

# SnapShot

944th Fighter Wing, Luke Air Force Base, Arizona

April 2017 Newsletter



**FMS pilots reach 100th F35 sortie milestone**

**History, heritage honored**

**DTF assists wing historian**

**Miller Testifies at HASC Readiness Hearing**



## 944 FW KEY LEADERS

### Commander

Col. Kurt J. Gallegos

### Vice Commander

Col. Bryan Cook

### Interim Command Chief

CMSgt. James M. Nudd

## 944th Fighter Wing Electronic Monthly SnapShot

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Bringing the Heat

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**Cover Photo:** Dave Toliver, Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter past president, speaks Mar. 23 during the fourth annual Commemoration Day for the Tuskegee Airmen in Arizona at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

**Above:** Members from the Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter Tuskegee Airmen and the Luke Air Force Base Honor Guard participate in the fourth annual Commemoration Day for the Tuskegee Airmen in Arizona Mar. 23 at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz.

**Right:** (Ret.) Tech. Sgt. Rudolf Silas, and (Ret.) Lt. Col. Robert Ashby, two of the original Tuskegee Airmen carry a wreath Mar. 23 during the fourth annual Commemoration Day for the Tuskegee Airmen in Arizona at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. (U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.)





# The significance of your efforts

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

Welcome back! I hope you are as excited as I am about this UTA. Saturday, I get to meet and spend time with your employers during our Bosses Day event.

We will also be hosting our first ever Operation Reserve Kids later that afternoon. If you are available please show your support in welcoming back the children from their “deployment” to the ATSO area at around 1530 at hangar 999.

It also happens to be April fool’s day but I will not be exaggerating or fooling anyone when I tell your bosses how important and crucial you are to our mission and the security of this nation.

The Air Force Reserve Command and local employer relationships are unique. The support we receive from your employers is appreciated and I always look forward to the opportunity to give them an experience they will not soon forget.

Balancing your civilian job, family, and military career in the Reserves can



be stressful at times but it is important you realize the significance of your efforts when you attend a UTA.

The work we accomplish as a Wing to support the war with our four major weapons systems is done with 75 percent traditional reservists and 25 percent full-time personnel. This is amazing, considering the short time we have together throughout the year. Your expertise and commitment along with the support of your employers, makes us more effective and makes this Air Force the best in the world.

As I get closer to retirement and experience my last events as your commander, I reflect on how far our Wing has come and the work we have done together. It saddens me to think that soon I will not be a part of this great Wing and the great things you will accomplish.

Let’s do our part to show our civilian guests a good time and what we do when we miss work to fulfill our military obligations. Thank you for what you do and like always, I am proud to serve with you. Keep Bringing the heat!

## Do you know when to ask for help?

*By Chief Master Sgt. James Nudd, 944th Fighter Wing interim command chief*

Unfortunately, with suicide rates continuing to trend in a negative direction I felt a compelling need to address this issue as my monthly pedestal topic. Having personally felt the impacts of suicide with one of my family members this issue tends to hit home a little harder so please bear with me.

Our focus as Airmen simply needs to be with recognizing the signs of when someone needs help, when to ask the tough questions and send them to get the needed help. I would contend that the pressures that confront you, me, our Airmen and their families, as reservist, are greater than those faced by anyone else in the military or the civilian sector maybe even more so now with the increasing use of Reserve forces in today’s defense of our nation.

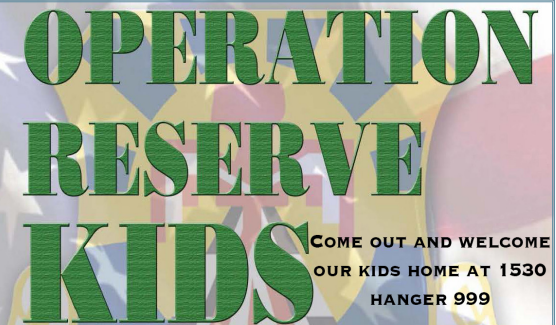
Our reservists, “You” juggle both civilian and military careers, you might be pursuing a higher education, confronting a deployment, could be volunteering in the community and are definitely serving as a key figure in your family. Ensuring a delicate balance is provided isn’t easy and often times one of these areas of responsibility is going pull you in one direction leaving the others areas potentially neglected or forcing you to stress trying to keep the proverbial boat floating.

As an Airmen we need to maintain a keen eye on both ourselves and the Airmen around us pay attention to the subtlest of indicators that may be a sign of someone needing help. Take the time to ask the tough question and then routinely follow-up with them. The resources we have today are more readily available now than ever before so please take the time to help us make this threat to our Reserve family extinct!

Thank you and have a great UTA!



**944th Fighter Wing**  
**Boss's Day**  
**April 1, 2017**



# FMS pilots reach 100th F35 sortie milestone

By Staff Sgt. Nestor Cruz, 944 Fighter Wing Public Affairs

**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.**-Student and instructor pilots working under the Foreign Military Sales program reached a historic milestone Mar. 7 when they flew their 100th sortie here.

The milestone is significant for the team making the mission happen on a daily basis.

"It was truly a reflection of the teamwork between operations and maintainers, and also the collaboration between the 944th Operations Group Detachment 2, Japan Air Self-Defense Force, and Lockheed Martin," said Maj. Michael Hobson, 944th OG Det. 2 assistant director of operations, who flew the history-making sortie with one of four Japanese F-35A jets.

Luke acquired the Japanese jets for the FMS program, thus enabling JASDF pilots to train here. The first of three classes started in December and is already on the fast track to reaching all training goals ahead of schedule and graduating its first two students in May. The students include a JASDF commander and director of operations.

"They've got thousands of flying hours and they're extremely experienced pilots with the F-2 and F-4, so they have flown 4th generation fighters before," said Lt. Col. Eric Puels, 944th OG Det. 2 director of operations. "So this is really a transition course which is similar to what we do on the U.S. side but tailored to their needs and what they do in their country as far as training and execution."

The course is a mix of classroom academics, simulators and flights. Upon completion of the course, the students will have the tools they need to create their own F-35 training program back home.

"(Our students) are going through the transition program now, teaching them how to fly the aircraft and execute operationally as wingmen, then they'll undergo instructor pilot upgrade added on to what they know so they can go home and instruct their teammates and build their own program from scratch," said Puels.

The 100th sortie is just one of many successes under the team's belt. Puels credits the success to the synergy and efficiency of the team.

"This is probably just one of a dozen firsts we've experienced in the past two months alone," said Puels. "Operationally, it means a great deal to be able to reach this milestone as



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.

quickly as we have. It shows that the innovative scheduling process and relationship that we have with our maintenance folks and with the operations folks is working and we're excited about that. We've taken innovative steps to do things outside of the box."

The pride in reaching this historic sortie is also shared by Team Luke's partners from JASDF.

"We have accomplished our 100th sortie with only three months of flight operations here at Luke AFB and I would like to celebrate this milestone with each and everyone here," said JASDF Maj. Toru Tsuchiya, Japanese F-35A foreign liaison officer. "I'm honored to work with the elite U.S. Air Force pilots and Lockheed Martin employees. I appreciate the outstanding support they have given us during this endeavor."

# BRINGING THE HEAT

## 944 FIGHTER WING



# History, heritage honored

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

**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.**—“History makes us smart and heritage makes us proud,” said Dave Toliver, Archer-Ragsdale Arizona Chapter past president, Mar. 23 during a ceremony here celebrating the fourth annual Commemoration Day for the Tuskegee Airmen in Arizona.

The ceremony took place at the Tuskegee Airman Memorial Park, where a static F-16 stands bearing the historic 302nd Fighter Squadron World War II “Red Tail” honoring the history and heritage of the warriors who endured and accomplished so much.

Over 150 people attended the event including (Ret.) Lt. Col. Robert Ashby, (Ret.) Lt. Col. Asa Herring, and (Ret.) Tech. Sgt. Rudolf Silas, three of the original Tuskegee Airmen. Members of the ARAC Tuskegee Airmen along with leadership from the 56th and 944th Fighter Wings were also present.

The Luke AFB Honor Guard rendered the proper military honors by presenting the colors to kick-off the event and performed Taps while a wreath was laid at the base of the red tail static by the original Tuskegee Airmen.

“Here at Luke I see the Tuskegee heritage alive and well in our Airmen not only in the 944th but in our partners in the 56th FW as well,” said Col. Kurt Gallegos, 944th Fighter Wing commander, during his comments to the group.

This was Gallegos’ fourth commemoration ceremony and his last, as he will retire later this summer.

“I can assure you that our future aviators and maintainers will always remember the Red Tails who paved the way for us,” continued Gallegos. “It has been an honor and a privilege to know all the men and women in red blazers, thank you.”

After the ceremony, everyone was invited to a luncheon at the Club Five-Six to interact and share fellowship time with the original Tuskegee Airmen and chapter members.

In July of 1987, the 944 FW re-activated the 302 FS and a few years later, in March of 2000, they re-activated the 301st Fighter Squadron. Both of these units belonged to the 332nd Fighter Group of Tuskegee fame 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.

In April 2013, former Governor Jan Brewer signed into law Senate Bill 1128 that designates the fourth Thursday in March as Tuskegee Airmen Commemoration Day in the state of Arizona.



## April 2017 promotions: Congratulations to the following 944th Fighter Wing promotees

### From Airman:

Airman First Class Debany Olson, 944 ASTS

### From Airman First Class:

Senior Airman Elijah Amberson, 944 FW Det. 1

Senior Airman Shem Bowman, 944 MDS

### From Senior Airman:

Staff Sgt. John Baker, 944 FW Det. 1

Staff Sgt. Charles McCarter, 944 FW Det. 1

Staff Sgt. Kristopher Parker, 924 MXS

Staff Sgt. Jose Romo, 944 FW Det. 1

Staff Sgt. Kimberly Villalobos, 944 ASTS

### From Staff Sergeant:

Tech. Sgt. Nestor Cruz, 944 FW

Tech. Sgt. Matthew Drake, 944 FW Det. 1

Tech. Sgt. Adrienne Gamble, 944 FW

Tech. Sgt. Julia Juvera Silvain, 944 LRS

### From Technical Sergeant:

Master Sgt. Luis Castaneda, 924 MXS

Master Sgt. Jonathan Dewedt, 414 MXS

Master Sgt. Scott Kopp, 944 LRS

  
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# The greatest generation

*From the 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*



*Courtesy photos*

**RAMSTEIN, Germany**-In a recent TDY to Germany, Senior Master Sgt. Dave Merris, 944th Force Support Squadron first sergeant, took advantage of an opportunity to recreate history.

In 1945, at the end of World War II, his father, Tech. 2 Ted Merris, was part of the 303rd Engineer Combat Battalion which fell under the U.S. Army's 78th Infantry Division in Germany. The Division saw action at the Battle of the Bulge.

During his time in Germany, Ted was photographed sitting on a bench in a park in the small town of Dillenburg.

"Ever since I can remember there was a picture of my dad in uniform sitting on a bench, hanging on the wall," said Merris. "When my dad passed away I received the picture and it now hangs in my home"

Merris came up with the idea to recreate the picture in the same town 72 years



later while preparing for his TDY. It took some time to find the exact location since a lot has changed over the years.

"It seemed fitting that the last TDY of my 33-year military career was to Germany and that I would get a final opportunity to recreate the picture while I am still able to wear the uniform before retiring," said Merris. "It is a tribute not only to my father, but to all those of the 'Greatest Generation,' who gave so much to ensure the freedoms that we all have today but sometimes take for granted."

After the war, Ted joined the Foreign Service and served as a diplomat in Iran, South Africa, and Portugal before joining the Civil Service and retiring as a GS-15 after 30 years working for the Department of the Navy.

"He never really talked about his experiences during the war but it left a lasting impact on him," concluded Merris.

# DTF assists wing historian

*Photo and story by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr. 944th Fighter Wing Public Affairs*



**LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz.**-There is a saying by Marcus Garvey that goes, "A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots". This is never truer than within military culture which is steeped in historical tradition.

During the March UTA 50 trainees from the 944th Fighter Wing Development Training Flight got to take a peek at wing history as they assisted the wing historian organize 14 boxes of photos, video tapes, books, and souvenirs.

The photos date back over three decades and allowed the future Airmen a glimpse into how things have changed over the years.

"This was a great history lesson for the trainees," said Tech. Sgt. James Oberhaus, 944 FW DTF training manager. "And it took us out of the classroom."

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Turner, 944 FW historian, developed a system before-hand to help the trainees organize the photos by category.

"The DTF trainees did a great job," said Turner. "The photos were organized as well

as we could hope."

Turner would like to be able to use the help of the trainees in the near future for more projects.

The primary responsibility of the wing historian is to advise the commander and his staff on historical issues as they pertain to current decision making.

The bulk of Turner's time is dedicated to writing the official government history of the wing. He produces an annual report that is kept at the Air Force Historical Research Agency. When anything interesting or valuable is done by units or members of the wing, a note should be forwarded to him for inclusion in the history. If the historian doesn't know about it, then it is not part of the wing's history.

Turner is currently preparing for a deployment later this year and provided insight into the future of the shop.

"We are looking for someone to replace me as historian," Turner said. "I hope to have some good overlap with the following historian to help him or her hit the ground running."

*Story continued on page 8...*



# Next generation coatings booth poised to save Air Force millions in energy

By Marisa Alia-Novobilski, Air Force Research Laboratory

**WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio**—It only makes sense for the Air Force's newest, most complex, multi-role fighter to have the most advanced, state-of-the-art sustainment facilities to ensure enduring power for years to come.

The Air Force Research Laboratory's Advanced Power Technology Office is on the front lines of making this happen for the F-35 Lighting II.

A next generation F-35 coatings application booth at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, the first of a series of three planned units, is nearly complete and set to become operational by October 2017. Part of a multi-year, collaborative project with multiple stakeholders from across the Air Force, Defense Department, government and industry, these facilities will enable safer, cheaper and energy efficient sustainment for the force's preeminent fighter now and in the future.

"The F-35 is a huge program for the Air Force and planning sustainment is important. It's important to get it right," said David Madden, the APTO Program Manager at AFRL's Materials and Manufacturing Directorate. "The F-35 program office came to us and asked for help in designing a cutting edge, state-of-the-art, energy efficient and environmentally friendly facility. We worked with a lot of partners on this — scientists, maintainers, process teams — from across government, academia and industry to make sure everything was right in design. We are excited about the upcoming testing."

The new booths are designed for the application of aircraft coatings, which are critical to the operational life of an aircraft. These coatings enable such things as heat resistance, corrosion protection and more on a platform.

Typical application of coatings is extremely costly in terms of energy consumption as

well as environmental impact and safety needs to ensure the health and protection of maintenance staff. Additionally, as an aircraft ages, older coatings need to be removed and replaced—a process that can use considerable amounts of energy.

During the early stages of booth research and design, a significant amount of time was dedicated to consulting with maintainers as well as environmental and technical experts to collect data to help identify and understand specific logistical needs of the F-35 depot teams. Madden said the goal was to maximize the use of commercial technologies, automation and up-front investment to reduce the life-cycle maintenance costs over the long term.

One way this was accomplished was through a project that modeled airflow and circulation. Analysis led to the development of an air recycling process, which reduces the energy cost typically associated with the coating process. By recirculating up to 70 percent of the air in the booth, it is estimated the Air Force can save more than \$330,000 in energy annually.

"When coating an aircraft there's a lot of spray and overspray that occurs, and a constant flow of air crosses a work area to take the excess spray away. Typically, 'new' air is forced through the booth to remove the harmful particulates," said Madden. "Using sophisticated computer modeling, our team was able to show on a simulation the pattern of air flow. We then developed an airflow approach that is able to filter out the particulates and reuse the air, saving all kinds of energy typically associated with conditioning new air. Bioenvironmental engineers evaluated the models and determined that the models were good—this is safe."

Another novel aspect of these booths is



Courtesy photo

the use of sensor automation for data collection and metrics that can enable life-long improvements and savings not only at the depot at Hill AFB, but across the Air Force sustainment enterprise.

"Extra flow meters and additional sensors have been included in this booth that may, for example, be able to calculate the amount of energy used per gallon of paint sprayed or measure how much electricity is used for each aircraft completed. We can then use these different ratios from the sensor metrics to determine which are the most meaningful. In this way, we could develop production efficiency metrics that can be compared with traditional booth operations across the Air Force," Madden said.

The new booths also take into account future robotic capabilities and are designed with enough space and clearances to enable the addition of automated technologies for coating applications.

"Rather than trying to fit the most we

can in a minimum amount of space, we thoughtfully designed the booth with enough space to be able to add robots at a later date. Through automation, we would be able to move the operator out of the paint area and into a conditioned control booth. This would eliminate the need for excessive personal protective equipment and provides a much safer work environment. Robots are a possible way of the future," Madden said.

By using advanced mechanical systems, sensors and energy efficient technology, the new booths provide an organic capability to Air Force maintainers that will yield millions of dollars of energy savings over the lifecycle of these elite platforms.

"The APTO team is known across DoD for its expertise in facilitating energy efficiency projects. This was a great team collaboration and we've created an organic capability for the Air Force," Madden said.

# Miller Testifies at HASC Readiness Hearing



*Courtesy photo*

*By Lt. Col. Denise Kerr, Air Force Reserve Policy and Integration Directorate*

**WASHINGTON**—Senior Air Force leaders were on Capitol Hill March 22 to testify and answer questions about top-priority readiness needs and challenges facing the Air Force.

Chairman Joe Wilson (R-South Carolina), Rep. Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam) and other members of Congress heard testimony during the House Armed Services Committee's Readiness Subcommittee hearing.

Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, chief of Air Force Reserve and commander of Air Force Reserve Command, testified on the importance of the total force and the impact of associations — partnerships involving the active duty, Reserve and Air National Guard — on readiness.

"Associations are critical to our readiness and our ability to get the mission done every day," Miller said. "We are the smallest Air Force that we've been, and it takes each one of the components to provide combat power and respond to emerging threats — integration is key."

Miller said funding the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation is crucial to modernizing aircraft and equipment.

"The Air Force Reserve leverages NGREA to increase capability and ensure interoperability in the joint fight," she said. "Congress' efforts to assist with our budget shortfalls have helped, but permanent relief from the Budget Control Act caps is crucial to a steady and enduring full readiness recovery."

Miller said the Air Force Reserve needs end-strength growth to bring in cyber, intelligence, space and remotely piloted aircraft operators.

"We are short in certain critical skills where the demand is high," the general said. "We are providing incentives to bring and keep them in."

The manning shortages are not due to recruiting challenges as much as retaining the critical skills that are needed to meet the emerging mission requirements.

Miller further explained the Air Force Reserve's cyber community grows with the active component in mission defense teams and supporting the combatant commander in the joint environment.

The AFR is currently manned at 1,500 in the space career field.

"We are looking for areas to leverage our capabilities and are currently working with Air Force Space Command to assist in the missions where needed," Miller said. "Growth is a priority that I can't get out ahead of, but I can certainly be a wingman for that growth."

The senior leaders called on Congress to provide support to improve manning, critical mission areas and infrastructure.

"As you know, our people are our greatest asset to ensuring global vigilance, global reach and global power," Miller said. "Portions of our force are stressed, but our Airmen are resilient, engaged and honored to serve."



944TH FIGHTER WING



MISSION:

**TRAIN AND PROVIDE COMBAT READY  
AIRMEN. ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.**

VISION:

**DEVELOP ELITE INTEGRATED AIRMEN  
TO ANSWER OUR NATION'S CALL.**



***DTF assists continued from page 6...***

Trainees of the DTF are utilized throughout the wing to help during special events, along with their normal training during the UTA.

"I believe we accomplished our task today and made it easier to access the material later," said Noheli Tellez, DTF trainee.

Tellez will be working on F-35s as a crew chief with the 944 FW Detachment 1, after attending basic training and technical school.

The main focus of the DTF program is to prepare new Air Force Reserve recruits for basic military training and their careers.





Airmen from the 944th Security Forces Squadron pose for a group photo Mar. 5 at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. (U.S. Air Force photo taken by Tech. Sgt. Louis Vega Jr.)