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Terrence Howard, actor/musician

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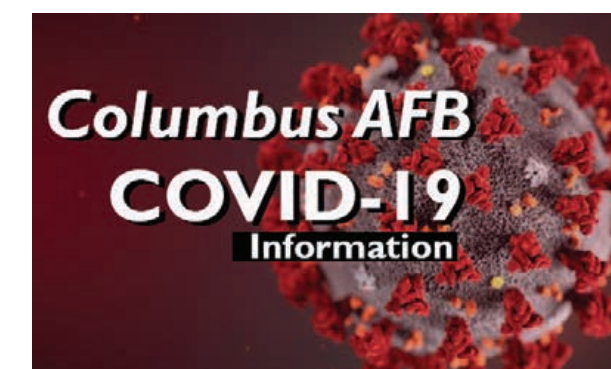
# SILVER WINGS

"Train World Class Pilots"

Vol. 45, Issue 20

Columbus Air Force Base, Miss.

October 22, 2021



## COVID-19 General Info

The base is continually focusing to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus and will persistently prioritize the safety of the Airmen, families and communities of Columbus.

Off-limit areas include any business or establishment that does not comply with Federal, State, and local COVID requirements. See Pg. 2 for more COVID-19 info.

### Social Gathering Limitations

- Kaye – 92 person limit
- Event Center/Club – 145 person limit
- Phillips Auditorium – 22 person limit
- Walker Center – 112 person limit

## Trailblazer talks innovation, diversity, recruitment

Leavitt has seen many changes to the force during her nearly thirty years of service

**Airman 1st Class Jessica Haynie**  
14th Flying Training Wing  
Public Affairs

The 14th Flying Training Wing hosted U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt, Department of the Air Force chief of safety, Headquarters U.S. Air Force Arlington, VA, and the Air Force Safety Center commander, Kirtland Air Force Base, NM., Oct. 13, 2021, on Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., during her visit as a distinguished guest for a Mississippi State University, USAF Detachment 425 formal evening event.

Leavitt is the first USAF female fighter pilot and was the first female commander of a combat fighter wing.

During her visit Leavitt received mission briefs from the local flying training squadrons, hands-on pilot training demonstrations with innovative simulator technology and shared her experiences and challenges with female service members.

"You are able to be more effective  
See TRAILBLAZER, Page 3



U.S. Air Force photo by Elizabeth Owens  
U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Jeannie Leavitt, Department of the Air Force chief of safety, Headquarters U.S. Air Force Arlington, VA., and Air Force Safety Center commander, Kirtland Air Force Base, NM., poses for a hero shot, Oct. 14, 2021, on Columbus Air Force Base, Miss. Leavitt was the U.S. Air Force's first female fighter pilot in 1993, and is the first woman to command a USAF combat fighter wing.



# COVID-19

## Coronavirus Disease 2019

# Mandatory Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination of DoD Civilian Employees

Department of Defense

To defend the Nation and protect the American people, we need a healthy and ready Total Force. To accomplish this, the Secretary of Defense directed the mandatory vaccination of Service members against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) by signing the memorandum, "Mandatory Corona virus Disease 2019 Vaccination of Department of Defense Service Members," on August 24, 2021.

On September 9, 2021, the President of the United States directed Executive Branch agencies to implement a COVID-19 vaccination requirement for Federal employees to ensure the health and safety of the Federal workforce and members of the public with whom they interact by signing Executive Order 14043, "Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees."

All DoD civilian employees must be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021, subject to exemptions as required by law. Employees are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after completing the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or 2 weeks after receiving a single dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine.

New DoD civilian employees must be fully vaccinated by their entry on duty (start) date or November 22, 2021, whichever is later.

To meet this requirement, individuals must be vaccinated with vaccines that are either fully licensed or authorized for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) (e.g., Cominaty/Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson/Janssen); listed for emergency use on the World Health Organization Emergency Use Listing (e.g., AstraZeneca/Oxford); or approved for use in a clinical trial vaccine for which vaccine efficacy has been independently confirmed (e.g., Novavax). Those with previous



iStock image

COVID-19 infection(s) or previous serology are not considered fully vaccinated on that basis for the purposes of this mandate.

Those who are not currently fully vaccinated must meet the following deadlines, if using vaccines that are fully licensed or authorized for emergency use by the FDA, in order to be fully vaccinated by November 22, 2021:

- **October 11:** first dose deadline (if receiving the Moderna vaccine);
- **October 18:** first dose deadline (if receiving the Cominaty/Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine);
- **November 8:** second dose deadline (if receiving the Moderna and Cominaty/Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines); and
- **November 8:** first (only) dose deadline (if receiving the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine).

In accordance with Deputy Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccine Guidance," December 7, 2020, DoD civilian employees are eligible to receive the COVID-19

vaccine at any DoD vaccination site, including military medical treatment facilities. They may also opt to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at locations other than DoD vaccination sites, including retail stores, private medical practices, and/or local and State public health department sites. Employees, including those who have already received COVID-19 vaccines, must be prepared to provide a copy of their COVID-19 vaccine record in order to meet forthcoming procedures for DoD COVID-19 vaccination verification.

Additional guidance, including procedures for processing vaccination exemption requests, will be published by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)). The USD(P&R) is authorized to rescind this memorandum as necessary for purposes of providing updated guidance.

Vaccinating DoD civilian employees against COVID-19 will save lives and allow for the defense of our Nation. Thank you for your focus on this critical mission.

## Silver Wings

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### Submission Deadline

The deadline for submitting copy for next week's SILVER WINGS is noon Monday. Articles may be dropped off at the public affairs office or e-mailed.

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# Arkansas WWII pilot returns home after 77 years

**2nd Lt. Peyton Craven**  
14th Flying Training Wing  
Public Affairs

The remains of a once considered unrecoverable World War II pilot returned home after missing for just over three-fourths of a century. Army Air Corps 2nd Lt. Henry D. Mitchell, who was shot down over Austria in 1944 during World War 2 and presumed Killed in Action, has been found.

On Dec. 11, 1953, Mitchell was declared non-recoverable. A Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) team discovered Mitchell's crash site and on August 3, 2021, Lt Mitchell was declared accounted for after 77 years. He has since been buried in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

The DPAA was established to provide the fullest possible accounting for missing personnel and their families. The agency works to locate missing personnel from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Cold War, and conflicts in the Iraq Theater.

"Anytime we recover the remains of somebody that has made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, it really resonates as a reminder for us who wear the uniform that we signed up to do the same thing," said Lt. Col. Nelson Prouty, 48th Flying Training Squadron commander. "We may not always be successful in bringing people back, but



U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Nelson Prouty, 48th Flying Training Squadron commander, speaks at the opening of their squadron's heritage room Oct. 8, 2021, on Columbus Air Force Base, Miss. The tanker and airlift track of specialized undergraduate pilot training is conducted by the 48th Flying Training Squadron.

we are never going to stop trying."

As a P-38 Lightning pilot, he was tied to the lineage of the 48th FTS based out of Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi.

The origin of the 48th FTS at Columbus AFB dates back to World War I when the unit was established at Kelly Field, Texas, in 1917. At the time, the unit was named

the 48th Aero Squadron, and their primary role was to provide Aerodome infrastructure support in France for Allied Forces. Upon the conclusion of their time in Italy, the unit went through a number of changes, including station adjustments and multiple reclassifications.

The unit was eventually fused with the 48th Pursuit Squadron in 1941 at Hamilton Field California, birthing the unit that eventually relocated to Columbus AFB, Mississippi.

The outbreak of World War II propelled the unit into combat operations in the African and European Theaters. At the time the 48th conducted bomber escorts, strafing operations, and supported the advancement of Allied infantry forces throughout the theaters.

In July of 1944, Mitchell was returning to base after conducting a mission over Austria. His squadron encountered enemy aircraft and the 48th immediately engaged. Mitchell was shot down and crashed near Waldegg, Austria.

The squadron recently hosted a grand opening for their re-vamped heritage room to celebrate the history of their squadron.

"It's important to remember and honor the people who have come before you by remembering what they have done and making sure you live up to that legacy as you go forward," said Prouty.



Members of the 48th Flying Training Squadron get their first glimpse at the new heritage room for their squadron Oct. 8, 2021, on Columbus Air Force Base, Miss. Heritage rooms serve as a reminder of the lineage of the previous members who served in that squadron to include past commanders, highly awarded pilots, missing in action, prisoners of war and more.



A 48th Flying Training Squadron mug hangs in the new heritage room Oct. 8, 2021, on Columbus Air Force Base, Miss. Students receive a minimum of 159 hours of flight instruction in the T-1A Jayhawk learning air refueling procedures, tactical navigation and much more.

## Air Force Readiness Programs

(Editor's note: All activities are offered at the Airman & Family Readiness Center unless otherwise specified. For more information about any of the activities listed, call 434-2790.)

**"Please note events are subject to change due to COVID-19, so please contact A&FRC to confirm all events"**

### Smooth Move Relocation Workshop

The next Smooth Move is from 10-11 a.m. Oct. 28 in the A&FRC. This workshop is highly recommended for first-time and over-seas relocating members. Get the very latest moving information straight from base-wide relocation assistance agencies. Learn what to expect before you move with information from Tri-Care, Housing, Military Pay, TMO, Medical Records and A&FRC. Be sure to ask any relocating questions you may have during this event. Pre-registration is required, so call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790 to register or for more information.

### Transition Assistance Program Workshop

The next Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshop is from 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Nov. 1-5 and includes seminars on: Transition, Military Occupational Code Crosswalk, Financial Planning, Health Benefits, Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Department of Veterans Affairs, Disabled TAP and Department of Labor. Preseparation counseling is required before attending, and recommended attendance is 12-24 months prior to separation/retirement. Spouses are encouraged to attend with their sponsor. To register or for more information, please call the TAP Manager at (662) 434-2631/2790.

### Wing Newcomers Orientation

The next Wing Newcomers Orientation will be held on Nov. 9 from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the Columbus Club. This event is mandatory for all newly arrived military and DoD civilian personnel. The event's foundation is the base's mobile App, so if you are registered, please locate and download the Columbus Air Force Base App from the App Store prior to attending. Pre-registration is required, so please contact your unit CSS to be registered. For more information, please call the A&FRC Relocation Manager at (662) 434-2701/2790.

### Department of Labor Transition Vocational Track Workshop

The next DoL Transition Vocational Track Workshop is from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Nov. 15-16 and will be held in the A&FRC. This workshop helps members identify skills, increase awareness of training and credentialing programs, and develop an action plan to achieve career goals. To register or for more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

## Airman of the Week



U.S. Air Force Col. Seth Graham, 14th Flying Training Wing commander, presents Staff Sgt. Aunika Cross-Manhart, 14th Mission Support Group security forces with a promotion certificate alongside Chief Master Sgt. Antonio Cooper, 14th FTW command chief, Sept. 30, 2021 on Columbus Air Force Base, Miss. Cross-Manhart also received Airman of the Week. This is a new program to further highlight our Airmen throughout the Wing who show outstanding performance and dedication to Excellence, Airmanship, and Leadership!

### Federal USA Jobs Workshop

The next Federal USA Jobs workshop is from 9-10:30 a.m. Nov. 17. This is a workshop on writing resumes, applications, and job search using the USAJobs website. To register or for more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

### Bundles for Babies

The next "Zoom" Bundles for Babies workshop is from 1-3:30 p.m. Dec. 2. This program is designed for active duty AF members and/or their spouses who are pregnant or have a child 4 months old or less. Attendees will learn about finances, labor and delivery, and infant care. A \$50 gift card sponsored by the Air Force Aid Society will be provided for each qualifying child. To register or for more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

### Heart Link

The next "Zoom" Heart Link / Spouse Welcome is from 8:30 a.m.-noon Jan. 6. This half-day program is open to all spouses of active duty military members assigned to Columbus AFB. Attendees will receive information about life in the Air Force, in the local area and at Columbus AFB from local subject matter experts including spouse leaders. To register or for more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

### Entrepreneurship Track Transition Workshop

The next Entrepreneurship Track Transition workshop will be held Jan. 27-28 from 8 a.m.-3

p.m. This workshop is conducted by the Small Business Administration for veterans and all base personnel interested starting up and operating their own business. To register or for more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

### Music on the Patio

Do you play a musical instrument or sing? Or have you ever wanted to? Please join the fun on the patio behind the Airman & Family Readiness Center on Thursday evenings from 5-7 p.m. If you have a musical instrument, bring it. There's no agenda, just people hanging out who enjoy playing music.

### EFMP-FS

Exceptional Family Members Program-Family Support, EFMP-FS, establishes, implements and maintains the FS (community support) entity of the Air Force EFMP in coordination with the Medical & Assignments components by enhancing the quality of life of special needs family members. Feel free to contact (662) 434-3323/2790 for any questions related to EFMP or for one-on-one assistance. We can assess your needs and make the proper community referral for you and your family!

### Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the A&FRC. We have volunteer opportunities located across the base for one-time events, special events or on a continual basis. Volunteers are needed on base at the Youth Cen-

ter, Child Development Center, Library, Medical Clinic, Chapel, Airman's Attic, Thrift Store, the Retiree Activities Office and many other locations. For more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

### Installation Voting Assistance Office

A&FRC houses the Voting Assistance Office (VAO) which is open Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and closed weekends/holidays. The VAO offers voting assistance including voter registration, absentee ballot requests and voting, change of address, and provides answers for other general voting questions to uniformed service members, their family members and civilians with access to A&FRC. Assistance includes but is not limited to aid in preparing and submitting Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) SF-76, Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) SF-186 and National Mail Voter Registration Form (NVRF). The VAO also leads and trains all installation unit voting assistance officers. For more information, please contact the Installation VAO at (662) 434-2701/2790 or e-mail: vote.columbus@us.af.mil.

### Discovery Resource Center

The Columbus A&FRC has computers with internet access available for job searches, assessments, resumes, cover letters, state and federal applications and companies' employment information. A printer and fax machine is available. A lending library of books, DVDs and periodicals on transition and EFMP topics are available for check out. These resources are available on a first-come-first-serve basis.

### Pre- and Post-Deployment Tour Briefing

These briefings are mandatory for active duty personnel who are either deploying or returning from deployment or a remote tour. Please contact A&FRC at (662) 434-2794/2790 to schedule a briefing and/or for more information.

### Pre-Separation Counseling

This counseling is a mandatory briefing for personnel separating or retiring, and is to be completed at least 90 days prior to separation. It may be completed up to 12 months prior to separation or 24 months prior to retirement. Please contact A&FRC at (662) 434-2790 to schedule a counseling session and/or for more information. See COMMUNITY, Page 14

## Chapel Schedule

**Chapel services are now available.**

**Catholic:** 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Sundays

**Daily Mass:** 11 a.m. Tuesday- Friday

**Protestant:** 9:30 a.m. on Sundays

As we gather for services there is a 50 person limit inside the chapel. Thank you all for your help during this time and we are looking forward to seeing you all soon!



## Columbus Air Force Base Information and Events

Join our Facebook page at Columbus AFB Living, Instagram at columbus\_afb\_living, or visit our website at ColumbusAFBliving.com to keep up to date with all the great events happening around base. Check out the calendar on the website for important Airman and Family Readiness Center events. For more information, contact (662) 434-2337.

## Get Connected with Your Base App!

As a way to connect people together, Columbus Air Force Base launched a new app to connect Airmen and families to the mission and community! The app is available on all app stores and can be found by searching 'Columbus Air Force Base'.

## Halloween Trunk-Or-Treat

14 FSS, 14 FTW Chapel, and Hunt Housing present Trunk-or-Treat on Oct. 30 from 5-8:30 p.m. at Venture 360 (across from Capital Housing). Join us for a spook-tacular time and enjoy treats from the trunks of cars, activities, food, and a costume contest. There will be face painting, carnival games, a cake walk, movies (G-rated), jumpers, Kona Ice, food trucks, beer sales, and a live DJ! The costume contest will be from 6:15-6:45 p.m. with 1st 2nd and 3rd place for Best Family Costume, Booth/Trunk, Couples Costume, and Best Overall. Sign-up for your truck at SignUpGenius.com/go/trunk-or-treat21.

## The Print Shop Has Moved!

The Print Shop has moved to The Commons, building 715, room 128. It is located in the back of the Commons and can be accessed either from the main entrance or from the parking lot directly behind the base Chapel. Services include large format printing, mounting, laminating, color and black/white copying, binding, and much more. For a quote call (662) 434-2337 or email 14FSSColumbus@gmail.com.

## Youth Program's After School Care

The Youth Center is offers After School Care for ages 5-12. The center provides games, sports, arts & crafts, educational enrichment, social skills, leadership building and much more. Request care at MilitaryChildCare.com or call (662) 434-2504 for more information.

## Library

The Library is open for in-house customers Tuesday-Friday 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. and closed Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. It has been relocated to a more inviting and visible location in open area in The Commons which is next to the base chapel. For everyone's safety, masks are required for patrons ages 3 and up and parents must remain with their children at all times.

The Library is hosting Storytime at the Park every Tuesday at 10 a.m. Meet at Freedom Park for a story read by your favorite Librarians! If it rains, StoryTime will be in the Library located in The Commons.

See all of the Library's activities visit their Facebook page: @ColumbusAirForceBaseLibrary.

## Fitness Center

The Columbus AFB Fitness Center and the Alpha Warrior tent is open Monday-Friday 5 a.m.-9 p.m. and on Saturday 8 a.m.-6 p.m. It is open on Sunday for 24/7 Access members only (CAC must be registered at the front desk prior to use).

The Fitness Center is now serving all DoD cardholders and eligible contractors during normal hours of operation.

24/7 access is available to not only Active Duty patrons, but also any DoD cardholder such as dependents, retirees, and civilian employees. CAC must be registered at the front desk.

Also, the locker rooms and showers are once again available.

Please note there will 100% ID card check, limited rental equipment available, and other risk mitigation plans still apply.

14 FSS, 14 FTW Chapel, & Hunt Housing Present the

# TRUNK-OR-TREAT

30 OCT | 5-8:30pm  
at Venture 360

SIGN UP TO HAVE A TRUNK/BOOTH:  
signupgenius.com/go/trunk-or-treat21

Join us for a spook-tacular time and enjoy trunk-or-treating, activities, food, and costume contests!

### COSTUME CONTEST FROM 6:15-6:45!

**CATEGORIES:**

- Best Family Costume
- Best Booth/Trunk
- Best Couple's Costume
- Best Costume Overall

1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category will win a prize!  
Winners will be determined by audience reaction, so bring your hype men!

### ACTIVITIES:

- Face Painting
- Carnival Games & Cake Walk
- Movies (G-rated)
- Inflatable Jumpers
- Kona Ice, Food Trucks, & Beer Sales
- Live DJ

FORCE

For more information, call the Fitness Center at (662) 434-2772.

Also, the basketball and racquetball courts are now available! Check-in at the front desk required.

## Spooky 5K

The Fitness Center will host the Spooky 5k Fun Run on Oct. 23 beginning at 9 a.m. Dress up in your favorite Halloween costume for a fun run around the base. Open to all ages. Call the Fitness Center for more information at (662) 434-2772.

## Arts & Craft Has Re-Opened!

Arts & Crafts has reopened and ready to serve your framing, engraving, and wood working needs, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

## Venture 360 is Now Open!

The much anticipated Venture 360 outdoor activity center, located across from Capital housing, is now open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. It will be a phased opening with more activities being added over the next several months as equipment arrives. Phase 1 includes volleyball, crossnet, several inflatables, a putt putt golf course (inflatable), 1-outdoor theatre locations, picnic and lounge areas, horseshoes, cornhole, and ping pong (inside the building). The building and activities will also be available for rent for parties and meetings. For pricing and a map of all the activities, visit ColumbusAFBliving.com/Venture360/ or call (662) 434-7972.

## Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor Recreation's (ODR) hours are Monday, Thursday, and Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.(closed Tuesday and Wednesday) and Saturday/Sunday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. ODR offers all sorts of rental for the water, camping, and much more! Call ODR at (662) 434-2505 for all your outdoor activities.

## Coffee House on 5th

Coffee House on 5th, located in the Blaze Commons, is back open to 50% capacity inside. Drive through or come in to enjoy a cup of coffee or a tasty treat. Their hours are Monday-Friday, 6 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday, 8 a.m.- noon. Call for more information at (662) 434-2233.

## Columbus Club & The Overrun Bar

The Columbus Club and the Overrun Bar are now open Wednesday 3:30 p.m.-7 p.m. and Friday (Drop Nights Only) from 4-8 p.m. (may be extended for special events) for dinner and drinks. Quick bites done just right featuring favorites such as Chicken Tenders, Mozzarella Sticks, and French Fries.

Also, don't forget the Club offers Catering services. Call (662) 434-2490 for more information.

Let's Connect! Boss & Buddy Night at the Club Wednesdays from 3:30-5:30 p.m. and enjoy a few brews with your boss and buddies.

## Back to Bowling!

The bowling lanes will open once again beginning Oct., 4th. Bowling will be available by appointment or walk-in, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. On Wednesdays it will close at 1 p.m. Friday, bowling will be open until 10 p.m. and feature a full bar! It will also feature Neon Bowling from 7-10 p.m. For reservations, call (662) 434-3426 or on Facebook @ColumbusAFBBowlingCenter.

## Spooky Neon Booo-ling

The Bowling center will have a special Neon bowling night with a Halloween theme on Oct. 29 from 7-10 p.m. There will be unlimited bowling for \$10 per person (includes shoes). There will also be prizes for the best costume. The bar will be open with beer and mixed drinks for purchase. Walk-ins are welcome or you can call for reservations.

## Strike Zone Grill at the Bowling Center!

The Strike Zone Grill (also known as the Snack Bar) is open for DINE-IN and TAKE-OUT service. The expanded eating area will allow for social distancing. Grab'n go products will be available including during bowling.

The StrikeZone Grill is now open for lunch and dinner! For breakfast they are open from 6:30 a.m.-10 a.m. Monday – Friday. For lunch/dinner, the grill is open from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. On Wednesdays, it will close at 2 p.m. It will be open until 9 p.m. on Fridays! The center is closed on Saturday and Sunday. For take-out orders, call (662) 434-3426.

## Information, Tickets & Travel (ITT)

Local ITT Customer Service will be temporarily handle by Keesler AFB. Please call Holly or Trish at (228) 377-3818 Tuesday-Friday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Local Shuttle Service will be handled by ODR on Monday, Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m.-1 p.m. This includes shuttle service to the airport of your choice. Stop by ODR or call (662) 434-2505 for more information.

## Assignment Night Transportation

Book Assignment Night transportation with ITT! Reserve the bus, the van or both! The cost is only \$30 per hour for Columbus and local areas; a \$30 deposit is required and applied to the total cost of reservation. Reservation must be a minimum of four hours and reserved in person. For more information, contact (662) 434-7861.

# Aviation mentor inspires Houston youth to take flight from her hometown

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas — Maj. Kiersten “Clicks” Thompson, an Instructor Combat Systems Officer assigned to the 479 Flying Training Group, represented Air Force Recruiting Service Detachment 1 twice in the last month, connecting with youth from all over the country.

She is one of 475 members of the Det. 1 Aviation Inspiration Mentorship (AIM) team supporting outreach and engagement activities aimed to inform, influence, and inspire the next generation of aviators. AIM members are Rated Diversity Improvement (RDI) ambassadors who provide mentorship by sharing their personal experiences during in-person and virtual engagements.

At her first event, Girls in Aviation Day in Dallas, Texas, Thompson and the AIM team inspired more than 500 females, ages of 8-18, toward a future in aviation and all things STEM related.

“It was so rewarding watching their eyes light up when we talked to them, you could see them envision themselves as Air Force aviators. I felt like a super hero all day” reflected Thompson.

Every event Det. 1 participates in is different. Whether it has a simulator station, a model C-17 Globemaster III fuselage, or virtual reality headsets, the team always tries to engage youth with fun and free games to the public.

“This time we ran a booth and two virtual reality simulators, enabling the aspiring aviators to fly an F-35 Lightning II through an obstacle course” explained Thompson, “It was a huge hit!”

In addition to the games and foam airplanes Det. 1 provides at events, the AIM team presence really means they have an opportunity to interact with all event participants, family, friends and some-

times, event faculty.

“Simply, if a girl sees me in a flight suit and it triggers a reaction of, ‘I can do that too!’ then it’s a successful event,” said Thompson. “It’s a much longer game for Det. 1 and AIMS and short game for standard recruiters.”

Participating in events with youth at an early age inspires them to pursue an education in STEM that sets them up for success for a career in aviation 10-15 years from now, well in advance of having what they need to be eligible to apply for a rated position in the Air Force

After a successful event with Girls in Aviation Day, Thompson volunteered for another event just two weeks later which enabled her to return to her hometown of Pearland, Texas. While there she visited her alma mater, Pearland High School, and represented Det. 1.

“It was a surreal experience walking the halls that I used to know so well. This high school was a huge part of my life and led all of the opportunities I’ve experienced so far.”

It now marks 15 years since Thompson was a student at Pearland High School and she still gives back when she can by meeting with the current student athletes about her experiences in the military, specifically as a rated officer in the Air Force.

“It was incredible getting to talk to and watch the volleyball team; since volleyball was my whole life in high school,” explained Thompson, “I hope I gave them a role model to look up to knowing that I was once one of them.”

At the Wings Over Houston Airshow Oct. 9-10, Thompson paired up with recruiters from the region as the only officer and aviator at the tent, a first for the AIM team to manage an event solo. She



Courtesy Photo

**Maj. Kiersten “CLICKS” Thompson meets members of the Pearland High School volleyball team Oct. 8, 2021 in Texas. near Houston. The combat systems officer graduated the high school in 2006 and is currently stationed at Pensacola Naval Air Station, Florida. She was able to return to her home town as a member of the Air Force Recruiting Service Detachment 1 Aviation Inspiration Mentorship team whose goal is to connect career aviators with youth around the country to restore the luster in aviation, AIM members are encouraged to Inform, Influence and Inspire future generations from any event, no matter how big or small.**

answered multiple questions on becoming an officer and even thinks she inspired an enlisted Marine to pursue a career as an Air Force aviator.

“My biggest win of the weekend was explaining to people that I was in fact not a pilot; I am a Combat Systems Officer and what that means.”

AIM members cover all four rated career fields, pilot, CSO, air battle manager, and remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) Pilots. This provides a wealth of knowledge when it comes to the various avenues to aviation and explains first hand there is not one way to apply and be selected for a rated career in the Air Force.

“It was an awesome opportunity that I am thankful the AIM team afforded me,” Thompson said. “Times like these let me share my passion for aviation and what I do with my two year old niece and nephew. Even though they don’t understand now, hopefully when they do they’ll want to follow in my footsteps.”

Thompson’s involvement with the AIM Program and her under-



Courtesy photo

**Maj. Kiersten “CLICKS” Thompson poses for a photo with her friend Maj. Mike Ball, a U.S. Air Force Thunderbird maintenance officer, at the Wings Over Houston Airshow in Houston, Texas, Oct. 10, 2021. As a member of the AFRS Detachment 1 Aviation Inspiration Mentorship (AIM) team, Thompson was able to return to her hometown airshow as an aviation mentor to inspire the next generation toward a future as U.S. Air Force aviators.**

standing of the mission resulted in her also being the first AIM member to represent Det. 1 solo at an event.

“Overall, it was a very rewarding experience. I think the biggest

part of being with the AIM team is not necessarily pulling in future recruits, but being a visible presence,” Thompson said. “Inform. Influence. Inspire.’ is the AIM motto and that’s what I set out to do.”





U.S. Air Force photo by 2nd Lt. Logan Thomas  
**Chief Master Sgt. Erik Thompson, center, command chief of Air Education and Training Command, and Staff Sgts. Russell Taylor, left, and Alyxandra Anguiano, right, 363rd Training Squadron armament instructors, carry a training missile to load on a mock-up F-22 ground instructional training aircraft during the chief's immersion tour with the 82nd Training Wing at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, Oct. 6, 2021. The chief spent two days at Sheppard to get a first-hand look at the Air Force's largest and most diverse training installation.**



U.S. Air Force photo by 2nd Lt. Logan Thomas  
**Chief Master Sgt. Erik Thompson, center, command chief of Air Education and Training Command is escorted to the F-22 maintenance training facility by 365th Training Squadron avionics instructor Tech. Sgt. David Hejmanowski during an immersion tour with the 82nd Training Wing at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, Oct. 6, 2021. The chief spent two days at Sheppard to get a first-hand look at the Air Force's largest and most diverse training installation.**

# AETC command chief: Focus is preparing Airmen for tomorrow's fight

**Michelle Martin**  
82nd Training Wing Public Affairs

SHEPPARD AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — The top enlisted leader of Air Education and Training command, Chief Master Sgt. Erik Thompson, got an up-close look at the Air Force's largest technical training wing Oct. 6-7 during an immersion tour.

"The big takeaway from being here is Sheppard is still generating combat air power every single day," said Thompson. "It is a massive engine that produces quality Airmen."

Thompson hit the ground running visiting the 80th Flying Training Wing, home of the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program, and then 82nd Training Wing mission. The itinerary included several schoolhouse tours, meeting both students and instructors and finishing up his immersion with an all-call at the base theater, where he addressed Sheppard's Airmen.

When it comes to training today's Airmen for tomorrow's Air Force, Thompson has a clear-cut philosophy he wants to convey. He

noted the United States faces new strategic competitors in China and Russia. He emphasized the importance of ensuring Airmen are oriented toward that philosophy from the very beginning of their time in the Air Force.

The chief said in today's international environment, it's difficult to go it alone when facing peer adversaries. That's why training alongside international partners is paramount to success.

"All you have to do is look at our national security and national defense strategy to understand that we can't do this by ourselves and we certainly don't want to do this by ourselves," he said. "We're absolutely more effective, more capable and more lethal when we train together, deploy together and fight together across countries, across nationalities and certainly across platforms."

Thompson said it's easy for him to translate AETC Commander Lt. Gen. Brad Webb's mission, vision and priorities into actionable goals. Continuing to enhance force development, lethality and readiness, trans-

See AETC, Page 7



U.S. Air Force photo by 2nd Lt. Logan Thomas  
**Chief Master Sgt. Erik Thompson, command chief of Air Education and Training Command, speaks with Staff Sgt. Macie Barela, 80th Operational Support Squadron air traffic controller, during an immersion tour with the 80th Flying Training Wing at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, Oct. 6, 2021. The chief, who previously served in the same capacity with 19th Air Force, which oversees pilot training for AETC, spent two days at Sheppard to get a first-hand look at the Air Force's largest and most diverse training installation.**

## BLAZE Hangar Tails: B-2 Spirit

### Mission

The B-2 Spirit is a multi-role bomber capable of delivering both conventional and nuclear munitions. A dramatic leap forward in technology, the bomber represents a major milestone in the U.S. bomber modernization program. The B-2 brings massive firepower to bear, in a short time, anywhere on the globe through previously impenetrable defenses.

### Features

The B-2 provides the penetrating flexibility and effectiveness inherent in manned bombers. Its low-observable, or "stealth," characteristics give it the unique ability to penetrate an enemy's most sophisticated defenses and threaten its most valued, and heavily defended, targets. Its capability to penetrate air defenses and threaten effective retaliation provides a strong, effective deterrent and combat force well into the 21st century.

The revolutionary blending of low-observable technologies with high aerodynamic efficiency and large payload gives the B-2 important advantages over existing bombers. Its low-observability provides it greater freedom of action at high altitudes, thus increasing its range and a better field of view for the aircraft's sensors. Its unrefueled range is approximately 6,000 nautical miles (9,600 kilometers).

The B-2's low observability is derived from a combination of reduced infrared, acoustic, electromagnetic, visual and radar signatures. These signatures make it difficult for the sophisticated defensive systems to detect, track and engage the B-2. Many aspects of the low-observability process remain classified; however, the B-2's composite materials, special coatings and flying-wing design all contribute

to its "stealthiness."

The B-2 has a crew of two pilots, a pilot in the left seat and mission commander in the right, compared to the B-1B's crew of four and the B-52's crew of five.

### Background

The first B-2 was publicly displayed on Nov. 22, 1988, when it was rolled out of its hangar at Air Force Plant 42, Palmdale, California. Its first flight was July 17, 1989. The B-2 Combined Test Force, Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards Air Force Base, California, is responsible for flight testing the engineering, manufacturing and development aircraft on the B-2.

Whiteman AFB, Missouri, is the only operational base for the B-2. The first aircraft, Spirit of Missouri, was delivered Dec. 17, 1993. Depot maintenance responsibility for the B-2 is performed by Air Force contractor support and is managed at the Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center at Tinker AFB, Okla.

The combat effectiveness of the B-2 was proved in Operation Allied Force, where it was responsible for destroying 33 percent of all Serbian targets in the first eight weeks, by flying nonstop to Kosovo from its home base in Missouri and back. In support of Operation Enduring Freedom, the B-2 flew one of its longest missions to date from Whiteman to Afghanistan and back. The B-2 completed its first-ever combat deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, flying 22 sorties from a forward operating location as well as 27 sorties from Whiteman AFB and releasing more than 1.5 million pounds of munitions. The aircraft received full operational capability status in December 2003. On Feb. 1, 2009,

the Air Force's newest command, Air Force Global Strike Command, assumed responsibility for the B-2 from Air Combat Command.

The prime contractor, responsible for overall system design and integration, is Northrop Grumman Integrated Systems Sector. Boeing Military Airplanes Co., Hughes Radar Systems Group, General Electric Aircraft Engine Group and Vought Aircraft Industries, Inc., are key members of the aircraft contractor team.

### General characteristics

- Primary function:** multi-role heavy bomber
- Contractor:** Northrop Grumman Corp. and Contractor Team: Boeing Military Airplanes Co., Hughes Radar Systems Group, General Electric Aircraft Engine Group and Vought Aircraft Industries, Inc.
- Power plant:** four General Electric F118-GE-100 engines
- Thrust:** 17,300 pounds each engine
- Wingspan:** 172 feet (52.12 meters)
- Length:** 69 feet (20.9 meters)
- Height:** 17 feet (5.1 meters)
- Weight:** 160,000 pounds (72,575 kilograms)
- Maximum takeoff weight:** 336,500 pounds (152,634 kilograms)
- Fuel capacity:** 167,000 pounds (75,750 kilograms)
- Payload:** 40,000 pounds (18,144 kilograms)
- Speed:** high subsonic
- Range:** intercontinental
- Ceiling:** 50,000 feet (15,240 meters)
- Armament:** conventional or nuclear weapons
- Crew:** two pilots
- Unit cost:** Approximately \$1.157 billion (fiscal 1998 constant dollars)
- Initial operating capability:** April 1997
- Inventory:** active force: 20 (1 test); ANG: 0; Reserve: 0



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Scott H. Spitzer  
**The B-2 Spirit approaches the boom of a McGuire Air Force Base, New Jersey KC-10A Extender during a Capstone orientation flight. Capstone is a Joint Airborne/Air Transportability Training mission providing interservice training for the wartime application of airlift. Through Capstone, senior level officers are able to observe the significance of airlift and its role in all military operations.**



U.S. Air Force photo by Bobbie Garcia  
**The B-2 Spirit is a multi-role bomber capable of delivering both conventional and nuclear munitions. A dramatic leap forward in technology, the bomber represents a major milestone in the U.S. bomber modernization program. The B-2 brings massive firepower to bear, in a short time, anywhere on the globe through previously impenetrable defenses.**



# AMC approves F-15, F-16 receivers as third KC-46 ICR milestone

Headquarters Air Mobility Command Public Affairs

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — Gen. Mike Minihan, commander of Air Mobility Command, approved a third Interim Capability Release mission set for the KC-46A Pegasus, Oct. 13.

This ICR decision allows the KC-46 to refuel all variants of the F-15 Eagle and F-16 Fighting Falcon during U.S. Transportation Command tasked missions.

“The KC-46 can now support 62% of all receiver aircraft that request air refueling support from USTRANSCOM,” said Brig. Gen. Ryan Samuelson, AMC deputy director of Strategy, Plans, Requirements and Programs and KC-46 Cross Functional Team lead. “This step forward accelerates the critical projection and connection warfighting requirements the Pegasus brings to the joint force, even before it’s fully operational.”

This ICR allows the Pegasus aircraft and crews to accept operational taskings which would otherwise be filled by the KC-135 Stratotanker and KC-10 Extender, increasing the force’s air refueling capacity.

Despite existing restrictions and deficiencies, the KC-46 continues to demonstrate its growing operational capabilities. The Pegasus has completed more than 6,000 missions, offloading more than 35 million pounds of fuel, and making 26,000 boom and 1,500 drogue contacts since January 2019.

On July 9, the first ICR decision approved the KC-46A Pegasus to refuel aircraft using its Centerline Drogue System. The second ICR decision, which approved the KC-46 to refuel the B-52 Stratofortress, C-17 Globemaster III and other KC-46 aircraft using its boom, was made August 5.

There is no timeline associated with the overall ICR plan, which instead focuses on establishing incremental confidence measures that allow the AMC commander and other senior leaders to qualitatively and quantitatively assess achievements at ICR milestones. Crews will continue to fly training, exercise and demonstration missions until all operational confidence measures are met.



U.S. Air Force by 1st Lt. Daniel Lee  
**A KC-46 Pegasus from the 97th Air Mobility Wing, assigned to the 56th Air Refueling Squadron, Altus Air Force Base, Okla., refuels an F-16 Fighting Falcon from the 49th Wing, 54th Fighter Group, Holloman AFB, N.M., Dec. 7, 2020. Two Altus AFB KC-46s and 10 Holloman AFB F-16s teamed up in the skies over New Mexico to practice air refueling operations.**



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## Commander’s Action Line

# 662-434-1414

In an effort to stay Connected, the Commander’s Action Line is your direct link to the commander for comments and suggestions on how to make Columbus AFB better.

Although the Commander’s Action Line is always available, the best way to resolve problems is through the chain-of-command. The Commander’s Action Line can be reached at 434-1414. Leave your name and phone number or email if you would like to receive an answer. All names will be kept confidential.

If you would like to remain anonymous, please submit your inquiries through our base application in the ‘Our Wing’ then ‘Contact the CC’ tab or you can submit through the webpage at [www.columbus.af.mil](http://www.columbus.af.mil). Click “Contact Us” at the top left of the page and select “Commander’s Action Line” in the Recipient drop down menu.



## The Airman’s Creed

I am an American Airman.  
I am a Warrior.  
I have answered my nation’s call.  
I am an American Airman.  
My mission is to fly, fight, and win.  
I am faithful to a proud heritage.  
A tradition of honor,  
And a legacy of valor.  
I am an American Airman.  
Guardian of freedom and justice,  
My nation’s sword and shield,  
Its sentry and avenger.  
I defend my country with my life.  
I am an American Airman.  
Wingman, leader, warrior.  
I will never leave an Airman behind.  
I will never falter,  
And I will not fail.



U.S. Air Force photo by 2nd Lt. Logan Thomas

**Chief Master Sgt. Erik Thompson, left, command chief of Air Education and Training Command, takes a spin in a virtual reality flight simulator with the aid of Capt. Kevin Bursaw, right, 89th Flying Training Squadron instructor pilot, during an immersion tour with the 80th Flying Training Wing at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, Oct. 6, 2021. The chief, who previously served in the same capacity with 19th Air Force, which oversees pilot training for AETC, spent two days at Sheppard to get a first-hand look at the Air Force’s largest and most diverse training installation.**

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### AETC

(Continued from page 6)

form training, and cultivating an environment of excellence are his top goals.

“We have to produce the highest quality Airmen with the best training and best education,” he said. “That means we have to continue to innovate and evolve in methods and modalities to make sure we are utilizing the latest technology, the best instruction techniques and the highest quality instructors to produce the strongest and most capable Airmen today.”

He praised what he saw across the base during the immersion, recognizing the phenomenal job Military Training Leaders do by building, caring for and preparing Airmen. He also said the tech training instructors do an awesome job of preparing Airmen for the operational roles they will have when they get to their respective duty stations.

Thompson is no stranger to Sheppard AFB. He began his career as a helicopter maintenance student in 1993 before returning in 1997 when he cross-trained into the flight engineer career field. Prior to his role as

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*“We have to produce the highest quality Airmen with the best training and best education,” he said. “That means we have to continue to innovate and evolve in methods and modalities to make sure we are utilizing the latest technology, the best instruction techniques and the highest quality instructors to produce the strongest and most capable Airmen today.”*

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AETC command chief, he served in the same capacity for 19th Air Force, the Numbered Air Force responsible for administering pilot training for AETC

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T-1A Jayhawk

# SUPT Class 22-01 earns silver wings



T-38C Talon



**Maj. Jakhongir Rustamov**  
Tashkent, Uzbekistan  
C-295

Five officers have prevailed during a year of training, earning the right to become Air Force pilots.

Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 22-01 graduates at 11 a.m. today during a ceremony at the Kaye Auditorium.

Students will receive their silver pilot's wings at the ceremony, and students who excelled in their respective training tracks will be recognized.

1st Lt. Taisuke Nishimura received the Air Education and Training Command Commander's Trophy for being the most outstanding student overall in class.

The Air Force Association Award was presented to 2nd Lt. James Ferenczy who excelled in training and typified the tenets of the association; promoting aerospace power and a strong national defense.

The distinguished graduate of Class 22-01 recognized was Nishimura for outstanding performance in academics, officer qualities and flying abilities.

The 52-week pilot training program begins with a six-week pre-flight phase of academics and physiological training to prepare students for flight. The second phase, primary training, is conducted in the single-engine, turboprop T-6A Texan II at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. Students learn aircraft flight characteristics, emergency procedures, takeoff and landing procedures, aerobatics and formation flying. Students also practice

night, instrument and cross country navigation flying.

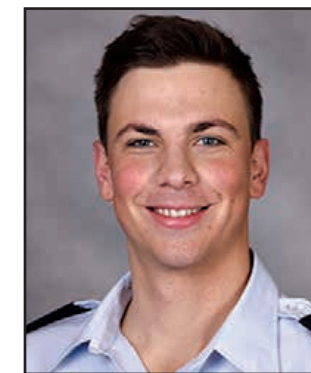
Primary training takes approximately 23 weeks and includes 254.4 hours of ground training, 27.3 hours in the flight simulator and 89 hours in the T-6A aircraft.

After primary training, students select, by order of merit, advanced training in the fighter-bomber or airlift-tanker track.

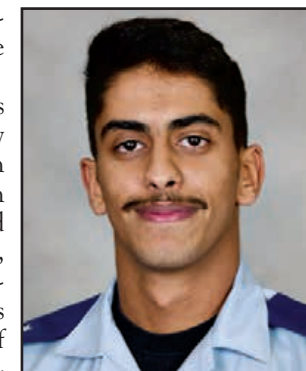
Both tracks are designed to best train pilots for successful transition to their follow-on aircraft and mission.

Advanced training for the fighter track is done in the T-38C Talon, a tandem-seat, twin-engine supersonic jet. T-38 training emphasizes formation, advanced aerobatics and navigation. Training takes approximately 26 weeks and includes 381 hours of ground training, 31.6 hours in the flight simulator and 118.7 hours in the T-38C aircraft.

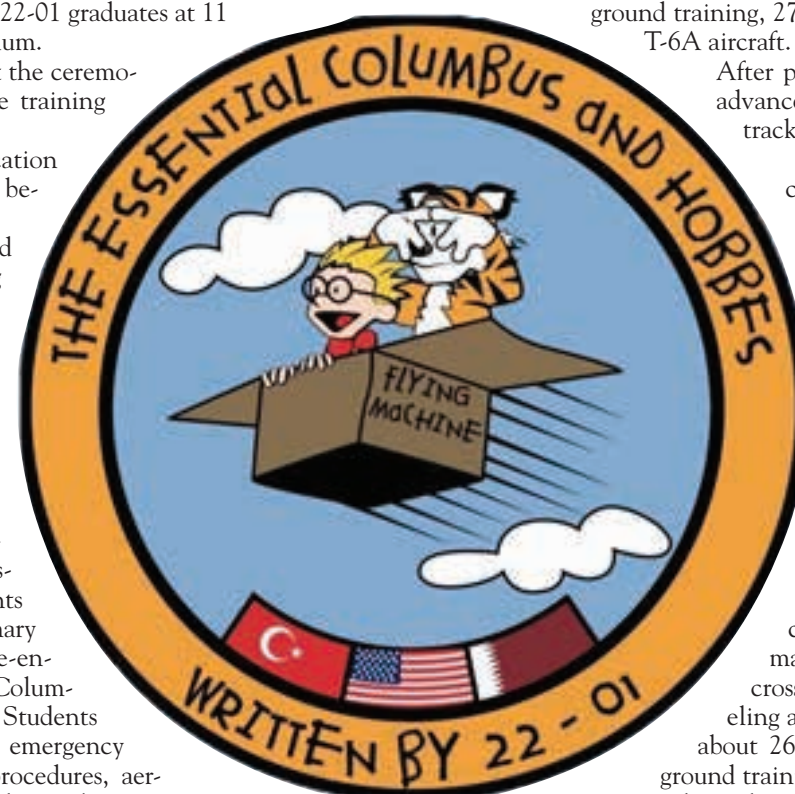
The airlift-tanker track uses the T-1A Jayhawk, the military version of a multi-place Beech Jet 400 business jet. Instruction centers on crew coordination and management, instrument training, cross-country flying and simulated refueling and airdrop missions. Training takes about 26 weeks and includes 185 hours of ground training, 53.6 hours in the flight simulator and 76.4 hours in the T-1A.



**1st Lt. James Ferenczy**  
Coxsackie, New York  
T-6



**2nd Lt. Meshari Alharbi**  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
F-15 SA



**1st Lt. Taisuke Nishimura**  
Iruma, Japan  
F-2



**2nd Lt. Muath Alamri**  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
F-15 SA

