

445th CES firefighter achieves world champion status

By 1st Lt. Rachel N. Ingram
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

He is a father, husband, Airman, athlete, and now, a world champion. Competing against 400 individuals from five different countries at the FireFit World Championships, Master Sgt. Sean Sullivan, assistant fire chief of operations, 445th Civil Engineer Squadron, was named world champion in the chief's division.

The Frankfort, Kentucky, resident travelled to Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, in September to participate in his fifth FireFit competition, where he ranked 33rd overall. He is also a seasoned athlete in another series of similar competitions, known as the 3M Scott Firefighter Combat Challenge, or FCC for short.

Best described as an obstacle course, both FCC and FireFit are timed competitions which incorporate five and six events, respectively, on a closed course. There are numerous divisions, including individual and team events, both of which Sullivan competes in.

"The obstacles are based on activities performed by firefighters in emergency situations," Sullivan explained. "Firefighting is an inherently dangerous and physical job by nature."

To simulate real firefighting conditions, all competitors must wear serviceable real-world gear, including an oxygen tank and mask. The weight, heat and flexibility of the gear add another dimension to the challenge, he said.

"The FireFit course begins with climbing five flights of stairs with a 45 pounds hose pack on your shoulder," Sullivan described. "Once at the top, you must place that pack in a box and hoist a 45 pounds hose roll up to the top of the tower and place it in the same box. Next you will run down the steps, touching every step for safety, and onto the force machine which simulates forcible entry work."

See FIREFIGHTER, page 4



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Sean Sullivan competes during recent FireFit World events.

Legacy of service, 445th Airman saves truck driver's life

By Senior Airman Amelia Burnett
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs

"We had just finished work," she paused as she recalled the day. "I was on my way back to my hotel, still in uniform." The semitrailer turned too sharply and began to tip over. She paused for a moment as it happened and then, checking the intersection to make sure it was free of vehicles, she pulled her car across the road to block the lanes off in front of the toppled truck.

"A few people had come out of the stores on the corner of the road and they were trying to climb into the truck to help," she took a breath, her pace quickening. "I could see the oil on the road

all around the semi. It smelled so strong it was like someone had splashed me in the face with it, and I knew we just had to hurry up and get him out of there."

Senior Airman Naomi Thomas, 445th Logistics Readiness Squadron materiel management apprentice, immediately responded and assisted in the rescue of a semitrailer driver when his vehicle overturned in Charleston, South Carolina, on Aug. 13, 2019.

"I knew it was go time," Thomas said. "I was on a time crunch and I had to act."

Still in her uniform with steel-toe

boots, Thomas quickly asked everyone to step back as she kicked in the glass windshield. She removed her operational camouflage pattern (OCP) blouse and laid it over the glass, preparing to assist the driver from the vehicle before discovering that his seatbelt was jammed.

"I ran back to my car to get a knife so that we could cut him free," Thomas said seriously. "I knew we had to work smarter, not harder, and pulling at it was going to take longer than cutting it."

Thomas helped the driver, who

See LEGACY, page 3

Overcoming life's curves – my resilience story

By Col. Bryan Runion
445th Mission Support Group Commander



Resilience. That word is getting a lot of attention now. Why? Unfortunately, suicides in the Air Force and in society as a whole, are increasing. Resilience is being seen as something that can help address this epidemic and perhaps prevent it. What is it? It's basically the ability to bounce back.

In 58 years on this earth, I can tell you that you will have disappointments in life. I have had a couple of big ones: losing my career in the Navy and the bigger one I am going to share with you.

My story began on Aug. 22, 1997 with the birth of my first child, my daughter, Ashlynn. At the time, I was a senior Air Reserve Technician officer with the 507th Combat Logistics Support Squadron, Tinker Air Force Base. As the senior ART in a unit with 150 traditional reservists, it was common for me to work 12-hour days and two weekends a month. I was a workaholic plus it was my first real ART job after being a trainee. However, I then learned sometimes that things happen that make you re-prioritize.

Two days after my daughter's birth, she went into the intensive care unit. She was not able to feed and stayed in the ICU at Presbyterian Hospital in Oklahoma City, for two months. She required surgery for a feeding tube. Following the surgery, she could not come off the ventilator and could not be weaned off it. She needed the ventilator to help her breathe.

Ashlynn had a rare metabolic disorder and required 24-hour skilled nursing care. The doctors recommended a facility nearby in Bethany, the Children's Center. My wife and I visited the center and it was a tough decision, but we were impressed with the staff and knew it could meet her needs. We committed that at least one of us would visit Ashlynn every day. We received training to where we could periodically bring her home for visits.

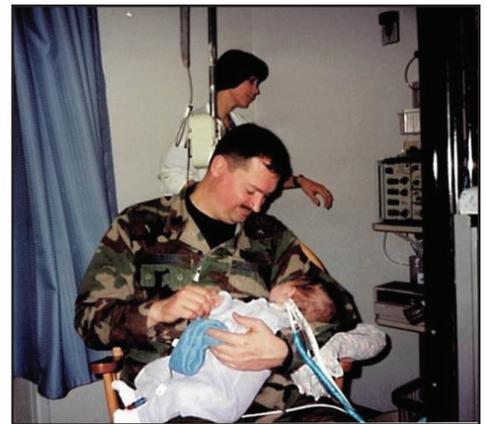
People react to trials differently. My wife's initial reaction was anger with God. We had done everything right; how could this happen? My reaction was to be strong. I felt like I was being tested and my faith was being tested. I also had the toughness I learned from the military, which included survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE) training in the Navy where I was in a simulated prisoner of war (POW) camp for a week and got slapped around.

You never know why these things happen. But, maybe God was using us as an example? One day, we had nice feedback in the way of a card from one of the nurses at the center. It said how my wife and I had touched her by the dedication we had to our daughter. So, you never know whose life you will touch.

In April 1999, our oldest son, Jimmy, was born, and then in May 2001, our youngest son, Jonathan, was born. Also, in 2001, I had the opportunity for a recall to active duty as a flight commander at Randolph Air Force Base. This also happened around the same time as 9/11. In fact, I was driving from Oklahoma to Randolph to talk to the staff at Wilford Hall about my daughter and the logistical challenge of getting her to Texas and I heard 9/11 as it unfolded on the radio. After talking to the staff, we were able to coordinate a medical evacuation flight from Tinker to Fort Hood. Unfortunately, the closest we could get my daughter was a facility two hours away. Weekend visits with my daughter and staying at the Ronald McDonald House became a way of life for us.

Then another blow happened in 2002. Jimmy was diagnosed with Autism. However, the good news in that was there was a team there at Brooke Army Medical Center that was able to diagnose him. He was diagnosed early and received services and went to a pre-school program at the age of three and has come a long way since then. So, I had a special needs daughter, a son with Autism, and my day-to-day challenges as a flight commander in an active duty squadron.

In 2004, my recall to active duty tour was coming to an end. Wanting to stay on active duty, I then went into the Active Guard Reserve program at Langley Air Force Base. But in March 2006, Ashlynn started having issues with infections around her trach, (she had a tracheostomy for her breath-



Courtesy photo

Col. Bryan Runion holds his baby girl, Ashlynn.

her trach, (she had a tracheostomy for her breath-

See *RESILIENCE*, page 5



Remove PII from SharePoint

By Master Sgt. Tim Back

445th Force Support Squadron Communications Element

No personally-identifiable information (PII) is permitted on SharePoint, but For Official Use Only (FOUO) material is allowed. You may ask, why is this since both are controlled unclassified information (CUI)?

The privacy legal landscape continues to evolve, and the Air Force privacy officer has made clear that no SharePoint servers in the Air Force are authorized to coordinate on or house Privacy Act information. To this end, the 68th Network Warfare Squadron and Air Force Reserve Command will soon begin active PII scans. If PII is discovered, it will be reported to AFRC as a breach. The standard operating procedure (SOP) calls for multiple reports, for the appointment of an investigating officer, etc. Obviously, we all want to prevent PII breaches from occurring.

If you have important SharePoint documents that contain PII, move them elsewhere during the November 2019 unit training as-

sembly. To save them from deletion, you can temporarily rescue them to your H: drive or desktop at least until they can find a better home or collaboration method. You could also move them to your S: drive or file them as records to your O: drive, provided that the destination folders are locked down to just those with “an official need to know.” If the folders are not locked down and unauthorized people can see them, it’s a breach.

November is your chance to not lose valuable data. The KMC SharePoint administrators must perform no-notice PII deletions in December, so please begin/continue clean-up efforts before then.

The Knowledge Management Center (KMC) will work with you to make this happen. Contact the KMC at 937-656-2374 or Master Sgt. Tim Back at 937-656-1780 to get started.

What options can we use to collaborate on documents containing PII?

1. Return to the tried-and-true encrypted e-mail routing process.

2. Set up an ORG box that accepts encrypted e-mail. Only those with a need-to-know will have access to the box, and have the encryption certs loaded on the appropriate machines. Then the documentation gets emailed to the box where it’s reviewed, sorted, and eventually deleted. (Remember to file any records on your O: drive first.) The CERTS are the only pain regarding setup up an org box.

3. Set up a collaboration subfolder on your S: drive. Its access is locked down to only those you choose, and you can ascribe which individuals are members of the security group that protects it.

This collaboration folder would be the ONLY folder you’re letting them into; the rest of your folders are locked down only to your office/unit. The KMC can assist with options 2 and 3.

Comm and KMC are closed for training on Sunday of all UTAs from 8 to 11 a.m. Be sure to address any issues before this time.

LEGACY, from page 1

had sustained minor injuries to his arm and leg, over to her car where she helped to stabilize him until the arrival of emergency personnel.

“I think I get it from my dad,” Thomas said with a smile. “He taught me not to hesitate and just to go into action.”

Thomas’ father also serves in the U.S. Air Force Reserve after an active-duty career in the U.S. Marines. She said he was a big part of the reason that she was inspired to serve.

“The Air Force fostered her sense of teamwork and certainly had an impact on the way in which she reacted,” said Senior Master Sgt. Lamon Pace, 445th LRS superintendent. “But that act of courage definitely came from inside her.”

Thomas was completing her seasoning training at Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, and will be returning to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base for the November unit training assembly.

“Airman Thomas first caught my attention when she made the commitment to commute all the way from Florida for each UTA without hesitation,” said 1st Lt. Anthony Busellato, 445th LRS transportation flight commander. “She then volunteered for seasoning training and almost immediately distinguished herself. From what I know of her, I can’t say I’m surprised.”

While many have called her actions heroic, Thomas doesn’t see it that way.

“I’m not really a hero,” Thomas said. “I just did what I had to do.”

Thomas has been nominated for the Airman’s Medal for her heroic actions and quick response to what could have been a potentially deadly situation.

“It could have gone a completely different way,” she said. “I am just so grateful that everyone came out of this alive.”



FIREFIGHTER from, page 1

Next, you will run through a series of cones to a charged hose and drag it to a target that you must spray with water and knock down. Finally, you finish by dragging a 175 pound, 6 feet tall victim simulator 100 feet backwards across the finish line."

The competitions require cardio endurance, muscle strength, and refined technique. Sullivan completed his first challenge in 2007, and has since travelled to 18 states and two Canadian provinces for about 75 FireFit and FCC competitions.

"I instantly fell in love with the camaraderie of the competitors and the humbling aspect of the course. I thought I was in good shape, but my first race showed me I wasn't," Sullivan said.

Determined to excel, Sullivan uses a mixture of circuit training, assault bike workouts, a rowing machine, and CrossFit-style workouts to prepare his body. He said the competitions are a great motivator to train for overall fitness and better job performance.

"I review the videos, evaluating every race I run to find areas where I can make improvements," he said.

The month following FireFit worlds in Ontario, Sullivan set new state records for Kentucky in three divisions during the FCC U.S. Nationals in Fort Pierce, Florida, with a course completion time of 1:35.43.

Sullivan retired as a captain from Frankfort Fire



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Sean Sullivan competes during recent FireFit World events.

and EMS, following more than 20 years of service. He's now a stay-at-home father to three and husband to Mary.

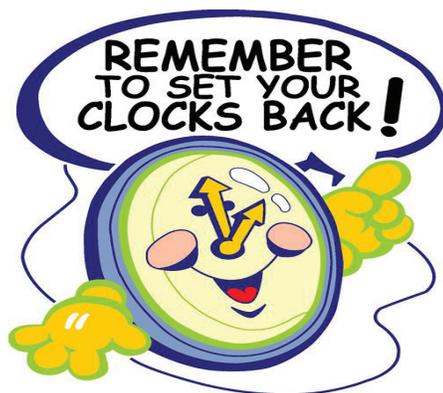
"I was overcome with joy and excitement once I crossed the finish line and saw that I won the chief's championship. The pain from racing was instantly gone and I felt amazing," Sullivan recalled. "I only wanted to grab my phone and tell my wife what I had been able to do."

Sullivan is already training for his next competition, this one in Alabama at the end of October for the FCC World Championships. One of his goals is to compete at FCC and FireFit events in Europe, or perhaps try a third challenge course, Toughest Firefighter Alive, also in Europe.

Between competitions and spending time with his family, he also serves in the 445th CES, providing fire protection for aircraft and assets at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

"To me, being a Wingman means being part of a larger group or family. It means having the back of the Airman next to you, no matter the job title or rank," Sullivan said. "It's about working together to make the Air Force better. Training for competitions helps improve my fitness, muscle strength, flexibility, and stamina on the fire ground, all of which help prevent injuries while working and increase efficiency."

November happenings...



November 3



November 11



November 28



RESILIENCE, from page 3

ing tube). She was in and out of the hospital for the next three months.

Looking back, I think God was preparing us for her passing. My squadron at Langley was very supportive. My commander gave me permissive leave, due to my daughter's illness and the squadron brought meals to the house.

In June 2006, Ashlynn appeared to be OK. I went TDY for training at McGuire Air Force Base. I got a phone call the morning of June 20th from my wife saying Ashlynn had passed away. She did not quite make it to the age of nine. The first sergeant worked with the Red Cross and got me back home.

As I headed to the Philadelphia airport, I will never forget driving up onto the upper deck of the George Washington Bridge and getting a phone call from my commander offering his condolences.

Life went on again. From December 2006 to May 2007, I deployed to Germany. It helped. I had friends, socialization, and an interesting job there. I then found out that sometimes grief hits later. In my case, it was more than a year and a half after my daughter passed away.

One morning in December 2007, I was driving to work at Langley, waiting to get into the gate and then this feeling of intense sadness hit me. I will never forget it. My mom told me she thought I was depressed. Of course, being my mom, I blew her off. One of my co-workers asked me if I was OK. He said he noticed that I had been snapping at people and other people had come to him concerned about me. When I get depressed, I get irritable. I also started stuttering and had a hard time talking, to the point where I had to see a speech therapist. I felt like the wind was taken out of my sails. I was adjusting from re-deployment, my daughter's death, my

son's Autism, on-going issues with the job, etc.

In January 2008, I was referred to mental health. I had a great counselor that I connected with and I was on medication. Getting help made all the difference in the world for me. In April 2009, I went from AGR back to ART status, with the opportunity to be near my wife's family at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana. I had a separation physical from active duty and thought I was good to go. Shortly after checking in, the reserve medical unit did a review of my medical records. I had been on meds for more than a year,



Master Sgt. Patrick O'Reilly

Col. Bryan Runion assumes command of the 445th Mission Support Group July 15, 2017.

and they said I should have had a medical evaluation board.

The philosophy at that time was that I was being followed by military doctors on active duty; but I was not being followed in the Reserve, even though I had a civilian doctor following me in my civilian life.

I felt like I experienced the "stigma" on mental health. I worked on clearing up my medical status for a year as my status was in doubt. My group commander was not sure if I could still be a squadron commander. I also got weaned off my meds.

In April 2014 as I prepared for

an upcoming assignment at McChord Air Force Base, I wanted to make sure that there was no cloud over me. I saw a military psychiatrist at Wright-Patterson, and it was verified that there were no issues with me being on meds, and that I was high functioning.

I have learned over the years that it is better for me to be on my meds than off. I have tried off and on, also counseling off and on. Things like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder do not go away; you learn to live with it. For me, there are things that will trigger it, such as seeing a handicapped child in a wheelchair reminds me of my daughter.

A couple of years ago at a function held at Clark State Community College, I saw a 20-year-old female Air National Guard one-stripe Airman. When she said she was born in 1997, it hit me; that could have been my daughter. I started getting tears in my eyes.

The good news is, because of me and others like me, over the years the Air Force Reserve leadership lobbied hard and finally got the medical standards changed to treat mental health in the reserve just like it is on active duty.

If you feel depressed, have suicidal thoughts, feeling a lack of hope: 1. Get help (that's why I am here today), the good news is the mental health "stigma" is going away; 2. Be a good wingman to others: look for signs, reach out like my mom and co-worker did, ask, "Are you OK?"; 3. Build those supports: For me: physical (bowling), social, family (wife), spiritual (that was the most important to me); my faith/beliefs; 4. I am willing to talk to people and share, not as an O-6, but as a person that wants to help.

I hope my resilience story will help. Life is going to hand you some curves, but there's help to get you through those times; to be resilient so you can handle it, learn from it, and grow.



SPOTLIGHT



Darrell Sydnor

Rank/Name: Senior Airman Wally Jniyah

Unit: 445th Operation Support Squadron

Duty Title: Combat Crew Communication

Hometown: Louisville, Kentucky

Education: Bachelor of Science in information technology from Kentucky Community and Technical College

Hobbies: I love fishing, camping, traveling and playing soccer, but

when I'm not doing these things, you can always find me programming.

Career Goal: Finishing up my degree in software development and pursuing a commission with the Air Force.

What you like about working at the 445th?: Working at the 445th has been nothing short from a great experience. I was able to make new friends and learn new trades to better myself. Leadership is very knowledgeable and everyone is approachable and willing to help. It's just like a big family!

Keep safety in mind when participating in winter sports

By Master Sgt. Joe Klimaski
445th Airlift Wing Occupational Safety Manager

Ah yes, we're finally on the cusp of the holidays... Oktoberfest has passed, fall is in full effect and the holidays are upon us. But most importantly, winter and snowboarding season is almost here.

If you enjoy the pleasure of snow sports, just know there are a number of countermeasures out there to keep you safe while on the mountain.

Winter sports are an obvious form of exercise. It's important to take the necessary time to warm-up. Snowboarding is absolutely no different. Taking 10-15 minutes to dynamically and statically stretch is unarguably crucial before binding in and hitting the mountain hard.

Next up? The wear of personal protective equipment. Head injuries are an unfortunate yet common occurrence on the mountain, and snow blindness is the "real deal." While you may not look hip in a helmet while on the mountain, helmets and goggles (to avert snow blindness) preserve visibility and are paramount.

Also, remember these three rules when skiing or riding; always look before you turn; turn in the opposite direction to avoid collisions; and the lower rider and skier always has the right of way.

Probably the most important tip to remember

when on the mountain is to ride and/or ski within your parameters, and always ride and/or ski with a buddy.

If you're a back country snowboarder, ensure you carry a day pack with necessary supplies (i.e. extra layers of clothing, food, water, flashlight, fire source, small e-tool, and most importantly a transceiver/avalanche beacon), because you never know what could or will happen in the backcountry. The mountains and Mother Nature are completely unpredictable and can be deadly.

Similarly, riding and/or skiing within your safety parameters and with a buddy is an absolute must. Know your limits, ride and/or ski within your level of experience, and exercise risk management at all times.

Well there we have it. A handful of common sense safety tips to keep you safe on the mountain in less than three minutes. While I'm guessing only a small fraction of 445th Buckeyes will head to mountains this winter, I felt it was important to discuss winter snow sports and mountain safety, because while riding and/or skiing is an amazing way to spend your well-earned time off, both can be inherently dangerous when risks are ignored.



News Briefs

Commander's Call

A mandatory commander's call will be held Nov. 3 in Hangar 4026.

Two sessions will be held. Airmen assigned to the wing staff, and maintenance and operations groups will attend the 8 a.m. session. Airmen assigned to the mission support group, and aerospace medicine and aeromedical staging squadrons will attend at 10 a.m.

Newcomers

Lt Col Ryan Albrecht, AW
Maj Phillip Jakubowicz, AMDS

Capt David No, CES
TSgt Wesley Baldwin, AW
TSgt Jeffrey Landis, MXS
TSgt Matthew Matheny, MXS

SSgt Eric Andersen, OSS
SSgt Luke Gehring, SFS
SSgt Christine Villa, OSS
SrA Adam Benzing, AMXS
SrA Sean Dobbs, MXS

SrA Sean Easton, CES
SrA William Veyon, AMDS
A1C Megan Hartley, CES
A1C David Sifuentes, FSS
A1C Andrew Spicer, MXS
AB Chandler Mather, CES

Retirements

November 2019

Lt Col John Marang, MSG
SMSgt Garry Merrill, MXG
MSgt Scott Ponchillia, LRS

October 2019

MSgt Anthony Phillips, CES
MSgt Roxanne Viney, 87 APS

Promotions

Airman

Jamaal Quentin Chandler, AMDS
Tyler Goodrich, 87 APS

Airman First Class

Zuri Dockham, AES

Amaya Hagler, AES
Skylar Hettenbach, AES
Erin Zimpfer, AW
Nicole Ellis, AMDS

Senior Airman

Tyra Monet Davis, FSS
Jeremy Roberts, 87 APS
Naomi Thomas, LRS

Staff Sergeant

Brandt Huston, 87 APS
Aaliyah Lovett, AES
Daniel Murphy, 87 APS
Brian Walker, AES

Technical Sergeant

Tobi Bennett, AMXS
Felicia Coronado, FSS
Amanda Crider, AMDS
Tera Graham, LRS
Joseph Hackney, AMXS
Daniel Levingston, LRS
Anna Noel, AMDS
Kathryn Resio, LRS
Aaron Stokes, MSG
Zachary Tschuor, AMDS

Master Sergeant

Michael Mahaney, AMXS
Joshua McConnell, SFS

Senior Master Sergeant

Joseph Andrews, ASTS

Awards

Air Force Meritorious Service Medal

MSgt Steven Palsgrove, OSS

Air Force Achievement Medal

SSgt Tenikwa Fischer, MSG

Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal

SrA Kirk Laytart, 87 APS

Buckeye Flyer

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Around the wing...



1st Lt. Weston Woodward



Staff Sgt. Joel McCullough

(left) Greater Dayton Area civic leaders eat lunch with cadets at the Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, during a civic leader tour, Oct. 10, 2019. Eighteen community leaders participated in the CLT Oct. 9-10, 2019. (right) Col. Adam Willis, 445th Airlift Wing commander, passes the guidon to Col. Hans Otto, incoming 445th Aerospace Medicine Squadron commander, during an assumption of command ceremony Oct. 6, 2019.



89th AS pilots support Canadian event



Darrell Sydnor

Capt. Maria Duffy and 1st Lt. Cecilia Photinos, both C-17 pilots with the 445th Airlift Wing's 89th Airlift Squadron, participated in the 2019 "The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too!" event held at the Abbotsford International Airport, Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada Oct. 5-6, 2019.

*By Stacy Vaughn
445th Airlift Wing Public Affairs*

Two female pilots from the 89th Airlift Squadron were part of the aircrew to participate in the Eighth Annual "The Sky's No Limit – Girls Fly Too!" event held at the Abbotsford International Airport, Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada Oct. 5-6, 2019.

The Sky's No Limit is an international, multi-agency event to which the Canadian Coast Guard, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, municipal police forces, local and international search and rescue organizations, first responders, civilian companies, educational institutions, the United States and Canadian Armed Forces are invited to participate and highlight the various aspects of aviation, aerospace, marine and defense.

Capt. Maria Duffy and 1st Lt. Cecilia Photinos, both C-17 pilots with the 89th AS, were thrilled about participating in the event and talking to the attendees about what it's like to be a pilot in the Air Force Reserve.

"It's pretty cool that we got to meet and talk to these young girls about what we do and show them that they can do this too," Photinos said.

The two-day event invited young girls and boys to enjoy free and fun hands-on events, including aircraft static displays and other booths to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers, both military and civilian, it also offered helicopter rides for children and their families who have never flown before.

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