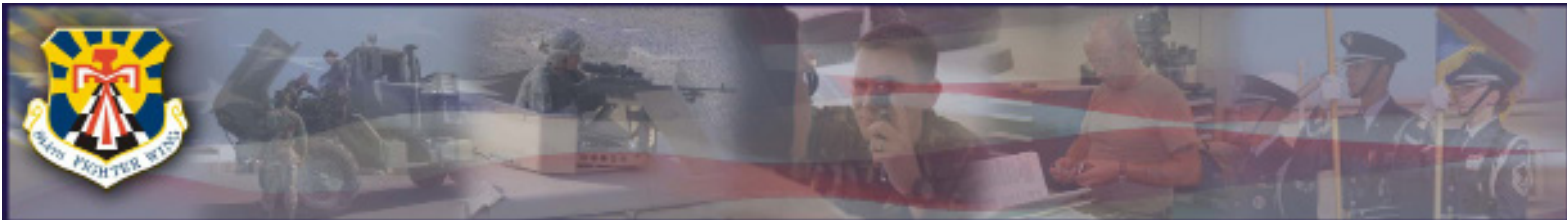
Our geographically separated units gained new leadership as we said goodbye to Col. John Russell and welcomed Col. Thomas McNurlin at the 924th Fighter Group. They also welcomed Lt. Col. Robert Hetland to the 47th Fighter Squadron. At the 414th Fighter Group, Col. Christopher Freeman took command from Col. Kevin Fesler. While here at Luke we bid farewell to Lt. Col. Jason Birch and Col. Anne Gunter and welcomed Maj. Orren Squires and Col. Paul Theisen to the Wing.

This UTA we will be celebrating the holidays with our own festivities and a visit from Santa. I hope you bring your families out as there are plenty of events for children of all ages, pictures with Santa, and a bizarre. I hope you enjoy the holidays with family and friends, and remember to be safe. I expect to see everyone back next year safe and sound with a smile on your face.

Thank you for all your work this year and I look forward to what the New Year has to offer.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Staci Miller



# As you reflect, look at the goodness of the world

*By Chief Master Sgt. Rhonda Hutson 944th Fighter Wing Command Chief*

944th Warriors!

Well, the holidays are here and it seems like just yesterday I arrived here at the Wing. This time of year always lead me to reflect on the past year and hopes for the coming year.

My reflections of 2014 are these; I was blessed with the privilege to be assigned to the best wing in Air Force Reserve Command. I have been proud to meet and serve with each and every one of you. The Wing passed the Unit Compliance Inspection with flying colors and deserves to be proud of that accomplishment.

As a country, this has been a trying year. The unrest at home and abroad only reinforces the belief that we are all in this together and being a good wingman both while in uniform and as you go about your daily life is even more important. Taking care of each other with care and understanding is more powerful than the hate that periodically casts its shadow over the world. As Archbishop Tutu said "The dream is that you and I and all of us will realize that we are family, that we are made for togetherness, for goodness, and for compassion." As you reflect, take a moment to look at the goodness in the world; don't just focus on the tragedy of the moment hyped by the media. With compassion and togetherness we can overcome any tragedy.

If this holiday season is difficult for you, seek out opportunities to get assistance from others. You might only need fellowship with others, don't be shy in asking for assistance or company. If your holiday season is bright with joy, share that with others who may be struggling. The gift of time spent with others creates memories that last a lifetime. Remember the Five C's of Comprehensive Airmen Fitness – Care, Commit, Connect, Communicate, and Celebrate.

So here are a few of my hopes for the next year. Yes I know hope is not a course of action, but Mr. Webster defines hope as a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. My hopes for the coming year are; the wing continues its proud tradition and history, we continue to help and take care of each other as were are a family, we take failures as an opportunity to learn and grow and not place blame. In short, be the people we always knew we could be.

The family here at the 944th needs you back next year for us to reach even greater heights. Have a safe and Happy Holiday season to each and every one of you and all of your families.

## Reservists can nominate their employers for Freedom Award

WASHINGTON -- Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense office, is now accepting nominations for the 2015 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. The Freedom Award is the Nation's highest honor presented to civilian employers for exceptional support of their National Guard and Reserve employees. ESGR encourages Guardsmen, Reservists, or family members acting on their behalf, to submit nominations at [www.FreedomAward.mil](http://www.FreedomAward.mil) by January 19, 2015.

Guard and Reserve members comprise nearly one-half of our nation's military force. They provide essential services to maintain national security and conduct humanitarian efforts at home and abroad. The unwavering commitment of their employers helps keep our military prepared and our Nation protected.

"Every day, employers large and small work to ease the burden on those who serve by providing workplace flexibility, career opportunities and dedicated support," said Paul Mock, ESGR National Chair. "The Freedom Award is one way we can thank the employers that stand behind our Guardsmen, Reservists and their families."

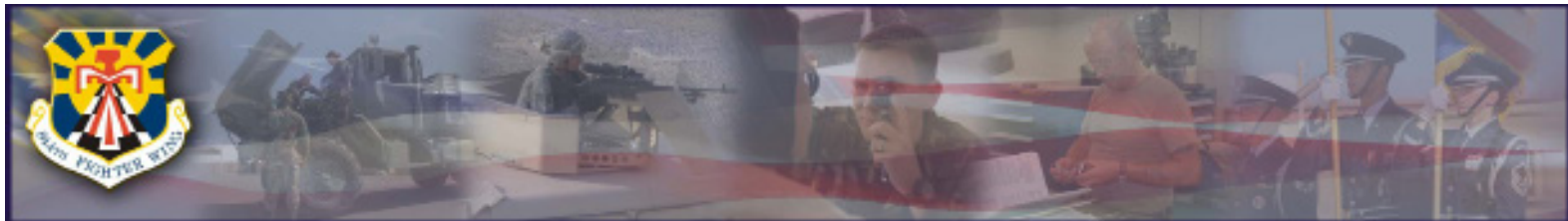
A Freedom Award ceremony is held in Washington, D.C. for up to 15 deserving employers each year. The Freedom Award recognizes employers who go above and beyond in supporting members of the Guard and Reserve - from continuing benefits and healthcare during deployments, to helping with home maintenance and sponsoring veteran hiring initiatives. Service members can thank employers for their exemplary support by submitting a Freedom Award nomination today.

About ESGR and the Freedom Award:

ESGR is a Department of Defense office that develops and promotes supportive work environments for service members in the Reserve Components through outreach, recognition, and educational opportunities.

We encourage the employment of Guardsmen and Reservists, who bring integrity, global perspective and proven leadership to the civilian workforce. On behalf of the Secretary of





## Promotions:

The following members were promoted 1 December 2014:

Airman Basic Karla E. Nesbitt to the rank of Airman, 944th Medical Squadron  
 Airman Christopher M. Lyon to the rank of Airman First Class, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman Corey J. Mayo to the rank of Airman First Class, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman First Class Ashley M. Arseo to the rank of Senior Airman, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron  
 Airman First Class Travis W. Bearden to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman First Class Jordan E. Borrego to the rank of Senior Airman, 924th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman First Class David A. Causby to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman First Class Zachary R. Daprile to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman First Class Stuart D. Davis to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman First Class Rashaed D. Everett to the rank of Senior Airman, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron  
 Airman First Class Mikel L. Hardison to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman First Class Johnny R. Martin to the rank of Senior Airman, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Airman First Class Tyler J. Maxey to the rank of Senior Airman, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron  
 Airman First Class Akeal D. Odom to the rank of Senior Airman, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron  
 Airman First Class Jessica F. Rojas to the rank of Senior Airman, 944th Medical Squadron  
 Airman First Class Andrea D. Washington to the rank of Senior Airman, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron  
 Senior Airman David A. Hainley to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 924th Fighter Group  
 Senior Airman Wade D. Hall to rank of Staff Sergeant, 924th Maintenance Squadron  
 Senior Airman Armando Salazar to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 944th Fighter Wing  
 Senior Airman Stephen V. Young to the rank of Staff Sergeant, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Staff Sergeant Christopher Cacopardo to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 924th Maintenance Squadron  
 Staff Sergeant Nathan J. Davis to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Staff Sergeant Aaron J. Franklin to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron  
 Staff Sergeant Shane T. Hall to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 924th Maintenance Squadron  
 Staff Sergeant Cody M. Poole to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Force Support Squadron  
 Staff Sergeant David S. Ross to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron  
 Staff Sergeant Sue E. Schmidt to the rank of Technical Sergeant, 944th Mission Support Group  
 Technical Sergeant Keith A. Baumbaugh to the rank of Master Sergeant, 414th Maintenance Squadron  
 Technical Sergeant Sandra D. Benjamin to the rank of Master Sergeant, 944th Force Support Squadron  
 Technical Sergeant Christian D. Nerone to the rank of Master Sergeant, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron  
 Master Sergeant Brett L. Tillison to the rank of Senior Master Sergeant, 414th Maintenance Squadron



Get your **\$10 a copy!**  
**944th Fighter Wing**  
**Cookbook!**  
**Dec. 7**  
 (during the Holiday Bazaar)

For more info, contact the Public Affairs Office x5388



# President announces Hagel's resignation as defense secretary

*By Tech. Sgt. Jake Richmond DOD News, Defense Media Activity*

Praising Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's "class and integrity," President Barack Obama announced Nov. 24 at the White House that Hagel will leave his post.

The president said Hagel has agreed to remain in his position until a successor is nominated and confirmed. For that, Obama said, he is "extraordinarily lucky and grateful."

"When I asked Chuck to serve as secretary of defense, we were entering a significant period of transition," Obama said.

That transition included the drawdown in Afghanistan, the need to prepare U.S. forces for future missions, and tough fiscal choices to keep the military strong and ready.

Last month, Obama said, Hagel came to him to discuss the final quarter of his presidency. It was then that Hagel initially determined that, having guided the department through this transition, it was an appropriate time for him to complete his service, the president added.

## A Steady Hand

"Over nearly two years, Chuck has been an exemplary defense secretary," Obama said, crediting Hagel for providing a steady hand during the modernization of the administration's strategy and budget

to meet long-term threats, while still responding to immediate challenges such as the Islamic State group and the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

Hagel said he is "immensely proud" of what the department has accomplished during his tenure.

"I believe we have set not only this department, the Department of Defense, but the nation on a stronger course toward security, stability and prosperity," the secretary said. Privileged to Serve

Hagel called his opportunity to serve as defense secretary the "greatest privilege of my life."

In the meantime, Hagel said, "I will stay on this job and work just as hard as I have over the last couple of years, every day, every moment, until my successor is confirmed by the United States Senate."

The United States of America can proudly claim the strongest military the world has ever known, Obama said.

"That's the result of the investments made over many decades, the blood and treasure and sacrifices of many generations," he said. "It's the result of the character and wisdom of those who lead them as well, including a young Army sergeant in Vietnam who rose to serve as our nation's 24th secretary of defense."



*Courtesy Photo*

# Wing dietitian teaches what she preaches

*By Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr, 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*

Living healthier by eating right and working out regularly is ideally most peoples' blueprint for looking good and feeling confident.

Tech. Sgt. Grace Haecker, 944th Aeromedical Staging Squadron non commissioned officer in charge diet therapy/unit fitness program manager, not only preaches fitness and healthy eating but she takes it one step further by living what she teaches.

To highlight the effectiveness of natural weight loss and fitness Haecker competes in bikini fitness competitions to showcase the results.

"My goal in competing was to see if I could do it naturally meaning no drugs, diuretics or starving myself on diets," said Haecker. "I often just listen to my body and give it what it needs."

As an outpatient registered dietitian at the Mayo clinic in her civilian career and diet craftsman with the military her knowledge in the area is extensive.

In September, she competed in the annual Luke Air Force Base Fitness Competition which included bodybuilding, physique, figure and bikini categories. Haecker placed first in the bikini category. This was one of three competitions she entered and has placed first and second previously. Haecker has qualified for a national competition which will take place in 2015.

"I hope to be ranked in the top five or even two, winning myself a professional card," said Haecker. "This would offer me a chance to be sponsored and help other women in the fitness industry achieve their dreams."

In May of this year Haecker decided to change her nine year work-out routine and hired a personal trainer who helped her improve her weight lifting and cardio exercise routines for the competitions.

As a diet therapist for the Air Force Reserve, Haecker expresses that she is an available resource for anyone looking to achieve healthier eating, weight loss/gain, basic nutrition etc. For any question please contact Tech Sgt. Grace Haecker at [grace.haecker@us.af.mil](mailto:grace.haecker@us.af.mil) or DSN 896-7591.



*Courtesy Photo*





## Theisen returns home to command 944 MSG



Photo by Staff Sgt. Lausanne Kinder

**Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante, 944th Fighter Wing**

During a Change of Command Ceremony on a crisp fall Arizona morning Col. Paul Theisen took the reins from Col. Anne Gunter as the new commander of the 944th Mission Support Group, here Nov. 2.

The colonel comes to the wing from Hill Air Force Base, Utah where he was the commander and senior air reserve technician of the 419th Mission Support Group.

The title may be new but the face is a very familiar one for Luke AFB and the 944th Fighter Wing. Theisen spent four years at Luke AFB on active duty before joining the Reserve and spending the next nine years

in many leadership roles right here at the 944th.

A native of Arizona Theisen received his commission through the Air Force ROTC program at ASU and served 15 years on active duty prior to transferring into the Reserve. His career has been a demanding one as he has served in wing, numbered AF and major command positions, and has been a commander three times at flight, squadron, and group levels. He also has served in numerous deployed leadership positions to include NATO Chief of Operations for the International Security Assistance Force, Allied Movement Coordination Centre, and Operation Enduring Freedom. Among his many assignments, he worked in the groundbreaking Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Battlelab developing initial USAF UAV capabilities.

Col. Kurt Gallegos, 944th FW commander, was the presiding officer for the ceremony. "PT you have some big shoes to fill, your reputation and background precede you and I really look forward to working with you."

In his new position, Theisen will oversee support planning and resource management activities for a 1,350-person fighter wing, including two geographically separated units, the 414th Fighter Group, at Seymour Johnson AFB in North Carolina and the 924th Fighter Group, at David Monthan AFB in Arizona. He will lead, direct, and manage four squadrons with the following responsibilities: civil engineering, explosive

ordnance disposal, readiness, fire protection, supply, transportation, fuels, logistics readiness, security and law enforcement, combat arms, military personnel, family readiness, lodging and food service support, mortuary affairs, communication and information systems, and computer support.

Theisen spoke from his heart about the support he has received over the years from his wife and family and their unselfish sacrifice during his military career. Additionally, he thanked Col. Gunter for her leadership, "You have left the group in outstanding shape, I thank you for your dedication to the 944th and I hope to build on your efforts and continue the legacy of the mission support group success," he said.

As he addressed his new group Theisen said, "I have had some amazing experiences, deployments, and opportunities in my AF career, those are all being eclipsed today. The relevance that the 944th MSG brings to the fight is substantial. Many here have deployed, augmented, and/or backfilled positions since 9/11. We have a significant role in our nation's defense we fight with and bleed alongside our active duty brethren. We do the same mission and do it well."

Closing his comments Theisen continued, "You all have much to brag about. You are not just relevant to today's AF but a vital part of it. We will continue to be ready to deploy and answer our nation's call. We will continue to be dependable and accountable. I'm honored to re-join this team of professionals possessing the best America has to offer!"

## AFRC CC and CCC take 944 FWs pulse

By Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr, 944th Public Affairs

Airmen from the 944th Fighter Wing demonstrated their capabilities, voiced genuine concerns, and asked questions of two Citizen Airmen who could shed some light.

Lt. Gen. James "JJ" Jackson, Air Force Reserve Command commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Cameron B. Kirksey, AFRC command chief, visited and toured the 944th FW and new F-35 Academy Training Center Nov. 6.

Their day started with a breakfast hosted by 944th junior enlisted Airmen. The duo then met with Col. Kurt J. Gallegos, 944th FW commander, for a briefing and tour of the Wing. For lunch, Jackson and Kirksey sat down with 944th senior enlisted members for another Q & A session.

"We want Airmen to stay 20 to 25 years," said Jackson when asked a question about enlistment and retention.

Kirksey had a few questions of his own as food for thought for the group. "Who here aspires to be Chief someday," asked Kirksey.

"What are you doing today to create that road map," continued Kirksey as hands were raised. "What are you doing to make that opportunity possible tomorrow?"

The last stop of the tour was the F-35 ATC and 61st Fighter Squadron where they were briefed on the new facility and its capabilities. The visit was part of Jackson and Kirksey's tour of several western bases.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.



# Changes coming to officer board documents

by Master Sgt. Timm Huffman HQ RIO  
Public Affairs

Changes are coming to the advanced academic degree and developmental education information visible on officer selection briefs for promotion boards.

Beginning Dec. 1, advanced academic degree information for line officers will be masked for promotion selection boards below the grade of colonel.

Another change will limit the visibility of how and when developmental education was completed. The new officer selection briefs will show the course and that it is complete. It will not display when a course was completed or whether it was completed by correspondence or in-residence.

These changes affect both active duty and Reserve members and the first Reserve board impacted will be the February 2015 Air Force Reserve Line and Non-line Major Promotion Selection Boards.

Non-line officers, such as chaplains and those in the medical and nurses corps, are unaffected by the changes to the advanced academic degree information, as they fall under the April 12, 2006, memorandum from

the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force requiring that data on the highest two degrees be visible to promotion boards for these individuals. However, the changes to developmental education do

to the member for review. Officers who are eligible for the upcoming Air Force Reserve major's board have received OPB documents reflecting these changes.

The changes to the academic degree and developmental education expectations are designed to restore Airmen's time and refocus officer promotions on job performance. The Air Force identified that unnecessary demands were being placed on Airmen as they pursued time-consuming education simply to fill perceived check boxes for promotion.

"Our intention is to set clear expectations and ensure that, where possible, we give time back to our officers," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh. "Since job performance is the most important factor when evaluating an officer for promotion, the decision to delay the completion of an advanced academic degree will not affect their ability to serve a full career in the Air Force."

Officers with questions regarding these changes should contact the Total Force Service Center at 210-565-0102, press option 3 and follow the prompt.



Courtesy graphic

apply.

Lt Col. Amy J. Boehle, acting director, promotion board secretariat, Headquarters Air Reserve Personnel Center, said that six months prior to every board, ARPC forwards a member's OPB to their servicing military personnel section, which in turn provides it

## When Opportunity Knocks, Will You Be Ready to Answer the Door?

by Senior Master Sgt. Sandra Stokes, 944th Medical Squadron first sergeant

As we get ready to wrap up another year, we are thankful for what we've experienced while we look forward to what the next year may bring. As you think about what is ahead of you next year, will you be ready to take advantage of opportunities that come your way?

Will you meet the time-in-service or time-in-grade requirement and be eligible for promotion next year? Simply having the time-in-grade and time-in-service to be eligible doesn't necessarily mean you have earned your next stripe. What other things do you need to think about? Do you have your upgrade training completed? Do you have the Professional Military Education done that might be required for that next rank? What about your Community College of the Air Force degree? Did you know that to be eligible for the SNCO ranks and many special duty positions, a CCAF degree is a prerequisite? Even if some of these things are not a prerequisite for your next opportunity, having them done early (or at least in progress) can set you apart from the competition. At the very least, taking care of requirements BEFORE they are required makes you ready if an opportunity comes along sooner than expected.

Some of the best career advice I ever received was given to me by a Chief when I was just an Airman First Class being groomed for Senior Airman below the zone. He told me that I am in charge of my own career, so it is my responsibility to know what I need to do and get it done. Where my supervisors are responsible to advise me and provide opportunities, if for some reason they don't, who is going to suffer? I took that advice to heart and have carried it with me throughout my military and civilian careers. I have rarely been surprised by an opportunity for which I wasn't prepared to compete.

Maybe you are still a while away from your next stripe or significant opportunity. What can you plan on accomplishing this year that could feed into your larger goals? Can you finish that certification for work, attend Airman Leadership School, NCO, or SNCO Academy in residence, give back to your community by heading up a volunteer project, or take some extra time to mentor one of your fellow Airmen?

You can be continually working on every aspect of your life (and the lives of those around you) to make yourself ready for that next opportunity. All the while, you are keeping track of what you did, how you did it, and what the impact was so that when your supervisor asks for input for quarterly awards, guess what? You'll be ready for that too!

In his visit to the 944th in early November, Air Force Reserve Command Command Chief Cameron Kirksey gave the following food for thought by asking our Wing's Airmen these questions:

"Who here aspires to be Chief someday? ... What are you doing today to create that road map? ... What are you doing to make that opportunity possible tomorrow?"

When the next opportunity comes your way, will you be ready to answer the door? Or will you need to wait until the next time? It's your career, it's your life... grab it today and make tomorrow's opportunities possible!





## TSP mistakes could cost money

by Staff Sgt. Ben Mota, 434th ARW Public Affairs

The phrase “plan for the worst and hope for the best” is often used when referring to retirement savings, but for many hopes are placed in the hands of others with little planning, often resulting in retirement losses.

Each year federal employees and military members contribute to Thrift Savings Plan, but many are not aware of plans investment options, or the fact that upon enrollment employees are automatically placed in low interest earning government funds.

“Knowing where your money goes is a key aspect to TSP savings because each individual has different needs and capabilities when it comes to retirement savings,” said Katina Dimitro, a Department of Defense contracted personal financial counselor.

TSP is a tax-deferred retirement and savings plan for Federal employees and all military members, similar to 401(k) accounts in the private sector, and offers six different funds.

“The government securities investment fund is the default fund, because it is set up by Congress that way,” said Dimitro. “It is up to the individual to contact TSP and change their allocations to a fund that meets their financial needs.”

Leaving your TSP investments in the government fund is not suggested, because interest rates related to the fund often fall below the average annual inflation rate, added Dimitro.

According to the TSP web site, the average annual inflation rate from 1926 to 2010 was 3 percent, a rate that would reduce \$150,000 in today’s dollars to the purchasing power of \$61,798 in 30 years. The G fund has not provided annual returns above inflation rates since 2008.

Depending on an individual’s financial needs, Dimitro suggests that employees place their financial contributions into a life cycle fund.

“The life cycle funds are what are commonly referred to ‘one size fits most,’ and are based on your projected retirement dates,” explained Dimitro. “For instance, if you want to choose the lifecycle 2050 funds it might be more aggressive because you have more time before you will need the funds.”

The annual returns statement on the TSP website indicated that the lifecycle 2050 funds earned 26.20 percent interest rate in 2013 and

15.85 percent interest rate in 2012, but those funds also come with greater risks.

“Percentage rates are higher for the lifecycle 2050 funds because there is more

risk involved,” said Dimitro. “But, investors using the fund are able to take more risk because their retirement dates are further away, allowing them to recover from any losses that might occur.”

In addition to the funding allocations, members have to determine if they are going to use a traditional TSP savings or Roth TSP savings.

The TSP website states that Roth contributions are taken out of pay after income is taxed. When funds are withdrawn from the Roth balance, the contributor will receive their Roth contributions tax free, since contributions would have already been taxed.

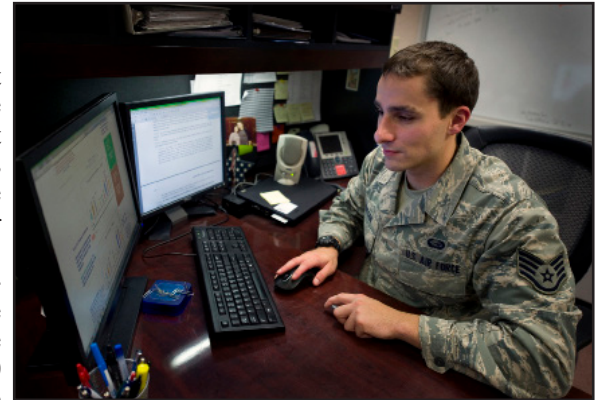
“The Roth TSP was created in 2012,” said Dimitro. “Many people don’t even know that it is an option, due to its recent availability.”

TSP contributors must keep in mind that each individual has different needs, and each financial situation is unique before investing in a particular type of TSP fund.

“Everyone has different financial situations, and their investment strategy will be different,” explained Dimitro. “That is why it is critical to meet with a personal financial counselor if you have questions to determine what options are best for you.”

Additional information about TSP is available on the TSP Web site at <http://www.tsp.gov>.

Grissom is home to the 434th Air Refueling Wing, the largest KC-135R Stratotanker unit in the Air Force Reserve Command, as well as three Army Reserve units and a Marine Corps Reserve communication detachment.



Courtesy Photo

## Never Forgotten

by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr, 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

944th Fighter Wing Airmen spent an afternoon during the Nov. UTA visit with Veterans at the Phoenix Veterans Hospital.

The visit, coordinated by the 944 FW Chaplains office, allowed the 13 volunteers a unique opportunity to thank Veterans and the staff caring for them for their service to our country and reassure them that they are remembered.

The group of volunteers visited with patients in the Intensive Care Unit and other areas of the hospital taking time to read aloud the words of hand written cards from a local church that Capt. David Kreis, 944th FW Chaplain, pastors at.

The cards were written by congregation members of all ages with the intent of lifting up the spirits of veteran’s they would never meet. The cards proved to be the perfect a token of appreciation and brought tears to the eyes of their recipients.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Nason



# Tools to safeguard PII scheduled for December rollout AF wide



Courtesy graphic

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND,  
Texas

The Digital Signature Enforcement Tool is scheduled for Air Force-wide integration Dec. 5, providing Microsoft Outlook email users with an interactive, automated virtual assistant to help ensure the security of personally identifiable information.

"I can't overstate the operational importance of preventing PII breaches," said Maj. Gen. B. Edwin Wilson, commander of 24th Air Force and Air Forces Cyber. "It's not an IT problem, it's a Total Force problem and DSET is an effective tool the Total Force can use, right now, to help reduce inadvertent PII breaches."

Beyond potential identity theft, PII breaches can lead to significant compromises in operational security. For example, a well-meaning member working to meet an operational deadline sends an unencrypted email, containing PII on several unit members, to a "non .mil" email account.

The sender could be attempting to get ahead on a project or be providing a status update to unit members on pending unit movements. Unknown to the sender, hackers have compromised email transport infrastructure between the sender's desktop and one of the destination, "non .mil" desktops.

Hackers intercepting this unencrypted email traffic can utilize the newly acquired personal

information to form specifically targeted attacks, known as spear phishing, to acquire additional information such as account numbers or passwords.

Unfortunately the attack does not stop there. Once an attacker has acquired enough information, he can simulate user accounts or even pass off communications on behalf of the service member, who is likely still unaware that his information has been compromised. Those false communications could be leveraged to gain digital access to Air Force systems, or even physical access to installations and personnel.

Obviously, the negative implications caused by PII breaches are severe, and equipping the force with tools to mitigate the risk is paramount.

DSET version 1.6.1, an updated version of the DSET 1.6.0 software already in use by the Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve Command, and Air Force Space Command, contains fixes for some previously identified software bugs as well as enhancements to make the digital tool more effective.

"DSET 1.6.0 launched back in July to three major commands," said Alonzo Pugh, cyber business system analyst for 24th AF. "Feedback has been overwhelmingly favorable for the use of the tool, and version 1.6.1 is definitely ready for Air Force-wide usage."

DSET is regarded as a short-term fix to help all Air Force network users protect PII, specifically if that information is to be included in an email communication. DSET 1.6.1 still only scans for PII in the form of social security numbers, leaving overall responsibility on the user to safeguard the sensitive information in all of its forms.

"First, the user should ask him or herself if the PII in the email is truly necessary," said Pugh.

"DSET scans the email draft before transmission. If PII is identified, DSET will notify the user through a series of pop-up windows. This interactivity allows the user to make a conscious decision of how to proceed with the information in question."

According to Pugh, if the information must be transmitted, encrypting the PII is

all that is necessary to protect the data during transmission.

DSET will trigger when it detects potential PII in an email, giving the user the opportunity to delete the information if not necessary to the communication, encrypt the information, or override and transmit the email as originally written.

If the file containing PII is already encrypted - through the Microsoft Office "protect" permission feature or some other software - DSET will not trigger and the email can be sent as usual to any recipient's email address, whether ".mil," ".com," etc.

However, if the email itself is encrypted through Microsoft Outlook, the communication is only safe to transmit to a recipient's ".mil" email address. An email encrypted in this fashion cannot be sent to any "non-.mil" addresses. If the user attempts to do so, DSET and Microsoft Outlook will provide pop-up boxes explaining the user's options.

"I can't overstate the importance of reading the information in the pop-up box," said Pugh. "Read the training materials on the use of DSET; read the training slides on how to use Microsoft Office features to encrypt various documents; understand how these tools can help you safeguard PII."

In preparation for the Air Force-wide release of DSET, you can access training at:

DSET tutorials: <https://afpki.lackland.af.mil/tutorials/dset/>

DSET Quick Reference Guide: [https://afpki.lackland.af.mil/assets/files/OE-15-40-064\\_QRG-DSET\\_v0001.pdf](https://afpki.lackland.af.mil/assets/files/OE-15-40-064_QRG-DSET_v0001.pdf)

Additional training on how to encrypt Microsoft Office documents can be accessed at: <http://www.24af.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-140701-064.pdf>

Users have multiple tools at their disposal to protect PII if encrypting e-mail is not feasible, but if electronic transmission of sensitive PII is operationally required, users can leverage approved Department of Defense file exchange services at: <https://safe.amrdec.army.mil/safe/>

More information regarding DSET implementation can be found at: <http://www.24af.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123417788>





# Safeguarding your digital footprint

By Tech. Sgt. Steve Grever, Air Force Public Affairs Agency

Social media is a great resource for Airmen and their families to share information and stay connected to relatives at home and abroad.

Although many depend on these wonderful tools, recent events have encouraged us to re-evaluate our digital footprint to ensure our personal and professional information is protected from online predators and individuals who want to do us harm.

Facebook smartphone photoWhile social media use can be entertaining and informative, it poses potential operations security weaknesses, and Air Force Instruction 1-1, Air Force Standards, provides guidance on appropriate social media use by Airmen.

OPSEC and personal privacy concerns should be paramount when using social media. Military members have recently been threatened on social media by terrorist organizations looking for information they can use to harm military families and disrupt Air Force operations.

The following tips will make it more difficult for unwanted users to acquire your data through social media:

- Be cautious when accepting friend requests and interacting with people online. You should never accept a friend request from someone you do not know, even if they know a friend of yours.
- Don't share information you don't want to become public. Re-

member, once you put something out there, you can't control where it goes.

- Disable location-based social networking, or geotagging, on all social media platforms. Geotagging is the process of adding geographical identification to photographs, video, websites and text messages.

- Avoid posting work or personal schedules and travel itineraries, especially deployment information and return dates for yourself, a loved one or a unit.

- If you ever hesitate before clicking 'post', reconsider the content you are about to share. Our team follows the motto: When in doubt, throw it out!

- Adjust your privacy settings to ensure your posts and profile information is secured and seen only by approved audiences. This last tip applies to any social media platforms you may use, but since Facebook is the most widely used, we want to share this detailed how-to guide on how to secure your profile. Check out this guide for more details.

Practicing good OPSEC and helping family members follow these security measures is essential to

protecting personal and mission-critical information on social media. If you ever feel you are being threatened or you notice vulnerable information online, be sure to alert the social media platform's help center and your local OPSEC manager for assistance.

See more at: <http://airforcelive.dodlive.mil/2014/10/securing-your-digital-footprint/#sthash.kmJBtYO.dpuf>



Courtesy photo



## 944 Fighter Wing Santa Arrival!

**Dec. 7  
9:30-noon  
Hangar 999**

**Bring your families to enjoy:**

- Cookie Decorating
- Coloring Station
- Reindeer Candy Cane Decoration
- Letters to Deployed Members
- Movie Room
- Face Painting
- Bounce House
- Trackless Train-Desert Dwellers Express
- Shriner's with Mini Cars and Clowns
- Sumo Suits
- Sporting Equipment
- Pictures with SANTA!!!!





## 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL HOLIDAY BAZAAR

0900 – 1400 AT hangar 999  
Sunday, 7 December 2014

Please tell your family and friends to come prepared to shop and finish your holiday shopping.

If you know anyone who would like to have a booth to take advantage of the captive customers, please call 856-8068 to reserve and more details.

Deadline: 15 November 2014



# BRINGING THE HEAT

## 944 FIGHTER WING