

# Service gives Airman new sense of family pride

by Airman 1st Class  
DAVID OWSIANKA

56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The short 16 months I've served in the Air Force has helped me to see my grandfather in a different light and what it means to serve in his footsteps.

My grandfather is retired Master Sgt. Edward Owsianka Sr.

I've always thought of my grandfather as a straightforward, honest person who enjoyed life. Growing up, I never thought much about his past or service in the Air Force, I just knew he served for 20 years and had a rough life prior to serving.

Since both of his parents died before his 7th birthday, my grandfather had a harder childhood than many.

First, his mother died from complications giving birth to his younger brother. Then his father passed away two years later from kidney failure.

Because it was in the midst of the great depression, their relatives couldn't take care of them, so they spent time in and out of orphanages, and at times my grandfather survived by living on the streets of Chicago.

When he was 14, he moved to Michigan to stay away from gangs and was later adopted by a family.

At 17, although my grandfather had only an 8th-grade education, he decided to join the Air Force because he didn't really know what else to do. He said joining the military provided him with a steady meal and allowed him to learn a trade.

He entered basic training June 17, 1947, a few months before the Air Force was officially established. Because it was just following World War II, the Defense

Department wanted to ensure every trainee was as mission-ready as possible.

Basic military training was 12 to 14 weeks long with two-weeks of field training.

When he finished basic, the instructors went down the line of Airmen and assigned each to a job.

He began his career as a military police officer stationed at Westover Field, Mass. My grandfather was terrified because he had never handled a gun before. Typical duties for the military police at the time were guarding gates, planes and prisoners. They also patrolled the flightline.

After serving as an MP for about eight months, he transferred to the fire department where he stood by both sides of the runway ready to respond to planes in

case there was a crash landing. He did this job for six years before cross-training into services.

My grandfather wanted to have a safe job so he chose to become a cook and stuck with it until he retired July 1, 1967, at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. As a services Airman, he worked 24-hour shifts with 48-hours off in a dining hall that seated 500 Airmen.

My military journey has been much different.

Even though my grandfather has six children and six grandchildren, I am the first Owsianka since him to join the military.

I decided to join the Air Force because I felt I needed to do something with my life. I had three-weeks notice to prepare when I found out I was leaving for basic military training, which began March 11, 2010, and coincidentally happened to be my grandfather's 80th birthday.

Before I left for BMT, my recruiter offered me the job I currently have — public affairs specialist. But

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Photo illustration by Senior Airman Melanie Holochwost

**LEFT:** Retired Master Sgt. Edward Owsianka Sr., poses next to a Douglas C-54 plane in 1947 at Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada.

**RIGHT:** Airman 1st Class David Owsianka, 56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs staff writer, poses next to a Douglas C-54 plane Sept. 2 at Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson.

## Notice to claimants

In accordance with Air Force Instruction 34-244, paragraph 3.1.5, notice is hereby given that Airman 1st Class Christopher Basinger is deceased. The undersigned has been appointed summary court officer for the purpose of estate settlement in accordance with AFI 34-244. All persons having claims for or against the estate should call 1st Lt. Brandon O'Neil, summary court officer, at (623) 856-6031.

## Notice to claimants

In accordance with Air Force Instruction 34-244, paragraph 3.1.5, notice is hereby given that Tech. Sgt. Carlos Trujillo is deceased. The undersigned has been appointed summary court officer for the purpose of estate settlement in accordance with AFI 34-244. All persons having claims for or against the estate should call Capt. Aubrie Jones, summary court officer, at (623) 856-7838.

## IN BRIEF

### Commander's call

Brig. Gen. J.D. Harris, 56th Fighter Wing commander, will be holding commander's calls at 4 p.m. Sept. 29, 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sept. 30 at the base gym.

### Free burger burn

There is a burger burn 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. today at Fowler Park with burgers, hot dogs, drinks and chips free to the base community in observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. For more information, call Cari Morrison at (623) 856-7758.

### LOSC luncheon

Join the Luke Officers' Spouses' Club for the annual Bunco luncheon at 11 a.m. Tuesday in the Club Five Six ballroom. Meet new friends, catch up with old ones and win prizes. Sign up for book club, Bunco, bowling and other activities. For more information or to make a reservation, go to [LOSCReservations@gmail.com](mailto:LOSCReservations@gmail.com).

### Thrift shop reopens

The thrift shop is open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for consignments and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for sales Wednesdays and Fridays. The thrift shop accepts clothing, household goods, furniture, small appliances, hardware and more. For more information, call (623) 935-5782 during business hours.

### Crafts for a cause

Make crafts for a cause at 5 p.m. Sept. 28 at the Luke Library. No craft skill is required and materials will be provided. Beanies and tie blankets will be donated to the Phoenix Children's Hospital. Adult size beanies will be sent to deployed service members and to West Valley homeless shelters. To R.S.V.P., call (623) 856-7191.

### Rocky Horror Picture Show

The Luke Experience is presenting Rocky Horror Picture Show at 7 p.m. Oct. 7 and 8 in the base theater.

### Breast cancer awareness

October is breast cancer awareness month. A brown bag luncheon will be 11 a.m. to noon Oct. 7 in the chapel annex. Receive promotional items and a chance to win a door prize. For more information, call (623) 856-4003.

### Cholesterol education

September is National Cholesterol Education Month. A brief on heart-healthy snacks to lower cholesterol as well as food samples and a cholesterol assessment will be 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. today in the gold waiting room at the clinic, Bldg. 1130 and Sept. 29 in the Health and Wellness Center, Bldg. 700. For more information, call Sunny Hayes, health promotion manager, at (623) 856-7531.

## THUNDERBOLT ALMANAC

### Fiscal 2011 graduates

|               |    |                         |     |
|---------------|----|-------------------------|-----|
| 62nd FS.....  | 57 | 56th TRS.....           | 140 |
| 308th FS..... | 49 | 607th ACS.....          | 142 |
| 309th FS..... | 70 | 107th ACS.....          | 44  |
| 310th FS..... | 48 | 372nd TRS, Det. 12..... | 521 |
| 21st FS.....  | 8  | 56th OG (IFTU).....     | 61  |
| 425th FS..... | 3  |                         |     |

Hours flown: 28,381.7  
Sorties flown: 21,344  
(As of Tuesday)

**T-Bolts  
Deployed**

*279 Luke members are  
deployed to  
17 countries  
around the world.*