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The 'Future Fight' is here: Red Flag-Nellis 22-3

by 1st Lt. Richard Caesar

Nellis AFB, Nev.

The familiar roar of America's air power is filling the skies over Las Vegas and the Nevada Test and Training Range to the north, signaling the start of another Red Flag exercise.

However, participants of this iteration will find themselves facing some unfamiliar opposition as the first ever dedicated fifth-generation aggressor force takes to the skies for Red Flag-Nellis 22-3.

More than 20 units and approximately 2,300 participants have arrived at Nellis to take part in the final Red Flag of 2022. Ready to greet them are the pilots of the newly re-activated 65th Aggressor Squadron, as well as the 57th Operations Group's dedicated multi-domain aggressor force.



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis

An F-22 Raptor assigned to Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., arrives for Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 6, 2022. Red Flag provides realistic combat training that saves lives while increasing combat effectiveness.



Air Force photograph by Airman Trevor Bell

In his welcoming remarks 414th Combat Training Squadron commander, Col. Jared "Jabba" Hutchinson foot-stomped that Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 is unlike any previous Red Flags that have gone before it.

"The Aggressor Nation will be unleashed as they refine threat replication, apply advanced threats and jamming capabilities, and increase threat capabilities to maximize training in non-permissive environments," said Hutchinson. "The airspace is also much different with almost twice as much fight airspace and

inclusion of neighboring airspace opportunities to optimize Blue and Red Force tactics."

This Red Flag also features extended night operations and enhanced combat search and rescue scenarios, in addition to a greatly expanded battle space, all integrated to provide the most true-to-life training experience, designed to prepare Airmen to face pacing challenges in the Pacific and elsewhere.

The 4th Fighter Wing from Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, is the lead wing for a diverse joint force

comprised of F-35A/C, F-22, B-1B, E-3, E-8, EA-18G, F-15E, HC-130, KC-135, RC-135, HH-60, and MQ-9 aircraft from the Air Force, Navy, Marines and Air National Guard. They have the difficult task of solving the complex tactical problem sets posed by the aggressor force, while gaining invaluable realistic combat experience in an advanced training environment that can only be found at Nellis.

In his remarks upon taking command of the 57th Wing on June 30, Brig. Gen. Richard Goodman highlighted the importance and the urgency of being ready to face pacing challenges, and the role exercises such as Red Flag 22-3 play in that preparation.

"Make no mistake about it, across the security environment, the stakes are huge for our country, for our Air Force and for the joint force," Goodman said. "But the good news is the 57th Wing has the right Airmen and the right leaders on task, laser-focused on training our Air Force, the joint force, our allies and partners for the next fight, the high-end fight."

With the potential of matching the best of our combat aircraft against the most advanced adversaries they have seen until now, Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 promises to prepare U.S. warfighters to meet and overcome tactical challenges at a level they have never encountered before.

United States Air Force

Perspective: "It could be worse"

by Lt. Col. Marc Vassallo
Dyess AFB, Texas

I will start off with a short story. Second Lt Vassallo worked as a flight commander in late 2000. It was my first assignment as new officer fresh out of OTS, and I was excited to be part of Team Dover [Dover AFB, Del.].

Since I was a prior enlisted maintainer, I was given the opportunity to lead as the Propulsion Flight Commander over 180 active duty military and civilian Airmen. As I gauged the climate of the flight, it seemed there was a large portion of the team who were unhappy with their work hours. This was baffling since almost all of the team were working nine-hour shifts (an occasional surge to 10) with an hour lunch and even more so because AMXS was working 12-hour shifts and frequent weekend duties.

To cut to the point, I found they were unhappy because they were comparing themselves with the civilians in the flight. The civilians, by contract, worked eight-hour shifts, with a break every hour, a lunch hour, and the ability to workout multiple times a week.

I talked to several of the Airmen and you would think they had the worst job of their lives -- for many of them this was their first job.

On the other side of the ramp, the

AMXS folks actually seemed a bit happier because although they were on 12-hour shifts they had just backed off from 6-and-1 (six days on and one day off) 12s to 5-and-2 12s. As my leadership team and I discussed the problem we decided it all came down to perspective. Our solution was to start doing more frequent rotations between the flight line and back shop. Word quickly spread that the flight really was a great place to work and morale improved.

In a follow-on discussion with one of our Airmen, he said I know now "it could be worse," I could be working in AMXS. Overall, we never changed hours, only our perspective.

I tried to keep this lesson in mind for all aspects of my personal and professional life. Every time I was unhappy with my situation I would reflect on how good I have it compared to some. I was lucky I had the opportunity throughout my career to learn mostly through the experience of others.

As an Air Adviser in Afghanistan I saw poverty and pain in the lives of good people beyond what I could have ever imagined. Likewise, as a CMS Squadron commander I needed to be intimately involved with issues like death, divorce, addiction and illness of my Airmen throughout my command. All this brings me to the most important part of this

commentary; tools that you can use to help yourself and the Airmen you lead gain helpful perspective.

1. Read! Read and learn about others who have lived through adversity and how their positive attitude led to their success.

2. Interact. Help out with people who have situations less fortunate than your own. This could be voluntarily though helping serve food to the homeless or non-voluntarily by moving an Airman who thinks they have low morale to a squadron that needs help on extended shifts.

3. Experience. Sometimes this lesson is only learned through experience. Just like the lesson you learned by touching a hot pot as a child. You might think you have it bad until something worse happens in your life then, when you rise above, you will never forget your experience.

I will end with another short story about my experience as the 379th EMXS commander at Al Udeid AB, Qatar.

Similar to my story from Dover AFB, I had some Airmen who were unhappy with their working conditions. It was HOT, and as the temperature rose so did the complaints.

So my leadership team and I decided we would start the "It Could be Worse" campaign. Hoping to help our Airmen learn without experiencing, I engaged the help of the ECES CC. To

paint the picture (and you are lucky this isn't a scratch and sniff book), they had recurring issues where toilet paper and baby wipes would clog up the base's sewer impeller system. Those selfless Airmen had to climb down and remove the clogs by hand. With temperatures deep in the 100s and stomach bugs amuck, I considered them some of the bravest Airmen on base. So we developed a slide show I added to my newcomers brief with pictures of CE Airmen doing this job and it ended with an invitation to go and help out anytime they were not happy with their current job and needed a break. Needless to say, complaints about working conditions quickly decreased.

Shortly after the phrase caught on and soon everyone was using the saying "It Could be Worse." AC not blowing cold enough ... it could be worse; chicken a bit dry at the DFAC ... it could be worse; had to work through lunch ... it could be worse. They even caught me when I complained about the network being slow and they told me with a smile ... it could be worse.

So please remember it is always easy to compare yourself with those who have it better, and challenging to compare yourself to those who have it worse; but it's not impossible. Happiness is all based on perspective. Read, interact, experience, but most of all remember: "it could be worse."



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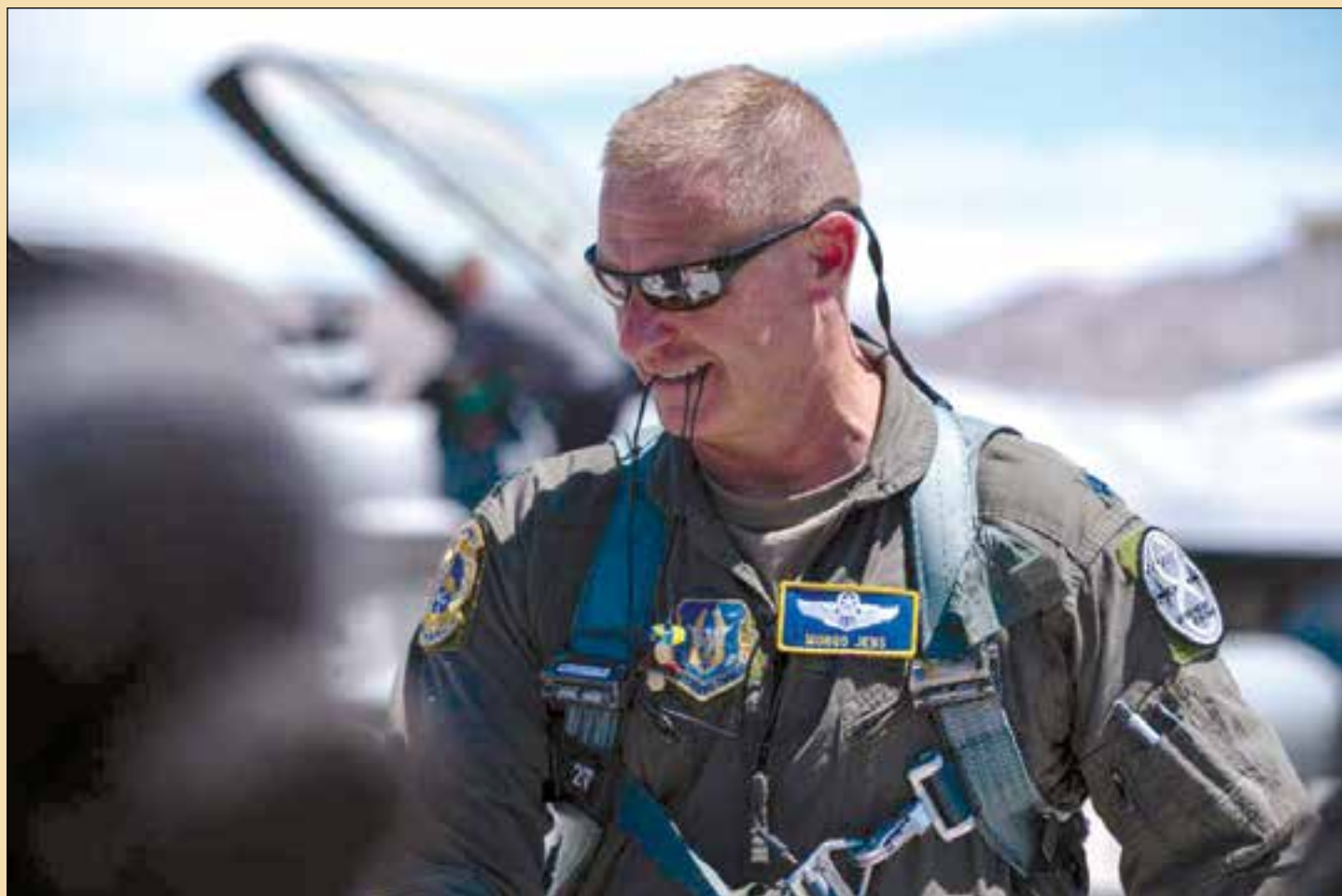
For all submissions, a name and phone number of a person to contact must be included in the event questions arise.

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

Desert Lightning News, So. Nevada edition can also be viewed online @ www.aerotechnews.com

Nellis' F-16 pilot reaches 4,000 flight hours



Air Force photographs by Airman 1st Class Josey Blades

Congrats to Lt. Col. Kevin "Mongo" Jens on an amazing accomplishment of more than 4,000 flight hours in the F-16 that he achieved on July 8, 2022. This is a feat only few pilots have achieved in the Air Force's 75-year history. Mongo is an F-16 pilot assigned to the 59th Test and Evaluation Squadron, 53rd Wing.



99th Medical Group gains new commander



Air Force photographs

On July 15, 2022, Col. Ryan Mihata assumed command of the 99th Medical Group at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Col. Joshua DeMotts, 99th Air Base Wing commander, presided over the change of command ceremony. Mihata takes over from Col. Brent A. Johnson who served two years as the commander of the 99th MDG and the Mike O'Callaghan Military Medical Center. "I am absolutely honored and humbled to be here at Nellis Air Force Base," said Mihata. "The opportunity and the chance to command is not given freely, and I feel absolutely blessed to be here and honored to take command of this amazing team. The incoming commander, I believe, has to demonstrate by their actions and not by their words how to lead and work in training in order to accomplish the mission and formulate the next generation."

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Reaper takes part in SINKEX 2022 as part of RIMPAC exercise



Air Force photographs

For the first time, MQ-9 Reapers are taking part in this year's Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise.

As part of RIMPAC, the Reapers were part of SINKEX 2022, in which the decommissioned USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG 60) was fired upon by military forces from the U.S., Australia, Canada and Malaysia, and sunk.

Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2022 military forces from Australia, Canada, Malaysia and the U.S., fired upon and sunk the decommissioned ex-USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG 60), July 12, during a sinking exercise (SINKEX) to gain proficiency in tactics, targeting and live firing against a surface target at sea. SINKEX vessels are put through a certified

cleaning process, including removing all environmentally harmful material including trash, floatable material, mercury, fluorocarbon and petroleum.

Twenty-six nations, 38 ships, four submarines, more than 170 aircraft and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC from June 29 to Aug. 4 in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. The world's largest international maritime exercise, RIMPAC provides a unique training opportunity while fostering and sustaining cooperative relationships among participants critical to ensuring the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans. RIMPAC 2022 is the 28th exercise in the series that began in 1971

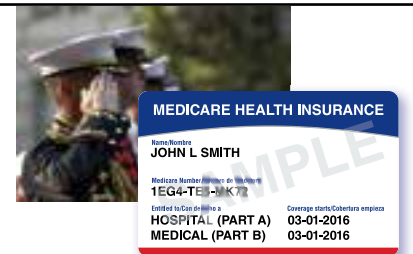


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RED FLAG-NELLIS 22-3 UNDERWAY



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Zachary Rufus

Col. Cameron "GLOVER" Dadgar, Nevada Test and Training Range commander flies over the NTTR during a Red Flag 22-3 mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 12, 2022. The Nevada Test and Training Range is the U.S. Air Force's premier military training area with more than 12,000 square miles of air space and 2.9 million acres of land.



Air Force photograph by Airman Trevor Bell

U.S. Navy Sailors assigned to the Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 147, Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., rest in the shade of an F-35C between Red Flag 22-3 missions at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 13, 2022. Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 provides realistic combat training that saves lives while increasing combat effectiveness.



Air Force photograph by Airman Trevor Bell

An F-15E Strike Eagle from the 336th Fighter Squadron, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., takes off during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 14, 2022. Participants conducting training missions during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 are able to test and perfect Agile Combat Employment operating concept for how the U.S. combat forces will fight in a modern, contested environment.



Air Force

A U.S. Navy Electronic Attack Squadron, Station Whidbey Island, Wash., climbs 22-3 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 12, 2022. Participants conducting training missions during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 are able to test and perfect Agile Combat Employment operating concept for how the U.S. combat forces will fight in a modern, contested environment.



Air Force

Capt. Andrew Dane, 549th Combat Training Squadron, completes a pre-flight briefing for Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 12, 2022. Pilots act as opposing forces for visiting pilots during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3. Participants conducting training missions during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 are able to test and perfect Agile Combat Employment operating concept for how the U.S. combat forces will fight in a modern, contested environment.



An F-35C Lightning II assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 147, Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif., takes off for Red Flag-Nellis 22-3, July 12, 2022. The 414th Combat Training Squadron conducts training missions during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 to provide aircrews the opportunity to conduct air combat sorties in the safety of a training environment.



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Josey Blades. A pilot from the 132nd Aggressor Squadron, stationed at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., jumps into his jet during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3, July 12, 2022. Participants conduct training missions during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 are able to test and perfect agile combat employment operating concept for how the U.S. combat forces will fight in a modern, contested environment.



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Josey Blades. U.S. Navy Seaman Tyler Noel, Electronic Attack Squadron 132 Aviation Structural Mechanic, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash., removes the sunshade from an EA-18G Growler during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 12, 2022. Participants conducting training missions during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 are able to test and perfect agile combat employment operating concept for how the U.S. combat forces will fight in a modern, contested environment.



Air Force photograph by Tech. Sgt. Alexandre Montes. A 414th Combat Training Squadron assistant director of operations briefs with other aggressor pilots during Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 14, 2022. Aggressor squadrons are visiting units during Red Flags hosted by the 414th Combat Training Squadron. The 414th CTS conducts Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 to provide the experience of multiple, intensive training missions in a training environment.



Air Force photograph by Airman Trevor Bell. Various aircraft taxi down the flightline during Red Flag 22-3 operations at Nellis AFB, Nev., July 14, 2022.



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis. An F-35 Lightning II assigned to the 4th Fighter Squadron, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, takes off for a Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 mission, July 12, 2022.



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Zachary Rufus. An F-16 Fighting Falcon piloted by Capt. Tim "REEF" Joubert, instructor pilot assigned to the 64th Aggressor Squadron, flies over the Nevada Test and Training Range after participating in a Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 mission at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., July 12, 2022.



Air Force photograph by William R. Lewis. An F-35 Lightning II assigned to the 4th Fighter Squadron, Hill Air Force Base, Utah, takes off for a Red Flag-Nellis 22-3 mission, July 12, 2022.



Air Force photograph

Viper AMU names winners of Dedicated Crew Chief Competition

Tech Sgt. Jordan Thoebald and Staff Sgt. Preston Moody of the 926th Wing Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Viper AMU recently won the Dedicated Crew Chief Competition.

The Dedicated Crew Chiefs and Assistant Dedicated Crew Chiefs were graded on a multitude of factors from overall aircraft cleanliness to individual appearance. The competition showcases the airmen's professionalism and meticulous attention to detail in their career field.

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