

# HawkTALK

JULY/AUG 2023

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Courtesy photo

Col. John Goodson, 37th Training Group commander, addresses members of the newly activated 342nd Training Squadron at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Aug. 1. The 342 TRS is one of six squadrons in the 37 TRG, headquartered at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, which is responsible for professional and technical training for more than 36,000 personnel yearly. The 342 TRS provides aerospace physiology training for officers and technicians, providing initial and refresher training for all aircrew, and acceleration training for all fighter aircrew.

## New squadron activates within the 37th Training Wing

By Christa D'Andrea  
37th Training Wing Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas** – The 37th Training Group here gained an additional squadron following an activation ceremony at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, Aug. 1.

One year ago the 37th Training Wing took responsibility of the Aerospace Physiology mission from the 711th Human Performance Wing, which initiated the stand up of the 344th Training Squadron's Detachment 2.

The 342 TRS was first activated April 30, 1976, as part of the U.S. Air Force School of Applied Aerospace Sciences here at Lackland until its inactivation July 30, 2016.

Today, the 342 TRS is one of six squadrons in the 37 TRG which is responsible for professional and technical training for more than 36,000 personnel yearly. The squadron, commanded by Lt. Col. Christianne Opresko, is home to the aerospace physiology technical school for officers and technicians, providing initial and refresher training for all aircrew, and acceleration training for all fighter aircrew.

**Read the entire story [here](#).**



**Commander**

Col. Lauren A. Courchaine

**Deputy Commander**

Col. John P. O'Dell III

**Command Chief**

CMSgt. Carlos Damian

**Chief, Public Affairs**

Christa L. D'Andrea

**Editor**

Vanessa R. Adame

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

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**11 Sept:** Patriot Day

**18 Sept:** Air Force's 76th Birthday

**19 Sept:** Emotional Well-Being  
Ultimatum Workshop

**19 Sept:** Torch Athena

**29 Sept:** Final Friday

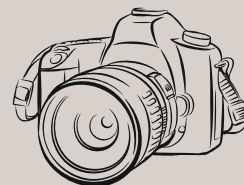
**6 Oct :** Warhawk Coffee Tawk

Scan here  
for more  
events



**PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPPORT**

Public affairs support requests should be submitted through the PA Productivity Portal - photography, video, audio, graphics, and editorial support. Services can be requested at <https://safpa.appianportals.com/request>. Be sure to select the 37TRW/PA as the Servicing Team. Submit at least 10 days in advance.



***Read these stories & more from  
AF.mil:***

**DAF unveils art commemorating 75 years of Air  
Space & Power**

**DOD announces changes to special accrual policy  
for service members**

**Micro-reactor pilot program reaches major  
milestone**

**Air Force band brings Ukrainian military to US for  
bilateral concert event**

**'Service during a consequential time': Top enlisted  
leader engages with Airmen at Joint Base Andrews**



**A1** PERSONNEL

**A2** POLITICAL MILITARY ADVISOR

**A3** CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER

**A4/7** FACILITIES/INSTALLATIONS & MISSION SUPPORT

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**A9** INNOVATION

## 37th Training Wing initiates transition to A-Staff structure

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas** – The 37th Training Wing is standing up its A-staff, in response to a command-wide implementation this year. The 37th TRW is one of three wings within Air Education and Training Command to undergo the transition that aims to streamline coordination and empowers units to focus on mission execution.

The reorganization is expected to be a seamless transition that will join vital capabilities across the wing and delineate clear lines of communication that emphasize planning, integration and coordination ahead of a crisis.

“Implementing this new organizational alignment will enable the Warhawk Wing to thrive,” said Col. Lauren Courchaine, 37th Training Wing commander, “When there is alignment, all aspects of the Wing including the mission, values, strategies, policies, processes and people are integrated and coordinated, leading to unprecedented success.”

The new operational framework enhances decision-making processes and ensures decisions are communicated to higher and lateral headquarters. The streamlined reorganization assures better communication that extends to joint partners who currently operate with similar staff structures.

The A-staff implementation was effective as of July 21.

WARHAWK  
**Rockstar!**  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERYDAY

Tech. Sgt. Torres Santiago is being recognized for his work in helping to acquire a \$32,000 upgrade at zero cost to the Inter-American Air Forces Academy. He also trained nine NCOs on continuous assessment in their programs. Lastly, his work as an initial member of the JBSA LEAP chapter in guiding applicants in the processes and program has helped many scholars and non-scholars to network and increase their knowledge within the cultures that LEAP is involved in.


Want to recognize someone? Submit your Warhawk Rockstar to [37trw.pa.inbox@us.af.mil](mailto:37trw.pa.inbox@us.af.mil)





(Clockwise from top left:) Brig. Gen. Rogelio Jorge Amador Mendoza, Director of Education and Training of the Mexican Air Force speaks to graduates during the Inter-American Air Forces Academy graduation banquet at JBSA-Lackland, August 9, 2023. Mendoza was the guest of honor for the graduation ceremony. (Bottom left:) Col. Bryan Tuinman, IAAFA commandant pins wings on an international military student during IAAFA's graduation ceremony. (Right:) A new graduate shakes hands with IAAFA instructor, Mateo Gonzales, after receiving her wings.



 and story by Vanessa R. Adame

## More than 200 international military students & USAF members graduate from IAAFA

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas** – More than 200 international military students from 12 partner nations and the U.S. Air Force filled an auditorium here for a ceremony to mark the end of their training at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy, Aug. 9.

Students graduated from courses in professional military education and leadership, aircrew training and technical courses.

Brig. Gen. Rogelio Jorge Amador Mendoza, Director of Education and Training of the Mexican Air Force, served as guest of honor for the event. Mendoza visited the campus and toured the 318th Training Squadron and the 837th Training Squadron, and then joined leaders for the graduation banquet.

Col. Bryan Tuinman, IAAFA commandant, spoke to the graduates and reminded them that “earning a certificate or wings from IAAFA, is more than just an achievement, it is also a commitment to cultivate deep, enduring relationships through security cooperation, a commitment to continuous improvement and a commitment to accelerate change.”







Lt. Paul Bernards, 637 ISS Commander, presents Capt. Aikaterini Sigala, Hellenic Air Force, a certificate of appreciation and commander's coin for her heroic actions on June 21, 2023. Sigala said it is her duty to provide medical care during critical situations and lives by her personal motto, "When I can help, I help! It is in my nature."

# Flight nurse from Greece come's to civilian's aid during medical emergency

 and story by *Spencer Berry*

*Defense Language Institute English Language Center Field Studies Program*

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas** – Capt. Aikaterini Sigala, a Specialized Aviation English student, was in the classroom when she heard a loud sound in the hallway. As a flight nurse in the Hellenic Air Force, she instinctively wanted to check the source of the noise.

As it turns out, a male maintenance worker fell near the second-floor elevator and suffered a head injury because of an epileptic seizure. Defense Language Institute English Language Center personnel, Lacey Grindley, Joseph Leishman and Sigala, were the first to respond and immediately called 911.

With more than 13 years' experience, Sigala immediately assessed the situation and began administering first aid on the young man's injury. While waiting for paramedics to arrive, she was checking his vitals and communicating with him.

"I spoke to him, checked his pulse, and checked his eyes to make sure he was responding to my questions. When I asked for his name, he didn't respond," she said. "However, I could see that he recognized what I was asking him. I continued to check that he was awake and alert until the paramedics arrived."

Once paramedics were on scene, Sigala relayed to them the treatment she had provided and recommended they conduct a CT scan and MRI on the patient. The medics then immobilized the young man's neck before transporting him to a medical facility. A few days later, Sigala inquired with the young man's co-worker about his condition and learned he had been released from the hospital the same day. He is currently working at the office while he continues to recover from the accident.

For her heroic actions during this medical emergency, DLIELC leadership presented Sigala a Certificate of Appreciation and commander's coin. Orlando Dona, Air Force Security Assistance Training Country Manager, also traveled to DLIELC to personally thank her.

Sigala said her duty is to provide medical care during critical situations and lives by her personal motto, "When I can help, I help! It is in my nature."

"The incident reaffirmed to me the significance of continuous training and preparedness," she said. "I highlighted the need for compassion and the ability to stay composed during emergencies. As a healthcare professional, it is my duty to be ready, willing, and able to provide care and support when the call for help comes."

Sigala stressed that the incident should be a reminder about the value and importance of being trained in first aid. "As a flight nurse, I am always reminded to make a positive difference in someone's life, even during the most challenging circumstance," Sigala said. "This day was one of them; I am immensely grateful to have offered immediate assistance and am overjoyed that this man is now safe."

The Defense Language Institute English Language Center fosters security cooperation and partnerships through English language training and cultural immersion, extending services to more than 100 countries and providing support to over 30 nonresident locations worldwide.

# MWD Program strengthens families and the force

by 2nd Lt. Kate Anderson  
37th Training Wing Public Affairs

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas** – The journey of a military working dog from raw potential to a fully trained warrior is not quick and easy. This transformation commences within the homes of puppy foster families. As the result of one such home, the Air Force Defender community recently gained another four-legged warrior within its ranks, following an emotional reunion with his foster family.

Military Working Dog, AAbaba, was fostered by one of the 37th Training Wing's very own, Maxine Ababa – the wing's senior protocol specialist. About a year following the death of her late husband, Ababa had the opportunity to foster an MWD, suitably named AAbaba, from the 341st Training Squadron's breeding program. Hoping to help ease her children's grief of losing their father, Ababa said "yes" to a 6-week-old Belgian Malinois, giving him his start in life.

MWD AAbaba spent approximately seven months with the two-legged family of four, learning basic manners, socializing and just how to be a dog before returning to the MWD training program and pairing up with MA1 Cody Ringler as his handler. Throughout the training, Ringler and MWD AAbaba excelled; moreover, they completed the explosive detection training and patrol dog training in 67 days -- approximately half the time it typically takes.

AAbaba graduated from his training on August 8, 2023, and will be stationed at Beale Air Force Base, Calif., with the 9th Security Forces Squadron.

However, just before leaving, MWD AAbaba reunited with his foster mom and her son, Jordan, so they could see all the hard work he put in to be a professional military working dog. "It's bittersweet seeing him grown up after having a hand in his care since he was a puppy," said Ababa, who has been connected to the Defender community since working at the 37 TRW since 2016.

According to Ababa, fostering the MWD deepened that connection to the Defender community and strengthened her own family.

Dogs, like AAbaba, born here through the military working dog breeding program can be identified by the double letters at the beginning of their names. Once a litter of puppies are whelped and weaned, they get placed into foster homes within, and around, the San Antonio and Austin areas so they can get started on the right paw.

The families they are paired with are encouraged to socialize the dogs and provide them with the highest quality care before returning them to the training program. Foster families are provided everything they need to care for the puppies including dog food, veterinary care equipment, toys, and training.

Since the dogs the Air Force breeds are highly energetic Belgian Malinois, there are a few requirements foster families must meet, including a secure 6-foot fence, no children under five years of age, no more than three other dogs, and must live within two hours of San Antonio. The foster family also needs to be able to bring the puppy to socialization and training sessions over the course of time they have the puppy (6 weeks-7 months).

"We take immense pride in the strength built between us and the community through the MWD puppy foster volunteer program. This program thrives on the support from these exceptional foster family volunteers and their continued dedication throughout the years. They are a true force multiplier for the MWD enterprise and the 37th Training Wing," said Major Jordan Criss, 341st Training Squadron commander.

To apply to be a MWD puppy foster family, email [mwd.foster@us.af.mil](mailto:mwd.foster@us.af.mil).



Photo by Vanessa R. Adame



# Welcome!



by Vanessa R. Adame



by Gregory Walker



by Gregory Walker

## New leaders join the Gateway Wing

Col. Bryan Tuinman, Inter-American Air Forces Commandant

Col. Billy Wilson, 737th Training Group commander

Chief Master Sgt. Carlos Damian, 37 TRW command chief

We'd also like to welcome all of our new squadron commanders and wing Senior Enlisted Leaders!



**TORCH ATHENA**

**GIRLS IN AVIATION  
RALLY & FLY-IN**

SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2023  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

POWER TO THRIVE:  
FIND YOUR INNER ATHENA

Save the Date!



© TORCHATHENA\_AETC

### ***FORGOT TO REGISTER?***

It's not too late to attend  
Torch Athena or volunteer  
for the event. Email  
Capt. Briana Winslow at  
[briana.winslow.1@us.af.mil](mailto:briana.winslow.1@us.af.mil)

# ***AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS***

## **37 TRW NOMINATIONS**

***AETC Winner, 2022 General Robert "Dutch" Huyser Award:***  
**Staff Sgt. Cassandra Reynolds, Flight Attendant, 344th Training Squadron**

**2023 National Latina Style Distinguished Military Service Award**  
**Active-Duty category**  
**Staff Sgt. Karina Flores, 737th Training Group**

**2022 Col. Gail Halvorsen Outstanding Air Force Air Transportation**  
**Individual of the Year**  
**Tech. Sgt. Alexander Ingram, 37th Training Group**

**2023 National Automotive Services Excellence Service Professionals Award**  
**SrA Frank Lopez, 37th Training Group**



**Col. Joe Jackson Award for Excellence in Mobility Tactics - Calendar Year 2022**  
**TSgt Travis J. Livingston, 37th Training Wing**

**Chief Master Sgt. Fred Archer Military Award Category**  
**Master Sgt. Nikesha S. MacEachern, 37th Training Wing**

**SMSgt Margaret Frances Barbour Military Award Category**  
**Staff Sgt. Philip Padilla, 37th Training Wing**

**Captain Robert W. Williams Military Award Category**  
**Capt. Afron Guze, 37th Training Wing**



# Congrats!



by Vanessa R. Adame



Courtesy photo

(Top from left): The 37th Training Wing Second Quarter Award Winners were recognized at a ceremony, July 28, 2023. (Right:) Maj. Meyliana Tonkgo, 344th Training Squadron, Det 1. commander, presents Staff Sgt. Luis Diaz the 3rd Quarter Unit Safety Rep Award. Diaz, from the 344th TRS Det 1., is a Vehicle Management Instructor at Port Hueneme, Calif.

## 37th TRSS provides back-to-school supplies for 13 school districts in SA

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas** – The month of August marks the return to school, but for many San Antonio families, the challenge of affording all the necessary school supplies for their children is real.

To alleviate this struggle, the 37th Training Support Squadron partnered with Communities in Schools of San Antonio for the annual Stuff The Bus School Supply Drive.

Starting in July, and continuing through the first week of August, the members of the 37 TRSS collected vital school supplies like notepads, markers, glue, pencils, and composition books. These donations were then transported to CIS-SA, which distributed them across 13 school districts in San Antonio.

Beyond the supply drive, volunteers from the 37 TRSS also dedicated their time on Stuff The Bus Day, on Saturday, August 5, 2023. Alongside CIS-SA staff, these volunteers served at Valley Hi H-E-B from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., encouraging H-E-B shoppers to contribute to the cause by donating supplies during their shopping trips.

Kevin Salis, Director of Operations for 37 TRSS and the Team Captain of Stuff the Bus, expressed his gratitude for the widespread support, stating, "It is heartening to witness the tremendous backing for this significant cause. It underscores the impact we can make when we unite."

Reflecting on his collaboration with Communities In Schools, he acknowledged the magnitude of the need.

The volunteer efforts played a pivotal role in achieving CIS-SA's objective of supplying \$1,500 worth of school materials to 160 schools, amounting to a total value of \$250,000. CIS-SA's surpassed its annual goal, thirty one tons of school supplies were donated with an estimated value of \$657,000.



Courtesy photo

Sean Dawkins, Ivette Clark and Kevin Salis are pictured in the photo above. The members of the 37th Training Support Squadron collected vital school supplies like notepads, markers, glue, pencils, and composition books. These donations were then transported to CIS-SA, which distributed them across 13 school districts in San Antonio.

# AROUND THE WING...



by 2nd Lt. Kate Anderson



by Gregory Walker

(Top left:) Hon. Krystan Jones, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller, performing the duties of Under Secretary of the Air Force, visited the 341st Training Squadron, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, Aug. 15, 2023. (Right:) Tech. Sgt. Elio De Los Santos throws out the first ball at the Missions Baseball game, Aug. 17, 2023.



by Vanessa R. Adame



by 2nd Lt. Kate Anderson

(Top left:) The U.S. Air Force Honor Guard performs ahead of the Basic Military Training Coin Ceremony, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, Aug. 15, 2023. (Right:) Pacific Air Forces Command Chief and Senior Enlisted Leaders visit the 37th Training Wing, Aug. 10, 2023.