

Hawk TALK

JANUARY 2024





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This Department of Defense newsletter is an authorized publication for members and families of the 37th Training Wing. Contents of the HAWK Talk are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the DoD.

Content for this monthly newsletter should be submitted no later than the 21st of the month prior to publication. Content, including articles and photos, should be submitted to

37trw.pa.inbox@us.af.mil



37th Training Wing website

NOW ACCEPTING NOMINATIONS

Has someone else's actions had an impact on you or others?

Has an individual or team gone above and beyond to show support?

Then nominate them as a Warhawk Rockstar and we will feature your note of appreciation and thanks in the next Hawk Talk.

Send your nomination to
37trw.pa.inbox@us.af.mil.

Include a short description/explanation on why you are submitting the nomination.

WARHAWK
Rockstar!
MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERYDAY



STAY CONNECTED! STAY INFORMED!

SCAN THE QR CODE TO VIEW ALL THE
37 TRW COMMUNICATION CHANNELS.

2023

MILESTONES

10 JAN 23

A recent graduate of Defense Language Institute, member of the Korean Search and Rescue team, helped save the life of a swimmer. Read the story [here](#).

9 FEB 23

433 TRS conducts final graduation as a line squadron.
Read more [here](#).

7 MARCH 23

Partner Nation Guest Instructor becomes first to earn AETC master instructor designation.
Read more [here](#).

6 FEB 23

37 TRW Wing Commander and members of the Inter-American Air Force's Academy participate in Colombia's Cyber Conference.
Read more [here](#).

23 FEB 23

Wing releases new strategic plan.
Read the story [here](#).

2023

MILESTONES

15 MARCH 23

IAAFA celebrates its 80th Birthday.
Read more [here](#).

26 APRIL 23

14 Basic Military Trainees graduate from
BMT as U.S. Citizens under new
streamlined naturalization process.
Read the full story [here](#).

5 JUNE 23

Five Airmen are recognized for saving a
woman's life.
Read the story [here](#).

16 JUNE 23

Chef Robert Irvine visits the 37 TRW.
Read the story on page 9.

7 JULY 23

37 TRW Command Chief retires after
nearly 30 years of service.
Read the story [here](#).

21 AUG 23

New squadron activates within 37 TRW.
Read more [here](#).

2023

MILESTONES

21 SEPT 23

BMT launches modernization efforts with start of new Zero Week.
Read the story [here](#).

27 SEPT 23

More than 200 students graduate during IAAFA's C-Cycle.
Read the story [here](#).

3 OCT 23

IAAFA conducts professional development subject matter expert exchange with Brazilian Air Force.
Read the story [here](#).

24 NOV 23

CSAF and CMSAF visit JBASA-Lackland ahead of Thanksgiving.
Read the story [here](#).

29 Nov 23

MTI takes the helm as Command Chief for a Day.
Read the story [here](#).

8 DEC 23

Service members received a holistic approach to stress management.
Read the story [here](#).



Airman 1st Class Zachary Rodriguez, an F-35 Mechanical Apprentice Crew Chief for the 61st Aircraft Maintenance Unit at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona, trains a military working dog during obedience training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, on Dec. 21, 2022. His father, Army Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Rodriguez, was killed in Ana Kalay, Afghanistan, on Sept. 2, 2008. Zachary spent the day with military working dog trainers from the 341st Training Squadron here to learn what his father did to serve the nation.

 by C Arce

A Day in Dad's Life

Gold Star family member spends day with MWD trainers

Photo and Story by C Arce
37th Training Wing Public Affairs

Published 1/3/23

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas – A Gold Star Family Member spent the day with military working dog trainers here at the 341st Training Squadron on Dec. 21. After losing his father at 7 years old, it was always his dream to experience the work his father did to serve the nation.

Airman 1st Class Zachary Rodriguez, who joined the Air Force in November 2021, is an F-35 Mechanical Apprentice Crew Chief for the 61st Aircraft Maintenance Unit at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. His father, Army Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Rodriguez, was a Special Operations dog handler, and was killed in Ana Kalay, Afghanistan, on Sept. 2, 2008, while serving in Operation Enduring Freedom. He was assigned to the K-9 unit of the 527th Military Police Company, 709th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, in Ansbach, Germany.

Personnel from the 341 TRS and the 701st Military Police Battalion, an Army detachment here, started the morning with Zachary by doing a "Hero Workout of the Day" to honor his father. A lot of times I'm overwhelmed with emotion, so it's hard to say a lot of words," said Laura Rodriguez, Zachary's mother, at the end of the workout. "I'm good at lecturing my kids, I'm good at lecturing my patients, but as a Gold Star Spouse, I don't always have the words to say. All of this is really meaningful to our family." Zachary said he knew he wanted to join the military at 5 years old because of his father. "Seeing him do his job was so cool," he said. "I've always wanted to be like my dad, and at the same time, be my own self. In fact, I drive the Jeep he bought in Germany. I got it for my 18th birthday." Zachary spent the rest of the day with 341 TRS personnel doing military working dog training, such as patrol, detection, and obedience work. He experienced being the "bait" for an MWD by doing bite work; conducted a building search; and trained a dog to scout in an open field, which are all part of patrol work.

"I had a great time. I barely slept at all last night," he said. "I was so excited for this, but at the same time nervous. I do like to see and follow my dad's footsteps and see what he did... I think this was a really cool experience."

The visit ended with a ceremony at The Military Working Dog Teams National Monument here, attended by 341 TRS personnel, 701st Military Police Battalion personnel, Zachary's mother and two sisters, Malorie and Charlie. Zachary and his family are Gold Star Family Members. Gold Star family members are those who lost a loved one in military service supporting combat operations or from terrorist activities. The 341st TRS falls under the 37th Training Group and is responsible for training and developing K9 professionals and MWDs to enhance the Department of Defense's global warfighting capability.



Courtesy photos

(Top left:) Col. Lauren Courchaine, 37th Training Wing commander, gestures as she speaks during Cyber Wings 2022 in Bogotá, Colombia, Nov. 25, 2022. The conference focused on cyber defense and cyber security issues, and brought together professionals from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and the United States. (Right:) Capt. Marissa Gaytan, 37th Training Wing and Tech. Sgt. Salvador Chavez, 837th Training Squadron, stand with Courchaine and other U.S. Airmen during Cyber Wings 2022 in Bogotá, Colombia.

Wing Commander, IAAFA participate in Colombia's Cyber Conference

Published 2/6/22

By Vanessa R. Adame
37th Training Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas – Cyber Defense professionals from nine countries across Latin America and the United States gathered in Bogotá, Colombia, Nov. 24-25, for Cyber Wings 2022. Col. Lauren Courchaine, 37th Training Wing commander, was invited as a guest speaker as a graduated Cyber commander and head of the largest Training Wing in the Air Force.

The conference, which focused on cyber defense and cyber security, was hosted by Universidad Javeriana and Universidad de Los Andes.

Courchaine, who is the first Cyber officer to command the 37 TRW, spoke on Countering Cyber Threats through Cooperation highlighting that “empowering cyber leaders through education, partnerships, and innovative research is absolutely necessary to maintain a workforce that can think critically and holistically about cyber, military operations and national security.”

Her remarks were translated for the Spanish speaking audience of more than 100 cyber professionals from across all military branches from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, and the United States.

[Read full story here](#)



Published 2/9/23

433RD TRAINING SQUADRON: END OF AN ERA

The 433rd Training Squadron conducted its final graduation as a line squadron Feb. 9, 2023. Squadron personnel returned to embedding within the active-duty squadrons who currently execute the BMT mission. In May 2020, the squadron, stood up as a line squadron alongside the active duty, inviting Reserve Military Training Instructors to return to the squadron to lead its trainees through 7.5 weeks of training.

Photo by Daniel Cruz

Tech. Sgt. Ernesto Gutierrez, 837th Training Squadron, places his hand on the mouse as he navigates the new SV-R simulator program, as contractors look on at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, Jan. 25, 2023. The simulator will be used to train military and law enforcement students from Latin America, focusing on counter narcotic efforts and combatting transnational criminal organizations.



IAAFA infuses agility into training with modern technology, simulators


Photo and story by Vanessa R. Adame

Published 2/22/23

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas – Virtual reality goggles and body worn sensors are helping to take technical training to the next level at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy here. The gear is part of a virtual reality simulator, and among the newest equipment being used to train international military students from partner nations.

The SV-R simulator will be used to train military and law enforcement students from Latin America, focusing on counter narcotic efforts and combatting transnational criminal organizations. "It's going to enhance training greatly for our students," said Master Sgt. Ricardo Alonso, IAAFA's Chief of Standardization and Evaluation, who helped bring the technology to the academy. "Many of them have never been exposed to this kind of training environment."

The SV-R simulator allows instructors to create an infinite number of scenarios in a realistic training environment. As Alonso explained, "even change the factors within it as to how lethal we have to respond as military police or law enforcement officers." The simulator features the user as an avatar and allows users to realistically interact with one another, creating a true-to-life environment. The cutting-edge technology is being implemented into IAAFA's Special Reactions Team and Ground Defense Leadership courses curriculum, where new and more advanced students can train in a controlled environment.

[Read the entire story here.](#) 

Gateway Wing releases new strategic plan

By 37th Training Wing Public Affairs staff

Published 2/23/23

Culture. Mission. People. These priorities are the foundation of the 37th Training Wing's 2023 Warhawk Strategic Plan released January 20.

The Warhawk Strategic Plan written by the 37th TRW commander, Col. Lauren Courchaine, and Command Chief, Chief Master Sgt. Michael Morgan, lays out the command team's intent for the wing and empowers Warhawks at every level to lead while recognizing that the best ideas can come from anywhere. "A strategic plan, regardless of the level, touches every member within the organization," said Col. Lauren Courchaine, 37th TRW commander. "It serves as a fundamental beacon to guide the organization toward mission objectives with actionable efforts."

Chief Michael Morgan, the 37 TRW command chief added, "The strategic plan is intended to assist Warhawks as they develop partnerships within their squadron and across the Wing to ensure we are effective in our mission of training the next generation of Airmen ready for the next decade." The plan provides Warhawks the mission and vision, and lines of effort (Culture. Mission. People), that will drive operations, activities, and future investments across the 37th TRW.

[Read the entire story here.](#) 



Partner Nation Guest Instructor becomes the first to earn AETC master instructor designation

by Vanessa R. Adame

Published 3/7/23

Intendente Jefe Alexander Pacheco of Colombia's National Police, has made history for the Inter-American Air Forces Academy. Pacheco, is the first partner nation guest instructor to earn the master instructor badge, the highest Air Education and Training Command's instructor qualification. Pacheco was nearing the end of a two-year assignment at IAAFA when he awarded the designation during a ceremony here, Feb. 17.

[Read the entire story here](#)



by Gregory Walker

Chef Robert Irvine, renowned for his commitment to healthy living, serves a spread of nutritious dishes to more than 400 Security Forces Airmen from the 343rd Training Squadron at the Robert Irvine Foundation "Breaking Bread with Heroes" event June 14, aimed at promoting wellness and mindful eating.

Celebrity Chef Robert Irvine inspires Airmen with healthy dinner and cooking demo

Published 6/16/23

By Christa D'Andrea
37th Training Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas – In an event aimed at promoting a healthy and active lifestyle, more than 450 Security Forces technical training students had the opportunity to break bread with renowned celebrity chef, Robert Irvine, and his team, here, June 14 and 15. Irvine and his corporate chefs not only served up a dinner for Defenders from the 343rd Training Squadron June 14, but they also attended the 331st Training Squadron Basic Military Training graduation parade and provided a cooking demonstration for a select number of Defenders at one of the installation's dining facilities June 15.

"He [Irvine] is all about being able to teach people how to provide healthy alternatives," said Brig. Gen. Russell Driggers, JBSA and 502nd Air Base Wing commander, during his opening remarks at Wednesday's dinner. "We all know that the human body and human performance is based on the food that you put in your body and the better we can take care of ourselves, the better we can take care of our installations and our nation." Col. Lauren Courchaine, 37th Training Wing commander, emphasized the general's comments and told the Defenders that, "we have to start thinking about how we take care of this body as a function of personal responsibility, as well as a readiness function, so that every single one of us can get the food we need ... the sleep that we need ... so we can maintain a focus on our mission and our family."

Courchaine thanked Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Joanne Bass for inviting the chef to the wing. [Read the entire story here](#)





Airman First Class D'elbrah Assamoi from Cote D'Ivoire signs her U.S. Certificate of Citizenship after the Basic Military Training Coin Ceremony at JBSA-Lackland, April 26, 2023. Fourteen Airmen became the first U.S. citizens here under the new streamlined Naturalization Process at BMT. The Airmen were part of approximately 500 trainees from the 326th Training Squadron who graduated this week. The process is part of an effort to revive the naturalization path for immigrants and allow trainees to become citizens before they graduate. It's just one of several initiatives the Air Force is taking to remove barriers to service amid the current challenging recruiting environment.

Basic Military Training trainees become U.S. Citizens under new streamlined naturalization process

Published 4/26/23

Story and 📷 by Vanessa R. Adame
37th Training Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas — Fourteen trainees in Basic Military Training here raised their right hands and are now the first to complete the new streamlined naturalization process making them U.S. citizens and allowing them to graduate as American Airmen.

Over the course of their 7.5 weeks of training in BMT, the trainees accomplished the necessary paperwork, took their citizenship test and their Oath of Allegiance. The first three accomplished their process as early as April 11, and the remaining trainees by April 25. All were formally recognized as U.S. citizens at the Airman's Coin and Retreat Ceremony April 26.

Airman 1st Class Natalia Laziuk, 31, from Russia, was one of the first three Airmen to take the Oath of Allegiance and become a citizen. Laziuk said she had been dreaming of becoming a citizen since she was 11 years old. "I will always be grateful for every opportunity I have here in the best country of the world," she added. These trainees' citizenship ceremonies were much like any other – with only one difference: the person administering the oath was on a computer monitor, miles away.

The online process is part of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Naturalization at Basic Training Initiative that allows trainees the opportunity to become citizens before they graduate. It's just one of several initiatives the Air Force is taking to remove barriers to service amid the current challenging recruiting environment. "Their desire to become citizens exemplifies their commitment and dedication to the United States," said Col. John P. O'Dell, 37th Training Wing vice commander. "When we began the partnership with USCIS, we asked all trainees who would be interested in starting their application, and 111 raised their hands. These trainees volunteered to serve a country they aren't yet citizens of and now we get to formally recognize them upon their graduation as American Airmen."

The 37th Training Wing partnered with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in March to reimplement the program after policy changes in 2017 changed processing timelines that affected a trainee's ability to naturalize prior to graduation.

[Read the entire story here.](#) 

Former Defender, Chopped Military Salute winner returns to JBSA-Lackland, offers advice to fellow Defenders


Published 6/23/23

By Vanessa R. Adame
37th Training Wing Public Affairs


JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas –Two decades after attending Security Forces technical training here, Master Sgt. Opal Poullard, 345th Training Squadron, returned to the 37th Training Wing – to where it all started in 2003. The Security Forces beret she once wore has been replaced by a toque.

Poullard was on base to support healthy living events through the Robert Irvine Foundation's Breaking Bread with Heroes program, June 14 - 15. Poullard, who spent 14 years as a Defender, retrained into a special duty career field and became an Enlisted Aide. There, she trained through the Advanced Culinary Program and received a Professional Chef 1 certification through the Culinary Institute of America.

"I loved being a defender, but I knew that I had a different calling in life," Poullard said.

[Read the entire story here](#) 




 by Gregory Walker



Veterans recall decades of service

Published 11/17/23

Story and  by Vanessa Adame
37th Training Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas – Eddie Molett grew up in the Texas country, raising chickens and hogs as a young boy. It was the life his parents had imagined for their family, but Molett yearned for more. In 1960, just weeks before he turned 21, Molett enlisted in the U.S. Air Force.

"What I wanted to do was see the world," Molett said. "I couldn't wait to get away and join the Air Force."

Molett served for 28 years and 16 assignments. His career took him to across the United States and overseas, where he developed a deep affection for Germany and the hospitality he encountered there.

"The people were so nice, they'd invite you to their home and you'd have to eat, and eat and eat," he said.

Molett was a dedicated service member. During his first few days in Vietnam, as rockets and mortars lit up the sky, Molett decided he would defend his country, even if it meant losing his life. He saw comrades injured, and others who never made it home.

"That was a hard year," Molett stressed. Despite the hardships, Molett found a sense of home in the Air Force. He retired in 1989, as a senior master sergeant, but soon returned as a civilian. Altogether, he's served 63 years in civil service. While much has changed since he retired – a lot has remained the same. "I still love it; I still wish I could wear my uniform," Molett said.

Today, Molett works as a supply technician at Camp Bullis in San Antonio, overseeing more than \$2 million dollars worth of equipment.

[Read the entire story here](#) 



Tech. Sgt. Sarah Bento, “Ask an MTI” program manager, conducts a Zoom call with Military Training Instructors just prior to the start of the weekly calls with Delayed Entry Program recruits Mar. 7, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. The Ask an MTI program gives recruits an opportunity to ask MTIs questions about Basic Military Training prior to their arrival and set expectations and better prepares recruits for the rigors of BMT. (U.S. Air Force photo by Christa D’Andrea)

“Ask an MTI” informs recruiters, helps bridge the gap for recruits heading to BMT

Published 10/12/23

Story and 📷 by Christa D’Andrea
37th Training Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas –For recruits heading to Basic Military Training here, connecting with a Military Training Instructor online prior to their departure is proving to help ease the transition from civilian to Airman. “Ask an MTI” is a BMT-led program managed by Tech. Sgt. Sarah Bento, MTI and the 737th Training Group Chief of Protocol, that connects recruits, recruiters, and instructors online to open lines of communication to better prepare the Air and Space Force’s next generation of trainees and Guardians for the rigors of training. “The program gives recruits and recruiters real-time information about BMT and the many changes,” said Staff Sgt. Ruth Elliott, who has been an MTI for 2.5 years. Elliott is one of several MTIs who are volunteering their time to engage with recruits and recruiters online in a relaxed forum that encourages open discussion. The program began as a grass-roots effort in 2021, but Bento said that over the past several months, the program has increased significantly in terms of participants and all 25 recruiting squadrons across the country are now participating in a formalized program.

[Read the entire story here.](#) ✨

Graduates Receive Wings at Inter-American Air Forces Academy Ceremony

Published 12/14/23



📷 by Vanessa R. Adame

(Top left:) Col. Bryan Tuinman, Inter-American Air Forces Academy commandant, pins on wings of an international military student during a graduation ceremony at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, Dec. 6, 2023. Approximately 200 students from 11 partner nations and the U.S. Air Force graduated from IAAFA, specializing in 14 courses across professional military education and leadership, aircrew training and technical courses. (Right:) International military students sit during a graduation ceremony. The mayor of Lytle, Texas, and Air Force retired Chief Master Sgt. Ruben Gonzalez, served as guest of honor for the evening banquet honoring the graduates. Gonzalez applauded the students for reaching this important milestone in their careers.

[Read the entire story here.](#) ✨



Gregory T. Walker

Published 11/24/23

CSAF and CMSAF inspire and engage at Gateway Wing before Thanksgiving

More than 700 Airmen assigned to Flights 1-17, graduated from U.S. Air Force Basic Military Training at Joint Base San Antonio, Texas, Nov. 21-22, 2023. The events mark the return to multi-squadron ceremonies. Gen. David W. Allvin, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, reviewed the ceremony. (Pictured below:) Gen. David W. Allvin, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass toured a Basic Military Training dormitory during their visit. While there observing a trainee's bed and locker area, Allvin decided to "pull a 341" for the trainee in their second week of training. He indicated on the 341 that "this is impressive ... keep pushing" and signed it "CSAF #23." The 341 is used in BMT to document performance discrepancies and excellence.



Gregory T. Walker

Local San Antonio community gives back on Thanksgiving



By Christa D'Andrea



Gregory T. Walker



[Read the entire story here](#)

Published 11/27/23

(Pictured above:) Trainees Nolan Hall (left), from North Carolina, and Keisei Velez Yamaoka (right), from Mississippi, get ready to depart the Pfingston Reception Center Nov. 23, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. The trainees, in their sixth week of training, spent Thanksgiving Day with Teresa Grady and her family as part of Operation Home Cooking. (Below:) Chief Master Sgt. Carlos Damian serves trainees from the 326th Training Squadron at Basic Military Training on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 23. In keeping with tradition, wing and 737th Training Squadron leadership served trainees in the dining facilities. Damian is the 37th Training Wing command chief at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas.



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Warhawk

Family,

THANK YOU

FOR ALL

YOUR HARD

WORK.