



F-35 Lightning II Program

Public Affairs Release – 2015 06 17

SECOND F-35 SQUADRON STANDS UP

by Senior Airman Grace Lee
56th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

Luke Air Force Base, ARIZONA -- Lt. Col. Gregory Frana assumed command of the 62nd Fighter Squadron during an assumption of command ceremony June 5 at Luke Air Force Base.

Frana previously served as the first F-35A Director of Operations for the 61st FS at Luke.

Col. William Bailey, 56th Operations Group commander, presided over the ceremony.

"As the commander of the 62nd, Colonel Frana will have his hands full, but he is definitely the right man for the job," he said. "I worked with him for the past year and he has an impeccable record, and I can't think of anyone who's better suited for the job. Frana is stepping into a role where he has the support from the leadership and the (56th Fighter) Wing, his fellow commanders and his own squadron members. But beyond this support, the strong partnerships we have built with Lockheed Martin, the comradery and council of our honorary commanders and community leaders, and the Fighter Country Partnership will help the 62nd move forward and enrich the experience of Frana's command."

Bailey then thanked Frana's family for their continuous support and the assumption of command ceremony began.

After accepting the unit flag, a symbol of command, Frana addressed the crowd.

"First and foremost I want to thank God for many things but for two things in particular today," Frana said. "Number one, a family that I love, none of my success would be possible without their love and support. Number two is having the opportunity to serve a country that I love, doing a job that I love. I truly cannot imagine doing anything else."

"As we open this new chapter in our squadron's history, we will focus our efforts on what we've been doing for three generations -- training and delivering combat air power in the defense of this great nation and our allies. We will do this using the most technologically advanced machine the world has ever seen. This is no small task but the 'Spikes' have done this before and the Spikes will do this again. That will be our legacy and that is our charge -- to support and defend this nation, our allies and the freedoms of all who live here."

Frana highlighted the 62nd FS's rich history dating back to the dawn of World War II during his speech.

"I am extremely honored to have the opportunity to lead this historic organization," Frana said. "An organization, that as of today, has a new mission, but at its core, the mission of the 62nd Fighter Squadron has stayed steadfast for more than 70 years. Since Jan. 15, 1941, when the 62nd Fighter Squadron was first activated, the Spikes have trained and delivered combat airpower in the defense of this great nation and our allies, and the Spikes have done a great job doing it. With 12 aces, 220 air-to-air kills and 357 enemy aircraft destroyed, there is no doubt that the 62nd has been continually up to the task. Now that great legacy is in our hands."

Frana graduated as a distinguished graduate and commissioned through the University of St. Thomas Reserve Officers' Training Corps program with a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics May 2000. He was a distinguished graduate of both Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training and the F-15E Basic Qualification Course.

Prior to his arrival to Luke, he served as the F-35 Academic Training Center Pilot lead, helping establish the first-ever F-35A formal training unit in the Air Force at Eglin AFB, Florida.

The 62nd FS is scheduled to begin accepting jets in July and will be joined by two partner nations, including Norway and Italy. A Norway pilot is scheduled to begin class in September.



Lt. Col. Gregory Frana assumes command of the 62nd Fighter Squadron June 5, 2015 at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The 62nd FS is scheduled to begin accepting F-35 Lightning II jets in July and will be joined by partner nations Norway and Italy.