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“Produce Pilots, Advance Airmen, Feed the Fight”

Columbus Air Force Base, Miss.

July 7, 2017

Vol. 41, Issue 26

Weather

Friday AM Thunderstorms High 89°F Low 73°F	Saturday Partly Cloudy, Chance of PM Thunderstorms High 91°F Low 72°F
Sunday Partly Cloudy, Chance of PM Thunderstorms High 88°F Low 71°F	Monday Partly Cloudy, Chance of PM Thunderstorms High 90°F Low 71°F

Forecast provided by the 14th OSS Weather Flight

News Briefs

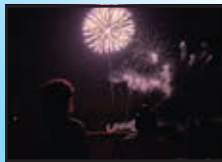
14th Flying Training Wing CV Retirement
Col. James Fisher, 14th Flying Training Wing Vice Commander, will retire during a ceremony at 2:14 p.m. July 7 at the Columbus Club.

New 14th Flying Training Wing CV Immersions
Col. William Denham, the new 14th FTW CV, will visit the 14th Operations Group July 11 and the Wing Staff Agencies July 14.

14th Security Forces Squadron Change of Command
The 14th Security Forces Squadron Change of Command is scheduled for 10:14 a.m. July 13 at the Columbus Club.

14th Contracting Squadron Change of Command
The 14th Contracting Squadron Change of Command is scheduled for 9:14 a.m. July 14 at the Columbus Club.

Inside



Feature 8
Fireworks on the Water is highlighted in this week's feature.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Keith Holcomb
Col. James Fisher, 14th Flying Training Wing Vice Commander, speaks at the graduation of Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 17-11 June 30, 2017, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. Fisher himself graduated from the pilot training program at Columbus AFB in 1997 in SUPT Class 97-04.

Fisher imparts final words to SUPT Class 17-11

Airman 1st Class Keith Holcomb
14th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

Col. James Fisher, 14th Flying Training Wing Vice Commander, spoke here June 30 for the graduation of Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 17-11. The wing conducts specialized undergraduate pilot training for U.S. Air Force and allied officers, as well as tactical training for Afghan pilots and aircraft maintainers in the A-29 Super Tucano at Moody AFB, Georgia. The wing at Columbus is composed of 234 aircraft that fly

54,000 sorties and over 75,000 hours per year to train over 400 pilots and combat system operators annually. Since 2015, Fisher has helped create around 600 aviation experts for the U.S. Air Force. Fisher began his speech by welcoming all those in attendance. Following his welcome he proceeded to ask the family and friends of the graduating class to stand so they could be acknowledged for their role in Class 17-11's success. "I really want to on behalf of my family, thank you for what

See FISHER, Page 2

COLUMBUS AFB TRAINING TIMELINE

PHASE II				PHASE III				IFF				WING SORTIE BOARD							
Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Track Select	Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Graduation	Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Graduation	Aircraft	Required	Flown	Annual				
37th (18-05)	-0.20 days	2.36 days	July 21	48th (17-12)	-3.63 days	-1.90 days	July 14	49th (17-JBC)	-15.32 days	-6.49 days	July 21	T-6	131	121	23,728				
41st (18-06)	-3.60 days	-1.04 days	Aug. 11	50th (17-12)	-3.98 days	0.16 days	July 14	* Mission numbers provided by 14 FTW Wing Scheduling.				T-1	45	36	6,237				
The graduation speaker for SUPT Class 17-12 graduation on July 28 is Ref. Col. Michael Speer.												T-38	54	52	8,258				
												IFF	23	20	3,479				

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14TH FLYING TRAINING WING DEPLOYED

As of press time, 21 TEAM BLAZE members are deployed worldwide. Remember to support the Airmen and their families while they are away.

Deployment numbers provided by the Installation Personnel Readiness Office.

FISHER

(Continued from page 1)

you have done,” Fisher said. “None of these officers were able to arrive in the seats in which they now sit, had it not been for the foundation that you poured into these graduates.”

Congratulating the class, Fisher then jumped into the heart of his speech.

“I want to give you three themes that if you apply these and put these into your toolbox, they might serve you well down the road,” he said.

Outlining the three main points was to challenge themselves. Referring to their personal and professional lives, he said he wants them to consistently challenge themselves to be the best they can be. Fisher challenged the class to guard their wings, honor those who have sacrificed to get them to this point today and those who will sacrifice to get them off of the ground each and every day, and to, for however long they wear this uniform, do it to the best of their abilities.

Fisher expanded on each point before offering final remarks.

“I want to take a minute to thank you. Members of 17-11, each person in this class has volunteered for this duty,” Fisher said. “You have each taken a solemn oath and

have made a commitment to our nation to defend it with your lives. You all have a full understanding of what that commitment might mean for you for your family or for your loved ones. I want to thank you on behalf of my family for what you have done and what you are about to do.”

This was Fisher's last speech to any graduating class at Columbus AFB. After serving 25 years in the Air Force, and being stationed at Columbus AFB on three separate occasions throughout his career, Fisher will retire July 7.

After earning his education from Mississippi State University in Starkville, Mississippi, he earned his wings as a pilot here in SUPT Class 97-04, later instructed in the T-1A Jayhawk aircraft here, and finished his career as the wing vice commander here, encountering many experiences with the base and community.

“I mean both of my kids were born here in my previous tours here,” Fisher said, “and being in a state around people you are comfortable with is an amazing opportunity, but additionally now being able to be a spokesman and a public face for people in the local community has been outstanding.”

The Airmen of Columbus Air Force Base thank Col. James Fisher for 25 years of service and commitment to this country.

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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News Around Town

July 7

The Columbus Police Department is hosting the 2017 Black and White Ball at 7 p.m. July 7 in the Trotter Convention Center. All proceeds benefit National Night Out on Crime and the City Wide toy drive. There will be live music and food provided by Hucks. The dress attire is semi-formal. Contact Officer Rhonda Sanders at (662) 251-7355.

July 8-9

There will be a Summer Sizzler Disc Golf Tournament July 8 - 9 at Lake Lowndes State Park and Propst Disc Golf

course. Contact Jason Willingham at (662) 242-1915.

July 15-16

The Lions Hills Center and Golf Course is hosting a guest golf tournament July 15 - 16. Contact Lion Hills at (662) 328-4837 for more information.

June 13 – July 28

Lion Hills Center and Golf Course will host Junior Golf Camps throughout the summer. Remaining classes are July 11 - 14; July 18 - 21; and July 25 – 28. Contact Lion Hills at (662) 328-4837 for more information.

BARGAIN LINE

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The Bargain Line is free for all military members (including guard and reserve members), DOD civilians, military retirees, family members and contract employees.

Bargain Line advertisements must be turned in to the Silver Wings office in the 14th Flying Training Wing headquarters building by noon Monday to be included in the following week's issue. Late ads will be held over for the next issue.

Reruns must be phoned in to the Silver Wings office, 434-7068, by noon Monday for inclusion in the next week's issue. Please do not re-submit ads for rerun on this form. Advertisements should contain a home phone number, home address or both. Duty phone numbers will not appear in the ads.

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Cycle safe, wear a helmet

RPA

(Continued from page 13)

certified. He began the EPIC program in October 2016, where he trained alongside 20 commissioned officers and two other enlisted students.

“I started Initial Flight Training in Pueblo, Colorado. I was there for four weeks and I learned the basic fundamentals of (aviation) by flying a Diamond DA20,” Alex said. “Then I went to Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas for Undergraduate RPA Training. There I trained on a simulator and learned aircraft controls and instrument flying.”

Alex hopes his efforts prove the Air Force made the right decision in calling upon enlisted Airmen to fly RPAs.

“I want to prove that enlisted personnel can perform the job as a pilot,” he said. “Hopefully, I can open doors to other jobs for enlisted personnel as well.”

Alex has enjoyed flying and the process of becoming a pilot. As he reaches the final stage of the training, he appreciates how far he has come in his career.

“When I first joined the Air Force, I was a maintainer, and I would always watch the pilots take off, wishing I could fly,” he said. “Then, I became a sensor operator, and I thought that was the closest I’d get to flying. So, when I’m up there flying, I think, ‘who would have thought A1C Alex would be flying in pilot training.’”



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First operational F-35A squadron receives final aircraft

Donovan K. Potter
388th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah — The 34th Fighter Squadron and 34th Aircraft Maintenance Unit at Hill Air Force Base accepted its final two combat-coded F-35A Lightning IIs June 21, 2017.

The addition of the 24th and final aircraft means the units have their full component of operational jets.

“Gaining the 24th F-35A here is another outstanding milestone for the 388th and 419th wings,” said Col. Jason Rueschhoff, the 388th Operations Group commander. “This allows both operations and maintenance to fine-tune our tactics, techniques and procedures with a focus on maximizing our combat lethality.”

This is a pivotal point for combat-capability development said Col. Michael Miles, the 388th Maintenance Group commander.

“Having the full number of aircraft in one FS/AMU means we’ll soon receive our full personnel and equipment,” Miles said. “This allows us to meet all potential combat taskings.”

The 388th Fighter Wing received its first F-35A in November 2015. Since that time, the unit has developed the best tactics, techniques and procedures, shaping how the F-35A operates in the Air Force, said Capt. Christina Merritt, the 34th AMU officer in charge.

Merritt said receiving the 24th aircraft pushes the threshold and helps Airmen further test the limits of the F-35A.

The 4th FS and 4th AMU are expected to receive the next F-35A



U.S. Air Force photo by Donovan K Potter

Airman 1st Class Matthew Clark, a 34th Aircraft Maintenance Unit Airman, marshals the newest F-35A Lightning II aircraft June 21, 2017, at Hill Air Force Base, Utah. This aircraft signifies the completion of the first full F-35A squadron at an operational unit.

this summer. A total of 78 jets will be delivered to two additional F-35A squadrons in the 388th FW through 2019.

Produce Pilots, Advance Airmen, Feed the Fight

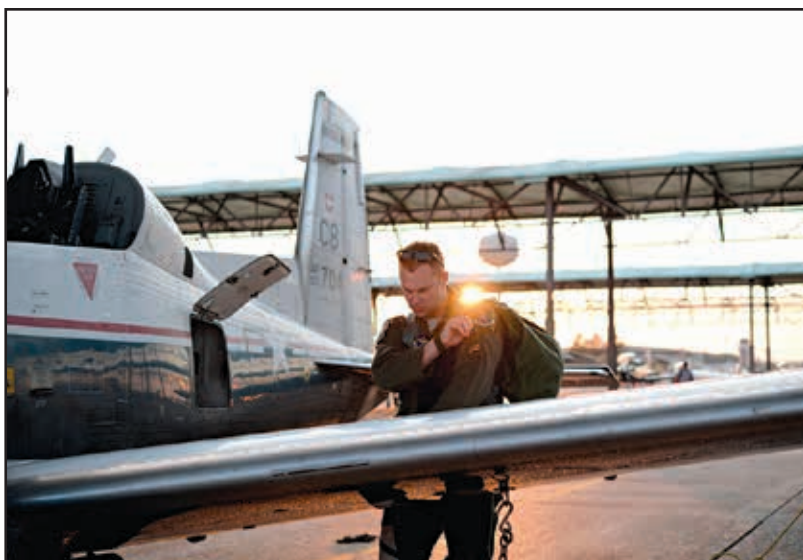
Nine recognized during promotion ceremony



U.S. Air Force photo by Melissa Doublin

Nine enlisted Airmen were congratulated at the June Enlisted Promotions Ceremony June 30, 2017, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. The last duty day of each month is reserved for the Enlisted Promotion Ceremony to recognize and praise the Airmen who have earned their new stripe.

SUPT spotlight



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Keith Holcomb

Capt. Roland Neal, 37th Flying Training Squadron Instructor Pilot, grabs his gear after a flight June 28, 2017, on Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. The instructor pilots ride with student pilots unless the student is taking a solo flight.

Fire protection, getting involved with Columbus

Airman 1st Class Keith Holcomb
14th Flying Training Wing

The Columbus Air Force Base 14th Civil Engineer Squadron Fire Protection Airmen are always involved with the base and community functions to educate everyone about safety and emergency procedures.

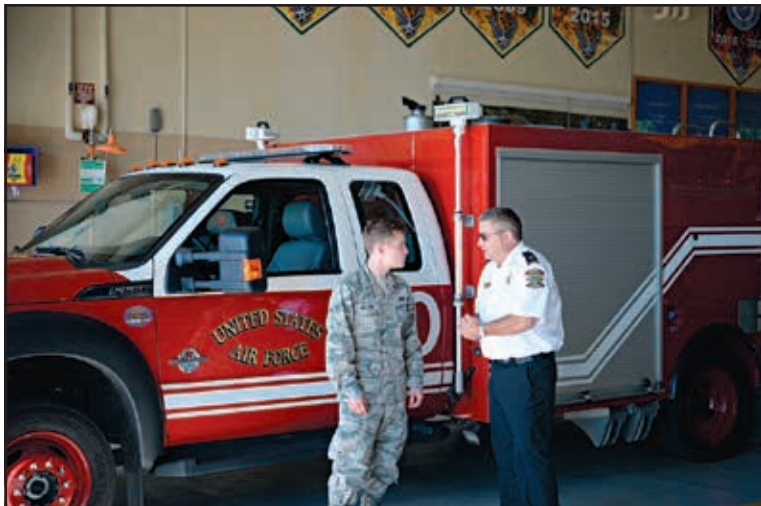
Much of what the Fire Protection Airmen do is crucial to the pilot-based emergencies that may occur at any time, but beyond the safety of the pilots on base they are always trying to help the community.

“We try to have someone at every community event planning committee meeting,” said Peter Delillo, 14th CES Fire Prevention Inspector. “We obviously cannot support every event but we do our best to show up to as much as we can to get involved with the community.”

For the event at Fireworks on the Water, July 1, 2017, the Fire Protection brought a static display of one of their trucks as well as had a tent selling items to people attending the event.

“As Fire Protection we usually are only seen when bad things are happening, to save the day you know,” Delillo said. “But we like to show the people the good sides to emergency responders showing up, to show who we are and hopefully educate them in the process.”

The Airmen in the department enjoy the opportunities to go to community events for many reasons, the largest reason is being able to meet those they are honored to protect and to put a name and face to their job.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Keith Holcomb

Airman Justin Weeter, 14th Civil Engineer Squadron firefighter, and Peter Delillo, 14th CES Fire Prevention Inspector, talk inside the Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi, Fire Station June 29, 2017. The Fire Protectors have many different ways to bring information to the Airmen and families on base through community events and different courses mandatory to newly arriving base members.

“The opportunities for networking and communicating with the people we work for and around is really cool,” said Airman 1st Class Jared Montgomery, 14th CES driver operator. “And the gratitude we receive really is amazing. It’s always something new and really keeps the job fun and interesting.”

At community events off-base, a lot of the emergency management and response is out of Columbus AFB jurisdiction, but they are always prepared.

At Fireworks on the Water the static display was ready for use and had two uniformed Fire Protection Airmen ready to answer questions and engage with bystanders, but were also prepared to help in emergency situations. A lot of preparation is involved for events such as Fireworks on

the Water and an air show, but it is necessary to help keep lives safe and can be a great resource to stopping accidents from occurring, Delillo said.

The Fire Protection Airmen are important for the safety at base events, especially the air show scheduled for April 21-22, 2018.

They will station three active and ready trucks along the flightline and will have a static display as well.

“We are here for the day-to-day of the pilots in the air, the Airmen on base, and their families. We will always be trying to educate to prevent any dangerous situation as well,” Delillo said. “Anytime anyone sees us I want people to ask questions and learn about what we do, it is always great to help out our community.”

Visit us online! www.columbus.af.mil

EFMP visits MSU Extension Equestrian Camp

Airman 1st Class Beaux Hebert
14th Flying Training Wing
Public Affairs

The bond between humans and horses can be traced back thousands of years. Horses have helped carry the load of building America, transported Americans from place to place and even served in wars. It's no wonder why many people use them as a way to heal.

The 14th Force Support Squadron and the Mississippi State University Extension's Equine Assisted Therapy Program helped members of the Exceptional Family Member Program connect with horses June 30, 2017, at the Elizabeth A Howard 4-H arena in West Point, Mississippi.

"Our program is designed to help rehabilitate people who have become or are disabled," said Lori Irvin, Extension Associate II. "It's amazing to watch people bond with the horses and in the process heal from it."

Before the day's events began, Cassi Brunson, Extension Associate, gave the attendees a quick safety brief of what not to do around

a horse.

"Safety is a big thing when it comes to children and horses," Brunson said. "These horses are very tame but they are still capable of doing harm."

After the briefing, the attendees were split into two stations.

The first station was grooming. The children were taught how to brush and clean the horses before they rode them.

The second station was actually riding the horse. Children rode in a closed arena, with assistance from program volunteers standing next to them to catch them if they fell.

The looks on the faces of the children when they were put on top of the horses gave a sense they were overwhelmed yet calm and relaxed.

"The kids, parents and even the program managers had a great time," said Jamey Coleman, 14th FSS Community Readiness Specialist. "It was very therapeutic for the families and everyone left with big smiles."

It's this feeling that many say makes horses one of human's best animal friends.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Beaux Hebert
Avery, son of Lt. Col. Erin Knightner, 14th Medical Group Chief Nurse, pets a miniature pony June 30, 2017, at the Elizabeth A. Howard 4-H Arena in West Point, Mississippi. The horses at the arena are very calm and are gentle enough for small children to pet, brush and ride them.

BLAZE 5/6 congratulates raffle winner

Courtesy photo
Capt. Adrian Marrero, 14th Medical Operations Squadron Physical Therapist, receives a check from Staff Sgt. Maria Schinella, 14th MDOS Dental Technician, June 23, 2017, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. The BLAZE 5/6 drew Marrero's name for a 50/50 raffle where he won \$493. Schinella was the 5/6 member who sold Marrero the winning ticket.

The Airman's Creed

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I will never falter,
And I will not fail.

SILVER WINGS
July 7, 2017

13

AF News

Enlisted RPA pilots soar to new heights

Airman 1st Class Tristan D. Viglianco
9th Reconnaissance Wing
Public Affairs

BEALE AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — The Air Force's first three Enlisted Pilot Initial Class graduates are slated to complete their final phase of training requirements in July at Beale Air Force Base, California.

The graduates are now assigned to the 12th Reconnaissance Squadron where they will receive their basic qualification training, which is designed to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to operate in the RQ-4 Global Hawk field.

"The training here is the culmination (of their year-long EPIC program). They have learned all of the basic skills they need to be pilots. Now we will be teaching them how to be Global Hawk pilots," said Major Mason, the 1st Reconnaissance Squadron director of operations. "We have two different phases: basic qualification training and mission qualification training. BQT occurs in the simulator. Once they complete that, they move on to MQT, where they will fly a jet in operation-

al scenarios to complete their training."

The graduates are also the first Airmen to become enlisted pilots since former President John F. Kennedy took office in 1961. Due to a shortage of pilots and an increased demand for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, the Air Force has turned to its enlisted Airmen to fly the service's remotely piloted aircraft.

Master Sgt. Alex, a 12th Reconnaissance Squadron student pilot, initially saw this as an opportunity he couldn't pass up and jumped at the chance to fly the RQ-4, which he had previously been a sensor operator on. He applied to the program and was eventually selected as a member of the first class in the EPIC program.

"Someone (gave) me the opportunity and I don't turn down great opportunities," Alex said. "It was a challenge, which I wanted to accept, because I wanted to be a part of something bigger, and have a bigger impact."

Alex left his home station at Beale and went to several installations around the country to receive his training and become flight

See RPA, Page 14



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Tristan D. Viglianco
Master Sgt. Alex, a 12th Reconnaissance Squadron RQ-4 Global Hawk student pilot, stands in front of an RQ-4, June 21, 2017, at Beale Air Force Base, California. Alex recently became one of the service's first Airmen to graduate from the Enlisted Pilot Initial Class. In July, Alex will complete the Basic Qualification Training course alongside two other EPIC graduates at Beale AFB. Alex was previously stationed at Beale as a sensor operator before graduating from the EPIC program to become a RQ-4 pilot.

Thunderbirds announce 2018 officer selections

Public Affairs
U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. — Gen. Mike Holmes, the commander of Air Combat Command, has officially selected the officers who will be joining the United States Air Force Thunderbirds for the 2018 demonstration season.

Capt. William Graeff, 88th Fighter Training Squadron, Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, has been selected as Thunderbird No. 2, the team's left wing pilot. He will fly as close as three feet from the No. 1 jet during flight formations, demonstrating the teamwork and precision of America's Air Force. Graeff will replace Maj. Ryan Bodenheimer.

Capt. Stephen Del Bagno, 58th Fighter Squadron, Eglin AFB, Florida, has been selected as Thunderbird No. 4, the team's slot pilot. Like Graeff, Del Bagno will also fly in close formation with the other demonstration pilots, just aft of the No. 1 aircraft and between the two wingmen. Del Bagno will be the first F-35 pilot to serve on the team and will replace Maj. Nick Krajicek.

Capt. Matthew Kimmel, 79th Fighter Squadron, Shaw AFB, South Carolina, has been chosen as Thunderbird No. 6, the team's opposing solo pilot. The solo pilots perform maneuvers that showcase the maximum capabilities of the F-16 aircraft. Maj. Whit Collins, the current opposing solo pilot, will transition to the lead solo position in 2018, replacing Maj. Alex Turner.

Maj. Eric Gorney, 613th Air Operations Center, Hickam



U.S. Air Force photo
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.

AFB, Hawaii, will serve as Thunderbird No. 7, the team's operations officer. His duties will include air space coordination, ground communication with the pilots in the air and safety observation. Gorney will replace Lt. Col. Kevin Walsh.

Capt. Lauren Venturini, 704th Munitions Support Squadron, Ghedi Air Base, Italy, has been selected as Thunderbird No. 10, the team's executive officer. Her responsibilities will

include leading an executive support staff responsible for Thunderbirds budget, training and force support actions for the commander. Venturini will replace Capt. Angelina Urbina.

Capt. Cassandra Mangosing, Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, Kirtland AFB, New Mexico, will serve as Thunderbird No. 11, the squadron's maintenance officer. She will be responsible for the operational capability of 11 F-16 fighter jets and the management of more than 90 Airmen in various aircraft maintenance specialties. Mangosing will replace Maj. Warren Smith.

Maj. Raymond Geoffroy, Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, Hickam AFB, Hawaii, has been chosen as Thunderbird No. 12, the squadron's public affairs officer. He will assume the team's extensive media relations, community relations and public relations programs. Geoffroy will replace Capt. Sara Harper.

"The entire field of officer applicants this year was phenomenal," Lt. Col. Jason Heard said. "The seven officers selected for the Team will no doubt bring the level of pride, precision and professionalism to uphold the tradition of excellence of our Team."

The 12 officer positions on the team are two-year tours of duty. By design, the position openings are staggered, allowing the squadron to maintain continuity of experience and leadership. In 2018, Thunderbird Nos. 1, 3, 6, 8, and 9 will be replaced.

Columbus Air Force Base Information and Events

Join our Facebook page at Columbus AFB Living, Twitter @columbusafbliving, 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 434-2337.

Color Run

The 5th Annual Columbus Air Force Base 5K Color Run will now take place at 8:30 a.m. July 8. Only \$10 per person, you can still register. Call 434-2504 for more information.

Independence Run

There will be an Independence Run at 7 a.m. July 14 starting at the fitness center.

Unlimited Bowling, Free Movie

Watch Moana for free at 6 p.m. while you bowl unlimited July 14. Cost for bowling is \$10 for adults, \$8 for kids along with shoes, a slice of pizza and drink. For more information call 434-3426.

Breakfast at the Club

The Columbus Club will host a free breakfast for club members from 6:30 – 9 a.m. July 18. Breakfast includes classic breakfast choices and a waffle station.

Summer Fest Bowling

Every Friday in July, enjoy 15 percent off bowling from 5:30 p.m. to close. Call 434-3426 for more information.

Win Moolah at the Club

The Columbus Club hosts Win Big Moolah from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. Fridays, except for graduation and assignment nights. Free and for club members only. All club members are entered to win the cash pot. If there is no winner, \$25 is added to the pot for the following Friday's drawing. Must be 18 or older. For more information call 434-2489.

Library Summer Reading Program

The Library Summer Reading Program has begun. Please see the Library for the schedule of activities.

BLAZE Commons Coffee House on 5th

The Blaze Commons Coffee House on 5th is open from 6 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday – Friday and serves coffee items, smoothies, breakfast and lunch items. Drive-thru service available as well as call ahead. Call 434-CAFÉ (2233). The commons also houses the Library, an ITT and ODR kiosk, a computer lab, and FedEx drop-off point.

Library Hours

The library is open from 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays; from 7:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. Thursdays; and from 8 a.m. – noon Saturdays. The library is closed Sundays and holidays.

Base Pool Hours

Independence Pool is open from noon – 7 p.m. daily. The daily rate is \$3 for non Club members and \$2 for members. Summer passes are available based on family size. Call 434-2505 for more information.

Water Aerobics Instructors Needed

Independence Pool is looking for Water Aerobics Instructors for the 2017 pool season. Lifeguards are also needed. Call 434-2505 for more information.



Fitness/Time Out Child Care

The Child Development Center offers child care from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. The cost is only \$4 per hour. Sign up one week in advance at the CDC or call 434-2479 for more information.

The Overrun Open Friday Nights

The Overrun is open from 4:30 p.m. - midnight Fridays. Bar menu includes chicken wing basket, chicken tender basket, club wrap, or buffalo chicken wrap. For more information, call 434-2419.

Story Time and Circle Time

The Base Library offers Story Time at 11 a.m. every Friday for all ages. Circle Time is offered each Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. for ages up to 4 years old. For more information, call 434-2934.

Laser Bowling Special

The Bowling Center offers Laser Bowling for only \$12 per person from 5 – 8 p.m. every Friday and Saturday night. You also may purchase individual games for \$3 per game with purchase of \$1.50 shoe rental. For more information, call 434-3426.

Free Wood at Whispering Pines

Wood is available at Whispering Pines from 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Sundays. Contact Whispering Pines Monday-Friday to arrange pick-up. Call 434-7932 for more information.

Wood Shop

The wood shop is now open from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

Lawn Mower and Bicycle Repair

Lawn mower repair is now available at Outdoor Recreation. The cost is only \$40 per hour plus parts; pickup and delivery available. Self-help bicycle repair is also available. For more information, call 434-2507.

Hobby and Craft Instructors Needed

Do you have a hobby or craft project you can share with others? For more information, call 434-7836.

Referees Needed

Referees needed for various sports at the Fitness Center. For more information or to sign up, call 434-2772.

Skeet & Trap

Skeet and trap is available at Outdoor Recreation. Call 434-2507 for more information.

Play Paintball

Book your next paintball event at Outdoor Recreation. The cost is \$15 per person for a party of 10 or more; \$20 per person for party of 9 or less. You must purchase paint at Outdoor Recreation for \$45 per case of 2,000. For more information, call 434-2505.

Need Money for College?

Enter to win scholarship money from Air Force Clubs. Visit MyAirForceLife.com/clubs for more information.

Take & Bake Pizzas at the Bowling Center

Grab-and-go ready pizzas for you to take home and bake yourself are available at the bowling center. Save \$2 per pizza. Large and medium pizzas only.

Hobby and Craft Instructors Needed

Do you have a hobby or craft project you can share with others? For more information, contact 434-7836.

Interested in Sponsoring with Columbus AFB?

Want your business to reach the 18,000 active-duty military, family members, civilian employees and retirees living and working at Columbus AFB? If you are interested in event sponsorship or donations, please contact our sponsorship coordinator at 434-2337.

Free Fitness Classes

Free classes are available at the fitness center. Classes range from P90X, Hot Fusion, Jiu Jitsu and Floor Core & More. For more information on class schedules, call the Fitness Center at 434-2772.

RV Storage Lot

Don't clutter your home space, park with us. Outdoor Recreation offers a great place to store your RV year around. You will have 24-hour access and can pay monthly or yearly. For more information, call 434-2505.

Instructional Classes at Youth Center

Youth Programs is offering piano lessons, guitar lessons, tumbling classes, dance classes, and martial arts instruction. Times and ages vary for all classes. Call 434-2504 or stop by the Youth Center for more information.

Fitness on Request

CAFB Fitness and Sports offers a truly comprehensive group fitness platform that is available all day and completely customizable to meet your needs with over 30 different classes on the Fitness on Request system. For more information, call 434-2772.

Space A Lodging

The Magnolia Inn usually has openings for Space A family and single units. Call the lodging desk at 434-2548.

Ride in Style

If you don't want to leave your car at the airport over a vacation, we can help you out. Outdoor Recreation offers a shuttle service to the airport of your choice. Call 434-2505 for more information.

Don't be a litter bug.
Keep America beautiful.

Local recyclers talk trash

Mike Jago

14th Civil Engineer Squadron
Environmental Chief

One of the products of the Air Force Community Partnership Program was a recent meeting with the city of Columbus chief of operations officer, Dave Armstrong.

Our topic of discussion was the perception there is no recycling in Columbus and how that in turn affects the base recycling efforts. One hot line of discussion was correcting our perception of what the city is doing and how they do it.

A little back story: the city tried curbside pick-up of recyclables with poor results. It failed to meet cost controls or to generate enough paper and metal to make it affordable. City government is open to more discussion, but there has to be more public education to raise awareness of the difficulties involved.

In short, it falls on the problems of cost of manpower and transportation. As a compromise, the city contracts a local company, Go Box, to collect, sort, bail and market recyclables.

The good news is there are currently seven locations in Lowndes County, Mississippi, to drop off cardboard, paper, wood, metal and plastic. They even take glass. They are:

- Gateway Shopping Center parking lot,

221 Alabama Street, (East) Columbus

- US Electrical Sales parking lot, 1600 Gardner Road, (East) Columbus

- New Hope High School parking lot,

3419 New Hope Road, Columbus

- Caledonia Fire Department, 13036 Hwy 12 E, Caledonia

- Anytime Fitness, 3918 Hwy 45 N, Columbus

- Joe Cook Elementary, 2217 7th St N, Columbus

- Hitching Lot Farmers Market, corner of 2nd Ave & 2nd St N, Columbus

Tell your neighbors and utilize the system.

The recycling industry needs enough bulk of materials to make large loads of materials. Buyers want tractor trailer loads of each item, sorted and bailed. Highly compressible plastic bottles takes thousands of customers to make a truck load.

It is in the interest of Columbus Air Force Base to support a recycling mind set. The base achieved a 54 percent trash diversion rate, in large part by getting customer cooperation. Department of Defense wide the rate is slumping to 43 percent, so we actually are a rock star in the recycling world. Help us keep it going.

For further information, call 662-328-5642.

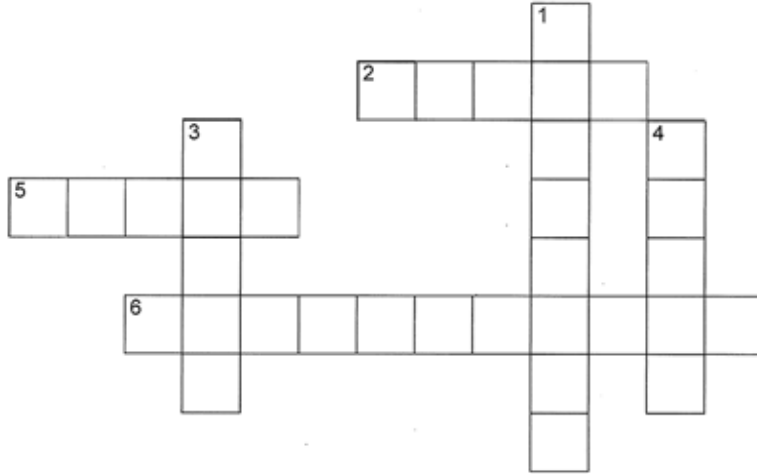
Recycling crossword puzzle

Across

2. Local recyclable marketer
5. Columbus failed to generate enough ____ to be affordable
6. Cardboard, paper, plastic, glass, wood, and metal

Down

1. A "rock star" in the recycling world
3. Columbus failed to generate enough ____ to be affordable
4. Number of local recycling locations



(See answers in next week's edition of Silver Wings)

Astronaut candidate has ties to Lowndes County

Alex Holloway

Courtesy of The Commercial Dispatch

Cat Hines gets to feel pretty cool these days. That's because her father, Bob, is one of 12 people — from an initial field of more than 18,300 — to be named astronaut candidates for NASA's space program.

"It's kind of cool," she said. "All my friends are asking about it, and if he's gonna go to Mars. It's pretty cool — I feel empowered."

It's taken some time for the reality of her dad's selection to set in for Cat. She was born in Columbus to Bob and his wife, Kelli, while Bob was stationed at Columbus Air Force Base. In the years since, the family has moved around several times — from England to California and a little bit of everywhere in between — to follow Bob's deployments with the U.S. Air Force.

Being part of a military family has made some unusual things usual for Cat. She said the magnitude of her father's selection didn't really hit her until Vice President Mike Pence was speaking at a June 7 candidate announcement ceremony at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas.

"When he got it, it didn't feel real," she said. "I was like, 'Oh, that's actually happening.' I didn't even realize it until the vice president was up there making the speech."

Bob, 42, said he's still getting over the shock of being picked as an astronaut candidate himself.

"I think even now, it's still disbelief," he said. "There's 18,000 applicants and the unique thing about the process is you get to know the other applicants. We live with the other applicants the entire time we're here for the interview process."

"You recognize how amazing these people are and the experiences and backgrounds they have," Hines added. "It's very humbling to be selected. There's not a person I can think of among that group of other people that wouldn't make a great astronaut."

Bob, a Lt. Col in the Air Force with extensive flying experience, is from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He's currently a research pilot for the Johnson Space Center and has 18 years of service for the Air Force and Air Force Reserves.

Local ties

Bob started pilot training in Dec. 1999 at Columbus Air Force Base. After finishing his training, he was named a First Assignment Instructor Pilot, and stayed at the base until Feb. 2004.

He met Kelli, who hails from Caledonia, while living in Columbus. They have three children, including Cat, 10-year-old Sarah, and 2-year old Julia.

Kelli was attending Mississippi University for Women at the time, and said she worked part-time at the base.

Last week's announcement was surprising and exciting, she said. She added that it was a fitting step on a path they've been on for years. She knew he wanted to be a test pilot when they met, and she said he told her he hoped to one day be an astronaut.

"I didn't take him seriously because I thought 'Well, a lot of people want to be astronauts,'" she said. "Over the years,



Courtesy photo

Bob Hines stands in front of a jet while wearing a NASA flight suit. Hines was selected as an astronaut candidate from a field of over 18,000.

our paths kept lining up for him to do this. He did take a few detours — got out of the Air Force, took a job with the (Federal Aviation Administration). He took a job at NASA because it was a great opportunity. He's taken a few choices that have taken us off the straight path, but our path kept lining up for it.

Kelli said Bob's selection is a point of pride for the whole family. His parents live in Pennsylvania, and her parents still live in Caledonia.

"It has been very inspiring sharing life with a husband who does a really terrific job balancing life and his career," she said. "He's a very involved and awesome dad to our girls."

What's next?

Bob and the other 11 candidates will begin a two-year training program in August. The training will include preparation for space walks, learning the systems on the International Space Station, survival training, and even medical and dental training. Most of the training will happen in Houston, but the candidates will travel as well. He said they will visit partner agencies, including the Euro Space Agency in Germany, the Japanese Space Agency and Roscosmos in Russia.

Once the training is complete, Bob will receive technical duty assignments in NASA's astronaut office while awaiting flight assignment.

Hines said his class has a special opportunity to fly a number of vehicles, as the successors to the space shuttle — which stopped flying in 2011 — are expected to be available for use in the next few years.

"We actually have the opportunity to fly on any or all of four vehicles, the space station being one of them," Hines said. "To get there, we can use the Soyuz, which we're currently doing with the Russians. Boeing and SpaceX will each have their vehicles, and Orion (a capsule to be mounted on a rocket) is going to start with deep space exploration. So all the development and testing that goes on with Orion and eventually getting to Mars — that's on the table as well. It's pretty unique timing for our class."

"Starting in the next year or so, we'll be launching from U.S. soil again, with SpaceX and Boeing and Orion," he added.

Full circle

For Bob, the selection as an astronaut candidate is the culmination of a lifelong love for aviation.

"There are pictures of me at two years old with my face pressed up against the window watching airplanes taxiing around," he said.

"My dad was in the Army so we moved around a lot," he added. "Shortly after we moved back to the United States, I got to watch on TV the launch of STS-1, which was the first space shuttle launch. That certainly amazed me, and had that sense of awe and wonder, and that inspired me to really want to pursue aviation."

Now, with his selection, it will be Bob's daughters who have the chance to watch him go up to space.

For Cat, that's pretty cool.

"I'm really excited to see it," she said.



Courtesy photo

Caledonia-native Kelli Hines stands with her husband Bob and their children. Bob was last week selected to be a NASA astronaut candidate. The Hines' children are, from left, Sarah, Julia and Cat.

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.)

Smooth Move

The Smooth Move class takes place 10 - 11:30 a.m. July 13. The class provides re-locating members/families with valuable information about moving. You learn what to expect from TMO, Housing, Military Pay, Legal, Billing, Tri-Care, Medical Records, and A&FRC. Please call 434-2790 to register.

Transition Assistance Program GPS Workshop

This workshop is held 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. July 17 - 21. The Transition Assistance Program Workshop has seminars on: Transition, Military Occupational Code Crosswalk, Financial Planning, Health Benefits, Mississippi Dept. of Employment Security, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Disabled TAP, Dept. of Labor TAP portion. Preseparation counseling is required before attending. Recommend attendance is 8 - 12 months prior to separation/retirement. Spouses are encouraged to attend with their sponsor. For more information or to register call 434-2839.

Wing Newcomers Orientation

This brief is 8 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. July 18 and is mandatory for newly arrived active-duty and civilian personnel. Spouses are encouraged to attend. The orientation is held at the Columbus Club. For more information or to register call 434-2790.

Military Life Cycle

The Military Life Cycle workshop from 1 - 2 p.m. July 18 allows the VA contractors to explain to service members, whether first term, separating, retiring or a veteran, what services the VA offers and what they are able to provide throughout the member's military career and how to apply for benefits. For more information or to register call 434-2790.

VA Home Loan Seminar

The Department of Veterans Affairs Home Loan Guaranty Division presents a seminar from 1 - 3 p.m. July 20. It includes information for active-duty and veterans on using their VA entitlements to purchase their homes. It will consist of a presentation and questions and answers. For more information or to register call 434-2790.

Career Technical Training

This transition event is held 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. July 24 - 25 and explores technical careers for post military personnel using VA Educational benefits. It is conducted by CALIBRE, private company contracted by DVA. Prior registration is required, company requires 10 days notification and must have minimum of eight partici-

Commissary benefit celebrates 150 years



U.S. Air Force photo by Elizabeth Owens

Tanesha Hill, Columbus Air Force Base Commissary Interim Secretary, and Greg Runyon, Columbus AFB Commissary Assistant Store Director, cut a cake at the Columbus AFB Commissary June 30, 2017, on Columbus AFB, Mississippi. The event was in recognition of 150 years of commissary benefits to the Armed Forces.

pates. For more information or to register call 434-2790.

Federal USAJobs Workshop

This workshop from 9 - 10:30 a.m. July 26 is on writing resumes, completing applications, and job searching using USAJobs. For more information or to register call 434-2790.

Bundles of Joy

The Bundles of Joy workshop is 1 - 3:30 p.m. July 26 for active-duty families assigned to Columbus AFB who are expecting or have a child up to four months of age. It is an Air Force Aid Society program with presentations about topics such as Tricare, Child Care, Breastfeeding, Car Seat Safety, Labor and Delivery. For more information or to register, call 434-2790.

Hearts Apart

The Hearts Apart Social program from 5 - 7 p.m. July 27 is a monthly event to provide community bonding, fun and appreciation for the families of active duty personnel who are deployed, remote, or on an extended TDY. Food and activities are provided. For more information or to register call 434-2790.

Pre-separation Counseling

This counseling is a mandatory briefing for personnel separating or retiring, to be completed at least 90 days prior to separation. It may be completed up to 12 months prior to separation or retirement. The counseling is held daily at 8:30 a.m. It takes approximately 60 minutes. Please contact A&FRC,

434-2839/434-2790 for more information.

Pre, Post Deployment Tour Brief

These briefings are mandatory briefings for active-duty personnel who are either deploying or returning from deployment or a remote tour. The briefings are held daily at the A&FRC. Pre-deployment is at 9:30 a.m., and post-deployment is at 1:30 p.m. Please contact A&FRC, 434-2839/434-2790 for more information.

Survivor-Benefit Plan

Are you nearing military retirement? The one decision you will need to make before you retire involves participation in the Survivor Benefit Plan. As with all good decision-making, you need to know the facts before you can make a sound decision, and be wary of anyone telling you they can offer you a better deal. Always get the true facts about the SBP before making up your mind. Additional details are available by calling (662) 434-2720.

Military and Family Life Consultant Program

The MFLC counselors provide non-medical counseling to help Airmen (both single and married), their spouses and other family members to cope with stressful situations created by deployments, reintegration, and life challenges such as martial issues, parenting, career stress and anger. All consultants are licensed mental health providers. Counselors can meet either on or off base. There is no charge for services and appointments can usually be made within one to two days. To contact the MFLC, call 662-364-0504.

Volunteer Opportunities

If you are interested in volunteering please contact the Airman & Family Readiness Center. We have volunteer opportunities located throughout the base for a one-time event, special events, or on a continual basis. Volunteers are needed on base at the Youth Center, Child Development Center, Library, Golf Course, Medical Clinic, Chapel, Airman Attic, Thrift Store, the Retiree Activities office and many others. For more information please call A&FRC at 434-2790.

Air Force Recovery Coordination Program

The Recovery Coordination Program streamlines and improves the way care and support are delivered to wounded, ill, and injured Airmen and their families. The RCP provides the support of a Recovery Care Coordinator who guides the Airman and family along their road to recovery. Those eligible include wounded, ill and injured Airmen who: (1) have a serious illness or injury (2) are unlikely to return to duty within a specified amount of time (3) may be medically separated from the military. Additional details are available by contacting the Columbus AFB RCC at DSN: 493-3399, Office: 334-953-3399 or tim.griggs.1.ctr@us.af.mil.

Chapel Schedule

Whether you are new to Columbus Air Force Base or have been around for a while, our parish communities welcome you to join us as we worship, fellowship, and encourage one another. For more information, please call 434-2500.

Catholic Community

Sundays:

3:45 p.m. - Religious Education, grades K-9 (Chapel Annex)
4 p.m. - Choir Practice (Chapel Sanctuary)
4 p.m. - Confession (or by appointment)
5 p.m. - Mass w/Children's Church
Fellowship Dinner after Mass on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month

Tuesdays:

11:30 a.m. - Daily Mass

Wednesdays:

11:30-12:30 p.m. - Adoration

Protestant Community

Sundays:

9 a.m. - Adult Sunday School (Chapel Library)
10:45 a.m. - Traditional Worship Service

Tuesdays:

5 p.m. - Student Pilot Bible Study (Chapel Library)

Wednesdays:

4 p.m. - Music Rehearsal

Ecumenical services

Wednesdays:

6 p.m. - AWANA, a religious education program for children ages three years old to 6th grade
6 p.m. - Adult Bible study on the Gospel of John
6 p.m. - Youth Group

You're driving the boat

Lt. Col. Marc Deshaies
14th Student Squadron Commander

Every two months, my wife Lauren and I meet with spouses and families about to embark on a 13-month long journey through the excitement and trials of Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training —and the message can also apply to those in the Radar Approach Control/Air Traffic Control Tower.

The message has remained relatively unchanged — there will be highs and lows, moments of closeness and separation, and in the end, you will depend on your greater Air Force family for support at this and every future assignment.

In SUPT, nearly every student will hook, bust or fail something — some will finally experience failure. Regardless of your past performance in academics and life — SUPT is just different. Some of the best pilots produced barely survived academics — while some of the most experienced pilots to enter SUPT found themselves lucky to have survived. The experience is humbling—and one of the hardest obstacles to face for many is that being average is ok.

Whether at ground speed zero during stand-up, at virtual speed in the simulator, or while flying in the actual jet, each student responds differently because it does not always come naturally. Being able to make a mistake — and bounce back — is the biggest difference between those who succeed and those who are eliminated. So own the mistake — in training and in your relationship — learn from it, and don't do it again.

Often times, performance in the jet can find itself creeping into our social lives. Busting an Emergency Procedure Quiz or academic test can translate into a quiet dinner, locked door at home, or staying elsewhere to avoid distractions. Temporarily, it's not a terrible thing. However, when nearly every night involves seclusion and isolation from your spouse and family, it drives a wedge into the home that if left unchecked, can result in earning a single Basic Allowance for Housing rate.

The best illustration I can think of is water skiing — as a student in SUPT or RAPCON/ATCT, you are driving the boat. If you go full throttle and never look back — you will not know when you lost your family until it's too late. Taking those moments to look ahead by isolating yourself is fine — not seeing when your family is about to let go is something entirely different. Take time with your family — they feel even more helpless because they often don't even know what's going on.

So stay connected! Build strong relationships with your neighbors, other families, and get connected. I have heard from several graduates that SUPT prepared them for life in the greater Air Force — i.e. deployments and extended TDYs. Some have relayed that physical separation on deployments was easier than emotional separation during SUPT.

With this said, the journey through SUPT will be a challenge for every marriage — so, accept help from strangers going through the same struggles, find a family mentor, and start building lifelong friends you can rely on when your family gets separated. Your family should be front and center — but you need to be surrounded by good people to help when the job calls. So, enjoy the time you have together right now, under the same roof — find the balance in your studies because at the end of the 13 months, you have both earned the set of U.S. Air Force Wings.

From the time you arrive at Columbus Air Force Base, you have to both accept the reality that quality time together will be limited. At times, it will feel like you both are enrolled in separate formal training programs. However, if you are the one driving the boat — you owe it to your spouse to check-six every so often, or you might just find yourself holding onto both pieces following the Breaking of the Wings Ceremony.

If pilot training is getting the better of your marriage — try to seek advice from other couples who have found the balance, contact Family Advocacy at (662) 434-2197 or consider the Military and Family Life Counseling Program at (662) 434-2790.



Share the road.
Watch for
motorcyclists.

MyMC2 app

Welcome to the My Military Communities information page. MyMC2 is the mobile application that centralizes all of your installation's community events, organizations and services right in your pocket.



How do I get MyMC2 for my phone?
You can access this app by navigating to the native app store or market on your device and search for "MyMC2", or you can scan this QR code and it will take you directly to the download page in your phone.



iPhone
QR code

Android
QR code

If you have any questions or need support please visit www.facebook.com/mymc2support.

BLAZE Hangar Tails: E-3 Sentry (AWACS)

Mission
The E-3 Sentry is an airborne warning and control system, or AWACS, aircraft with an integrated command and control battle management, or C2BM, surveillance, target detection, and tracking platform. The aircraft provides an accurate, real-time picture of the battlespace to the Joint Air Operations Center. AWACS provides situational awareness of friendly, neutral and hostile activity, command and control of an area of responsibility, battle management of theater forces, all-altitude and all-weather surveillance of the battle space, and early warning of enemy actions during joint, allied, and coalition operations.

Features
As an air defense system, E-3s can detect, identify and track airborne enemy forces far from the boundaries of the United States or NATO countries. It can direct fighter-interceptor aircraft to these enemy targets. Experience has proven that the E-3 Sentry can respond quickly and effectively to a crisis and support worldwide military deployment operations. AWACS may be employed alone or horizontally integrated in combination with other C2BM and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance elements of the Theater Air Control System. It supports decentralized execution of the air tasking order/air combat order. The system provides the ability to find, fix, track and target airborne or maritime threats and to detect, locate and ID emitters. It has the ability to detect threats and control assets below and beyond the coverage of ground-based command and control or C2, and can exchange data with other C2 systems and shooters via datalinks.

With its mobility as an airborne warning and control sys-

tem, the Sentry has a greater chance of surviving in warfare than a fixed, ground-based radar system. Among other things, the Sentry's flight path can quickly be changed according to mission and survival requirements. The E-3 can fly a mission profile approximately 8 hours without refueling. Its range and on-station time can be increased through in-flight refueling and the use of an on-board crew rest area.

Background
There are 31 aircraft in the U.S. inventory. Air Combat Command has 27 E-3s at Tinker. Pacific Air Forces has four E-3 Sentries at Kadena AB, Japan and Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

As proven in operations Desert Storm, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and Odyssey Dawn/Unified Protector the E-3 Sentry is the world's premier C2BM aircraft. AWACS aircraft and crews were instrumental to the successful completion of operations Northern and Southern Watch, and are still engaged in operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom. They provide radar surveillance and control in addition to providing senior leadership with time-critical information on the actions of enemy forces. The E-3 has also deployed to support humanitarian relief operations in the U.S. following Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, coordinating rescue efforts between military and civilian authorities.

The data collection capability of the E-3 radar and computer subsystems allowed an entire air war to be recorded for the first time in the history of aerial warfare.

In March 1996, the Air Force activated the 513th Air Control Group, an AWACS Reserve Associate Program unit which performs duties on active-duty aircraft.

During the spring of 1999, the first AWACS aircraft went

through the Radar System Improvement Program. RSIP is a joint U.S./NATO development program that involved a major hardware and software intensive modification to the existing radar system. Installation of RSIP enhanced the operational capability of the E-3 radar electronic counter-measures and has improved the system's reliability, maintainability and availability.

General characteristics
Primary function: airborne battle management, command and control
Contractor: Boeing Aerospace Co.
Power plant: four Pratt and Whitney TF33-PW-100A turbofan engines
Thrust: 20,500 pounds each engine at sea level
Rotodome: 30 feet in diameter (9.1 meters), 6 feet thick (1.8 meters), mounted 11 feet (3.33 meters) above fuselage
Wingspan: 145 feet, 9 inches (44.4 meters)
Length: 152 feet, 11 inches (46.6 meters)
Height: 41 feet, 9 inches (13 meters)
Weight: 205,000 pounds (zero fuel) (92,986 kilograms)
Maximum Takeoff Weight: 325,000 pounds (147,418 kilograms)
Fuel Capacity: 21,000 gallons (79,494 liters)
Speed: optimum cruise 360 mph (Mach 0.48)
Range: more than 5,000 nautical miles (9,250 kilometers)
Ceiling: Above 29,000 feet (8,788 meters)
Crew: flight crew of four plus mission crew of 13-19 specialists (mission crew size varies according to mission)
Unit Cost: \$270 million (fiscal 98 constant dollars) Initial operating capability: April 1978
Inventory: active force, 32 (one test); Reserve, 0; Guard, 0



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Amanda Grabiec

An E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft from the 961st Airborne Air Control Squadron takes off from Kadena Air Base, Japan. The E-3 provides all-weather surveillance, command, control and communications needed by commanders of U.S., NATO and other allied air defense forces.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. John McDowell

An E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft from Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, flies a mission. The E-3 is a modified Boeing 707/320 commercial airframe with a rotating radar dome.

Fireworks on the Water blasts off after questionable weather



Volunteers plan for their roles during inclement weather before Fireworks on the Water begins July 1, 2017, at the Stennis Lock and Dam in Columbus, Mississippi. Numerous volunteers helped hold down various tents and other items through the harsh wind and rain.



Dr. Medhat Hamed, a new Columbus, Mississippi, resident, catches a football during Fireworks on the Water July 1, 2017, at the Stennis Lock and Dam in Columbus. Many people created their own entertainment because the scheduled live music was unable to take place in the rain.

Airman 1st Class Keith Holcomb
14th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs

Despite inconsistent weather, about 6,000 people attended Fireworks on the Water July 1 at the Stennis Lock and Dam.

Until 6 p.m., there was no guarantee the fireworks show would take place.

The overcast sun did eventually appear and with a light rain, the show went on.

Those in attendance were able to enjoy the bouncy obstacle courses, tossing footballs, talking with friends or vendors and dancing to music being played from the stage's pre-made playlist.

"I'm happy everyone had a good time even with the not-so-great weather," said Col. Douglas Gosney, 14th Flying Training Wing commander.

Danika Portz, pop and country music singer, and the rock-and-roll-influenced Johnny Coleman and the Swing Shift band, were scheduled to play live music, but because of the weather they could not set up the electronics necessary to play their live music.

Both artists said they were disappointed they were unable to perform for the Columbus, Mississippi, crowd.

"Any chance we get to play for the military is a complete honor," Portz said. "I'm so grateful Columbus invited us back. Everyone's been really, really sweet and even if it doesn't happen I hope we can make something happen in the future."

Fireworks then lit up the sky and were choreographed to



People purchase food from various vendors during Fireworks on the Water July 1, 2017, at the Stennis Lock and Dam in Columbus, Mississippi. Many vendors sold food to volunteers and families on location throughout the whole event.

multiple popular songs from the past decades.

The show lasted about 18 minutes and had many people cheering when the larger fireworks rang loud over the water.

After the fireworks display, volunteers and workers of the event cleared the parking lots, helping stuck cars out of the mud to make it home.



Family and friends gather as the sun sets during Fireworks on the Water July 1, 2017, at the Stennis Lock and Dam in Columbus, Mississippi. People stayed entertained by the bouncy obstacle courses, tossing footballs, talking with friends or vendors and dancing to music being played from the stage's pre-made playlist.



Families watch the fireworks display during Fireworks on the Water July 1, 2017, at the Stennis Lock and Dam in Columbus, Mississippi. Even through weather complications the fireworks show was still able to be put on display.



Fireworks light the sky during the 2017 Fireworks on the Water July 1, 2017, at the Stennis Lock and Dam in Columbus, Mississippi. The show lasted for 18 minutes and was choreographed to recorded music.

★ U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Keith Holcomb ★