

# “THE DUCT-FREE ZONE”

By Gerry Wagner, Vice President HVAC Technical Training  
Tradewinds Climate Systems



**Training in the COVID era:** I think everyone, including me is tired of webinars. As I write this, Zoom stock price is \$316.49 a share, \$61.49 higher than Microsoft. Who would have guessed that would ever happen? ... but who would have guessed a global pandemic would ever happen?

I'm happy for Zoom and their stockholders and I'm also happy Zoom existed at a time when it was needed the most ... without Zoom, I might not have been employed over the past year. Zoom has allowed me to remain relevant as the GREE mini split technical trainer and gave me an audience when I could no longer travel directly to my audience and be with them in one room.

I raised the bar for webinars by creating the GREE TV studio in Cumberland County, PA so I would have the latest technology available for webinar production as well as live GREE mini split equipment that actually cools and heats the studio.

That all said, I think most of us have reached a level of webinar saturation and the webinar format has run its course ... for now anyway.

A short time prior to COVID hitting the scene, I worked with Interplay Learning out of Austin, TX to develop Virtual Reality training modules for the GREE mini split product. Doug Donovan, CEO of Interplay Learning and his crew are the leaders in trade training with VR based technology.

I started using the simulations in my in-person training events early 2020, traveling around the country with a VR headset and handpods so GREE train-

ing attendees could experience using this incredible technology at all my troubleshooting events.

I have to say that it was a huge hit and quickly became a draw for the troubleshooting curriculum. ... and then COVID came into our lives in early March, 2020 and travel and in-person training events ceased.

One of the many advantages of the VR troubleshooting simulations is that they can also be used in what I call the 2D (2 dimensional) format with any laptop or desktop computer, no need for special VR equipment. This allows virtually (excuse the pun) anyone to use the simulations in the comfort of their home or office to continue to refine their GREE mini split troubleshooting skills long after my formal training is over, whether that be in-person or webinar.

As COVID hit, we had about 1000 registered users of the troubleshooting simulations and about 120 who were actively using them on a week to week basis.

Earlier this year when it became apparent that COVID and the travel and group meeting restrictions resulting from COVID weren't going away any time soon, I decided to take the GREE mini split troubleshooting simulations to yet another level ... **COMPE-TITION!**

The GREE TOP GUN Training Competition started the week of February 28, 2021 and it has been a huge success! Three new winners every week with all competitors working toward the grand prize of a GREE 12K Sapphire system and to be named the 2021 GREE TOP GUN TROUBLESHOOTER!

By the time this article is published, we will be in

week six of the eight weeks of competition. There will still be plenty of time for you to jump into the learning, earning and FUN!

You can see the details and rules of the competition as well as video tutorials on how to use the GREE mini split troubleshooting simulations at GREEtraining.com. Just click on the TOP GUN COMPETITION tab at the top of the page ... Imagine being able to promote yourself and your company as the 2021 GREE TOP GUN TROUBLESHOOTER and have your award posted on all avenues of social media and print press ... what an incredible way to differentiate yourself from your competition! ... and the grand prize of a complete GREE 12K Sapphire system ain't bad either!

Look, the whole COVID thing has shaken us all to our core testing our resilience and sanity (the toilet paper thing proving some of us failed the later). As I said earlier, I am truly grateful for the webinar format during these difficult times but its time for me to get back on the road and do what I think I do best and that is conduct live, in-person GREE mini split training events ... see you soon I hope!

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Gerry Wagner is the Vice President of HVAC Technical Training for Tradewinds Climate Systems. He has 41 years in the HVACR industry working in manufacturing, contracting and now training. You can contact Gerry by email: gwagner@twclimate.com and also please visit our website:www.twclimate.com

## Blacks Supply Host NAVAC and TurboTorch Counter Days in Orlando

On April 13-14, Blacks Supply hosted NAVAC and TurboTorch Counter Days at the Orlando and East Orlando locations. Andres Ponce and Chris Craft of Target Sales gave product demonstrations for these two product lines including: The repair of aluminum coils and special brazing techniques, Smart Vacuum Pumps and Smart Refrigerant Charging Machine

demos. Also, more of NAVAC's Smart Tools and TurboTorch brazing products were on display!

Comprising a full lineup of tools, gauges, detectors, charging machines, vacuum pumps, and recovery units among other solutions, NAVAC's product portfolio is designed with one overarching concept in mind: user-friendliness. TurboTorch's premium quali-

ty brazing and soldering products include kits, outfits, torches, tips, handles, hoses, gauges, nitrogen purge kits, nitrogen regulators and nitrogen cylinder totes.

Stop by and visit one of Blacks Supply four locations in Orlando, East Orlando, Leesburg, and Eustis. See why their products and people make an unbeatable team!



Andres Ponce with Target Sales gave a soldering demonstration to Jorge Garcia and Rueben of JEG Air Conditioning



Shor Dasrat of Shor Cool with Bruce Fortenberry of Blacks Supply



John Lovelace of Blacks Supply, Joe Dorsey of Dorsey Air Conditioning, Chris Craft of Target Sales



Hamlet DaAlvarez of City of Orlando, Mutt Stroud of Blacks Supply, and Chris Craft of Target Sales



Andres Ponce with Target Sales at the Counter day Blacks Supply East Orlando location



Ray Diaz and Fredrick Cintron of Advent Health with Chris Craft and Andres Ponce of Target Sales repairing an aluminum coil



It was busy during Blacks Supply NAVAC and TurboTorch Counter Days!



Sherry Hall, Nicole Vines and Teia Harner of Blacks Supply



Chris Craft of Target Sales demonstrates one of the new NAVAC hand tools