

# SnapShot



944th Fighter Wing, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona

December 2016 Newsletter



First Japanese F-35A arrives at Luke

Honoring the Tuskegee Airmen experience

F-35 begins integrated training with F-16 at Luke



## 944 FW KEY LEADERS

### Commander

Col. Kurt J. Gallegos

### Vice Commander

Col. Bryan Cook

### Command Chief

CMSgt. Rhonda L. Hutson

## 944th Fighter Wing Electronic Monthly SnapShot

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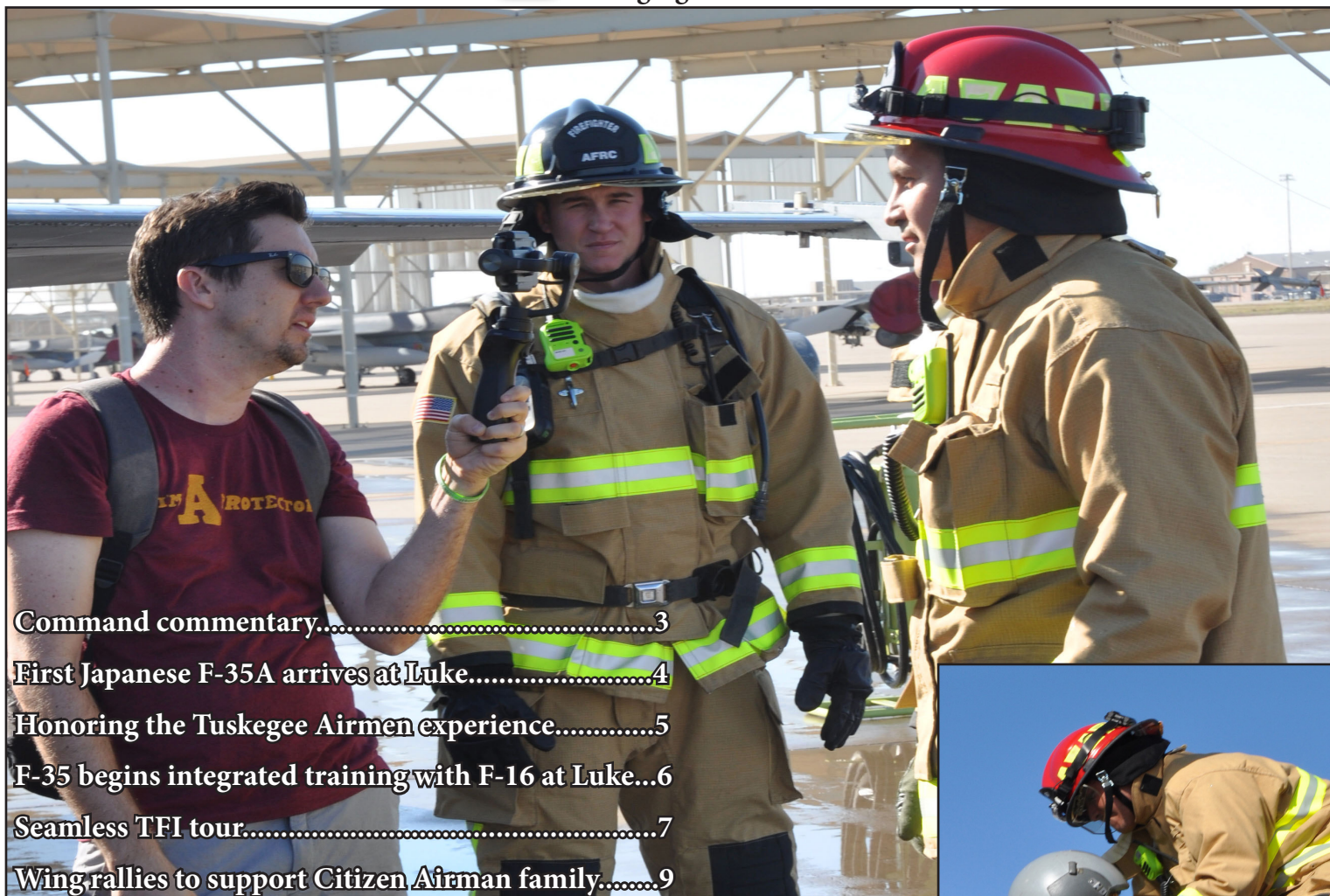


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Bringing the Heat

December 2016



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**Cover Photo:** 944th Civil Engineering Squadron take a group photo during the November unit training assembly at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Nestor Cruz)

**Above:** Josh Kelman, an Arizona State University representative, interviews Tech. Sgt. Gabe Ulibarri, 944th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, Nov. 6 during an annual egress training exercise. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante)

**Right:** Tech. Sgt. Gabe Ulibarri, 944th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, helps to extricate an Airman from a simulated burning F-16, during annual egress training during the November UTA. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante)





# Wingmen: holidays bring joy and happiness for many, but also can be difficult



*By Col. Kurt Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing commander*

Happy holidays and welcome back for our last UTA of the year! You have completed another year of faithful service and I couldn't be prouder of our Airmen. Growth, excellence, and mission success have highlighted 2016 and I thank you for all your hard work.

As we wrap up this calendar year with our annual Family Holiday Party this Sunday, I encourage you to invite your families and loved ones to join us. I know your service requires sacrifice from not only you, but from your family as well, and this event is an opportunity for us to thank them for their support and understanding. Plus, it is always a lot of fun with activities for all ages.

The end of the year is a great time for personal and spiritual reflection as well as shared moments with loved ones and family. Take time to look back over the year and think about everything that has happened, the good and the bad. Then, reflect on what you want for next year and start making plans to achieve your goals.

The holidays bring joy and happiness for many, they can also be a source of difficulty for others. As your wingman, I ask that you keep an eye on those around you and be there for each other. Check in on your co-workers, friends and family and make sure

they are doing ok.

With the holidays we also tend to get busy with holiday events, shopping, cooking, travel, etc. Make sure you are making smart decisions and staying safe. Drinking and driving or driving distracted are areas of concern year-round but incidents may be more likely during the holiday season due to parties and gatherings away from home. Other concerns often associated with alcohol related incidents are sexual assaults and domestic violence.

Please keep yourself, your Wingmen and your families safe this holiday season. Make wise decisions and stay within your boundaries and limitations. Don't take risks with your life, your career, or the trust of those around you.

I look forward to seeing you all safe and sound in the new year and wish you and your families a very merry holiday season.



## In the midst of another Holiday season

*By Chief Master Sgt. Rhonda Hutson, 944th Fighter Wing command chief*

Here we are again, in the midst of another Holiday season. I am sitting here looking at a blank screen trying to think of a positive holiday message. For me that is a tough thing to do as I am not really a holiday person. As my husband likes to say I'm just an Ebenezer this time of year.

I don't really have anything specific against this time of year, but I find this time of year creates a sense of general unease and unnecessary stress. Maybe it is the crass commercialism or maybe it is the length of the season (who thought it was a good idea to put up Christmas decorations right after Halloween anyways?). Bah-Humbug! Now I am expecting three ghosts to show up and show me the errors of my ways.

For me I'd much rather see us trying to extend that "holiday feeling" year round. To paraphrase Bill Murray in the movie Scrooged, (Paramount-1988); *'Christmas is once a year and it's a fraud. It's not! You have to do something. You have to take a chance and get involved. There are people that don't have enough to eat and who are cold. Go out and greet these people. Take an old blanket out to them or make them a sandwich. We should all act a little nicer, smile a little easier, share a little more. Be the people we always hoped we would be...'*

Wow, wisdom from an old (not that 28 is old) Hollywood movie. That's pretty unusual.

There are people who need help in a whole myriad of ways. Reach out to help them be that good Wingman. The viciousness in the news is overwhelming at times and doesn't seem to be improving. Turn it off or tune it out. Instead, let's all reflect on the graciousness of living in the greatest nation ever to inhabit the Earth. Are we perfect, of course not! But it sure beats any of the alternatives. Let's look at the bright side and appeal to our better angels. Maybe I am a reformed Ebenezer after all... Happy Holidays 944th Family!

# First Japanese F-35A arrives at Luke

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

**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, ARIZ.** -The F-35 program hit another milestone Nov. 28 with the arrival of the first Foreign Military Sales F-35 at Luke Air Force Base.

The arrival marked the next step for the international F-35 training program as Japan took ownership of the first FMS aircraft to arrive at Luke.

"Today is a great day for the U.S. Air Force Reserve Command, Luke AFB, the 944th Fighter Wing, and the Japanese Air Self-Defense forces," said Col. Kurt J. Gallegos, 944 FW commander. "We have a great team of Airmen who have worked hard to set up an outstanding training program and are ready to train our FMS counterparts."

The aircraft was welcomed by a joint delegation from the 944 FW, 56th Fighter Wing, Lockheed Martin, and Japanese staff.

"Today I am thrilled for the Japan Air Self-Defense Force and Team Luke," said Lt. Col. Sean Holahan, 944th Operations Group Detachment 2 commander. "The arrival of Japan's first F-35A marks another important milestone in the steadfast relationship between our two nations, and the beginning of training for an elite cadre of JASDF fighter pilots and maintainers. We put an incredible amount of thought and effort into building the world's first F-35 Foreign Military Sales training program from the ground up. To see Japan's first jet on our flightline, surrounded by the men and women who have made this mission possible, is humbling."

The arrival of the first FMS aircraft is the culmination of years of planning and hard work.

"The jet arrival marks the beginning of a new and exciting mission at Luke AFB to train our allies to fly the F-35A," explained Lt. Col. Joe Bemis, 944 OG Det. 2 executive officer and resource advisor. "We have been preparing for this program for years. We have remodeled buildings, built a huge team of professional pilots, maintainers, and administration staff, and created specialized syllabus.

We are hopeful that this mission will strengthen relationships between the US and nations that participate in the training."

Over the next several years, Luke AFB will be training FMS pilots from Japan, Israel and South Korea along with partner nations including Australia, Italy, Norway, Turkey, Netherlands, Denmark, and Canada.

"This is such an important time in our wing's history

as we pick up the mission to train all FMS F-35 pilots," said Gallegos. "It's been almost 10 years since our wing has seen aircraft on our flightline. It is an amazing feeling to look outside and see the F-35s out there and know that we are playing such an important and critical role as we build relationships that will enhance our future partnership."

In addition to the Foreign Military Sales mission led by the 944 OG/Det 2 Ninjas, Luke is scheduled to have six fighter squadrons and 144 F-35s.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.

## Warrior of the Month



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Barbara Plante

**Staff Sergeant Ashley Oviatt**, 944th Logistics Readiness Squadron supply chain manager

**Time in Service:** 10 years

**Time with the 944th Fighter Wing:** Five years

**Civilian Job:** Boeing, Human Resources specialist

**Hometown:** Omaha, Nebraska

**Hobbies:** Hiking, Golf, Traveling

**Commander's comments:** Staff Sgt. Ashley Oviatt has stepped up to fill in as the full-time material management superintendent for the Wing. While on orders not only has she picked up the day-to-day operations of supplying the various Wing agencies with uniforms and support equipment, but she has also picked up all of the behind-the-scenes operations such as conducting weapons and ammunition inventories and taking over the bulk of the Wing's Government Purchase Cards.

After coordinating with the 944th Medical Squadron, she led the small supply flight in re-purposing 304 medical tourniquets saving the Wing \$11k and minimizing fraud, waste, and abuse. She was critical in the relocation of the wing's more than 350 mobility bags, quickly vacating a 56 LRS facility ahead of schedule, freeing space for F-35 usage. Oviatt inventoried Individual equipment assets; inspected 532 FW weapons with zero discrepancies and conducted a 100 percent accountability inspection/leak testing of over 480 M50 gas masks one month ahead of schedule.

**Why did you join the Air Force Reserves?** To continue military service after active duty.

**How does your job support the mission of the 944th Fighter Wing?** Oversees unit personnel readiness. Issues sized items and survival equipment ensuring all deployers are combat ready.

## Welcome Home!!

Senior Airman Renee Murray, 944th Fighter Wing Det. 1, returned home from Bagram Airfield Afghanistan

Staff Sgt. Gage Carter, 944th Fighter Wing Det. 1, returned home from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan

Staff Sgt. Michael Williamson, 944th Fighter Wing Det. 1, returned home from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan



# Honoring the Tuskegee Airmen experience



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

**PHOENIX, Ariz.** -The Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., held a ceremony on Friday, Nov. 11, on Veterans Day, to honor over 15,000 men and women who were part of the Tuskegee experience.

During the formal ceremony, ARAC unveiled a red tail granite paver, honoring Tuskegee Airmen World War II heroes at the Wesley Bolin Plaza, near the Arizona State Capital building in downtown Phoenix.

"The unveiling of the granite paver marks a place of permanence to honor the Tuskegee Airmen," said Bernard Bruce, 56th Fighter Wing occupational ground safety manager and chapter historian for ARAC.

The paver is at a site that honors other WWII veterans and is located between the gun barrels of the USS Arizona and the USS Missouri.

"The location was selected because the USS Arizona was sunk

at Pearl Harbor December 1941 at the start of the war and the deck of the USS Missouri is the location where Japan surrendered to the allies in September 1945," Bruce continued.

The key note speaker, David Toliver, past vice president of the chapter, explained the chapter's two-fold mission: To perpetuate the activities and achievements of those Americans who shared in the aspirations and frustrations of pioneering men and women in the Tuskegee experience, and to actively motivate minority youth to outstanding achievement and leadership in a democratic society. The chapter motto is, "Reaching our youth, ensuring our future."

"Arizona is the first and only state to honor the Tuskegee Airmen experience in this way," said Toliver.

About 100 people attended the ceremony including Brig. Gen. Brook Leonard, 56th Fighter Wing commander, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Robert Ashby, Lt. Col. (Ret.) Asa Herring, and Tech. Sgt. (Ret.) Rudolf Silas, three of the original Tuskegee Airmen.

Luke Air Force Base has strong ties with Tuskegee Airmen. In July of 1987, the 944th Fighter Wing re-activated one of the original Tuskegee units when it stood up the 302nd Fighter Squadron and a few years later, in March of 2000, they re-activated the 301st Fighter Squadron. Both these units belonged to the famed 332nd Fighter Group during WWII. The units have since transitioned to the F-22 mission and are located at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska and Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico respectively. However, the 944 FW still embraces the proud tradition of the Tuskegee Airmen.

## December 2016 promotions: Congratulations to the following 944th Fighter Wing promotees From Airman Basic:

Airman Marlen Cherop, 944 MDS

Airman Alberto Sanchez, 924 MXS

Airman Andre Spears 944 MDS

Airman Jacob Wakefield Gonzalez, 924 MXS

### From Airman:

Airman First Class Blake Busahrt, 924 MXS

Airman First Class Hannah Goerl, 924 MXS

Airman First Class Kaleb Thornhill, 924 MXS

Airman First Class Dante Williams, 924 MXS

### From Airman First Class:

Senior Airman Walter Ayers, 924 MXS

Senior Airman Stephen Powell, 414 MXS

Senior Airman Nehemiah Shelley, 414 MXS

Senior Airman Christopher Straticoglu, 944 MDS

Senior Airman Torriane Upshaw, 47 FS

### From Senior Airman:

Staff Sgt. Micah Atlas, 944 MDS

Staff Sgt. Chad Thomson, 944 FW Det. 1

### From Staff Sergeant:

Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Bascue, 944 CES

Tech. Sgt. Frank Dominguez, 944 LRS

Tech. Sgt. Trevor Williams, 944 FSS

Tech. Sgt. Mark Eyman, 944 CES

Tech. Sgt. David Hainley, 924 OSF

Tech. Sgt. Ronnie Jamison, 944 CES

Tech. Sgt. Isaac Ndungu, 944 CES

Tech. Sgt. Diana Place, 924 MXS

Tech. Sgt. Earl Vereen, 944 CES

Tech. Sgt. Jose Villarreal, 924 MXS

Tech. Sgt. Stephen Young, 414 MXS

### From Technical Sergeant:

Master Sgt. Raina Hauenstein, 924 MXS

Master Sgt. Jude Joseph, 944 ASTS

Master Sgt. Michael Loose, 944 FW Det. 1

Master Sgt. Frank Vollmer, 924 MXS



# F-35 begins integrated training with F-16 at Luke

By Airman 1st Class Ridge Shan, 56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs



Courtesy photo

**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.** -In October, pilots of the 56th Fighter Wing began flying integrated direct support practice sorties in the F-35A Lightning II and the F-16 Fighting Falcon for the first time as a regular component of the training curriculum at Luke Air Force Base.

The integrated training comes as part of the next step in the development of F-35 training and tactics, and helps pilots become efficient in conducting futuristic mission sets and aerial combat scenarios involving both fourth and

fifth-generation fighter jets.

“The F-35 has reached a point where we can do both our continuation and upgrade training to a level where integration will benefit both fourth- and fifth-generation pilots,” said Col. David Shoemaker, the 56th Fighter Wing vice commander. “We are now flying dedicated sorties every day to train in F-16 and F-35 integrated direct support.”

The integrated training accomplishes two major train-

ing goals, first in exposing F-35 pilots to air-to-air combat scenarios against fourth-generation aircraft capable of mimicking adversaries that pilots would realistically face on today’s battlefields, and second in providing F-35 and F-16 pilots with experience in carrying out joint strike missions.

“The difference in the way of thinking between flying a fourth-generation and a fifth-generation fighter is tremendous,” Shoemaker said. “The ability to get out there and see the capabilities of the fifth-generation F-35 versus a fourth-generation airframe, and then to teach fourth-generation pilots how to integrate the tactical and technological advances of the fifth generation, is a great opportunity for us.”

While the F-35 will eventually phase out the four-decade-old F-16, both jets will operate together for some time, requiring pilots to be proficient in the development and usage of integrated tactics designed to maximize the utility of both aircraft.

“It’s important not only for our F-35 pilots to see integration, but also for our F-16 instructor pilots, who after their time here at Luke will eventually go back into combat Air Force assignments where having that knowledge of how to work with fifth-generation aircraft is going to be vital to their warfighting capability,” Shoemaker said.

Through integration, Luke’s F-16 pilots are learning how to accomplish missions by complementing their toolset with the numerous, new capabilities of the F-35, including stealth and advanced sensors.

“The F-35 maintains many new and advanced capabilities in its platform that inherently exist without the need to be attached as an add-on or external accessory like in the F-16, F-15 (Eagle), or any fourth-generation fighter,” said Maj. David Bennett, the 309th Fighter Squadron director of operations and an F-16 pilot. “The F-35 is really a force multiplier for any ally in its airspace. The more exposure our F-16 pilots have flying with the F-35, the better they will be in the future.”

Luke’s mission as the largest F-35 and F-16 training base keeps it at the forefront of the effort to build the future of airpower, both in the United States and around the world. As training development continues, Luke is scheduled to eventually host 144 F-35s between six F-35 fighter squadrons.

“For as long as the F-16 is here, we will continue to work, train with, and support the F-35 mission, which will ultimately benefit us all,” Bennett said.



# Seamless TFI tour

*Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr., 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*

**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.** -Airmen from Luke Air Force Base had the opportunity to help share their passion for service with Air Force Junior ROTC cadets from Basha High School on Nov. 16.

Col. Clifford Stansell, Basha H.S. AFJROTC senior aerospace science instructor and retired AF aircraft maintenance and munitions officer, brought 43 of his students to Luke for a tour.

"The tour was an incredible experience and I personally was amazed by the hands-on activities," said Kayliea Landers, AFJROTC cadet. "My favorite part was being able to experience the night vision device along with shooting the paint ball guns."

Master Sgt. Christopher Buscaglio, 944th Security Forces Squadron NCO-in-charge, provided the cadets a peek in the life of an SFS fire team member.

Another area visited was the 56th Fighter Wing Civil Engineering Squadron explosive ordnance disposal flight. Master Sgt. Joshua Flaherty, and four other explosive ordnance disposal technicians, offered the students hands-on experiences with some of the tools they use including a bomb suit with helmet and controlling an AF medium size robot. They also gave insight into their career field and answered questions.

"My favorite part of the tour was going to the explosive ordnance disposal room," said McKenna Smith, AFJROTC cadet. "I was fascinated when learning not just about the different types of explosives that can be found in the field, but also the different ways that the AF goes about removing them by identifying them and assessing their sensitivity."

The group then visited the flight line where they got to see an F-35 Lightning II up close.

Maj. Wyckliffe Furcron, 944th Operations Group Detachment 2 pilot, along with Staff Sgt. James Paterson and Senior Airman Martin Carey, 61st Aircraft Maintenance Unit F-35 mechanics, worked together to brief the cadets on the F-35 from a pilot's and mechanic's perspective.

"I personally would consider joining the Air Force and I am very interested in aviation as well



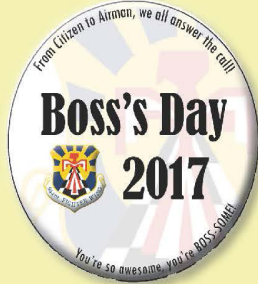
as public affairs," said Landers.

The tour ended with a pizza party and an informal brief from Col. Bryan Cook, 944 FW vice commander, about his journey to become a pilot and his career, including time spent in the Guard, on active duty, as well as the Reserves.

"This was a great opportunity for the cadets to expand their horizons, meet great Airmen and see the numerous specialties available to those who choose to serve," said Stansell. "Airmen today are even more educated and more professional than when I joined in 1984, which is why I truly enjoy opportunities for our cadets to meet them and talk to them about their personal AF responsibilities and skill sets. I only wish all of the students at Basha High School could have such a great experience."







# 944th Fighter Wing

# BOSS'S DAY

April 1, 2017



*From Citizen to Airmen, we all answer the call.*

## EVENTS:

KC-135 Air Refueling Mission  
Operation Deploy  
MOP Gear Experience  
Security Forces Display  
Medical Display  
Vehicle Operations Display  
Explosive Ordnance Disposal  
And Much, Much More ...

Visit  
<http://tinyurl.com/jm8ougg>  
for the registration form.

*Cut-off for registration is Jan 27!*



## 944 Fighter Wing Santa Arrival!

Dec. 4  
9:30-noon  
Hangar 999

Bring your families to enjoy:

Rice Krispy Pop Decorating  
Arts and Crafts  
Letters to Deployed Members  
Free Massages  
Face Painting  
Bounce House

Trackless Train-Desert Dwellers Express  
Shriner's with Mini Cars and Clowns  
Sumo Suits

Sporting Equipment  
Pictures with SANTA!!!!



## 944TH WING HONOR GUARD RECRUITMENT



Looking for 4-5 Highly motivated Airmen to grow our Wing Honor Guard team. Request Packets should be turned in by COB OCT UTA. Email TSgt Jackson for more information at: [eric.jackson.29@us.af.mil](mailto:eric.jackson.29@us.af.mil) for more information or questions



### Requirements

### Benefits/Perks

- Branch Esprit de Corps
- Great Bullet/High Visibility
- Community Involvement
- Morale Builder

- ▶ E-3 to E-4
- ▶ 5 level
- ▶ 3 years retention left on contract
- ▶ No profile restrictions
- ▶ Supervisor and Commander approval
- ▶ Ability to be put on orders to train with Active Duty



# Wing rallies to support Citizen Airman family

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

**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.-** Citizen Airmen understand what the ultimate sacrifice is as a service member, and when a deployment happens, the risk of loved ones receiving bad news is a possibility they accept.

Tech. Sgt. Francisco “Frankie” Alcocer, 944th Security Forces Squadron combat arms NCO-in-charge, never expected to receive bad news from home when he was on a deployment in Kuwait.

“I received a message from my dad that said please call me ASAP,” said Frankie. “Knowing my pops, I figured something was wrong. What he said next absolutely floored me.”

On June 14th of this year Frankie was informed his mother, Bridget Alcocer, was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia. Doctors told the family that the success rate for this type of cancer was high and could be beaten.

Soon after diagnosis in early July, Bridget started Chemo therapy and after three weeks they had to stop the treatment because it had a damaging effect on her already fragile body.

“The treatment completely destroyed my bone marrow to the point of no recovery,” said Bridget. “I am now on transfusions three to four times a week because my body struggles to make platelets on its own.”

Platelets are tiny blood cells that help the body form clots to stop bleeding and repair damage. These blood and platelet transfusions are the only thing keeping Bridget alive until she receives a bone marrow transplant.

“A transplant will eliminate the cancer, but if my bone marrow should recover without a transplant, I would start chemo all over again,” said Bridget.

In the efforts to locate a viable donor, all five of her siblings were tested and although they were matches for each other, none were a match for her. However, she has recently received good news that there were a few possible donor matches in Germany and Israel.

Some of the issues with bone marrow donors are that when signing up to become a donor, their names can be in a donor bank for up to 20 years. During that time donors may change residences which unfortunately are not updated in the system.

Locating the donor is one obstacle and then finding out if they are still a viable donor candidate, is yet another. Worst case scenario, after locating the donor, they may have already passed away or now have issues of their own they have to deal with.

Although Bridget and her family are understandably concerned about what the future may hold, their spirits and

willingness to keep up the fight in their battle against cancer, holds strong.

As a family member of the 944th Fighter Wing, the wing is sponsoring a replenishing blood drive during the January unit training assembly to help replenish much needed blood into blood banks.

Bridget and her husband, Francisco Sr., have been supportive throughout their sons’ 18 year military career.

Bridget is an Aetna director of network management and founder of a popular nonprofit organization called Santa for Soldiers, which she started in her own garage in 2007, and has since sent four to five thousand care packages overseas to the troops during the Holiday Season.

Francisco Sr., is currently working two jobs to help out while Bridget fights for her life. He also drives her to all her appointments, most of which are clear across town from where they live in southern Phoenix.

Frankie has started a gofundme site to raise money to help his parents during their time in need. Through the site they have raised \$3,400 to date and he encourages people to register to be a bone marrow donor.

Frankie has been with the 944 SFS since April 2007 and has developed lifelong friendships within that time and his parents have adopted his friends into their family. Bridget has even gone as far as hiring Airmen from her son’s squadron to help them out when they needed it.

“I am part of her son’s military family and she treated me as part of her family,” said Tech. Sgt. Angelique Abbott, 944 SFS fire team member. “When I struggled to find decent employment after a deployment to Kyrgyzstan, Bridget offered me a job at Aetna and scolded me for not coming to her sooner. Bridget is a strong woman who has



*Courtesy photo*

a deep love for her country and those that take an oath to protect it. Her and Francisco have treated me like family and made me feel loved. I would do anything to help when they are in need, as they have both done for me,” she concluded.

“To be on the receiving end of such an outpouring of love, prayers and support has been humbling,” said Bridget. “My love for all of you over the years has just returned twofold. My heart is full, you are the best. There are days I am exhausted, you have filled me with strength... I too am a fighter. I have cancer, but cancer doesn’t have me. Giving up is not an option. Thank you for taking this journey with me and allowing me to be a part of your family. I am forever grateful for my 944th Desert Dawg family, I love you all.”

The 944 FW blood drive will be held on Jan. 8 from 0800 to 1200 in Hangar 999.

For more information on where to donate and/or become a donor please contact Master Sgt. Christopher Buscaglio, 944 SFS senior action officer, or visit the link. [www.bethematch.org](http://www.bethematch.org)





Members of the Japan Air Self-Defense Force prepare for the arrival of the first Japanese F-35A Nov. 28 at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.)