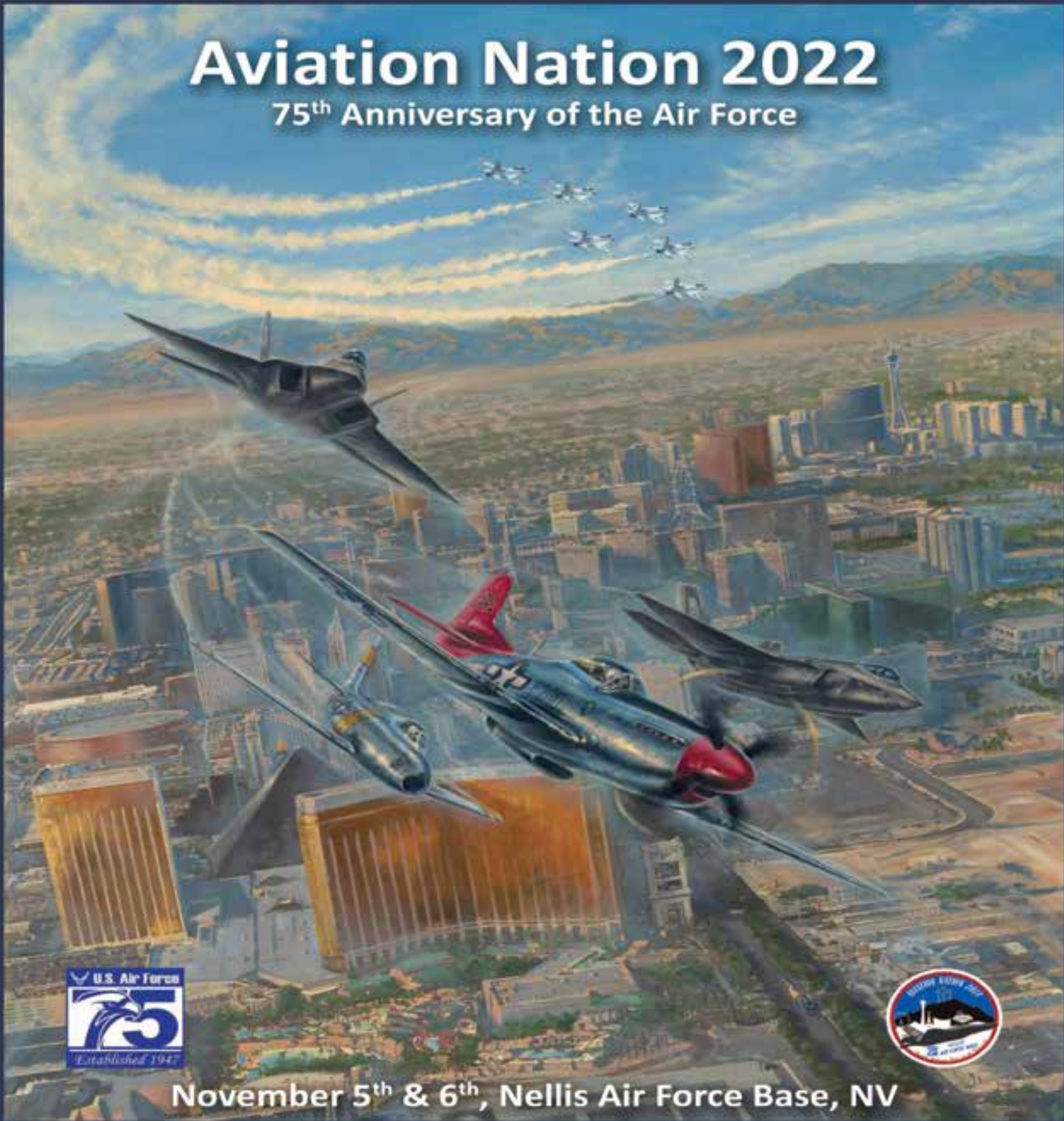


Desert Lightning News

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Aviation Nation 2022

75th Anniversary of the Air Force



November 5th & 6th, Nellis Air Force Base, NV

Welcome to 2022 Aviation Nation

Welcome to Aviation Nation 2022 — The capstone event and culmination of our 75th Air Force Anniversary celebration.

For 75 years, Airmen have continued to enable the Air Force to adapt and modernize; because of them, our forces have the warfighting capabilities they need to stay ahead of our ever-evolving pacing challenges. Nellis Air Force Base is the home of airpower's future, which is key to defending the Nation and deterring adversaries.

At today's air show you will see a variety of aircraft demonstrations and displays that together, showcase our current capabilities while honoring the Air Force tradition of keeping America safe and promoting global prosperity. This air show is one of our favorite events we have at Nellis because it gives us a chance to say thanks to the Las Vegas community for your constant support and partnership. The community has a tremendous impact on the well-being of our Airmen, their families, and our ability to conduct the high-end training that can only happen on the Nevada Test and Training Range. It is our pleasure to host you as we celebrate this milestone celebration.

Thank you for joining us and showing your continued support of our service men and women. We hope you enjoy your time at Nellis Air Force Base.

Col. Joshua D. DeMotts
99th Air Base Wing commander



Col. Joshua D. DeMotts
99th Air Base Wing commander

AVIATION NATION SURVEY



Thank you very much for attending Aviation Nation, we hope your experience was thrilling and you have a better understanding of what your Air Force does for our National Defense. We would appreciate your feedback so that we can continue to improve our Air Show. Hope to see you again in November of 2024.



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

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

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

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

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U.S. Air Force Demonstration Squadron — Thunderbirds



Mission

The U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, the Thunderbirds, performs precision aerial maneuvers demonstrating the capabilities of Air Force high performance aircraft – currently the F-16 Fighting Falcon — to people throughout the world. The squadron exhibits the professional qualities the Air Force develops in the people who fly, maintain and support these aircraft.

The Thunderbirds squadron is an Air Combat Command unit composed of eight pilots (including six demonstration pilots), four support officers, three civilians and more than 130 enlisted personnel performing in 25 career fields.

A Thunderbirds air demonstration is a mix of formation flying and solo routines. The four-aircraft diamond formation demonstrates the training and precision of Air Force pilots, while the solo aircraft highlight the maximum capabilities of the F-16 Fighting Falcon.

The pilots perform approximately 30 maneuvers in a demonstration. The entire show, including ground and air, runs about an hour and 15 minutes.

The season lasts from March to November, with the winter months used to train new members. Officers serve a two-year assignment with the squadron, while enlisted personnel serve three to four. Replacements must be trained for about half of the team each year, providing a constant mix of experience.

The squadron performs approximately 75 demonstrations each year and has never canceled a demonstration due to maintenance difficulty. More than 300 million people in all 50 states and 58 for-



Air Force photograph by Adam Bowles

The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds fly over Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., during the Aerospace Valley Open House, Air Show and STEM Expo, Oct. 14-16, 2022.



Air Force photograph by Giancarlo Casem

The Thunderbirds perform precision aerial maneuvers during the 2022 Aerospace Valley Open House, Air Show and STEM Expo at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Oct. 14-16, 2022.



Air Force photograph by Giancarlo Casem

A U.S. Air Force Thunderbird performs a "sneak pass" maneuver during the 2022 Aerospace Valley Open House, Air Show and STEM Expo at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Oct. 14-16, 2022.



Courtesy photo

Thunderbird #5 and #6 perform a maneuver at the 2022 Aerospace Valley Open House, Air Show and STEM Expo at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Oct. 14-16, 2022.



Air Force photograph by Giancarlo Casem

Thunderbird #5 and #6 perform a maneuver at the 2022 Aerospace Valley Open House, Air Show and STEM Expo at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Oct. 14-16, 2022.



Air Force photograph by Kyle Brasier

The Thunderbirds, the U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, flying their F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft, perform precision aerial maneuvers during the 2022 Aerospace Valley Open House, Air Show and STEM Expo at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Oct. 14-16, 2022.

foreign countries have seen the red, white and blue jets in more than 4,000 aerial demonstrations.

In addition to their responsibilities as the official U.S. Air Force aerial dem-

onstration team, the Thunderbirds are part of our combat force. If required, the team's personnel and aircraft can be rapidly integrated into a fighter unit at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Since the

aircraft are only slightly modified, they can be made combat-ready in less than 72 hours.

— See **THUNDERBIRDS**, on Page 20



U. S. Air Force Warfare Center

Warfighters: As the Air Force Warfare Center, our staff and units work for all major commands and Air Component Commanders, as well as all U.S. Air Force warfighters, on behalf of the Chief of staff of the Air Force. USAFWC engagement to shape and improve Operational Training and Test Infrastructure is particularly important at this time.

The Global Situation — Great Power Competition: Today, all elements of center work must be viewed through the lens of great power competition as defined by the 2022 National Defense Strategy.

“The NDS sets out how the Department of Defense will contribute to advancing and safeguarding vital U.S. national interests — protecting the American people, expanding America’s prosperity, and realizing and defending our democratic values. DOD will advance our goals through three primary ways: integrated deterrence, campaigning, and actions that build enduring advantages.”

On Sept. 18, 1947, the U.S. Air Force

was established to provide a corps of professionals dedicated to the control and exploitation of the air domain to secure our nation’s interests. Our five Air Force core missions remain:

- Air Superiority
- Global Strike
- ISR
- Mobility, and
- Command & Control required to execute the first four.

The USAFWC ensures our warfighters have the tools, training, and expertise required to successfully execute these missions in any combat situation against any adversary.

The Method — Collaborate and Integrate to Dominate: The USAFWC organization is unique, and it fulfills several roles. The staff functions as a NAF to assist subordinate wings and organizations with assigned missions. Collectively, the staff and subordinate wings serve as the Air Force’s weapons and tactics shop, providing integrated

tactical and operational solutions to warfighters, major commands and combatant commands. These solutions are inclusive, synchronized, and integrated with, or complementary to, joint, inter-agency, allied, and partner capabilities.

Organizations

To execute its mission, the USAFWC oversees the operations of five wings and two named units: the 57th Wing, 99th Air Base Wing, the Nevada Test and Training Range, and the Air Force Joint Test Program Office at Nellis AFB; the 53rd Wing and the 350th Spectrum Warfare Wing at Eglin AFB, Fla.; and the 505th Command and Control Wing at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

The USAFWC is comprised of approximately 13,000 personnel, active duty, guard, reserve, DOD civilians contractors, located in 21 states. The USAFWC also includes its own Inspector General, Staff Judge Advocate, Safety Office, Protocol Office, Financial Manager and Historian.

The U. S. Air Force Warfare Center at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., reports directly to the Air Combat Command. The center was founded Sept. 1, 1966, as the U.S. Air Force Tactical Fighter Weapons Center. It was renamed the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center in October 2005.

The Mission: The USAFWC conducts warfighter-centric live and virtual operational test and evaluation, tactics development, and advanced training to optimize Air Force capabilities and prepare Airmen for joint, all domain combat operations.

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57th Wing

The 57th Wing, as the most diverse wing in the Air Force, provides advanced, realistic, and multi-domain training focused on ensuring dominance through air, space and cyberspace.

The 57th Wing builds innova-

tive leaders in tactics, training and high-end warfighting to ensure world-wide combat air forces are prepared for tomorrow's victories, while overseeing dynamic and challenging flight operations at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

The 57th Wing is comprised of the United States Air Force Weapons School, 57th Maintenance Group, 57th Operations Group, USAF Aerial Demonstration Squadron (Thunderbirds), and the USAF Advanced Maintenance and Munitions

Operations School (AMMOS). U.S. Air Force Weapons School

Comprised of 21 squadrons, the U.S. Air Force Weapons School teaches graduate-level instructor courses that provide the world's most advanced training in weapons and tactics employment to officers of the combat air forces and mobility air forces. Every six months, the school produces approximately 80 graduates who are expert instructors on weapons, weapons systems, as well as air,

space and cyberspace integration. The school also produces the Weapons Review magazine, the CAF's premier professional tactics publication.

Upon graduation, the new weapons officers return to the field to serve as unit weapons and tactics officers, providing advanced instruction and battlefield guidance to their commanders, operations officers, and personnel.

57th Operations Group educates, exercises, and advocates

the integration of airpower into the joint fight and supports the preparation of the combat air forces' (CAF) maintainers and aircrews. To execute its mission, the 57th OG oversees operations of six squadrons and two detachments located at Nellis AFB and four geographically separated locations.

United States Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron — Thunderbirds For more information on the USAF Thunderbirds, see Page 3.



U. S. Air Force Weapons School

The U.S. Air Force Weapons School trains tactical experts and leaders to control and exploit air, space and cyber on behalf of the joint force.

Every six months, the school graduates approximately 100

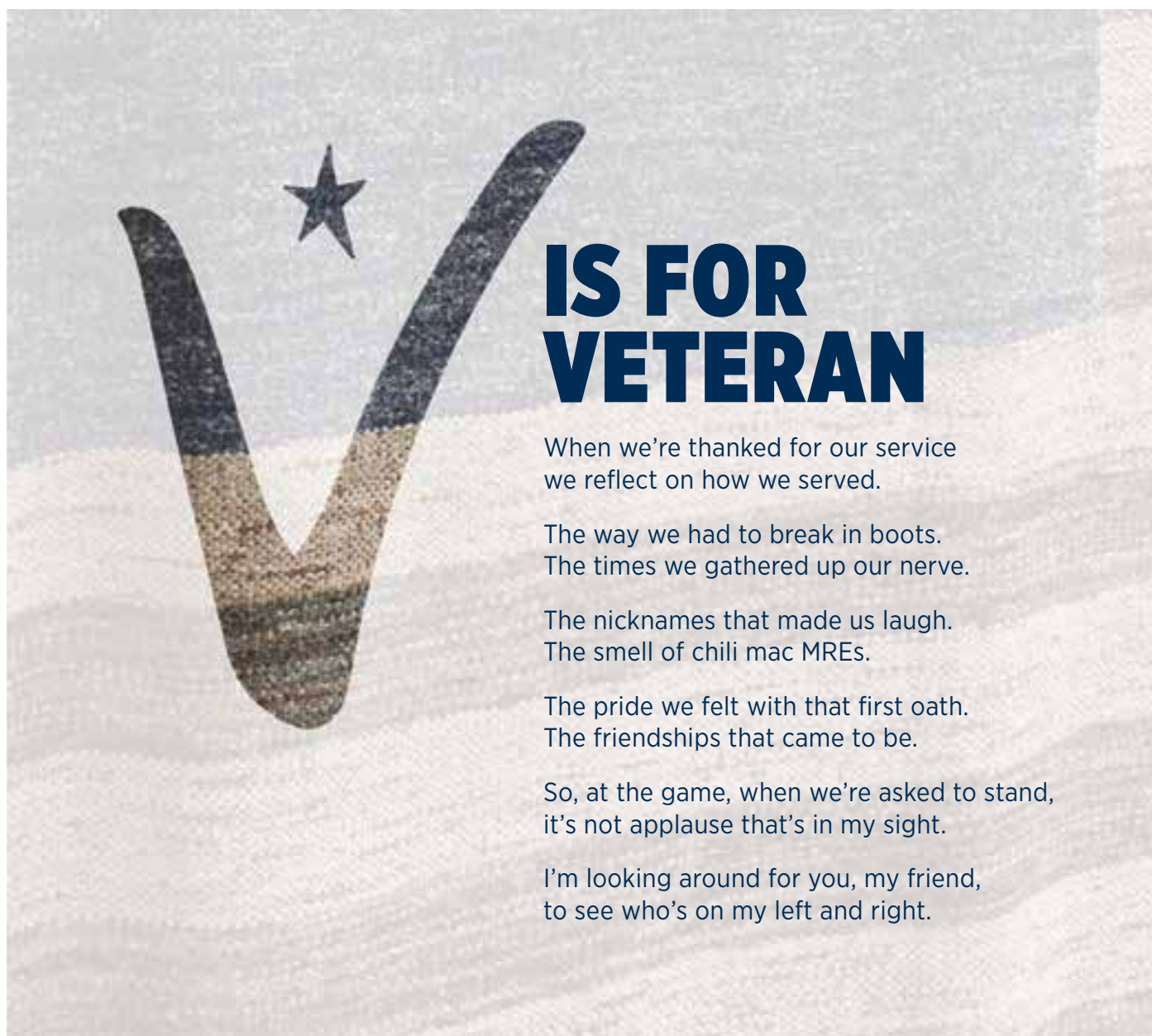
Weapons Officers and enlisted specialists who are tactical system experts, weapons instructors and leaders of Airmen.

Weapons Officers serve as advisers to military leaders at all levels, both those in uniform or

civilian government positions. Weapons Officers are the instructors of the Air Force's instructors and the service's institutional reservoir of tactical and operational knowledge. Taking the mantra, "humble, approachable and cred-

ible" as their creed, they form a fraternity of trusted advisors and problem-solvers that leads the force and enables it to integrate its combat power seamlessly alongside those of other military services.

— See **WEAPONS**, on Page 18



IS FOR VETERAN

When we're thanked for our service we reflect on how we served.

The way we had to break in boots.
The times we gathered up our nerve.

The nicknames that made us laugh.
The smell of chili mac MREs.

The pride we felt with that first oath.
The friendships that came to be.

So, at the game, when we're asked to stand,
it's not applause that's in my sight.

I'm looking around for you, my friend,
to see who's on my left and right.



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United States Air Force Advanced Maintenance and Munitions Operations School

The United States Air Force Advanced Maintenance and Munitions Operations School, part of the 57th Wing, prepares aircraft maintenance, munitions, and logistics readiness leaders for tomorrow's victories.

USAF AMMOS provides the Air Force's premier advanced maintenance, munitions and logistics training, expanding combat capability through graduate-level education. Graduates are highly skilled tactical and operational maintenance, munitions, and logistics readiness officers and senior non-commissioned officers, capable of effectively leading

aircraft maintenance, munitions, logistics readiness operations at home station or deployed. They can skillfully manage aircraft fleet-health, and overall unit personnel readiness and training challenges to ensure combat-ready weapons systems in support of an air campaign.

Graduates plan and execute a unit's flying hour program and can effectively deploy forces to successfully accomplish expeditionary combat operations. They can also design and execute munitions operations and production.

Graduates are charged to effectively share their knowledge as mentors to their

senior leaders, peers, and subordinates. They also act as an adviser to wing leadership on aircraft maintenance, munitions, and logistics readiness issues at home station or deployed.

USAF AMMOS was established as a result of experience gained from Operation Allied Force. During the air war, former (and now retired) Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper, then the U. S. Air Forces Europe commander, noted a need for mid-level logistics officers to have enhanced logistics knowledge similar to what operators receive from the U. S. Air Force Weapons School.

In December 2000, a CORONA tasker directed the development of advanced logistics officer training. The following June, Jumper, then Air Combat Command commander, approved the "stand up" of the school at Nellis AFB, Nev., as a part of the 57th Fighter Wing. The mission was to train selected mid-level Captain logisticians in the integration of expeditionary logistics processes at the tactical level.

The first class of 12 students, comprised of aircraft maintenance, munitions, logistics planners and supply officers, graduated in June 2003.



99th Air Base Wing

99th Mission Support Group and the 99th Medical Group along with the 99th Comptroller Squadron.

The 99th Comptroller Squadron is assigned directly to the wing and executes the annual budgets for Nellis AFB, Creech AFB, and the Nevada Test and Training Range. Additionally, they provide ADCON to 10 Wing Staff Agencies including the Inspector General, Safety, Chaplain, Historian, Information Protection, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, Equal Opportunity, Community Support Coordinator, and Command Post.

Background

The 99th Air Base Wing

traces its lineage to the 99th Bombardment Group activated on June 1, 1942. Flying the B-17 Flying Fortress, the 99th BG participated in Operation Frantic, the first shuttle combat U.S. and Russian aircraft. While flying over North Africa, Italy, and Southern Europe with the 12th Air Force and subsequently the 15th Air Force, the 99th BG completed 395 missions.

The group was inactivated after World War II, then briefly reactivated as the 99th Bombardment Group, Very Heavy in the Air Force Reserve at Birmingham, Ala., from 1947 to 1949.

A new wing, the 99th Stra-

tegic Reconnaissance Wing, Heavy activated on Jan. 1, 1953, at Fairchild AFB, Wash., flying the B/RB-36. In 1955, this wing re-designated as the 99th Bombardment Wing and moved to Westover AFB, Mass., where it flew the B-52 and the KC-135 until inactivation in 1974.

On Jan. 31, 1984, the Air Force consolidated the 99th Bombardment Group and the 99th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. The Air Force designed this action so that current units would perpetuate the legacies of World War II fighting units.

This led to the activation of the 99th Strategic Weapons Wing at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., on Aug. 10, 1989. The wing

would re-designated as the 99th Tactics and Training Wing, then 99th Wing, and finally as the 99th Air Base Wing upon arriving at Nellis Air Force Base on Oct. 1, 1995.

Under eight names with a single lineage, the 99th Air Base Wing has earned a number of honors. During World War II, the 99th BG earned 14 campaign streamers as well as two Distinguished Unit Citations for destroying enemy fighters at Gerbini Airfield (July 5, 1943) and the Weiner-Neustadt Aircraft Factory (April 23, 1944). The wing has also earned 15 Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards, including 10 while stationed at Nellis.



926th Wing (Air Force Reserve)

tion, reservists are integrated into regular Air Force units, accomplishing the USAFWC and 432nd Wing/432nd Air Expeditionary Wing at Creech AFB, missions side-by-side active duty Air Force personnel on a daily basis.

Through TFI, the 926th Wing provides combat-ready reservists to the USAFWC as sustained expertise integrated at the operational and tactical levels of warfare. It continuously conducts combat operations, operational test and evaluation, tactics development, and advanced training

to forge the tools required to fly, fight and win.

The 926th WG also supports the U.S. Air Force's first Remotely Piloted Aircraft wing, the 432nd WG/432nd AEW, equipped with the MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aircraft, in its mission to train pilots, sensor operators and other unmanned aircraft systems crewmembers, and conduct combat surveillance and attack operations worldwide.

The 926th WG consists of two groups, 13 squadrons and one detachment across the nation.

The 926th Operations Group

at Nellis Air Force Base includes units assigned to Eglin AFB, Fla., Schriever Space Force Base, Colo., and Hurlburt Field, Fla.

The 726th Operations Group at Creech AFB supports units at Creech and Nellis, Holloman AFB, N.M., Beale AFB, Calif.

The wing traces its heritage to the 926th Troop Carrier Group established Dec. 28, 1963, at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, La., flying the C-119 Flying Boxcar.

Throughout the years, the wing has flown both transport and fighter aircraft including the

C-130 Hercules, the A-37 Dragonfly, the A-10 Thunderbolt II and the F-16 Fighting Falcon. In 1990 and 1991, the wing deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, as the nation's first Air Force Reserve combat unit recalled to active duty. In 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission identified the 926th FW for closure with personnel and aircraft relocating to four bases. In October 2007, the 926th Group was officially re-activated at Nellis AFB. It was re-designated the 926th Wing on Dec. 5, 2014.

The 926th Wing is an Air Force Reserve unit under 10th Air Force, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, Fort Worth, Texas. The wing is located at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., as an associate unit to the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center.

Through Total Force Integra-

Nevada Test and Training Range

The Nevada Test and Training Range, formerly the 98th Range Wing, provides the warfighter a flexible, realistic and multidimensional battle-space to conduct testing tactics development, and advanced training in support of U.S. national interests.

The NTTR also provides instrumentation and target maintenance support for Green Flag-West at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., and Leach Lake Tactics Range, Calif.

As a Major Range Test Facility Base activity, the NTTR supports the Department of Defense advanced composite force training, tactics development, and electronic combat testing as well as DOD and Department of Energy testing, research, and development. The NTTR hosts numerous Red Flag and U.S. Air Force Weapons School exercises each year, as well as various test and tactics development missions.

The NTTR coordinates operational and support matters with major commands, other services, DOE and Department of Interior, as well as other federal,

state, and local government agencies. The NTTR acts as the single point of contact for range customers.

The NTTR Mission is to create, operate, and maintain live and synthetic environments and integrate partners to optimize warfighter capabilities.

The NTTR Vision is to provide premier arenas enabling U.S. and partner nation warfighters to defeat all adversaries

Priorities of the NTTR are:

- Build, update, and resource the NTTR to a Threat Matrix Framework Level 4 capability by fiscal year 2027
- Accelerate Joint Simulation Environment in the 31st Combat Training Squadron to achieve Night-1 Test and Training Objectives
- Synchronize NTTR, interagency, and intergovernmental airspace and land management efforts to build efficient and transparent partnerships
- Create and communicate a deliberate human capital strategy that recruits, retains, and prepares talent for the NTTR and the U.S. Air Force

- Ensure internal safety and security processes and policies allow freedom to execute NTTR missions and tasks today while preparing for tomorrow

History

The 98th Range Wing was activated at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., on Oct. 29, 2001. The history of the 98th Range Wing can be traced to the 98th Bombardment Wing formed on Oct. 24, 1947. Further re-designations followed, including the 98th Strategic Aerospace Wing on Feb. 1, 1964, and later the 98th Strategic Wing on June 25, 1966. The 98th Strategic Wing was inactivated on Dec. 31, 1976. The 98th Range Wing was re-designated the Nevada Test and Training Range on June 21, 2011.

Background

The NTTR is the largest contiguous air and ground space available for peacetime military operations in the free world. The range occupies 2.9 million acres of land, 5,000 square miles of airspace which is restricted from civilian air traffic over-flight and another 7,000 square miles of Military Operating Area,

or MOA, which is shared with civilian aircraft. The 12,000-square-nautical mile range provides a realistic arena for operational testing and training aircrews to improve combat readiness. A wide variety of live munitions can be employed on targets on the range.

The NTTR organization is composed of nine directorates and one squadron: Operations Directorate which includes the 31st Combat Training Squadron, Mission Support, Program Management, Plans and Programs, Financial Management, Safety, Range Support, Information Protection, and Advanced Programs.

Operation Directorate

The mission of the Operations Directorate is to provide day-to-day direction and control of the geographical NTTR. The Director of Operations oversees two divisions, Current Operations and Weapons, and the 31st Combat Training Squadron (Virtual Test and Training Center). The Range Operations Officer

—————See **NTTR**, on Page 18

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DANCER PHOTO BY BILL HUGHES

414th Combat Training Squadron "Red Flag"



his first 10 combat missions, his probability of survival for remaining missions increased substantially. Red Flag was designed to expose each "Blue" force pilot to their first 10 "combat missions" here at Nellis, allowing them to be more confident and effective in actual combat. This same principle continues to guide Red Flag today, with the goal of preparing Air Force, Joint, and Coalition pilots, aircrew and operators to fight against a near-peer adversary in any combat environment.

Tasked to plan and control this training, the 414th Combat Training Squadron's mission is to maximize the combat readiness, capability and survivability of participating units by providing realistic, multi-domain training in a combined air, ground, space and electronic threat environment while providing opportunity for a free ex-

change of ideas between forces.

Aircraft and personnel deploy to Nellis for Red Flag under the Air Expeditionary Force concept and make up the exercise's "Blue" forces. By working together, these Blue forces are able to utilize their diverse capabilities and weapons systems to execute specific missions, such as offensive counter air, suppression of enemy air defense, combat search and rescue, dynamic targeting, and defensive counter air. These forces use various tactics to attack NTTR targets such as mock airfields, vehicle convoys, tanks, parked aircraft, bunkered defensive positions, missile sites, and conduct personnel recovery efforts. These targets are defended by a variety of simulated "Red" force ground and air threats to give participant aircrews the most realistic combat training possible.

The Red force threats are aligned under the 57th Op-

erations Group, which controls seven squadrons of U.S. Air Force Aggressors, including fighter, space, information operations and air defense units. The Aggressors are specially trained to replicate the tactics and techniques of potential adversaries and provide a scalable threat presentation to Blue forces which aids in achieving the desired learning outcomes for each mission.

A typical Red Flag exercise involves a variety of attack, fighter and bomber aircraft (F-15E, F-35, F-16, F/A-18, A-10C, B-1B, B-2A, B-52H, FGR4, MQ-9, etc.), reconnaissance aircraft (MQ-4B, RC-135, U-2S), electronic warfare aircraft (EC-130H, EA-18G and F-16CM), air superiority aircraft (F-22A, F-15C, etc), airlift support (C-130, C-17A), Search and Rescue aircraft (HH-60G, HH-60W, HC-130J, CH-47), aerial refueling aircraft (A330, KC-130,

KC-135R, KC-10A, KC-46A, etc), multi-domain Command and Control platforms (E-3, E-8C, E-2C, E-7A, R1, etc) as well as ground based Command and Control, Space, and Cyber Forces.

Four U.S. military services, their Guard/Reserve components and the air forces of numerous other countries participate in each Red Flag exercise. Since 1975, 29 countries which includes (EPAF a consortium of Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark and Norway) and NATO (AWACS) have joined the U.S. in these exercises and several other countries have participated as observers. Red Flag has seen 30,268 aircraft and has provided training for more than 529,722 military personnel, of which 164,724 are aircrew members flying more than 423,248 sorties and logging more than 783,907 hours of flying time.


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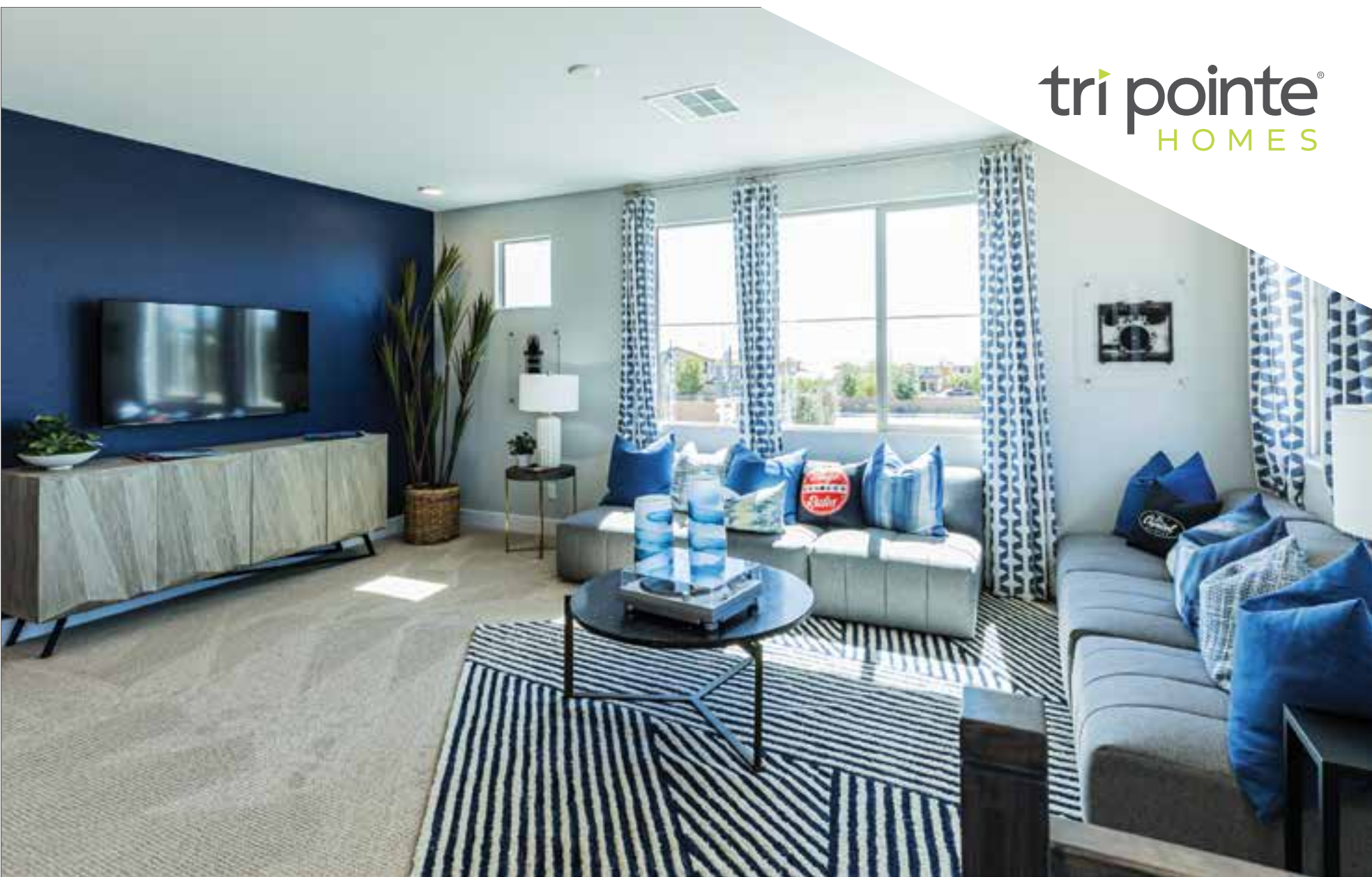
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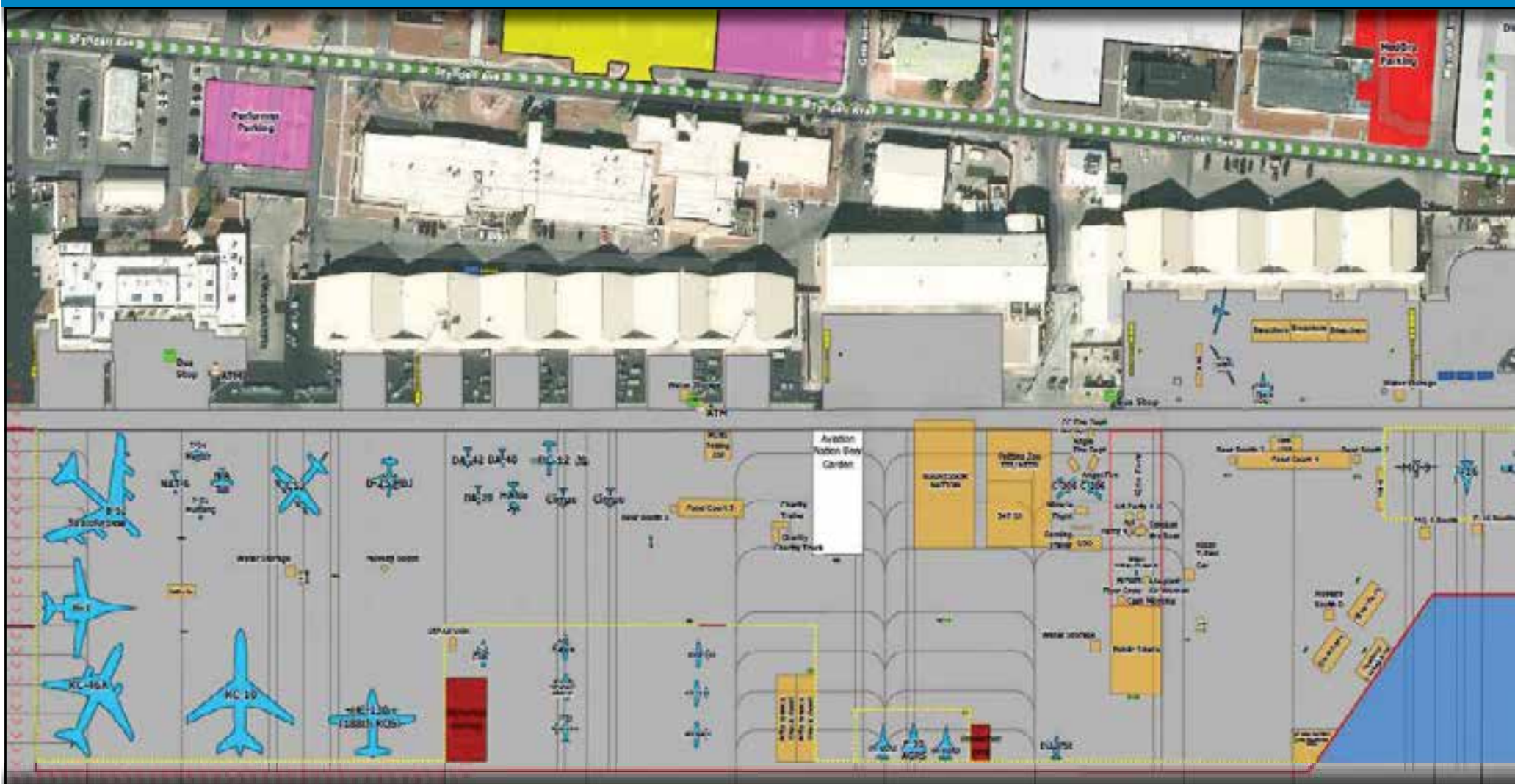
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NELLIS AIR FORCE AVIATION



2022 Schedule of Events

Nov. 5-6, 2022

Events and Static Displays subject to change

Gates will be open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Buses will take people to the flight line from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

All parking will be at the Las Vegas Motor Speedway. No foot traffic through any gate is allowed.

STATIC DISPLAYS

MQ-9 Reaper

F-15C Eagle

T-6A Texan II

T-1A Jayhawk

T-38 Talon

Nellis Threat Training Facility displays

B-52? Stratofortress

KC-46? Pegasus

Civil Air Patrol

Wright Flyer

Eclipse 550 Jet

CAFSocal B-25 PBJ

KC-10 Extender

C-17 Globemaster III

C-5M Super Galaxy

C-130 Hercules

Formula 1 Las Vegas Grand Prix

Subject to change

CE BASE NATION 2022



AERIAL PERFORMANCES

Headliner: USAF Thunderbirds

Aftershock

Bill Stein (Edge 540)

Jodi Reuger (RV6)

Growler (EA-18G)

Acemaker (T-33)

West Coast Rhino Demo Team

A four-ship heritage flight showcasing an F35, F-22, P-51 and F-86

USAF demo teams:

C-17

F-22

F-35

Combined Arms Demo

F-16

F-15E

F-35

A-10

HH-60

Joint Tactical Air Control (JTAC)

SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape)



64th Aggressor Squadron

bat against any adversary. To that end, the squadron vision states “Respected, requested, required air combat adversaries.”

The squadron operates 30 F-16C/M aircraft, providing realistic, threat-representative, near-peer adversary air for high-end U.S. and coalition training.

The Aggressor program began in the fall of 1972 with the

activation of the 64th Aggressor Squadron. This program started as a direct result of the high air combat loss rate experienced in the Vietnam War. A professional adversary force conducting a program of intense dissimilar air combat training was identified as the best means to remedy this result. This new training replaced pilots flying the same type aircraft in mock combat at their

home bases with Aggressor pilots and controllers flying and employing tactics that emulated the former Soviet Union and other potential adversaries.

Over the years the Aggressor Squadrons have flown the T-38, F-5, F-15C, and currently F-16 aircraft. As a result of defense budget cuts, the last Aggressor squadron was deactivated in October 1990 and reformed as the Adversary Tactics Division

under the 414th Combat Training Squadron, or Red Flag.

After 12 years as the professional adversaries for Red Flag, demands began to exceed the reduced Aggressor charter. The 64th Aggressor Squadron was reactivated on Oct. 3, 2003. The principal testament to the value of the Aggressor program is the consistent dominance of our Air Force during recent conflicts.

The mission of the 64th Aggressor Squadron is to prepare warfighters to win in air com-



65th Aggressor Squadron

The 65th Aggressor Squadron reactivated June 9, 2022, with a directed mission to know, teach and replicate fifth-generation air adversaries at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

Air Combat Command commander

Gen. Mark Kelly flew his F-15E Strike Eagle against the unit's first assigned F-35A Lightning II and newest commander, Lt. Col. Brandon Nauta, immediately prior to the ceremony.

“Due to the growing threat posed by PRC [People’s Republic of China] fifth and sixth-gen fighter development, we must use a portion of our daily fifth-generation aircraft today at Langley, Elmendorf, Hill, Eielson, and now Nellis, to replicate adversary fifth-generation capabilities,” Kelly said. “Precisely because we have this credible threat, when we do replicate a fifth-gen adversary, it has to be done professionally. That’s the Aggressors.”

In 2019, the then-Air Combat Command commander and secretary of the Air Force approved the activation to improve training for fifth-generation fighter tactics development, advanced large force training and operational test support. The decision underwent compliance

with the National Environmental and Policy Act and other regulatory and planning processes.

The 65th AGRS was previously active at Nellis AFB from 2005 — 2014. During that time, the unit replicated tactics and techniques of potential adversaries with a fleet of F-15 Eagles. When they inactivated, the 64th AGRS continued the aggressor mission with F-16 Fighting Falcons.

“This significant milestone marks our ability to bring fifth-generation capabilities to the high-end fight, and will allow us to enhance our premier tactics and training with joint, allied and coalition forces,” said Brig. Gen. Michael Drowley, the then 57th Wing commander.



66th Rescue Squadron

Asia in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

In 2003 the 66 ERQS was called on again to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, deploying to a classified location and moving continually forward to four extremely austere forward operating locations. The 66th was the first U.S. Air Force flying unit operating at Baghdad International Airport. During OIF the Nellis Rescue Team conducted the first combat recovery of a downed fighter crew by a conventional combat, search and rescue unit since the Vietnam War.

Two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars, and 25 Distinguished Flying Crosses have been awarded to 66th RQS aircrew for their heroic actions during operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Despite the extremely high operations tempo, the 66 RQS met 100 percent of its operational taskings during two major contingencies. The pararescue team became the 58th RQS in 2002, and the maintenance squadron became the 763rd in 2003. The 763rd deactivated on April 10, 2012, and the 823rd Maintenance Squadron was activated. The combined efforts of these exemplary units are on duty

anywhere they are needed in support of America’s national interests and the global war on terrorism. These Things We Do, That Others May Live.

The 66th Rescue Squadron stood up the first ever Global Response Force in 2015 and is currently deployed in support of Operation Freedom’s Sentinel.

The squadron’s motto is “Haec Ago Ut Alii Vivant” or “These things we do, that others may live.”

The mission of the 66th Rescue Squadron is to provide rapidly deployable, expeditionary, and agile combat search and rescue forces to theater commanders in response to contingency operations worldwide. The 66th RQS conducts peacetime search and rescue in support of the National Search and Rescue Plan and the Air Warfare Center. They directly support HH-60G logistical and maintenance support requirements for the USAF Weapons School and Air Combat Command-directed operational test missions.

Vision Statement

We will be the most capable and reliable personnel recovery force in the world for all peacetime and combat operations. We will be dedicated,

professional airmen and experts at employing the HH-60G to effectively recover all isolated personnel day or night and under any conditions. We will continually develop our ability to fight future wars to ensure we are always prepared to provide Combatant Commanders with world class personnel recovery support.

Description

The approximately 130 Airmen of the 66th Rescue Squadron operate the HH-60G Pave Hawk medium-lift Combat Search and Rescue helicopter and provides rapidly deployable full spectrum expeditionary personnel recovery vertical lift capabilities to theater commanders worldwide. They tactically employ the HH-60G helicopter and its crew in hostile environments to recover downed aircrew and isolated personnel during day, night, or marginal weather conditions in contested airspace employing skills such as weapons employment, shipboard operations, and aerial refueling. The squadron also conducts military operations other than war including; civil search and rescue, disaster relief, international aid, and emergency medical evacuation.

The 66th Rescue Squadron first took to the air on Nov. 14, 1952, at Royal Air Base Manston, England, flying C-119 “Flying Boxcar” transports, H-19 “Chickasaw” helicopters and SA-16 “Albatross” seaplanes.

The unit deactivated on Jan. 18, 1958, and reactivated on March 1, 1991, flying the HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter. In 1993, the 66 RQS deployed to Operation Desert Storm, and later deployed to Operations Northern and Southern Watch.

Following the events of Sept. 11, 2001, operations, maintenance and pararescue personnel combined to deploy as the 66th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron to South Central



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Nellis Air Force Base



Air Force Base, it was renamed the next year in honor of Lt. William Harrell Nellis. Nellis, a P-47 pilot from southern Nevada, was killed in action Dec. 27, 1944, while on his 70th combat mission over Luxembourg during the Battle of the Bulge in support of the besieged 101st Airborne Division.

Initially an advanced pilot training base, the mission changed to F-86 flight training and gunnery for qualified pilots. During the Korean War, the training received at Nellis AFB was directly responsible for the 14-1 kill ratio of the F-86 against the superior MiG-15. At the time, Nellis was the only base training F-86 combat pilots - pilots returning from the theater were used as instructors at the Combat Crew Training School, and provided the air expertise that allowed the United States to maintain air superiority throughout the war.

With a 1958 transfer from Air Training Command to Tactical Air Command, the mission transitioned from initial aircraft qualification and gunnery training to advanced, graduate-level weapons training. The USAF Tactical Fighter Weapons Center (now Warfare Center) was acti-

vated in 1966. In 1975, Red Flag air-to-air exercises were started and in 1990, the Air Warrior, now Green Flag-West, air-to-ground training mission moved to Nellis AFB.

Today, as part of the USAF Warfare Center, units at Nellis continue to provide training for composite strike forces that include every type of aircraft in the U.S. Air Force inventory, along with air and ground units of the Army, Navy, Marines and air units from allied nations. Nellis is also responsible for operational test and evaluation, as well as tactics development.

The 57th Wing is the operational element of the center. The wing's major units are the 57th Operations Group, 57th Maintenance Group, U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds", U.S. Air Force Weapons School, 414th Combat Training Squadron (Red Flag), 547th Intelligence Squadron and the 549th Combat Training Squadron (Green Flag-West).

Other USAF units at Nellis AFB are the 99th Air Base Wing and Nevada Test and Training Range, along with the 53rd Test & Evaluation Group (53rd Wing, Eglin AFB, Fla.) and 505th Op-

erations Group (505th Command & Control Wing, Hurlburt Field, Fla.).

The NTTR organization is responsible for developing, maintaining, and operating facilities on the NTTR to satisfy requirements for a realistic combat environment.

The 99th ABW has two groups. The 99th Mission Support Group provides a wide array of services including transportation, supply, services, contracting, civil engineering, mission support and communications. The 99th Medical Group provides a growing range of medical services at the Mike O'Callaghan Military Medical Center, providing mission ready Airmen.

Tenant units at Nellis include the 926th Wing, Air Force Reserve Command, 820th Red Horse Squadron, 365th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Group (363rd ISRW) and 555th Red Horse Squadron; Operating Location Alpha, 563rd Rescue Group and more than 50 smaller tenant units and activities. Also present is an Armed Forces Reserve Center hosting U.S. Navy Reserve, U.S. Army Reserve and U.S. Marine Corps Reserve units.

Nellis Air Force Base, a part of the U.S. Air Force's Air Combat Command, is located approximately eight miles northeast of Las Vegas, Nev. The base itself covers more than 14,000 acres, while the total land area occupied by Nellis and its restricted ranges is about 5,000 square miles. An additional 7,700 miles of airspace north and east of the restricted ranges are also available for military flight operations.

Nellis is a major focal point for advanced combat aviation training. Its mission is accomplished through an array of aircraft, including fighters, bombers, refuelers, and aircraft used for transport, close-air-support, command-and-control and combat search-and-rescue. The Nellis work force of about 9,500 military and civilians makes it one of the largest single employers in

Southern Nevada. The total military population numbers more than 40,000, including family members and military retirees in the area.

Background

Nellis began as the Las Vegas Army Air Field in late 1941, hosting the Army Air Corps Flexible Gunnery School which started B-17 gunnery training in early 1942. In 1944, B-17 co-pilot training was added. During the height of World War II, more than 600 gunners and 215 co-pilots graduated from the school every five weeks. In March 1945, B-17 co-pilot training was cancelled and the gunnery program gave way to B-29 gunnery training. Following the end of the war, the base was a separation center and then placed on temporary standby status, finally closing in January 1947.

Reopened in 1949 as Las Vegas

Lieutenant William Harrell Nellis



Courtesy photo

the Nellis family returned to Las Vegas where Nellis found a job with the railroad. Nellis' job with the railroad was enough to keep him out of the Army at the outbreak of World War II. However, after completing some flying lessons and logging eight hours in the air, Nellis enlisted in the Enlisted Reserve Corps Dec. 9, 1942. He reported for active duty as an aviation cadet March 2, 1943. On Aug. 27, 1943, Nellis completed primary pilot training in Albany, Ga. He was honorably discharged Jan. 6, 1944, and accepted an appointment as a flight officer the next day.

Nellis departed the United States for overseas duty with the 495th Replacement Group May 21, 1944. He was reassigned to the 513th Fighter Squadron July 9, 1944, where he participated in 70 aerial combat missions. He was shot down three times. Most of the missions flown by the 513th Fighter Squadron in 1944 were air-to-ground operations in support of Gen. George Patton's 3rd Army. Due to the fast advance of the 3rd Army through France, the squadron was forced to change airfields constantly. The constant movement did not hamper the unit's operations, however. The squadron proved quite effective in the air-interdiction and combat air support

role. Nellis was an active member in those missions, receiving two promotions and several awards. On Dec. 18, the Germans launched a major counteroffensive in the Ardennes Forest area known as the Battle of the Bulge. Because of bad weather, the 513th Fighter Squadron was unable to provide air support until Dec. 23. Most of the action occurred within 10 miles of the city of Bastogne, Belgium. Missions conducted in the Bastogne area were considered extremely hazardous. The fighter squadron flew sorties from dawn to dusk in support of the 101st Airborne Division until Dec. 29. It was in this environment that Nellis flew his final combat mission.

On Dec. 27, 1944, Nellis was hit by ground fire while strafing a German convoy over Luxembourg. His plane burst into flames and plunged into the ground, and Nellis was not seen exiting the aircraft. His sacrifice was not in vain. The missions undertaken by the 513th Fighter Squadron saved many lives and destroyed irreplaceable German armored vehicles, personnel and supplies. He was appointed second lieutenant on Aug. 9, 1944, and promoted to first lieutenant on Nov. 22, 1944. At the time of his death, Nellis had received the Air Medal with one silver and one bronze

Oak Leaf cluster, the American Campaign Medal, the European- African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with four Bronze Service Stars for participation in the Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes-Alsace, and Rhineland campaigns as well as the Distinguished Unit Emblem with one Oak Leaf Cluster. He had also been awarded his Pilot's wings (aviation badge) and a Marksmanship Badge with Pistol Bar. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and World War II Victory Medal.

In April 1949, the Air Force began its Memorial Program for the purpose of honoring certain individuals who distinguished themselves serving their country. The Air Force began receiving and evaluating recommendations for memorializing outstanding deceased military personalities who distinguished themselves to such an extent that the nation wished to perpetuate their memory by naming military air installations in their honor.

Nellis was chosen unanimously by local civic organizations to be honored. Effective April 30, 1950, Las Vegas Air Force Base was officially renamed Nellis Air Force Base. A dedication ceremony to mark the occasion took place May 20 with Lieutenant Nellis' family in attendance.

William Harrell Nellis was born in Santa Rita, N.M., March 8, 1916. He was still a child when his family relocated to Searchlight, Nev., and Nellis lived with his grandmother for a time in Searchlight.

When not attending school, he helped her run the Searchlight Hotel. Nellis remained in the town until he graduated the eighth grade, then moved to Las Vegas where he attended Las Vegas High School, where he graduated in 1936. He rented a room and held a job after school to pay room and board. In 1939, Nellis married Las Vegas native Shirley R. Fletcher. The couple had two children, Gary and Joyce. After relocating to Searchlight for a time,

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Creech Air Force Base



Creech Air Force Base, Nev., is home to the famed “Hunters” of the 432nd Wing and 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing.

The once-modest installation hosts the global Remotely Piloted Aircraft Enterprise and related operations of the British Royal Air Force’s No. 39 Squadron, the 556th Test and Evaluation Squadron, the Nevada Air National Guard’s 232nd Operations Squadron, and the Air Force Reserve’s 726th Operations Group.

Creech AFB arose from a small training site erected in the aftermath of the brutal Dec. 7, 1941, aerial attack on Pearl Harbor, an event that thrust America and the newly organized U.S. Army Air Forces into World War II. First envisioned as a simple sub-post “tent city” military training camp, by March 1942 three graded-earth landing strips with taxiways were in place with additional plans to construct more permanent facilities that included an auxiliary landing field for the parent Las Vegas Army Air Field. In the following seven decades the installation’s roles and missions focused on a sudden call to duty — preparing Airmen for combat and other roles in service to the nation.

Built one mile northwest of the community of Indian

Springs, and about 35 miles northwest of the city of Las Vegas, the sub-post was known as the Indian Springs Airport. Before the end of 1942, the Army had a contract for regular facilities there. By February 1943 the camp saw use as a divert field and as a base for air-to-air gunnery training. Later that summer, after the establishment of a four-engine ground training school for B-17 co-pilots, the airport’s full complement of aircraft included 29 B-17s, 18 TC-26s and 6 AT-61 trainers. In early 1945, as World War II began to wind down, so too did the missions at Indian Springs, and at year’s end the installation was in stand-by status with maintenance by a small housekeeping staff. As part of the post-war drawdown, both Indian Springs Airport and Las Vegas Army Air Field (today’s Nellis AFB) inactivated in January 1947.

Along with Las Vegas Army Air Field, Indian Springs Airport reopened in January 1949 after the birth of an Independent Air Force and the onset of the Cold War. Assigned to Air Training Command, the major command redesignated the field Indian Springs AFB as the site prepared for the arrival of its first permanently assigned Air Force unit in 1950. A renewal of airpower in-

novation and tactics in the new service during the Korean War left its mark on Indian Springs AFB. In July 1952, the base transferred to the Air Research and Development Command and realigned under the Air Force Special Weapons Center in Albuquerque, N.M. After the 3600th Air Demonstration Team “Thunderbirds” moved to Nellis AFB in June 1956, the Indian Springs airfield became their primary air demonstration practice site.

In 1961, control of the installation at Indian Springs shifted to Tactical Air Command. The base’s myriad roles throughout the 20th century belied its size and resources. A successive string of host and tenant organizations, ranging from groups to detachments, provided support to on- and off-site missions. Critical but little known responsibilities included support to the Continental Nuclear Test Program and service as a key staging base for the delivery of testing materials to the Soviet Union for joint verification tests. The base’s proximity to such remote but essential locations led to the arrival of its most distinguished visitor on Dec. 8, 1962,

as President John F. Kennedy arrived at Indian Springs AFB before proceeding by helicopter to the Nevada Test Site for an inspection of those facilities.

On April 13, 1964, the Air Force redesignated Indian Springs AFB as Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Field and assigned it to Nellis AFB. During this era the base had two enduring and well-known roles. It provided range maintenance for sections of the massive Nellis Test and Training Range. Concurrently, it served as a recurring host base for deployments of Airmen and aviators

from all the services in search of realistic, less constrained field training. Despite these vital and persistent contributions to critical missions and the development of air superiority, the base acquired no singular operational mission of its own. A detachment of UH-1N helicopters in the 1970s and 1980s constituted the only aircraft unit assigned to the installation.

Following the inactivation of Tactical Air Command in 1992, Indian Springs AFAF fell under the new Air Combat Command. A new era began on Dec. 13, 1996, with the first flight of the RQ-1 Predator remotely piloted aircraft at the airfield. In a defining moment of history, on the Nellis AFB Range, the Predator conducted the first successful firing of a Hellfire missile in February 2001. This transformation of a reconnaissance platform into an offensive weapon would, in a few short years, transform Indian Springs from a center of support to a center of operations reaching far beyond the horizons of the Nevada desert.

On June 20, 2005, with the transfer of the remotely piloted aviation mission to Indian Springs growing rapidly, the U.S. Air Force redesignated Indian Springs AFAF as Creech AFB in honor of Gen. Wilbur L. Creech. Naming the installation for Creech, commander of Tactical Air Command from 1978 to 1984, and a veteran of more than 275 combat missions in Korea and Vietnam, was doubly fitting. Dubbed the “father of the Thunderbirds,” Creech served as a Thunderbird pilot and senior mentor. As vice commander of Aeronautical Systems Division, his advocacy for systems development and acquisition paved the way for the Predator RPA.

On March 13, 2007, the arrival of the first MQ-9 Reaper at Creech marked another milestone in the base’s growing fleet of remotely piloted aircraft. The U.S. Air Force elevated the standing of RPA Enterprise on May 1, 2007, with the activation of the 432rd Wing. Establishment of the 432rd Air Expeditionary Wing at Creech on May 15, 2008, acknowledged the full spectrum of these operations. On Aug. 30, 2012, the 799th Air Base Group stood up to improve operating support at the base. Then, on Dec. 5, 2014, the 726th Operations Group of the Air Force Reserve Command unfurled its flag at Creech in a direct reflection of the expansion and enduring importance of the total force integration at the Hunters’ main operating base.

A final ceremony on Feb. 6, 2015, marked the end of the Silver Flag Alpha mission at Creech. The 99th Ground Combat Training Squadron inactivated shortly thereafter on April 1, 2015. A significant shift in primary roles and missions saw the activation of the Persistent Attack and Reconnaissance Operations Center in October of 2017. Further, the 432rd Mission Support Group activated in July of 2019 in a change of stewardship between the 99th Air Base Wing and the 432nd Wing. Present-day Creech AFB serves as the vibrant main operating base of the 432rd Wing and 432rd Air Expeditionary Wing. With a 3,000-strong workforce, it sustains around-the-clock overseas contingency operations against global terrorism. Born at the onset of a world war that imperiled America over three-quarters of a century ago, this seemingly unassuming base continues to live up to a legacy of defending this nation against all who would threaten it.

WEAPONS, from Page 5

In addition, the Weapons School provides academic and advisory support to numerous units, enhancing air combat training for thousands of Airmen from the Air Force, Department of Defense and U.S. allied services each year.

The Weapons School cadre also authors tactical doctrine, and conducts tactics validation. Actively collecting tactical knowledge and lessons learned from deployed units, evaluating solutions in exercises, and formally preparing them for application across the force, the Weapons School provides a controlled learning environment and knowledge trust for

best practices in air, space and cyber combat techniques.

Members of the Weapons School cadre have served as advisors to the other U.S. and allied military services around the world. The school also authors the Weapons Review, the Air Force’s premier professional tactics publication.

The Weapons School consists of 19 Weap-

ons Squadrons at nine locations across the country. Twelve squadrons are based at Nellis Air Force Base, while the other seven squadrons are located at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Little Rock AFB, Ark., Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., Dyess AFB, Texas, Whiteman, AFB, Mo., Barksdale AFB, La., and Fairchild AFB, Wash.

NTTR, from Page 7

is appointed in the DO office. The directorate supports Air Force, Joint, and multi-national test and training activities by operating the NTTR and supporting LLTR. The directorate prioritizes all activities and schedules range users while providing ground control intercept operations, flight following safety deconfliction, simulated threat command and control operations, and range access control. It assists customers and

coordinates support activities including airspace issues with military and federal agencies.

Mission Support

The Mission Support Directorate is responsible for providing range maintenance on the NTTR and base operating support at three geographically separated Operations and Maintenance compounds, including Point Bravo Electronic Combat Range, Tolicha Peak Electronic Combat Range, Tonopah Electronic Combat Range and

four remote communication sites. The directorate provides small arms range support on NTTR’s southern ranges, as well as at the main training compound at Range 63C. In support to other units, Mission Support Directorate provides limited Base Operations Support oversight at Creech AFB and Tonopah Test Range Airfield under memorandums of agreements. The directorate also supports the 549th and 12th Combat Training Squadrons (which conduct Green Flag-West) at LLTR.

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93534

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 Listing Title: Cloudbreak Communities
Listing Category: General
Website: <http://www.cloudbreakcommunities.com>
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Address:
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91101

Listings

Antelope Valley Florist

 Listing Category: General

Description

"We want to be involved in all of life's celebrations," said Chris Spicher, owner of Antelope Valley Florist. His father opened the Lancaster business in 1953, and now four generations have provided flowers for big events, venue parties, business gifts, thank-you bouquets, birthdays, and weddings.

"It's a great way to be involved in the community."

Spicher said that people can come by and pick out flowers, order online, or have them delivered. "We can sell a single rose or so much more."

Flowers are a gracious way to show someone you care. "Love and respect are always in fashion," said Spicher. He added that ordering a day ahead is the way to get the freshest flowers.

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432nd Wing, 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing



The illustrious history of the 432nd “Hunters” began with the activation of the 432nd Observation Group on Feb. 22, 1943, at Alachua Army Air Field, Fla., to train cadres for new groups and squadrons as the nation continued to prepare forces for war.

After redesignation as the 432nd Reconnaissance Group, and a transfer to Keystone Army Air Field, Fla., a revamped training program offered basic and flying training, and instruction on subjects that included chemical warfare, aircraft recognition, security and censorship. The Army Air Force inactivated the group on Nov. 1, 1943, shortly after its redesignation as the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Group. Just over a decade later, on March 18, 1954, the group returned to active status at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C., to provide tactical reconnaissance capabilities. In early 1959, after consolidating its lineage with the 432nd Tactical Reconnaissance Wing’s, the unit ran the U.S. Air Force Advanced Flying School, Tactical Reconnaissance briefly before inactivating on May 17, 1959.

Activated once again on Aug. 19, 1966, the 432nd TRW formed up a month later on Sep. 18, 1966, at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand. Thus began the most defining era of the unit’s history, one that forged a legacy of valor, courage and steadfastness that buttresses the warfighting traditions carried on by today’s Hunters. As before, the role that initially personified the “hunt” in Vietnam for the 432nd was tactical aerial reconnaissance in support of other combat operations. This changed one year later, with the arrival and assignment of seven tactical fighter squadrons to the wing, as its mission set expanded to include combat air patrols against MiGs and

ground strike operations. To be sure, the Hunters embraced the intensification of their combat role. Between Dec. 17, 1967, and Jan. 8, 1973, the wing’s squadrons received credit for 36 confirmed MiG kills. Sixteen of those came from the Air Force’s only Vietnam era “Aces,” each one a Hunter. Three in all, they included Capt. Charles B. DeBellevue, of the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron, credited with downing two MiG-19s and four MiG-21s; Capt. Jeffrey S. Feinstein, of the 13th TFS, credited with downing five MiG-21s; and lastly Capt. Richard S. Ritchie, of the 555th TFS, credited with downing five MiG-21s.

Not all landmark events in that war occurred in the air, as with the case of Capt. Roger C. Locher of the 555th TFS. Shot down on May 10, 1972, Locher evaded captivity for 23 days before being rescued. The rescue itself, the deepest such mission into North Vietnam territory by American forces, is still deemed one of the most successful combat evasion chapters of the war. After participating in 14 of the 17 air campaigns of the Vietnam War, in January 1973, the 432nd officially ended operations in that country. Still, combat air operations continued that year in Laos until February and in Cambodia until August. After implementation of the cease-fire accords, the 432nd remained in Thailand to conduct routine reconnaissance and training missions. In belated recognition of its new mission set, it became the 432nd Tactical Fighter Wing on Nov. 15, 1974. In April 1975, the wing supported the evacuation of American and Allied personnel from Cambodia and South Vietnam. That same year, the 432nd played a key role in finding and recovering the American freighter, S.S. Mayaguez. Relieved of all operational duties on Nov. 30, 1975, the 432nd inactivated on Dec. 23 of the same year.

This time the highly decorated flag of the 432nd did not remain furled for long. After redesignation as the 432nd Tactical Drone Group, the unit activated May 24, 1976, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., to conduct follow-on

and evaluation testing of the AQM-34V unmanned drone. The 432nd carried out parallel initial operational testing of the drone’s DC-130H “mothership” as well. This brief venture into yet another mission area ended, for a time at least, with the group’s inactivation in 1979. On July 1, 1984, the unit activated at Misawa Air Base, Japan, as the 432nd Tactical Fighter Wing. Serving as the host base unit, the 432nd TFW flew F-16 Viper aircraft in support of a tactical employment mission. Using Misawa as a test base for a new wing organizational structure, popularly referred to as the “one wing, one base, one boss” concept, the Air Force redesignated the unit as the 432nd Fighter Wing on May 31, 1991. This concept led to the assignment of a third flying squadron to the 432nd FW, with operational control of the 39th Rescue Squadron’s four HH-60G “Black Hawk” helicopters ceded to the wing by the Air Rescue Service on Feb. 1, 1993. On Oct. 1, 1994, the 432nd FW inactivated at Misawa as the 35th Fighter Wing stood up there.

The veteran combat unit returned to active service on May 1, 2007, at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., as the 432nd Wing, and formed the U.S. Air Force’s first unmanned (later remotely piloted) aircraft systems wing. In doing so, the 432nd took charge of existing and rapidly expanding unmanned precision attack and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance combat missions there in support of overseas contingency operations. On May 15, 2008, the provisional 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing activated at Creech to offer the fullest possible spectrum of leadership to these fights, while complementing the operate, train and equip efforts of the 432nd Wing. Within a few short, frenzied and grueling years the Hunters quadrupled their output of MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper combat lines. Sprinting off the 250,000 flight hours mark hit in mid-2007, set over the course of 12 years — they hit the 500,000 flight hours mark in early 2009, the one million flight hours mark in early 2011, and then the two million mark in late 2013.

The unrelenting uptick in the RPA Enterprise’s size and scope led to parallel, remarkable organizational changes to the 432nd Wing and Creech-based associates in 2012 and beyond. Among them, the standup of a 799th Air Base Group under the host base 99th Air Base Wing in August, and shortly thereafter the activation of the 732nd Operations Group under the 432nd Wing in September. On the total force side, Air Force Reserve Command activated the 726th Operations Group at Creech in December 2014 to serve alongside the Hunters. Two more active duty squadrons joined the wing in 2015 and a third in 2016. Elements of the wing’s operations and maintenance units began to transform that latter year following the Air Force’s decision to retire the MQ-1 Predator fleet from active service. The 432nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron’s Tiger Aircraft Maintenance Unit launched its first MQ-9 Reaper that summer, shortly after the service redesignated the wing’s flying mission units as attack squadrons.

The fall of 2017 saw the start of a transitional period for the 432nd Air Expeditionary Wing with the October standup of the 12th Air Force’s Persistent Attack and Reconnaissance Operations Center at Creech. The cooperative partnership of the 432nd AEW and PAROC complements the wing’s historic and critical RPA Enterprise coordination and support role. At the same time, the 432nd Wing remained a critical pillar of the Enterprise by providing an underpinning of leadership for an expansion under the Air Force’s RPA Culture and Process Improvement Program. Groundwork for a second RPA wing under CPIP began with the 2018 assignment of the 25th Operations Group and three squadrons at Shaw AFB, South Carolina, to the 432nd Wing. Furthermore, at year’s end, the wing’s 732nd Operations Group gained another squadron at Creech AFB, Nev. In July 2019, the wing’s 432nd Mission Support Group stood up to implement a transition in stewardship for Creech AFB with the inactivation of the 99th ABW’s 799th ABG.

THUNDERBIRDS, from Page 3 —

The Thunderbirds were officially activated June 1, 1953, as the 3600th Air Demonstration Team at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. Their first aircraft was the straight-winged F-84G Thunderjet, a combat fighter-bomber that had seen action in Korea. Early in 1955 the team transitioned to the swept-winged F-84F Thunderstreak.

In June 1956, the team moved to its current home at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. At the same time the Thunderbirds traded the veteran F-84 for the world’s first supersonic fighter, the F-100 Super Sabre — an aerial platform that would serve the Thunderbirds for 13 years. More than

1,000 demonstrations were flown in the Super Sabre, thrilling spectators around the world. The team changed briefly to the Republic F-105 Thunderchief. After only six shows, in 1964, due to an extensive modification that became necessary on all Thunderchiefs, the Thunderbirds returned to the F-100.

From 1969 to 1973, the Thunderbirds flew the Air Force’s front-line fighter, the F-4E Phantom. In 1974, the Thunderbirds converted to the T-38 Talon, the world’s first supersonic trainer. The T-38 was more fuel-efficient and less costly to maintain than the larger F-4.

Early in 1983, the Thunderbirds reinstated their traditional role of demon-

strating the Air Force’s front-line fighter capabilities. Transition to the F-16A allowed the team to retain manpower and fuel efficiency while demonstrating to spectators the latest in fighter technology.

In 1986, the Thunderbirds participated in the rededication flyby of the Statue of Liberty and in September, another milestone was attained when the team went over the 200 million mark for total attendance.

The largest crowd, 2.25 million people, to see a performance was at Coney Island, N.Y., July 4, 1987. The 1987 Far East tour marked their debut in Beijing, China — the first American military demonstration performance in a Communist country.

Operation Desert Storm cancelled the

1990 European tour and the season was shortened. The team converted to the F-16C in 1992, bringing the F-16A era to an end.

In 2020, following the cancellation of most air shows because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Thunderbirds, along with the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, conducted many flyovers around the nation — most often focusing on hospitals and medical facilities, to show support to the frontline workers engaged in battling the pandemic.

Back to a full schedule of performances, the Thunderbirds 2022 schedule includes 15 air shows in the United States and Canada, including the annual ‘homecoming’ show — the Nellis AFB Aviation Nation show, Nov. 5 and 6.

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