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By: C/

Van Doren

Angel Thunder

Angel Thunder is described by Davis-Monthan AFB as: **"the largest and most realistic joint service, multinational, interagency combat search and rescue exercise.."**. Usually these series of joint exercises are held across the Western portion of the US and around the time NAU ends its regular spring semester. I have attended these exercises in both 2014 and 2015, which is extraordinary despite almost being discontinued due to budget cuts in 2013. This exercise truly shows the extreme teamwork and excellence needed to meet the modern-day personnel recovery mission. In Angel Thunder 2014 I was dropped off inside one of Camp Navajo's

live fire ranges. This was only after being briefed and dressed up as a victim of some sort of mock attack. Initially the group of cadets I was with (which included cadets from U of A), was found by the Coconino Sheriff's department's Search and Rescue Team. After being spotted by a Pave Hawk Helicopter, a convoy of Humvee's driven by Pararescuemen came to triage and treated us onsite. A lot of the PJ's were still in training and being evaluated as they applied IV's and bandages to our fake wounds. After some time of being treated by the PJ's, they drove us to a landing zone where I was transported via litter to a French helicopter. Even though I was strapped into a backboard, the ride to the Flagstaff Airport was more than exiting. Once at the Airport we were unloaded and debriefed by multiple flight nurses and other rescue personnel from National Guard and active duty units. For Angel Thunder 2015 the pace of events and number of exercises seemed to be stepped up. Once again the cadets I went with were dressed up and made to look like they were suffering from multiple injuries. We were mixed in with active duty airmen that had volunteered to be part of the exercise. We spent a few hours being placed in the woods around Camp Navajo by USAF SERE Specialists. Once our group was spread out across a mile stretch, we waited until we heard the sound of multiple helicopters fly over. Shortly after the fly-over a team of German Search and Rescue specialists came and recovered the cadets and airmen. We were moved to a field where USAF CCT's, PJ's and SERE members had all set up a triage center. Inside of the triage the German rescue team was working with American and German field doctors to further treat our "wounds". We remained

at the center for only moments before German and US Army Helicopters flew to extract us. On board the helicopters was a team formed of many different NATO forces. The Pilots of the Chinook CH-47 were in the US Army, the flight nurses were British and two of the rescue technicians were Dutch. The crew on board the helicopter was truly a joint force and they worked surprisingly well together. Once we landed at Williams Airport, just outside Flagstaff, we able to watch aircraft land from units in every branch and some rescue airplanes from other nations. Angel Thunder really gave me the opportunity to see how the modern day Air Force works, especially in a deployed environment. Communication was quick and accurate and I saw officers and enlisted service members from many NATO forces work together to accomplish a larger mission. I would highly encourage anyone interested in an Aviation, Rescue or Foreign Relations field to volunteer for Angel Thunder.

To see more information go to:

http://www.dm.af.mil/library/angelthunder.asp

By:

Jacques Soto

The Future of American Air Superiority

In the past, the skies were ruled by planes which capitalized on a single role, either air-to-air, air-to-ground and so on. These fundamentals were established during the Second World War and wars subsequent, such as Vietnam. In today's battle for the sky, the situation is much different. No longer do modern planes in development situate themselves around supporting one task but rather capitalizing on as many tasks as possible. This is a theory which has not yet been proven in battle because there hasn't been a plane such as this deployed into serious combat yet. The planes of the last 3 to 4 decades have involved those such as the F-14, F-15, F-16, F-18 and the A-10 Warthog. A few of these have been transformed into a design which can be proficient in possibly t wo areas of combat like the F-15. The F-15 has various models including the F-15C (air superiority version) and the F-15E model (multi-role strike version). This system of continually upgrading works just fine in yesterday's wars. However, in the modern arena the vision of dominance is a fortitude of multi-role fighter aircraft capable of dominating in every kind of air battle.

This vision is the basis of the F-35 JSF (Joint Strike Fighter). The F-35 was designed to replace a large majority of the planes in service today including

the F-18, F-16, A-10 and the Harrier. Creating a plane of extreme diversity is a theory which looks lucrative on paper but has some serious consequences in real life. The purpose of the JSF program was to create a single plane cheaply and efficiently to replace the military's current combat aircraft fleet listed above. Instead of paying for the production of three or four different planes for each service, now it can be rolled up into one single aircraft. This plan carries repercussions involving performance and actual viability. Consequences include unforeseen production costs averaging $178 million per plane, poor maneuverability and a dismal weapons payload. It seems almost all the perks have been turned into nightmares for the F-35 designers. Attempting to make a perfectly "rounded" aircraft has led to a situation where the F-35 is neither good nor bad at anything. For example, the JSF does not have enough wing surface area to be a superior fighter, nor the amount of munitions to effectively assist ground troops. In the end, the question will be whether the F-35 is capable of much of anything except costing the government a pretty penny.

Other modern planes like the F-22 Raptor have seen a large amount of success establishing dominance in the modern arena. Never before has the world seen such a plane capable of absolutely demolishing everything else in the sky. During war trials like red flag, the F-22 performed superbly without almost a single hitch. The one kink in its armor is close combat maneuvering.

Dogfighters like the Eurofighter Typhoon and F-16 can close in on the F-22's six o'clock if allowed close enough; some pilots even report getting a successful shot. In other scenarios pitting the Raptor against its eventual predecessor the F-15 Eagle, a single F-22 was able to "kill" all 5 engaged F-15's without the Eagle pilots ever knowing where the Raptor pilot was. Truly, the Raptor is recognized around the world as the best fighter jet the world has ever seen, whether they like it or not. However, critiques are fast to point out the one other flaw in the USAF's army of Raptors, which is how few of them there are. The sheer cost of one Raptor is $339 million, an absolutely incredible amount for one fighter aircraft. This resulted in a reduction of total production numbers, only 185 operational jets. In a war of attrition this is a serious matter concerning the lethality of the F-22. Will we simply run out of Raptors? Fortunately for the USAF, the F-22 production tools are in storage somewhere where they keep the aliens. This means that if necessary, the military can once again begin pumping out this super jet. Other countries such as Russia and China are developing their own counter to the F-22, will they be successful? Most likely only someone sitting in the situation room of the White House can answer that one. One thing is for sure - America is years ahead of the game technologically, and above all American grit

outweighs all else. In a world where the enemy can kill from hundreds of miles out, super planes like the F-35 and F-22 exist to ensure American dominance and perpetuate freedom one missile at a time.

By:

C/3C Seth Nanny

Echo Flight showing off their spirit

Dining In

Dining In is a tradition in most military communities to acquaint service members with the ins and outs of the proceedings to make Dining Out flow smoothly. Possibly the most important of the traditions is the Prisoner of War / Missing in Action table. It reminds us of the importance of lives lost and the ultimate sacrifice given. In my opinion, the most impactful part of the POW/MIA table is that the glasses are inverted to emphasize that they cannot toast alongside us. There is a toast given to the POW/MIA - a silent toast to help illustrate the seriousness of those taken prisoner of war or missing in action. The Head Table seats the Cadre, Wing and Vice Wing Commander and,

most importantly, Ms. Karen. The Head Table oversees all the happenings of Dining In and makes sure all games are fair. This year, teamwork exercises were included to promote cohesive flights and reward the winners. The skit put on by the GMC is their chance to jab at the POC in a “warm cocoon of safety.” The Grog is a disgusting concoction made by the POC that, if called out, from which one must drink. The Grog this year started out looking pretty tasty, right up until the chunky salsa was added. I personally escaped the Grog, but many others did not share my fate. Overall, Dining In is a relaxed environment where learning and joking alike are promoted. Barriers are broken between cadets and tension is released by calling out those that are deserving individuals. All in all, Dining In is a great experience in which a lot of effort is expended for the formal training of cadets. C/Soza, C/Johnson, and their staff did a superb job making sure everything smoothly. Get your rhymes ready for Dining Out, but be sure to avoid C/Ross and her fire spittin’.

By:

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&

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