

AFTERBURNER

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AFTERBURNER

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Tech. Sgt. Roberto Ortiz, an Engineering Craftsman, 144th Civil Engineer Squadron places concrete pavers to create a footpath at a school near Chisinau, Moldova. The 144th CES completed a variety of projects meant to improve conditions for school children in Moldova. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler)

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Commander's Corner

By Col. Reed Drake

144th Fighter Wing Commander



The UEI has come and gone, and you knocked it out of the park. THANK YOU. Thank you for getting down to business and putting your nose to the grindstone and showing the ACC/IG who we are and what we are made of. But that is not the most impressive part of the evaluation. What impresses me most is that you didn't show off all the Wing programs and your great work ethic because the IG was here. You showed off your work ethic because that is who we are. That is what we do. We work hard each and EVERY day because we are the best. As the IG team left the base they were truly impressed with everything about the 144th Fighter Wing. The team chief said that this was one of the best ANG bases he has visited.

But staying on top isn't easy. To stay at the top and maintain peak efficiency, we have to continue

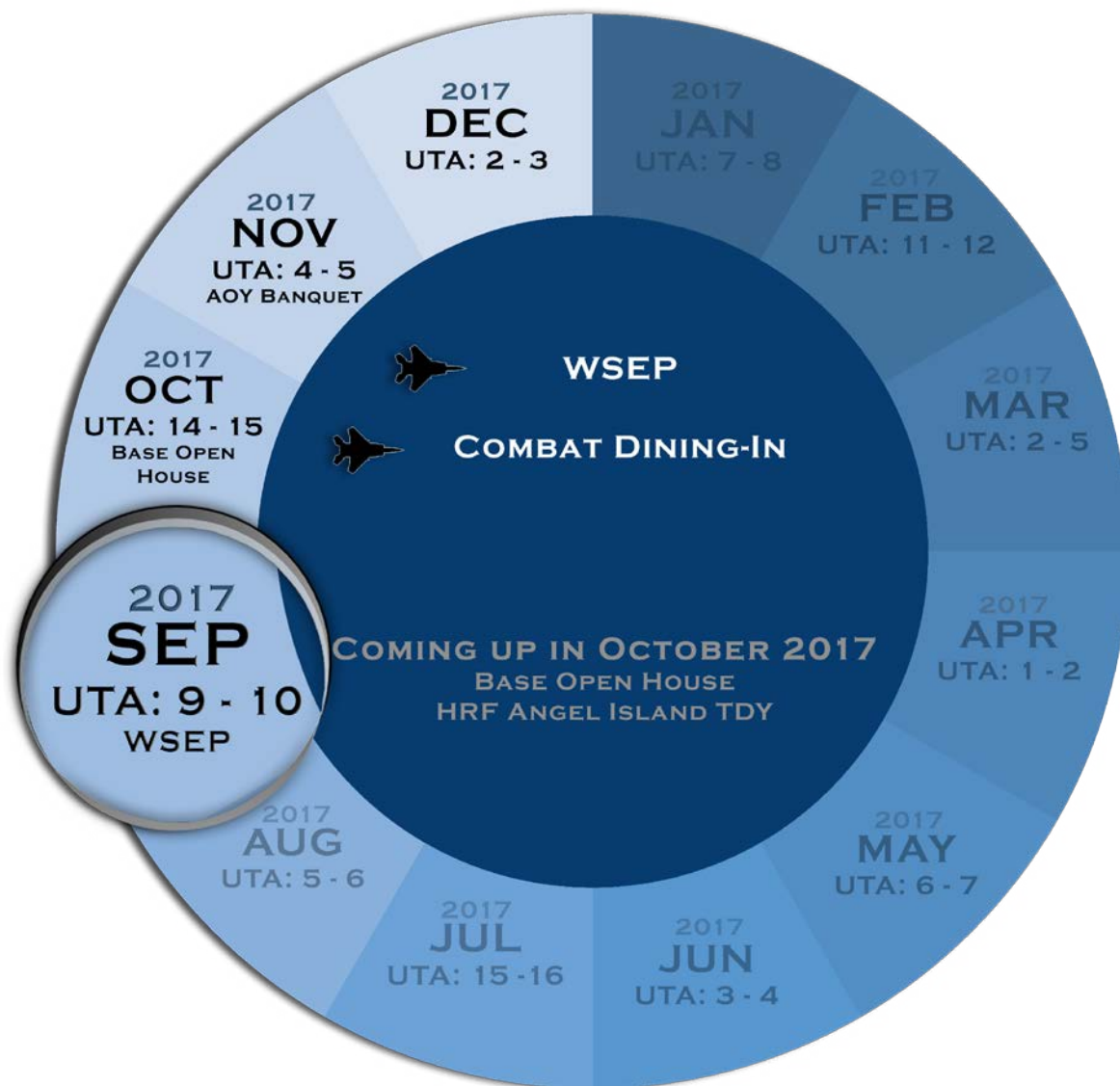
working hard. Now is not the time to rest on our laurels. The first thing we need to do is fix the deficiencies the IG identified. The team found areas that need some attention and the onus is on us to fix them. Now that the UEI results are official I am going to ask each of you to do two things. First, I want you to read the report and find the positive comments. You do a great job and you came through with a team win. Enjoy the moment.

Secondly, and maybe a little more difficult, is to read the report again and focus on the deficiencies. These deficiencies won't get fixed by themselves so I need you to focus on those areas. Reading the report and thinking it is someone else's responsibility doesn't help and that is not the team effort or the culture we have built. Just like every day operations, when

someone sees an area that needs fixing or a person in need of assistance, we dive in and help. That's what I'm asking of you now. Take ownership of "the fix" and make us even better than what we already are.

Just like the professional athlete who puts in endless hours every day honing their skills. It's exactly what you do, but you do it on an even grander scale. Why do we do it? Because, unlike the elite professional athlete who can lose every once in a while, losing is not an option for us. Losing is not an option when it comes to defending our nation. All your hard work and dedication doesn't go unnoticed and I couldn't be more proud of the 144th Fighter Wing and each of you for what you provide to this great country.

THANK YOU!! Keep up the outstanding work!



Upcoming Events & Announcements

Legal

- Legal Assistance is available on UTA weekends at the following times:
- Article 137 briefings held in the Chapel Sat. at 3 p.m.
- Sun. 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., walk-ins are available for deploying service members.
- Please visit our website:
<https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil/lass/lass.html>
to receive a ticket number to bring with you to your appointment.

144th Fighter Wing Enlisted Council Town Hall Meeting

- Sun., Sept. 10, at 3:00 p.m. at the DFAC
- The Amn/NCO and Senior Enlisted Councils are hosting a town hall event aimed at understanding what you want to see from us! Join us for:
- A quick introduction to the councils.
- A review of topics discussed at the last Town Hall.
- Open mic where you can present your comments, suggestions, and questions.
- Immediately following the event snacks and refreshments will be available.
- Adult beverages sponsored by the Senior Enlisted Council for those of appropriate age!

9-11 Run Ol' Glory 5k

- Come join us on Mon., Sept. 11 at 7:00 a.m. at Woodward Park for an Ol' Glory run/walk 5k.
- Bring your flag and let's have a great run. Military service flag or Ol' Glory. No sports teams please.
- Join us for breakfast afterwards at Batter Up pancakes on 8029 N. Cedar Ave. in Fresno.
- Meet at the Japanese Garden Parking lot. We will run/walk the Lewis E. Eaton trail.



U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Wyatt Rapier, a Power Pro Apprentice, with the 144th Civil Engineer Squadron installs floor trim on a newly tiled floor at a kindergarten school on the outskirts of Chisinau, Moldova. Airmen from the 144th CES traveled to the nation of Moldova, nestled between Ukraine and Romania, to participate in a Humanitarian and Civil Affairs Deployment for Training where they made a multitude of safety and structural improvements to two kindergartens outside of the capital city of Chisinau. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler)

Moldova School Restoration

By Master Sgt. David Loeffler

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova - Over thirty California Air National Guardsmen from the 144th Civil Engineer Squadron traveled over 6,300 miles to lend their expertise to a much needed restoration project of two schools near the capital of the tiny landlocked nation.

Flanked on the East by Ukraine and to the West by Romania, Moldova is a country blessed with dark, rich agricultural land and has a long history of influence by the many nations that have held interests in the republic.

The Humanitarian and Civil Affairs Deployment for Training mission gave the civil engineering team an opportunity to put their skills into action and also provided NCOs and CE leadership a chance to test their leadership skills.

“The whole reason we are here is to support the country of Moldova and lend them our expertise and skill sets to complete two school houses,”

said Staff Sgt. Jose Rodriguez, a Structural Journeyman of the 144th CES. “It was a great experience. The Moldovan people really appreciated the work we did and the skills we are brought to the table. The mission proved to be a great thing for both countries.”

The team overcame many challenges to include untrue walls, floors and ceilings of the building built in the soviet era. Tools taken for granted back at home were replaced with ingenuity and resourcefulness as the nearest “big box” store simply didn’t exist.

“We arrived to a school in need. It’s probably much like a school my grandmother went to when she was a child,” stated Tech Sgt. Roberto Ortiz, an Engineering Assistant with the 144th CES. “I have visited a school in Mexico where my mother went and it was a lot like this, where they had a limited amount of resources. Here, we made it better for the children and I think she would appreciate that. She would appreciate

(continue on pg. 5)



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Raymond Gipaya, a Structural Specialist, with the 144th Civil Engineer Squadron trues a soviet era wall prior to tiling at a school near Chisinau, Moldova. (US Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler)



Airmen from the 144 Civil Engineer Squadron prepare a walkway where concrete pavers will be installed so that school children from the outskirts of Chisinau, Moldova can meet their daily requirement of outdoor activity regardless of weather conditions. The 144th CES traveled to the nation of Moldova to participate in a Humanitarian and Civil Affairs Deployment for Training. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler)



U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Michael Scott, the Chief of Operations for the 144th Civil Engineer Squadron, observes as two Airmen from the 144th CES install ceiling tiles at a kindergarten on the outskirts of Chisinau, Moldova. The 144th CES traveled to the nation of Moldova to participate in a Humanitarian and Civil Affairs Deployment for Training where they made a multitude of safety and structural improvements to two kindergartens. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler)

(continued from pg. 4) our role in helping them out and making things better for the children - and for the future.”

The thirty man team from Fresno, Calif. split up between two schools that desperately needed repairs and refurbishment. At the school in the village of Gratiesti the team focused on providing over 650 linear feet of walkway to allow the school children to participate in their mandatory 60 minutes of daily physical activity, no matter the weather conditions. They also placed efforts to install baseboards for the newly laid floors and installed safety covers for the steam radiators - the only source of heat for the classrooms.

“It made me feel good to be a part of this because you can see that the children did not have that much. To help them out and give them something new and something to come back to feels really good,” stated Ortiz.

At the village of Hoboka school the team upgraded the classroom lighting to LED lighting and installed drop-in ceilings throughout the school, alleviating a major concern of the old ceiling dropping on the children during class.

“We arrived fully motivated and fully ready to go,” said Master Sgt. Adolph Dominguez, the project

manager for the mission. “Everyone was eager to jump in and help out with any task they were asked to preform. It was an amazing combination and it all came together at the end.”

The HCA-DFT indeed took the Airmen out of their comfort zone and their day-to-day environment.

“This was a great opportunity, because typically my job with the fire department is fire prevention and emergency calls,” said Staff Sgt. Bradley Peyton, a firefighter with the 144th Fighter Wing Fire Department. “Travelling to a different country was very beneficial for myself and others because we get to go outside of our normal scope of practice. For example I helped with tile work, not fire protection, so it’s gave me an opportunity to hone in different skills, making me more of a valuable asset for the 144th and also gave me a chance to help out the community and the students in Moldova. It goes a lot further than just throwing money at something to actually come out and work. Teachers also came out and helped us. They did other projects and worked alongside us. I know everybody benefited from this. We are able to walk a little taller, with our heads up higher thinking how we improved the schools.”

Toys for Moldova

By Master Sgt. David Loeffler

Chisinau, Republic of Moldova - Airmen from the 144th Civil Engineer Squadron traveled to the tiny landlocked nation of Moldova, nestled between Ukraine and Romania, to participate in a Humanitarian and Civil Affairs Deployment for Training where they made a multitude of safety and structural improvements to two kindergartens outside of the capital city of Chisinau. The team traveled over 6,300 miles from their home base of Fresno, Calif. in late July and completed the mission in mid-Aug.

In addition to their regular mission, the Airmen from the 144th CES were able to raise funds to purchase much needed school supplies for two schools in the outskirts of Chisinau.

"My wife is a teacher and I know at the start of the year I often buy supplies for the class. I figured if we have to do that in America, most likely here in Moldova there's a greater need for supplies for the schools," said Staff Sgt. Adam Higareda, 144th CES work control specialist. "The least that we could do was bring extra money and help them purchase some much needed school supplies."

The funds were used to purchase everything from hula hoops to classroom furniture which was assembled by the team of engineers as an additional duty after they completed much of the normal scope of work well ahead of schedule.

"The money came from a fund-raiser that we had on base. We're able to raise about \$1,300. Personally, I think it's a good thing that this mission happened and as far as raising the money goes, I think it's a very small gesture that I hope will go a long way in building a good

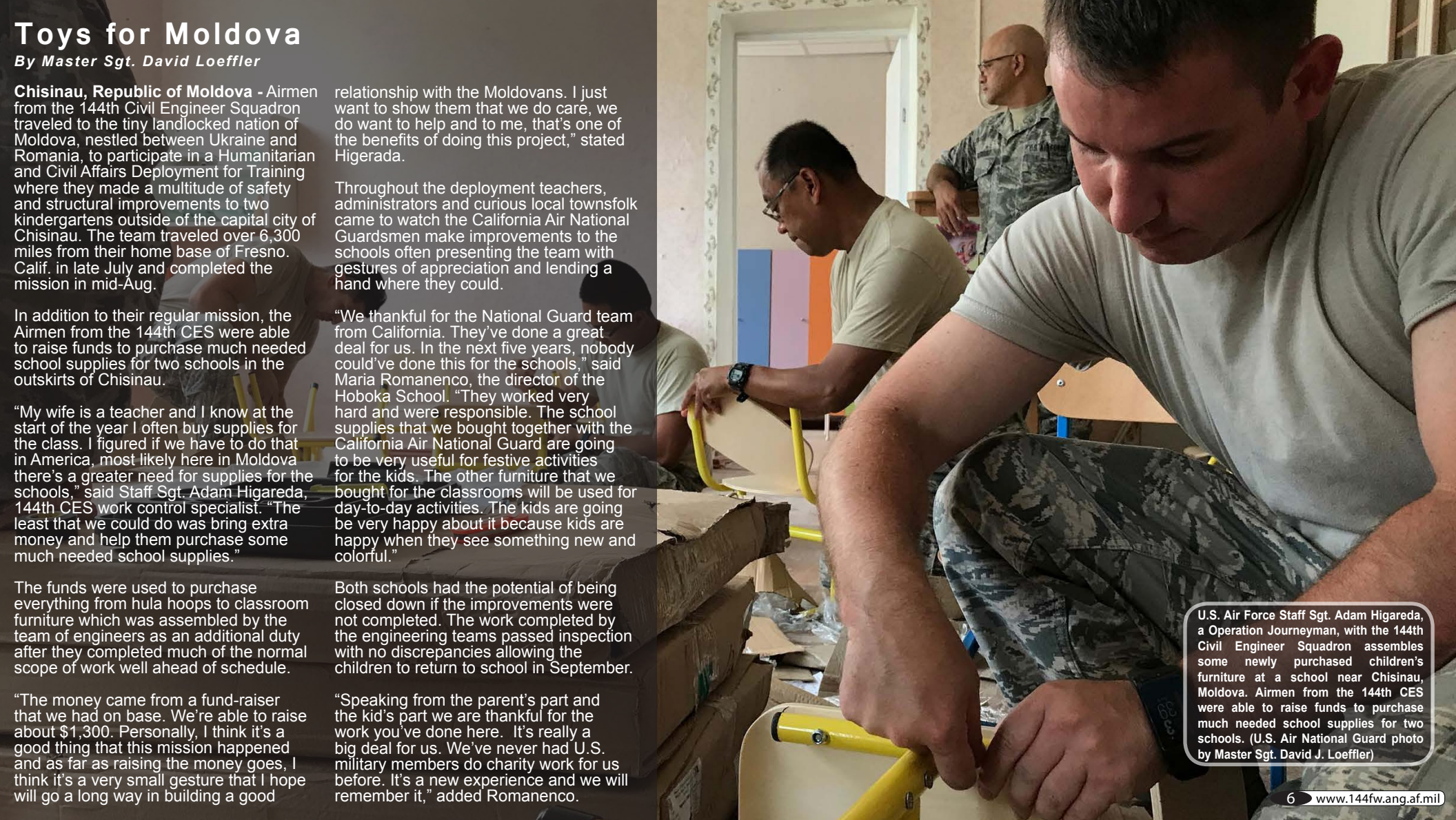
relationship with the Moldovans. I just want to show them that we do care, we do want to help and to me, that's one of the benefits of doing this project," stated Higerada.

Throughout the deployment teachers, administrators and curious local townsfolk came to watch the California Air National Guardsmen make improvements to the schools often presenting the team with gestures of appreciation and lending a hand where they could.

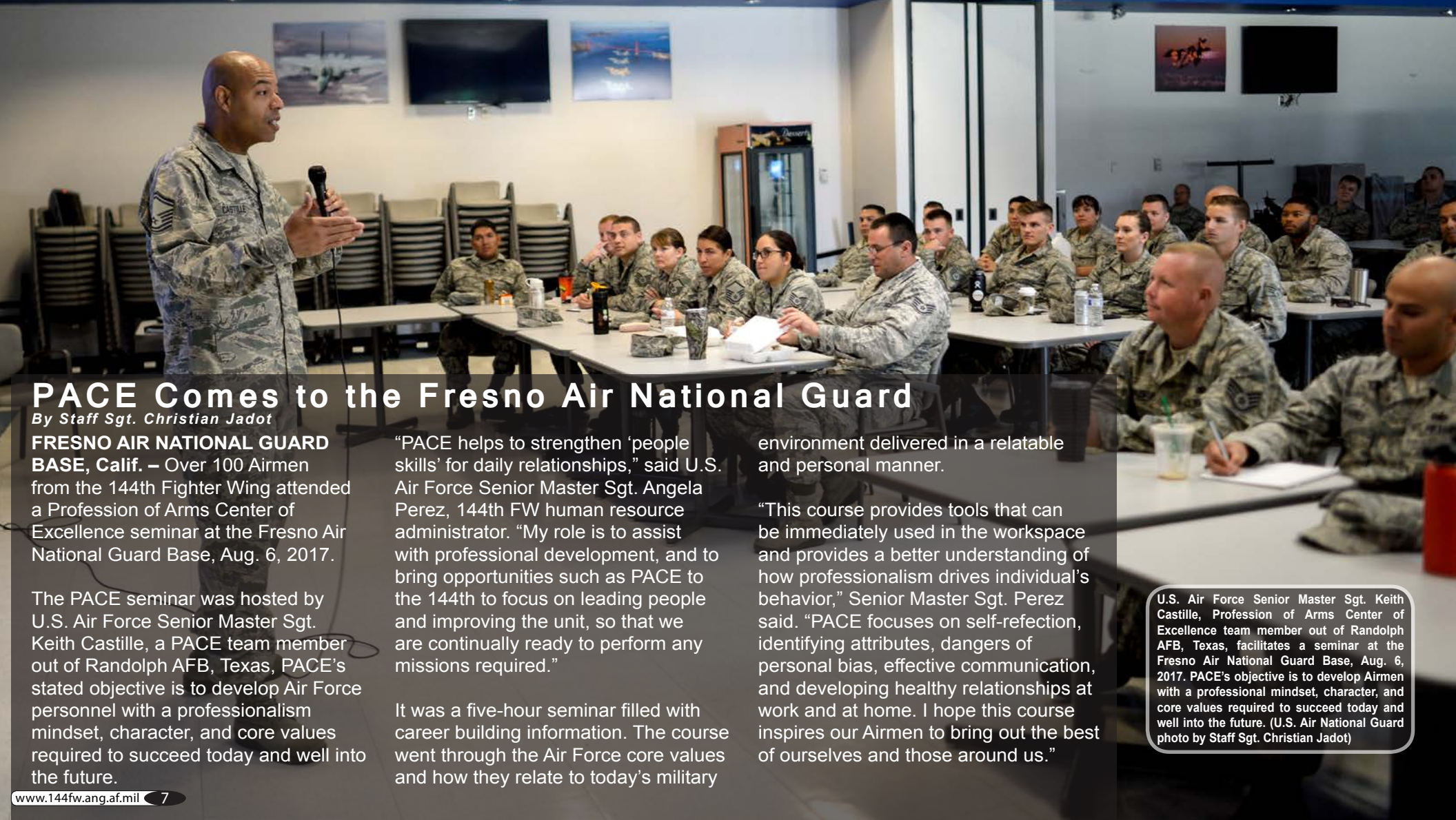
"We thankful for the National Guard team from California. They've done a great deal for us. In the next five years, nobody could've done this for the schools," said Maria Romanenco, the director of the Hoboka School. "They worked very hard and were responsible. The school supplies that we bought together with the California Air National Guard are going to be very useful for festive activities for the kids. The other furniture that we bought for the classrooms will be used for day-to-day activities. The kids are going to be very happy about it because kids are happy when they see something new and colorful."

Both schools had the potential of being closed down if the improvements were not completed. The work completed by the engineering teams passed inspection with no discrepancies allowing the children to return to school in September.

"Speaking from the parent's part and the kid's part we are thankful for the work you've done here. It's really a big deal for us. We've never had U.S. military members do charity work for us before. It's a new experience and we will remember it," added Romanenco.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Adam Higareda, a Operation Journeyman, with the 144th Civil Engineer Squadron assembles some newly purchased children's furniture at a school near Chisinau, Moldova. Airmen from the 144th CES were able to raise funds to purchase much needed school supplies for two schools. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. David J. Loeffler)



PACE Comes to the Fresno Air National Guard

By Staff Sgt. Christian Jadot

FRESNO AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Calif. – Over 100 Airmen from the 144th Fighter Wing attended a Profession of Arms Center of Excellence seminar at the Fresno Air National Guard Base, Aug. 6, 2017.

The PACE seminar was hosted by U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Keith Castille, a PACE team member out of Randolph AFB, Texas, PACE's stated objective is to develop Air Force personnel with a professionalism mindset, character, and core values required to succeed today and well into the future.

"PACE helps to strengthen 'people skills' for daily relationships," said U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Angela Perez, 144th FW human resource administrator. "My role is to assist with professional development, and to bring opportunities such as PACE to the 144th to focus on leading people and improving the unit, so that we are continually ready to perform any missions required."

It was a five-hour seminar filled with career building information. The course went through the Air Force core values and how they relate to today's military

environment delivered in a relatable and personal manner.

"This course provides tools that can be immediately used in the workspace and provides a better understanding of how professionalism drives individual's behavior," Senior Master Sgt. Perez said. "PACE focuses on self-reflection, identifying attributes, dangers of personal bias, effective communication, and developing healthy relationships at work and at home. I hope this course inspires our Airmen to bring out the best of ourselves and those around us."

U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Keith Castille, Profession of Arms Center of Excellence team member out of Randolph AFB, Texas, facilitates a seminar at the Fresno Air National Guard Base, Aug. 6, 2017. PACE's objective is to develop Airmen with a professional mindset, character, and core values required to succeed today and well into the future. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Christian Jadot)

COMBAT DINING IN HISTORY AND RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

For those of you attending a function of this type for the first time please do not be intimidated by the customs associated with this traditional ceremony. We are here to have fun! Our purpose and goal is to enjoy a relaxing evening of esprit-de-corps and camaraderie in the company of your peers. From pre-Christian Roman legions, to second century Viking warlords, to King Arthur's Knights in the sixth century, who would feast to honor military victories, individual and unit achievements. Leading to the days of antiquity, military forces have come together for great feasts to celebrate victories, accomplishments, and breakthroughs in acquisition reform. British soldiers brought the custom to colonial America, where it was borrowed by George Washington's continental Army. Our modern Air Force Dining In tradition began with General Hap Arnold's wing-dings, huge parties to strengthen the close bonds enjoyed by the Air Force and their British colleagues during the Second World War. Of course, whereas the Dining In represents the most formal aspect of military social life, its primary purpose is to enhance morale and esprit-de-corps of a military unit. A "COMBAT" Dining In takes this idea to the extreme, not being so formal but still encompassing esprit-de-corps and the traditions of a Dining In. So enjoy yourselves to the fullest! Accept and take pride in your role being part of these military traditions.

1. Thou shall NEVER question any decisions made by the President; he/she is ALWAYS right
2. Thou shall be present at the social hour before the President arrives and make every effort to meet all guests
3. Thou shall ensure thy clothing is militant in nature, deviations from 36-2903 (in good taste) are encouraged
4. Thou shall not smoke in the combat area
5. Thou shall not take his/her place at the table until the President so directs
6. Thou shall not be late. Should a member be late, he/she must go to the President, offer his/her apologies and request permission to take a seat
7. Thou shall not prop elbows on the table when eating
8. Thou shall direct all points of order to the Sergeants at Arms, or SAA
9. Thou shall ensure thy cup is always charged when toasting, and thou shall ONLY toast with water in memory of POW/MIA
10. Thou shall keep toasts and comments within limits of good taste (no profanity) and mutual respect, however, good natured humor is ENCOURAGED
11. Thou shall not talk about work
12. Thou shall express approval by tapping dog tag, or pound fist on the table. Clapping of hands will not be tolerated
13. Thou shall be permitted to initiate combat whenever alarm red is declared and prepare to defend your combat area
14. Thou shall cease combat as soon as alarm green is declared
15. If a member of the mess calls for a "cease fire" respect their wishes. Members serving an official capacity (photographers) are protected from combat under LOAC
16. Thou shall come to battle prepared for war with all necessary gear during obstacle course
17. Thou shall not move to the ammunition resupply area unless released by the President to reload, if so you will be de-armed by SAA
18. Thou shall not point with thy finger for it is of poor taste
19. Thou shall not over-indulge thyself in alcoholic beverages
20. Warriors under the legal drinking age of 21 must wear a reflective belt
21. Thou shall have thy RMO (Round Metal Object) accessible at all times
22. When the mess adjourns, rise and wait for the President and head table to leave



144th Mobile App Function: Groups

By Senior Master Sgt. Christopher Drudge

There is a powerful new feature on our app. It's called "Groups." It's the easiest and fastest way to connect and instantly communicate with any type of group within the 144th Fighter Wing.

There are several features within the app itself to include: messages, schedules, instant updates, photos, and event details.

Creating your own group is a simple process, but still is reviewed by Public Affairs to ensure that all operational security measures are kept within AFI standards.

The groups that are created are private and members can interact without exchanging contact information.

To create a group in the 144th's app, you must first have the App downloaded onto your mobile device. Once you have the 144FW app, you can open groups and select the create group button. The creator of the group will receive a code that all group members must have to join the group.

Disseminating pertinent information to all our Airmen is the goal of this function. Communication is one of the biggest concerns on this installation and we're hoping this part of the app will alleviate some of those concerns.

As always, this app is a tool for everyone to use. If there is a function you'd like to see or a recommendation you'd like to put in, please contact Public Affairs.



NORAD Commander Visits the 144th

By Senior Master Sgt. Chris Drudge

FRESNO AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Calif. – U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. R. Scott Williams, Commander, CONUS NORAD Region, 1st Air Force, visited with Airmen of the California Air National Guard's 144th Fighter Wing Aug. 6, 2017.

Lt. Gen. Williams was at the 144th FW in conjunction with his review of the aerospace control alert mission.

"I like to get and out and see how each unit is operating, find out strengths, weaknesses, any areas I can help, and get assurance that they are ready to launch and carry out the mission on a moment's notice. I'm

absolutely assured that Fresno can do that," stated Lt. Gen. Williams.

While at the 144th FW, Williams presented his coin to some of Fresno's finest Airmen. When asked how the 144th was doing, Williams stated that his assessment of the wing is excellent. The wing leadership is outstanding, the senior NCOs have ensured that morale is sky high, and they are funded, equipped, and ready to go.

"I'm glad I came. The 144th Airmen absolutely knocking it out of the park," Williams said. "The morale is high, the strength is high, readiness is high, they are

thinking about what could be next, how can they best defend America, how can they best deploy, and how can they be ready to do whatever the country needs them to go do."

Knowing high level leadership recognizes the outstanding work at the Fresno Air National Guard Base reaffirms the wing commander's confidence in his Airmen and their mission.

"Having someone at Lt. Gen. Williams' level personally recognize the 144th FW and its Airmen proves that we are at the peak of our game," said Col. Reed Drake, 144th FW commander.

U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. R. Scott Williams (middle), Commander, CONUS NORAD Region, 1st Air Force, and Chief Master Sgt. Richard King (far left), Command Chief Master Sgt., CONUS NORAD Region, 1st Air Force, pause for a photo opportunity with Airmen from the 144th Mission Support Group, Aug. 6, 2017 at the 144th Fighter Wing, Calif. Air National Guard. (Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Chris Drudge)



#BeThere

Your actions could save a life

#BeThere

By Stephanie Grant

It is important to BeThere for your fellow wingmen every day of the month and every month of the year! However, September is a special month where we can take time to dig deeper into suicide prevention strategies and consider both individually and collectively what we can do to BeThere for each other!

We need to pay attention to those around us as well as consider our own well-being. Noticing subtle changes in behavior and seeking support is important! Some of the warning signs can include posting negative thoughts on social media, appearing anxious or stressed, acting out of sorts, or struggling with a relationship.

According to Dr. Keita Franklin, the Director of the Defense Suicide Prevention Office, "Suicide is the culmination of complex interactions between biological, social, economic, cultural, and psychological factors operating at the individual, community, and societal levels." Take time to notice the warning signs. If you believe that you or your friend is at risk it may be hard to reach out particularly if you are worried about potential consequences for seeking help or you are worried about your friend's reaction. It is important to remember that seeking help reduces

consequences and mitigates negative outcomes. In fact, research shows that seeking help early greatly reduces the magnitude of the problem.

There are many choices for seeking support during difficult times. I am available as your DPH full-time at 559-453-5461 or Stephanie.grant9.civ@mail.mil. The Military Crisis Line is 1-800-273-8255. The Department of Defense has established the BeThere Peer Support Call and Outreach Center to provide Active Duty, Army Guard, Air National Guard, Reserves, and their family members with peer support for everyday challenges 24/7. The Center's peer specialists are Veterans and military spouses who combine their personal military-life experience with training to offer support with the right resources at the right time, including follow-up support to ensure resolution. Their motto is "We've been there, now we're here for you!"

Call: 844-357-PEER (7337)
Text: 480-360-6188

Chat live or visit: <https://www.BeTherePeerSupport.org>



@DoDPeerSupport



@BeTherePeerSupport



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Miguel Saldana from the 144th Fighter Wing's Security Forces Squadron participates in Combat Leaders Course as a member of the opposition force Aug. 16, 2017. This training is used to challenge and develop the students' leadership skills. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Wright)

144th Security Forces go to Texas for the Combat Leaders Course

By Master Sgt. Jimmy Schiotis

CAMP BULLIS, TEXAS - Any seasoned combat soldier, marine or even law enforcement officer will tell you that there are three keys to success in a firefight; solid tactics, good leadership, and a little bit of luck. Camp Bullis is home to the Security Forces Combat Leaders Course, a course that hones in on the good leadership skills. Over the course of the last year the 144th Security Forces Squadron has been supporting this course by sending Airmen to act as Opposing Forces or OPFOR for the course's field training exercise. Our support has directly enhanced

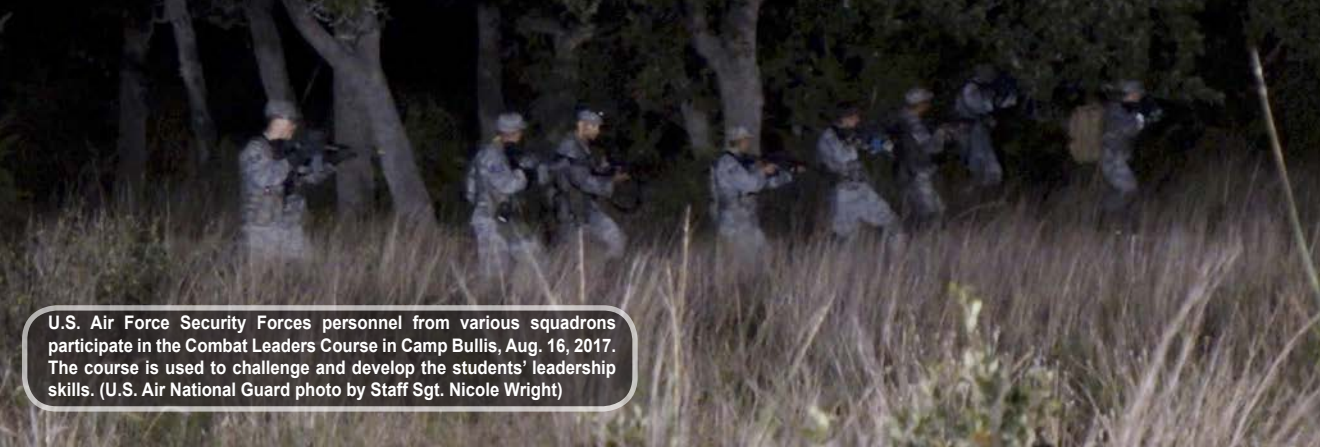
student learning, directly influencing the capabilities of these small unit leaders in the field. Not only does our support of the course enhance student learning, it enhances our 144th SFS leadership capabilities as well.

The Combat Leaders Course, or CLC ("click") as it is known, provides vital squad level leadership experience to SFS Staff and Technical Sergeants. by providing them combat leadership experience in a training environment. These members are generally in charge of a squad in the field and often find

themselves in positions to lead small units in missions that have potential to, or do, end up in a firefight. The course begins by providing students a set of relevant tactics and giving them the opportunity to work together as a team and then, at random intervals throughout the course, leadership changes. This provides students an opportunity to plan, lead, and execute missions in a training environment, before they hit the chaos of the field. Their given mission for the day may be foot patrol, convoy, or to conduct operations in an urban environment and it may be a Staff Sergeants in charge of the

entire mission while Technical Sergeants take a back seat. Each of these training missions lead to the final cumulative event known as the FTX, or field training exercise.

This capstone event marks the end of the course and is 48 or so hours of chasing bad guys, repelling probes, and securing a piece of key terrain in the Camp Bullis landscape. It requires Airmen to put together everything they have learned and work as a team in a fluid and sleep deprived atmosphere. This is where having a good OPFOR *(continue on pg.13)*



U.S. Air Force Security Forces personnel from various squadrons participate in the Combat Leaders Course in Camp Bullis, Aug. 16, 2017. The course is used to challenge and develop the students' leadership skills. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Wright)



U.S. Air Force Security Forces personnel from various squadrons participate in the Combat Leaders Course in Camp Bullis, Texas Aug. 16, 2017. The course is used to challenge and develop the students' leadership skills. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Wright)

(continued from pg. 12) comes into play. During his Security Forces Officer School, our commander found out that the OPFOR section is hurting for people to conduct “bad guy” operations during this event. Since then, the 144th SFS have provided a steady stream of Airmen to Camp Bullis to act as OPFOR. These Airmen provide realism to the student’s FTX, giving them a better picture of combat chaos. It is difficult to make an enemy attack feel realistic to the students when you only have one or two people as OPFOR, but when you have five or so people you can actually emulate some of the tactics we see insurgents use downrange, split forces, and create chaos that forces leaders to act decisively.

Not only does this enhance the student’s experience, but it increases our Airmen’s capabilities as well. OPFOR has the opportunity to see things from the other side of the coin, to see how mistakes in leadership can cause a ripple effect or how poor planning looks to the bad guy. Conversely, we also get to see how well rehearsed tactics combined with good leadership and planning make it hard for the bad guy to get a leg up. Just like the friendly forces, OPFOR will spend hours planning and setting up for a fight that may only last minutes. Just when you think you have the perfect plan to split the forces and repel them, they do something or come from an angle you didn’t expect. These are the “ah-ha” moments for our 144 SFS Airmen, the chance to see how thinking outside of the box can disrupt the enemy.

These are lessons that our Airmen will carry with them through their careers, on both sides of the battle. Those students who have come to CLC will have a more enhanced experience while 144 SFS Airmen will get to see things from a different perspective. It is a win-win for both, one in which the CLC staff has repeatedly thanked the 144th SFS for supporting!



Courtesy photo by Senior Master Sgt. Richard Chavez

144th Participates in the 45th RAGBRAI Bicycle Race

By Tech. Sgt. Charles Vaughn

FRESNO AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Calif.—Two Airmen from the 144th Fighter Wing participated in the 45th annual Des Moines Register’s Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa, or RAGBRAI, along with approximately 150 other Air Force cycling team support members and riders.

Throughout the seven-day RAGBRAI, Master Sgt. Vincent Di Primo and Senior Master Sgt. Richard Chavez along with fellow Air Force Cycling Team members supported other cyclists by providing assistance along the 460 mile route. In addition to fixing flats, team members handled derailleurs, chain, seat post, cleat and other

mechanical issues. The team also rendered basic first aid and traffic assistance during medical emergencies.

“I assisted many cyclists with flats, broken chains, and other issues” said Di Primo. “Helping others is part of our lives and it reflects our core values of integrity, service before self, and excellence in all we do!”

RAGBRAI was started in 1973 as a six-day ride across the state of Iowa by two Des Moines Register columnists who invited a few friends along. It is held the last full week in July. It has now evolved into the world’s longest, largest and oldest rec-

reational bicycle event. With 8,500 week long riders, 1,500 daily riders, and countless “unofficial” riders, the roads and towns fill up, creating a one-of-a-kind experience. Although cycling is the unifying theme, diversity abounds—young and old, one seat, two seat, three seats and even no seat, spandex and cotton; creative jerseys and yes, even tutus—all pedaling the open road from one end of the state to the other.

This year, the AFCT shared their annual team dinner with members of Iowa’s “Dream Team,” which started in 1996 to give disadvantaged, inner-city youth the opportunity to ride RAGBRAI. The teen-

agers make a five-month commitment that provides them a unique opportunity to build relationships, achieve personal growth, and learn from adult mentors.

RAGBRAI provided AFCT members an opportunity to wear the Air Force emblem, as well as have meaningful exchanges with local citizens of the overnight hosting towns and the towns in between.

Many lasting connections were made with individuals from Iowa, other states, and other nations across the globe, such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and *(continue on pg. 15)*



Courtesy photo by Senior Master Sgt. Richard Chavez



Courtesy photo by Senior Master Sgt. Richard Chavez



Courtesy photo by Senior Master Sgt. Richard Chavez

(continued from pg. 14) Ukraine. Team members truly appreciated hearing, "Thank you Air Force!" nearly every minute of the ride."

"I heard nothing but great comments: "I Love you, Air Force!" "Air Force Rocks!" These positive comments remind us of why we do this," Di Primo said. "RAGBRAI participants call us guardians of the road. What else can you ask for? Great riding, food, and enjoying the company and experiences of others."

Of note, one highlight for the entire AFCT was when all 131 riders formed into a tight, two-by-two formation and rode into the final town where other riders stopped to cheer and local residents lined the street to applaud and thank not just the AFCT, but the entire Air Force for their efforts.

Even though each stop meant extra effort back on the bike to stay on schedule, these personal connections made the event. Other personal connections included taking time to chat with local families cheering riders on from their front yards, as well as chatting with children and passing out recruiting gear or swag (i.e. Air Force bracelets and stickers) to America's youth.

For anyone wanting to be part of RAGBRAI next year, please visit the Air Force Cycling Facebook page and www.afcycling.com. In addition, there are pictures and videos of the AFCT completing its 2017 RAGBRAI mission.

AFTERBURNER



Mission Statement

Federal Mission - The 144th Fighter Wing is to provide Air Superiority in support of worldwide joint operations as well as Air Defense of the United States. Additionally, the wing provides agile combat support, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to combatant commanders around the globe. The Wing also provides a variety of homeland defense capabilities to U.S. NORTHCOM.

State Mission - The 144th Fighter Wing provides a variety of Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) capabilities to the Governor of California. Primary contributions include Ready manpower, reconnaissance assets, response to chemical, biological and radiological attacks, security, medical, civil engineering and command and control.



U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. R. Scott Williams, Commander, CONUS NORAD Region, 1st Air Force, and Chief Master Sgt. Richard King, Command Chief Master Sgt., CONUS NORAD Region, 1st Air Force, present the Continental NORAD Region Aerospace Control Alert Maintainer of the Year Award to Tech. Sgt. Chance Babbitt, 144th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron alert crew chief, Aug. 6, 2017 at the 144th Fighter Wing, Calif. Air National Guard. Babbitt was selected from more than 300 other alert maintainers from across the country. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Chris Drudge)

Top 3 Priorities

1. BE READY TO DEPLOY AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.

All 144th Fighter Wing Airmen will be combat ready whenever the Combatant Commander calls or a deployment tasking is assigned.

2. BE READY TO PERFORM OUR STATE MISSION.

All Airmen must be ready when the Governor calls and needs the support of the 144th Fighter Wing.

3. CONTINUE ALERT OPERATIONS.

We have a 24/7/365 alert mission -- we must flawlessly continue to execute that mission.