

Commander's Call Topics



October 2009

"No my friends, we are not building the Air Force we thought we would build ten years ago. The strategic environment, new technologies, and a full cycle of resource changes--up, down and flat--have brought us to a different place; they compel us in new directions. Some of these directions are clear today, some remain to be written. Shaping these new directions will not always be easy, but--consistent with our heritage--these new directions will always seek to move us forward."

- Secretary of the Air Force Michael B. Donley in his 'State of the Air Force – 2009' keynote address to the recent Air Force Association Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition, Washington, D.C. To read the entire speech, go to <http://www.af.mil/information/speeches/speech.asp?id=503>.

FROM THE SECAF AND CSAF

Secretary Donley: Airmen vital to missions in Iraq and Afghanistan

Airmen remain a vital part of the joint mission, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley observed during his recent visit to installations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Secretary Donley listed many missions Airmen carry out on a daily basis in support of the joint fight and thanked the Airmen for their hard work.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123166704>.

CSAF addresses AFA convention

Gen. Norton Schwartz, chief of staff of the Air Force, spoke at the Air Force Association's Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition on his vision for the future, jointness, the Year of the Air Force Family and honored heroic sacrifices of Airmen. The general said the past year has been challenging for the Air Force.

"We navigated through a challenging but ultimately healthy period of inspection and introspection with a recommitment to our heritage of excellence," he said.

The general discussed what he envisions for the Air Force's future; an Air Force that effectively controls and exploits air and space, and eventually cyberspace, in ways that provide even greater margins of global stability and economic vitality.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123167925>; to read the entire speech, go to <http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090915-240.pdf>.

FROM THE CMSAF

CMSAF discusses current issues

Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force James A. Roy discussed current issues at an open forum during the 2009 Air Force Association Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition.

Compliance is among several issues in which the chief advocated collaboration with the Air Force's joint and coalition partners. He explained that Airmen continue to be engaged in today's fight, thus underscoring the importance of expeditionary training as well as reviewing the unit deployment manager program.

The chief also discussed the Year of the Air Force Family and described the four pillars therein: Airman and Family Support; Health and Wellness; Airman and Family Housing; and Education, Development and Employment.

In addition to focusing on new child development centers and their sustainment, plans are in the works to train Airmen and Family Readiness Center technicians to increase their effectiveness in relocating families under the Exceptional Family Member Program. Chief Roy clarified that the Year of the Air Force Family also includes provisions for single Airmen through housing privatization and military construction.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123168415>.

► CURRENT ISSUES

Air Force has solid future capabilities, Secretary Gates says

Speaking at the Air Force Association's Air and Space Conference, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates addressed the range of things the Air Force must be able to do in the future to protect America against an array of lethal and complex threats. He discussed the current F-22 inventory, the F-35 program and the importance of the unmanned aircraft.

Secretary Gates also announced the return of the KC-X program, the Air Force's tanker acquisition program which was delayed after the Government Accountability Office upheld a protest to the source selection.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News stories at

<http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123168156> and <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123168125>.

DOD officials announce requirement for new aerial tanker competition

The needs of warfighters and value for taxpayers are at the heart of the new draft request for proposal to replace the Air Force's aging KC-135R Stratotanker fleet.

This is the second time the contract has been competed. Officials with the Government Accountability Office recommended that the Air Force re-bid the contract, originally won by a Northrop-Grumman/EADS/Airbus consortium in February 2008. Boeing protested the decision, and in June 2008 the GAO agreed that there were irregularities in the contracting process.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123169586>.

Air Force officials strengthen nuclear deterrence operations

There are new initiatives to emphasize nuclear security underway within the Air Force to consolidate commands, modernize systems and strengthen personnel. The growth of the number of countries that have or are developing nuclear weapons has prompted changes, including the creation of the Global Strike Command, which stood up at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., last month.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123167703>.

Changes ahead for Air Force acquisition

Senior leaders at the Air Force Association Technology Symposium discussed how the Air Force needs better definitions of realistic requirements up front; simplified source selections; more robust systems engineering; increased efforts at technology risk reduction; competitive prototyping; additional program documentation requirements for both industry and government; and more scrutiny in the form of independent reviews.

The acquisition improvement plan, now in execution, includes a number of initiatives; no. 1 is to revitalize the workforce.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123168941>.

Improvement plan realigns acquisition wings as directorates

Air Force officials will implement a new organizational construct for weapon systems acquisition that includes designating directorates, divisions and branches in place of some current wings, groups and squadrons.

Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz announced the changes in a recent service-wide memo. The memo makes clear that realigning organizations under a directorate/division/branch structure is driven by one of five goals from the Acquisition Improvement Plan the secretary and chief announced in May. The full text of the memo is available online at <http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090910-070.pdf>.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123167133>.

Criteria announced for basing of joint strike fighter

Airspace, flight training ranges, weather, support facilities, runways, taxi ramps, environmental concerns and cost factors are the criteria that will be used to determine the future basing of joint strike fighters.

More than 200 Air Force sites will be evaluated against the approved criteria. Officials will then consider other factors such as combatant commander requirements, aircraft retirements and delivery schedules; aircraft maintenance and logistics support; and integration with the Air National Guard and Reserve. This information will be used to identify two candidate basing lists, one list for operations and the other for training, to place the 250 to 300 joint strike fighter aircraft scheduled for delivery through 2017.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123168380>.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

Annual Combined Federal Campaign

The CFC was established in 1961 and is the largest workplace charity campaign in the country. This annual fall fund-raising drive allows millions of federal employees and military personnel to contribute to thousands of local and national nonprofit organizations.

Local CFC project officers have more information. The CFC Web site is at www.opm.gov/cfc.

Air Force officials discontinue permissive PCS policy

Permissive permanent change of station policy will be discontinued; however, other policies have changed lifting restrictions from the join spouse and base-of-preference programs.

For more information call the 24-hour Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102; or read the Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123169622>.

Assignment deferment extended for births, adoptions

Air Force officials announced recent modifications to the post-birth and post-adoption assignment deferment policy will increase the time a parent can delay reporting to certain assignments, re-emphasizing the Air Force's commitment of taking care of its people.

Birth mothers and adoptive families now have a six-month-deferment period instead of four months before reporting to an assignment, including family-member restricted overseas tours, accompanied overseas tours when concurrent travel was denied, and temporary duty assignments or deployments.

For more information, visit <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>; call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102 or DSN 665-5000; or read the Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123169624>.

Base of preference requests can now be initiated online through vMPF

Air Force Personnel Center officials have revamped the Voluntary Assignments Base of Preference Program to allow eligible enlisted members to initiate BOP requests online. Air Force members E-8 and below can now apply for permanent change of station BOP, in-place BOP, or both through the virtual Military Personnel Flight.

The Total Force Service Center in San Antonio will be primarily responsible to assist members with extenuating circumstances accessing vMPF, determining their eligibility requirements and making updates to their information in MilPDS. After Airmen make their requests through vMPF, AFPC will process their applications and notify members when a decision is made. Airmen should allow up to six weeks for AFPC to process their requests.

For more information on the BOP program or the new online application process, call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102; or read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123165460>.

Video clarifies officer promotion board procedures

Personnel officials will release an online video in early October offering Air Force officers a comprehensive look at the complete promotion selection board process. The officer promotion selection board video will provide a look into how a selection board is conducted, from the date the board convenes to its adjournment.

The video includes information on board member demographics, the Air Force secretary's memorandum of instructions, board member responsibilities and overall board processes and procedures. The video, to be posted on the Air Force Personnel Center's Ask Web site, is an update to a 2001 version.

For more information, go to <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/> and type "officer selection video" in the search engine; or read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123169520>.

JAG Corps officials announce law school programs

Applications for the Funded Legal Education Program and Excess Leave Program are being accepted from Jan. 1 to March 1, 2010.

The FLEP, which is a paid legal studies program for active-duty Air Force commissioned officers, is an assignment action and participants receive full pay, allowances and tuition. Applicants must have between two and six years active-duty service -- enlisted or commissioned -- and must be a captain or below as of the day they begin law school.

The ELP is an unpaid legal studies program for Air Force officers. Participants do not receive pay and allowances; however, they remain on active duty for retirement eligibility and benefits purposes. Applicants must have between two and ten years active-duty service and must be a captain or below as of the first day of law school.

For more information and application materials, log on to <http://www.airforce.com/jag>; call 800-524-8723; or read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123166109>.

NASA accepting applications for aeronautics scholarship

Officials in NASA's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate are accepting scholarship applications for the 2010 academic year. The application deadline is Jan. 11, 2010. NASA officials expect to award 20 undergraduate and five graduate scholarships to students in aeronautics or related fields.

For details about this scholarship program, including how to apply, visit: <http://asee.org/nasaasp>; for more information about NASA's aeronautics programs, visit: <http://www.aeronautics.nasa.gov>; for information about NASA and agency programs, visit: <http://www.nasa.gov>; or read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123165169>.

Air Force Uniform Office researches fire-resistant uniform

The Air Force is currently researching a flame-resistant uniform that wool naturally provides. Not only does wool resist flame, but it also resists wrinkles, stains and moisture and is durable, retains its shape and is comfortable in all seasons. Wool absorbs perspiration, keeping a layer of dry air against the skin that helps hold in body heat in cold temperatures and cool people in warmer weather.

The AFUO is currently researching many different fiber options for fire-resistant clothing, and continues to work joint initiatives with sister services. For questions or suggestions or to volunteer as a wear test candidate, e-mail the AFUO at 648AESS.clothing@wpafb.af.mil.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123166102>.

CIVILIAN

'My Biz' offers training records updating for civilians

A new tab in "My Biz" allows Air Force civilian employees to update their completed training through the self-service module in the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System. This eliminates faxing, e-mailing or delivering completed training certificates to the local civilian personnel section or training office.

Installation CPS or training offices will automatically update training records for any mandatory training courses. To avoid erroneous or duplicate training entries, employees should wait 30 days after completion of training to allow the system to update.

For more information on the automation of civilian training records, call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102; e-mail tfsc_sa.feedback@randolph.af.mil; or read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123169050>.

Personnel officials launch new civilian employment Web site

Air Force Personnel Center officials have developed a new Air Force civilian employment Web site to educate potential applicants and the general public about available civilian jobs, the eligibility and application process, and finding job opportunities in various specialties and career fields.

The new site will help clarify the Air Force's current civilian hiring process and provide site visitors with detailed information about available career fields. The site also helps explain federal employment benefits and educates visitors on student job opportunities.

Air Force civilian employment opportunities can be found at the new Web site, <http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afcivilianjobs>. For more information about civilian employment, please call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102 or e-mail tfsc_sa_feedback@randolph.af.mil.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123167336>.

Air Force officials seek nominations for top civilian employees

Air Force Personnel Center officials are seeking nominations for the 2010 Air Force Association's Outstanding Air Force Civilian Employees of the Year Awards. The AFA recognizes four Air Force civilian employees for their outstanding achievements.

The four award categories are Civilian Wage Employee, Civilian Program Specialist, Civilian Program Manager and Civilian Senior Manager. Nominations will be on the nature of the achievement, breadth of impact, and the development of techniques or procedures that significantly increased mission effectiveness. The awards are based on contributions and accomplishments that occurred during the 2009 calendar year. Nomination packages are due to AFPC by Feb. 15, 2010.

For more information, call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102; or read the Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123167218>.

GUARD AND RESERVE

ReserveNet changes to ARCNet, welcomes Air National Guard members

ReserveNet has a new name and a new mission; ARCNet was established to provide ReserveNet capabilities to ANG members. Before, only Reservists had access to these resources used to train, communicate and prepare for executing their missions. Now, ARCNet will provide a standard ancillary training program for the ANG.

Six ANG units initially will have access to ARCNet. The National Guard Bureau plans to bring the remaining Air Guard units on board in 2010.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123167801>.

Guardmembers must submit civilian employment information

Air National Guard members must provide their civilian employment information to the Department of Defense through a mandatory program. The Civilian Employment Information Program makes it possible for defense officials to know who can be called up for active duty. Information is required to be updated every year.

Guardmembers must fill in 10 specific data fields. Technicians must also register as government employees. Employment data can be entered on the Defense Manpower Data Center Web site.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123166763>.

Guard offers resiliency training to servicemembers, families

The training program, titled "Flash Forward - Soldiers and Leaders Guide to Resiliency," is focused on incorporating resiliency into the culture of the Army and Air National Guard.

The program is a new approach to the way Guard leaders ensure the wellness of Guardsmen and is available to all local, state and nongovernmental organization personnel and their families whose duties place them in harm's way. Its mission is to provide the education and training necessary to instill tools to handle high-level stress, accurately identify potential problems and develop both individual and group techniques to survive and prosper in times of great stress.

A Web site has been launched by the center at www.WarFighterDiaries.com to foster relationships with uniformed servicemembers through short videos of actual warriors, their stories and real life experiences.

To find out more information about the National Guard Resiliency Center, its training programs or to request resiliency training, call 785-274-1439; or read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123169582>.

FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Key Spouse Training Program

Is your spouse looking for a meaningful way to become involved in their Air Force community? The revised Key Spouse Training Program was recently re-introduced, and provides a vital link to families, especially during deployments. Key spouses work as a team with unit commanders and first sergeants to create an official communication network with families. The Key Spouse Program serves to enhance readiness and establish a sense of community. This program is a great "force multiplier," and a valuable tool to support families during separations and enhance communication between leadership, spouses, and other family members. For more information, please contact your Airman and Family Readiness Center.

Year of the Air Force Family

Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz announced July 2009 - July 2010 as the YoAFF. The primary target of this program is to rally efforts and energy as a renewed sense of community emerges at the installation level and across the Air Force. The primary goal is to reinforce the long-standing heritage of taking care of the Air Force Family, including active-duty, Reserve and Guard component members, civilians, spouses and children. Contact your major command or installation POC for more information.

Caring for People Coordinators

The Caring for People initiative to create nine career broadening positions will start this October. Caring for People Coordinators serve as an installation-level Airman and Family Services flight with overall responsibility for developing and providing Caring for People services related to pre-deployment, reintegration education and consultation. In particular, these coordinators will be leading installation-wide Caring for People activities and

services for active duty, Guard, Reserve, DOD civilians and family members. Locations are Aviano AB, Italy; McConnell AFB, Kan.; RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath, England; MacDill AFB, Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field, Fla.; Kadena AB, Japan; Langley AFB, Va.; Barksdale AFB, La.; and Tinker AFB, Okla.

Important updates in life require update in DEERS

When military families experience life events, it's important to keep their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System records up to date. DEERS is the worldwide database of uniformed services members, their family members and others eligible for military benefits, including Tricare.

Along with changes of address, other life events that can affect DEERS records include additions to the family, either through births or adoptions; a child going to college; changes in a sponsor's status such as retirement; marriage or divorce; becoming entitled to Medicare; or the death of a sponsor or family member.

Contact information on DEERS can be updated in several different ways including in person at a military ID card issuing facility; online; and by phone, fax or mail. There are two online options via either the new myDODbenefits Web site at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/mydodbenefits>, or the Beneficiary Web Enrollment Web site at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/bwe>. For more information regarding DEERS and how and when to update DEERS records, go to <http://www.tricare.mil/DEERS>.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123165733>.

Policy change benefits disabled Airmen

A policy change by Air Force Personnel Center officials now allows some Airmen retiring with less than 20 years active service to receive retirement certificates.

A change to Air Force Instruction 36-3203, Service Retirements, authorizes Airmen with less than 20 years of active service who are retired permanently for disability to be issued Department of Defense Form 363AF, Certificate of Retirement. Previously, the policy limited presentation of certain retirement documents to members with 20 or more years of active service. The effective date for eligibility under the new policy is Aug. 20, 2009.

For more information about this change, visit <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil> and type "retirement" into the search engine; call the 24-hour Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102; or read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123166463>.

DOD targets drug abuse during Red Ribbon Week

"Drug free is the key" is the theme for Red Ribbon Week 2009 set for October 23 - 31. Red Ribbon Week is the nation's oldest and largest drug prevention program and is a reminder to Tricare beneficiaries of the dangers of unhealthy habits.

For more information about DOD observation of Red Ribbon Week visit <http://tricare.mil/tma/DDRP/red-ribbon-week.aspx>; or read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123167417>.

VA officials warn of telephone scam

Officials at the Department of Veterans Affairs are warning people not to give credit card numbers over the phone to callers claiming to be updating VA prescription information.

Veterans are being contacted by 'Patient Care Group' representing that they are helping administer VA prescriptions and stating that the pharmacy billing procedures have changed and they are therefore requesting veteran credit card numbers for prescription payments in advance of filling their prescriptions. VA has not changed its processes for dispensing prescription medicines.

Anyone who receives a call from someone claiming to work for the Patient Care Group who is seeking a credit card number should simply hang up. Veterans with questions about VA services should contact the nearest VA medical center or call toll-free 877-222-8387.

For more information, read the Air Force Print News story at <http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123167735>.

WORTH REPEATING

"It takes as much courage to have tried and failed as it does to have tried and succeeded."

- Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906 – 2001), author, pioneering aviator and wife of Charles Lindbergh

RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Air Force Community

<http://www.afcommunity.af.mil/>

Air Force Highlights

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil/usafhighlights/index.asp>

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>

Air Force Personnel Center

<http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>

Air Reserve Personnel Center

<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil/>

Department of Defense

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defenselink.mil>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Web site

<http://www.firstgov.gov/>

AIR FORCE HERITAGE TO HORIZONS

Hispanic Heritage Month continues through October 15: The nation observes Hispanic Heritage Month in honor of the many contributions made by the Hispanic community to the United States.

Oct. 1, 1958 – NASA established to control nonmilitary scientific space projects.

Oct. 1, 1959 – The USAF Aerospace Medical Center activated at Brooks AFB, Texas, absorbing the former School of Aviation Medicine, the USAF Hospital at Lackland AFB, Texas, and other facilities

Oct. 1, 1979 – First phase of Space Defense Operations Center began limited operations in Cheyenne Mountain Complex, Colo., sharing computer terminals and communications with Air Defense Command Intelligence Watch.

Oct. 14, 1947 – The first faster-than-sound flight is made by Capt. Charles E. Yeager at Muroc Air Base, Calif., in a rocket-powered research plane, Bell XS-1 rocket ship.

Oct. 14, 1962 – A U.S. Air Force reconnaissance flight proved the existence of Russian missile sites in Cuba.

Oct. 15, 1948 – The Combined Airlift Task Force created to increase efficiency during the Berlin Airlift.

Oct. 22, 1970 – First attempted simultaneous launch of two Minuteman II ICBMs succeeded at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

Oct. 23, 1909 – Lt. Benjamin D. Foulois took his first flying lesson from Wilbur Wright.

Oct. 24, 1974 – The Space and Missile Systems Organization successfully launched a Minuteman I ICBM from a C-5A Galaxy cargo aircraft.

Oct. 27, 1962 – A U-2 reconnaissance aircraft from the 4080th Strategic Wing piloted by Maj. Rudolf Anderson Jr. is shot down over Cuba. Lost with his aircraft, Major Anderson posthumously received the first Air Force Cross for his sacrifice.

Oct. 31, 1959 – A Series D Atlas ICBM went on alert at Vandenberg AFB, Calif. This was the first American ICBM equipped with a nuclear warhead to be placed on alert status.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit the Air Force Link heritage section at <http://www.af.mil/information/heritage>.

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