

# BUCKEYE FLYER

Wright-Patterson AFB, OH

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## Rounding out 2025: Holiday Season and New Year

*By Col. Douglas A. Perry Jr., 445th Airlift Wing Commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Gordon M.R. Wager, 445th AW Command Chief*

Team 445th – What an amazing year we had full of unexpected challenges and surprises.

Rolling out of our strategic alignment in December 2024, we now have a year under our belts working toward our refined priorities of Generating Ready Forces, Developing Leaders, and Mastering the Fundamentals - Innovating to Excel.

The Air Force Reserve Command's top priorities remain steady at Ready Now and Transform for the Future. Three new lines of effort from our new Numbered Air Force commander focus on War Fighting, Force Development and Preserving the Nature of the Reserves.

As we work toward continuous improvement in all these areas, we will continue to face challenges with very little growth in the overall top-line budget, prioritizing our Airmen's limited time and various staffing shortfalls across the organization.

We successfully navigated through continuous change as the Department of Defense, now renamed the Department of War, and the Air Force reshaped various policies across the enterprise through hiring freezes, early separation buy outs, reductions across the government civilian workforce, planning for the revamped physical fitness program, Standards and Readiness Reviews, and the longest government shutdown in history, just to name a few, all while meeting 100% of our taskings with increasing mission demands and finding ways to refine and strengthen our existing focus on fortifying our Warrior Ethos.

A few highlights from across the wing included a 445th Aeromedical Staging Squadron locally planned

and executed joint medical readiness exercise that included over 400 members with a joint and foreign warfighting presence.

The wing achieved over 350 professional military education courses and obtained over 100 CCAF degrees.

As a result of our remarkable maintenance team, operations was able to execute at nearly 120% of our wing's flying hour program, well above our projections. Ops and maintenance also executed a short-notice, in-place mobilization while maintaining a local flying schedule, all during the furlough from the shutdown.

The 445th Mission Support Group supported multiple global engagements across four named operations and exercises – all this and more while also maintaining our relationships with our mission partners and the community.

While we continue to navigate through our changing environment and hone our priorities, my challenge to you is to remain focused, be an expert in your field, and ensure your families and own readiness requirements are taken

care of, while maintaining your physical, mental and emotional health.

As we approach the end of another busy year marked by many accomplishments, and challenges, the coming year will prove to be just as challenging and even busier.

Our most powerful weapon is our people and your commitment to service alongside your teammates is remarkable.

Please take time to relax with family and friends during this holiday season. On behalf of the wing leadership, Chief Wager and I can't thank everyone enough for your selfless sacrifice and steadfast commitment day-in and day-out. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



# Airman's early love of geology leads to international, space work

By Capt. Rachel N. Ingram  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

**It started with ramen noodles**  
Staff Sgt. René Castillo, 87th Aerial Port Squadron load planner, was 11 years old when she decided to become a geologist.  
“I was in fifth grade,” said Castillo, now 26. “My mom used to pack ramen noodles for me to take to school for lunch. One day, she stopped. When I asked her what happened to the ramen noodles, she said that the grocery store didn’t have them anymore.”

A naturally curious child, she turned to the internet for answers.

“I learned that a huge earthquake had devastated Japan and wiped out the factory that made the noodles we bought,” she recalled.

The Tōhoku earthquake, a 9.1 magnitude megathrust earthquake, was the world’s fourth most powerful earthquake recorded in history, and nearly 20,000 people died as a result of the quake and ensuing tsunami.

“That stuck with me,” Castillo said.  
Her interest in earthquakes and tsunamis grew, and she soon realized she wanted to be a geologist.

“In fifth grade, I made up my mind,” she said, “so that’s what I did.”

**Science and service converge**  
Both Castillo’s parents served in the U.S. Army, so the family moved around a bit. Castillo and her older sister grew up in California, Texas and the state of Washington.

She began her geology education at Texas A&M University while she was still in high school, participating in camps and other special programming. She later majored in geology there and played tuba in the band.

Following in her parents’ footsteps, she also pursued military service, completing Air Force ROTC at Texas A&M. Upon graduation, she was given the choice to either go into active duty or enroll at the Air Force Institute of Technology in a chemical engineering or engineering graduate degree path.

Ultimately, Castillo decided to remain true to her dream of becoming a geologist, so she enlisted in the Air Force Reserve, drilling at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas.

“I never want to stop learning,” she said.

It was the driving force to learn and grow that brought her to The Ohio State University. She earned a master’s degree in geology, and she is now in her third year of the PhD in Earth Sciences program at OSU.



Staff Sgt. René Castillo, 87th Aerial Port Squadron load planner, collects sediment samples from the ocean core for studies for her PhD onboard the Chikyu, a Japanese scientific drilling ship built for the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program during the expedition. (Courtesy photo by Doriane Letexier)

**From Texas to Ohio and beyond**  
During the course of her geology and geophysics studies, Castillo traveled to Austria, Costa Rica, England, Germany, Greece, Japan, Mexico and Scotland.

She was also a sedimentologist team member for Expedition 405 of the International Ocean Discovery Program, working with a team from across the globe who conduct research on the world’s largest scientific ocean drilling vessel, Chikyu, owned by the Japanese government. The technologically-advanced ship can drill more than four miles into the Earth’s crust, extracting layers of ocean core for research.

“I take those samples of rock and mud – all little pieces of a puzzle – and I assemble them into usable data,” she said.

From this compilation, researchers draw conclusions about the environment and natural world.

Data, coding and exploration work in harmony in

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# Wing announces 3rd Quarter award winners for CY 2025

445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

The 445th Airlift Wing announced its 3rd Quarter award winners for Calendar Year 2025.

**Airman of the Quarter**  
Airman 1st Class Adam Dinovo, 445th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron heavy aircraft integrated avionics, is the Airman of the Quarter. When faced with a critical ultra-high frequency radio malfunction that impacted vital airlift operations, Dinovo diagnosed and rectified the fault that enabled 44 essential sorties and the transport of 177 personnel and 190,000 pounds of crucial cargo.

Additionally, he proactively modernized five aircraft systems and 14 line-replaceable units while in upgrade training that contributed to the safety and operational readiness of the C-17 fleet.

He diagnosed and repaired a faulty color weather radar and overcame a persistent technical challenge that threatened C-17 operations. This restored critical weather detections and enabled 15 sorties and 263 flying hours.

Dinovo’s dedication to the 445th Maintenance Group Commander’s ceremony led to its success through his construction of the stage, arrangement of seating, securing of the sound system and coordination of gate security. He is also working toward his bachelor’s degree through The Ohio State University while maintaining a 3.4 GPA with a 13-credit hour course load.

**NCO of the Quarter**  
Tech. Sgt. Mason Green, 445th AMXS communication and navigation system journeyman, is the NCO of the Quarter. Green replaced a faulty receiver-transmitter and saved vital Air Force Reserve Command missions that enabled the completion of 115 missions, delivered 5,000 tons of essential cargo and supported command global objections.

Additionally, his guidance enhanced the technical proficiency of 43 avionics Airmen and improved unit readiness. His finalization of 37 critical avionics upgrades led to the advancement of three Airmen to fully qualified status.

He led the repair of a complex Co-Pilot’s Standby Altimeter adjustment thereby restoring an aircraft to flyable status, preventing mission delay and ensuring timely execution of a high-priority mission.

As a volunteer coach, Green spent 49 hours coaching 123 youth athletes at Lexington Christian Academy and instilled the key values of teamwork, discipline and leadership in the students. He also trained two Airmen in the safety procedures of static aircrafts for the 445th Family Day that enabled the C-17 tour for 160 family members and ensuring the event was a success.

**SNCO of the Quarter**  
Master Sgt. Mariah Magtoto, 445th Force Support Squadron Force Management section chief, is the Senior NCO of the Quarter. Magtoto processed 12 Air

Force Form 2096 forms for Special Duty Pay-qualified personnel securing \$19,000 in retroactive compensation. She also on-boarded 100 members across 34 units that increased squadron manning and unit type code readiness by 40%.

Additionally, she developed and implemented an electronic Inactive Duty for Training processing system that reduced turnaround time by 65% that secured an annual cost savings of \$35,000 and eliminated the use of more than 900 pounds in supplies.

She processed 155 unit manning document position updates across 34 units that led to open position availability and increased technical skills competencies. This allowed for promotion considerations and bonus eligibility.

Magtoto earned her Bachelor of Arts in business administration and completed the final four requirements for her CCAF in information management while mentoring 10 Airmen on the importance of higher education and growing as a leader. She also designed and organized a professional development session for five Airmen in upgrade training that enabled the completion of 340 upgrade training tasks six months early and improved deployment readiness by 53%.

**CGO of the Quarter**  
First Lt. Brandon Peege, 89th Airlift Squadron pilot, is the Company Grade Officer of the Quarter. Peege managed over 130 unit-pilot currencies and collaborated directly with squadron leadership and instructors to develop tailored training plans for all members to ensure 100% mission readiness.

Additionally, he used his extensive experience in

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IGI helps wing maintain readiness with in-depth CBRNE training exercise

Tech. Sgt. Johnathan Quiñones  
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Prioritizing action-based training over passive learning environments is key to building agile, resilient Airmen.

To ensure this, the 445th Airlift Wing Inspector General Inspections Team conducted an in-depth chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high yield explosive exercise Nov. 1 during the monthly unit training assembly.

“Primarily in the IG office, we worry more about evaluations as opposed to training, when we conduct CBRNE exercises,” said Master Sgt. Shawn McKellop, 445 Airlift Wing IGI exercise coordinator. “It’s the Airmen’s opportunity to apply and demonstrate their knowledge of what they’ve learned – the training comes after.”

To enhance evaluation consistency and training effectiveness, the IGI implemented an innovative wing-level exercise. Rather than conducting individual squadron evaluations, the new approach brought multiple units together at a central location.

There, Airmen rotated through six specialized stations, each overseen by a member of the Wing Inspection Team ensuring a standardized assessment of readiness across the entire wing.

“It was a good refresher,” said Senior Airman Christopher Garlock, 445th Security Forces Squadron fire team member apprentice. “I haven’t touched contamination cards, or the lotion, or the powder since technical school – that’s been three years. Everything was relevant, and this is way better than sitting in a class-

room or doing a CBT [computer-based training].” Routine training is the essential foundation of an Airman’s skill set, but true, comprehensive readiness requires a deeper, more rigorous dive into practical application.

“Last UTA, we went through the Mission Oriented Protective Posture, or MOPP, phases; that’s something we do regularly,” Garlock said. “What we don’t do is what we are doing here: setting up the cards, how we are identifying things, how do we use this stuff. There are a bunch of other things we did here that are important, that we should be up on.”

This in-depth approach ensures Airmen are not just following a checklist but truly understand the complete operational picture they will face in a deployed environment.

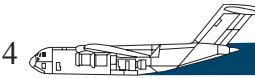
Senior Master Sgt. DiMarco Britton, 445th SFS superintendent of programs and readiness and WIT member since 2018 explained those items include “getting out there and understanding the nomenclature of why we put on our CBRNE gear, what contaminants we are looking for and what are the purposes of the MOPP levels.”

By challenging Airmen to use their equipment and critical thinking skills in a demanding field setting, the training ensures they are truly “fit to fight” when it matters most.

“I noticed that when we only do our four-year requirement for CBRNE we get rusty at it, Britton said. “Today, especially with the Great Power Competition going on, it’s more important than ever that we practice exactly how we play. If we do this a lot more, we will become more proficient at these exercises.”



Staff Sgt. Dayvian Wells, left, 445th Security Forces Squadron fire team member craftsman, and Senior Airman Elias Strubler, 445th SFS fire team member journeyman, fill out an unexploded ordinance marking worksheet during station five of the 445th Airlift Wing Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive exercise at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Nov. 1, 2025. During the station, Airmen traveled outside to complete a post-attack reconnaissance sweep then performed UXO marking techniques. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Joel McCullough)



News Briefs

Promotions

**Technical Sergeant**  
Johnathan Quinones,  
445 AW

**Staff Sergeant**  
Preston Sanders, AES  
Jacoby Kinder, ASTS  
Lane Crutchfield, LRS  
Meredith McCauley, FSS  
Marco Olah, MXS  
Tavis Pascual FSS

**Senior Airman**  
Adam Dinovo, AMXS  
Ernest Boateng, LRS  
Mason Kimmel, 87 APS

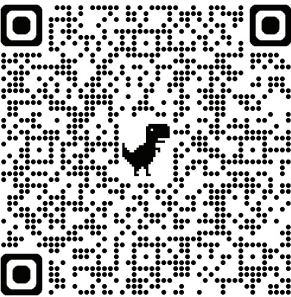
**Airman First Class**  
Jack Rott, MXS  
Lorwy Valmir, FSS  
Van Mawi, ASTS

**Airman**  
Katherine Ross, LRS

Newcomers

TSgt Emilee Munson, ASTS  
SSgt Jessica Abbondanza, MXS  
SSgt Jusain Jones, AMDS  
SSgt Charles Zeallear, MXS  
SrA Hafiz Ibrahim, LRS  
SrA Steven Bell, LRS  
SrA Faith Wagner, AES  
A1C Dayvon Coble, CES  
A1C Colin Polsdorfer, MXS  
A1C Gabriek Weaver, AMXS  
AMN Lissette Lopez, LRS  
AB Anup Baruwat, 87 APS

Public Affairs Survey



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Annual awards banquet to be held March of next year

Editor's note: The date previously published in the November Buckeye Flyer was incorrect. The following date in the article is the correct date.

The 445th Airlift Wing 2025 Annual Awards Banquet will be held Saturday, March 14, 2026, at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force. The reception is slated to begin at 6 p.m. and the program at 7 p.m.

A medallion ceremony will be held at 5 p.m. to formally recognize all nominees. Family members and leadership are invited to attend. More details will be emailed to nominees.

The awards banquet will recognize those selected for Airman, NCO, senior NCO, company grade officer, first sergeant, field grade officer, recruiter, honor guard member, civilian (category I GS-09 and below/ category II, GS-11 and above), spouse, youth and squadron of the year.

The cost of the event is \$60 for adults; \$25 for children 6 to 10; and children 5 and under are free. Payment can be made via cash or check at the PA office in building 4010, room 171. Please try to have the exact amount, as PA may not have change available at the time of payment.

Attendees must RSVP before making payment in the PA office when the reservation will be confirmed –

an RSVP for the event will not constitute confirmation without payment. All reservations must be made by Feb. 20, 2026, at 6 p.m. Please use the following link to RSVP – <https://forms.osi.apps.mil/r/1KfHF7Sndn>.

The dress for the event is semi-formal or mess dress for enlisted Airmen, mess dress for officers and formal evening attire for civilians.

Award Nominations being accepted

Nominations are currently being accepted for all categories and are due no later than close of business Jan. 12. Nominations should be submitted on an Air Force Form 1206 to 445aw.ccc.res@us.af.mil. Please refer to the 445 AWOI 36-2802 guidance for more details. Contact Chief Master Sgt. Gordon Wager at gordon.wager.1@us.af.mil if you have questions.

All individual military nominees will need to take their photos and can do so during the December/January unit training assemblies as a walk in or by contacting the PA office at 445aw.pa2@us.af.mil to schedule an appointment during the week.

For civilian categories, nominees can contact the PA office to schedule an appointment before Feb. 15, 2026. For spouse and youth categories, please provide a professional photo of the nominee to PA by Feb. 15, 2026.









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the field of geology. Castillo learned Python coding during her time at Texas A&M.

Now, she interns at NASA as a software engineer, coding the database that organizes information supplied by a satellite on Saturn's largest moon, Titan. Her work is part of a NASA New Frontiers' mission called Dragonfly, scheduled to launch in 2028.

"The Dragonfly satellite will travel around Titan for three years, collecting samples from various areas. The researchers will ask, 'What are we seeing on other planetary bodies, and how can we analyze and categorize those samples, then map them?' That's a geologist's job," she said. "That's what I do."

Titan is of special interest, she explained, because, while not a planet, it is one of the most earth-like of the planetary bodies. NASA is exploring the habitability of Titan's environment, according to the official webpage of the mission.

"It has a liquid, methane, at its surface, which makes it particularly interesting," she explained. "Geologists often study methane as part of their earthquake research."

#### **A looming threat**

No matter how far her research takes her, Castillo says she won't forget her roots.

The west coast of the U.S. is in the Cascadia subduction zone, leaving her childhood states vulnerable to megathrust earthquakes, catastrophic events which occur when one tectonic plate is forced beneath



**Staff Sgt. René Castillo, 87th Aerial Port Squadron load planner, poses for a pic onboard the Chikyu, a Japanese scientific drilling ship built for the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program during the expedition. (Courtesy photo by Doriane Letexier)**

another. Powerful tsunamis and flooding often follow these seismic events at convergent plate boundaries.

Each spring, she travels bi-weekly to Forks, Washington, and teaches geology and geophysics at Quileute Tribal School as part of the Cascadia Culture and geoScience Exchange (CASE) program. The Native American students and their community are near to her heart; Castillo is an enrolled member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, a band of the Lakota Nation.

"One day my dream is to open an Indigenous geology institute," she said.

The school where she currently teaches was relocated in 2022, part of preventative measures the Quileute Tribe took based on emerging research about earthquakes and tsunamis.

They continue working to mitigate the coastal geohazard risks in the Pacific Northwest through their Move to Higher Ground project, according to the Cascadia Region Earthquake Science Center.

Other communities in the region aren't as prepared, Castillo

said.

"We, as researchers, are expecting the next megathrust earthquake to hit Cascadia in the next 50-60 years," she added.

When asked what's next, Castillo said she plans to continue researching and educating for the rest of her life – "This is what I'm meant to do."



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