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by Vanessa R. Adame

More than 600 Airmen assigned to the 433rd Training Squadron graduated from Basic Military Training at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, February 1-2, 2023. Lt. Gen. Richard G. Moore, Jr., Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon, Arlington, Va., reviewed the ceremony.

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

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.

[Read the entire story here.](#)



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Col. Lauren A. Courchaine

### **Vice Commander**

Col. John P. O'Dell III

### **Command Chief**

CMSgt. Michael R. Morgan

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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

## **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**2 June** : Master Sergeant Release Social

**2 June:** Warhawk Coffee Tawk

**9 June:** MTL Troop Tawk

**16 June:** MTI Troop Tawk

**19 June:** Juneteenth Holiday

**23 June:** 322 TRS Change of Command

**23 June:** 323 TRS Change of Command

**23 June:** Instructor Tawk

**26-29 June:** Unit Effectiveness Inspection

**7 July:** Chief Mike Morgan Retirement Ceremony

**3 July:** AETC Family Day

**4 July:** Independence Day



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

**[Air Force's Enlisted Swap Assignment Program starts June 1](#)**

**[Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall's message on sexual assault, harassment](#)**

**[Air Force, Space Force to offer medals, promotions for recruiting support](#)**

**[WEAR program enables Airmen, Guardians to aid recruiting efforts](#)**

**[Effective June 1, First Term Airmen can retrain into AFSC's under 90% manning in lieu of separation](#)**

# 101 CRITICAL DAYS OF

# Summer

The 101 Critical Days of Summer begins Memorial Day weekend and continues through Labor Day weekend. During this timeframe, Airmen and Guardians tend to participate in more outdoor activities, travel, barbeque, and explore new things over a season that has historically come with a higher risk of danger.

This year, the Air Force Safety Center is reinvigorating the 101 Critical Days of Summer with off-duty risk management materials created to educate Airmen and Guardians on the risks associated with summer activities. This year's theme will be "See Something, Do Something ... Live to be Lethal".

Go to the Air Force Safety Center's summer [webpage](#) for more tips!

See Something Do Something...Live to be Lethal

101 CRITICAL DAYS OF

SUMMER



## Why I Serve...

**Airman First Class Nirajan Tamang** joined the Air Force to be an active citizen serving a purpose for his nation and people.

*"The Profession of Arms is a whole new experience for my life, which is a story I can pass on to the next generation. I want to ... share my knowledge to new generations to help make positive changes."*

*- Airman First Class Nirajan Tamang*

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





Clockwise from left: Col. José Jiménez, Jr., commandant of the Inter-American Air Forces Academy, pins international military student during IAAFA's graduation banquet and 80th anniversary celebration, at San Antonio, Texas, April 26, 2023. More than 60 international military students from seven partner nations and the USAF graduated during the first training cycle of 2023. (Right:) An international military student glances at the camera during the IAAFA graduation ceremony. (Bottom left:) Col. Lauren Courchaine, 37th Training Wing Commander, Ambassador Luis Moreno and Capitan Jhonatan D. Escuraina Novoa of the Colombian Army are flanked by Col. José Jiménez, Jr., and Chief Master Sgt. Yusef Saad, IAAFA Senior Enlisted Leader, as they prepare to cut into the ceremonial cake.

## IAAFA celebrates 80th anniversary, graduates more than 60 U.S. and partner nations students

 and story by Vanessa R. Adame

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas** – More than 60 international military students from seven partner nations and the USAF filled an auditorium here for a ceremony to mark the end of their training at the Inter-American Air Forces Academy, April 26. Students graduated from eight courses in professional military education and leadership, aircrew training and technical courses.

Senior leaders, distinguished visitors and guests helped commemorate the event that also celebrated the academy's 80th anniversary. This year, the affair was held at the University of Incarnate Word's Rosenberg Sky Room to mark the special celebration. Luis Moreno, former Ambassador to Jamaica, and former Narcotics Affairs Director in Bogota, Colombia, served as guest of honor. Moreno spoke of the importance of IAAFA in Latin America, and congratulated graduates on their achievement, which he said would most likely remember as "a bright arch in their lives".

"I'd like to extend my gratitude to our instructors, who each day not only led us to acquire knowledge in each of our courses, but for being true professionals and serving as fundamental pillars for us as students," said Mayor Juan Verdugo of the Chilean Air Force who spoke at the graduation ceremony.

Col. Lauren Courchaine, 37th Training Wing Commander, Moreno and Capitan Jhonatan D. Escuraina Novoa of the Colombian Army performed the ceremonial cake cutting as the recipient of the General Fernando Melgar Award, an outstanding student recognition. Escuraina, who also received the Academic Achievement Award in the officer category, and other top performing students were recognized during the banquet including Tecnico Segundo Luis Mejia De La Hoz from the Colombian Air Force, who earned the Academic Achievement Award for the highest-grade point average in the enlisted category.

Looking back at IAAFA's history, Col. José Jiménez, Jr., IAAFA commandant, spoke of the academy's eight decades of success as symbolizing new roles and opportunities for the institution as it charges forward and tackles new complex challenges. "As we step into the new chapters of our journeys, let us work together to build cross cultural and cross boundary partnerships to advance common goals, cultivate, deepen shared relationships, accelerate change and preserve peace and human rights," Jiménez said.

Read the entire story [here](#). 

 [Click here to see more photos ....](#)



(Top left:) Thu Nguyen, DLIELC alumni, and his son Lt. Col. Quoc-nam Nguyen, 338th Enterprise Sourcing Squadron commander, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas, test the Defense Language Institute Aviation Training Center aviation lab simulator at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, March 7, 2023. DLIELC builds security cooperation capability through English language training for national and international military students and civilian personnel. (Right:) Thu Nguyen attended the Defense Language Institute English Language Center over 50 years ago. He had the opportunity to tour DLIELC, along with alumni Henry Tran and Phuong Nguyen, in March 2023. (Courtesy photo)

## DLIELC welcomes Vietnamese alumni

 and story by Agnes Koterba

**JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-LACKLAND, Texas** – Over 50 years ago, three officers from the South Vietnamese Air Force attended the Defense Language Institute English Language Center.

Henry Tran, Thu Nguyen, and Phuong Nguyen studied and learned English while attending DLIELC. They also received their certificates of Aeronautical Ratings from the U.S. Air Force. After graduation, they continued their follow-on training at various U.S. locations.

The training they received allowed Tran to pilot the first Vietnamese CH-47 and both Nguyen's to fly A-37's during the Vietnam War. Each alumni faced different life changing events during the conflict.

After spending three years in prison for his service to South Vietnam, Tran and his family eventually moved stateside and settled in Oklahoma.

When the South Vietnamese forces demobilized, Thu eventually found himself on the USS Midway traveling to the Philippines, Guam, and then a refugee camp at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. Phuong was also imprisoned for six years and later relocated to the United States in the early nineties.

The alumni did not know each other prior to their visit to DLIELC in March, but one-of-a-kind connections brought them together.

Tran's daughter, Tina Neville, a former U.S. State Department foreign service officer, and Thu's son, Lt. Col. Quoc-Nam Nguyen, met in 2005. Through several deployments both kept bumping into one another over the years. As fate would have it, Neville and Quoc-Nam connected all three families over dinner and scheduled a tour of the DLIELC campus.

The visit to DLIELC brought some familiarity back to all three gentlemen. Most of the campus was quite different from what they remember," said Quoc-nam, 338th Enterprise Sourcing Squadron commander, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas.

The alumni and their families spent the afternoon touring DLIELC including the modernized classrooms and the Aviation Language Training Center. "When they were students, they were poor. They could only afford to eat at the dining facility when breakfast was \$0.25 and lunch or dinner was \$0.75," Quoc-Nam said. "It was just a very surreal experience for them to get an opportunity to see the campus for what it is today," he replied.

[Read the entire story here.](#) 



# National Police Week honors fallen Defenders



Photos by Vanessa R. Adame

A ceremony was held May 18 at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, in honor of National Police Week. Col. Lauren Courchaine, 37th Training Wing Commander, and base leaders attended the event which honored fallen defenders. Hundreds of Airmen attended the remembrance which included a 24-hour ruck march.

★ [Click here to see more photos ....](#)



In remembrance of those Aerial Transporters (Port Dawgs) who passed last year, the 345th Training Squadron conducted a 10th annual Port Dawg Memorial Run May 19 at Ft. Gregg-Adams, Va., in honor of these fallen: Master Sgt. Erok VanDyke, Senior Airman Kohl Reed, Mr. Jerry Carnako, Staff Sgt. Guilbert Apresto, Staff Sgt. Justin McManon, Mr. Jake Stovall, and Tech. Sgt. Mark Vannorden.



📷 Photos by Agnes Koterba

## 344th TRS gains new commander

The 344th Training Squadron held a change of command May 3, here. Members said goodbye to Lt. Col. Patrick King and welcomed new commander Maj. Michael Schumacher. Dozens of people attended the event. The 344th provides technical training for more than 8,000 Airmen annually in the Career Enlisted Aviation, Vehicle Management, Logistics Plans, Materiel Management, Contracting, Recruiting, Safety, and TEMPEST courses.



📷 Photo by Daniel Cruz

## New MTIs graduate during ceremony

The 737th Training Group welcomed nine new military training instructors at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, April 14, after completing a rigorous 8-week course.

The new MTIs are pictured from left to right: Staff Sgt. Tiffanie Sawatzke, Staff Sgt. Seraphina Bullitt, Tech. Sgt. Sergio Duarte, Tech. Sgt. Karla De Los Santos, Tech. Sgt. Cally Hatrick, Tech. Sgt. Christopher Martin, Staff Sgt. Isley Baggett, Tech. Sgt. Corey Wood and Tech. Sgt. Nathan Simon were presented with their dark blue campaign hat during the ceremony.

# AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

## 37 TRW NOMINATIONS

**Language Capable Airman/Guardian of the Year: (LCAOY)**

**Maj. Elias Corcho,  
Tech. Sgt. Edwin Acevedo**

**AETC Nominees, 2022 General Robert "Dutch" Huyser Award:**

**Tech. Sgt. Travis Livingston,  
Staff Sgt. Cassandra Reynolds**

**2023 League of Latin American Citizens Excellence in Service Award:**

**Staff Sgt. Fabian A. Cancel Pancorbo**

**2023 Federally Employed Women Military Meritorious Award:**

**Tech. Sgt. Ebony C. Gray**

## 345 TRS enhances international partnerships through training



Courtesy photos

345th Training Squadron Parachute Rigger instructors, Tech Sgt. Christopher Jensen and Tech Sgt. Michael Diaz, participated in a technical engagement at the Indian Army Airborne Training School as part of a four-man mobile training team. The purpose of the visit was to educate the Indian Army Airborne Training School on Joint Airdrop Operations by providing the Air Load Inspector Certification Course and to inspect Aerial delivery equipment to increase interoperability with key INDOPACOM partner nations.



## Warhawks celebrate Month of the Military Child

Dozens of families came out to JBSA-Lackland, Texas, April 29, to support Month of the Military Child. The Band of the West provided entertainment while many children and families donned purple - to celebrate military kids. Little ones enjoyed playing games, blowing bubbles, eating delicious treats, face painting and even watching military working dogs in a demonstration.





## COMMENTARY

Forty-six years ago I graduated from Basic Training out of the 3707 BMTS (which is now the 326 TRS). As I look back on the experiences I had in the years (decades) that followed, I always go back to my MTIs, Tech. Sgt. Rey Gonzalez, Master Sgt. Ron Sipe, and Senior Airman Alley. Those MTIs laid the foundation for the Airman I became. They instilled in me a standard of excellence, they planted an ethos in me to always bridge the gap between satisfactory and excellent, and then bridge the gap between excellent and outstanding. And that was back before “continuous improvement” became a thing.

I was privileged to wear the uniform of the U.S. Air Force for 28 years. I have the life I have thanks to the U.S. Air Force and it all started in the 3707. Every time I put on that uniform, including every time I get to put it on today, I set it up so that in the event one of my MTIs were to see me in it I would not let them down. They were in an impeccable uniform when they flipped the light switch at 0500 to wake us up and they were in an impeccable uniform when they flipped off the light switch at 2100. And I have no idea how they did it, but they didn't ever sweat!

In addition to having a deep and sincere appreciation for MTIs, I also deeply regard Senior NCOs. The mission effective leadership at the button mashing, wrench turning, trigger pulling level comes from the unit's Senior NCOs. Good NCOs can carry marginal officers. Good officers cannot carry marginal NCOs. This is not to minimize or downplay the roles and leadership of a unit's officers in any way. All are vital and all must be excellent Airmen. But to that Airman/Airman 1st Class/Senior Airman doing the work, the effective leadership comes from those Senior NCOs.

When I was an Airman 1st Class I was selected for a commissioning program. I can tell you from my personal experience that, while it was Tech. Sgt. Gonzalez, Master. Sgt. (later SMSgt) Sipe, and SrA Alley who made me an Airman, it was Senior Master Sgt. Larry Pullen who made me an officer. And I believe it was that appreciation for the officer/Senior NCO relationship that made me a successful officer. MTIs have the thankless and underappreciated job of taking people from all over this nation, and sometimes other nations, and turning them into Airmen. They do it masterfully. A lot of people think that's no big deal, but not me. So, to TSgt Rey Gonzalez, SMSgt Ron Sipe, and SrA Alley, thank you! To those MTIs who are doing the job today, thank you, not just for what you do for our Air Force, but for who you are/will be to Airmen and Guardians from whom you may never hear. To those who will whine and gripe about MTIs being too mean, go away, we don't have time for you. Thank you for being so generous with your time that you would spend it bearing from an old coot like me today. If you ever look over your shoulder and see me behind you, it's because I have your back.

Respectfully,

Col (Ret.) Michael (Mick) Humphrey, USAF



## Fiesta fist bump

by Agnes Koterba

Navy diver and Italian Defense Language Institute English Language Center student, Pietro Stipa, interacts with parade goers at the annual Fiesta Flambeau parade in San Antonio, Texas, April 29, 2023. DLIELC International Military Students and volunteers walked roughly 2.5 miles through the streets of downtown San Antonio experiencing and learning the rich history of just one-of-the-many Fiesta events.

# A Final Reunion

Commentary by Chris Dion, Program Analyst, U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Retired

by Christa D'Andrea and Vanessa Adame

On the early morning of May 5, 2023, as the historic town of San Antonio began to rise in preparation for the celebration of Cinco De Mayo, a band of warriors journeyed southward to the Gateway to the Air Force for a celebration of their own.

This was not their first visit to the crucible where Airmen are made and Defenders are born, nor were they alone in their journey. They traveled here this day accompanied by beloved wives they had met and married since coming here as young men so long ago.

Here in this place called Lackland, these men in their youth had answered their nation's call.

Here they had become Airmen. Here they had become Defenders. Here they had become K9! In this place they were trained to work as one, a seamless pairing of man and beast dedicated to the security of the forces.

From here they were sent to a place, many of them had never heard of before -- Vietnam. They became members of a special fraternity called the 366th Security Police Squadron K9 assigned to Da Nang. Their time here together created a bond of brotherhood spoken of in the writings of poets, playwrights, philosophers, and kings.

It was this bond that brought them once more to this place now called JBSA-Lackland. Their trip here was coordinated by the 37th TRW Public Affairs office and the Airman Heritage Foundation who saw it as a great honor to serve those who had served us and blazed a trail for others to follow.



Their first stop here would be the Transportation Security Administration Canine Training Center where they learned the history of the National Explosive Detection Canine Team Program which began in 1972, and had been a part of the 341st Training Squadron Department of Defense Military Working Dog Training School. They were also given a demonstration of Passenger Screening Canines in a simulated airport environment complete with role players as passengers.

After seeing how the place that had trained them had created a whole new entity responsible for airline travel around the nation and the standard around the globe, they next traveled to their alma mater, the 341st TRS. Here they were briefed on training techniques and shown the inner workings of the kennels and the breeding facility, ending their time here by meeting the newest future canines living in the whelping facility.

Famished from a day full of relived memories, stories of then and now, and the placement of many footsteps of familiar ground, they stopped to rest at the Gateway Club for lunch before continuing their journey. Once filled and refreshed they traveled to the Security Forces



## Reunion cont.

Museum and learned that their career field was unique in that it was the only one with its own museum.

Inside they met a fellow warrior in Col. Mel Grover who had chewed similar dirt as they had in his time at Tan Son Nhut; and Airman Ken Neal a Sentry Dog Handler who served in Thailand during the war. These two warriors provided an all access tour of the Museum to include the kennel of MWD Nemo, hero of Tan Son Nhut which stands today just outside the museum doors.

After bidding farewell to the museum and its staff, these warriors and their wives mounted the bus for one last stop. It was a stop that they had looked forward to since their days of service. Not one of them had ever forgotten the furry warriors they served with and the honor bestowed upon them in being allowed to hold the leash. Thus, it was a great joy for them to end their day at the U.S. Military Working Dog Teams National Monument and to see the "Never Forgotten Fountain" that is dedicated as part of the Monument to all the Vietnam Handlers and the Canines they left behind.

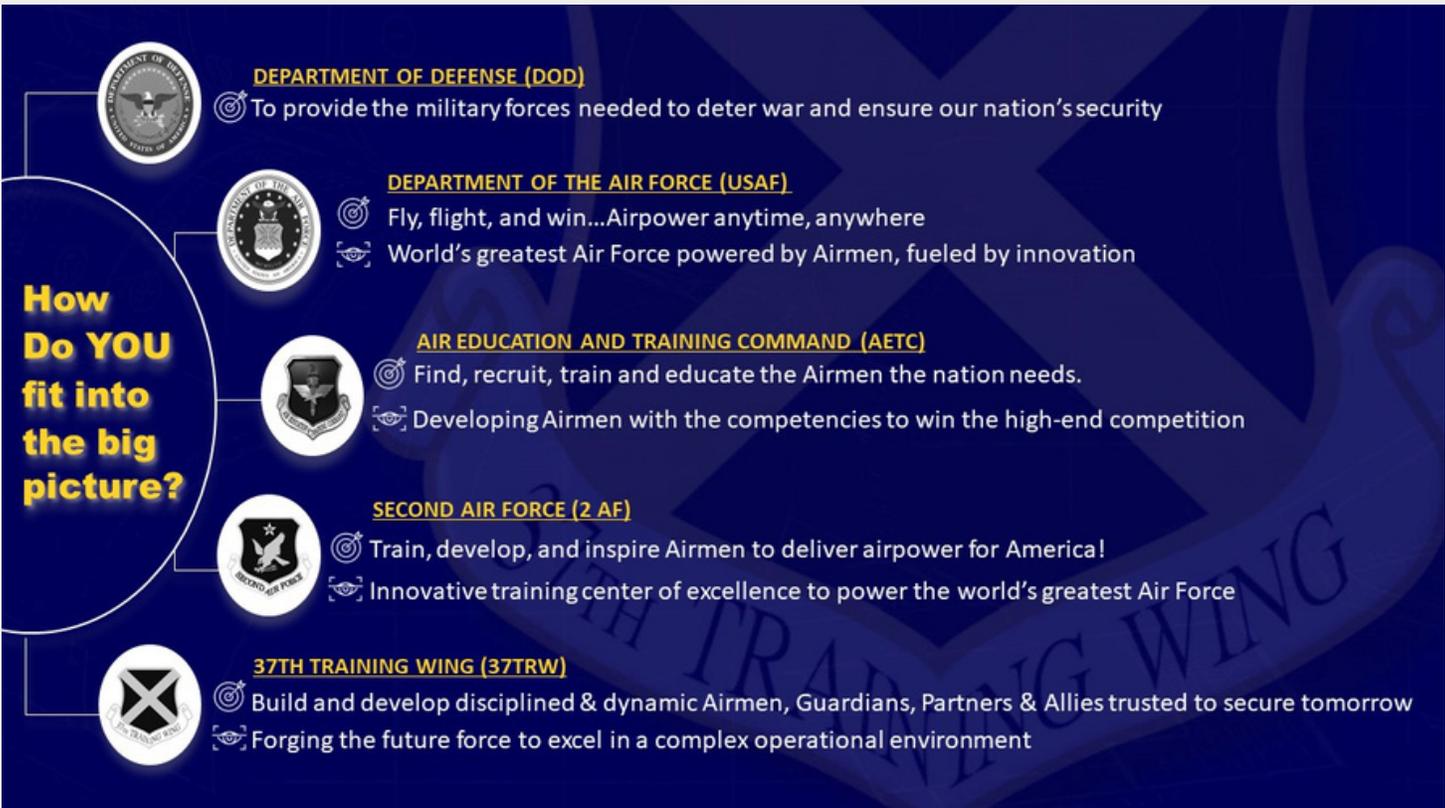
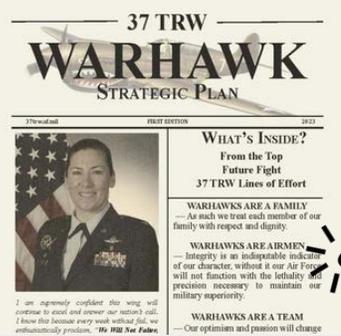
Here they learned a truth that lightened a burden many had carried since leaving Vietnam behind. They learned that because of them, their tireless efforts, and the stories they had shared, that never again would an MWD ever be left behind by the U.S. Military.

So, with the setting of the sun these comrades left a patch of dirt in the South Texas Plains where one can still hear the warriors call "Remember the Alamo!" It is the place where Teddy Roosevelt and over a thousand Rough Riders left for San Juan Hill many to never return. It is also the place where this band of brothers, known as the 366th SPS K9, began their own chapter in history and joined the lineage of warrior brotherhoods born in Texas.



**Aligning mission/goals/objectives in any organization is part of mission effectiveness.**

**Be sure you've read, and understand, the 37th Training Wing's Strategic Plan. Click the photo to access it.**



|                                       |   |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <p><b><u>37 TRW HOME PAGE</u></b></p> | <p><b><u>WING EVENTS CALENDAR</u></b></p> | <p><b><u>WARHAWK SOLUTIONS</u></b></p> | <p><b><u>WARHAWK UNIVERSITY</u></b></p> |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|---|

**RECURRING EVENTS SUPPORTING 37 TRW LINES OF EFFORT**

| <b><u>CULTURE</u></b>  | <b><u>PEOPLE</u></b>   | <b><u>MISSION</u></b>  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>First Friday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateway Club @ 1530 – All Warhawks and spouses are invited</li> </ul> <p><b>Squadron Commander Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wing CR – 3rd Friday @ 1400</li> </ul> <p><b>Airman's Coin Ceremony</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRC - Wed @ 1000</li> </ul> <p><b>BMT Graduation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parade Field – Thurs @ 0900</li> </ul> | <p><b>Warhawk Coffee Tawk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotating Locations – 1st Friday @ 0800</li> <li>All are invited</li> </ul> <p><b>MTL Troop Tawk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotating Locations – 2nd Friday</li> </ul> <p><b>MTI Troop Tawk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotating Locations – 3rd Friday</li> </ul> <p><b>Podium Instructor Tawk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotating Locations – 4th Friday</li> </ul> | <p><b>Quarterly Command Team Calls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Times/locations vary</li> </ul> <p><b>Wing Staff Meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wing CR– Tues @ 0830</li> </ul> <p><b>Wing CIMB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wing CR – Tues @ 1000</li> </ul> <p><b>RO Brief</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IAAFA Auditorium - Wed @ 1400</li> </ul> <p><b>Wing Visits/Airman's Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rotating Locations - Fri @ 1000</li> </ul> |