

Gallup's Wayne Lufkins follows family into service

Written by By Rachel Pfeiffer Sun Correspondent
Friday, 22 October 2021 04:20



Gallup's Wayne Lufkins follows family into service

Written by By Rachel Pfeiffer Sun Correspondent
Friday, 22 October 2021 04:20

An elite, tight-knit group of airmen compose the United States Air Force Honor Guard, among them Gallup's own Wayne Lufkins. Lufkins is the son of recently elected Eleventh Judicial District Attorney Bernadine Martin.

"We're all so proud of him," Martin told the *Sun*. "Wayne comes from a long line of veterans. His grandfather served in the Korean War as a paratrooper.

"His grandpa George Willie was a Code Talker. He has numerous cousins and uncles that have served since World War II," Martin said.

Lufkins is excited to continue this military legacy in the Honor Guard. The Honor Guard represents the United States Air Force in official ceremonial functions in Washington, D.C. and around the world. They carry the colors of the United States and the Air Force at special ceremonies and Washington, D.C. parades, perform precise drills around the country at functions such as sporting events and render honors for fallen soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery.

While Lufkins is honored to be a part of this select unit, it isn't something that he ever anticipated.

Lufkins' first experiences with the military came while he was still in school. At Gallup High School, he was a member of the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, whose mission is: "To motivate young people to be better citizens." In the JROTC, Lufkins met requirements and participated in ceremonies at the school, laying the foundation for his future.

"I was super involved in everything about it," Lufkins said. "It was really intriguing, and I like the structure that the military presented.

"It was a lot of life skills in general that I just didn't get in other classes in high school," he said.

Gallup's Wayne Lufkins follows family into service

Written by By Rachel Pfeiffer Sun Correspondent
Friday, 22 October 2021 04:20

After graduating from Gallup High in 2015, Lufkins joined the Air Force. At that time the Honor Guard wasn't on his radar at all. Most of those serving in the Honor Guard come straight from basic training, but Lufkins is a part of an even more select group of prior service members selected for the Honor Guard. To be selected for the Honor Guard, airmen must first be recommended for it by someone in their leadership chain.

"It was a surprise to me. I didn't realize that someone had put my name up," Lufkins said of his recommendation. "I just got an email one day saying, 'Hey, we're considering you.' I was like, 'what the heck,' because the requirements are so stringent.

"We're a unit of 300 members, about 85 to 90 percent of those are airmen who are straight out of basic training," he added.

Once selected, Lufkins underwent eight weeks of training where he learned all the drill movements and how to take care of his uniform.

"The biggest thing was maintaining our bearings, where we don't move for anything," Lufkins said.

One of the proudest moments in Lufkins' training came when he received the Top Gun Award.

"The person that receives the Top Gun award did the best overall in military movements throughout their evaluations," Lufkins explained. "We had to take evaluations, and we were only allowed to miss so many items.

"Essentially, I got the award because I missed the least on all of our evaluations," he said.

Now that his training is over, Lufkins serves in Arlington National Cemetery where he and his

Gallup's Wayne Lufkins follows family into service

Written by By Rachel Pfeiffer Sun Correspondent
Friday, 22 October 2021 04:20

fellow Honor Guard members render honors for fallen soldiers. In these ceremonies, some serve as pallbearers while others, like Lufkins, serve in the firing party. The firing party shoots several rounds as a salute to the soldier being buried.

“For military honors, we issue three volleys of seven rounds, and we do that in unison. Our motto is seven as one,” Lufkins said.

Lufkins will serve a four-year tour in the Honor Guard. After that, he will move on to a different deployment. At the end of the day, Lufkins said his military career is an important example of how working hard and taking a leap of faith can lead to unexpected opportunities.

“I think it’s important for people to go out and do what they want to do,” Lufkins said. “I never pictured myself where I am today.

“I definitely didn’t think that it was going to happen the way it did, but life is full of surprises. If I can do it, then anyone else can too,” he said.

By Rachel Pfeiffer
Sun Correspondent