

# AFTERBURNER

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# AFTERBURNER

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A U.S. Air Force F-15C assigned to the California Air National Guards 144th Fighter Wing takes off from Starokostiantyniv Air Base, Ukraine during the Clear Sky 2018 media day Oct. 12. Clear Sky 18 is the first large-scale, air-centric, multinational regional security exercise that United States Air Forces in Europe - Air Forces Africa has sponsored in eastern Europe since 2014. (U.S. Air National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Charles Vaughn)

# 144th's Newest Commanders



The 144th Fighter Wing would like to congratulate the two newest members of the command staff. Maj. Joe Carlos, newly appointed Security Forces Squadron commander, who came from the Force Support Squadron and Maj. Kevin Swayne, newly appointed Force Support Squadron commander, who came from the Logistics Readiness Squadron. Both assumption of command ceremonies were held over October UTA.

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# Chief's Corner

By Chief Master Sgt. James M. Kehoe

*144th Detachment 1*



As I look back this year on schedules, inspections, and deployments, I was thinking of the wing sponsored Family Day celebration. I am reminded of what family and the military means to me.

Military service is a proud tradition in my family; my father and his brother were both Marines and served in the Pacific during WWII, and their father served in the Army in France during WWI. It has been a great honor for me to carry on this legacy and to pass it on to my own family.

During my career I have had the privilege to serve this great nation with the next generation of family. My brother-in-law and I enlisted in the Air National

Guard under the “buddy system.” Fast forward twelve years and my oldest son also joined our unit. Since that time we have served missions, CONUS AND OCONUS, together under various engagements. Most notably, we served during Operation Noble Eagle in defense of our homeland after the tragedy of the September 11th attacks on our country. The Air National Guard was among the first to respond, flying Combat Air Patrols (CAPs) over New York City immediately after the attack and for eleven months following that day. My son was at tech school on September 11th and returned soon after. He joined me and his uncle on the flight line supporting the defense of our homeland. Over the next seventeen years we

deployed with our unit overseas several times to Qatar and Iraq. As wingmen, we have seen each other through dark times when my son’s childhood best friend and cherished member of our family, a Marine sniper, was killed in action.

As important, and sometimes more so, are our families who stay behind when we are deployed or training in remote places, and who support and sacrifice for us during UTAs when we miss family events. We owe a great deal of thanks for everything they do to keep life as normal as possible when sometimes that hill seems insurmountable. I know I can’t thank my wife and youngest son enough for holding the household together and for

sending care packages, and attending all the ceremonies and devoting so much of their time, so we could do our mission without fail.

This upcoming holiday season, please take the time and thank your loved ones for all their support so you can stay focused and ready to accomplish the mission, to be ready to deploy at a moment’s notice, to be ready to support the great State of California, and to continue Alert Operations 24/7x365 days a year.

# A Closer Look at Clear Sky 2018

By Maj. Jennifer Piggott

STAROKOSTIANTYNIV AIR BASE, UKRAINE –The 144th Fighter Wing made history October 6, 2018 when F-15C Eagles landed in Ukraine for the first time, but the men and women participating in Clear Sky 2018 continue to make history as this air-centric exercise brings many firsts for Ukrainians.

In 2011, the U.S. Air Force, leveraging the special relationship between Ukraine and the California Air National Guard, participated in Safe Skies, which was an air defense-focused exercise prior to the EuroCup. That exercise focused on security and safety, but Clear Sky 2018 is a whole different ball game in terms of complexity.

“We have taken massive steps to reach interoperability during this exercise,” said Maj. Gen. Clay Garrison, California Air National Guard commander and Clear Sky 2018 exercise director. “Clear Sky is leaps and bounds more comprehensive and extensive than our last air-centric exercise in 2011.”

Clear Sky 2018 is the first-ever joint multi-national exercise hosted by Ukraine and sponsored by U.S. Forces in Europe. The exercise primarily involves the U.S. Air Force and Ukrainian air force, but also includes seven other partner nations in a collective effort to bring Ukraine in line with NATO standards of interoperability.

“Ukraine asked us to come here and bring this exercise to them,” Garrison said. “NATO is the gold standard for security cooperation across the world because we have rules to ensure a high level of safety and realism while training together. Ukraine knows the only way they can be interoperable with NATO is to train to that standard, which is exactly what we are working towards and accomplishing with this exercise.”

*(continue on pg. 5)*

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 144th Fighter Wing, California Air National Guard, salute while the National Anthem is played during media day opening ceremonies at Clear Sky 2018, Oct. 12. Clear Sky 18 is the first large-scale, air-centric, multinational regional security exercise that United States Air Forces in Europe - Air Forces Africa has sponsored in eastern Europe since 2014. (U.S. Air National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Charles Vaughn)



The link that brings everything together for this exercise is U.S. European Command's State Partnership Program, which has allowed the state of California and Ukraine to work closely together for 25 years. These partnerships help foster relationships and build trust, with an ultimate goal of helping increase readiness and training for both nations.

"Over the past 25 years, California and Ukraine have become extremely cooperative, working functionally together," said Lt. Col. Robert Swertfager, State Partnership Program director for the California Air National Guard. "This exercise is a very distinct example of that cooperation and strong relationship."

Clear Sky showcased the strong bond between the U.S. and Ukraine and how far Ukrainian air force components have come since 2014.

"Ukraine is continuing to build their ability to operate with NATO and partner nation forces," said Maj. Gen. David Baldwin, California National Guard adjutant general. "Doing joint operations is very tough business, but being able to blend forces together and get the synergism for an effect that provides either deterrence or, if necessary, the ability to provide combat power is tough business, and Ukrainians are getting very good at it."

A key objective of Clear Sky 2018 is to increase interoperability between Ukraine, its regional partners, the U.S. Air Force, and other NATO nations.

"The more we can increase Ukraine's ability to interoperate with other nations, the more secure the



U.S. Air Force Maj. Gen. Clay Garrison, California Air National Guard commander, speaks with Senior Master Sgt. Troy Scott, 144th Maintenance Group production supervisor during the Clear Sky 2018 exercise at Starokostiantyniv Air Base, Ukraine, Oct. 11, 2018.



Pilots from the U.S. Air Force and Ukrainian air force greet each other during the opening ceremony for Clear Sky 2018, Oct. 8.



F-15C fighter jets from the California Air National Guard are secured for the evening at Starokostiantyniv Air Base, Ukraine.



U.S. Air Force Airmen from the 144th Fighter Wing prepare an F-15C Eagle for the morning launch on the second day of air operations at Starokostiantyniv Air Base, Ukraine, Oct. 10 as part of the Clear Sky 2018 exercise.

region becomes for both Ukraine and its neighbors," Swertfager said.

Clear Sky 2018 actually includes several different components: tactical airlift, aeromedical evacuation, pararescue, cyber defense, air sovereignty, and air-to-ground joint fire integration.

"This exercise was a daunting task and has been one of the most challenging deployments we have ever participated in, but keeping the combat capability moving is our sole responsibility," said Chief Master Sgt. Jose A. Salas, 144th Maintenance Group, California Air National Guard and a member of the exercise planning team.

"The primary goal is to provide combat air power and the men and women participating in this exercise have done just that," Salas said. "They have taken every challenge and executed flawlessly and in turn received invaluable training during this exercise. The Airmen are proud of what they have accomplished and we are extremely proud of all our Airmen, Ukrainian counterparts, and exercise participants."

Success was evident throughout Clear Sky, according to the exercise director.

"This is a country that has had their sovereignty violated," Garrison said. "Ukrainians value the relationship and partnership with the U.S., and we are committed to helping them maintain their territorial sovereignty and their ability to be a free nation. This exercise is a big deal, and it has not always been easy, but getting it done says a lot about our Airmen. I am incredibly proud."

# Trunk or Treat at the 144FW



For the second year in a row, the "Trunk or Treat" event was a great success. Thank you to Mrs. Karen Pearson-Melrose for coordinating the celebration along with all of our other volunteers. Special shout out to the Security Forces Squadron for making the event possible. The winner of the costume and set decoration contest was the Jurassic Park themed display. (Photos by Karen Melrose Photography)

# Finding New Ways to Celebrate after Significant Loss: Grieving Through the Holidays

By Stephanie Grant, LCSW, Director of Psychological Health

It may seem unfair and overwhelming to those of us that have suffered a significant loss during this holiday season. Traditions that were once comforting and familiar can stir-up feelings of sadness, anger, and confusion. On the other hand, for some, the idea of ditching the traditions brings feelings of loneliness and loss. When we are grieving, it is common to think about what our life was like before the loss. During the holiday season, this ever present state of “remembering” can be especially difficult. In the midst of these often conflicting and confusing emotions, there are ways you can make the holidays less overwhelming and stressful. You can discover ways to honor the memory of the person that died and create new meaningful traditions. Here are some suggestions and activities developed by grief expert DeCristofaro (2012). As we all experience grief in our way, take what is helpful to you.

**Acknowledge and embrace limitations.** Grief can be all-consuming, no matter the time of year. You may not want to or be able to do all the things you have done. Take time to explore what aspects of the holidays are more challenging than others for you and your family. Once you know which elements of the holidays are creating stress for you consider where you might be able to scale back or change. This might include shopping, decorating, sending cards, traveling, etc. Sometimes it may feel wrong or scary to say no to things you have said yes to in the past, but give yourself permission to

make the best choices for yourself and your family this year.

**Consider and celebrate different feelings and preferences.** Remember that grief is unique for everyone and includes each person’s preferences and needs. Talk about traditions that you want to keep as well as ideas for changing things.

**Be informed before attending events.** Who will be there, how long is it expected to last, do you need to do anything to prepare for it. Remember, it’s okay to attend, not attend, or only stop by for a short time.

**Ask for help, even when it’s hard to do.** Sometimes we worry about burdening others, but more often than not, they are eager to have an opportunity to contribute, but don’t know the best way to do so.

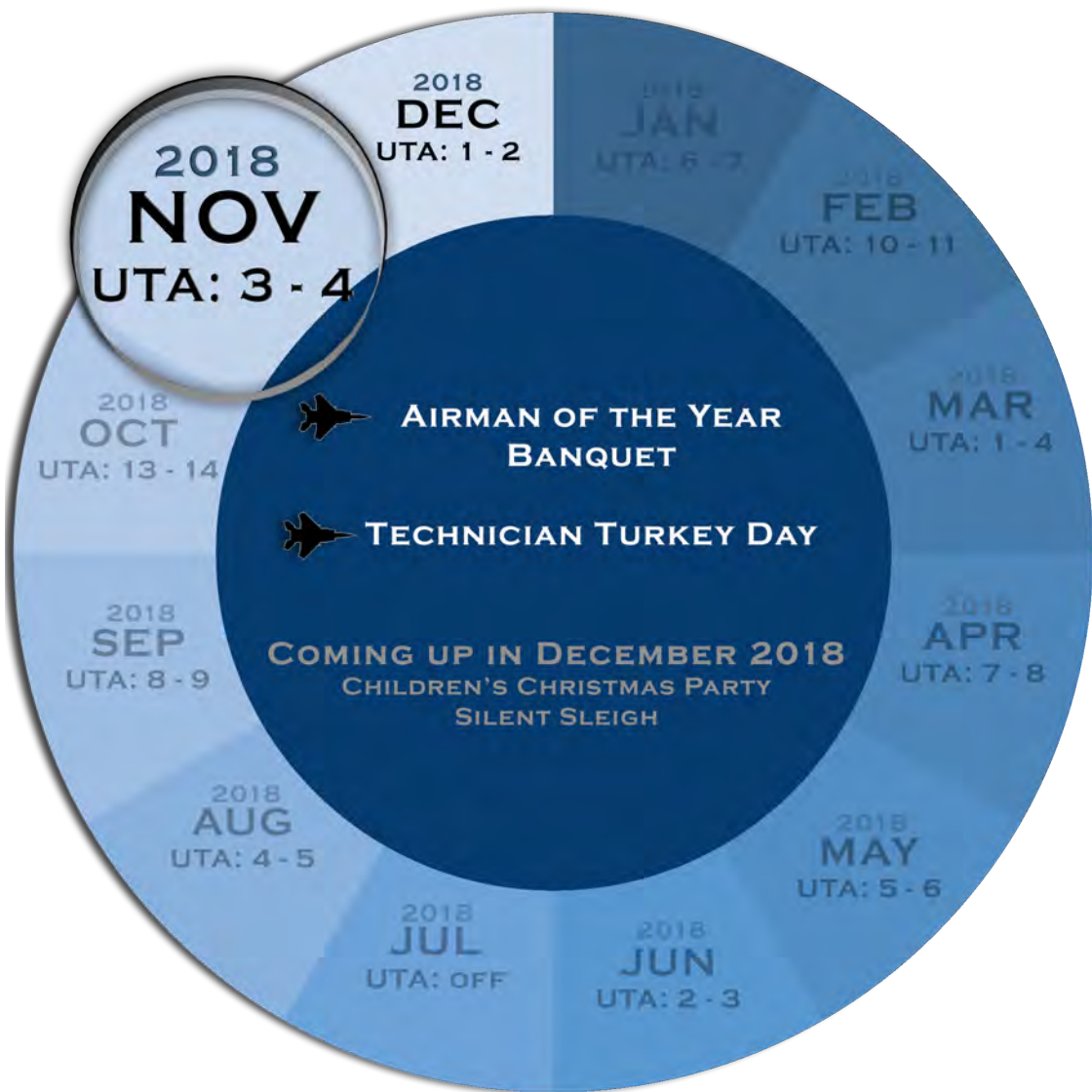
**Carve out time for rest.** The holidays can be physically and emotionally draining for everyone, and especially those who are grieving. Encourage times of rest and quiet along with trying to eat well and stay hydrated.

**Find ways to acknowledge and remember the person who died.** There are many ways to honor a person’s memory during the holiday, either by continuing traditions or creating new ones. Here

are some ideas to consider. What feels comforting is as unique as grief, so choose the ones that feel right to you and your family.

- Light a memorial candle and share memories. Consider their favorite color or scent when choosing the candle
- Write a card or letter to the person expressing your thoughts
- On strips of paper write memories of the person who died. Loop the strips of paper to create a chain
- Buy a gift that the person would have liked to receive and donate it to a charity
- Create a memorabilia table or corner where you can place photos or other key mementos that remind you of your loved one
- Share a meal of the person’s favorite foods. Food can be a great spark for talking about memories and stories.

In all of this, keep in mind that there is no right or wrong way to handle a holiday after loss. Some people want to continue traditions while others prefer to do something completely different. Perhaps you will choose a mix of the two. Finding a balance between your need for support and other’s needs for your involvement in the activities of the present can be helpful as you navigate the holiday calendar. It is important to remember that the holidays are difficult for many. You are not alone!



# 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

## Jan-Jam

January UTA will be the 10 - 13, off base activities will be held at the Clovis Veterans Memorial District.

## Family Readiness Update

The Holiday will be here before you know it. Let Family Readiness help you, whether it's re-connecting after deployment, preparing for deployment, starting your New Year's resolutions early with a new resume or just stopping by the office to enjoy Gail's coffee. "Don't under estimate the power of a good cup of coffee"

We have many resources available to help you as WorkLife4You is an underutilized program. Let WorkLife4You help so you don't miss out on any of the joy. Specialists are available around the clock, even on holidays, to help with research and resources for holiday planning needs such as travel arrangements, child care during school breaks, family activities and more. Call 800 222-0364 today!

The most wonderful time of the year can also be the busiest, let us help you have a Joyful Holiday!

Some important dates:

- 16 Nov 2018 - Turkey Dinner – DFAC
- 1 & 2 Dec 2018- Toy Giveaway – CE Classroom
- 9 Dec 2018 – Yellow Ribbon Event
- 12 Dec 2018- Silent Slay & Children's Christmas Party



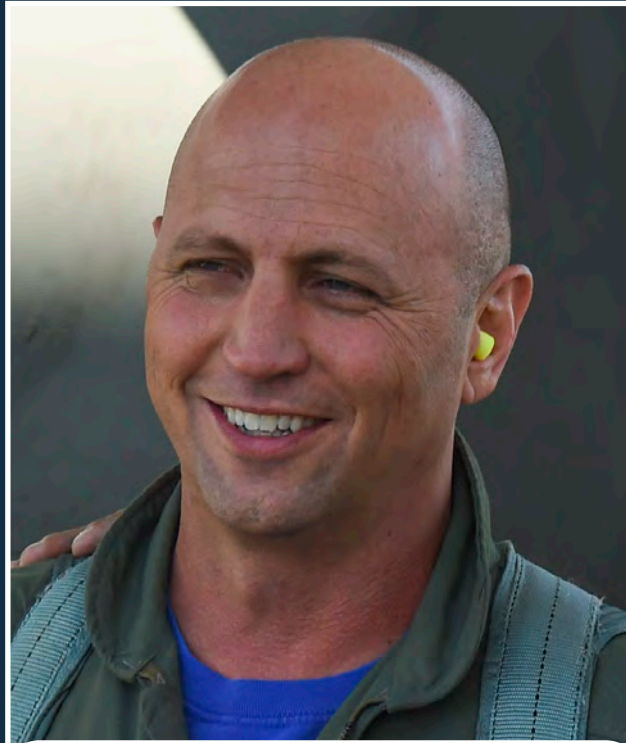
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## Mission Statement

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.



Lt. Col. Seth "Jethro" Nehring, assigned to the 194th Fighter Squadron, perished in an SU-27 plane crash in Ukraine Oct. 16. Jethro was deployed to Ukraine for the Clear Sky 2018 exercise.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Jethro's family and friends.

## 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.