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#### AVIATION NATION 2025 — APRIL 5 & 6



 ${\bf Air\,Force\,photograph\,by\,Airman\,1st\,Class\,Josey\,Blades}$ 

A C-130J Hercules flies over Aviation Nation 2022 airshow at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 4, 2022.

10 a.m. Gates open — Guest parking at Las Vegas Motor Speedway

11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. — INSPIRE Festival south end of ramp; free shuttle service

11 a.m. — Opening ceremonies

**Noon - 5 p.m.** — Flying performances

6 p.m. — Gates closed/Last bus departs for LVMS

All times are subject to change.



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Jordan McCoy Airmen and families gather to watch performances during Aviation Nation 2022 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 4, 2022.



Air Force photograph by Tech. Sgt. Alexandre Montes

Patrons of Aviation Nation 2022 watch as the U.S. Air Force Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds" perform their final show of the season Nov. 6, 2022, at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.



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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.

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



Q. I have small children. Can I bring a stroller, diaper bag, or change of clothes?

A. Yes. Strollers will be handsearched at the security checkpoint. Please bring only necessary items in the diaper bag, subject to hand-search at the security checkpoint. Also please consider bringing hearing protection for small children.

Q. Can I bring my camera, video camera, or cell phone?

A. Yes. There are no security restrictions on these items. However, large camera bags are

not permitted. Bring only necessary camera equipment, leaving

extra attachments at home. A small fanny pack or vest is useful for carrying small lenses. Keep in mind that everything is subject to search.

Q. Can I bring food?

A. Small snacks are fine as long as they are not in glass containers. In addition, no ice chests or coolers (except small coolers for medical supplies or infant formula purposes), nor bags larger than a small purse, fanny pack, backpack and Camelbaks will be allowed. All items brought are subject to approval by gate security personnel and are hand-searched at security checkpoint.

Q. Will there be any food or souvenirs available?

A. Yes. There will be concessions at the air show for food, drinks, and souvenirs.

Q. Will there be free transportation from Las Vegas Motor Speedway to the Air Show?

A. Yes.

Q. Will there be a free tram service to take people from one end of the air show to the other?

A. Yes.

Q. Can I leave and re-enter the Air & Space Show?

A. Yes. You may leave and reenter as many times as needed. However, anyone re-entering will have to go through the shuttle bus line and security checkpoints again.

Q. Is tailgating allowed? A. No.

Q. Is smoking allowed?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

A. Yes, but only in designated areas and not on the flight line.

Q. Are alcoholic beverages allowed?

A. You can purchase them at concessions, but you cannot transport them onto base.

Q. Do I need a military ID?

A. No, this event is open to the public.

Q. Will restroom facilities be easily accessible?

A. Yes. Portable restrooms will be located throughout the air show grounds.

Q. Can I take pictures or get autographs?

A. Yes. Many of the performers make themselves available for autographs and pictures during the show.

Q. Will it be necessary to have hearing protection?

A. Due to the nature of the event, it is highly encouraged you bring hearing protection—especially for children. There will be a number of aircraft taking off, landing, and performing, which will be extremely loud.

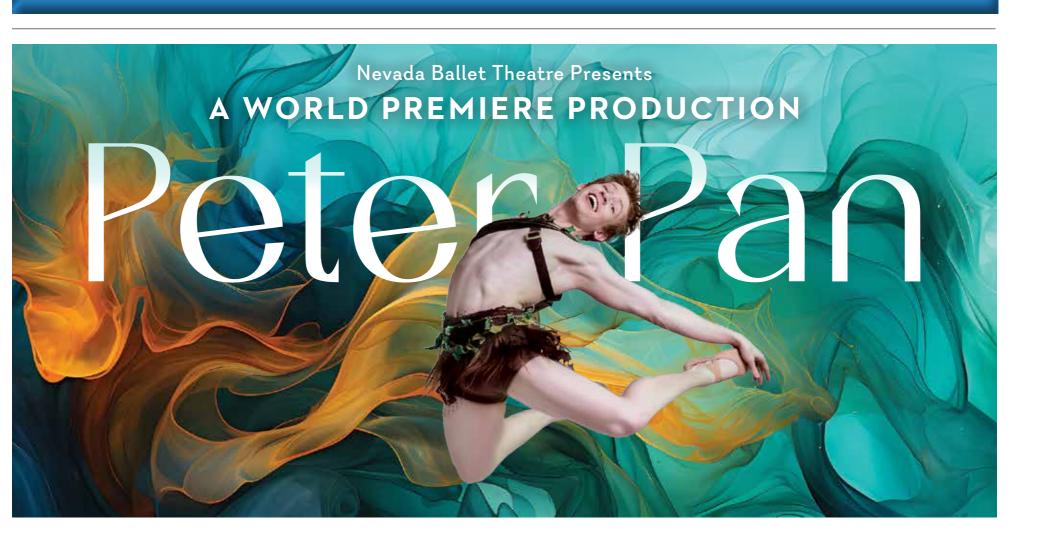
Q. Which day will the Thunderbirds be performing?

A. Both! The Thunderbirds will perform their amazing demonstrations both days, weather permitting.

Q. Will there be shade?

A. There are limited areas of shade available throughout the flight line. You can take a walk through one of our larger static

—See **QUESTIONS**, on Page 12



**APRIL 19-27, 2025** 

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#### BE PREPARED!

Visitors should be prepared for the desert sun by wearing sunscreen, and bringing hearing protection for the exciting, loud aircraft maneuvers.

- Sunscreen
- Plastic beverage bottles with factory seal intact (baby bottles exempt)
- Reusable water bottle (empty for security line, free water stations are available inside)
- Hearing protection (especially for children)
- Wagon or lightweight stroller for tired children
- Stadium chair or cushion for free bleacher seating (collapsible camping chairs are fine, but subject to search)
- Food, beverages, and souvenirs will be available for purchase at the event

#### — Prohibited Items —



Certain items are prohibited/ barred from Nellis Air Force Base during Aviation Nation. Banned items will be confiscated or could cause visitors to be turned away at the gate.

#### Banned items include:

RC aircraft and drones: The FAA
has established a temporary flight
restriction around Nellis AFB
out to five nautical miles, which
includes the speedway

- Weapons of any kind including pocket knives, pocket tools, scissors, box cutters, billy clubs, large, heavy, chain-link jewelry or belts, mace and pepper spray
- Firearms of any type
- Toys that resemble firearms, laser pointers
- Flammable items and fireworks
- Pets (except for service animals)
- Spray paint and spray string
- Bicycles, skateboards, scooters, heelies, roller skates or roller blades, or hoverboards
- Outside food, coolers, grills, or glass containers (metal or plastic water bottles are allowed must be empty prior to boarding buses)
- Glass bottles

- Liquid without factory seal intact (baby bottles are exempt)
- Walkie-talkies, HAM radios, scanners
- Alcohol and illegal drugs (including marijuana). Possession of marijuana is illegal on Nellis AFB and all federal facilities. This includes recreational and medicinal marijuana.
- Excessively large items and bags (exceptions are diaper bags, small purses, canvas bags with folding chairs, and small camera bags at or below 21 inches long, 10 inches wide, and 10 inches deep)

Additionally, no distribution of religious or political material is allowed.



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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 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.

*Objectives of the squadron are:* 

- To support Air Force recruiting and retention programs
- To reinforce public confidence in the Air Force and to demonstrate to the public the professional competence of Air Force members
- To strengthen morale and esprit de corps among Air Force
- To support Air Force community relations and people-to-people
- To represent the United States and its armed forces to foreign nations and to project international goodwill

#### The Team

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.



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Maria Umanzor Guzman

The United States Air Force Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds," perform an aerobatic formation during the Thunder Over The Rock air show at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. The Thunderbirds perform at various events around the world, showcasing their elite pilot skills and demonstrating the capabilities of the Air Force's F-16 Fighting Falcon.



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Josey Blades to audiences worldwide.

LEFT: The Thunderbirds perform in the Thunder Over The Rock air show at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. The Thunderbirds team performs precision aerial maneuvers demonstrating the capabilities of Air Force high-performance aircraft



the U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds" during the Aviation Nation 2022 air show at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 4, 2022. The Thunderbirds perform maneuvers that test and showcase what is required from every combat aviator.



The United States Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron, known as the Thunderbirds, perform during the Frontiers in Flight Open House and Air Show \at McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas.



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Makenna Gott

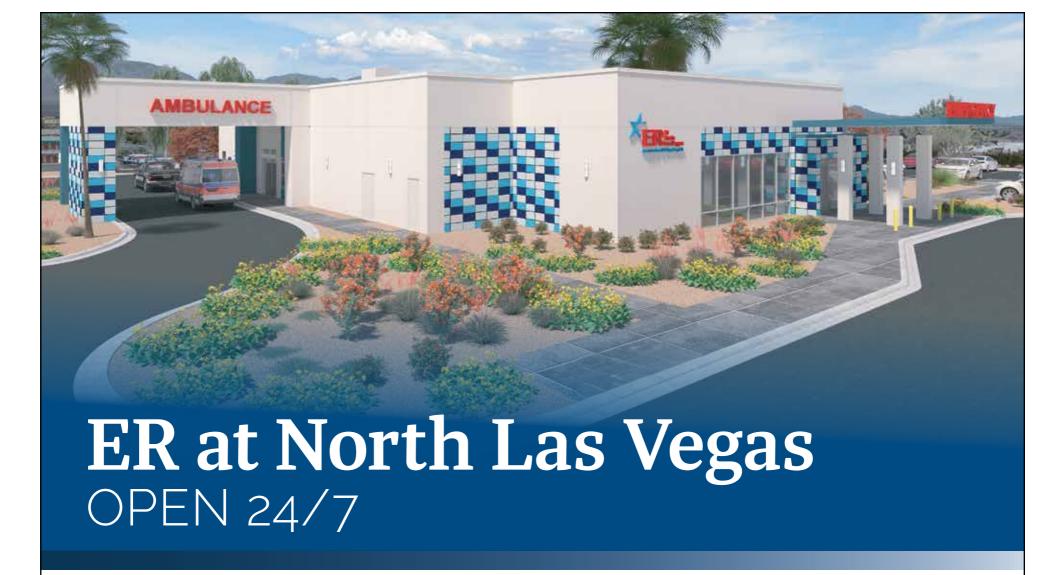
Six F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter jets assigned to the U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds" during the Aviation Nation 2022 air show at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Nov. 4, 2022.

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.

See **THUNDERBIRDS**, on Page 8

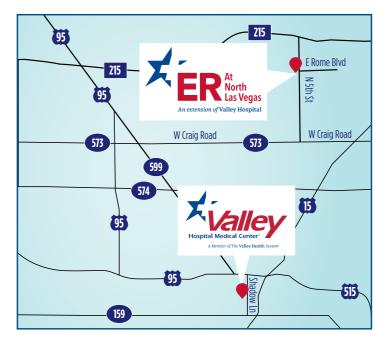


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#### **THUNDERBIRDS**, from Page 6 —

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 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 demonstration 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.

#### F-16 Fighting Falcon

The Lockheed Martin (formerly General Dynamics) F-16 represents the full range of capabilities possessed by the Air Force's tactical fighters. This highly maneuverable multi-role fighter has proven to be one of the world's best precision tactical bombers and air-to-air combat aircraft. The only modifications needed to prepare the aircraft for its air demonstration role are installing a smoke-generating system in the space

normally reserved for the 20mm cannon, and the painting of the aircraft in Thunderbird colors.

#### History

The Thunderbirds were officially activated June 1, 1953, as the 3600th Air Demonstration Team at Luke AFB, Ariz. Their first aircraft was the straightwinged 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. 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. The Thunderbirds returned to the F-100 in 1964 after only six shows, due to an extensive modification that became necessary on all Thunderchiefs.

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 reinstituted their traditional role of demonstrating 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 canceled 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 July 1996, the team participated in opening ceremonies of the Centennial Olympics held in Atlanta which were viewed by an estimated 3.5 billion people around the world.

The Thunderbirds made television history in 2003 while celebrating their 50th anniversary. The commander/leader started the Coca-Cola 600 by broadcasting live from Thunderbird No. 1 as he said, "Gentlemen, start your engines."

In 2007, the Thunderbirds visited Europe for the first time since Sept. 11, 2001, with the European Goodwill Tour. The trip included shows in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom — and for the first time in Thunderbird history — Ireland.

In 2009, the Thunderbirds traveled back to the Pacific Rim, performing in locations like Malaysia, Guam, Australia, Korea and Japan. The team performed more than 70 shows in 22 states and Puerto Rico.

Spending more than 250 days on the road representing Airmen, millions of people have witnessed the Thunderbird demonstrations. In turn, they've seen the pride, professionalism and dedication of hundreds of thousands of Airmen serving at home and abroad. Each year brings another opportunity for the team to represent those who deserve the most credit: the everyday, hardworking Airmen voluntarily serving America and defending freedom.



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## AVIATION NATION 202

#### **PERFORMERS**

Para-Aces|Paramotor Demo Team Misty Blues

U-2 Flyby

Undaunted — RV x2

**CAF WASP** 

**CAF Warbirds** 

F/A-18 TACDEMO

KC-46/C-17 AAR Pass

C-17 Demo

KC-46 Demo

Vampire — DH-115

**CAD Player Launch** 

Covington/Slayer Jet Car — S2S/JC

CAD — Various

Bill Stein Edge 540

F-22 Demo/Heritage P-38

Vicky Benzing — P-51

**Red Bull Air Force** 

**Thunderbirds** 

Subject to change.

#### **U-2 Dragon Lady**



Air Force photograph by Staff Sgt. Robert M. Trujillo

The U-2 provides high-altitude, all-weather surveillance and reconnaissance, day or night, in direct support of U.S. and allied forces. It delivers critical imagery and signals intelligence to decision makers throughout all phases of conflict, including peacetime indications and warnings, low-intensity conflict, and large-scale hostilities.

#### **KC-46 Pegasus**



Air Force photograph by Master Sgt. Michael Jackson

The KC-46A is the first phase in recapitalizing the U.S. Air Force's aging tanker fleet. With greater refueling, cargo and aeromedical evacuation capabilities compared to the KC-135, the KC-46A will provide aerial refueling support to Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and partner-nation receivers.

#### F-22 Raptor Demo and P-38 Heritage Flight



Air Force photograph by Staff Sgt. Abbey Rieve

A U.S. Air Force F-22 Raptor aircraft, left, and the P-38 Lightning aircraft, right, fly during the Heritage Flight Training Course at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., March 2, 2025. The HFTC demonstrates the evolution of the United States f Air Power.

At right, the F-18 Rhino Demo Team flies the F/A-18F RIGHT: Super Hornet in a 15-minute demonstration of the Navy's workhorse carrier-based fighter. This twin engine beast puts out 44,000 pounds of heart-vibrating thrust in a dynamic display of speed and maneuverability that is awe inspiring for a fighter developed more than 40 years ago.



Vicky Benzing



Marine Corps photo

Vicky began racing at the Reno Air Races, each after winning her first race. In 2015, she be in Reno's history, qualifying at 469.831 mph. her P-51D Plum Crazy h to 4th in the Unlimonly woman to race in three classes — spor

#### F/A-18 Rhino De



Navy p

## 25 AERIAL PERFORMERS

#### **Misty Blues**



Marine Corps photograph by Lance Cpl. AaronJames. Vinculado

There are approximately 35,000 active skydivers in North America, and only 15 percent are women! The Misty Blues team is 100 percent women. The ladies on the team come from all across the US to demonstrate their amazing skydiving skills. Since the early 1980 fs The Misty Blues All Woman Skydiving Team has been thrilling audiences at air shows, corporate events and other special occasions around the world. These exceptionally talented and brave ladies delight in displaying their parachuting talents that make them some of the most skilled skydivers in the world. They do things in the air that make people look up into the sky and feel excitement, patriotism or the thrill of a shocking visual treat.

C-17 Globemaster III



photograph by Lance Cpl. Seferino Gamez es, earning Rookie of the Year e became the fastest woman nph. Last September, she flew nlimited Class, becoming the sport, jet, and unlimited.

Demo



avy photograph by PO3 Caledon Rabbipal



Air Force photograph by Staff Sgt. Mitch Fuqua

The C-17 Globemaster III is the most flexible cargo aircraft to enter the airlift force. The C-17 is capable of rapid strategic delivery of troops and all types of cargo to main operating bases or directly to forward bases in the deployment area. The aircraft can perform tactical airlift and airdrop missions and can transport litters and ambulatory patients during aeromedical evacuations. The inherent flexibility and performance of the C-17 force improve the ability of the total airlift system to fulfill the worldwide air mobility requirements of the United States.

#### Bill Stein Edge 540



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Miranda Loera

#### Vampire Airshows? DH-115 Vampire



April 5-6, 2025

Our spectacular show merges entertainment with education. The Vampire Airshow profile grips audiences with speed, noise and jet warbird aerobatics. While our pilots banter with?the announcer, crowds are drawn into learning about this sensational aircraft.?The deHavilland Vampire is a fully aerobatic aircraft that wows audiences by performing?rolls, Cuban eights, shark tooths, inverted flight,?high-speed passes and all with a killer smoke system.? The Vampire is awe-inspiring as the aircraft that led the way for ALL modern jet aviation.

#### **Red Bull Air Force**



The Red Bull Air Force are known for pushing the boundaries of flight, and making the impossible possible — whether in a plane, a helicopter, or with their own bodies via skydiving or wingsuit flying.

LEFT: Bill Stein has logged more than 7,000 hours of aerobatic and formation flight. Bill began flying aerobatics when he was still a student pilot and has been dedicated to perfecting his skills ever since. Since 1995, Bill has performed at air shows across the United States and has entertained millions of air show fans. The Edge 540 is specially painted to change colors depending on the aircraft's varying angle and lighting.

#### **QUESTIONS**, from Page 4 -

displays to get a break from the sun, as well as a few open hangars featuring displays.

Q. What happens if it rains?

A. In the event of rain, some flying demonstrations may be delayed. However, unless the weather poses a serious threat to the safety of the visitors and participants, the show will proceed as scheduled with some modifications. In the event of an air show cancellation, announcements will be coordinated with local news agencies as well as a recorded message available on the Nellis Straight Talk Hotline at 702-652-7469 with more information as it becomes available.

Q. Are umbrellas allowed at the air show? A. Small rain umbrellas are fine to bring (the small ones that fit in a purse), but large golf umbrellas or shade umbrellas are banned as they may block the view of spectators behind you.

Q. What type of medical services will be available?

A. First aid only will be provided such as oral hydration, treatment for minor cuts and bruises, and application of emergency medications (ex. Epi-pens). Medical personnel will stabilize and coordinate transportation to higher level of care for all other injuries/illnesses.



Air Force photograph by Tech. Sgt. Alexandre Monte

Patrons of Aviation Nation 2022 watch as the U.S. Air Force Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds" perform their final show of the season Nov. 6, 2022, at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

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## AVIATION NATION 2025 STATIC DISPLAYS

**MQ-9 Reaper** 

F-15C Eagle

T-6A Texan II

T-1A Jayhawk

T-38 Talon

F-22 Raptor

F-35A Lightning II

A-10 Thunderbolt II

F-15E Strike Eagle

F-16 Fighting Falcon

**Nellis Threat Training Facility** 

displays

**B-52 Stratofortress** 

**KC-46 Pegasus** 

**Civil Air Patrol** 

Wright Flyer

Eclipse 550 Jet **CAF SoCal B-25 PBJ** 

**KC-10 Extender** 

**C-5M Super Galaxy** 

**C-130J Hercules** 

**AH-64 Apache** 

L-39 Albatros

Formula 1 Las Vegas Grand Prix Formula Drift Team, Branden and **Amanda Sorensen** 

Subject to change.



#### **MQ-9 Reaper**



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Haley Stevens

#### F-15C Eagle



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Joshua Hastings



Air Force photograph by Randy Martin

AH-64 Apache



Army photograph by Sgt. Vincent Leveley

**STATIC**, from Page 14 -

#### T-38 Talon



Air Force photograph by Airman Tristan D. Viglianco

#### KC-46 Pegasus

F-22 Raptor



Air National Guard photograph by Senior Master Sgt. Timm

- See **STATIC**, on Page 16

Air Force photograph by Tech. Sgt. Curt Beach

#### **B-52 Stratofortress**



Senior Airman Thomas Spangler

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#### **STATIC**, from Page 15 -

#### F-16 Fighting Falcon



Airman 1st Class Michael Sanders

#### C-5M Super Galaxy



Air Force photograph by Senior Airman Marcel Williams

#### CAF SoCal B-25 PBJ



A-10 Thunderbolt II



Air Force photograph by Airman 1st Class Trevor Bell

#### F-35A Lightning II



Air Force photograph by Staff Sgt. Jose Miguel T. Tamondong

Courtesy photograph

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By advertising in Aerotech News' special PCS guide you position your business to attract new customers as they settle into our communities. Our advertisers benefit from a focused and employed audience with distribution on and off base locations as well as thousands of readers who engage with us online.

#### New arrivals are typically in need of:

- Housing Where to live (especially if base housing is in short supply)?
- **Education** Charter or private school options for children, higher education for adults
- Food/ Entertainment What are options for eating out, recreation and socializing?
- **Transportation** Who has military financing for vehicle purchase or leasing?
- Worship Where are the local churches, synagogues, etc?
- **Medical and dental care** What providers are available in the community to supplement on-base services?
- Pre-school and child care Who can be trusted to care for children of dual-income families?
- Goods and services Where are the best places for furniture, home goods, car repair, specialty goods and services?

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Advertising Reservation Deadline: May 5, 2025
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|                   | \$295<br>\$535<br>\$975<br>\$1794<br>TIONS<br>n/a |  |  |  |

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The aerospace and military markets we serve are the area's largest and MOST STABLE workforce and customer base you can reach! Our readers are passionate about the news, features, and information we provide!

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Page size: 6 columns x 13 inches Image area 10.25" x 13" tall

1 column: 1.5625" 2 columns: 3.325" 3 columns: 5" 4 columns: 6.75" 5 columns: 8.50" 6 columns: 10.25"

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