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Red Flag 24-1 hosts Royal Australian Air Force F-35A Lightning IIs



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Alexandre Montes

A Royal Australian Air Force pilot waits for clearance to taxi to conduct a sortie during Red Flag Nellis 24-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Jan. 23, 2024. F-35s from the RAAF and various aircraft from the 53rd Wing, conducted interoperability training to evaluate capabilities in a realistic training environment. These exercises build partnerships and interoperability among our allies and across domains. This Red Flag will provide more complex realistic scenarios concentrated on warfighting in the Indo-Pacific theater.

Red Flag-Nellis had the privilege of hosting the Royal Australian Air Force's F-35A Lightning IIs for the very first time during the 24-1 iteration from January 15 to 26, 2024.

Red Flag-Nellis is a two-week advanced aerial combat training exercise designed to provide participants, including allies and partners, with the opportunity to engage in advanced and realistic combat scenarios within a controlled environment. This experience enhances their mission capabilities and ensures their safe return home.

"This marks the debut of our F-35s at Nellis for Red Flag," said Wing Commander Adrian Kiely, commanding officer of No. 3 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force. "Nellis offers a unique opportunity for us to integrate with Air Combat Command and various elements of the combat Air Force."

Kiely emphasized the F-35's pivotal role in the RAAF, highlighting its capabilities in offensive counterair, strike operations, and suppression

of enemy air defenses. He further noted these capabilities contribute to a higher standard of quality in the battle space.

Collaborating with assets from the U.S. and the Royal Air Force has allowed the RAAF to integrate the strengths of different nations in advanced training scenarios. This collaboration aims to enhance lethality, improve survivability, and foster effective integration with coalition partners.

"The more joint partners we can work and integrate with to test our technical and tactical integration, the more competent we become in executing our missions," said Kiely. "It's invaluable to have a diverse range of assets to test and exercise our tactical and technical interoperability. I've developed strong personal and professional relationships with the U.S. Air Force, and it's gratifying to put these relationships into action."

Editor's note: See inside, pages six and seven for more Red Flag 24-1 photos and story.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samantha Krolikowski

Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Wing Commander Adrian Kiely, No. 3 Squadron commanding officer, dons his helmet while getting ready for a flight for Red Flag 24-1 on January 23, 2024, at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. The RAAF flew six of their F-35A Lightning IIs for the first time in Red Flag-Nellis.

CMSAF Bass hears stories of resilience during Creech visit

By Senior Airman Kristal Munguia
432nd Wing/ 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing

CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. — Airmen assigned to the base shared their stories of resilience and dedication during Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Joanne S. Bass's visit to the base, Jan. 9, 2024.

Bass represents the highest enlisted leadership level in the Air Force, providing direction for the enlisted force and representing their interests. By traveling to military installations, Bass can fulfill this vital duty, sparking dialogue between herself and the Airmen.

"Hosting CMSAF Bass was a great experience for the entire 432nd Wing family," said Chief Master Sgt. Cory L. Shipp, 432nd Wing/432nd Air Expeditionary Wing command chief. "Her visit provided a unique opportunity for our teammates to engage with our most senior enlisted leader, to showcase our mission, and to gain perspectives that will inspire and fortify our force."

The visit commenced with the wing's mission brief explaining its indispensable role within the broader Air Force landscape, gaining a comprehensive

understanding of its pivotal contributions to its overarching objectives.

Afterward, Bass visited the dedicated men and women of the 432nd Security Forces Squadron and witnessed their crucial role in safeguarding the base. Bass learned about the Augmentee Program, the solution to combating manning issues within the squadron. The program provides training such as instructing suspects, handcuffing, combative techniques, and more to Airmen from different Air Force specialty codes, who then become a defender for approximately 60-120 days.

"The Augmentee Program has given our Defenders the opportunity to provide an even better scope of base defense without having to stretch their resources," said Senior Airman Ariel O'Shea, 432nd Security Forces Squadron augmentee. "I've appreciated the opportunity to work with them and get a behind-the-scenes understanding of the amazing job they do to keep us operating smoothly 24/7/365. Gaining insight into the security forces career field has been humbling, and I will forever treasure the sacrifices they and their families make to serve our mission."



U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Victoria Nuzzi

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass, walks on the flightline with 432nd Wing leadership at Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, Jan. 9, 2024. The visit was the first time Chief Bass visited Creech AFB.



Airmen from the 432nd Security Forces Squadron discuss their service experiences with Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass during her visit to Creech Air Force Base, Nevada, Jan. 9, 2024.

Bass then visited the 11th Attack Squadron where they demonstrated their role in the new developments in Satellite Launch and Recovery (SLR).

The base's senior enlisted leaders and first sergeants then got the opportunity to sit down and have lunch with Bass to discuss the issues surfacing among Airmen. Topics discussed were Airmen readiness and welfare, leadership development and mentorship, quality of life initiatives, and operational challenges and mission support.

"Being the first sergeant for our Defenders, I'm responsible for safeguarding the well-being and effectiveness of every Airman under my charge," said Master Sgt. Jacob L. Brown, 432nd Security Forces Squadron first sergeant. "After speaking with Chief Bass, I was able to

amplify the voices of my Airmen, while also getting the chance to receive mentorship from our senior enlisted leader."

Bass then immersed herself in the intricacies of MQ-9 operations by taking a seat in a simulator, gaining firsthand insights into the collaborative efforts of remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) pilots and sensor operators as they work in tandem to execute missions.

"I really enjoyed getting to meet Chief Bass," said Senior Airman Brittany Posner, 867th Attack Squadron sensor operator. "I was able to explain my Air Force specialty code and she had several good questions to ask further about what sensor operators do day-to-day. I also appreciated her asking us what changes we would like to see implemented across the Air Force

which was very appreciated."

She then saw an MQ-9 static display and a portable aircraft control station (PACS) demonstration.

The visit concluded with a base-wide all-call, an open dialogue between Bass and Airmen, providing an opportunity for the enlisted force to be heard and addressed. She also took the time to recognize the outstanding contributions of some exceptional Airmen:

- AIC James Marx, 89th Attack Squadron
- SrA John McKenna Oneill, 489th Attack Squadron
- SrA Richard Delgado Lopez, 22nd Attack Squadron
- SSgt Ryan Sierra, 432nd Support Squadron
- SSgt Jacob Allen, 432nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron



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The deadline for submissions to Desert Lightning News is no later than Monday, 4:30 p.m., the week of desired publication date.

For all submissions, a name and phone number of a person to contact must be included in the event questions arise.

All material is edited for accuracy, brevity, clarity and conformity to the AP Style Guide, to include military ranks and proper writing etiquette.

Corrections: Desert Lightning News staff members strive for accuracy each week. If you notice an error in fact, contact the Desert Lightning News staff at 334-718-3509, or e-mail editor@aerotechnews.com, and we will consider publishing a correction when appropriate.

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Creech AFB volleyball team competes in Arizona

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. —Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona hosted a regional level volleyball tournament in the Benko Fitness Center for west coast Airmen on Jan. 13-14, 2024.

Seven west coast U.S. Air Force volleyball teams, including Creech Air Force Base traveled to Davis-Monthan on permissive TDY to compete in the two-day tournament.

“The difference between this tournament and previous tournaments is that this is actually a regional tournament, which is eventually going to lead to a final,” said Ian Ventura, director of the volleyball tournament at Davis-Monthan.

The teams competed for a chance to qualify for the national tournament that will be held at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Each team played a minimum of three games to determine their regional ranking.

“Whoever wins this regional will be the west coast champion,

and those champions get to play in the national tournament,” said Senior Airman Ricky Moore, 612th Air Operations Center imagery analyst and vice president of the Desert Lightning Volleyball Club. “Along with the national championship, every team is invited to the invitational, which is another tournament happening in San Antonio. Whoever wins the invitational gets a free spot in next year’s championship.”

At the conclusion of the tournament, Travis Air Force Base, California, won the competition for the women’s and co-ed divisions, while Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, won the competition for the men’s division. The women’s division of the Davis-Monthan Desert Lightning Team, formally known as the Mustangs, came in 2nd place overall. They started preparations to attend the next volleyball invitational tournament that will be held in Fort Sam Houston, Texas, next month.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Robert Allen Cooke III

U.S. Airmen on the women’s division of the Creech Air Force Base volleyball team receive an award at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., Jan. 14, 2024. The awards ceremony was held after the second day of the tournament at the Benko Fitness Center.

DAF announces Spark Tank 2024 finalists

Deputy Under SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

Management

WASHINGTON (AFNS) — The Department of the Air Force announced the six Spark Tank 2024 finalists Dec. 14, following the announcement of the 15 semifinalists Dec. 5.

The Spark Tank team presented the top 15 ideas identified through pairwise voting and subject matter expert evaluations from this year’s pool of submissions. DAF senior leaders convened to review and discuss the merits of each idea, reaching consensus to identify Spark Tank 2024’s six finalists.

Out of 138 submissions from across the U.S. Space Force and U.S. Air Force, the following were selected for the semifinals round:

Air Traffic Control Situational Awareness Mobile Network — a man portable combination system that provides a RADAR-like capability in austere environments

CLEAR skies, safe eyes: Protecting aircrews from laser strikes — technology to triangulate locations of ground-based laser attacks directed at aircrews

COMMERCIAL CHECK - Pioneering the Path to Eradicate Acquisition Delays — harnessing automated intelligence and machine learning to securely expedite acquisitions

Enterprise Digital Credentialing Service — a user-centric integration of credentials from both DAF and external systems to provide a holistic view of Airmen’s knowledge, skills, and abilities

Increasing USAF Air Dominance Lethality and Survivability through M&S — an application for advanced framework for simulation, integration and modeling for rapid tactics evaluation tool



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Sergio A. Gamboa

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Justin Bauer, 355th Fighter Wing stamps a date on a wheel at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, May 20, 2020. Winner of the 2021 Spark Tank contest, Bauer designed a prototype tool for C-130 Hercules wheels, allowing the shop to work on the wheel inhouse instead of delivering them to Hill Air Force Base, Utah. This saved Davis-Monthan and the Air Force \$624,000 annually.

Project Spectrum Shield — a network of connected devices that detect and locate intrusion by unauthorized devices collecting against air bases and sensitive operating locations

Revolutionize the PCS Process-Bring Transportation of HHG from 1975 to 2023 — an application that fully automates household goods shipping management

Secure Agile Communications System — a self-contained fly-away kit that establishes secure communication channels for forward operating bases

Unmanned Flight Interface — a unified dashboard that

provides a reliable, seamless integration of all software tools utilized by unmanned vehicle pilots

The following were selected as the finalists from the top 15: **Autonomous Vehicles for Flightline Resupply*** — automated delivery vehicles to provide supplies to maintenance crews working on aircraft on the flightline

CyberAssess — like TurboTax for your Authority to Operate* — an application that simplifies the steps and automates the paperwork required to introduce new technology into the Air Force information architecture

F-16 Collapsible Cockpit ACE Ladder* — a collapsible ladder that can be carried inside the cockpit, thus removing the need to preposition bulky legacy ladders

Flyways Defender for Airspace Awareness and Defense* — an artificial intelligence-enabled to provide air defense situational awareness and aid decision making

Load Plan+* — an interactive load plan application that allows medevac crews to label patients, select equipment needed for the mission, and optimize placement within the aircraft

Project Lavoy (formerly Project Lifesaver)* — advanced technology for contingency blood transfusions

The six finalist teams traveled to Arlington, Virginia, in January 2024 to refine their pitches and stage presence in preparation for their presentation to the secretary of the Air Force, chief of Space Operations, chief of staff of the Air Force, chief master sergeant of the Space Force, and chief master sergeant of the Air Force next year at a yet-to-be-announced location.

Spark Tank is DAF’s flagship competition in which innovators from across the department pitch their ideas to a panel of top leadership and industry experts in pursuit of sponsorship to realize their idea.

CONTACT: Editorial Staff at editor@aerotechnews.com

WAPS testing going digital in February 2024

Secretary of the Air Force

Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFNS) — Beginning with the CY24 E6 promotion cycle in February, the Weighted Airman Promotion System test will be administered electronically, supporting a long-awaited modernization need in the Air Force's personnel development efforts.

The eWAPS platform is a collaborative effort between the Air Force, the Personnel Data Research Institute and PearsonVUE. Airmen participating in the 2024 technical sergeant and staff sergeant promotion cycles will be the first to use this system.

"This initiative, along with others such as the myFSS applications, is just one of many human resources transformation efforts," said Lt. Gen. Caroline Miller, deputy chief of staff for Manpower, Personnel, and Services. "Transforming HR Information Technology is one of my five priorities and underpins the entire HR enterprise."

Promotion-eligible Airmen can anticipate receiving invitational emails, prompting them to visit the PearsonVUE website to establish an account by creating a username and password.

Test Control Officers or unit WAPS monitors will contact each eligible Air-



Lt. Gen. Caroline Miller

Lt. Gen. Caroline Miller is the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Virginia.

man to come into the base education and testing center to sign for their assigned official test date. During this time, they

will review testing instructions and individual responsibilities, which include the requirement to have their username and password with them on test day.

Airmen will also receive instructions on how to create their PearsonVUE account if they did not receive the PearsonVUE email or did not create an account to reasons such as not updating their email in vMPPF or a deployment.

Airmen are required to arrive in uniform, punctually, and with their Common Access Card. Additionally, it is now imperative for them to remember their username and password.

Lack of preparation, to include not having or knowing their username and password, can result in being marked as a no-show for testing. Airmen can retrieve their username using their first and last name and their email account and will also be able to reset their password by responding to security questions they established during the account creation process. Airmen who cannot reset their password and access their PearsonVUE account will be marked as a no-show for testing.

"This is a transformative step that en-

hances the careers of our Airmen," said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force JoAnne Bass. "By aligning with industry standards, e-testing ensures a secure and innovative platform for a fair and equitable opportunity in promotion and career advancement. It also streamlines the process by allowing test responses to be submitted directly to the Air Force Personnel Center, eliminating the need for traditional mailing of answer sheets. This advancement not only instills total confidence in our Airmen but also provides unhindered access, empowering them to reach goals with greater efficiency and effectiveness. This is a much-needed change...and there are more to come!"

Airmen who are not co-located near a base testing center, such as Airmen assigned to a geographically separated unit, could test at one of many PearsonVUE centers, affording greater flexibility.

If eligible Airmen do not receive an e-mail or they can't find it, they can go directly to the PearsonVUE website and create an account. Accounts can only be created through the PearsonVUE website after Jan. 30, 2024, at <https://home.pearsonvue.com/waps>.



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DOD reduces childcare fees for military families

By
Joseph Clark

DOD News

The Defense Department is focused on making quality childcare options affordable for military families as officials continue to prioritize initiatives to take care of those who serve.

In January 2024, the department implemented its new fee schedule for on base childcare designed to reduce fees for lower income military families while maintaining high quality care at DOD child development centers around the world.

Chad Sheldon, DOD's associate director for child and youth programs policy, said the driver behind this year's fee change was "to make the childcare fees more equitable and more affordable, specifically for those families with the greatest economic need."

"We wanted to be able to reduce the percentage of income that they're paying for childcare and balance that across our fee schedule," he said.

The reduction in the basic weekly rate for on base childcare is applied across several tiers under the new structure, as determined by military families' total family income:

- Those with a total family income of



U.S. Air Force photo by Craig Z. Rodarte

A child development center staff member cares for children at Buckley Space Force Base, Colorado., Feb. 2, 2023.

\$45,000 will pay a basic weekly rate of \$54, down from \$82 under the previous fee schedule.

- Those with a total family income of \$65,000 will pay a basic weekly rate of \$74, down from \$121 under the previous fee schedule.

- Those with a total family income of \$90,000 will pay a basic weekly rate of \$104, down from \$143 under the previ-

ous fee schedule.

- Those with a total family income of \$115,000 will pay a basic weekly rate of \$138, down from \$154 under the previous fee schedule.

Sheldon said childcare can be a major expense for new families who are typically still in the early stages of their careers and not at the peak of their earning potential.

"By making these adjustments to our fees, our intent is that they're going to have more money in their pocket to cover additional expenses – food, diapers, all those things that come along with being a parent as well," he said.

President Joe Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden have made reducing childcare costs for military families a key focus of the Biden-Harris administration.

The new fee structure follows Biden's executive order in April directing the DOD to improve childcare affordability on military installations.

The DOD operates one of the largest employer-sponsored childcare programs in the U.S., serving more than 160,000 children every year, according to 2022 figures.

"Our service members matter," Sheldon said. "Their families matter. And certainly, we have a vested interest in children and youth. Our mission is a really important one and one that we take seriously."

He said childcare providers and child development center staff throughout DOD, take their mission to serve the children of military families to heart.

"I hope that service members know that their well-being and their family's well-being is something that is critically important to us," he said.

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U.S. Air Force photo by William R. Lewis

Six Royal Air Force FGR-4 Typhoons prepare to land for Red Flag-Nellis 24-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Jan. 10, 2024. This Red Flag had approximately 30 units and close to 2,000 participants from U.S. and Allied forces. Red Flag exercises provide aircrews the experience of multiple, intensive air combat sorties in the safety of a training environment.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Samantha Krolikowski

Royal Australian Air Force Wing Commander Adrian Kiely, No.3 Squadron commanding officer, left, speaks with a British and Australian crew chief before a sortie in support of Red Flag 24-1 on January 23, 2024, at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.



U.S. Air Force photo by 1st Lt. Nathan Poblete

A maintainer from the 421st Fighter Generation Squadron marshals an F-35A prior to a mission during Red Flag 24-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Jan. 17, 2024. Red Flag delivers distinctive training for the F-35A, focusing on enhancing airman readiness for high-end warfighting and strategic competition.

COMPLEX PROBLEMS,



A U.S. Navy EA-18G Growler assigned to Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Washington, arrives for Red Flag-Nellis and offensive counter air-air interdiction.

By
MICAH GARBARINO

388th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

It's 1 a.m. They are hunched over maps and charts and data points like college students over an impossible equation. Tomorrow is coming fast. Hours of planning, briefing, revising, clarifying. Sleep. Eat. Brief again. Finally, time to fly. In the air, despite the gameplan, it's "controlled chaos" again. This night is a win, but by

how much? What went wrong? Time to reconstruct everything and debrief. Tomorrow is coming fast and another problem set awaits.

For pilots at Red Flag, the Air Force's premier combat exercise, cycles of mission planning, briefing and flying sorties roll by in 12-hour chunks. Three weeks go by in a blur for "night train" riders and "day-walkers." As demanding as it is, there is no other environment that yields lessons as valuable for both experienced and inexperienced pilots.

Red Flag, which started after the Vietnam War to provide pilots combat seasoning, has grown into an integrated ultra-modern fight, testing various units' capabilities in the air, space, and cyber domains. A friendly "Blue" force takes on an enemy "Red" force in scenarios created by a host "White" cell, the 414th Combat Training Squadron.

PLAN

Each morning and evening new scenarios are presented to the Blue Force, which stands up a "Mission Planning Cell" made up of functional team leaders. The entire picture is laid out by an intelligence team – from air and ground targets and threats to political and diplomatic implications. Generally, the F-35 pilots are tasked with the role of Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses. Let the problem solving begin.

"Red Flag comes up with some

really creative scenarios that, combined with the skill and capabilities of the Red Force, push the limits of what our capabilities are," said Capt. Benn Hawkins, an F-35 pilot with the 421st Fighter Squadron. "It takes each of our teams getting creative, working together to come back with what we think the best tactical solution is, and it may not be perfect."

Over this 12-hour period, there are up to six different meetings or briefings that take place – some as an entire team, some just for individual role players – breaking down the upcoming three-hour mission in painstaking, minute-by-minute detail.

It can be tedious, but for younger pilots, this is an opportunity to learn how the entirety of the Blue and Red Forces are integrated, providing a macro view of the battlespace.

"We get good at being wingmen and doing what we're told, but at Red Flag you can see a lot of the 'why' and the bigger picture," said Capt. Kody Owens, an F-35 pilot in the 421st FS at Red Flag for the first time. "Having awareness of the other platforms capabilities and how certain threats affect them and where we fit into that. You can start to grow and build your own palate of techniques."

Owens isn't the lone newbie in the 421st. This is the first Red

DEMANDING SCHEDULE AT RED FLAG



U.S. Air Force photo by William R. Lewis

Nellis 24-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Jan. 10, 2024. Participants conduct a variety of scenarios, including defensive counter air, offensive counter air suppression of enemy air defenses



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Tan

Royal Australian Air Force Aviators and U.S. Air Force Airmen rotate the bombs to attach hooks before loading them on a munitions assembly conveyor at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Jan. 18, 2024. RAAF Aviators are at Nellis to partake in Red Flag Nellis 24-1. The combat training exercise provides opportunities for the U.S. Air Force and its allies to train and work together toward similar goals.

Flag for nearly three-quarters of the squadron. They are getting used to the pace. After a 12-hour shift of mission planning it may be 6 p.m. or 6 a.m. Either way, it's time to rest. Might be tough.

"It's busy. You hear stories of how busy it is, but you don't really know until you're in it. It's definitely hard to keep healthy habits," Owens said. "But getting

enough sleep, getting a 20-30 minute workout in and eating right really helps."

EXECUTE

When their next shift starts it's "go time." Mission execution day kicks off with a mass brief – typically an hour where the mission commander presents the finalized plan for the entire force. Each team breaks

and runs through their individual roles one last time.

The mission takes place in a roughly three-hour window. There may be more than 100 Blue and Red aircraft in each scenario, flying in airspace that bridges training ranges in California, Nevada and Utah.

– See **RED FLAG**, on Page 8



U.S. Air Force photo by USAF 1st Lieutenant Nathan Poblete

Senior Airman Gavin Wieszala, F-35A crew chief with the 421st Fighter Generation Squadron, secures the engine intake after a training sortie returns from Red Flag 24-1. The exercises during Red Flag 24-1 offer maintenance airmen like Wieszala the chance to refine their skills, preparing them for the challenges they may face in future operations

RED FLAG, from Page 7 —

“I’ve heard it called ‘controlled chaos’ and it really is,” Owens said. “There are a lot of moving parts, and as a young wingman you’re making sure you’re staying safe and flying clean, learning how to make the right call on

comms and then you can start applying tactics.”

Over the course of the exercise, these scenarios build on each other, growing in complexity. Like war, success or failure today impacts success or failure tomorrow.

“It’s constantly evolving, con-



U.S. Air Force photo by William R. Lewis

A Royal Air Force FGR-4 Typhoon lands at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, Jan. 10, 2024 in preparation for Red Flag-Nellis 24-1. Red Flag exercises provide aircrews the experience of multiple, intensive air combat sorties in the safety of a training environment.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Elizabeth Tan

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Tadeo Rodriguez, left, assigned to the 31st Munitions Squadron at Aviano Air Force Base, U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jordan Render from the 57th munitions squadron, middle, and Royal Australian Air Force Leading Aircraftman, Luke Mather, right, upload an inert training bomb on the munitions assembly conveyor for prep to build a GBU-31V1 at Nellis AFB, Nevada, Jan. 18, 2024. Once built, the inert training bomb will be loaded on an F-35 Lightning II combat aircraft.

stantly presenting new problems,” Hawkins said. “The systems and tactics they are employing against us are eye-opening. It’s a very realistic picture.”

DEBRIEF

The day isn’t over at Red Flag when pilots land. In fact, it’s what comes next that many say is of most value. After each mission, both Blue and Red participants individually take their mission data and reconstruct it in preparation of a mass, joint debrief.

“It may take me 90 minutes, but I need to be able to speak intelligently on how me and my formation positively or negatively impacted the fight,” Hawkins said. “We all have a real-time

picture in our heads of how things went during the mission, but you don’t really know if that’s true until you do the reconstruction. It could have gone way better or way worse. Maybe you won, but you didn’t win as hard as you thought you did.”

Once the data is compiled, players join a mass debrief, working through the data and the mission timeline for hours. Asking tough questions, sometimes not having the right answers. It takes thick skin, but it leads to every participant learning and growing.

“The last hour of that is really where the money is made. Each team lead comes to the group with

two or three points based on all the planning, prepping, training, executing, reconstructed data. “These are the things I want us to take away from this mission that we can put in our playbooks for the next fight,” Hawkins said.

“Iron sharpens iron” and “pressure makes diamonds” those clichés are true at Red Flag, Hawkins said. Maybe especially so for the first timers like Owens.

“It comes at the end of a long day, but (the debrief) is super energizing for me because it’s such a new environment,” Owens said. “I am listening a lot, learning a lot.”

Another day down. Tomorrow is coming fast, and another problem set awaits.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND PROPOSED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR PROPOSED INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN PROJECTS AT NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE AND THE NEVADA TEST AND TRAINING RANGE, NEVADA

The United States Air Force (Air Force) and Nellis Air Force Base (AFB) announce the availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluating Proposed Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan projects at Nellis AFB and the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR). The updated Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) will guide and document the manner in which Nellis AFB and the NTTR manage natural resources while supporting the military mission. The INRMP has established long-term goals, objectives, and projects for management and protection of natural resource assets integral to carrying out the military mission and provides guidance on avoiding impacts to natural resources during the planning, designing, and management phases of new construction/expansion projects when practicable.

The EA, prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA implementing regulations, and the Air Force’s Environmental Impact Analysis Process, evaluates potential impacts on the environment from the Air Force’s Proposed Action at Nellis AFB. Based on analysis in the Draft EA, no significant adverse impacts would be anticipated from the manner in which Nellis AFB manages natural resources. Accordingly, the Air Force has prepared a proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) to document its findings.

Copies of the Draft EA and proposed FONSI are available for review at the following area libraries:

- Sunrise Library, 5400 E Harris Ave, Las Vegas, NV 89110
- Alexander Library, 1755 W Alexander Rd, North Las Vegas, NV 89032

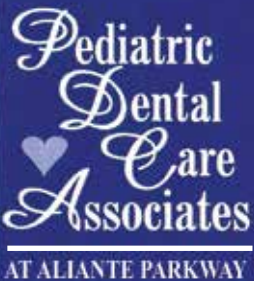
Electronic copies of the documents are also available on the Nellis AFB website at <https://www.nellis.af.mil/Public-Affairs/Community-Engagement/Partnerships/Environment/>.

You are encouraged to submit comments during the public comment period, which ends 02 March 2024. Comments received after this comment period will be considered to the extent practicable. Comments or inquiries may be sent to Nellis AFB, ATTN: Mr. Tod Oppenborn, NEPA Program Manager, at 6020 Beale Ave., Nellis AFB, NV, 89191-6520; by phone (702) 652-9366; or email (preferred) tod.oppenborn@us.af.mil


PRIVACY ADVISORY NOTICE

This Draft EA and proposed FONSI are provided for public comment in accordance with NEPA, the President’s Council on Environmental Quality NEPA regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and 32 CFR Part 989, the Air Force’s Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP). The EIAP provides an opportunity for public input on Air Force decision-making, allows the public to offer inputs on alternative ways for the Air Force to accomplish what it is proposing, and solicits comments on the Air Force’s analysis of environmental effects.

Public comment allows the Air Force to make better, informed decisions. Letters or other written or oral comments provided may be published in the EA. As required by law, comments provided will be addressed in the EA and made available to the public. Providing personal information is voluntary. Any personal information provided will be used only to identify your desire to make a statement during the public comment portion of any public meetings or hearings or to fulfill requests for copies of the EA and associated documents. Private addresses will be compiled to develop a mailing list for those requesting hard copies of the EA; however, only the names of the individual’s making comments and specific comments will be disclosed. Personal home addresses and phone numbers will not be published in the EA.



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The 432nd Security Forces Squadron Combat Arms firing range complex is located off of Highway 95 East on Lee Canyon Road. This area is off limits to all unauthorized personnel. Firing operations are conducted during the day and night; trespassing is illegal and extremely dangerous. For more information, please contact the Nevada Test and Training Range security office at 702-653-4705. If valid access is required after duty hours, please contact the Amentum Security Operations Center at 702-653-4693.

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