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Supersonic jet makes first flight at Mojave Air, Space Port



Courtesy Photo Boom Supersonic press release

XB-1 takes off from runway 30 at Mojave Air and Space Port on its inaugural flight.

By Cathy Hansen

Special to Aerotech News

Mojave Air and Space Port was the site of another "first flight" on March 22, 2024.

Boom Supersonic's successful maiden flight announced XB-1, the world's first independently developed supersonic jet.

The XB-1 has all the stateof-the-art technologies that will be incorporated in Boom's supersonic airliner, Overture, according to a Boom press release. These features include carbon fiber composites to enable efficient supersonic flight, advanced avionics, digitally optimized aerodynamics, and an advanced supersonic propulsion system.

"Today, XB-1 took flight in the same hallowed airspace where the Bell X-1 first broke the sound barrier in 1947," said Blake Scholl, founder and CEO

of Boom Supersonic. "I've been looking forward to this flight since founding Boom in 2014, and it marks the most significant milestone yet on our path to bring supersonic travel to passengers worldwide."

"Everyone on the XB-1 team should be incredibly proud of this achievement," said Bill "Doc" Shoemaker, Chief Test Pilot for Boom Supersonic. "It has been a privilege to share this journey with so many dedicated and talented professionals. The experience we have gained in reaching this milestone will be invaluable to Boom's revival of supersonic travel."

For Doc, the road to XB-1 encompassed military service, a Stanford doctorate in aeronautics and astronautics, and the first flight of several prototype aircraft. He is a former U.S. naval aviator, and a graduate of the United States Naval Test Pilot School. Shoemaker has flown

more than 5,000 flight hours in 50 aircraft types and has 900 carrier arrested landings.

Taxi test completed last

Boom Supersonic's scaled down prototype, the XB-1, completed taxi tests on Runway 30 at Mojave on Aug. 23, 2023. Earlier in 2023, XB-1 was moved from the company's hangar in Centennial, Colorado, to the Mojave Air and Space Port in Mojave, California, to continue preparations for flight.

The XB-1 is 71 feet in length and serves as a scaled-down prototype with the primary objective of validating pivotal technologies slated for employment in Boom Supersonic's future supersonic airliner, the Overture, which will seat an estimated 65 to 80 passengers. The Overture plans to achieve remarkable speeds of up to

In preparation for flight, Boom's test pilots have completed hundreds of hours in the simulator for aircraft evaluation, operations development, training, and human factors assessments to achieve the highest levels of safety. The test pilots also maintain flight proficiency in a T-38 trainer aircraft, the same aircraft that was used as a chase plane for Friday's flight. The test pilots also use the T-38 to practice formation flying.

Chase aircraft and pilot

Test Pilot Tristan "Geppetto" Brandenburg flew the T-38 chase aircraft which monitored XB-1 in the air. Chase planes accompany new aircraft on their maiden flights to observe how the test plane is handling and verify things like altitude, airspeed, and airworthiness during flight.

"Being in the air with XB-1 during its maiden flight is a mo-



Test Pilot Tristan "Geppetto" Brandenburg sits in cockpit of the T-38 chase aircraft after the historic flight.

ment I will never forget," said Brandenburg. "The team has been working hard to get to this point, and seeing today's flight through mission completion is a huge accomplishment for all

'Geppetto" is a former U.S. Naval aviator and graduated from the United States Naval

Test Pilot School.

High angle of attack landing on Runway 30

The XB-1 met all its test objectives, including safely and successfully achieving an altitude of 7,120 feet and speeds up

See XB-1, Page 4





AFRL's XQ-67A makes 1st successful flight



General Atomics Aeronautical Systems photograph

AFRL's XQ-67A Off Board Sensing Station, or OBSS, designed and built by General Atomics, took its maiden flight Feb. 28 from Gray Butte Field Airport, Palmdale, California. The XQ-67A completed several test points and safely recovered on the first of a series of flight tests. The XQ-67A is the first of a second generation of autonomous collaborative platforms, or ACP.

By Aleah M. Castreion

Air Force Research Laboratory Public Affairs

The Air Force Research Laboratory's Aerospace Systems Directorate successfully flew the XQ-67A, an Off-Board Sensing Station, or OBSS, uncrewed air vehicle Feb. 28, 2024, at the General Atomics Gray Butte Flight Operations Facility near Palmdale, California.

The XQ-67A is the first of a second generation of autonomous collaborative platforms, or ACP.

Following the success of the XQ-58A Valkyrie, the first low-cost uncrewed air vehicle intended to provide the warfighter with credible and affordable mass, the XQ-67A proves the common chassis or "genus" approach to aircraft design, build and test, according to Doug Meador, autonomous collaborative platform capability lead with AFRL's Aerospace Systems Directorate. This approach paves the way for other aircraft "species" to be rapidly replicated on a standard genus chassis.

This new approach also responds to the challenge of great power competition by speeding delivery of affordable, advanced capability to the warfighter.

"This approach will help save time and money by leveraging standard substructures and subsystems, similar to how the automotive industry builds a product line," Meador said. "From there, the genus can be built upon for other aircraft — similar to that of a vehicle frame —with the possibility of adding different aircraft kits to the frame, such as an Off-Board Sensing Station or Off-Board Weapon Station, [or OBWS]."

So, what is an autonomous collaborative platform?

"We broke it down according to how the warfighter sees these put together: autonomy, human systems integration, sensor and weapons payloads, networks and communications and the air vehicle," Meador said.

"We've been evolving this class of systems since the start of the Low Cost Attritable Aircraft Technologies, [or LCAAT], initiative," he added.

The major effort that initially explored the genus/species concept was the Low Cost Attritable Aircraft Platform Sharing, or LCAAPS, program, which fed technology and knowledge forward into the OBSS program that culminated with building and flying the XQ-67A, Meador said.

"The intention behind LCAAPS early on was these systems were to augment, not replace, manned aircraft," said Trenton White, LCAAPS and OBSS program manager from AFRL's Aerospace Systems Directorate.

In late 2014 and early 2015, the initial years of the LCAAT initiative, the team began with some in-house designs, for which Meador credits White, who led the studies early on that evolved into the requirements definition for the Low Cost Attritable Strike Demonstrator, or LCASD, Joint Capability Technology Demonstration. The LCASD team defined, designed, built and tested the XQ-58 for the first time in 2019.

"The first generation was XQ-58, and that was really about prov-

ing the concept that you could build relevant combat capability quickly and cheaply," White said.

The OBSS program built upon the low-cost capability that LCASD proved by leveraging design and manufacturing technology research that had taken place since the first generation and was directed to reduce risk in the development of future generations, White added.

"We had always intended from the start of LCAAT to have multiple vehicle development spirals or threads of vehicle development," White said. "Then once the vehicle is proven ready, you can start integrating stuff with it, such as sensors, autonomy, weapons, payloads and electronics."

With the XQ-67A, the team is using the platform-sharing approach or drawing leverage from automotive industry practices.

"We are looking to leverage technology development that's been done since XQ-58, since that first generation," White added.

The team began discussing LCAAPS in 2018, focusing on the notion of "can we provide the acquirer with a new way of buying aircraft that is different and better and quicker than the old traditional way of how we build manned aircraft," Meador said. "Which means we pretty much start over from scratch every time."

Instead, the team considered the same approach that a car manufacturer applies to building a line of vehicles, where the continuous development over time would work for aircraft, as well.



General Atomics Aeronautical Systems photograph

AFRL's XQ-67A Off Board Sensing Station, or OBSS, designed and built by General Atomics, took its maiden flight Feb. 28 from Gray Butte Field Airport, Palmdale, California.

"It's really about leveraging this best practice that we've seen in the automotive and other industries where time to market has decreased, while the time to initial operating capability for military aircraft has increased at an alarming rate," White said.

With this genus platform, White said a usable aircraft can be created faster at a lower cost with more opportunities for technology refresh and insertion if new models are being developed and rolled out every few years.

AFRL harnesses science and technology innovation for specific operational requirements to ensure meaningful military capabilities reach the hands of warfighters. The

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'Wing-a-Wish' makes Captain 'Soar'



Air Force photograph by Laisa Leao

Col. Douglas Wickert, 412th Test Wing commander, presents a collection of coins to nine-year-old Dean Lomelin, Jan. 31, 2024, at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

By Laisa Leao

Edwards AFB, Calif.

Dean Lomelin is a nine-year-old boy who loves his country, reveres the American flag, and has been fascinated with airplanes from a young age.

Over the last couple of years, Dean developed a stronger affinity for the military, and enjoys spending his free time reading and watching movies about America's forces and the wars it fought.

He also has a rare disorder called Beta-mannosidosis. The disorder affects the way the body breaks down certain sugar molecules which in turn leads to physiological effects. In Dean's case, it started with hearing loss, but quickly progressed to speech dysfunction, learning disabilities, and more recently, vision impairment. Beta-mannosidosis is progressive with no known cure.



Air Force photograph by Laisa Leao

Col. Douglas Wickert, 412th Test Wing commander, "commissions" Dean Lomelin, making him Captain "Soar," during his visit to Edwards Air Force Base, California, Jan. 31, 2024.

The 412th Test Wing indulged Dean's passion for all things military with not just a tour of Edwards Air Force Base, California, but a whole day including simulators, watching the Thunderbirds practice, and getting promoted.

Dean's mom Lorena Lomelin contacted Tech. Sgt. Robert Gregory and Airman 1st Class Matthew Hoover from the 412th Operations Support Squadron, and requested a visit to Edwards. Instead of just a tour, Team Edwards came together and planned a very special day for Dean as the first of many Wing-a-Wish. Wing-a-Wish is possible thanks to the private contributions and donations, monetary and in-kind, from the men and women of the 412th Test Wing.

Reflecting on Dean's affinity for the military, Lorena said, "Last year, all he wanted for Christmas was a military uniform, so that's what Santa gave him. He is fascinated with uniforms, badges and airplanes."

Dean's day started with his enlistment; he then donned a flight suit and received an honorary military identification card granting him base access. Airman Dean was officially welcomed by the 412th OSS and 412th Force Support Squadron at Base Operations, where he received his newcomer orientation.

Dean's first assignment was to the Test Parachute Team. Through the virtual parachute jump simulator, Airman Dean jumped from an airplane at 3,000 feet above ground and safely landed on a soccer field.

Subsequently, Dean was selected to attend the Air Force Test Pilot School where students, instructors, leadership, and the school mascot greeted him with applause. While at TPS, Dean flew an F-16 Fighting Falcon flight simulator through various maneuvers such as inverted flight and loops.

At the conclusion of his TPS training, he attended a promotion ceremony where Col. Douglas Wickert, 412th Test Wing commander, promoted Dean to the rank of captain. Wickert pinned Air Force Pilot Wings on Dean's uniform making him a pilot and christened him with the callsign "Soar" in honor of the Boeing X-20 Dyna-Soar, an experimental space plane program that was expected to be flown from Edwards AFB in the 1960s, but was canceled just after its construction had begun.



Air Force photograph by Kaitlyn Steigerwald

Nine-year-old Dean Lomelin, sits inside the cockpit of an F-35 Lightning II, Jan. 31, 2024, during his visit to Edwards Air Force Base, California, as part of the 412th Test Wing's Wing-a-Wish.

Dean was then afforded a spectacular view of the Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds" winter practice session from the show center. Dean watched as the "Thunderbirds" performed breathtaking maneuvers and sneak passes.

Dean concluded his day at the Flight Test Museum where he toured the historical artifacts inside. Upon departing the base, members from Team Edwards came together and stood at attention and rendered their salutes. While it was only a day, Lorena said, "We will be speaking about these memories for a lifetime."

Aerotech News and Review



Courtesy Photo Boom Supersonic press release

to 238 knots (273 mph), Boom Supersonic said in a press release. While XB-1 was in the air, the team performed an initial assessment of the aircraft's handling qualities, including airspeed checks with the T-38 chase aircraft, and assessing the aircraft's stability in the landing attitude (at a high angle of attack).

Looking forward to the return of supersonic air travel

The Concorde was retired on Oct. 24, 2003, more than 20 years ago. This historic first flight of Boom's XB-1 points the way back to civil supersonic flight with Boom's Overture airliner.



XB-1 touches down on Runway 30 after its maiden flight.





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Martians wanted: NASA calling for simulated yearlong Mars mission

by Rachel Kraft NASA

NASA is seeking applicants to participate in its next simulated one-year Mars surface mission to help inform the agency's plans for human exploration of the Red Planet.

The second of three planned ground-based missions called CHA-PEA (Crew Health and Performance Exploration Analog) is scheduled to kick off in spring 2025.

Each CHAPEA mission involves a four-person volunteer crew living and working inside a 1,700-square-foot, 3D-printed habitat based at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston. The habitat, called the Mars Dune Alpha, simulates the challenges of a mission on Mars, including resource limitations, equipment failures, communication delays, and other environmental stressors. Crew tasks include simulated spacewalks, robotic operations, habitat maintenance, exercise, and crop growth.

NASA is looking for healthy, motivated U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are non-smokers, 30-55 years old, and proficient in English for effective communication between crewmates and mission control. Applicants should have a strong desire for unique, rewarding adventures and interest in contributing to NASA's work to prepare for the first human journey to Mars.

The deadline for applicants is April 2. To apply, go to https://chapea.nasa.gov/

Crew selection will follow additional standard NASA criteria for astronaut candidate applicants. A master's degree in a STEM field such as engineering, mathematics, or biological, physical or computer science from an accredited institution with at least two years of professional STEM experience or a minimum of one thousand hours piloting an aircraft is required.

Candidates who have completed two years of work toward a doctoral program in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, completed a medical degree, or a test pilot program will also be considered. With four years of professional experience, applicants who have completed military officer training or a Bachelor of Science degree in a STEM field may be considered.



Courtesy Photo Boom Supersonic press release

The CHAPEA Mission 1 crew (from left: Nathan Jones, Ross Brockwell, Kelly Haston, Anca Selariu) exit a prototype of a pressurized rover and make their way to the CHAPEA facility ahead of their entry into the habitat on June 25, 2023.

Compensation for participating in the mission is available. More information will be provided during the candidate screening process.

As NASA works to establish a long-term presence for scientific discovery and exploration on the Moon through the Artemis campaign, CHAPEA missions provide important scientific data to validate systems and develop solutions for future missions to the Red Planet. With the first CHAPEA crew more than halfway through their yearlong mission, NASA is using research gained through the

simulated missions to help inform crew health and performance support during Mars expeditions.

Under NASA's Artemis campaign, the agency will establish the foundation for long-term scientific exploration at the Moon, land the first woman, first person of color, and its first international partner astronaut on the lunar surface, and prepare for human expeditions to Mars for the benefit of all.

For more about CHAPEA, visit: https://www.nasa.gov/humans-in-space/chapea/



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Air Force Reserve unit provides full-time support

By Giancarlo Casem

412th Test Wing Public Affairs

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, California — While the 412th Test Wing has been known to fly unique aircraft throughout the years, it has also relied on a unique unit to accomplish the ever-changing flight test mission: the 370th Flight Test Squadron.

The 370th Flight Test Squadron, 413th Flight Test Group, is an Air Force Reserve unit at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

The unit is unique in that not only does it provided a vital support role with aerial refueling operations, but they also support flight test operations by assigning Reserve test pilots into active duty flight test squadrons, greatly increasing a flight test squadron's capability said Lt. Col. Jonathan Bearce, 370th FLTS

"In a typical F-35 test mission, we'll get maybe two hours of flight testing without a tanker. If we have tankers, we can extend that to three to three and a half hours, sometimes even five hours," Bearce states.

Bearce, an F-35 and F-16 test pilot, brings nearly nine years of experience to his role within the squadron. Bearce explained that the squadron's key mission of aerial refueling with KC-135 enhances mission efficiency by extending flight testing durations. He added that the 370th also bridges gaps between active duty and reservist pilots, ensuring collaboration and understanding between units. In his particular case, although the 370th FLTS handles Bearce's administrative requirements, he flies predominantly with the 461st FLTS as an F-35 test pilot.

"That's what makes us very unique: we have boom operators for the refuelers, we have the KC-135 pilots, and test pilots to augment into that squadron who fly the opposite of the KC-135 and fly a lot of the fighter units."

The variety of missions and the squadron's diverse responsibilities, including providing support for other airframes on base conducting their own testing, has been a highlight for Master Sgt. Brittany Garland, a boom operator with the 370th.

"Aerial refueling is something that is very necessary for a lot of the different smaller fighter jets or bombers that need to be airborne for an extended period of time," Garland explains. "They're unable to do that unless they get fuel while they're orbiting around in the sky waiting to do their next mission or in between missions."

Garland's dual expertise as an air traffic controller in her civilian career enables her to provide valuable support to pilots and gain a comprehensive understanding of



U.S. Air Force photo by Laisa Leao

Master Sgt. Brittany Garland, an aerial refueling boom operator with the 370th Flight Test Squadron, operates the aerial refueling boom on a KC-135 Stratotanker during aerial refueling operations in the skies above Edwards Air Force Base, California, Jan. 22, 2024.

aviation operations.

She also stated that the 370th's mission variety provides a challenging, yet rewarding experience.

"The other bases I've been to have a very small handful of aircraft you get to refuel, but here it's something different every single day," Garland said. "If you want more of a variety, this is where you would want to be because it's unlike anywhere. It's something different all the



time, and it's exciting."

Both Bearce and Garland emphasize the importance of balancing military service with civilian careers, showcasing the versatility and commitment of military reservists. They are just two members of the 370th FLTS, however their stories show a commonality with the rest of the squadron, and that is the professionalism needed to provide support for the various test missions and requirements on Edwards.



Lockheed Martin photo by Darin Russell

Lt. Col. Jonathan Bearce, an F-35 test pilot with the 370th Flight Test Squadron, conducts a walkaround of an F-35 Lightning II at Edwards Air Force Base, California, April 2, 2020.



Lockheed Martin photo by Darin Russell

Master Sgt. Brittany Garland, an aerial refueling boom operator with the 370th Flight Test Squadron, stays on the lookout for approaching aircraft while conducting aerial refueling operations in the skies above Edwards Air Force Base, California, Jan. 22, 2024.

OSI PJ secures X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle mission

By Thomas Brading

OSI Public Affairs

The Office of Special Investigations, Office of Special Projects, or PJ, were unsung heroes thanks to their counterintelligence activities and security efforts following a recent landmark Space Force launch.

Last December's USSF-52 launch, which sent the X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle into orbit, marked not just a milestone for the Space Force, but also soared OSI PJ's role in counterintelligence and security to new heights

"At the heart of the X-37B mission are the extraordinary people at OSI PJ, whose passion and expertise drive us to new heights of achievement," said Special Agent Lee Russ, OSI PJ executive director. "Their relentless dedication to security and professionalism ensures that we continue to push the boundaries of space exploration and inspire future generations."

The X-37B is an experimental test platform managed by the Department of the Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office, which is why it came under OSI's protective wing.

Launched from Kennedy Space Center, Florida, aboard a SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket Dec. 28, the mission underscored OSI's adaptability, skill, and diversity of its personnel, said Special Agent Cassie Hettmansperger, OSI PJ Detachment 11, Program Security Officer, who worked alongside senior military and industry leaders to ensure the safety of the

"Being able to support the research, development, and acquisition process for the Department of the Air Force and the DOD at large is incredible,"

Hettmansperger said. "OSI provides counterintelligence support to that capability," Hettmansperger said. "So essentially, that's everything from threat mitigation on the ground to physical security and network protection."

During the mission, OSI Special Agents extended their expertise beyond traditional boundaries and collaborating with other agencies like

"I think [this mission is] interesting and unique, unlike anything I've seen in my career, how we're embedded with the customer," said Special Agent Benjamin Arnold, OSI PJ Det 11. "This level of integration," he added, "significantly enhances our ability to collaborate and effectively protect these technologies."

However, OSI's involvement was just one part of a larger collaborative effort aimed at ensuring the safety and security of the program.

"We are protecting national level programs that are not specific to our traditional role within OSI," Hettmansperger said.

For the USSF-52 launch, OSI PJ made the journey from Washington, D.C., to Florida's Space Coast, to ensure their direct involvement and oversight at the launch site. Their physical presence was crucial for managing security in real time, Hettmansperger said, and underscored OSI's dedication to actively engaging in the protection of national interests.

"The successful launch of the X-37B exemplifies the dedication and unwavering commitment of OSI PJ's talented team," Russ said. "Their hard work and expertise have propelled us into a new era of innovation and advancement in space exploration."



Air Force photograph by Joshua Co

The National Security Space Launch program successfully launched the Falcon Heavy USSF-52 mission on Dec. 28, 2023, from the Eastern Range.



Courtesy photograph

Air Force Office of Special Investigations PJ secures X-37B space mission. The NSSL program, a critical component of the Department of Defense's efforts to ensure national security in space, is at the forefront of providing essential space support for the warfighter, national security, and various government spacelift missions.



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High Desert Hangar Stories The man who opened a magic door on the runway

By Bob Alvis

Special to Aerotech News

Many years ago, I found myself on the 4th of July with not much to do as my family was taking part in other activities.

Not wanting to sit around all day, I jumped in my truck and pointed it south to see what I could discover.

After a while I pulled off the freeway in Santa Monica with the Museum of Flying in my sites to spend a day around some airplane history at old Clover field. Never would I have thought that day would change my life forever.

Late that afternoon, a Stearman Biplane pulled up to one of the hangars and I went over to take some photos and talk to the pilot about his beautiful ride. Some time and many words later, he asked me if I wanted to go for a ride, and of course I jumped at the chance.

Like a kid at Christmas, I climbed in the front seat and prepared for what I thought would be just a short hop around the field. I didn't know it would be much more than that. As we rolled down the runway, those bi wings had us in the air in short order and we climbed out to the west over the ocean and turned north to parallel the shoreline.

As we flew along, we had some back and forth about the joy of flying in such a great old airplane, and as I looked down at the shoreline the 4th of July aspect really hit me as the shore was packed with beachgoers on their holiday quest for fun. I was looking down at them and they were looking up at me alone in the sky in a plane from American history.

Randy, the pilot, came on the intercom and asked me "Do you want to fly it?" At first, I had that moment, but before long I had the stick and pedals working in unison. This dream just kept getting better as the cool air and smell of the salty air of the ocean passed through that open cockpit as that radial engine sang along.

Before long, Randy had me doing wingovers as I enjoyed the freedom of dancing in the air, and I enjoyed looking down at the people on the beaches looking up at me dancing in the air.

Still being aware of airplane etiquette, I was also calling out other air traffic as we encountered them, and Randy appreciated my attention to those details. During the flight I shared that my dad was a pilot and flew a Waco out of Santa Monica back in the late 1940s and how I was now glad to share that same experience he had many years ago.

We made it up to Malibu then turned back to head for home. As I continued to fly the plane, a kind of peace came over me that made me realize the best flying I could ever experience was that in an open cockpit. The magic of what I was experiencing all started when those wheels left that runway.

While turning into the pattern, Randy asked me if I wanted to land it and I had that moment again of not wanting to bend his beautiful plane. After some back and forth, he is telling me "You can do this," but I still just did not feel comfortable with putting those wheels on the ground.

As we landed, he schooled me on a bit of history about his old World War II trainer and how city and farm boys with no experience became pilots in this old Stearman. When you realize that in an old biplane, things didn't happen real fast as all that wing-area struts and guide wires gave the plane a landing speed that was equivalent of a fast walk.

As we taxied back in, I realized my life on this July 4th was changed forever, and my love for flying and old war birds would define my life for many years to come.

Recently that yellow Stearman, known as the Triple Nickel, was donated to the Planes of Fame in Chino and when I saw the pictures of it sitting there, the memories of that special day came flooding back.

Talking to my friend John down at the museum I learned the painful reality of why the plane made its way to its new home. Randy, my pilot and instructor that day, had been killed in a plane crash leaving an airport in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and his daughter felt the plane would be well taken care of by the crews at Chino.

Doing a bit more research, I found out my pilot that day was Dr. Randy Sherman, a renowned plastic surgeon who spent many years doing humanitarian missions around the world. Dr. Sherman participated in Operation Smile's World Journey of Hope, which circled the globe in a flying hospital to bring reconstructive services to more than 5,000 children.

Dr. Sherman served on the organization's board of directors and served as chief medical officer, consulting with the U.S. Navy on multiple humanitarian missions.

He was truly a great man who did amazing things in his life and a tragic loss. But for one guy on a 4th of July many summers ago, he will always be the man who opened that magic door on a runway. He helped me realize the dream of dancing in the clouds and brought a peace to my soul I never knew I could achieve.

Thank you, Randy, for the ride and the opportunity, your moment in time with me will last forever in my heart.

Peace my friends, and until next time, Bob out ...



Courtesy photograph

Bob Alvis gives the "hang loose" sign in a Stearman Biplane on the runway in Santa Monica. On a long ago Fourth of July, owner Dr. Randy Sherman gave Alvis a ride and let him pilot it.



Courtesy photograph

A Stearman biplane named "Triple Nickel" on display at the Planes of Fame in Chino. It was donated to the museum by owner Dr. Randy Sherman's daughter after his death.

Northrop Grumman's B-21 Raider receives Aviation Week Grand Laureate Award

Northrop Grumman received the Aviation Week Grand Laureate Award in the defense category for its role as the prime contractor delivering the B-21 Raider to the United States Air Force.

Aviation Week announced the Grand Laureate winners at its 66th Annual Laureate awards in Washington, D.C.

"On behalf of the entire nationwide B-21 Raider team, Northrop Grumman is honored to receive this prestigious award," said Tom Jones, corporate vice president and president, Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Systems. "The Grand Laureate represents the pioneering spirit, innovative technology and trailblazing approach to contract management that has brought the world's first sixth-generation aircraft to life."

In the fall of 2023, the Air Force confirmed the first B-21 test vehicle had entered flight test, followed by low-rate initial production award. The aircraft is currently undergoing a robust flight test campaign executed by the B-21 Combined Test Force at Edwards Air Force Base in California. The program continues to meet all DOD technical, schedule and affordability requirements on its path to operational capability.

Developed with the next generation of stealth technology, advanced networking capabilities and open systems architecture, the B-21 Raider will serve as the backbone of America's bomber fleet. Capable of deliv-

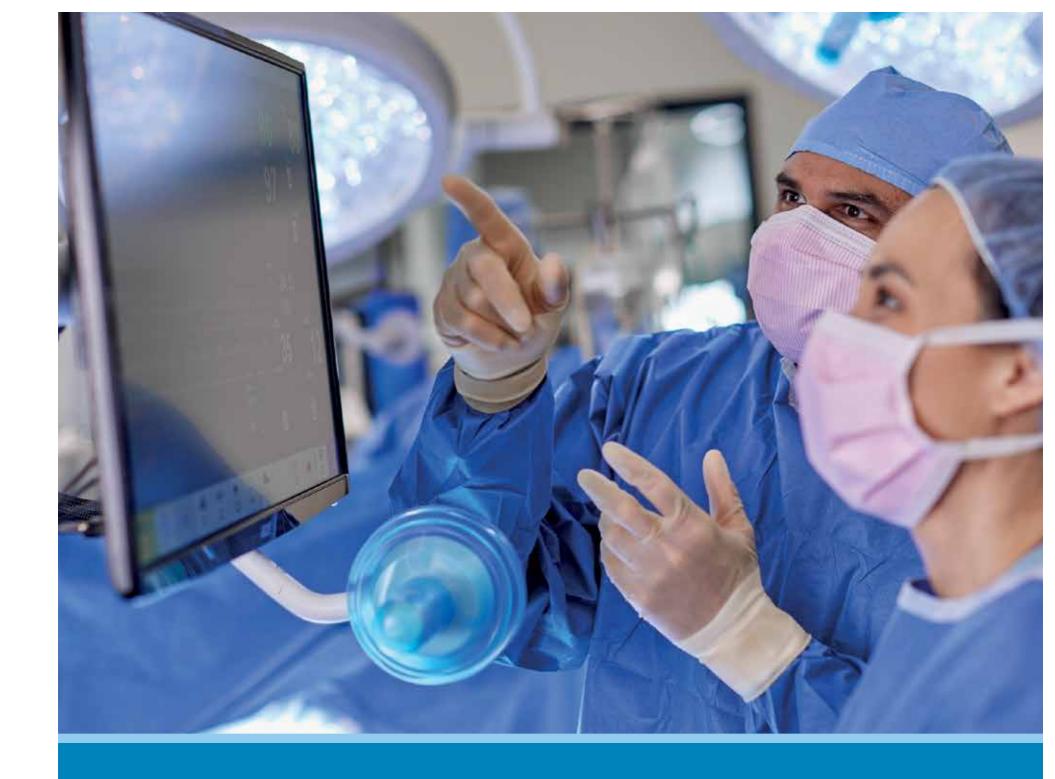


orthrop Grumman photograph

The B-21 Raider received the Grand Laureate award within the defense space at *Aviation Week's* 66th Annual Laureate Awards.

ering both conventional and nuclear payloads, the B-21 will be one of the most effective aircraft in the sky, with the ability to use a broad mix of stand-off and direct attack munitions.

Northrop Grumman is a leading global aerospace and defense technology company. Our pioneering solutions equip our customers with the capabilities they need to connect and protect the world, and push the boundaries of human exploration across the universe. Driven by a shared purpose to solve our customers' toughest problems, our employees define possible every day.



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'FlyGirl' inspires at women veterans event

By Allison Gatlin

Special to Aerotech News

LANCASTER, California — Vernice "FlyGirl" Armour, the first Black woman to fly in combat, draws on her experiences as a U.S. Marine, a police officer, and an entrepreneur to motivate and inspire others to take "gutsy" action to achieve their goals.

Armour spoke to students, staff and



Courtesy photograph

Vernice "FlyGirl" Armour speaks at a Women's History Month event for women veterans at the Hellenic Center in Lancaster, California on Mar. 20, 2024. A Marine Corps veteran, Armour was the first Black female combat pilot, a police officer, and now is an author, motivational speaker, and consultant. community members on March 20 as part of the 4th annual VRC Woman Veterans Lunch presented by Antelope Valley College's Student Equity and the Veteran's Resource Center.

Armour's journey to becoming a combat pilot began by joining the Army Reserves and ROTC in college. She initially hadn't even considered flying, until attending a career day event where she saw a Black woman in a flight suit.

"It blew me away," she said. "I saw her — completely changed my life."

Meeting that pilot made the possibility of becoming one herself tangible.

"Stand up to be counted, because you never know who's counting on you," she said.

Armour described a combat situation in Iraq in which she needed to eliminate an enemy position that was firing on a group of U.S. soldiers pinned down in a cemetery and who had run out of ammunition to respond.

With fuel running low, she found the target and waited to hear from the ground controller the call of "Clear Hot!" giving her permission to engage and fire her remaining missile.

That last missile took out the enemy, and Armour learned that all those troops made it back safely.

In life, there is no ground controller providing instructions, Armour said. Instead, you have to make the decision yourself to engage.

"How you engage in life is everything," she said.

At every stage, Armour — like oth-



Courtesy photograph

Marine Corps air combat veteran Vernice "FlyGirl" Armour sits in the cockpit of the AH-1W Super Cobra attack helicopter she piloted in the 2003 Iraq invasion. She now lectures on how to persevere in life.

ers — faced obstacles and challenges as she reached for her goals.

"The key is to acknowledge the obstacles; don't give them power," she said; instead give power to the solution

As the only female pilot in a group of 365 Marines and 67 pilots, Armour said she did feel the tension in her po-

sition

She recalled a day when that tension brought her to the point of tears, when she was "ready to take these wings off and throw them away." She called her mother, who reminded her that she had not worked "this hard for this long to give up now."

To be successful, you must keep fo-

cused on what's at stake and what is your goal, not the obstacles and challenges on the way," she said.

"If I focused on them, I would have drowned," Armour said.

Whether in the military or in life, you must "navigate, flex and adapt, get back on course and finish the mission,"

10 ways students can prepare to #BeAnAstronaut: connect with NASA

Want to #BeAnAstronaut, but don't know where to start?

Here are some ways you can kick-start your journey! Even if you don't qualify to #BeAnAstronaut — yet — within NASA's Office of STEM Engagement, or OSTEM, there are ways to get involved with NASA's missions. Check out the top 10 ways to #BeAnAstronaut:

1. Apply for NASA internships

Becoming an intern is the perfect way to get your start with NASA. Several astronauts started out as interns! Astronaut Jessica Watkins was selected as a NASA intern while both an undergraduate and graduate student. "Those experiences were really what helped shape me as a scientist and an explorer," Watkins said, crediting the hands-on experiences she had the opportunity to be a part of during her internships. Interested in applying? More information can be found at intern.nasa.gov.

2. Participate in Artemis student challenges

Did you know that Artemis Student Challenges contribute directly to NASA's mission? Student Launch, the Human Exploration Rover Challenge, Spacesuit User Interface Technologies for Students (S.U.I.T.S.), Lunabotics, Microg Neutral Buoyancy Experiment Design Teams (Micro-G NExT), First Nations Launch and the Big Idea Challenge vary in mission and education levels (middle school to college), and encompass many elements of the Artemis program. Artemis Student Challenges allow you to be creative, take what you have learned in the classroom and apply it to existing space exploration challenges.

3. Subscribe to NASA EXPRESS

Stay informed about what's going on inside NASA!

See ASTRONAUT, Page 12



NASA photograph

Students in the NASA Explorer School program visit the agency. The NES program establishes a three-year partnership annually between NASA and 50 NASA Explorer School teams, consisting of teachers and education administrators from diverse communities nationwide.

Department of the Air Force releases 2025 budget proposal

The Department of the Air Force unveiled a \$217.5 billion budget request March 11, designed to continue modernizing the Air Force and Space Force, maintain readiness to respond to current threats. and address key capability gaps while investing to manage risks that are increasing with time.

The \$217.5 billion proposal that Congress will now consider for fiscal year 2025 includes \$188.1 billion for the Air Force and \$29.4 billion for the Space Force. If enacted into law, the Department's overall budget would grow by 1.1 percent, \$2.4 billion, from last fiscal year's budget.

Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall stressed the importance of adequately funding the military for competitiveness in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

"I think that 2025, while difficult, is at a level that I think we can accept, and it will still allow us to make progress on the modernization we need." Kendall said.

The fiscal 2025 budget was built for each service's unique mis-

"The Air Force's core functions remain unchanged: air superiority, global strike, rapid global mobility, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance," said Kristyn Jones, performing the duties of the Under Secretary of the Air Force. "The Space Force's efforts reflect the indispensable support that underpins all other joint operations and its continued transformation into a warfighting service to secure our interests in, from and to space."

The budget request includes:

- \$14.9 billion investment to enhance competitive capabilities and maintain air domain lethality
- \$24.9 billion to ensure unmatched ability to deliver global strike around the world
- \$29.4 billion in readiness while continuing to make maximum possible investment in modernization
- \$4.7 billion to proliferate a multi-orbit missile warning architecture to counter near-peer threats



- \$538 million for Agile Combat Employment to build the right mix of capabilities to defend against current and future threats
- \$6.2 billion in commercial space launches and resilient space data network to deliver capabilities to the Joint Force in, from
- \$4.4 billion in funds for integrating satellite communications to increase space superiority by connecting and supporting our allies and partners
- \$3.4 billion in the Next Generation Air Dominance Family of Systems to augment current and future platforms in highly con-

tested environments

Acknowledging the practicalities of economic factors, the budget proposal accommodates inflation and rising fuel costs, and for quality of life and retention of personnel:

- \$42.9 billion to improve quality of life for Airmen and Guardians including a 4.5 percent pay raise
- \$1.1 billion for bonus and retention programs for 118,000 critically skilled positions

This budget proposal represents the Department's priorities for maintaining the nation's security and interests.

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General Atomics Aeronautical Systems photograph

AFRL's XQ-67A Off Board Sensing Station, or OBSS, designed and built by General Atomics, took its maiden flight Feb. 28 from Gray Butte Field Airport, Palmdale, California.

XQ-67 is the first variant to be designed and built from this shared platform, White said.

"The main objectives here are to validate an open aircraft system concept for hardware and software and to demonstrate rapid time-to-market and low development cost," he added.

This project looked at incorporating aspects of the OBSS and the OBWS to different capability concepts. The OBSS was viewed as slower while carrying sensors but have longer endurance, while the OBWS was considered faster and more maneuverable, with less endurance but better range.

"We wanted to design both of those but figure out how much of the two you can make common so we could follow this chassis genus species type of approach," Meador said.

XQ-67A has been just over two years in the making, moving quickly through the design, build and fly process. While the team initially worked with five industry vendors, AFRL decided at the end of 2021 to exercise the opportunity to build the General Atomics design.

This successful flight is initial proof that the genus approach works, and aircraft can be built from a chassis.

"This is all part of a bigger plan and it's all about this affordable mass," Meador added. "This has to be done affordably and this program even though there's an aircraft at the end that we're going to get a lot of use out of — the purpose of this program was the journey of rapid, low-cost production as much as it was the destination of a relevant combat aircraft."

This signals to other companies that there is a new approach to constructing an aircraft, moving away from the conventional method of starting from scratch, Meador said.

"We don't have the time and resources to do that," Meador said. "We have to move quicker now."

ASTRONAUT, from 10 -

NASA EXPRESS is a weekly newsletter featuring updates and opportunities from NASA and the STEM Engagement community. NASA EXPRESS is a great resource for students to explore various STEM opportunities beyond the walls of the classroom. Sign up today!

4. Attend ASTRO CAMP® or Space Camp

Are you a young explorer? Sharpen your skills at NASA's ASTRO CAMP® at Stennis Space Center. NASA astronaut Kate Rubins launched to the International Space Station in 2016, but before that she attended a space camp in the seventh grade after saving up her chore money to attend. Rubins dreamed of becoming an astronaut as a child, and left camp knowing she had to take as many math and science courses as she could to make her dream a reality.

5. Learn what it really takes to become an astronaut

There are many myths and misconceptions about what it takes to #BeAnAstronaut. Educate yourself on the facts and requirements, and prepare for an out-of-this-world experience — literally.

6. A variety of career paths can take you to space: Find one you love

Keep an open mind! You don't have to be an engineer or take a specific path to #

BeAnAstronaut. NASA astronauts come from all walks of life — teachers, doctors, biologists, geologists, service members and more! The most recent class of astronauts reflect this level of diversity. Above all else, make sure you love what you do.

7. Stay active

Physical fitness is a big part of astronaut training and daily life in space. Aboard the International Space Station, astronauts exercise two hours per day to keep their bones strong in the microgravity environment. Keep up a healthy lifestyle and workout egiment, or try a new sport! Learn more about

how astronauts stay in shape here [https://www.nasa.gov/stem-content/train-like-an-astronaut/].

8. Participate in science and engineering fairs

Take time to showcase your hard work and ingenuity outside the classroom. Science and engineering fairs are a great way to not only show off your work, but get inspired by those around you.

9. Apply to graduate and professional schools or a pilot training program

Plan for your future. If you want to #BeAnAstronaut, obtaining a high-level degree is a must. Astronauts must complete a master's degree in a STEM field, be working toward a doctorate, or hold a doctorate in medicine or osteopathic medicine. Apply for graduate school and take the next step in your education, preparing for life in space. Another way to qualify is through the completion of an accredited test pilot school program.

10. Enroll in STEM classes and clubs

Not quite at the collegiate or postgraduate level? It's never too early to get involved in STEM and take those first steps towards an out-of-this-world career. Choose science, math and programming classes that align with your goals, and join STEM-related clubs and activities outside of the classroom. If your school or community does not offer a club for what you are interested in, start one!

As NASA continues to move forward with the Artemis program and astronaut recruitment, you, the future STEM workforce could one day take us to distant worlds, are a major part of that. Through OSTEM's variety of resources, you are welcome to join us on this journey as we move forward to the Moon ... and beyond

For more NASA STEM updates, follow us @NASASTEM on X.



NASA photograph

NASA astronaut candidate Loral O'Hara answers a question during a live episode of the Administrator's monthly chat show, Watch This Space in the Webb Auditorium at NASA Headquarters in Washington. This astronaut candidate class started their two years of training in 2018.



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Seeking Volunteers for Base Advisory Board Positions



Edwards Air Force Base officials are seeking volunteers to represent the

Boron, Main Base, NASA Armstrong, North Base, North Edwards and South Base communities

on the Restoration Advisory Board. The RAB facilitates two-way communication between the public and those responsible for environmental cleanup at Edwards AFB. Volunteer representatives are not expected to be environmental experts.

Responsibilities

A RAB public representative acts as a conduit for environmental cleanup information. Responsibilities include distributing a quarterly newsletter and meeting flyers in addition to attending semiannual meetings. Applicants should be accessible within their respective area and willing to publicize contact information. Community concerns or questions can be addressed by the representative or referred to the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Installation Support Section at Edwards AFB.

Requirements

Individuals interested in serving on the RAB must be at least 18 years of age and work or live in the area they seek to represent. Terms of service are two years in length. Military members, civil service and contract employees are welcome to apply.

Applications

Applications are available by contacting Gary Hatch, 412th Test Wing Public Affairs, at (661) 277-8707 or by e-mailing 412tw.rab@us.af.mil.

Applications will be accepted until the positions are filled.

For additional information, contact Gary Hatch or Belinda Martinez (Cherokee Federal) by e-mailing 412tw.rab@us.af.mil.

Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Installation Support Section, Edwards Air Force Base, California



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 17th day of April 2024 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.

5416 Hernandez, Maribel 3235 Guevara, Alexander 6415 Villegas, David 3135 Cotton, Kelonnie 4050 Perez, Aaron 6053 Tellez, Erica 5041 Orozco, Ismael 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 17th day of April 2024 or thereafter. The auction is being held at www. selfstorageauction.com by competitive bid. The property is stored by Nova Storage located 13129 S. Figueroa Street. Los Angeles, CA 90061

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

Q10 Williams, Laneshia N31 Randolph, Pam G20 Lemon, Aprile F06 Garcia, Edgar K22 Barrientos, Luis Enrique I29 Nichols, Lamont K05 Jeter, Lucindy I45 Watson, Wilden N26 Jones, Shapale Q08 Frodge, Tracy 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 17th day of April 2024 or thereafter. The auction is being held at www.selfstorageauction.com by competitive bid. The property is stored by Nova Storage located 11230 Wright Road. Lynwood, CA 90262.

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

H209A Baltazar, Ruby C315 Wallace, Zonita 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 17th day of April 2024 or thereafter. The auction is being held at www.selfstorageauction. com by competitive bid. The property is stored by Nova Storage located, 5951 East Firestone Blvd., South Gate, CA. 90280

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

0391A Andrade, Beatriz 0352B Simpson, TyJee 0454B Lee, Kordelle 2421 Jones, Aiani 0078 Rios, Jonathan 1418 Jones, Derrick 0250 Urizar, Paula 0034 Lugo, Albert 0302 Galvan, Raul 1319 Le Blanc, Christina 0221 Padilla, Tracy 0145 Williams, Robert 0550 Mendoza, Gizelle 1215 Andrade, Jose 0311 Hernandez, Patricia 0618 Moten, Morgana

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 17th day of April 2024 or thereafter. The auction is being held at www.selfstorageauction.com by competitive bid. The property is stored by Nova Storage located 13043 Foothill Blvd Sylmar, CA 91342

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

0269 Linden, Nelson 0142 Reyes, Karla 0305 Linden, Nelson 0152 Small, Dorothy 3114 Ballesteros, Joe 3010 Salazar, Anthony 0563 Domingo, Michael 3005 Yeloyan, Artur

Date: March 26, 2024 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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Aerotech News and Review

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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 17th day of April 2024 or thereafter. The auction is being held at www.selfstorageauction.com by competitive bid. The property is stored by 3305 E. Palmdale Blvd., Palmdale, CA 93550.

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

A027 Lopez, Hector D170 Alcantar, Gerardo E436 Romero, Robert E434 Hidalgo, Flor D253 Smith, Wendy E292 Lugo, Michelle D128 Cisneros, Orlando G576 Hidalgo, Flor F523 Lugo, Michelle F517 Patterson, Koneisha 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 17th day of April 2024 or thereafter. The auction is being held at www.selfstorageauction.com by competitive bid. The property is stored by Nova Storage located at 825 W Avenue L12., Lancaster, CA 93534

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

0034 Tonoyan, Vardan 0115 Barrett, Venessa 0460 Smith, Darrell 0469 Elizondo, Mandi 0579 Whitney, Christopher 0072 Matsumoto, Camara 0574 Siebenhoven, H. Von

Date: March 26th, 2024 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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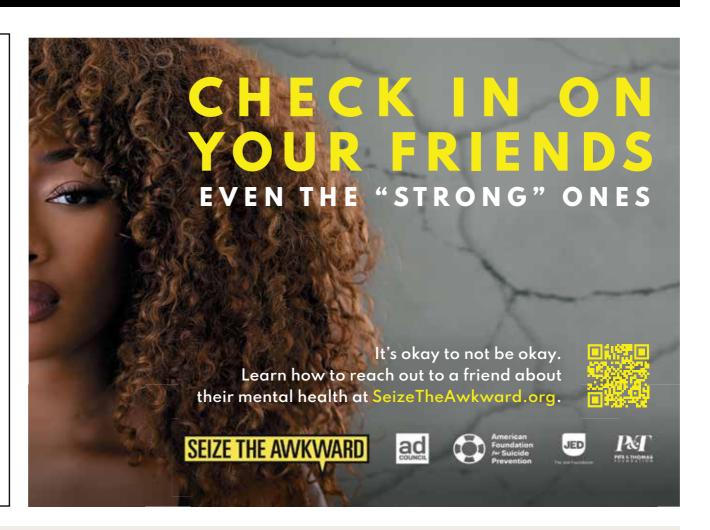
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Notice is hereby given that the Undersigned intents to sell the personal property described below to enforce a lien imposed on said property pursuant to sections 21700-21716 of the California Business & Professions code. Section 2328 of the UCC, Section 535 of the Penal Code, provisions of the Civil Code.

The Undersigned will sell at public sale by competitive bidding at www.storagetreasures.com to end April 27, 2024 at 10:00 am on the premises where said property has been stored & which are located at: Storelocal Storage 42738 4th St E Lancaster, CA 93535 County of Los Angeles, State of California.

NAME

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