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# Nellis welcomes new **HH-60W JOLLY GREEN II**

The 66th Rescue Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., recently welcomed its first operational HH-60W Jolly Green II. Coming straight from Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company, in Stratford, Conn. The HH-60W replaces the current HH-60G. The increased versatility of the HH-60W will help Airmen train for long-range and high threat engagements. "One of the biggest benefits we're going to get from the Whiskey is that it's a new bird fresh off the lot with zero hours on it," said Capt. Jose Martinez, 66th Rescue Squadron. "So it is going to allow maintenance to be significantly reduced, and allow our flight percentages to go up significantly." Martinez went on to say, "Up front, the biggest difference is that we have a whole glass cockpit. That means we are transitioning from a lot of gauges to an all digitalized cockpit. We are super excited here at Nellis to get the Whiskey and to really hone our skills as combat search and rescue aviators."









# **'l am the 1% that recovers'** Resilience standard set as Russian linguist fights quadriplegia

#### **by Senior Airman Abbey Rieves** *St. Louis, Mo.*

Lauren Arduser was a tall, slender Russian linguist with long straight brown hair and a warm smile.

She was newly arrived at Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, from Presidio of Monterey, Calif., for intelligence training; her 10th day on-site meant exploring the new area with her friends and hiking the local state park.

Bleep. Bleep. Bleep. Lauren's ears perked up at the steady rhythmic sound of medical equipment.

She was in the hospital. She realized she could not move anything from her neck downward. Frustrating tears rolled down her face when no one explained, and she could not ask: what happened and why was she there?

Eventually, the 311th Training Squadron student was told she was in a severe car accident that left all four limbs paralyzed and her neck broken. Her language skills and cognitive ability were unaffected.

Unable to breathe independently, she had been in a medically induced coma for the past few weeks, not expected to survive.

Her last memory was 11 days prior when she finished a hike with her friends and climbed into the passenger seat, instinctively buckling her seatbelt.

Like experiencing an Alice-in-Wonderland moment, the Airman 1st Class could not fathom why her mom and other family members looked down at her so perplexed and "strangely," she described.

Lauren's body smashed into the ground as the vehicle flipped an undetermined number of times. She suffered an interrupted spinal cord injury, meaning her crushed C6 and broken C7 vertebrae required life-saving surgery.

By a mere coincidence, the exact surgeon her injury required happened to be in town during his once-a-month rotating medical schedule. San Angelo is an outlying city, nearly four hours from the next major city, and has no local spinal cord surgeons. Thankfully, her surgery was a success. She now has a steel plate cadaver encasing her crushed C6, a bar in the front of her neck from her C3 to T1, and a second bar in the back of her neck from C3 to T2.

Lauren was treated at the intensive care unit in San Angelo. After recovering from a collapsed lung, Lauren was transported to a hospital in San Antonio, where she learned to breathe independently.

After maximizing their medical capabilities at the San Antonio hospital, Lauren now rehabs three hours a day, five days a week at the St. Louis VA Healthcare System-Jefferson Barracks, in Missouri, where she continues to exceed all expectations daily.

"I realized the only person who could stop me was me," said Lauren. "Anytime I had those bad days where I cried, sobbed, and felt like I was the smallest person, my leg would move the next day."

Her resilience, which she jokingly calls stubbornness, powers her to assess, adjust and overcome daily physical and psychological challenges of her new environment.

"I would tell myself, 'if I can move my toes, I can move my whole foot," said Lauren. "I would allow myself to have those sad days, and then be incredibly stubborn the next day. This is a mind game, I can do it. I can move my entire body if I tell myself I can."

You will never walk again, you will never be able to move your hands again, you're always going to be in a wheelchair, they said. But in her less-than-threemonth recovery, she has already walked.

"I am too stubborn to be pushed down," she said. "I am resilient and have so much more to offer. I'm here to show people that mind over matter does work."

Before arriving at Goodfellow, Lauren was trained for Airpower over an entire year, developing Russian language skills at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, POM. Based on national defense needs, DLIFLC actively

next major city, and has no local spinal trains over 65 languages to advance the cord surgeons. Thankfully, her surgery Department of Defense.

Along with 14 other classmates, Lauren put her mind over matter and submitted her final language exam, qualifying her to be a Russian linguist for the United States Air Force, even when they told her she could not. It was February 24, the same day Russia invaded Ukraine.

Lauren's training demonstrates how advanced and forward-thinking the force development structure is. And her resilience revealed itself when she and one other classmate were the only two to pass the exam.

From an early age, Lauren expressed her passion for culture and diversity. "Our differences make us stronger," she said. After leaving her small hometown in Missouri, her heart felt unfulfilled by culinary school. She felt she had nothing left, but with encouragement from her aunt, she enlisted in the Air Force. She later discovered her late greatgrandfather also had a secret military life uncovered in declassified military documents last year.

Like putting on glasses, her vision in life became clear, and her heart became whole. She saw the Air Force was the right choice for her, and she refuses to let that go.

"My biggest goal is going back to active duty and doing my job," said Lauren, her brown eyes flared, fierce and passionate. "I've worked so hard for this, and I'm not giving up now."

While Lauren is mission-focused, her 17th Training Wing leadership is focused on her, embodying the mission first, people always, mentality.

"Every single person I have in my corner now is military," said Lauren, referring to emotional support she's received outside of her physical care. "I love having this team behind me. You can tell they care not only for me, but for my family and are willing to take care of me in any way they can. I'm so grateful."

Her strong, confident voice is incomparable to the near faint whispers her voice muttered when she was initially



Courtesy photograph

Airman 1st Class Lauren Arduser, 311th Training Squadron Russian language analyst, celebrates putting her uniform on independently, at the St. Louis VA Healthcare System-Jefferson Barracks, Mo., in May 2022. Arduser was expected to die from a quadriplegic injury, but can now move every limb. She fights each day to be better and does more, so she can return to the mission.

admitted into the hospital. Even in the darkest of times, Lauren finds ways to laugh and joke, like when she playfully banters with a fellow spinal cord-injured service member, an Army Major named John. John hit a milestone, transitioning from a powered wheelchair to a manual wheelchair. Lauren was there, secretly cheering on his accomplishment because it was a significant accomplishment only spinal cord injury survivors could genuinely understand. The military bond holds firm, a united joint force — down range, or in recovery.

Like John, Lauren also hit a milestone by independently putting on her

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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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## AIR AND SPACE FORCES Association Legends VISIT CREECH



Air Force photographs by Airman 1st Class Ariel O'Shea Retired Chief Master Sgt. Harold "Buddy" Hutchison shakes hands with an Airman assigned to the 432nd Wing at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., July 28, 2022. Hutchison started his career as a Security Forces Defender and eventually became the Command Senior Enlisted Leader at North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command.

LEFT: Three retired generals and a retired chief master sergeant, pose with Airmen assigned to the 432nd Wing at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., July 28, 2022. They were visiting as part of the Air and Space Forces Association Legends Tour commemorating the Air Force's 75th anniversary.



Retired U.S. Air Force Gen. Lori **Robinson shares** a hug with an Airman assigned to the 432nd Wing, that she previously mentored at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., July 28, 2022. As the first woman to command a unified combatant command, Robinson was named to Time magazine's list of 100 most influential people in 2016.



Retired Gen. John Jumper, right, meets with Airmen assigned to the 432nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., July 28, 2022. Jumper was the 17th Chief of Staff of the Air Force.



Retired Gen. Lloyd "Fig" Newton meets with Airmen assigned to the 432nd Wing at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., July 28, 2022. Newton was the first Black pilot in the history of the Thunderbirds.



Retired Gen. Lori Robinson and retired Senior Master Sgt. Bobi Oates pose with Airmen assigned to the 432nd Wing at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., July 28, 2022. Robinson was the first female officer in the history of the United States Armed Forces to command a major Unified Combatant Command, while Oates is a retired aircraft maintenance Senior Master Sergeant, with 23 years of service.



Retired Chief Master Sqt. Harold "Buddy" Hutchison and Generals John Jumper, Lori Robinson and Lloyd "Fig" Newton pose in front of an MQ-9 Reaper at Creech Air Force Base, Nev., July 28, 2022. They were visiting as part of the Air and Space Forces Association Legends Tour commemorating the Air Force's 75th anniversary.

#### CONTACT: Editorial Staff at 334-718-3509 • E-Mail: editor@aerotechnews.com

## USAF Warfare Center commander visits 505th CCW

Col. Frederick Coleman, 505th Command and Control Wing commander, and his senior leaders recently hosted Maj. Gen. Case Cunningham, U.S. Air Force Warfare Center commander, at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

The 505th CCW falls under the U.S. Air Force Warfare Center.

Cunningham was briefed on the 505th CCW's wing's key missions: training – U.S. Air Force, joint and coalition, operational testing, and the modernization and innovation of operational command and control for the warfighter.



Lt. Col. Alex Botardo, 505th Communications Squadron commander, right, welcomes Maj. Gen. Case Cunningham, USAF Warfare Center commander, to the squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Aug. 2, 2022

LEFT: Chief Master Sgt. Gene Jameson III, U.S. Air Force Warfare Center command chief, left to right, Maj. Gen. Case Cunningham, USAFWC commander, Lt. Col. Aarron Cornine, 505th Combat Training Squadron commander, Airman Corey Millerleile, 505th Combat Training Squadron, Cunningham recognized Millerleile as an outstanding performer during his visit to Hurlburt Field, Fla., Aug. 2, 2022. Millerleile volunteered for a six-month deployment to U.S. Central Command in support of the Personnel Recovery Center at Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait.



Lt. Col. Michael Power, 505th Combat Training Squadron director of operations, left, welcomes Maj. Gen. Case Cunningham, USAF Warfare Center commander, center, at Hurlburt Field, Fla., Aug. 2, 2022.

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### Air Force battle lab showcases emerging space and cyber technologies

#### Air Force News

The 805th Combat Training Squadron's Shadow Operations Center-Nellis, or ShOC-N, hosted an advanced technology demonstration for personnel across multiple domains as part of exercise Red Flag 22-3, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

Red Flag is a two-week advanced air component-centric combat exercise held multiple times a year by the 414th Combat Training Squadron. The exercise aims to offer realistic multi-domain advanced combat training to warfighters and allied partners in a degraded and operationally contested environment.

The ShOC-N is the U.S. Air Force's premier Battle Lab supporting the experimentation, prototyping, integration and test of key technologies, and capabilities designed to compress the kill chain for joint and coalition warfighters.

In coordination with the 414th CTS, the ShOC-N planned, organized and executed a technology demonstration that included ten tools and applications in varying development stages and a wide spectrum of mission areas. Red Flag 22-3 provided an ideal environment for the ShOC-N to showcase new emerging technologies to the warfighters.

The technological demonstration highlighted potential solutions to the warfighter capability requirements ranging from a space domain awareness of indication and warning to a complex airspace management tool using multicommand and control program.

"The ShOC-N creates a unique environment that enables demonstration of current and emerging capabilities that helps accelerate the development of warfighter requirements to meet the Air Force goals," said Garry Benton, 805th CTS/ShOC-N project manager. "Advancing technology is key to increasing our military advantage in the great power competition."

"When ready, the ShOC-N can help match product owners with the required cybersecurity and accreditation professionals to move the capability into an appropriate operationally relevant experimentation environment," said Maj. Jesse

source correlator and a tracker to cyber Swanson, 805th CTS/ShOC-N director of Systems and Communications. "The ShOC-N stands ready to engage current and future pacing challenges."

The 805th CTS reports to the 505th Combat Training Group, Nellis AFB, and the 505th Command and Control Wing, headquartered at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

"The ShOC-N creates a unique environment that enables demonstration of current and emerging capabilities that helps accelerate the development of warfighter requirements to meet the Air Force goals," said Garry Benton, 805th CTS/ShOC-N project manager. "Advancing technology is key to increasing our military advantage in the great power competition."

#### **RECOVERS**, from Page 2–

military uniform. On her first try since her accident, it took her more than two hours. Nevertheless, with a 'put-me-in-coach' mentality she continuously advocates to get back to the mission. The first step is putting her uniform on, which now takes her less than 35 minutes.

"Never say what an individual with desire 'can't' do," said Lt. Col. E.J. Mason, 316th Training Squadron commander, who held administrative responsibility for Lauren at the time of her accident. "Because if you told me Lauren would be talking, putting her uniform on, and walking with assistance, after I first saw her in the hospital, I would not have thought it was possible. And I was wrong.'

"This is about personal resilience," said Mason. "Every day, she says, 'Hey, I want to come back and be better. I want to reach those next steps. I want to be a linguist.' When all the odds were against her."

"That is a lesson to me," said Mason. "There's nothing an individual with desire can't do."

In her downtime, Lauren continues to capitalize her Russian skills. By her request, unclassified course materials have also been provided to her, so she can continuously improve herself for the mission she eagerly wants to return to.

"I am the one percent that recovers," said Lauren. "All of this is temporary, and I will get back to doing the mission I'm so proud of."

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# **MWD: FOUR-LEGGED AIRMEN P**



GGrief, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog, takes a break after finding explosive components during detection training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022.



NNayeli, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog, looks for explosive components during detection training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022. NNayeli celebrated her second birthday by training with her handler.



Photo F

Staff Sgt Veronica Baham, 99th Secur congratulates NNayeli, 99th SFS MWD, Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022. Nnay by training with her handler.



Staff Sgt. Ariel Sison, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, gets chased by NNayeli, 99th SFS MWD, during patrol training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022.



Staff Sgt. Charles Pop patrol training at Nell



Esme, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog, 'kisses' Staff Sgt. Veronica Baham, 99th SFS MWD handler, after patrol training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022.



Staff Sgt. Ariel Sison, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, searches for explosive components with GGrief, 99th SFS MWD, during detection training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022. MWDs advance their training on a daily basis while also improving upon the skills they have already learned.



Staff Sgt. Ariel Sison, 99th Security Fe dog handler, holds back GGrief, 99 SF Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 20 line security, police services, antiterror AFB and Creech AFB.

# **PROTECT AND SERVE**



ecurity Forces Squadron K-9 handler, WD, during detection training at Nellis Nnayeli celebrated her second birthday



NNayeli, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog, finds explosive components during detection training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022.



Air Force photographs by Airman 1st Class Josey Blades

Pope, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, works with GGrief, 99th SFS MWD, during Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022.



ty Forces Squadron military working 19 SFS MWD, during patrol training at 8, 2022. The 99th SFS provides flighterrorism and force protection for Nellis



Esme, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog, attacks an aggressor during patrol training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022. Patrol training teaches MWDs how to apprehend and detain aggressors.



Staff Sgt. Ariel Sison, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, searches for explosive components with GGrief, 99th SFS MWD, during detection training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022.



Staff Sgt. Ariel Sison, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, poses with GGrief, 99th SFS MWD, during patrol training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022.



Staff Sgt. Veronica Baham, 99th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler, holds back NNayeli, 99th MWD, during patrol training at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Aug. 18, 2022. Security Forces specialists go through extensive training in law enforcement and combat tactics to protect bases.

# Airmen perform bay orderly duties at Nellis



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