

School Liaison, STARBASE work together to better serve installation and community

by **Mary Kozaitis and Chase Kohler**
Edwards AFB, Calif.

A good education is one of the top five quality-of-life challenges for military families.

Accessibility to quality education directly impacts the readiness, retention and future of our Air Force, especially for remote and isolated installations. If service members are concerned about their children's schooling, they cannot focus on our shared mission in this era of Great Power Competition.

During the last few years, leaders and Airmen of the 412th Test Wing have worked together to streamline critical roles to better serve our community. This is particularly focused on supporting students, families and military leaders through the School Liaison Program and STARBASE at Edwards Air Force Base.

School Liaison program

School Liaison program managers are the central point of contact for commanders, military families and school districts interested in local preschool through high school education topics.

"We advocate for military-connected students at the local, state and national level," said Rebecca Balkenbush, School Liaison program manager for the 412th Test Wing. "We generate real-time solutions for military-connected students as they face educational challenges and transitions."

Strong schools are a hallmark for the installation's Line of Effort 1 — Develop Our People and Strengthen Our Teams. Balkenbush directly supports more than 1,900 military-connected students, with nearly 600 students attending Muroc

— See **STARBASE**, on Page 2



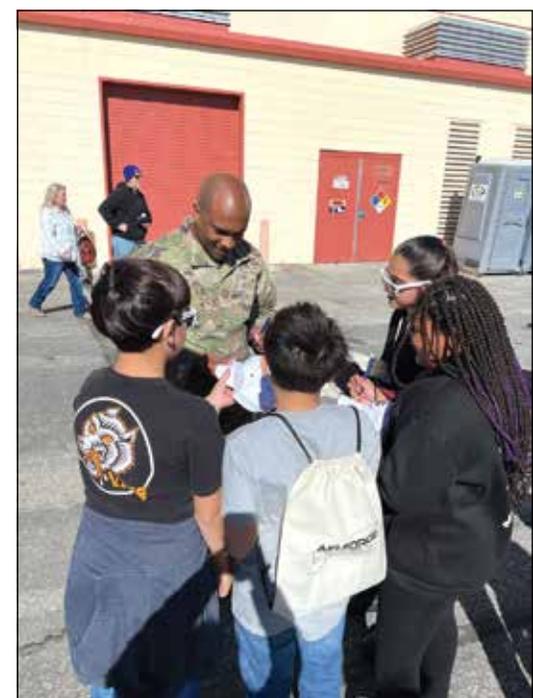
Air Force photographs

STARBASE students get up close and personal with F-22s during a tour during the fall 2024 semester.

Transitional kindergarten students from William A. Bailey visit the 50th anniversary of the F-16 celebration. Over 1,200 students from Muroc Joint Unified School District attended the event to see static displays, participate in STEM activities, and watch a flyover from the Thunderbirds on the flightline.



STARBASE students tour the Pratt and Whitney propulsion lab during the 2024 to 2025 school year.



Chief Master Sgt. Jermaine King, 412th Mission Support Group, autographs Air Force swag during the 50th Anniversary of the F-16 Celebration.



STARBASE, from Page 1

Joint Unified School District. Edwards Air Force Base houses three schools that serve Kindergarten through 12th grade in a centrally located educational complex that received a combined \$180 million renovation investment in 2022.

The School Liaison program supports all families with school-age children connected to Edwards AFB, serving more than 130 schools across 14 school districts in the local area including families who homeschool, foreign nationals and DOD civilians. School Liaisons offer several programs to support military-connected students including:

- **Anchored4Life:** Anchored4Life is an Air Force-funded program available to all students at the three schools on base. The School Liaison collaborates with Anchored4Life to provide students with resilience and leadership training, supporting smoother transitions through Permanent Change of Station and deployments, and fostering an overall sense of belonging in the community.

- **Child and Youth Behavioral Military and Family Life Counselors:** The School Liaison Program is also responsible for the Child and Youth Behavioral Military Family Life Counselors on base. They partner with counselors to connect families and schools with on-site counseling services, promoting emotional well-being and addressing the unique challenges faced by military-connected students.



Students from William A. Bailey visit the 50th anniversary of the F-16 celebration. More than 1,200 students from Muroc Joint Unified School District attended the event to see static displays, participate in STEM activities and watch a fly over from the Thunderbirds. R: Students from West Boron Elementary watch the Thunderbirds practice from the Edwards flight line.



Col. Chris Carnduff, 412th Mission Support Group commander, addresses the audience at the Edwards AFB Back-to-School Bash.



- **Grants and Scholarships:** An installation's school liaison also provides resources and guidance on accessing education-focused grants and scholarships tailored for military children, helping families alleviate financial burdens related to academics.

- **Change of Station Support:** The School Liaison Program offers personalized assistance to families during Permanent Change of Station moves, easing transitions by connecting them with local schools, enrollment processes, and academic resources.

- **Purple Star Schools:** The program advocates for and supports schools in earning the Purple Star designation, ensuring they meet the needs of military families through dedicated resources,

LEFT: STARBASE students from Tehachapi Unified School District check out F-35 Lightnings.

staff training, and strong military-family connections.

- **Partnership Initiatives:** The school liaison also strives to increase educational opportunities through partnerships, such as organizing career panels, parent workshops, installation tours for schools, educators and students, and installation welcome events for new families.

STARBASE

STARBASE is a DOD program that provides on-base STEM education and enrichment to students from eight surrounding school districts, covering more than 5,200 hundred square miles across the Antelope Valley. STARBASE provides community activities, unique aerospace-focused field trips, clubs, and five-day hands-on STEM camps throughout the year.

"All fifth-grade students in the Muroc School District attend STARBASE for STEM exposure and real-life interaction with military personnel," said Dr. Samantha Duchscherer, chief of STEM Integration and T3 for the 412th Test Wing. "It targets students in a crucial developmental time in terms of future career trajectory."

STARBASE has roughly 1,200 students across the Antelope Valley that at-



Students from William A. Bailey Elementary participate in a Show and Tell event by the 412th Security Forces Squadron.

tend every year. Facility upgrades within the past year include new laptops, iPads, classroom furniture and projectors. The program recently received approval to double its student capacity during the next school year, in addition to expanding beyond its traditional fifth grade curriculum to further impact student enrichment.

Since inception, the program continues to receive positive feedback regarding increased community events such as STEM fairs, early educational fairs and summer welcome events for families relocating to Edwards. In 2024, STARBASE Edwards also began a new partnership with Southern Kern Unified School District, expanding beyond the Antelope Valley with an additional 4,000 current students.

The 412th Test Wing also independently works with the Department of the Air Force's Air and Space STEM Outreach office to facilitate hands-on STEM experiences across the Southern California community, from Fresno to Long Beach. The recent recipient of a \$225 thousand grant, the office's additional programing allows further impact that boosts the current and future potential of elementary and middle school students.



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The Essence of Teamwork: Space Test education at USAF TPS

by **Dr. Andrew Freeborn**
Edwards AFB, Calif.

The Antelope Valley in Southern California, also known as “America’s Aerospace Valley,” has long been a hub of aviation and space innovation.

From the Bell X-1 breaking the sound barrier to the development of the F-35, the region has played a crucial role in advancing aerospace technology.

Beyond aeronautics, the valley has significantly contributed to space exploration, hosting early spaceflight milestones such as the X-15, Saturn V engine tests and Apollo astronaut training. The U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School has continued this legacy by partnering with the U.S. Space Force to train the next generation of space test leaders through the Space Test Course.

Recognizing the need for trained space testers in an increasingly contested domain, the Air Force Test Center initiated the Space Test Fundamentals course in 2021. Despite challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the course successfully laid the foundation for a rigorous space test curriculum. As the U.S. Space Force took shape, its Test and Evaluation Directorate requested the expansion of the Space Test Fundamentals course into a yearlong program mirroring the Test Pilot School’s renowned Flight Test Course.

By 2024, the Space Test Course had evolved into a comprehensive test and evaluation education program, awarding a Graduate Certificate in Space Test Engineering and earning graduates the same distinguished “blue patch” as their air domain counterparts.

Today, Space Test Course students train alongside Flight Test Course students, engaging in shared academic coursework while receiving specialized instruction in astronomical sciences and space mission systems. This integration fosters a multi-domain test capability that is essential for modern warfare capabilities.

“With each class we continue to press forward in multi-domain testing. Test Management Projects have evolved into blended teams of Guardians and Airman executing complex tests that expand upon the current test capabilities that Delta 12 and AFTC have built,” said Maj. Chris Reis, a Guardian graduate of the Flight Test



Air Force photograph by Scott Walter

Space Test Course Students prepare for an XVI satellite pass in Test Pilot School’s new Satellite Operations Control Room, at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. Recognizing the need for trained space testers in an increasingly contested domain, the Air Force Test Center initiated the Space Test Fundamentals course in 2021.



Air Force photograph by Andrew Freeborn

“Beta” Class observes a SpaceX test launch at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. The Space Test Course curriculum continues to evolve, directly supporting the Air Force Test Center’s mission to develop and maintain cutting-edge Air Force weapon systems.



Air Force photograph by Scott Walter

Generic Robotic On-Orbit Trainer Lab, at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. Test Management Projects, a long-standing Test Pilot School requirement, now include space-domain projects, providing hands-on experience with real-world test assets.

Course and current chief of space test foundations at the Test Pilot School.

Test Management Projects, a long-standing Test Pilot School requirement, now include space-domain projects, providing hands-on experience with real-world test assets.

In 2024, Space Test Course students executed the first space-domain projects, characterizing an optical space domain awareness system and a space-range planning capability. Beginning in 2025, projects will focus on incorporating integrated air-space efforts, enhancing cross-domain test expertise even further.

The Space Test Course curriculum continues to evolve, directly supporting the Air Force Test Center’s mission to develop and maintain cutting-edge Air Force weapon systems. Guardian instructors, administratively part of Space Delta 12 operational control unit and embedded within Test Pilot School, are charged with ensuring curriculum relevance by leveraging their

space operational and engineering expertise.

Hands-on training has also expanded, with students now operating real on-orbit assets through partnerships with organizations such as the Air Force Research Laboratory’s Small Satellite Portfolio team. The addition of the AFRL XVI satellite allows students to plan, direct and execute space vehicle operations, reinforcing practical test and evaluation principles.

Looking ahead, the Space Test Course aims to further integrate with the National Space Test and Training Complex, advance space-domain test and evaluation techniques, and expand hands-on training with operationally representative hardware. A new Guardian Ph.D. pipeline instructor will join the staff as well, further enhancing the program’s academic rigor. With these advancements, the course remains committed to producing highly skilled test professionals

who ensure U.S. space capabilities remain second to none.

“We’re aggressively pursuing additional operationally representative hardware to give students hands-on experience in component, platform and kill-web testing,” said Maj. James Ross, Space Test Fundamentals graduate.

The Space Test Course exemplifies the Air Force Test Center’s dedication to readiness and future competitiveness, providing the Department of the Air Force with elite test leaders capable of executing complex space-domain test and evaluation missions. Through continuous innovation and strong partnerships across the aerospace test and evaluation community, the Test Pilot School and the Space Test Course will continue to shape the future of space test for years to come.

Edwards AFB unveils new Flight Test Engineering Lab to enhance warfighting capabilities

by Giancarlo Casem
Edwards AFB, Calif.

Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., officially opened its state-of-the-art Flight Test Engineering Lab (FTEL) during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in late 2024, marking a significant advancement in the Air Force's ability to develop and test cutting-edge warfighting technologies.

The FTEL is designed to improve the testing and integration of critical systems in the areas of Electro Optics/Infrared (EO/IR) sensors, long-range kill chain data link capabilities, and the development of digital twin tools that accelerate the creation of future combat capabilities. This new facility will enable the Air Force to push the boundaries of modern warfare, ensuring the U.S. maintains its technological edge.

Paul Waters, 412th Test Engineering Group director, emphasized the importance of the FTEL in meeting evolving military needs.

"The Flight Test Engineering Lab is a critical new capability that will enable the Test Wing to develop and test new warfighting technologies that enhance sensor accuracy, communication through long-range data links, and the integration of flight test data with advanced modeling



Air Force photographs by Madeline Guadarrama

Paul Waters, 412th Test Engineering Group director, Dan Osburn, 412th Test Wing technical director, and Shaun Frost, Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District chief of construction, cut the ribbon to formally open the Flight Test Engineering Laboratory during a ceremony on Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Nov. 4, 2024.

and simulation," Waters said. "These tools will not only accelerate our development processes but also help us stay ahead of rapidly advancing global threats."

Waters also underscored the strategic role of the FTEL in supporting the Air

Force's mission to "Accelerate Change or Lose." The FTEL will enable us to deliver more accurate weapons systems that can detect and engage targets more effectively, ensuring our ability to deter adversaries or, if necessary, defeat them in combat," he

stated. "By refining advanced sensors, data links, and validated models, we are preparing our forces for an increasingly complex global security environment.

"We are also leveraging the capabilities of the FTEL to accelerate the training and development of our workforce. Three state-of-the-art training rooms allow us to accelerate the development our young engineers," Waters added.

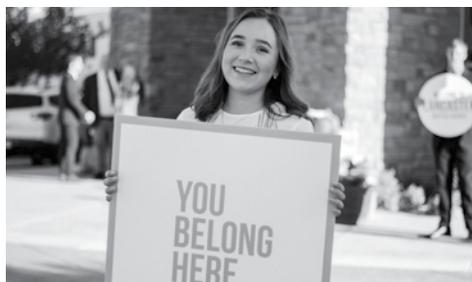
The project began in May 2021 with the issuance of a solicitation for construction. After contract awards and a series of delays, including two formal protests, construction officially broke ground in October 2022. The lab's original opening date was set for March 2024, but due to delays, it is now expected to fully occupy the facility by November 2024.

The project came at a cost of \$41.35 million, which includes contract modifications made throughout the development process. Despite the delays, the FTEL's completion marks a major milestone in the Air Force's modernization efforts.

As military technology continues to evolve, the FTEL stands as a critical hub for the next generation of weapons and systems, paving the way for the development of more effective, adaptable tools to safeguard national security.



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A new era in testing: TPS partners with Stanford, Silicon Valley for AI, emerging tech course

by Tech. Sgt. Robert Cloys
Edwards AFB, Calif.

The U.S. Air Force Test Pilot School has embarked on a groundbreaking initiative, completing its inaugural “Test of AI and Emerging Technologies” course in partnership with Stanford University and the Department of the Air Force’s Stanford AI Studio.

This historic collaboration marks the school’s first major engagement with academia in recent memory and is part of a broader effort to prepare future military test leaders for the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, data-driven systems, and autonomous technologies.

The course, which took place from Jan. 13-24, was a key component of TPS’s new Data-Driven Test program, a five-week curriculum integrated throughout the year-long Flight and Space Test Courses. By blending classroom instruction, hands-on testing, and industry engagement, TPS is ensuring its graduates remain at the forefront of modern military test and evaluation.



Air Force photograph

Leading Stanford AI experts instruct United States Air Force Test Pilot School students during its inaugural “Test of AI and Emerging Technologies” course in partnership with Stanford University and the Department of the Air Force’s Stanford AI Studio, Jan. 17, 2025. This historic collaboration marks the school’s first major engagement with academia in recent memory and is part of a broader effort to prepare future military test leaders for the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, data-driven systems, and autonomous technologies.

Preparing test leaders for future of AI in defense

The Data-Driven Test program is designed to equip students with the expertise needed to test and evaluate next-generation autonomous systems,

advanced mission capabilities, and data-intensive platforms. As the Air Force accelerates its adoption of Collaborative Combat Aircraft, data-driven kill webs, and advanced simulation environments, TPS is evolving its curriculum to ensure

its test professionals are ready to lead in this new era.

“The Air Force Test Center is laser focused on the next era of test, in particular the integration of game-changing capabilities such as AI and machine learning that promise to transform warfighting,” said Col. Maryann Karlen, Air Force Test Center Deputy commander. “Through its Data-Driven Test program, TPS is on the leading edge of AFTC’s efforts to educate, research, and integrating AI-driven capabilities across the Air Force and Space Force.”

A curriculum blending AI theory with hands-on application

Over the two-week course, TPS students engaged in an intensive blend of academic instruction, real-world applications, and direct collaboration with industry leaders.

Week 1: Foundations of AI and machine learning at Stanford

The program began with coursework at Stanford University, led by Dr. Marco Pavone from Stanford’s Aeronautics

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NASA uses new technology to understand California wildfires

by Erica Heim

NASA Armstrong

The January wildfires in California devastated local habitats and communities. In an effort to better understand wildfire behavior, NASA scientists and engineers tried to learn from the events by testing new technology.

The new instrument, the Compact Fire Infrared Radiance Spectral Tracker (c-FIRST), was tested when NASA's B200 King Air aircraft flew over the wildfires in the Pacific Palisades and Altadena, Calif. Based at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center at Edwards, Calif., the aircraft used the c-FIRST instrument to observe the impacts of the fires in near real-time. Due to its small size and ability to efficiently simulate a satellite-based mission, the B200 King Air is uniquely suited for testing c-FIRST.

Managed and operated by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California, c-FIRST gathers thermal infrared images in high-resolution and other data about the terrain to study the impacts of wildfires on ecology. In a single observation, c-FIRST can capture the full temperature range across a wide area of wildland fires — as well as the cool, unburned background — potentially



NASA photograph by Steve Freeman

NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center at Edwards, Calif., flew the B200 King Air in support of the Signals of Opportunity Synthetic Aperture Radar (SoOpSAR) campaign on Feb. 27, 2023.

increasing both the quantity and quality of science data produced.

"Currently, no instrument is able to cover the entire range of attributes for fires present in the Earth system," said Sarath Gunapala, principal investigator for c-FIRST at NASA JPL. "This leads to gaps in our understanding of how many fires occur, and of crucial characteristics like size and temperature."

For decades, the quality of infrared images has struggled to convey the nuances of high-temperature surfaces above 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Blurry resolution and light saturation of infrared images has inhibited scientists' understanding of an extremely hot terrain, and thereby also

inhibited wildfire research. Historically, images of extremely hot targets often lacked the detail scientists need to understand the range of a fire's impacts on an ecosystem.

To address this, NASA's Earth Science Technology Office supported JPL's development of the c-FIRST instrument, combining state-of-the-art imaging technology with a compact and efficient design. When c-FIRST was airborne, scientists could detect smoldering fires more accurately and quickly, while also gathering important information on active fires in near real-time.

"These smoldering fires can flame up if the wind picks up again," said Gunapala.

"Therefore, the c-FIRST data set could provide very important information for firefighting agencies to fight fires more effectively."

For instance, c-FIRST data can help scientists estimate the likelihood of a fire spreading in a certain landscape, allowing officials to more effectively monitor smoldering fires and track how fires evolve. Furthermore, c-FIRST can collect detailed data that can enable scientists to understand how an ecosystem may recover from fire events.

"The requirements of the c-FIRST instrument meet the flight profile of the King Air," said KC Sujana, operations engineer for the B200 King Air. "The c-FIRST team wanted a quick integration, the flight speed in the range 130 and 140 knots on a level flight, communication and navigation systems, and the instruments power requirement that are perfectly fit for King Air's capability."

By first testing the instrument onboard the B200 King Air, the c-FIRST team can evaluate its readiness for future satellite missions investigating wildfires. On a changing planet where wildfires are increasingly common, instruments like c-FIRST could provide data that can aid firefighting agencies to fight fires more effectively, and to understand the ecosystemic impacts of extreme weather events.

TPS, from Page 5

and Astronautics Department. Students explored core AI principles, including autonomous stacks, robotic perception, decision-making algorithms, and imitation learning. The curriculum combined theoretical instruction, guest lectures, and hands-on coding exercises using robotic systems to illustrate how AI-driven autonomy compares to traditional control methods.

Week 2: Engaging with Silicon Valley's aerospace tech leaders

In the second week, TPS students traveled to Silicon Valley, where they visited industry leaders such as NVIDIA, Autodesk, Skydio, Lighter Than Air Research, Lockheed Martin Space, Astranis, Wisk, and Windborne. These visits allowed students to see firsthand how AI, sensor fusion, software-defined mission systems, and open-architecture standards are revolutionizing aerospace development.

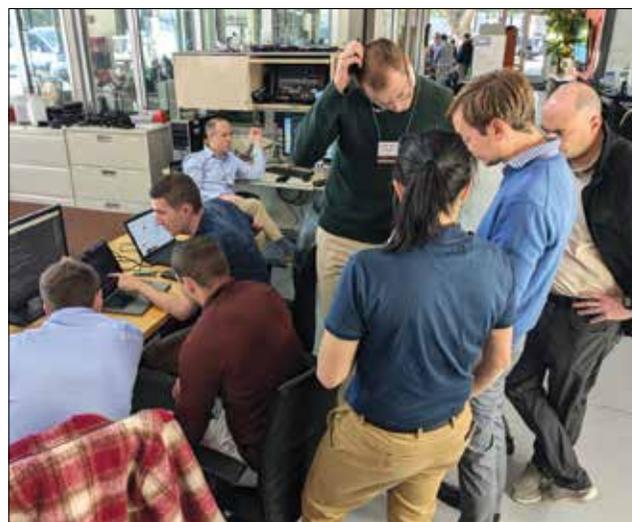
By immersing students in cutting-edge technology development, TPS is strengthening the defense-industry-academia collaboration that has been foundational to innovation since the early days of Silicon Valley.

Beyond the course: AI in flight, space, mission systems

The two-week Stanford engagement was just the beginning. The Data-Driven Test program continues its five weeks of intensive learning throughout the year-long TPS curriculum with dedicated coursework and hands-on applications in flight sciences, space systems, and mission technologies.

- Flight and Space Sciences: Students develop neural network-based reinforcement learning algorithms for real-world flight test scenarios.

- Mission Systems: AI and machine learning applications are introduced into advanced sensing, electronic warfare, combat identification, and radar detection exercises.



Air Force photograph

United States Air Force Test Pilot School students grapple with hands-on challenges of developing and testing AI robots during its inaugural "Test of AI and Emerging Technologies" course in partnership with Stanford University and the Department of the Air Force's Stanford AI Studio, Jan. 15, 2025. The collaboration marks the school's first major engagement with academia in recent memory and is part of a broader effort to prepare future military test leaders for the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, data-driven systems, and autonomous technologies

- Capstone Projects: Students lead final exercises using the X-62 fighter autonomy testbed and the Joint Simulation Environment to develop and test AI-driven combat agents in operationally relevant scenarios.

• Bridging gap between academia, military T&E

The integration of Stanford University and Silicon Val-

ley expertise into TPS represents a modern evolution of a decades-long relationship between military test, academia, and industry. Historically, TPS partnered with universities in the 1960s to develop the Aerospace Research Pilot School, a precursor to astronaut training. Today, as AI reshapes the landscape of modern warfare, this new initiative continues that legacy — ensuring TPS remains the world's premier flight test institution.

A key partner in the effort was the Stanford AI Studio, led by Col. Jason Hansberger and Maj. John Alora. The AI Studio connects defense, academia, and industry to drive AI-based solutions into operational Air Force capabilities. Their expertise was instrumental in shaping the course's defense-relevant curriculum.

• A lasting impact on military T&E

With its successful completion, the Test of AI and Emerging Technologies course represents a pivotal shift in TPS's curriculum, ensuring future classes will continue to benefit from AI education and industry engagement. The program also supports broader Air Force modernization priorities, equipping TPS graduates to test and validate autonomous, AI-driven systems that will define future warfighting capabilities.

"By dedicating time in our curriculum to AI and data-driven test methodologies, TPS is ensuring our graduates remain at the cutting edge of military technology," said Col. James Valpiani, TPS commandant. "Long after data-driven technologies are in warfighter hands, TPS will have the Data-Driven Test program as a template for identifying and preparing the Department's test enterprise for the next technological horizon."

Through initiatives like the Data-Driven Test program, TPS continues its 80-year tradition of producing the world's finest test leaders, ensuring that the Air Force maintains its advantage in rapidly evolving warfighting domains.

Civ-Mil continues 35-year tradition of supporting Edwards airmen

by Laisa Leao
Edwards AFB, Calif.

The Edwards Air Force Base Civilian/Military Support Group connects civic and military leaders with the common goal of partnering to support projects that improve quality of life at Edwards.

“As a remote and isolated installation, members stationed at Edwards AFB can sometimes feel disconnected from the rest of the world. Civ-Mil helps alleviate this sense of distance by providing a platform for the community to come together and show their appreciation for the sacrifices and dedication of our military personnel,” said Chief Master Sgt. Justin Stoltzfus, 412th Test Wing command chief.

The group is a non-profit organization and raises funds mainly through donations and three annual fundraiser events: Spring Mixer, Bob Slade Memorial barbecue and the Installation Banquet and Ceremony. The funds are utilized to complement and fill the gaps of projects and events, such as to purchase and install flags and flag poles; picnic tables and benches for the Flag Park; picnic tables for the Air Force Flight Research Laboratory; the Higher Grounds Internet Café; and

goodie bags for deployed service members, among others.

“A shining example of Civ-Mil’s commitment to supporting our Airmen is their recent effort to update Higher Grounds, a social gathering space where our junior Airmen can connect and unwind. Through their tireless fundraising efforts, Civ-Mil raised an impressive \$10,000 to give the social space a much-needed makeover. The project included a fresh coat of paint, new furniture, massage chairs and many other amenities that have not only improved quality of life, but also boosted morale and camaraderie among our junior teammates,” said Stoltzfus.

The organization’s board of directors are composed by individuals with strong ties to the Antelope Valley community and the military, and who dedicate their expertise and time to serve in the board as a volunteer.

Matthew Winheim, Civ-Mil president, represents the civilian-military foundation of the organization, as both an Air Force veteran and a STEM educational leader himself.

“Most of us in Civ-Mil have served in some form or another, or are one step away from a family member who has served.

We understand the sacrifices required, and we understand our region,” said Winheim. “We love our community’s aerospace flight test heritage and are glad to have the opportunity to support the service members stationed here.”

Winheim teaches Aviation, Planes and Drones, and Mathematics in Space Aeronautics Gateway to Exploration Magnet Academy, a middle school in the Palmdale Unified School District. Winheim’s contribution to promote and inspire innovation in and out the classroom has led him to receive the California 2025 Teacher of the Year award. Winheim is one of five teachers in the state to receive the distinction, also known as the “Sweet Five.”

“Earning such an award was never my intention. I am grateful to have been nominated by my colleagues, and then selected to represent the Palmdale School District, then the County of Los Angeles, and then finally to be selected by State Superintendent Tony Thurmond to represent California Educators at the national level. It is an incredible honor,” said Winheim.

Civ-Mil member like Winheim ensure the bonds between Edwards Airmen and the AV community remain strong today and for future generations.



Air Force photograph

Matthew Winheim, Civ-Mil president, represents the civilian-military foundation of the organization, as both an Air Force veteran and a STEM educational leader himself. Winheim’s contribution to promote and inspire innovation in and out of the classroom has led him to receive the California 2025 Teacher of the Year award.



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NASA's X-59 turns up power, throttles through engine tests

by **Brian Newbacher**
NASA Armstrong

NASA's X-59 quiet supersonic research aircraft took another successful step toward flight with the conclusion of a series of engine performance tests.

In preparation for the X-59's planned first flight this year, NASA and Lockheed Martin successfully completed the aircraft's engine run tests in January. The engine, a modified F414-GE-100 that powers the aircraft's flight and integrated subsystems, performed to expectations during three increasingly complicated tests that ran from October through January at contractor Lockheed Martin's Skunk Works facility in Palmdale, California.

"We have successfully progressed through our engine ground tests as we planned," said Raymond Castner, X-59 propulsion lead at NASA's Glenn Research Center in Cleveland. "We had no major showstoppers. We were getting smooth and steady airflow as predicted from wind tunnel testing. We didn't have any structural or excessive vibration issues. And parts of the



Lockheed Martin photograph by Gary Tice

NASA's X-59 lights up the night sky with its unique Mach diamonds, also known as shock diamonds, during maximum afterburner testing at Lockheed Martin Skunk Works in Palmdale, California. The test demonstrated the engine's ability to generate the thrust required for supersonic flight, advancing NASA's Quesst mission.

engine and aircraft that needed cooling were getting it."

The tests began with seeing how the aircraft's hydraulics, electrical, and environmental control systems performed when the engine was powered up but idling. The team then per-

formed throttle checks, bringing the aircraft up to full power and firing its afterburner — an engine component that generates additional thrust — to maximum.

A third test, throttle snaps, involved moving the throttle swiftly back and

forth to validate that the engine responds instantly. The engine produces as much as 22,000 pounds of thrust to achieve a desired cruising speed of Mach 1.4 (925 mph) at an altitude of approximately 55,000 feet.

The X-59's engine, similar to those aboard the U.S. Navy's F-18 Super Hornet, is mounted on top of the aircraft to reduce the level of noise reaching the ground. Many features of the X-59, including its 38-foot-long nose, are designed to lower the noise of a sonic boom to that of a mere "thump," similar to the sound of a car door slamming nearby.

Next steps before first flight will include evaluating the X-59 for potential electromagnetic interference effects, as well as "aluminum bird" testing, during which data will be fed to the aircraft under both normal and failure conditions. A series of taxi tests and other preparations will also take place before the first flight.

The X-59 is the centerpiece of NASA's Quesst mission, which seeks to solve one of the major barriers to commercial supersonic flight over land by making sonic booms quieter.

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CITY OF PALMDALE



NASA inspires high school engineering club

by Priscila Valdez
NASA Armstrong

A group of enthusiastic high school students recently visited NASA to learn about facilities and capabilities that enable the agency's researchers to explore, innovate, and inspire for the benefit of humanity.

Engineering club students from Palmdale High School in Southern California were able to connect classroom lessons to real-world applications, sparking curiosity and ambition while at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center at Edwards, Calif. "I learned a lot about the different careers that you can get at a place like NASA," student Roberto Cisnero said.

Through partnerships with the regional STEM community, NASA's STEM Engagement provides local students with hands-on opportunities aligned with NASA's missions. "Many students do not get the opportunity to be encouraged to pursue STEM careers. Part of our NASA mission is to be that encourager," said Randy Thompson, deputy director for NASA Armstrong Research and Engineering.

Highlights from the visit included demonstrations at a mission control room, the Subscale Flight Research Laboratory, the Flight Loads Laboratory, and the Experimental Fabrication Shop, all of which support high-risk, atmospheric flight research and test projects. Students engaged with laboratory technicians, engineers, and program managers, asking questions about the work they do. "It was fun to see what the valued people at NASA do with all of the resources," student Jonathan Peitz said.



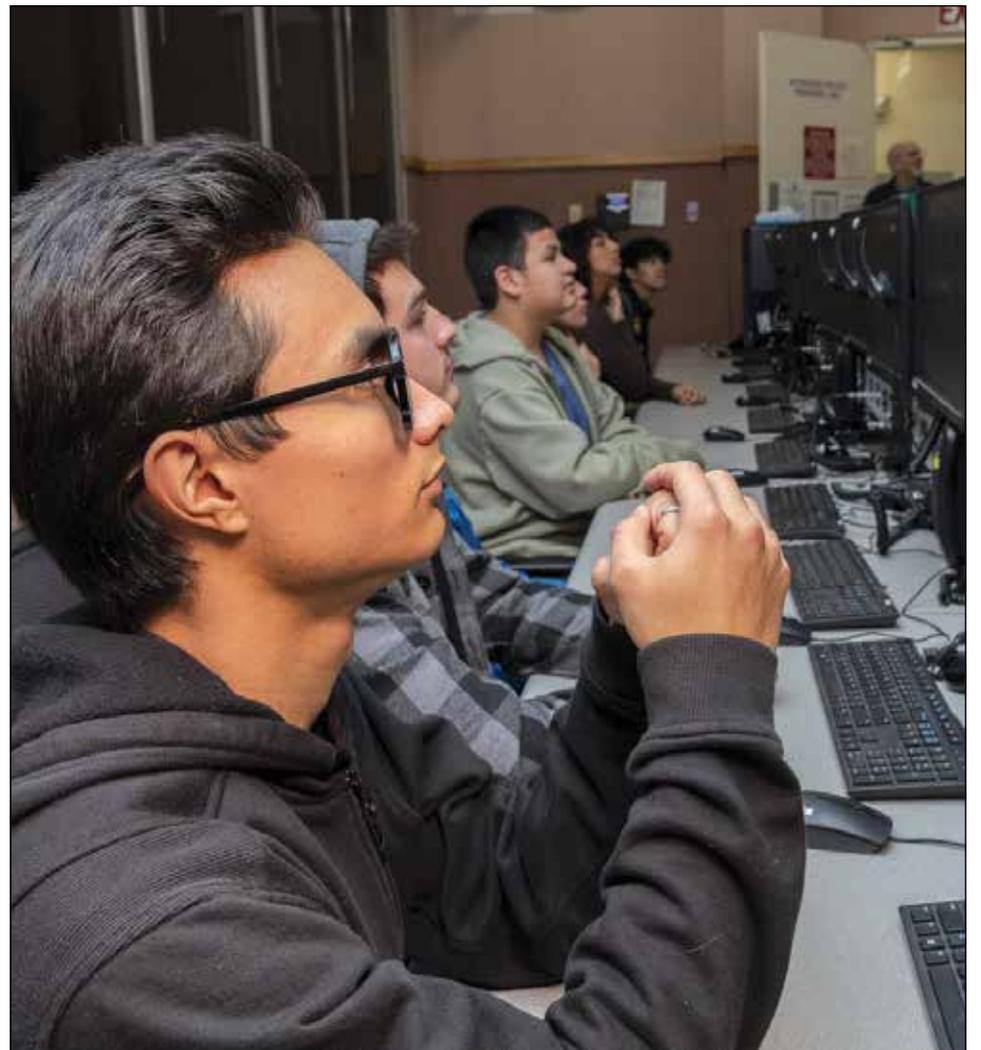
NASA photographs by Steve Freeman

Students examine the Global Hawk Fairing Load Test at the Experimental Ship at NASA's Armstrong Flight Center at Edwards, Calif. The students are from the engineering club from Palmdale High School in Palmdale, Calif.

NASA's California Office of STEM Engagement hosted the visit in celebration of National Aviation History Month. By supporting students, educators, and expanding STEM participation, NASA aims to inspire future leaders and build a diverse, skilled workforce.



Students look at a sub-scale model at the Dale Reed Subscale Flight Research Laboratory at NASA's Armstrong Research Flight Center at Palmdale, Calif.



Students tour a control room at NASA's Armstrong Flight Center at Edwards, Calif.



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RED FLAG 25-1 CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis

A U.S. Air Force B-52 Stratofortress assigned to the 2nd Bomb Wing, Barksdale Air Force Base, La., arrives to Nellis AFB, Nev., in preparation for Red Flag-Nellis 25-1, Jan. 23, 2025. Red Flag is an opportunity to enhance the readiness and training necessary to respond as a joint force to any potential crisis or challenge across the globe.

57th Wing Public Affairs

Nellis AFB, Nev.

Red Flag 25-1 that took flight Jan. 27-Feb. 6, 2025, at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., united U.S. forces with allies from the Royal Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force in a combined exercise to enhance combat readiness and strengthen partnerships.

This iteration of Red Flag marks 50 years of high-end training, highlighting Red Flag's enduring legacy of preparing its participants to be combat-ready and mission-effective in the face of evolving threats.

For half a century, Red Flag has provided warfighters with realistic training to prepare for combat against evolving adversaries. What began in 1975 to address lessons learned in Vietnam has grown into an international training ground with participants from 29 nations honing their skills in joint and allied operations. This year, the RAF and RAAF bring critical expertise to the fight.

"Integrating combat capability is what Red Flag is all about and being ready for integrated combat operations with our Allies is key to success in any potential future conflict," said Col. Eric Winterbottom, commander of the 414th Combat Training Squadron. "The Royal Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force bring not only advanced capabilities but also a wealth of operational experience that enriches everyone's experience in this exercise. Red Flag is



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Makenna Patterson

A Royal Air Force FGR-4 Typhoon assigned RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland, Scotland takes off for a mission during Red Flag-Nellis 25-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Jan. 28, 2025. Since 1975, 29 countries which include the Royal Air Force, Royal Australian Air force, European Participating Air Forces, a consortium of Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Norway and NATO Airborne Warning and Control Systems have joined the U.S. in these exercises.



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Makenna Patterson

A Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) F-35A Lightning II takes off for a mission during Red Flag-Nellis 25-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Jan. 28, 2025. These advanced aircraft bring unprecedented capabilities, including enhanced stealth, sensor fusion, and network connectivity, which enable the maintenance of air superiority and deter potential adversaries.

RIGHT: A U.S. Navy EA-18G Growler assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron 135, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., arrives to Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Jan. 22, 2025, in preparation for Red Flag-Nellis 25-1. Red Flag was designed to expose each blue force pilot to their first 10 combat missions, allowing them to be more confident, effective, and combat-ready.



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Jordan McCoy

U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Travis Bond, assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron 209, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., climbs into a U.S. Navy EA-18G Growler during Red Flag-Nellis 25-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Feb. 5, 2025.



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis

EXCELLENCE, from Page 12

where we come together as one team to sharpen our edge, build trust, and prepare for tomorrow's challenges today."

Red Flag continues to focus on overcoming the complexities of Great Power Competition, with an emphasis on integrating air, space, and cyber capabilities to counter advanced threats. Training scenarios push participants to operate in contested



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Sanders

A U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle assigned to 366th Fighter Wing, Mountain Home Air Force Base, Idaho, taxis in after a mission during Red Flag-Nellis 25-1, Jan. 27, 2025, at Nellis AFB, Nev. The objective of exercises with speed and scale is to demonstrate the Department of the Air Force preparedness for complex, large-scale military operations, demonstrating the ability to operate in a contested, dynamic environment against high end threats on short notice.



Air Force photograph



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis

A U.S. Air Force F-16 assigned to the 64th Aggressor Squadron, Nellis Air Force Base, takes off for a mission in preparation for Red Flag-Nellis 25-1 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Jan. 23, 2025. Red Flag exercises build partnerships and interoperability among our allies and across domains.

LEFT: Nov. 19, 1975: The first Red Flag air-to-air training exercise started at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., to provide realistic training for combat aircrews. The 64th and 65th Aggressor Squadrons flew T-38s and then F-5 Tiger II aircraft using Soviet tactics and markings to simulate Soviet, Warsaw Pact and Soviet client air forces' tactics and operations. Initially a fighter only exercise, today's Red Flag integrates the entire spectrum of U.S. Air Force, joint, and coalition aircraft and space capabilities.

and degraded environments, forcing rapid decision-making and teamwork under pressure. The RAF and RAAF play key roles in these scenarios, demonstrating their ability to seamlessly integrate with U.S. forces in highly dynamic combat situations.

With more than 500,000 military personnel trained and more than 420,000 sorties flown since its inception, Red Flag's legacy continues to evolve. Allied participation is a cornerstone of that legacy ensuring that joint and partner forces are ready to respond to threats anywhere in the world.

Red Flag 25-1 highlights the enduring importance of allied partnerships demonstrating that the U.S., RAF, and RAAF are stronger together in facing the challenges of the future.



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Bamboo Eagle 25-1 tests forces in a combat representative environment

by 57th Wing Public Affairs
Nellis AFB, Nev.

The U.S. Air Force Warfare Center recently wrapped up Bamboo Eagle 25-1, concluding a series of coordinated, multi-domain operations that involved more than 10,000 personnel from multiple Air Force major commands, the joint force and allied air forces.

The exercise, which featured more than 175 aircraft, spanned several locations — including California, Hawaii, Florida and Guam — and included participants from the U.S. as well as the Royal Air Force (United Kingdom), Royal Australian Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force. The exercise was designed to execute Agile Combat Employment, advance communication as well as command and control tactics and simulate realistic operations in a contested environment.

“Bamboo Eagle provides us an opportunity to align with the warrior ethos mentality,” said Lt. Col. Joseph Manglitz, 393rd Expeditionary Bomb Squadron commander. “It’s one thing to train at home — and we train hard at home — but it’s even better to bring a subset of our base on the road here and work together to generate air power alongside the rest of the combat air force and our allies.”

Participants engaged in a series of complex missions designed to simulate the ever-evolving challenges of modern warfare.

“From the perspective of the B-2, this exercise was a real test,”



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Monique Stober

Staff Sgt. Jose Melendez, a 6th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (AMXS) crew chief, marshals in a KC-135 Stratotanker assigned to MacDill Air Force base, Florida, at McClellan Airport in Sacramento California, during exercise Bamboo Eagle 25-1, Feb. 11, 2025. The 6th MXS provides on-and-off equipment maintenance for KC-135 aircraft supporting air refueling.

said Manglitz. “And when we’re able to overcome challenges and succeed in these simulated combat environments, that really bolsters this idea of warrior ethos within each and every one of us.”

Back on the ground, maintenance teams worked around the clock to support the distributed operations and ensure that all aircraft remained mission-ready amid the demanding operational tempo.

“It’s a tough job, and sometimes it’s a thankless job, but the maintenance crews do it anyway,” said 1st Lt. Benjamin Brooks, a maintenance officer assigned to the 366th Maintenance Squadron. “They’re out in the sun sweating, and it makes me really proud to be able to lead people who are so willing to get the job done and who have so much pride in the work they do.”

The multinational nature of the exercise provided additional opportunities for cross-service learning and integration, bringing interoperability to a new level.

“During Bamboo Eagle the E-7A crews had a number of opportunities to integrate with U.S. command and control entities,” said RAAF Flt. Lt. Jacob Rolfey, an Air Battle Manager aboard the E-7A Wedgetail. “Based on our previous integration, a number of the tactics and procedures that we have in place are similar, but here at Bamboo Eagle, because of the differences with Agile Combat Employment, we were able to gain a common understanding of how to do this with limited information and still execute effectively.”

Adding to that collaborative spirit, multinational leaders

emphasized the exercise’s role in sharpening dynamic operational capabilities.

“Bamboo Eagle tested our ability to integrate the tactical effects we trained in Red Flag from dispersed forces and under distributed command and control,” said RAF Gp. Capt. Guy Lefroy, UK detachment commander. “Throughout the exercise we developed our people’s ability to dynamically deliver air power through empowerment, effective risk management and innovation, ultimately sharpening our individual, service and collective international capabilities to deliver battle-winning effects.”

Bamboo Eagle 25-1 provided an advanced, multi-domain and realistic training environment aimed at preparing the U.S. and allied forces for the evolving demands of modern warfare.



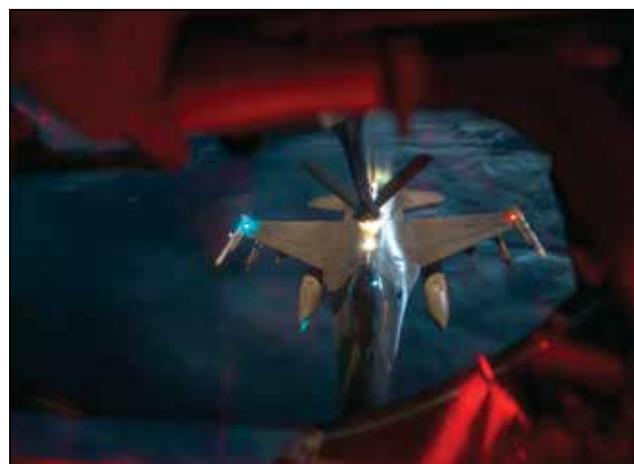
Air Force photograph by Wendy Day

Airman 1st Class Christopher Ian Padecio, assigned to the 51st Combat Communications Squadron, works to ensure communication capabilities during Exercise Bamboo Eagle 2025 at March Air Reserve Base, Calif., Feb. 13, 2025. Bamboo Eagle enhances operational readiness by ensuring reliable and secure communications in a contested environment.



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Bryson Sherard

Three B-2 Spirit stealth bombers prepare for departure during Exercise Bamboo Eagle at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Feb. 10, 2025. Bamboo Eagle incorporates multiple mission scenarios, preparing aircrews for complex operational challenges.



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Monique Stober

A U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon receives fuel from a KC-135 Stratotanker assigned to the 6th Air Refueling Wing during exercise Bamboo Eagle 25-1 over the Southeast Pacific Ocean, Feb. 12, 2025. As part of Bamboo Eagle, the 50th Air Refueling Squadron operates the KC-135 Stratotanker to provide air refueling support that extends the reach and endurance of combat aircraft.



Air Force photograph by 2nd Lt. Alexis Kula

Four F/A-18F Super Hornets, assigned to the Royal Australian Air Force, fly alongside a KC-46 Pegasus, assigned to the 305th Air Mobility Wing, while preparing to receive fuel over the Pacific Ocean during exercise Bamboo Eagle 25-1, Feb. 12, 2025. Bamboo Eagle tests the ability to deploy rapidly, maneuver the Joint Force and allies at speed, scale and mass, and deliver cross-functional and lethal combat capabilities.

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DM at the 100th Annual Tucson Rodeo Parade

The 100th Annual Tucson Rodeo Parade kicks off in Tucson, Ariz., Feb. 20, 2025. Members assigned to the 355th Wing participated in the parade to show community support.



Air Force photographs by Staff Sgt. Abbey Rieves

The 100th Annual Tucson Rodeo Parade kicks off in Tucson, Ariz., Feb. 20, 2025. Members assigned to the 355th Wing participated in the parade to show community support.



Col. Gabriel Brown, 355th Wing deputy commander, waves at the 100th Annual Tucson Rodeo Parade in Tucson, Ariz., Feb. 20, 2025. Brown's attendance shows the commitment of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base to the local community.



RIGHT: U.S. Airmen assigned to the 355th Wing participate in the 100th Annual Tucson Rodeo Parade in Tucson, Ariz., Feb. 20, 2025. The Airmen attended the parade to represent Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, which is one of the largest installations and flying operations in the United States Air Force, to the community.

DM Airman awarded Red Cross Certificate of Merit for saving a life

by Staff Sgt. Abbey Rieves
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

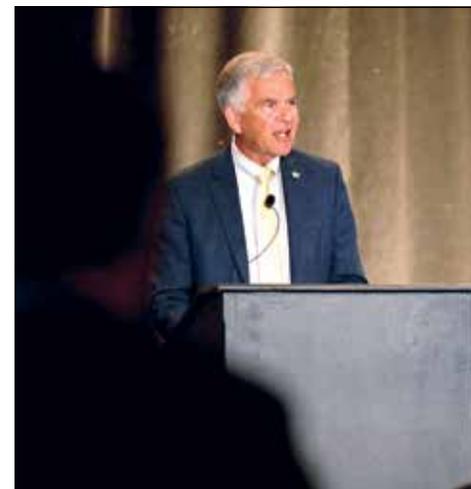
U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Rickenbach, a firefighter assigned to the 355th Civil Engineer Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, was awarded the Red Cross Certificate of Merit for administering life-saving actions, in Oro Valley, Arizona, Feb. 4, 2025.

The Red Cross Certificate of Merit is the highest award given to an individual who saved or sustained life using skills learned through Red Cross training.

"It is our privilege to honor an individual who embodies the spirit of resil-



Staff Sgt. Christopher Rickenbach, 355th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, and local community members stand for a photo at a ceremony honoring him in Oro Valley, Ariz., Feb. 4, 2025. Rickenbach was awarded the Red Cross Certificate of Merit for administering life-saving actions to an unconscious 52-year old man.



The honorable Joe Winfield, Oro Valley mayor, speaks at a ceremony in Oro Valley, Ariz., Feb. 4, 2025. Winfield spoke of building resilience and mobilizing partnerships within the community.



Air Force photographs by Staff Sgt. Abbey Rieves

Staff Sgt. Christopher Rickenbach, 355th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, left, and his mother, right, attend a ceremony in Oro Valley, Ariz., Feb. 4, 2025. At the ceremony, Rickenbach was awarded the Red Cross Certificate of Merit for administering life-saving actions.

ience and serves as a beacon of hope in Tucson, for his life-saving actions," said Amanda Wiggins, president and CEO of the Marana Chamber of Commerce. "First responders are not just the heroes in moments of crisis, they are essential pillars in building and maintaining a resilient, well-prepared community whether they are on or off duty."

On Sept. 8, 2024, Chris Rickenbach was playing recreational soccer when he heard a cry for help. Rickenbach said he had been trained to run towards someone shouting for help.

With a character built upon Air Force core values and elite fire protection train-

ing, Rickenbach dropped everything to help his fellow community member, a 52-year old man, unconscious with no pulse.

In addition to being CPR certified since he was 16 years old, Rickenbach has undergone 68 training days to become a U.S. Air Force firefighter, trained in hazardous materials (HAZMAT) awareness operations, emergency medical technician (EMT) certification, and wildland fire management from the Louis F. Garland Department of Defense Fire Academy at Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, Texas.

Upon graduation from the fire academy, firefighters also receive national

certifications such as the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians (NREMT).

After saving a life in the community he serves in, Rickenbach remained humble and said he happened to be in the right place at the right time.

"This evening [we are] building community resilience and mobilizing partnerships and this resonates deeply in Oro Valley," said the honorable Joe Winfield, Oro Valley Mayor. "This work is essential not only in times of crisis but in preparing communities to be stronger, more connected and ready for whatever comes next."



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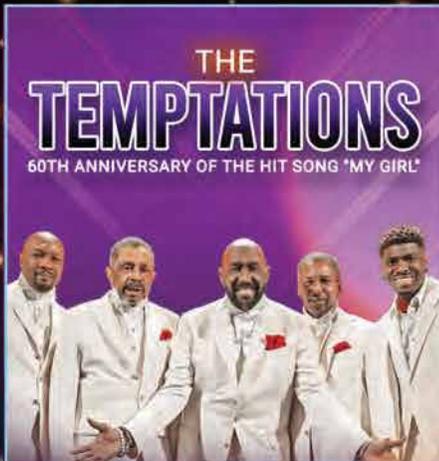
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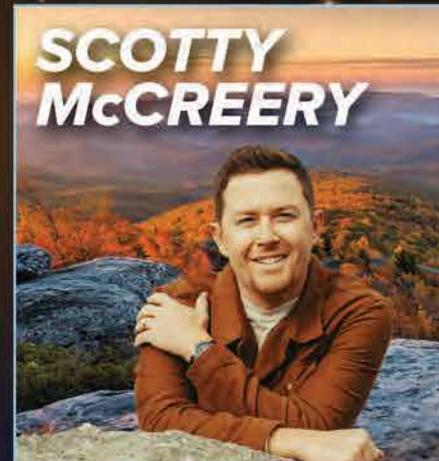
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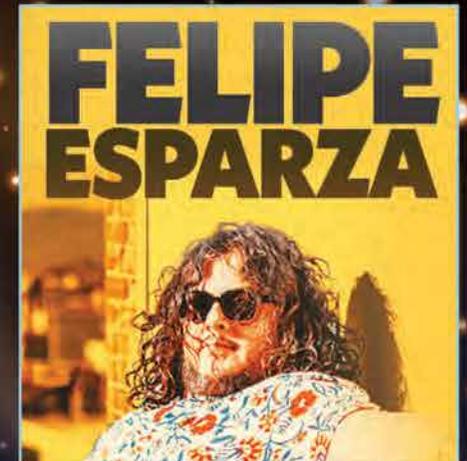
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DM Airmen take part in Mosaic Lightning 25-01

by Senior Airman Devlin Bishop
Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

U.S. Airmen from the 355th Wing participated in a large-scale exercise in Utah, Feb. 1 to 8, 2025.

Airmen from multiple squadrons across Davis-Monthan took part in Mosaic Lightning 25-01, which tested the wing's readiness by simulating a late-notice deployment to an austere environment. The exercise aimed to validate the wing's ability to project total force capabilities in a contested setting while simultaneously testing the Air Force's new deployable combat wing initiative.

"The overall purpose of Mosaic Lightning was to test our wing's readiness and project combat search and rescue into a contested environment," said Capt. Jesse Copeland, 355th Wing A3/A4 force protection officer. "This exercise allowed us to understand what it really means to operate under the Agile Combat Employment concept, working in unfamiliar environments with less-than-optimal resources."

During the exercise, Airmen relied on their Mission Ready Airmen training, adapting to new challenges and stepping outside their usual roles. The goal was to reinforce problem-solving skills and prepare for real-world scenarios where adaptability is key.

"Getting into an exercise environment like this gives Airmen a chance to understand their roles better and see what they may be called upon to do," Copeland said. "Many younger



Air Force photographs by Senior Airman Devlin Bishop

A U.S. Airman runs toward simulated gunfire during Mosaic Lightning 25-01 in Utah, Feb. 6, 2025. ML 25-01 tested the 355th Wing's capability to deploy at a moment's notice and operate effectively in an unfamiliar austere environment while facing simulated threats like missile strikes and attacks from opposing forces.



A U.S. Airman helps another Airman with a simulated injury to their feet during Mosaic Lightning 25-01 in Utah, Feb. 6, 2025. ML 25-01 put participating Airmen in scenarios which forced them to operate outside of the normal scope of their job requirements to test their Mission-Ready Airman capabilities.

Airmen have not had the deployment experience that older members have, so exercises like this provide an invaluable opportunity to prepare for future operations."

Master Sgt. Brian Pontes, 355th Wing inspector general exercise manager and lead evaluator for ML 25-01, highlighted the scale of the exercise and the collaboration required to ensure mission success.

"From the inspector general's perspective, this was an exercise that was developed across the wing and encompassed about 12 of our squadrons in a mass effort to test and evaluate readiness," Pontes said. "This was the first large-scale event where we implemented a sustainment aspect, bringing in the 355th Mission

Support Group to sustain personnel in a simulated deployed environment." The exercise not only tested operational capabilities but also helped refine future training and readiness efforts. Wing leadership identified areas for improvement while reinforcing established tactics, techniques and procedures. "It's good to test your readiness and know where you stand so you can see where improvements are needed," Pontes said. "Coming away from Mosaic Lightning 25-01, we have clear directions for future focus areas, but we also confirmed that we have strong processes in place."

Looking ahead, the 355th Wing will use the lessons learned from this exercise to enhance future iterations of Mosaic Lightning. Each phase will continue to refine the integration of operations, maintenance, mission support and command and control elements, ensuring the wing remains ready for dynamic and unpredictable operational environments.

"Mosaic Lightning 25-01 was our first step in the direction of developing a deployable combat wing, integrating generation, employment and sustainment stages," Pontes said. "This exercise sets the foundation for the future, ensuring we are prepared to operate effectively in any situation."

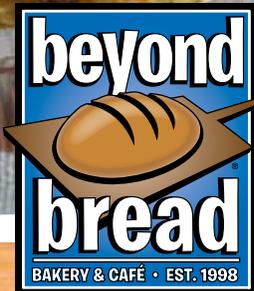
As the Air Force continues to emphasize combat readiness and adaptability, exercises like Mosaic Lightning 25-01 will remain a critical component in preparing Airmen to meet the challenges of modern warfare.



A U.S. Air Force HH-60W Jolly Green II helicopter assigned to the 55th Rescue Squadron takes off during Mosaic Lightning 25-01 in Utah, Feb. 6, 2025. ML 25-01 tested the Air Force's new deployable combat wing initiative by grading the 355th Wing's ability to mobilize a total-force group to an austere environment where they faced scenarios including simulated missile strikes on their forward operating site and attacks from opposing forces.

Tech. Sgt. Daniel Middaugh, 355th Logistics Readiness Squadron fuels operations section chief, oversees a forward area refueling point exercise during Mosaic Lightning 25-01 in Utah, Feb. 5, 2025. During the FARP, the Airmen had to perform effectively while under threat from opposing forces.

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The weaving of a tale and a couple of pilots

by Bob Alvis
special to Aerotech News

Several years ago, I was the recipient of a box of books about aviation that a friend had found at an estate sale.

I put the box in the garage, and it wasn't until a couple weeks later that I looked at the contents. Most of the time these types of books have very little "wow" factor and usually end up in a donation bin somewhere.

When I was about halfway through this box, one book really caught my eye. Being a student of military history, I knew a bit about Masajiro "Mike" Kawato and his World War II exploits as a Japanese fighter ace.

The book, *Flight into Conquest*, was the personal account of his World War II exploits — as he saw it— and in the 1970s, he started to travel the air show circuits selling and promoting his book.

At some point the book and its stories started to get real scrutiny, as some people started to question many of the claims.

The one story that had people poking around was the book's claim that Mike had shot down legendary World War II Marine Ace Greg "Pappy" Boyington. Historians looking at that Jan. 3, 1944, mission where Boyington was shot down did agree that Mike was in that 40-plane



Courtesy photograph

World War II fighter pilots Masajiro "Mike" Kawato and Greg "Pappy" Boyington share a moment.

formation that tangled with Pappy's famous Black Sheep, but that he could not have been the one that shot him down.

In a strange twist, it wasn't long until Mike and Pappy found themselves together. Mike said that he had contacted NBC, which was producing the *Baa Baa Black Sheep* television program, and a meet up happened in Burbank not long after.

Funny that the combatants had no problem with each other and became good friends over

time and maybe it was their shared experience as POWs that formed their bond. Many times, they would share a table at air shows and events and sit side-by-side autographing books.

After some time, Mike's record was researched and it was found that he only had one and a quarter victories in World War II, but in his book he was claiming 18 victories. Details like this start to chip away at all the other accounts in the book, and that's sad. I'm sure many of those details are cor-

rect, but now they have a cloud over them.

That being said, I must point out that in the strange world of friendships that Pappy, with all his victories and being a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, never called out Mike for any of his writing and never debunked that it was Mike who shot him down. Maybe it was the fact that Captain Kawato had been in the scrap that day — just another reason their friendship endured.

Many times, I have been at events where questioning and differences of opinion about aerial exploits have come into question, but I always follow one common rule— let the

men who flew the planes and fought the battles be the ones to question the actions and share the truths. Too many times, we younger generations can have our favorites, and we can push to have different outcomes, but that serves no purpose when it comes to making sure the facts are correct and that the legends really are legends.

So where does that leave us now with this story? Taking it all in where we are now in history, all we can really say is Major Boyington and Captain Kawato were best friends and no matter what the record shows that's all that matters to the outcome of this story.

Now, another strange twist to this story was how did this book find its way into my garage from an estate sale? When I opened it up, some papers fell out and after looking at the book, I started in on the papers. Come to find out, this book came from an optometrist who was doing Mike's eye exams to keep his pilot's license current. Pretty cool since I have Mike's signature on many of the documents!

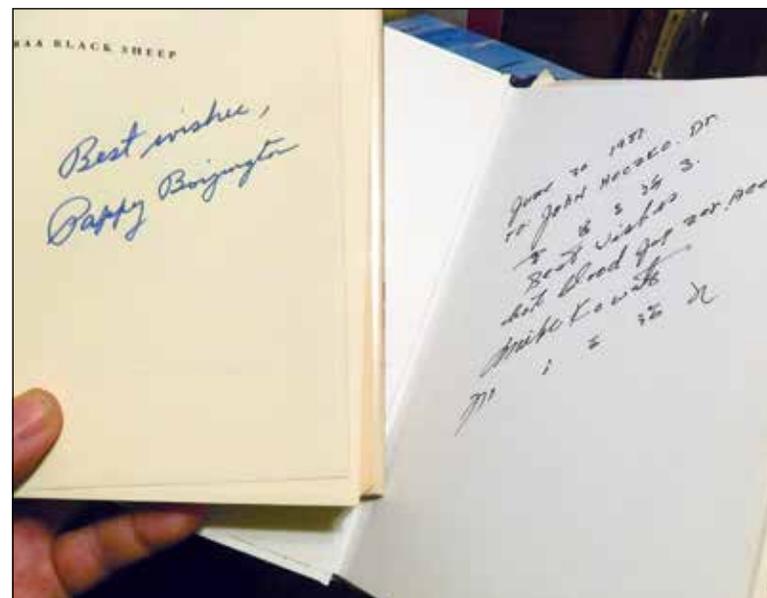
In working on more air shows and events I can count in my life, I was blessed to cross paths with Pappy at some air shows and have some books signed by him. So now on my bookshelf the two share space side-by-side just like they did later in life, and I'm pretty sure late at night there is some pretty intense hanger flying going back and forth between the two men who took to the skies in World War II.

Until next time, Bob out . . .



Photograph by Bob Alvis

Two books, two heroes, two autographs.



Photograph by Bob Alvis

Masajiro "Mike" Kawato and Greg "Pappy" Boyington's books side-by-side.



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The Undersigned will sell at public sale by competitive bidding at www.storage-treasures.com to end **March 29, 2025 at 10:00 am** on the premises where said property has been stored & which are located at: **Storelocal Challenger Way, 42133 Challenger Way Lancaster, CA 93535** County of Los Angeles, State of California.

The following Property consists of:
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NAME: Ken L Autery

The Undersigned will sell at public sale by competitive bidding at www.storage-treasures.com to end **April 05, 2025 at 10:00 am** on the premises where said property has been stored & which are located at: **Storelocal Lancaster, 42738 4th St E Lancaster, CA 93535** County of Los Angeles, State of California.

NAME: Carrie Tapia

The Undersigned will sell at public sale by competitive bidding at www.storage-treasures.com to end **April 05, 2025 at 10:00 am** on the premises where said property has been stored & which are located at: **Storelocal L8 429 East Ave L8 Lancaster, CA 93535** County of Los Angeles, State of California.

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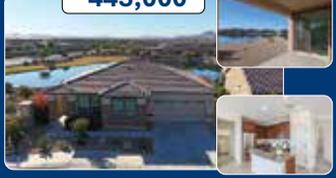
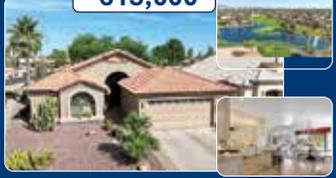
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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC LIEN SALES
Business & Professional Code Section 21700-21707**

Notice is hereby given by the undersigned that a public lien sale of the following described personal property will be held at the hours of **12 noon on the 12th day of March 2025** or thereafter. The auction is being held at **www.selfstorageauction.com** by competitive bid. The property is stored by **Nova Storage located 7349 Suva St, Downey CA 90240**

The items to be sold are generally described as follows: Furniture, clothing, tools and or other household items stored by the following persons.

- 1243 Ybarra, Araceli
- 6415 Guerra, David
- 1108 Rodriguez, Josue
- 6164 Repiche, Philip
- 4047 Leal, Jose Luis
- 1116 Solorio, Erica
- 1060 Lomeli, Luis
- 5334 Finley, Warren
- 6044 Chaves, Alejandro
- 4055 Huaman, Zulema
- 5007 Akiyama, Glen
- 2015 Salazar, Antonio
- 4019 Akiyama, Glen

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The items to be sold are generally described as follows: Furniture, clothing, tools and or other household items stored by the following persons.

- Q15 Roman, Manuel
- V34 Rosales, Wendy
- T36 Mitchell, James
- T37 Mitchell, James
- P20 Washington, Debra
- V08 Ourega Mahi, Veronique
- G33 Mann, Carlton
- H09 Trotman, R Shawn Ragus Group LLC
- I01 Kimp, Heather
- V05 Mitchell, James
- N09 Hernandez Cervantes, Helen
- F07 Castro, Francisco
- Q06 Lamb, Shavil
- W07 Martinez-Diaz, Lilia
- L06 Navarrete, Isabel
- I29 Nichols, Lamont

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- E631 Fuentes, Rigoberto
- E612 Lima, Jr., Eduardo
- E663 Miranda, Mario
- G848 Love, Rita

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The items to be sold are generally described as follows: Furniture, clothing, tools and or other household items stored by the following persons.

- 2238 Hernandez, Misael
- 3312 Hernandez, Lizbeth
- 2210 Arana, Jaime
- P4004 Machuca, Rosa
- 2435 Lopez, Magdalena
- 2329 Barragala- Ruiz, Nora
- 1424 Hernandez Mejia, Norma
- 2106 Schreiber, Kenna
- 0236 Rezex, Pedro
- 0194 Aguilera, Hector
- 4016 Michel, Leticia
- 1025 Munoz, Kimberly

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- 0405 Pineda, Julio Roberto
- 0358 Zamora, Michel
- 0397 Ramirez, Andrea
- 0643 Lopez, Leonor
- 0624 Martinez, Miguel
- 0053 Garcia, Isidro
- 3204 Medrano, Oscar

Date: February 20th, 2025 Signed NOVA STORAGE This notice is given in accordance with the provisions of section 21700 et seq. of Business & Professional Code of the Sate of California. The owner reserves the right to bid at the sale. All purchased goods are sold "As Is" and must be paid for and removed at the time of sale. Sales subject to prior cancellation in the event of settlement between owner & obligated party. Auctioneer: Nova Storage

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC LIEN SALES
Business & Professional Code Section 21700-21707**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC LIEN SALES
Business & Professional Code Section
21700-21707**

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The items to be sold are generally described as follows: Furniture, clothing, tools and or other household items stored by the following persons.

- B09 Brownlee, David
- C28 Newman, Quinton
- D10 Candice Brown

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Business & Professional Code Section
21700-21707**

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The items to be sold are generally described as follows: Furniture, clothing, tools and or other household items stored by the following persons.

- 0639 DeRoman, Paulino
- 4072 Jimenez, Jonathan
- 0393 Batun-Buford, William Casita BB LLC
- 0241 Gutierrez, Ramon
- 0248 Montanez, Mandy
- 0117 Batun-Buford, William Casita BB LLC

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- 0445 Maiden, Lafunda
- 0196 Webb, Urma
- 0051 Diaz, Brittnee
- 0115 Barrett, Venessa
- 0217 Khaki, Cindy
- 0265 Crumb, Amy
- 0544 Richardson, Marcus
- 0603 Drake, Alex
- 0574 Siebenhoven, H. Von
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The items to be sold are generally described as follows: Furniture, clothing, tools and or other household items stored by the following persons.

- E330 Johnson, Angela
- E371 Castillo, Margarita
- B055 Mason, Kiara
- I2114 Luque, Christopher
- E338 Trotman, Shawn

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The items to be sold are generally described as follows: Furniture, clothing, tools and or other household items stored by the following persons.

- 3109 Gonzalez, Adriana

Date: February 20 2025 Signed NOVA STORAGE This notice is given in accordance with the provisions of section 21700 et seq. of Business & Professional Code of the Sate of California. The owner reserves the right to bid at the sale. All purchased goods are sold "As Is" and must be paid for and removed at the time of sale. Sales subject to prior cancellation in the event of settlement between owner & obligated party. Auctioneer: Nova Storage

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NOW OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK



NOW OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

PALMDALE

3305 E Palmdale Blvd

(661) 797-8034

Mon-Fri 10am - 6pm

Sat-Sun 10am - 5pm

Gate Hours: 6:30am - 6:30pm

LANCASTER

825 W Ave L12

(661) 535-1246

Mon-Fri 10am - 5pm

Sat-Sun 10am - 4pm

Gate Hours: 6:30am - 6:30pm

ADELANTO

16488 Adelanto Rd

(760) 530-4748

Mon-Fri 10am - 5pm

Sat-Sun 10am - 4pm

Gate Hours: 6:30am - 6:30pm



Safe



Clean



Well-Lit



Secure



There's No Place Like Home

New Homes Near Military Bases

Home is where your heart takes you at the end of a long day. It's your special haven to enjoy quality time with loved ones in a neighborhood where people connect at the park with their dogs, or over a delicious BBQ picnic.

If this is what you're looking for, consider creating new memories in a K. Hovnanian® Homes new-construction home in sunny Southern California.

We have 12 welcoming communities waiting for you.

Our Communities Offer:

- ✓ Convenient commutes to military bases and employment hubs like Edwards Air Force Base, Beale Air Force Base, Air Force Plant 42, and Mojave Air and Space Port
- ✓ Each home features one of our interior design Looks, a simple and transparent way to ensure designer-curated style is cohesive throughout your new home

Designed with You in Mind:

- ✓ Prices starting from the mid \$300s
- ✓ For added comfort and privacy, we offer Extra Suite and Extra Suite+ on select plans at select communities, perfect for multi-generational living or hosting extended guests
- ✓ Our Hometown Heroes promotion offers you \$1,000 off of options or closing costs for military, aerospace employees, and others working for the safety of their community^



Come see what our homes have in store for you today

Visit khov.com/socal or call 888-807-0881



AGUILA AT TERRA LAGO
Single-family homes from the low \$500s



ASPIRE AT CYPRESS CROSSING
Single-family homes



ASPIRE AT DAVIS RANCH
Single-family homes



ASPIRE AT SUNNYSIDE
Single-family homes from the low \$400s



ASPIRE AT THE TRAILS
Single-family homes from the mid \$300s



JOSHUA LANDING
Single-family homes from the low \$600s



MIRABELLA
Single-family homes



MONTEROSA
Single-family homes from the mid \$400s



PALO VERDE
Single-family homes from the upper \$400s



TEHACHAPI HILLS
Single-family homes from the low \$500s



THE ESTATES AT SILVERWOOD
Single-family homes in a gated community



WEST VIEW ESTATES
Single-family homes from the low \$500s

^See khov.com/socal for full details. Offer applies to select homes at select communities. Value of Heroes incentive not to exceed \$1,000. Unless otherwise specified, incentives may be applied towards closing costs, upgrades or options. Seller contribution limits may apply and may affect maximum financing. Maximum closing cost assistance may vary based on the purchase price, product, and occupancy. Seller is not a lender. A portion of incentives and/or closing costs are based on the use of affiliated lender, K. Hovnanian American Mortgage, L.L.C. ("KHAM") for financing or an all cash purchase. If KHAM or all cash is not used, the incentives (other than a home price reduction) will be reduced by the greater of \$10,000 or 3% of the purchase price. Offer may not be available in all communities. Incentive must be included at the time of contract. Offer valid for owner occupants only. Additional conditions or restrictions may apply. To qualify for the incentive, applicant must show proof of eligibility at the time of contract signing. To be eligible the applicant on the contract and mortgage must show proof of military or employment status with an ID card or other official documentation. Void where prohibited by law. Incentive is per applicant. The home price reduction incentive is unrelated to and distinct from the other incentives offered and does not require the use of KHAM for financing to receive the price reduction incentive. The list price for certain homes may already reflect a base sales price reduction and/or may be subject to prior sale. Offer not available on all homes, communities or states. Incentives, special interest rate financing options, builder options, upgrades, and/or closing costs will vary by home, homesite and community. Offer subject to change without notice. K. Hovnanian American Mortgage, L.L.C. 3601 Quantum Boulevard, Boynton Beach, FL 33426. NMLS #3259 (www.nmlsconsumeraccess.org). Licensed by California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act. Lic. #4130532. ©2025 K. Hovnanian California Operations, Inc. DRE license #01183847. Artist renderings and photographs; illustrative purposes only. All dimensions are approximate. Features and options may vary. Unless stated hardscape, landscape and decorator items not included. Price reflects options that may have been added to home. Prices are subject to change. See a sales consultant for details. Sales consultants: Barbara Wagar DRE#00606392, Allison Keldgard DRE#01224497, Kevin McInerney DRE# 01750612, Tamara Braden DRE#01879848, Anna Banuelos DRE#01503709, Charlene Oliver DRE#01499600, Giovanni Ciarmitaro DRE#01700314, Adriana Zaragoza DRE#01411082, Nancy Osuna DRE#01945909, Wendy Margrave DRE#01128324, Patricia Beauchamp DRE#01816136, Jessica Harris DRE#01950868, Lynda McInerney DRE#01821460, and Lori Thomas DRE#01454848. Equal Housing Opportunity.