



The Lowndes County American Cancer Society Relay For Life will take place on Saturday, August 4, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Columbus Riverwalk.

At 8:30 p.m. there will be a special luminaria ceremony. It is a special way to remember our friends and loved ones who have been lost to cancer and celebrate the lives of those who have won their battle or are still fighting.

You can support this effort by ordering a luminaria bag in memory or honor of your friends or loved ones. Simply fill out the order form below, enclose \$10 for each name and mail it to the address listed on the form. The night of Relay the track will be lined with these bags. We invite you to come to Relay and be a part of this special ceremony.



Forms must be mailed by July 31, 2018.

WESTMORELAND

Minimum Contribution: \$10.00 per Luminaria

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For more information contact Mevela Andrews at (662) 242-0459 or visit relayforlife.org/lowndesms

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"The 12 Steps have put me in touch with a power greater than myself and for that I am grateful."

Photo for illustration purposes only.

"I came to the Pines at a point when I was physically addicted to alcohol. I was in a suicidal state and chose treatment over the other option. I relapsed in treatment when I went on a weekend pass because I was triggered by my anger. Today, I use the 12 Steps as a way of dealing with my problems. I make a meeting every day, attend aftercare, and have two sponsors. Working with others is the best way for me to get outside of myself and find purpose. The 12 Steps have put me in touch with a power greater than myself and for that I am grateful."

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Vol. 42, Issue 21

June 1, 2018

Weather

<p>Friday</p> <p>Isolated Afternoon Thunderstorms</p> <p>High 95°F Low 73°F</p>	<p>Saturday</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p> <p>High 97°F Low 74°F</p>
<p>Sunday</p> <p>Partly Cloudy</p> <p>High 93°F Low 68°F</p>	<p>Monday</p> <p>Isolated Afternoon Thunderstorms</p> <p>High 92°F Low 65°F</p>

Forecast provided by the 14th OSS Weather Flight

News Briefs

SUPT Class 18-10 Graduation
Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 18-10 graduates at 10 a.m., June 8 at the Kaye Auditorium.

Autocross
Autocross is scheduled for 9 a.m. June 9-10 at the SAC ramp.

41st Flying Training Squadron Change of Command
The 41st Flying Training Squadron is hosting a Change of Command ceremony at 9:41 a.m. at the Fire Station.

Inside

Feature 8

The Memorial Day Ceremony is highlighted in this week's feature.



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

Shelly Becker scratch etches the name of her deceased husband, Maj. Andrew Becker, after a Memorial Day Ceremony May 24, 2018, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. Maj. Andrew Becker, a pilot and graduate of Class 09-10, died when his U-28A crashed near Clovis, New Mexico, in March 2017 during a training mission. His wife, father and mother visited Columbus AFB to attend a Memorial Day Ceremony and a special service in his honor where his name was unveiled on the memorial wall in the Richard “Gene” Smith Plaza.

CAFB honors Memorial Day, pays tribute to late pilot from Class 09-10

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

COLUMBUS AIR FORCE BASE, Miss. – Members of the 14th Flying Training Wing along with family and friends of Maj. Andrew Becker gathered in the Kaye Auditorium here during a Memorial Day Ceremony and paid tribute to Becker during a special memorial service May 24.

Becker, along with two other Airmen, were killed when

■ **More photos,**
pages 8 and 9

See MEMORIAL DAY, Page 8

COLUMBUS AFB TRAINING TIMELINE											
PHASE II				PHASE III				IFF			
Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Track Select	Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Graduation	Squadron	Senior Class	Squadron Overall	Graduation
37th (19-04)	-6.52 days	-4.13 days	June 29	48th (18-10)	-0.95 days	3.89 days	June 8	49th (18-HBC)	-3.91 days	-1.70 days	June 1
41st (19-03)	-6.63 days	-9.01 days	June 6	50th (18-10)	1.07 days	2.03 days	June 8				
* Mission numbers provided by 14 FTW Wing Scheduling.											
Maj. Gen. Glen D. VanHerck, Vice Director for Strategic Plans and Policy, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., is the guest speaker for Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 18-10's graduation at 10 a.m. June 8, 2018, in the Kaye Auditorium.											

WING SORTIE BOARD			
Aircraft	Required	Flown	Annual
T-6	2,841	2,362	17,719
T-1	995	800	5,969
T-38	988	821	7,709
IFF	406	310	2,860

Gate Closure

The South Gate will be closed 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. June 4-5 for routine maintenance. Please plan your commute accordingly.

14TH FLYING TRAINING WING DEPLOYED

As of press time, 26 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.



Gutierrez assumes command of 14th CS



U.S. Air Force photo Sharon Ybarra
Col. Anthony Sansano, 14th Mission Support Group commander, passes the 14th Communications Squadron guidon to Maj. Eddy Gutierrez, the new 14th CS commander, May 30, 2018 on Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. Gutierrez's last assignment was the commander of the 2nd Communications Squadron, Barksdale, Louisiana.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat/Sun	Long Range Events
4	5 USAFA Ops — Air Force Visit	6	7 Daedalians Meeting, Noon @ 41st FTS Heritage Room	8 SUPT Class 18-10 Graduation, 10 a.m. @ Kaye	9/10 9th-10th: Autocross, 9 a.m. @ SAC Ramp	June 19: Wing Newcomers June 19: 14th CES Change of Command June 21: Dorm Dinner June 22: 81st FS Change of Command June 28: 14th MDSS Change of Command June 29: SUPT Class 18-11 Graduation July 4: Independence Day Holiday July 5: AETC Family Day July 6: Patriot Fest
11 USAFA Ops Air Force Visit	12	13	14 14th FTS Change of Command	15 SUPT Class 18-11 Assignment Night	16/17	

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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The SILVER WINGS staff reserves the right to edit or rewrite all copy submitted when necessary. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise stated.

Submit all advertising to the Columbus, Miss., Commercial Dispatch advertising department one week prior to desired publication date. The advertising department can be reached at (662) 328-2424.

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Discipleship Training - 5pm
Evening Worship - 6pm

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BARGAIN LINE

Alabama, American country-music group, will be performing at 7:30 p.m. at the Bancorp South Arena in Tupelo, Mississippi. Tickets are available online.

Miscellaneous

For Sale: Polan Pro, gas-powered, 200 mph, hand blower/vacuum in excellent condition. Asking \$49. Six lots of 1984 Avon Collector Ducks, assorted ducks in original box. Like new. Asking \$39. Matching pair of ceramic quail in excellent condition. Asking \$9.95. Collection of 14 assorted ceramic ducks; three small ducks, two large planter ducks, 1 candy dish large duck, three medium ducks and five large ducks. All in excellent condition and have been wrapped and in boxes. Asking \$49. Belkin N300 Wi-Fi Router. Excellent condition. Asking \$39. Please call (662) 327-1205

Bargain Line advertisement

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.

Advertisements for private businesses or services providing a continuous source of income, such as baby-sitting or rental property, may not appear in the Bargain Line. They may, however, be purchased through the Silver Wings publisher, 328-2424. Please fill out this form completely. The Silver Wings staff reserves the right to edit ads as necessary.

Type of advertisement (circle one) Home Transportation Miscellaneous Yard sales Pets

Print advertisement

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If you would like to give any other suggestions, please e-mail us at silverwings@us.af.mil.

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MILITARY STAR giving away \$30,000 in Exchange gift cards with ignite your workout sweepstakes

100 cardholders will win a \$300 gift card by shopping Commissaries and Military Exchanges

Marisa Wolfe

Army & Air Force Exchange Service Public Affairs

DALLAS – Living a BE FIT lifestyle is its own reward – but a bonus never hurts.

MILITARY STAR's Ignite Your Workout sweepstakes will reward 100 lucky military shoppers with a \$300 exchange gift card each. Shoppers automatically earn an entry with two purchases at their local commissary plus two purchases at Army & Air Force Exchange Service, Navy Exchange or Marine Corps Exchange locations with their MILITARY STAR® card from June 1 through 30. Winning Army & Air Force shoppers will receive an Army & Air Force Exchange Service gift card, while Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard winners will receive a gift card to their respective exchange.

The Exchange has been partnering with the Defense Commissary Agency to highlight better-for-you choices as part of the Exchange's BE FIT program to encourage readiness and resiliency in Soldiers, Airmen and military families. The Ignite Your Workout sweepstakes is the latest initiative to promote awareness of the healthy living program.

“What better way to spotlight our BE FIT program than by giving away \$30,000?” said Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Luis Reyes, the Exchange’s senior enlisted advisor. “We look

Commander's Action Line
434-1414

The Commander's Action Line is your direct line to the commander for comments and suggestions on how to make Columbus AFB a better place. 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 phone number is 434-1414. Callers should leave their name and phone number to receive an answer. All names will be kept confidential. Message may be answered in the Silver Wings without names.

Written questions may also be brought to the PA office in the Wing Headquarters building, BLDG. 724, suite 210. Questions and answers may be edited for brevity and style.

Nine Team BLAZE Airmen selected for promotion to E-7

Congratulations to the following Team BLAZE Airmen for their promotion to master sergeant.

Tech. Sgt. Bryan Albrecht, 14th Operations Support Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Samuel Hall, 14th Medical Operations Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Micael Jiggetts, 14th Contracting Squadron

Tech. Sgt. George MacEachern, 14th MDOS

Tech. Sgt. Andrew McNally, 14th Civil Engineer Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Thomas Scott, 14th OSS

Tech. Sgt. Miguel Stewart, 14th Security Force Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Adam Latta, 81st Fighter Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Timothy Lindsey Jr., 81st FS

Security and policy review

Did you know that as a military member you must coordinate all information relating to speeches, presentations, academic papers, multimedia visual information materials and information proposed for release to a publicly accessible Worldwide Website, with exception of Air Force publications, through the 14th Flying Training Wing Public Affairs Office? For more information contact the 14th FTW/PA at 434-7068.



VanHerck to speak at SUPT Class 18-10 graduation

Maj. Gen. Glen D. VanHerck, Vice Director for Strategic Plans and Policy, Joint Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C., will be the guest speaker at Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 18-10's graduation ceremony at 10 a.m. June 8 at Kaye Auditorium.

General VanHerck provides strategic direction, policy guidance and planning focus to develop and execute the National Military Strategy. Through the Director Strategic Plans and Policy, he enables the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide military advice to the President, the Secretary of Defense and the National Security Council

General VanHerck is a graduate of the University of Missouri and was commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. He has a diverse background that includes operational and training assignments in the F-15C, F-35A, B-2A, and B-1B. He has served as an instructor pilot and flight examiner in the F-15C, B-2A, and the T-6A. Additionally, he served as a U.S. Air Force Weapons School instructor in the F-15C and the B-2A.

He has commanded at the squadron, group and twice at the wing command levels. Additionally, he has served as a deputy operations group commander and as vice wing commander. His staff assignments include tours at Headquarters Air Combat Command, Headquarters Air Force Global Strike Command and U.S. Strategic Command. Prior to assuming his current position, he commanded the Air Force Warfare Center, Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada.

EDUCATION

- 1987 Bachelor of Science in liberal studies, University of Missouri, Columbia
- 1995 Squadron Officers School, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 1999 Air Command and Staff College, by correspondence
- 2000 Master of Science degree, in aviation safety/management, University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg
- 2005 Air War College, Air University, by correspondence
- 2008 Master of Arts in national security and strategy, Naval War College, Newport Naval Station, R.I.
- 2008 Naval War College, Newport, R.I.
- 2009 U.S. Air Force Executive Leadership Seminar,

Darden School of Business, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

2014 Combined Force Air Component Commanders Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2015 Cyberspace Operations Executive Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2015 Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

2016 Joint Senior Information Operations Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. January 1988 - January 1989, Undergraduate Pilot Training, 14th Flying Training Wing, Columbus AFB, Miss.
- 2. February 1989 - May 1989, Student, Lead-in-Fighter Training, Holloman AFB, N.M.
- 3. June 1989 - November 1989, Student, F-15C Replacement Training, Tyndall AFB, Fla.
- 4. November 1989 - December 1993, F-15C Aircraft commander, Mission Commander, Instructor Pilot, Flight Examiner, 44th Fighter Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan
- 5. January 1994 - June 1994, Student, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nev.
- 6. July 1994 - May 1997, Chief, Weapons and Tactics, Flight Commander, Assistant Director of Operations, 94th Fighter Squadron, Langley AFB, Va.
- 7. May 1997 - July 1998, F-15C Instructor Pilot, Chief of Safety, U.S. Air Force Weapons School, Nellis AFB, Nev.
- 8. August 1998 - March 2001, Assistant Director of Operations, 393rd Bomb Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Mo.
- 9. April 2001 - December 2001, Director of Operations, 325th Bomb Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Mo.
- 10. January 2002 - July 2004, B-2 Program Element Monitor, Chief, Air Combat Command Senior Officer Management, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va.
- 11. July 2004 - December 2004, B-2 Requalification Training, 394th Combat Training Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Mo.
- 12. January 2005 - January 2007, Commander, 325th Weapons Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Mo.
- 13. January 2007 - July 2007, Deputy Commander, 509th Operations Group, Whiteman AFB, Mo.
- 14. August 2007 - June 2008, Student, U.S. Naval War College, Newport Naval Station, R.I.
- 15. July 2008 - August 2008, Student, T-6A Pilot Instructor Training, 559th Flying Training Squadron, Randolph AFB, Texas
- 16. September 2008 - January 2010, Commander, 71st Operations Group, Vance AFB, Okla.
- 17. January 2010 - June 2010, Vice Commander, 71st

Flying Training Wing, Vance AFB, Okla.

18. June 2010 - June 2012, Director, Plans and Integration, Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt AFB, Neb.

19. July 2012 - February 2014, Commander, 7th Bomb Wing, Dyess AFB, Texas

20. February 2014 - June 2015, Commander, 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman AFB, Mo.

21. June 2015 - March 2016, Director, Operations, Headquarters Air Force Global Strike Command, Barksdale AFB, La.

22. March 2016 - July 2017, Commander, United States Air Force Warfare Center, Nellis AFB, Nev.

23. July 2017 - present, Vice Director, Strategic Plans and Policy (J5), Joint Staff, Pentagon, DC.

SUMMARY OF JOINT ASSIGNMENTS

- 1. June 2010 - June 2012, Director, Plans and Integration, Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike, U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt AFB, Neb., as a colonel
- 2. July 2017 - present, Vice Director, Strategic Plans and Policy (J5), Joint Staff, Pentagon, Va.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

- Rating: Command Pilot
- Flight hours: More than 3,200
- Aircraft flown: T-1A, T-6A, T-37, T-38A, A/T-38B, T-38C, F-15A/B/C/D, F-35A, B-1B, B-2A

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

- Distinguished Service Medal
- Defense Superior Service Medal
- Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters
- Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters
- Air Medal
- Aerial Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster
- Joint Service Commendation Medal
- Air Force Commendation Medal
- Air Force Achievement Medal

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

- Second Lieutenant Sept. 16, 1987
- First Lieutenant Sept. 16, 1989
- Captain Sept. 16, 1991
- Major Aug. 1, 1998
- Lieutenant Colonel Feb. 1, 2003
- Colonel Sept. 1, 2007
- Brigadier General Sept. 2, 2013
- Major General May 13, 2016
- (Current as of August 2017)

Air Force Cross Airman honors Intelligence Squadron legacy

Staff Sgt. Alexandre Montes
70th Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing Public Affairs

FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, Md. — Heritage. It doesn't have to be something tangible handed down, it can also be something that gives a sense of pride and belonging. In September 1944, the 11th Photographic Technical Unit was constituted, and on May 18, 2018, an Air Force Cross recipient, Master Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr., assisted the 29th Intelligence Squadron with honoring the unit's legacy at their Heritage Day ceremony.

During the ceremony, Lt. Col. Robert Vidoloff, 29th IS commander, said this year's Heritage Day was meant to be specific.

On May 18, 1959, the 432nd Reconnaissance Technical Squadron was inactivated after a tour in which their Airmen, using reconnaissance aircraft, provided the 70th Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Wing support for ground troops. The unit is also the one from which the 29th IS was derived.

"We have a fantastic Airman who came to share his story with us," Vidoloff said of the events keynote speaker. "He has had 13 combat deployments and has been a combat controller since he entered the Air Force in 2002."

From 2008 to 2009, Gutierrez was part of the 321st Special Tactics Squadron. While he was on a routine patrol in Afghanistan, his unit was suddenly attacked. Using intelligence that was given to him and his convoy



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Alexandre Montes
Master Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr., Battlefield Airmen Training Group standards and evaluation, poses for a portrait May 18, 2018 in Laurel, Md. Gutierrez is a combat controller who was on the team in Afghanistan in 2009 that conducted ad high-risk operations that eventually captured the second most powerful leader of the Taliban in that region.

by ISR Airmen, he was able to find cover and coordinate needed air support.

The Airmen of the 29th IS clapped as the combat controller walked to the podium, standing not behind it but in front of it, smiling ear-to-ear with a sense of Airmanship. Gutierrez, currently a member of the Battle-

field Airmen Training Group, began with just a few words, "Thank you for this opportunity. Coming from an operator, we need each other, and thank you for how you support our efforts."

"As one of four living and serving Air Force Cross recipients, I am afforded the

wonderful opportunity to speak to our Air Force and reinforce the importance of our Air Force core values in our everyday duty and lives," Gutierrez said.

"The significance of the 29th IS is intel," Gutierrez explained. "In my profession, we drive and take the fight to the enemies through a plethora of information via signals intelligence, human intelligence or other avenues. Intel plays a monumental role in our fight against our nation's enemies, and the future adversaries we will be challenged by. I was brought in (today) to explain, from a ground warfighter's (perspective), the importance of the 29th IS's role in supporting our forces across the globe with (intelligence) to help our warfighters and air assets."

As the event continued, Airmen heard about the impact they have, and are continuing to have, on a daily basis. Not just within their "bubble," but assisting warfighters downrange.

"Times and technology have changed," Gutierrez said. "We're better, we're smarter and more efficient. It cost me a lot physically, but what matters more is getting the job done. What you do is important and it helps people like me stay alive."

Gutierrez concluded with some parting words that seemed to resonate with the Airmen in the audience.

"It's my honor to serve with such great team members," he said. "I value our most cherished and important asset in the Air Force, which in my opinion is our people. Without our hard-working Airmen, we wouldn't be the world's greatest Air Force."

Retired Air Force rated officers welcomed back on active duty

Kat Bailey
Air Force's Personnel Center Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas — Retired Air Force rated officers with Air Force Specialty Codes 11X-pilot, 12X-combat systems officer or 13B-air battle manager are encouraged to apply for the Voluntary Retired Return to Active Duty Program to help alleviate manning shortages within the Air Force rated community.

Also eligible to apply are current Air Force rated officers in those AFSCs with an approved retirement order. Officers currently serving on active duty under the 2017 VRRAD program whose tour lengths are limited to 12 months may apply for tour extensions under this program.

The secretary of the Air Force approved the extension to VRRAD for implementation on May 11, 2018 as one of a wide range of initiatives the Air Force is pursuing to improve

rated officers' quality of life and quality of service in order to increase retention and the rated officer inventory.

"Officers who return to active duty under VRRAD will fill rated staff and active flying staff, test, training and operational positions where rated officer expertise is required," said Maj. Elizabeth Jarding, Air Force's Personnel Center VRRAD rated liaison. "We can match VRRAD participants to stateside or overseas requirements where they'll fill critical billets that would otherwise remain vacant due to the shortage of rated officers."

Rated officers who received an active duty-retirement within five years, or will receive one within 12 months from their VRRAD date of application, in the ranks of captain, major or lieutenant colonel, and who are under age 50, may apply for the program, with applicants older than 50 considered on a case-by-case basis. Participation has expanded to up to 1,000 retired rated officers and active-duty tour lengths are increased

to a minimum of 24 months and a maximum of 48 months.

In addition, applicants must be medically qualified for active duty and have served in a rated staff position within 15 years or been qualified in an Air Force aircraft within 10 years of application for flying positions. Refer to AFPC's VRRAD web page for aircraft specifics.

AFPC will accept applications for VRRAD until Dec. 31, 2018, or until all openings are filled, whichever happens first. Retired officers returned to active duty will not be eligible for the aviation bonus or for promotion consideration. Program participants will only deploy if they volunteer, unless they are assigned to a combat coded unit.

Officers who retired for physical disability are not eligible to apply.

Find additional information on VRRAD application procedures and eligibility requirements on the VRRAD page of the AFPC public website.

Memphis Belle opens at National Museum of the U.S. Air Force

Staff Sgt. Megan Friedl
Defense Media Activity

DAYTON, Ohio — Seventy five years ago on May 17, 1943, the crew of the B-17F Memphis Belle completed their 25th combat mission in Nazi-occupied Europe. They overcame insurmountable odds by becoming the first U.S. Army Air Forces heavy bomber to complete 25 missions and return to the U.S.

Exactly 75 years after their last mission, the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force has the renovated Memphis Belle on display to the public May 17, 2018.

The museum curator and project manager for the Memphis Belle exhibit, Jeff Duford said “during the war more than 25,000 U.S. heavy bomber crewmen were killed in combat with over 8,000 of the heavy bombers being destroyed”.

In the 1940s the Memphis Belle was a symbol of American bravery. After the crew returned home to the U.S., they went on a cross-country tour promoting the sale of war bonds. A 1944 documentary was made about the aircraft and crew with real footage from the war. Later in 1990, a Hollywood movie was also released about the Memphis Belle.

Since 2005 when the aircraft arrived at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, more than 55,000 meticulous hours were spent renovating it back to its original condition. A skilled restoration staff along with a group of technically qualified volunteers were able to make it possible for the Memphis Belle to be in the impeccable state that it is in now.

On May 16, 2018, a select number of families and friends of the Memphis Belle crew, veterans and other special guests from around the country gathered to view the unveiling of the Memphis Belle. Even some of the descendants of Wilbur and Orville Wright attended the special event.

The son of the Memphis Belle pilot, Robert K. Morgan Jr., was one of the special guests during the unveiling ceremony. For him, this was a very special moment.

“It makes me so happy because this is what dad wanted so desperately,” Morgan said. “He worked so hard with the Memphis Belle Memorial Association for so many years trying to preserve the plane.... I wish that he could see it today.”

The Memphis Belle is now the centerpiece of the U.S. Army Air Forces Strategic Bombing in Europe in World War II exhibit at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. Next to the Memphis Belle aircraft is



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Megan Friedl

Special guests including National Museum of the U.S. Air Force Director retired Lt. Gen. John L. Hudson and Air Force Director of Staff Lt. Gen. Jacqueline D. Van Ovost cut the ceremonial ribbon for the public opening of the Memphis Belle at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, Ohio, May 17, 2018. The Memphis Belle crew completed their 25th mission in Europe exactly 75 years before the ribbon cutting ceremony.

also an exhibit that features hundreds of artifacts related to the aircraft and its crews, including wartime uniforms, insignia and rare color archival footage.

“The strategic bombing campaign that these young Airmen conducted played a critical part in ending the war,” said Duford. “They broke the back of the German air force, which allowed D-Day to happen”.

During the public ribbon cutting and throughout the celebratory weekend of events, the museum was filled with thousands of people ranging from veterans, families, aviation history fanatics to school children and everyone in between.

Five P-51 Mustang fighters, three B-17 Flying Fortress bombers and a PT-19 trainer aircraft flew in a formation over the museum to commemorate the event. The B-17s, Aluminum Overcast and Yankee Lady, along with the P-51 Ain’t Misbehavin’ and a Heritage trainer landed for guests to see up close in person.

Along with the opening of the exhibit and the fly-overs, visiting guests were able to see an encampment of World War II vehicles and more than 130 reenactors participating in the opening events.

Lt. Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost, Air Force



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Megan Friedl

The Cincinnati Warbirds Experimental Aircraft Association Squadron 18 presented a U.S. flag to Herb Heilbrun, a 97-year-old B-17 pilot veteran. The flag was flown on the B-17 Yankee Lady during the formation flyover at the U.S. Air Force Museum, May 16, 2018.

director of staff and a guest speaker during the event, said the Memphis Belle and its crew “exemplify the strength and spirit of

our nation. We’re a better Air Force, a better nation and a better world because they answered the call”.

Columbus AFB Library offers summer reading program

Europaonda Stone

14th Force Support Squadron

The Base Library urges families to get ready, get set, and go to the Library on June 18 to sign up for its Summer Reading Program. This year’s theme is “Reading Takes You Everywhere!”

From June 18-Aug. 3, the library will host a range of free activities for children, teens, and adults that encourage and support a love of reading. Participants will earn badges and incentive prizes at intervals throughout the program to encourage readers to reach their reading goals.

The library staff has planned a wonderful program for children to make the library a great place to read, learn, and discover what’s available for their enjoyment. Along with the library’s weekly Storytimes, other events will be offered like weekly movies, a quiz bowl, open mic, a scavenger hunt, and much more. As the summer reading program’s theme state, “Reading Takes You Everywhere!”, some events will focus on overseas duty stations family members can accompany military personnel on assignment: Japan, Italy, Guam, South Korea, Germany and England.

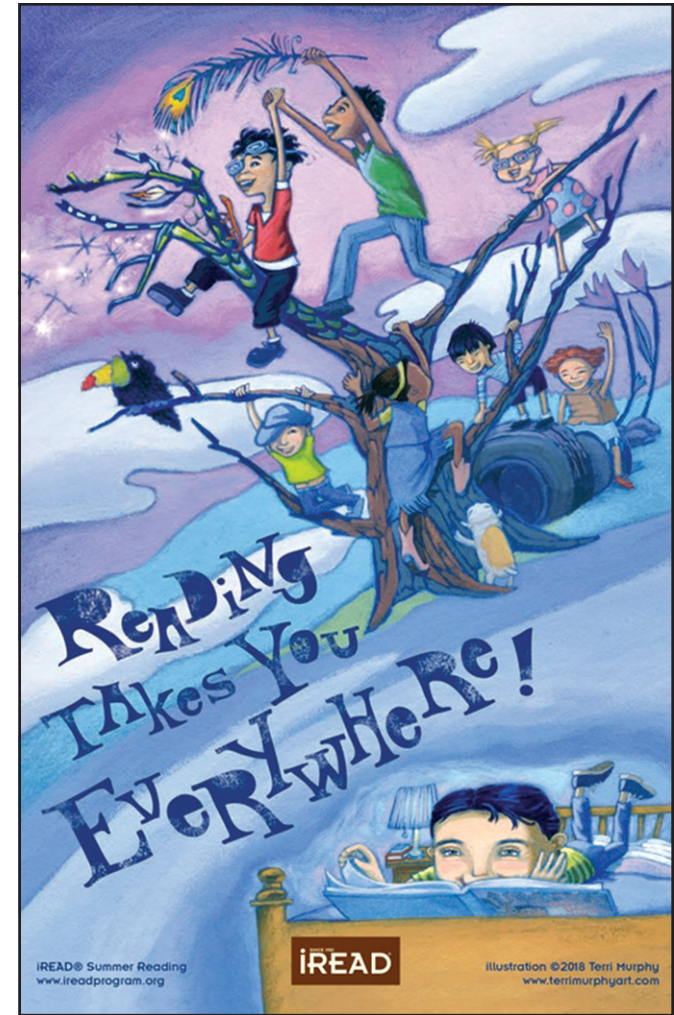
There will be encouragement raffles during the Summer Reading Program, and prizes will be awarded to the top three readers of each category at the capstone program on Aug. 3 at Freedom Park. Examples of prizes are travel passports to National Park Services’ parks, play-mats, car games,

The library staff has planned a wonderful program for children to make the library a great place to read, learn, and discover what’s available for their enjoyment.

kites, gift cards and more. Some of the top reader prizes are zoo passes, Leap Pads and Amazon Fire tablets.

There’s also a serious side to summer reading. Research has shown that reading over the summer prevents summer reading loss. “Studies also indicate students who read recreationally outperformed those who don’t. Students read more when they can choose materials based on their own interests. The amount of time children spend reading outside of school is linked to gains in reading achievement. Our Library is committed to supporting lifelong learning and educational enrichment for all everyone.

Registration starts at the Library’s Summer Reading Program’s kickoff program on June 18 and continues through Aug 3. Please call 434-2934 or check out the Library’s website at <https://www.columbusafbiving.com/library/> for more information.



iREAD® Summer Reading
www.ireadprogram.org

iREAD

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www.terrimurphyart.com

Newcomers are educated about CAFB



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

Team BLAZE members receive a wing newcomers briefing from base firefighters May 29, 2018, on Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. The newcomer’s briefings allows members from every squadron to explain their influence on the pilot training mission. Learning the locations, phone numbers, and local protocol for each squadron and flight can help create a more efficient communication system for base members.

**Buckle up!
It’s the law.**

BLAZE Hangar Tails: A-10 Thunderbolt II

Mission

The A-10 Thunderbolt II has excellent maneuverability at low air speeds and altitude, and is a highly accurate and survivable weapons-delivery platform. The aircraft can loiter near battle areas for extended periods of time and operate in low ceiling and visibility conditions. The wide combat radius and short takeoff and landing capability permit operations in and out of locations near front lines. Using night vision goggles, A-10 pilots can conduct their missions during darkness.

Thunderbolt IIs have Night Vision Imaging Systems, or NVIS, goggle compatible single-seat cockpits forward of their wings and a large bubble canopy which provides pilots all-around vision. The pilots are protected by titanium armor that also protects parts of the flight-control system. The redundant primary structural sections allow the aircraft to enjoy better survivability during close air support than did previous aircraft. The aircraft can survive direct hits from armor-piercing and high explosive projectiles up to 23mm. Their self-sealing fuel cells are protected by internal and external foam. Manual systems back up their redundant hydraulic flight-control systems. This permits pilots to fly and land when hydraulic power is lost.

The A-10 has received many upgrades over the years. In 1978, the aircraft received the Pave Penny laser receiver pod, which sensed reflected laser radiation from a laser designator. Pave Penny has now been discontinued in favor more capable advanced targeting pods. The A-10 began receiving an inertial navigation system in 1980. Later, the Low-Altitude Safety and Targeting Enhancement (LASTE) upgrade provided computerized weapon-aiming equipment, an autopilot, and a ground-collision warning system. In

1999, aircraft began to receive Global Positioning System navigation systems and a new multi-function display. In 2005, the entire A-10 fleet began receiving the Precision Engagement upgrades that include an improved fire control system (FCS), electronic countermeasures (ECM), upgraded cockpit displays, the ability to deliver smart bombs, moving map display, hands on throttle and stick, digital stores management, LITENING and Sniper advanced targeting pod integration, situational awareness data link or SADL, variable message format, or VME, GPS-guided weapons, and upgraded DC power. The entire A-10 fleet has been Precision Engagement modified and now carries the A-10C designation.

The Thunderbolt II can be serviced and operated from austere bases with limited facilities near battle areas. Many of the aircraft's parts are interchangeable left and right, including the engines, main landing gear and vertical stabilizers. Avionics equipment includes multi-band communications; Global Positioning System and inertial navigations systems; infrared and electronic countermeasures against air-to-air and air-to-surface threats. And, it has a heads-up display to display flight and weapons delivery information.

The Thunderbolt II can employ a wide variety of conventional munitions, including general purpose bombs, cluster bomb units, laser guided bombs, joint direct attack munitions or JDAM, wind corrected munitions dispenser or WCMD, AGM-65 Maverick and AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles, rockets, illumination flares, and the GAU-8/A 30mm cannon, capable of firing 3,900 rounds per minute to defeat a wide variety of targets including tanks.

General Characteristics

Primary Function: Close air support, Airborne Forward

Air Control, Combat Search and Rescue

Contractor: Fairchild Republic Co.

Power Plant: Two General Electric TF34-GE-100 turbofans

Thrust: 9,065 pounds each engine

Wingspan: 57 feet, 6 inches (17.42 meters)

Length: 53 feet, 4 inches (16.16 meters)

Height: 14 feet, 8 inches (4.42 meters)

Weight: 29,000 pounds (13,154 kilograms)

Maximum Takeoff Weight: 51,000 pounds (22,950 kilograms)

Fuel Capacity: 11,000 pounds (7,257 kilograms)

Payload: 16,000 pounds (7,257 kilograms)

Speed: 450 nautical miles per hour (Mach 0.75)

Range: 2580 miles (2240 nautical miles)

Ceiling: 45,000 feet (13,636 meters)

Armament: One 30 mm GAU-8/A seven-barrel Gatling gun; up to 16,000 pounds (7,200 kilograms) of mixed ordnance on eight under-wing and three under-fuselage pylon stations, including 500 pound (225 kilograms) Mk-82 and 2,000 pounds (900 kilograms) Mk-84 series low/high drag bombs, incendiary cluster bombs, combined effects munitions, mine dispensing munitions, AGM-65 Maverick missiles and laser-guided/electro-optically guided bombs; infrared countermeasure flares; electronic countermeasure chaff; jammer pods; 2.75-inch (6.99 centimeters) rockets; illumination flares and AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles.

Crew: One

Unit Cost: \$18.8 million

Initial operating capability: A-10A, 1977; A-10C, 2007

Inventory: Active force, 187; Reserve, 49; ANG, 107

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.)

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 one hour. Please contact A&FRC, 434-2790 for more information.

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. The briefings are held daily at the A&FRC. Pre-deployment is at 9:30 a.m. and post-deployment is at 1:30p.m. Please contact A&FRC, (662) 434-2839/434-2790 for more information.

Smooth Move

The next Smooth Move workshop is from 10-11 a.m. June 12 in the A&FRC. This monthly venue provides information for relocating members and families. Here you'll learn what to expect before you move from agencies such as Traffic Management Office (TMO), Housing, Military Pay, Lodging, Tri-Care, School Liaison Officer and A&FRC. To register or for more information, please call the A&FRC Relocation Manager at (662) 434-2701/2790.

Wing Newcomers Orientation

The next Wing Newcomers Orientation will be from 8 a.m.-noon June 19. This event is mandatory for all newly arrived active duty and civilian personnel, and spouses are encouraged to attend. The orientation is held at the Columbus Club. To register or for more information, please call the A&FRC Relocation Manager at (662) 434-2701/2790.

Hearts Apart

The next Hearts Apart is from 5-7 p.m. June 28. This monthly social event is for family members whose sponsor is deployed, on a remote tour, or TDY for more than 30 days. To register or for more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

Transition Assistance Program GPS (Goals, Plans, Success) Workshop

The next Transition Assistance Program workshop will be from 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. July 9-13, 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. Pre-separation counseling is required before attending, and recommended attendance is 8-12 months prior to separation or 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.

Pilot Partners visit Columbus AFB



U.S. Air Force photo by Elizabeth Owens

Members of the Pilot Partner Program and Team BLAZE stand in front of a T-38C Talon during a base tour May 30, 2018, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. The Pilot Partner Program pairs local businesses with specialized undergraduate pilot training classes to help build base and community relations.

quired before attending, and recommended attendance is 8-12 months prior to separation or 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.

Career Technical Training Track Workshop

The next Career Technical Training Track workshop is from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. July 16-17, in the A&FRC. This workshop covers the importance and how to go about obtaining skills required to make better decisions about your technical goals. To register or for more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

Federal USAJobs Workshop

The next Federal USAJobs workshop will be from 9-10:30 a.m. July 18. 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 of Joy

The next Bundles of Joy workshop will be from 1-3:30 p.m. Aug. 16 in the A&FRC. This program is designed for active-duty Air Force 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.

Linked-In Workshop

The next Linked-In workshop is 2-5 p.m. Sept. 17-18. You'll learn how to establish/use a Linked-In account. To register or for more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

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Heart Link

The next Heart Link will be held from 8:30 a.m.-noon Aug. 22, in the A&FRC. 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 from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Sept. 20-21. 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.

Key Spouse Program (KSP)

The mission of Key Spouse Program is to provide information and resources to military spouses, supporting families in successfully navigating through the military life cycle. The KSP is a commander's program. The commander establishes and maintains the program within the unit, to include choosing team members. Once selected as a key spouse in writing, you will need to attend initial/refresh-er key spouse training and continuing education. For more information, please call (662) 434-3323.

Employment Workshop

An employment workshop on local and base employment opportunities is held every Wednesday from 1-2 p.m. This program provides military families and DOD civilian member's individual assessment and career counseling to assist with local employment, preparation for future endeavors via education, job search, or self-owned business objectives in the local area. For more information, please call A&FRC at (662) 434-2790.

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) Start date TBA

4 p.m. – Choir Practice (Chapel Sanctuary)

4 p.m. – Confession (or by appointment)

5 p.m. – Mass

Fellowship Dinner after Mass on 1st and 3rd Sundays of every 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

Wednesdays:

4 p.m. – Music Rehearsal

Thursdays:

5:30 p.m. – Student Pilot Bible Study (Chapel Library)

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



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Amanda Savannah

Members of the 75th Aircraft Maintenance Unit marshal Capt. Chris Severino, 75th Fighter Squadron A Flight Commander and A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot, into position on the SAC Ramp Sept. 8, 2017, on Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. Twenty-one A-10s and a HC-130J Combat King II evacuated from Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, Sept. 8; the HC-130J was transporting aircrew.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. Trevor T. McBride

An A-10 Warthog flies behind an MV-22 Osprey during a combat rescue scenario as part of Red Flag-Rescue 18-2 near Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, on May 12, 2018. Red Flag-Rescue gives joint service personnel an opportunity to build fundamental combat search and rescue skills to fight in and out of contested environments.

Columbus Air Force Base Information and Events
Join our Facebook page at Columbus AFB Living, Twitter at @columbusafbliving, Instagram at columbus_afb_living, or visit our website at www.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.

New Arts and Crafts Customer Service Hours
The Arts and Crafts customer service hours are as follows: Monday through Friday from 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. For more information, contact 434-7836.

Lunch Buffets at the Overrun
Enjoy daily lunch buffets Tuesday-Friday at the Columbus Club. Daily buffets include: Tuesday: taco and nacho for \$9, Wednesday: chicken wings and pasta for \$10, Thursday: southern-style lunch for \$10 and Friday: fried catfish for \$10. Club Members receive a \$2 discount. For more information, contact 434-2489.

Youth Book Club
Explore new worlds and ideas through reading! Stop by the Base Library and pick up a copy of the book “Scat,” by Carl Hiaasen, for the Youth Book Club. The book club discussion meeting will is at 4 p.m. June 20. For more information, contact 434-2934.

Base Pool Opens for Season
Independence Pool is open daily from 11 a.m.–6 p.m. through Sept. 3. Lap swim is available Monday–Friday from 6–7:30 a.m., 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. and 5–6 p.m. No lap swim available on holidays or weekends. You may purchase your seasonal pool pass at ITT; located in the BLAZE Commons. For more information, contact ITT at 434-7861.

Swim Lessons
So you want to learn to swim? Sign up now at ITT! Swim lesson ages: Frog and Tadpole (ages 6 months thru 3 years), Little Nemo (ages 4 and 5 years), and Dolphin (must have completed level 1 and 2 of Little Nemo). Sessions will be held June 18 until June 29, July 9-July 20 and July 23–Aug. 3. For more information, contact the ITT office located in the BLAZE Commons.

Seasonal Pool Pass
Purchase your seasonal pool pass today! The Base Pool will open May 25 for the pool season. For more information, contact ITT at 434-7861.

Triathlon for Adults and Youth
The Fitness Center is offering a free triathlon for adults and youth at 7 a.m. June 2. Participants ages 17 and up will swim 300M, bike 23K and run 5K. Youth 5 – 16 years old may participate and distance will vary based on age. T-shirts available for purchase. A free spaghetti dinner will be offered to registered participants and their family at 5 p.m. June 1 at the Columbus Club. For more information, contact 434-2772.

Free Home Run Derby
The Fitness Center is offering a free home run derby from 5–8 p.m. June 7 at the softball field No. 1. Prizes awarded to the top hitters; ten balls pitched per participant. Each participant must bring own pitcher. Registration deadline is 1 p.m. Jun. 7. For more information, contact 434-2772.

UFC 225 Fight Night
Catch all the action at the Columbus Club June 9! Watch the UFC 225 Fight “Whittaker vs Romero 2”! This is a free event; doors open at 6:30 p.m.; pre-fight at 7 p.m.; featured fight at

COLUMBUS AIR FORCE BASE

300M

Swim

23K

Bike

5K

Run

TRIATHLON

JUNE 2nd

OFFICIAL CHIP TIMING SYSTEM WILL BE USED

Check-in 7am ~ Race Meeting 7:45am ~ Race Begins 8am

CAFB INDEPENDENCE POOL

FREE EVENT

Youth Age Categories 5-7, 8-10, 11-13, and 14-16

Youth distances (based on age):
Swim 25m, 50m, 100m or 150m; Bike .5mi, 2mi, 3mi or 6mi; & Run .25mi, 1mi, 2mi or 3mi

T-shirts available for purchase (\$15 Adult - \$12 Youth)
Register at the Fitness Center or Youth Center

Free spaghetti dinner will be offered to registered participants
& families on June 1st at 5pm at the Columbus Club

FOR MORE INFORMATION 434-2772

11 p.m. Club members receive a \$5 food voucher. For more information, contact 434-2489.

British Soccer Camp
Register now for British Soccer Camp for ages 3–18! The camp will be held June 11–15. The cost varies due to age and special session. Register online at www.challengersports.com or for more information, contact 434-2504.

Free Breakfast for Club Members
Start your morning off at the Overrun! Free breakfast buffet for club members from 6:30–9 a.m. June 19. The cost is only \$8 for non-members. Become a club member and save! For more information, contact 434-2489.

Ice Cream Soda Day
Celebrate National Ice Cream Soda Day! Enjoy this soda fountain favorite for only \$1.75 from 11 a.m.–1 p.m. June 20 at the Columbus Club. Lunch guests may substitute beverage for an ice cream soda at no additional charge. For more information, contact 434-2489.

Wine and Cheese Tasting
Swirl. Sniff. Sip. Join the Columbus Club for a Wine and Cheese Tasting at 7 p.m. Saturday, June 23 at Independence Pool. Non-alcoholic cocktails available; swim attire optional. Purchase your tickets at the Columbus Club. For more information, contact 434-2489 or 434-2471.

Ties and Tiaras Father Daughter Dance
The Columbus Club is offering a father-daughter dance from 5:30–9:30 p.m. June 23. The cost is only \$30 per couple; \$12 each additional daughter. Enjoy fun, food, games and an evening of music by Paul Brady. A photographer will be available. Reserve no later than June 19 at the Columbus Club or thru the memberplan-et app. For more information, contact 434-2489.

Storytime Schedule
The Base Library is offering Storytime on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. for ages 3–6 years and Fridays at 10 a.m. for ages birth–2 years. For more information, contact 434-2934.

FSS Gift Cards
Make your shopping easier! Purchase or redeem your 14th Force Support Squadron gift card at the following locations: Arts and Crafts, Bowling Center, Café at Whispering Pines, Child Development Center, Columbus Club, Information Tickets and Travel, Outdoor Recreation or the Youth Center. For more information, stop by any of these locations.

Game Night at the Library
The Base Library is offering a free game night at 5 p.m. the second Thursday of each month. For more information, contact 434-2934.

Horse Boarding Available
The Columbus Air Force Base riding stables usually has stall space available. For pricing and more information, contact Outdoor Recreation at 434-2505.

Free Mango Languages
Learn a new language today! Free Mango Languages available at the Base Library; real-life conversations in over 70 languages. For more information, contact 434-2934.

Play Paintball
Outdoor Recreation offers paintball for groups or individuals. You must book 24 hours in advance; 17 years old and under must be accompanied by an adult. The cost is \$15 per person for party of 10 or more; \$20 per person for party of nine or less. You must purchase paint balls at Outdoor Recreation for \$50 per case of 2,000. For more information, contact 434-2505.

The Overrun Open Friday Nights
The Overrun is open Fridays 4:30 p.m. until midnight. For more information, contact 434-2419.

Library Hours of Operation
The Base Library hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thursday 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m.-noon. For more information, contact 434-2934.

Lawn Mower and Bicycle Repair
Outdoor Recreation is now offering lawn mower repair and self-help bicycle repair. For more information, contact 434-2507.

Hobby and Craft Instructors Needed
Do you have a hobby or craft project you can share with others? Arts & Crafts is looking for craft instructors. For more information, contact 434-7836.

Referees Needed
Referees needed for various sports at the Fitness Center. For more information or to sign up, contact 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.

Instructors Needed
The Youth Center is seeking instructors for tumbling classes, dance classes, piano and guitar lessons. For more information, contact the Youth Center.

The Ultimate Sacrifice

Chief Master Sgt. Bradley Reilly
14th Operations Group superintendent

“It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God such men lived.”

- George S. Patton, 1945.

Service.
Once upon a time ... I was indestructible. I feared no one and nothing. Every challenge was an opportunity to triumph, every roadblock an opportunity to crush and prevail by brute force alone. Every decision I ever made in my military career was exclusively aimed at getting myself closer and closer to the fight. Have gun, will travel. In retrospect, the perceived invincibility of my youth has served both me and this nation quite well. I have never lived so much as when I risked it all. Those were the best of days. But I was not alone.

Sacrifice.
I can't tell you that I always understood the true implications of sacrifice. In the rearview mirror of my marginally effective memory I want to feel like I understood--and certainly I should have understood--but it is more likely that I was too emotionally handicapped by youth and nativity to ponder something that deep for more than a few seconds. My opportunity would come. It was Memorial Day weekend 2005 and I was home recovering from wounds I had received in Afghanistan only a few weeks before. I had been thinking hard about Memorial Day that year for some reason and wanted to ensure that my daughter, Erin, understood what it was all about. I intended to wake up early and drive out to the nearest cemetery, thinking that possibly we would run into a pack of Boy Scouts placing flags on the headstones of servicemen and women. I supposed that even if they didn't let her help, it would serve as opportunity and venue for us to talk about service and sacrifice.

Erin was seven at the time, in the preceding four years, training or deployed, I had been away from home well over 40 months. Just two years before that day in fact, sitting on the floor of the living room, outfitted in a dress made of bubble wrap and practicing her Kim Possible, Naked Mole Rat dance. I tried to explain to her what I did for a living. A video of Osama Bin Laden flashed across the screen triggering a conversation that began with “Do you remember the World Trade Center? Well it's my turn to go get that guy.” I said with all of the positive persuasion I could, hoping that she would be so excited for me that my leaving for the upcoming deployment would be a minor aspect. She wasn't impressed, she cared less about some bad guy living half way around the world and more about just having her dad home.

I don't know about you, but when I was a child my worst fear was that something awful would happen to my dad and he wouldn't come home. I remember nights lying awake in bed,

tears running down my cheeks, worrying about some horrible accident that would never happen. But my dad wasn't a special operator, he was a banker. He didn't deploy, jump out of air-planes or blow things up; his greatest professional risk was driving down I-10 to go to work. In fact, in my entire childhood, I can only remember one time he was not home for dinner every night. Now on the eve of Memorial Day 2005, my daughter had not only been without me more than with me, but had seen her dad return home wounded. What does that look like through the eyes of a seven year old? Sacrifice right? That's what we say in this business, the whole military family sacrifices. But that's not the sacrifice that this story is about.

Ultimate Sacrifice.
The phone rang at 0730 on Memorial Day, Monday, May 30, 2005. The voice on the other end told me that he needed me to come in to work immediately. I knew why and only asked one question, “who?” the response still sends chills down my spine today ... “worst case possible.” Combat controllers rarely deployed together those days, I couldn't even comprehend how any more than one guy could have been hurt. When I arrived to the squadron I learned that the airfield survey team, operating in Iraq and Afghanistan, had gone down in a small non-standard aircraft killing all on board. In addition to an American pilot from a sister flying squadron and his Iraqi co-pilot, we had lost three men: Capt. Derek Argel, Capt. Jeremy Fresques and Staff Sgt. Casey Crate. Capt. Argel was my assistant team leader. I was assigned to be the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) for his wife Wendy and son Logan, not yet a year old, and would follow right behind the notification team. I can't even begin to tell you how cool Capt Argel was. At 6' 4” or better, he was literally a man bigger than life. A star water polo player at the U.S. Air Force Academy, he crushed record after record as he made his way through the CCT pipeline. Argel was a man's man, a physical specimen, instructors often supplemented heavy logs and other handicaps to his run, ruck or swim, just to flatten the playing field a little bit. But it never even slowed him down, as he would finish with the log on one shoulder, and typically a struggling team mate across the other.

For a long time I refused to believe that he could even be injured in that plane crash. That in the field of debris and ball of fire, he would stand, dust himself off and start finding his team. It was Argel that greeted me on the ramp at Bagram when my medevac arrived from the field. Wrapping his massive hand around mine and shaking it excitedly “what's up RY?” he said with a slight grin. He was so proud of me, and it was written on his face. In past several days leading up to the crash, I had been emailing Capt. Argel who was still in theater. We discussed a number of things, but his future as a special tactics officer weighed most heavily on his mind. He had gotten a taste of the action recently, and wanted more. He was worried that his future role as an officer would take him further from the fight.

Now, still on crutches, I was standing at his front door, where inside a notification team was delivering news that would forever change the lives of the young family inside. It would be the most impactful moments of my life.

Erin was there too. I needed her for an important task. “Erin, Logan just lost his dad, but he's really little and really won't understand right now. When we get there, I'm going to need you to take care of him. His mom is going to be really sad. It's going to be a long day. I need you to play with him, change his diaper, make him some food when he is hungry, a nap if he needs it... whatever, but I don't want his mom to have to worry about him.” Erin said nothing, just nodded that she understood. Much of the rest of that day, that week, that month actually, is a blur. But I do remember this-- from the moment we walked in that door to the end of the day maybe 10 or 12 hours later, we never heard from or saw Erin and Logan. Not a single question or concern, complaint or grumble from either one of them. As it would turn out, I didn't need the boy scouts or a flag planting detail. On that Memorial Day, she accepted and accomplished her task with selfless efficiency. It occurs to me now, that at seven years old, it is entirely possible she had a better understanding of service and sacrifice than many serving today.

Remember
So, what did you do for Memorial Day? Go to a ballgame? Barbeque? Maybe hit the beach? I truly hope you enjoyed yourself. I hope you were able to spend quality time with your friends and loved ones. As a sentinel of this nation, you deserve it. You deserve to enjoy every amazing aspect of a life and country dedicated to those very freedoms you defend. But before you put Memorial Day 2018 in your rearview mirror, I have one small request. I won't ask you to put on your blues, visit a wall or memorial, or make plans to take your kids to the cemetery to help out those Boy Scouts next year. No further need for you to be solemn, reflective, or mourn today for those who have died serving this country. Please, for the sake of all that you hold dear, I need you to do just one more simple thing... Get down on your knees and thank God that such men lived. Those men, forever young, immortalized by war, their fearlessness, bravery and courage woven into every fiber of this nation. And the only request that they possibly ask? Remember me. Our greatest act of valor is not behind us but before us my friends, remembering those that gave all is the solemn duty of all that return home. It is at once the obligation and honor of a lifetime. That should their sacrifice be forgotten, that their name be no longer remembered, that the long history of America be remembered without their deed; shall we perish as fools from this earth forever.

To my brothers, I will remember you and our times together fondly; indestructible once and young.

- Derek Argel, 30 May 2005
- Jeremy Fresques, 30 May 2005
- Casey Crate, 30 May 2005
- Adam Servias, 19 Aug 2006
- William Jefferson, 22 Mar 2008
- Timothy Davis, 20 Feb 2009
- Andrew Harvell, 06 Aug 2011
- Neil Landsberg, 09 May 2013
- Marty Bettelyoun, 03 Aug 2015
- Sean Harvell, 26 Apr 2016



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Beaux Hebert

The Columbus Air Force Base Honor Guard presents the colors May 24, 2018, at Columbus AFB, Mississippi. The Kaye Auditorium was filled with Team BLAZE members and special guests to honor Maj. Andrew Becker, a former student pilot here, who gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Beaux Hebert

Col. Douglas Gosney, 14th Flying Training Wing commander, speaks to the family of Maj. Andrew Becker, during a Memorial Day Ceremony May 24, 2018, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. During the ceremony Becker's name was unveiled on the memorial wall in the Richard "Gene" Smith Plaza.

MEMORIAL DAY

(Continued from page 1)

their U-28A crashed in March 2017 during a training sortie near Clovis, New Mexico.

"Our Air Force has a long history of brave Airmen," said Col. Douglas Gosney, 14th Flying Training Wing commander. "Airmen like Maj. Andrew Becker. Andrew was and will always be a member of Team BLAZE. ... We are here to remember those who were willing to put service before self in order to protect the many freedoms we enjoy, but behind every decorated grave of a fallen Airman, Soldier, Sailor, Marine and Coast Guardsman, is a story of grief that came to a spouse, a mother, a father, a child, a family or a community."

Becker, who graduated from pilot training at Columbus Air Force Base in 2009 with Class 09-10, had his name added to the memorial wall in the Richard "Gene" Smith Plaza. Since Columbus AFB became a pilot training base in 1971, 85 pilot training graduates and instructor pilots have died in the line of duty and their names have been added to the memorial wall in the plaza.

"Seeing his name on the wall is very somber," said Shelly Becker, Andrew's wife, "but I am so proud of him. It's also a bit surreal standing in the same plaza we once took our photographs in when he pinned on his grandfather's wings. It's almost full circle in a way."



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

Shelly Becker hugs Gary Becker, her father-in-law, after the Memorial Day Ceremony May 24, 2018, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. Maj. Andrew Becker, a pilot and graduate of Class 09-10, died when his U-28A crashed near Clovis, New Mexico, in March 2017 during a training mission. His wife, father and mother visited Columbus AFB to attend a Memorial Day Ceremony and a special service in his honor where his name was unveiled on the memorial wall in the Richard "Gene" Smith Plaza.

"Seeing his name on the wall is very somber," said Shelly Becker, Andrew's wife, "but I am so proud of him. It's also a bit surreal standing in the same plaza we once took our photographs in when he pinned on his grandfather's wings. It's almost full circle in a way."

During a very difficult time in her life, Shelly said the support she received allowed her and Andrew's family to start Random Acts for Andy, in which they perform acts of kindness as a way to give back to their community and the nation with one kind gesture at a time.

"The Random Acts for Andy started as a way to give people an outlet," Shelly said. "I thought the best way to honor him was to do something he would be happy and proud of and I just want to continue to make him proud every day. It was a way for people to do something small or something grand to pay it forward in the way they remembered him."

Shelly said some of those acts have included people donating or volunteering at animal shelters. Others have taken a pay-it-forward approach and bought random people drinks.

"It was the big things, the little things that each time

they sent me a message it lifted me," she said. "It meant his spirit and generosity lives on thorough actions not only through remembrance and photos."

According to those he served with and his family, Becker was an impressive leader, aviator and Airmen to all.

"He loved to teach, and he loved aviation," Shelly said. "He not only wanted those around him to learn, he wanted them to be inspired and his attitude was contagious."

During the ceremony, Gosney also stressed the importance of not forgetting and remembering the sacrifices those have made in defense of America.

"All are represented here today for Maj. Becker," he said. "We must not forget those lost in service to our country or their families and we may never fully appreciate all the sacrifices made for us, but let us use today as a gift to honor those who gave their all so we may live free."



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

Col. Douglas Gosney, 14th Flying Training Wing commander, gives a gift to Gary and Stacy Becker after a Memorial Day Ceremony May 24, 2018, at Columbus Air Force Base, Mississippi. Their son Maj. Andrew Becker payed the ultimate sacrifice in March 2017, when his U-28A crashed during a training sortie near Clovis, New Mexico. The Becker family said they're thankful for the support from the Air Force and the military aviation community.



U.S. Air Force by Tech. Sgt. Christopher Gross

The Columbus Air Force Base Honor Guard makes their way out of Kaye Auditorium after presenting the colors during a Memorial Day service May 24, 2018, on Columbus Air Force Base. During the ceremony Maj. Andrew C. Becker's name was unveiled on the memorial wall in the Richard "Gene" Smith Plaza.



U.S. Air Force by Tech. Sgt. Christopher Gross

Attendees stand for the playing of taps and the unveiling of Maj. Andrew C. Becker's name on the memorial wall in the Richard "Gene" Smith Plaza during a Memorial Day service inside the Kaye Auditorium May 24, 2018, on Columbus Air Force Base. Since Columbus AFB became a pilot training base in 1971, 85 pilot training graduates and instructor pilots have died in the line of duty and their names have been added to the memorial wall in the plaza.