

A woman in a military uniform, wearing a camouflage helmet and brown leather gloves, is working on a large wooden structure. She is looking up at the structure with a focused expression. The background is a clear blue sky with some green foliage visible on the left.

THE BEACON

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE 124TH FIGHTER WING

SUMMER 2021

COMBAT EXCELLENCE-ALWAYS ON MISSION



FROM THE 124TH FIGHTER WING
WING COMMANDER
 COL. SHANNON SMITH

As we near the close of the fiscal year, it may feel like 2021 is trying to keep pace with the challenges 2020 brought us. I certainly couldn't have imagined the tests of our readiness that have been so unrelenting and varied.

In the last year and a half, we have faced the challenges of deploying and redeploying in the midst of a pandemic, supporting our state in its COVID-19 response, answering the call to be a calming force in our nation's civil unrest, protecting our neighbors and lands from wildfires, and answering the call to provide relief to our Afghan allies. And this doesn't even begin to cover our flying mission, our Cyber mobilization, our on-going federal mobilizations of Special Warfare-TACP and Defenders, or the individual mountains you may be facing in your personal life.

Although it may seem like we are on a rollercoaster of impossible tasks, you have answered the call time and time again. You have responded, often with no notice and little guidance. I could not be prouder of how unselfishly you have served.

The oath we have taken to support and defend our constitution is a noble one. Our past contributions matter and our present and future contributions matter more. Because the responsibility we bear in wearing the uniform is a heavy one, it ignites strong emotions.

Current events may cause you to reflect on your service, there may be mandates that are polarizing or orders with few guidelines. The passion that ignites in us is a normal response and part of what enables us to serve with such dedication. And though there are no right or wrong emotions, how we respond and move forward must be deliberate.

I need you to openly communicate with your chain of command or those helping agencies we have in place; bring your concerns forward. And leaders of the 124th Fighter Wing, which is all of you, ensure that every voice is heard. We honor each other and our service by respectfully engaging each new challenge. We ensure future readiness by actively executing self-care and in seeking connectedness with our fellow Airman.

To continue to answer our nation and state's call, we must thoughtfully and courageously engage the challenges to come, ensuring we remain united and focused. It's our uninterrupted focus of serving a cause bigger than ourselves that allows us to prioritize and balance the tasks that come our way.

During the 2021 fiscal year we operated under a revised vision statement for the 124th Fighter Wing:

Mission Ready – nothing less! ... Every Airman a deployable, agile, and innovative leader.

Airmen of the 124th Fighter Wing, you have taken this vision and made it a reality. Thank you for your readiness to serve and executing with such precision and inspiration. I'm proud to stand with you.

MISSION READY - ATTACK!

Col. Smith



Representatives from Idaho's Congressional Delegation

The Representatives visited Gowen Field, August 12, for an update on the Idaho National Guard's capabilities and military activities that require legislative support and appropriations through the National Defense Authorization Act. Delegates from the offices of Senator Mike Crapo, Senator Jim Risch, Representative Mike Simpson and Representative Russ Fulcher participated.

US Air National Guard photos by Master Sgt. Becky Vanshur





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WING COMMANDER

Col. Shannon Smith

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Capt. Rebecca Solosabal

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPERINTENDENT

Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras

PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

Staff Sgt. Mercedee Wilds
Senior Airman Joseph Morgan
Mr. Ryan White

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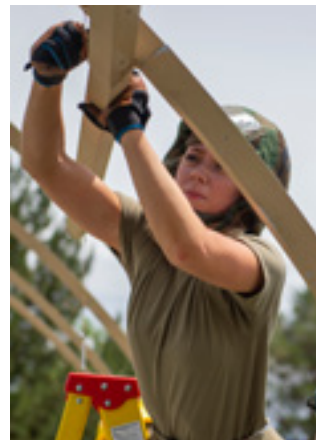


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ON THE COVER:



Testing their limits
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THE BEACON is the official magazine of the 124th Fighter Wing, Idaho Air National Guard. It is published quarterly by the wing public affairs office. Views expressed may not be those of the U.S. Air Force, Air National Guard, Department of Defense or U.S. Government.

Testing their limits

Tennessee and Idaho ANG FSS units train in joint exercise

US Air National Guard story by Mr. Ryan White

Airmen with the 118th Force Support Squadron, Tennessee Air National Guard, joined members of the 124th FSS, Idaho Air National Guard, for a joint training exercise at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, June 8-11.

The goal of the joint training exercise was to bring two different units together who could learn from each other's strengths in a simulated deployed environment.

"We wanted to come in and mesh groups, because when you deploy you're going to be working with people you don't know," said Tech. Sgt. Devin Stokes, a base services specialist with the 118th FSS.

The units worked together to perform mission essential tasks in a simulated, contested environment. Normally challenging on its own, the joint training was also an exercise in testing emotional limits, as members of the 118th FSS had recently lost one of their Airmen.

Tech. Sgt. Rashad Wilson, an Airman with the 118th FSS, was killed in a motorcycle accident

in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, days before the unit was scheduled to leave for the joint exercise in Idaho.

Wilson made Air Force history as the first Airman in a U.S. Air Force support squadron to complete a cold-water operations course. He was considered a rising star in the 118th FSS and many of his peers looked up to him.

"That man would be leading Airmen and they didn't even know he was doing it because he did it in an empathetic way, but he did it in a firm way," said 118th FSS Commander Lt. Col. Brian Celatka.

Wilson's influence continues to shape the Airmen of the 118th FSS.

"That man would be leading Airmen and they didn't even know he was doing it."

"I notice a change in our people; everyone has really stepped up because he was a prominent figure in our unit," said Stokes. "It's kind of like, well, now that he's gone, who's going to fill the shoes? And there's several people that want to try, so that's really awesome to see."

Airmen from the 118th FSS worked with the 124th FSS to train on METs, including food preparation, establishing accountability, receiving bed down forces, fitness, regenerating the force and coordinating mortuary affairs, which involves search and recovery.



Tech. Sgt. Rashad Wilson
Tennessee ANG
Aug. 7, 1980-May 25, 2021

Project coordinators for the exercise partnered with a local butcher to procure animal parts for a more realistic search and recovery training. This unique training opportunity is rarely done outside of tech school.

"I'd say 95% of the fiscal year you're in the kitchen cooking, so I've been really excited about the search and recovery part of the exercise," said Senior Airman Jaymon Kay, a services apprentice with the 124th FSS. "I'm excited for how realistic this is. It's a side of our career field that we don't ever get to see."

During the search and recovery, 12 FSS members formed a straight line, with two flankers on either end, and followed the direction of a team leader who called out stop movements. Members searched the terrain for remains, which they photographed, plotted with GPS coordinates, and bagged and tagged for processing.

Search and recovery is not for the faint of heart. In fact, it's an optional assignment within the FSS.

This exercise gave Airmen an opportunity to learn about themselves and see if they could handle being in the search and recovery line when a future tasking comes.

Given the recent loss of Wilson, Stokes believes the Airmen of the 118th excelled.

"It seems like they're working together better than they were before," said Stokes. "Everybody's attitude has been great and they've come together."

"I notice a change in our people; everyone has really stepped up because he was a prominent figure in our unit."





PROMOTED

Senior Master Sgt. Michael A. Jenkins, a security forces manager with the 124th Security Forces Squadron, was promoted to the rank of Chief Master Sergeant and received a numbered chief stripe from Chief Master Sgt. Eugene Rosin, a group superintendent with the 124th Mission Support Group, June 5, at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.

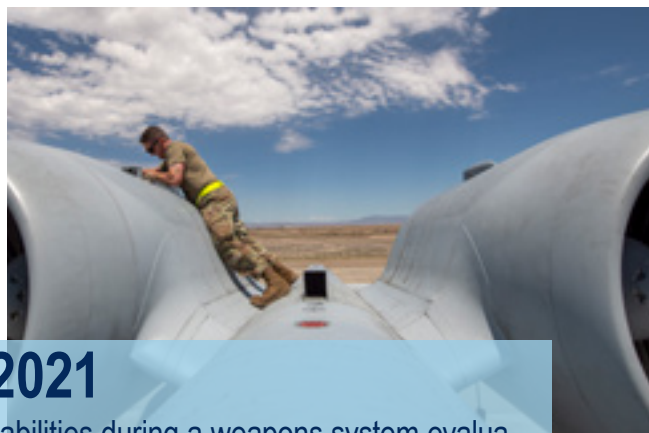


Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Brearley, fire chief for the Gowen Field Fire Department, retired in a ceremony on June 6, at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho. Brearley continues to work for the Gowen Field Fire Department in a civilian capacity following his retirement.



RETIRED



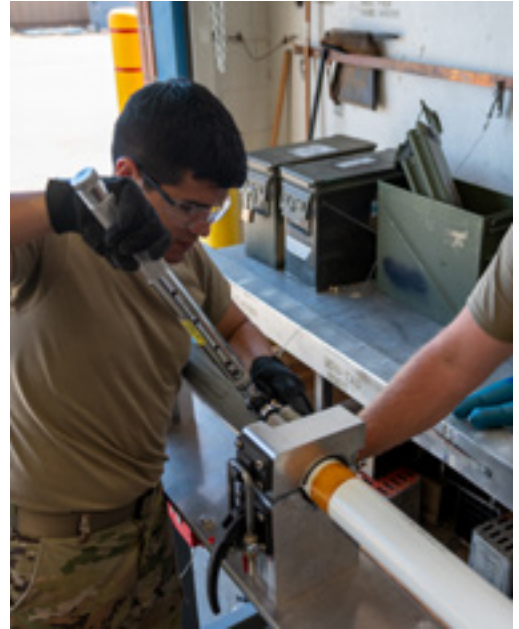


WSEP 2021

Idaho Air Guardsmen evaluated wartime capabilities during a weapons system evaluation program exercise, June 8, at Mountain Home Air Force Base. A-10 Thunderbolt II's assigned to the 124th Fighter Wing flew from Mountain Home AFB to the Utah Test and Training Range where they live fired AIM-9 Sidewinder missile for the first time.

US Air National Guard photos by Senior Master Sgt Joshua Allmaras

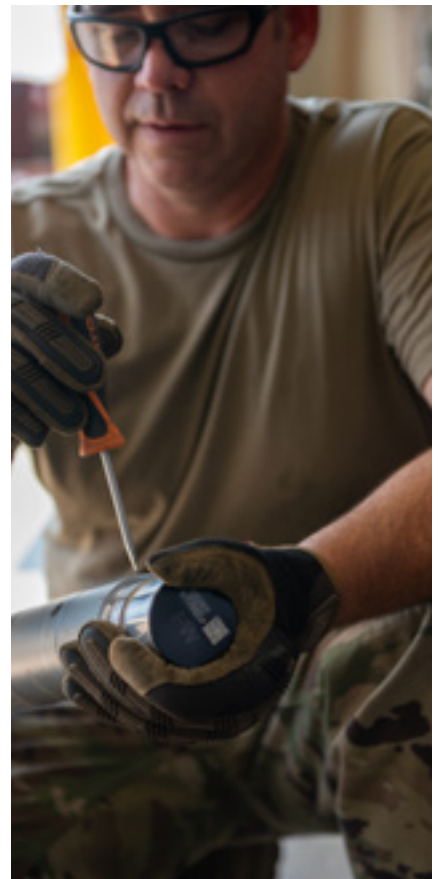




It's rocket science!

Munition systems Airmen from the 124th Maintenance Squadron put together Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System rockets July 7, 2021 at Gowen Field. The APK-WS rockets are laser guided versions of the veteran 2.75-inch Folding Fin Aerial Rocket.

US Air National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Mercedee Wilds



Congratulations NCO Enrichment Graduates



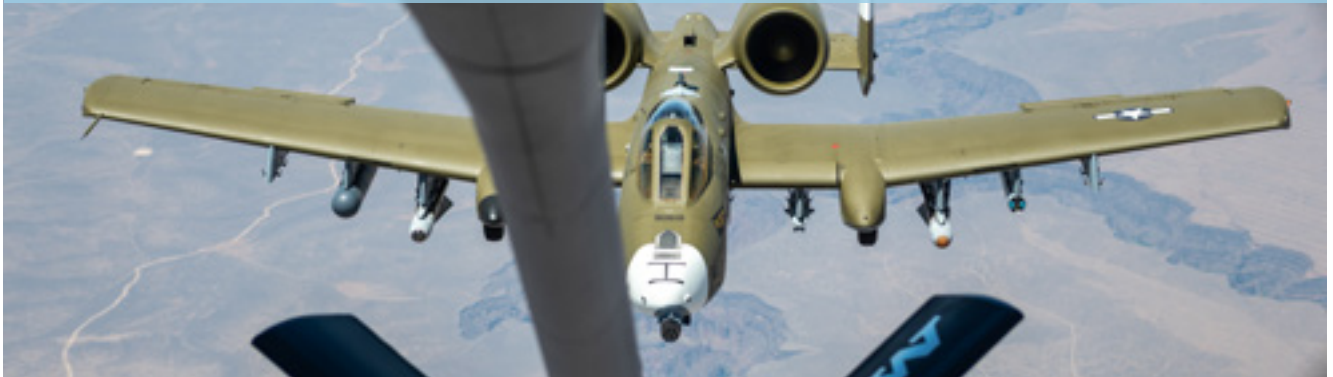
Summer Class of 2021



Okies refuel Warthogs over Idaho

A KC-135 Stratotanker from the 507th Air Refueling Wing from Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, refueled A-10 Thunderbolt IIs from the 124th Fighter Wing over Mountain Home, July 7, 2021. The 507th ARW visited Idaho to refuel the A-10s during routine training.

US Air National Guard photos by Staff Sgt. Mercedes Wilds





Col. Michael R. Knowles retired in a ceremony at Gowen Field on July 7, after nearly 30 years of service. Col. Knowles is a master navigator who flew the B-52G/H and B1-B while on active duty, and flew the C-130E/H while in the Idaho Air National Guard. He most recently served as a special assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs.





Retiring U.S. flags

Members from the Idaho National Guard, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Young Marines, and the Boy Scouts of America gathered and retired U.S. flags during a ceremony at Gowen Field, June 14. The ceremony retired and payed final respects to U.S. flags that are no longer serviceable.

US Air National Guard photos by Senior Master Sgt Joshua Allmaras



NEW Chaplain Father German Orsorio

US Air National Guard story by Mr. Ryan White



The 124th Fighter Wing's newest chaplain and only Catholic priest, Father German Orsorio, swore into the 124th FW at a ceremony on Aug. 13, 2021, Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.

Osario brings unique experience to the wing. He grew up in Columbia, the youngest of three. His family is Catholic, and Osario always looked up to the priests in his church. Starting his ministry as an altar boy, he entered seminary after high school in 1997. Osario then moved to the United States in 2003, by invitation from the vocations director for the Diocese of Boise. He decided to begin the journey towards citizenship and became a citizen in 2018.

Osario began pastoring at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Mountain Home in 2017 where he met several active and retired military members, including Father Mario Rosario, a Catholic Chaplain from Mountain Home Air Force Base. He encouraged Father German to consider chaplaincy ministry.

"I never planned or thought or dreamed about wearing the military uniform, much less the U.S. military uniform," said Osario. "I see this as an opportunity to thank the U.S. by serving in the military, which I couldn't do being just a regular civilian Catholic priest. To me, it

is kind of paying back the U.S. for believing in me and allowing me to become an American citizen."

At first, Osario looked into active duty Air Force, but Idaho had been his home since moving to the U.S. and he didn't want to move away. Fortunately, he learned about the Idaho Air National Guard and the opportunity to keep Idaho his home. He was introduced to Master Sgt. Casey Bermensolo, a recruiter with the 124th FW, and the two quickly formed a friendship. Osario said Bermensolo taught him about the family atmosphere of the guard, which is ultimately what convinced him that he wanted to join.



"Family to me is very important, in every sense, said Osario. "Blood family, diocesan family and now military family."

Bermensolo said Osario's enlistment was particularly special for him. Osario was his last recruit before he would transition to his new role in retention. He was excited to bring Osario into the fold.

"It's one big family out here," said Bermensolo. "You have multiple generations out here and you really do want the best people, because that makes your family strong."

"To me, it is kind of paying back the U.S. for believing in me and allowing me to become an American citizen."

Bermensolo and his family are Catholic and, due to the pandemic, his daughter wasn't able to be baptized right after she was born, as is traditional in the Catholic faith. Bermensolo had grown so close to Osario during the recruiting process that he asked if he'd be willing to perform the baptism for his daughter. Bermensolo's daughter was baptized by Osario on July, 15, 2021. Bermensolo believes it was the first baptism done at the chapel on Gowen Field.

"As our friendship grew and connection grew, it just meant that much more to have Father German baptize my daughter," said Bermensolo. "It was just like story-book kind of stuff. It's crazy how it all worked out and how much it meant to me for him to do the baptism and to have it done on Gowen Field."

The baptism meant just as much to Osario, who said he looks forward to serving all the Airmen of the 124th FW.

"Whatever spiritual need they have, I'm here to help," said Osario. "And for the Catholic Airman, whenever they need a sacrament to be celebrated or a prayer to be said, I'm here for them. And I hope we all meet each other and become good, good friends."





The USS Idaho crew visits Gowen

U.S. Navy Cmdr. Nick Meyers, the first skipper of the USS Idaho, and his crew toured Gowen Field, July 1. The crew visited various military installations during their visit to see the state their nuclear-powered Virginia-class submarine is named after.

US Air National Guard photos by Senior Master Sgt Joshua Allmaras





Idaho Youth Challenge Academy

The Idaho Youth Challenge Academy graduated its 15th class during a ceremony at the Calvary Chapel in Boise, Idaho, June 19.

US Air National Guard photos by Senior Master Sgt. Joshua Allmaras



FREE CHILDCARE

DO YOU QUALIFY?

- ☐ Children 2 weeks-12 years old?
- ☐ Single parent or deployed spouse?
- ☐ Mil to mil and both in a status?
- ☐ Civilian spouse works nights/weekends?

COMPLETE THE PAPERWORK

- ☐ Enrollment form
- ☐ Vaccination Record
- ☐ Nutritional Information

SUBMIT FORMS

- ☐ Can be submitted 3-Months in advance
- ☐ Supervisors Signature
- ☐ Any local guidance

RECEIVE NOTIFICATION

- ☐ Typically week prior to requested date
- ☐ Contact provider for tour
- ☐ Discuss concerns and/or needs

QUESTIONS?

Contact FSS/Services Flight
208-422-6140

