MAGAZINE

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2016 International Convention



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Jeffrey Ledoux, Air Force Sergeants Association 26th International President

LOOKING FORWARD

WOW ... I can't believe another year has come and gone. This year we celebrated AFSA's 55th year in existence during our Professional Airmen's Conference (PAC) in San Antonio, Texas. It's sometimes difficult to imagine an organization that has been around for 55 years with the sole purpose to ensure a higher quality of life for those who serve, have served or will serve in the future. That's why our motto "Defending the Enlisted Corps and Their Families Since 1961" continues to be the driving force behind AFSA.

Some of the PAC highlights include recognizing great AFSA members for the work they did this past year. This year was no different. We handed out numerous accolades to our award recipients who went above and beyond this past year. We also recognized our numerous recruiters who achieved either Sky-Higher, High-Flier or Twin-Flier status. It was also great to have several of our past presidents in attendance. I always enjoy the Past President's Panel which helps us gain insight into AFSA's past. In addition, we had several notable guest speakers including CMSAF James Cody who provided us with a senior leader perspective. Yet another highlight was the panel of our Major Command's senior enlisted leaders who provided us with their views of the Air Force of today and in the future. It's difficult to condense a week's worth of activities into one small article, but it's safe to assume that everyone had a great time.

Some of the more controversial Bylaw changes created lots of discussion, but in the end, the executive council and general membership voted them down. What we did learn during this process is that many of our members need additional training on "Robert's Rules of Order"

"I want to thank everyone for their diligent efforts in keeping AFSA successful, and I look forward to working with everyone as we move AFSA forward."

which helps us understand how to conduct meetings the proper way. We'll work this into next year's PAC.

Lastly, I would be remiss as your new president if I didn't take some time to thank our outgoing president CMSgt. (Ret.) Daniel Yeomans. For the past four years, he served as our 25th president and led this association and the executive council to achieve greatness. Thank him the next time you see him as he deserves the recognition. The good news is that he's not leaving the executive council, as he will be serving as my Senior Advisor and Membership Chair for the next two years.

Lastly, many thanks to those serving behind the scenes to make this PAC an enjoyable one for all attendees.

As I start my new term as president, I want to thank everyone for their diligent efforts in keeping AFSA successful, and I look forward to working with everyone as we move AFSA forward. Communication is critical to AFSA success, so we'll be working on our Chapter Toolbox link as a way to keep you updated on AFSA changes. In the coming months, we'll be working to balance our budget and refine our processes. That should keep us busy for a while ... #We Are AFSA.

Jeffry E Kedout

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On the Cover: Special guests, the Airmen of Airmen's Week from Lackland AFB joined *American Idol* winner Taylor Hicks, and other convention guests on stage during the AFSA Gives Back Live Concert!

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MEMBERSHIP

One-year, two-year, three-year and life membership options are available. Please call Headquarters for pricing. A subscription to the *AFSA Magazine* is included in membership dues. Non-member subscription rate is \$27 per year.

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

AFSA Magazine is the only magazine dedicated solely to serving the Total Enlisted Corps and their families. We are obliged to serve the interests and concerns of enlisted personnel and our members by striving to report timely and accurate information. The editors reserve the right to edit all submissions but will never materially alter the author's viewpoint. The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Air Force Sergeants Association or its editors.

AFSA does not necessarily endorse products or services advertised in the *AFSA Magazine*.

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AFSA

Founded in 1961 by four Air Force enlisted people, AFSA is a non-profit, tax-exempted organization representing the professional and quality-of-life concerns of the Total Air Force (active duty and components) enlisted members in active, retired and veteran status, and their families, on Capitol Hill and in the Pentagon. Through its many programs and worldwide chapters. AFSA also reaches out to bases and communities to help those in need and to raise awareness of the sacrifices, concerns and contributions of those who have worn or are wearing enlisted chevrons

AMF

An AFSA affiliate, the Airmen Memorial Foundation (AMF), provides educational assistance to dependent children of the Total Air Force enlisted force. It is also an annual participant in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #10517).

AMM

An AFSA affiliate, the Airmen Memorial Museum (AMM), located in AFSA's Airmen Memorial Building, features rotating exhibits and stands as a tribute to those who have served. It is also an annual participant in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC #10518).

IMPORTANT AFSA NUMBERS AFSA Headquarters:

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HOW DO YOU "COOL?"

Civilian industry leaders are looking for talented and highly skilled professionals to lead their companies through the 21st Century. They need disciplined leaders who can manage small and large projects and provide accurate and precise results to new and challenging industry circumstances. Who better to lead the way on this than the Department of Defense under the Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) initiatives!

Each branch of the Armed Forces has a COOL Program Office that is responsible for providing detailed information on how their members can obtain civilian-industry-recognized credentials and licensures. Contact information for each of the branches is listed below. The Air Force Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (AF COOL) Program, which was launched in October of 2014, is dedicated to providing the level of expertise that industry partners expect.

The United States Air Force is preparing Airmen to be assets not only to the force they currently serve, but also as skilled experts in the civilian sector once they transition. Skill sets that are obtained during technical and On-the-Job Training (OJT) to the members' 5-skill levels are matched to within 80 percent of over 1,300 recognized civilian credentials and licensures, and are made available for Airmen to pursue under their primary Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC).

In addition to the AF COOL program providing access to credentials and licensures, the program also launched in August of 2016 the capability for Airmen to receive unlimited credentials and licensures up to a \$4,500 lifetime cap. The program also provides payments for study materials and preparatory courses such as boot camps, books, software and other related items. To date, the AF COOL Program has saved enlisted Airmen over \$1.5 million in tuition assistance dollars—and that's pretty "COOL!"

In FY16, one base took the AF COOL Challenge and never let the reins go! The top base in 2016 was none other than Lackland AFB, San Antonio, Texas. Lackland had 139 individuals participate in the AF COOL Program; the second highest participation rate belonged to Ramstein AB, Germany, with 119 individuals.



The top AFSCs in 2016 were 3D152 (128), 3D151 (81), 3D052 (76), 3D172 (64), and 3D072 (61). The top credentials sought were for Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) with 536 educational goals and the Project Management Professional with 251.

The AF COOL Program visited 22 installations in FY16 spreading the message—from Eielson AFB, AK, to Andrews and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Their travels in FY17 are projecting them to USAFE, PACAF, and the East Coast! Here's to a great start of FY17. Are you ready?



ONE EMPTY SEAT

More than 90,000 American service members who have been prisoners of war or missing in action will be remembered and honored at the Washington Redskins stadium and many other sports functions across the U.S.

Last year, Rolling Thunder, Washington, DC, Inc. contacted the Washington Redskins to discuss the possibility of the Redskins placing a permanent POW/MIA Chair of Honor at their home stadium, FedExField. They were extremely receptive to the idea and immediately went to work on making it happen.

On Sept. 12, 2016, at the Redskins home opener and in front of 62,000 cheering fans, the executive director and co-founder of Rolling Thunder, 1st Sgt. Walt Sides, USMC (Ret.), and Rob Wilkins, Vice President/Director of Legislative Affairs, unveiled the POW/MIA chair at FedExField. The chair is located on the Club Level, 50-yard line. The seat will remain unoccupied in honor of the memory of the men and women who sacrificed for their country.

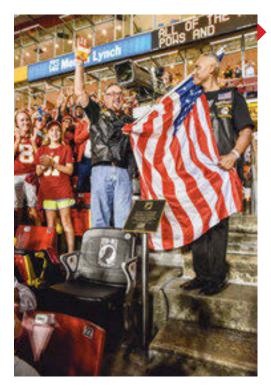
Redskins President Bruce Allen commented, "We are forever grateful to the brave men and women of our Armed Forces and even though POWs and MIAs may not be present, they will never be forgotten.

This seat will remain perpetually empty for every Redskins home game in their honor." In response to articles in the last edition of the AFSA Magazine (Summer 2016) on POW/MIA-related topics, we received the following information from AFSA member MSgt. Rob Wilkins, USAF (Ret.), Vice President/Director of Legislative Affairs for Rolling Thunder, Washington, DC, Inc.

To date, over 350 of these Chairs of Honor have already been placed throughout the United States.

Patrick Hughes stated, "This Empty Chair will serve as an instant reminder of all the sacrifices made for Our Country by these still-missing American servicemen who have for too long been forgotten by all but their immediate families and some close friends."

Rolling Thunder's goal is to have a POW/MIA Chair of Honor at every National Football League (NFL), National Basketball Association (NBA), Major League Baseball (MLB) and National Hockey League (NHL) stadium/arena.



Executive Director and co-founder of Rolling Thunder 1st Sgt. Walt Sides, USMC (Ret.), and MSgt. Rob Wilkins, USAF (Ret.), Vice President/ Director of Legislative Affairs, unveiled the POW/ MIA chair at FedExField. (Photo courtesy of Patrick Hughes)

Redskins Salute, the team's military appreciation club, and Rolling Thunder, Washington, DC, Inc., unveiled a POW/MIA seat in section 342 during the Sept. 12, 2016, home opener against the Pittsburgh Steelers. (Photo courtesy of Patrick Hughes)





ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE FORUM HELD AFSA AIMS TO STOP PAY CAPS, SEQUESTRATION

In August 2016 at the Legislative Forum of the AFSA International Convention in San Antonio, Texas, AFSA delegates ratified the 2016–2017 Legislative Platform—the basic list of targets that AFSA lobbyists will pursue in testimony and visits to Capitol Hill during the upcoming months. Delegates also unanimously passed an "Open Letter to Congress and the President" on Ending Military Pay Raise Caps and an annual resolution on sequestration. The Open Letter urges lawmakers and the Administration to take immediate action

to restore a 2.1 percent pay raise for January 2017, which is called for by law, and to stop future pay raise caps. It also recommends that steps should be taken to account for previous year caps, to catch up where law has said our military basic pay should be today. The Resolution insists Congress stop sequestration by addressing the Budget Control Act cuts to properly fund the Defense Department at levels that ensure adequate manning, training and equipment modernization. The new platform, Open Letter and Resolution are available for viewing and download on the AFSA home page.

NDAA UPDATE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT FUNDING STATUS

As predicted, lawmakers didn't complete negotiations on the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act before the election recess, so once again we will have to wait until the latter part of the year for the final defense policy bill. Prior to the break, negotiators reached agreement on many of their differences and we hear there are just a couple of sticking points remaining. Repeating from last year is the ongoing debate over the greater sage grouse. House Republicans want to prevent the bird from being listed on the endangered species list because they believe it could limit military training at some western bases. Meanwhile, Senate Republicans don't want the bill encumbered by these discussions and thereby setting up the stalemate over that particular issue. The greater problem is how DoD programs are funded as well as how much is provided to the department. There was an \$18 billion difference between the House and Senate bills going into the negotiations and



CONVERSATION WITH THE SERVICE SECRETARIES

Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James answers questions during the Center for a New American Security panel moderated by Barbara Starr, CNN's Pentagon Correspondent, in Washington, D.C., Oct. 24, 2016. James shared the panel with Army Secretary Eric Fanning and Navy Secretary Ray Mabus. (U.S. Air Force photo/Scott M. Ash)

Eye on Washington reports on all of the legislative activity that AFSA is either involved with or tracking on behalf of our members. The Military & Government Relations Team writes each issue's compilation.



AF, NAVY CONDUCT JOINT AIR DEFENSE EXERCISE

Petty Officer 3rd Class Gabrielle Embry signals to an F/A-18F Super Hornet, assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 131, on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) ("Ike"). Embry serves as an aviation boatswain's mate (handling) aboard Ike. Ike and its carrier strike group are deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations. *(U.S. Navy photo/Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan T. Beard*)

the last we heard, panel members were looking at splitting the difference. We also understand that they may use the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) fund for some regular defense programs which has caused some interparty/chamber consternation in the past.

While it may be December before Congress announces their final decisions on many key issues like the pay raise and pharmacy co-pays, we can be fairly certain of some actions since similar language appeared in both bills (see NDAA matrix). Here are three changes you will most likely see once the final bill is released:

TRICARE: TRICARE Standard will have a new name and be reclassified as a preferred provider network, meaning there could be higher charges for visits with doctors who aren't in the new TRICARE network. It would also have an annual enrollment requirement; so, if you are under 65 and in TRICARE Standard now, pay very close attention to any notices you receive next year about the annual enrollment period. If you don't, you and your family might not be covered by TRICARE. Also, in future years there will likely be an annual enrollment fee. If the House plan prevails in the final bill, the annual enrollment fee in 2020 would be \$100/\$200 for single/family. However, it could be more and could occur earlier—it all depends on the results of the House-Senate negotiations. Last but not least, both bills contained language directing a number of changes that will improve access to care. These include a standardized appointment system, expanded use of telehealth services, and displaying emergency room wait times.

SENATE AND HOUSE PROVISIONS FOR THE FY 2017 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

ISSUE	Senate Bill (S. 2943)	House Bill (H.R. 4909)
Military Pay Raise	Caps pay raise at 1.6%.	Provides full 2.1% pay raise in accordance with current law, matching private sector pay growth.
Housing Allowance	 Cap monthly allowance at lower grade- applicable rate or actual housing expenses. For dual military couples or housing sharers, divide BAH by number of servicemembers in domicile. 	No change to current law.
Commissary	Similar provisions to House.	Allows "variable pricing" strategies and "house brand" products at commissaries nationwide, but specifies current patron savings and satisfaction must be maintained.
Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA)	Makes SSIA permanent at current \$310 rate.	Extends SSIA for 1yr at \$310 rate.
Former Spouse Protection Act	Similar provisions to House.	Makes retired pay amount divisible with former spouses based on grade and years of service at time of divorce (future divorces only).
Selective Service Registration	Requires males & females to register.	Requires DoD to report on continued utility of registration.
Spouse/Family PCS flexibility	Authorizes spouse/family relocation up to 6 months before or after the servicemember to accommodate work, school or caregiver needs.	N/A
TRICARE for Life	No changes (rejects DoD-proposed enrollment fee of up to 2% of retired pay).	Same provisions as Senate.
TRICARE Prime	24% enrollment fee increase to \$350/\$700 (individual/family) effective Jan. 1, 2018.	Grandfathers currently serving and retired beneficiaries against proposed increases but applies similar hikes to new service entrants after Jan. 1, 2018.
TRICARE Standard	 \$150/\$300 (individual/family) enrollment fee as of Jan. 1, 2018; increasing to \$450/\$900 for 2023. Index annually after 2023 by CPI health cost index. Double deductible to \$300/\$600. 	 \$100/\$200 enrollment fee as of Jan. 1, 2020. Index annually by COLA percentage. Apply Senate-like increases to new service entrants after Jan. 1, 2018.
Catastrophic Cap on Out-of-pocket Expenses	 Raises as of Jan. 1, 2018, to \$1,500 (versus current 1K) for currently serving families. Increase to \$4,000 (versus current 3K) for retired families. Increase annually after 2018 by COLA percentage. 	 Retains current \$1,000 cap for currently serving and \$3,000 for retired families. Applies increases only to those who enter service after Jan. 1, 2018.
TRICARE Access and Quality Issues	 Eliminates preauthorization requirement for urgent and specialty care. Many other initiatives to improve beneficiary access, care quality and system productivity. 	 Eliminates preauthorization requirement for urgent care. Many other initiatives to improve beneficiary access, care quality and system productivity.
Military Health Care Consolidation	Consolidate responsibility for military health care delivery, budgeting and facilities under the Defense Health Agency.	Similar language.
Pharmacy Co-payments	 Require annual increases that would roughly double co-pays within 9 years. Imposes \$11 co-pay (versus current \$0) for mail order generics as of 2020. 	No changes to current law.
Use Military Star Card at Commissaries	N/A	SECDEF to ensure acceptance.
Space-A Travel	Requires study on space-available travel system. NLT 90 days after enactment; SECDEF to enter contract for independent study of system. Report 180 days after contract on current and projected capacity, efficiency, effects/feasibility of adding eligibility for SelRes members/families, gray area Reserves for international flights and their dependents, drilling Reserves traveling to drill locations and un-remarried survivors of active/ reserve component members. Also assess relative priority and data on travelers who sought but didn't obtain travel.	
Furlough Protection		Exempts Military Technicians (Dual Status) from civilian employee furloughs.

SURVIVORS: Both bills contained language addressing the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA), so we anticipate the program will be extended for at least another year, buying us additional time toward eliminating the SBP-DIC offset altogether.

COMMISSARIES: The bills also contained language allowing "variable pricing" strategies and "house brand" products at commissaries nationwide, but they also specify that current patron savings and satisfaction must be maintained.

One item not likely to appear in the final bill is a Senate provision that would limit veterans' preference in hiring to a one-time use. Military and veterans groups, including AFSA, opposed this move shortly after the passage of that chamber's bill. The backlash prompted Senate Armed Services Chair John McCain (R-AZ) to abandon the effort and he has since told VSOs he would "Ensure that this provision, which is not included in the House bill, is not included in the NDAA conference report."

We conclude this summary on the NDAA with a word of caution: <u>none of these decisions is final</u>. Because conference negotiations are conducted in private, we won't know what is in the final bill until it is released and even then, both chambers must approve the bill and the President must sign it before it becomes law.

TRICARE: CVS OUT, WALGREENS IN EXPRESS SCRIPTS PHARMACY NETWORK CHANGING FOR TRICARE BENEFICIARIES

As this issue was going to press, Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI) was announcing an important change to the retail pharmacy network it manages on behalf of TRICARE. On Dec. 1, 2016, Walgreens pharmacy locations will join the network. CVS pharmacies, including those in Target stores, will leave the network on the same day. The new network will have more than 57,000 locations nationwide, and ensures TRICARE beneficiaries have timely access to retail pharmacies in their community.

ESI is the TRICARE pharmacy contractor, responsible for developing the pharmacy network. ESI reached a new network agreement with Walgreens, which will replace CVS pharmacy in the TRICARE network. This change is intended to provide better value and maintain convenient access for beneficiaries. The addition of Walgreens into the network means that 98 percent of TRICARE beneficiaries will still have a network pharmacy within 5 miles of their home. **Very Important**: If beneficiaries choose to fill a prescription at CVS after Dec. 1, it will be a non-network pharmacy. That means beneficiaries will have to pay the full cost of the medication up front and then file for partial reimbursement.

ESI and TRICARE are working to notify all beneficiaries of this change, and ensure that people currently using CVS have time to switch to another network pharmacy. ESI is doing additional outreach to patients filling specialty drugs at CVS pharmacies to ensure they can move their prescription with no gap in their prescription coverage. You can find more information about this change by visiting ESI's website at **express-scripts.com/TRICARE/index.shtml**.

PRESERVING SYMBOL OF VALOR BILL PROHIBITS SELLING OF PURPLE HEARTS

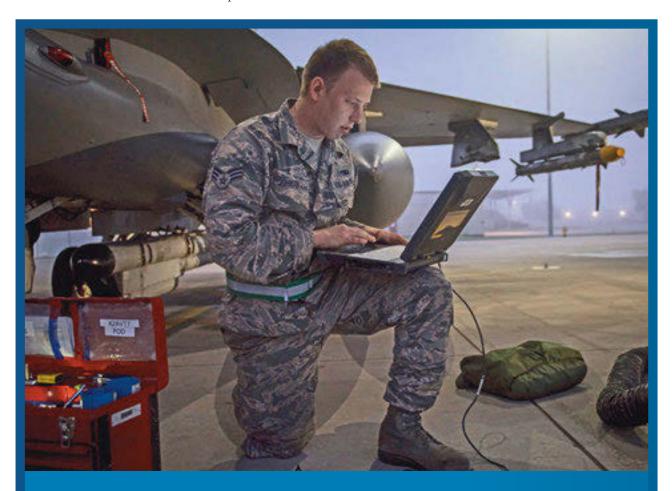
Recently Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA) introduced H.R. 6234, the "Private Corrado Piccoli Purple Heart Preservation Act" which would make it illegal to buy and sell military-issued Purple Hearts. The Purple Heart is our nation's oldest medal, awarded exclusively to members of the armed forces who are wounded by an enemy instrument of war. Unfortunately, the military memorabilia collectors' market places a high value on military-issued Purple Hearts, with medals engraved with the names of those killed in action commanding the highest prices. Rep. Cook, wounded twice in combat himself, said, "These military collectors cheapen the Purple Heart by buying and selling this symbol of sacrifice like a pack of baseball cards. I'm committed to defending our Veterans, and that means preserving their symbols of honor like the Purple Heart. These medals belong with families or in museums, not on some collector's auction block." The AFSA-endorsed Purple Heart Preservation Act would help put an end to the practice of selling the medals and make it easier to return them to their rightful owners.

LOWER CO-PAYS FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT CHANGES

Beginning Oct. 3, 2016, non-active duty dependent beneficiaries, retirees, their family members and survivors will generally pay lower co-payments and cost-shares for mental health care, such as \$12 for outpatient mental health and substance use disorder (SUD) visits rather than the current rate of \$25 per mental health visit. Co-pays and cost-shares for inpatient mental health services will also be the same as for inpatient medical/surgical care. You can ask your provider or visit TRICARE's website for more information.

BLOCKING CUTS FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM THERAPY EFFORT TO REVERSE THE ABA REIMBURSEMENT RATE CUT

Last year, TRICARE began a demonstration project to provide a single, uniform benefit to the estimated 26,000 TRICARE beneficiaries with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). However, in April of this year, TRICARE adjusted the reimbursement rates to providers of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy, threatening a severe reduction in access to crucial ABA services for dependents with ASD. In October, a small, bipartisan group of Senate lawmakers urged appropriators in both chambers to take the necessary steps to reverse cuts in reimbursement rates for ABA treatment of military children with ASD. The senators sent a letter to the members of the Appropriations Committees urging them to ensure that funding for the Department of Defense includes a reversal in the TRICARE cuts to mirror this reversal in the House and Senate National Defense Authorization Act bills. Time will tell if their efforts are successful; lawmakers will also be working on FY 2017 funding solutions in the lame-duck session.



FOG ROLLS OVER THE 138[™]

Senior Airman Jeremy Johnson from the Oklahoma Air National Guard's 138th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron in Tulsa, Oklahoma, performs routine maintenance on an F-16 Fighting Falcon's critical components Oct. 27, 2016. *(U.S. Air Force photo/Drew Egnoske)*

COVER STORY

AFSA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & PROFESSIONAL AIRMEN'S CONFERENCE

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Within our International Convention, the Air Force Sergeants Association hosts the Professional Airmen's Conference (PAC) to help network, support and educate service members on the issues affecting the U.S. Air Force and our national security. The annual PAC includes participants from military educational centers, supporting military branches and joint services trainers, as well as enlisted leadership.

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San Antonio, Texas, is where many of our members began their basic military training and military careers. And, from August 20th through the 24th, it was home to the 2016 AFSA International Convention & Professional Airmen's Conference.

During the AFSA Annual International Convention, the International and Executive Councils, Division and Chapter Delegates along with our active members came together to share valuable information, discuss and ratify bylaws, review the Legislative Platform, set goals and objectives for the coming year, and celebrate all the past year's amazing success.

In addition to AFSA's general membership, attendees and guests had the opportunity to meet past and present AFSA, military, and congressional leaders as part of the professional development forums and prestigious awards ceremonies.

These forums consisted of keynote addresses from Air Force Chief of Staff General David L. Goldfein and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody. Guest speakers included Texas Congressman Joaquin Castro, AFSA's Past Presidents, MAJCOM/COCOM Command Chief Panel, and the ever popular (and lively) former Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force.

Each speaker and honored guest provided a rich insight to the Air Force's past, present and future. Moreover, these forums continue to build on the strong, solid foundation of activism, education, fraternalism and support for our Total Enlisted Corps and their families.

Within our International Convention, the Air Force Sergeant's Association hosts the Professional Airmen's Conference to support and educate service members on the issues affecting the U.S. Air Force and our national security. The Professional Airmen's Conferences feature participants from Military Educational Centers, supporting Military Branches and Joint Services Trainers, as well as Enlisted Leadership groups.

For those who were not able to attend, what follows is a recap in photos of the convention and conference. And, for those in attendance, we hope this feature provides a fond reminder of your time with us and your fellow members of the AFSA in San Antonio.

COVER STORY

AFSA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

Four days of fraternity, legislative review, shared communications and membership activity.





CREDENTIALS

Registration and Credentials are open, and we're ready to get this convention started.

Host Divisions 3 and 5 provided a wide array of raffle gift items and support for attendees.



The annual InfoExpo enjoyed large crowds eager to learn, discuss and network together. We are most grateful to our sponsors, partners and exhibitors.













It's a Texas Roundup! Guests were ready to reap the rewards of membership and have a great evening of fellowship, shared laughter and festive fare.







The AFSA Gives Back Live Concert featured *American Idol* winner Taylor Hicks, semi-finalist Alexis Gomez, comedian Dick Hardwick and special guests—the Airmen of Airmen's Week, Lackland AFB.



★ ★ ★ AFSA





COVER STORY

AFSA International President's Luncheon with the Medallion and 2015 Recognition Ceremonies.











AFSA's International Charity Appeals and Parade of Checks in support of AFSA Scholarships, Auxiliary Grant/Scholarships, AMM, AMF, AFEV, and AFSA Building Fund.







Past International President's Panel: (pictured from left to light) Joe Spence, Geno Piccoli, Michael Parente, John "Doc" McCauslin, Carolyn Whitsell Piccoli, Carol Ruholl, Michael Carton and Jeff Ledoux.

AFSA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION & PROFESSIONAL AIRMEN'S CONFERENCE

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Professional Development Forum and Senior Leadership Perspective with Chief of Staff General David L. Goldfein, CMSAF James Cody and MAJCOM/COCOM Command Chief Panel.









AFSA International NCO and Airman of the Year Selection Board: Former CMSAF #5 Robert Gaylor greets the NCO and Airman of the Year nominees to offer his congratulations and help calm their nerves before their final interviews.





Meet & Greet with the Former Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force: an AFSA exclusive and true highlight of the conference. Members, guests and young Airmen have an opportunity to meet, greet and gather autographs from the CMSAFs on their AFSA commemorative trading cards.



During the Former CMSAF Meet & Greet, Senior Airman William Whetstone received news of his promotion. His mentor, CMSAF #15 Rodney McKinley, shared in the celebration to sign and tack on the new stripes.



AFSA-sponsored Air Force Honors Banquet and CMSAF Awards featured presentations for the Americanism Award Recipient, The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS); the Excellence in Military Leadership Award recipient, recently retired General Mark Wels;, the William H. Pitsenbarger Award, Airmen and NCO of the Year Award, and the CMSAF Award Recipients.





The 2015 AFSA International Convention closes with the swearing in of the new officers and a resounding hammer of the gavel by our retiring 25th AFSA International President.

P-40 FLYING TIGER CUCKOO CLOCK

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AFSA AWARD RECIPIENTS

The AFSA Professional Airmen's Conference was held August 20–24 in San Antonio, Texas. This annual event brings together AFSA members with Senior Air Force and Congressional leaders for professional development, the sharing of ideas and to conduct the business of AFSA. Another highlight of the event is the AFSA International Awards Ceremony, which recognizes specific members and nominees who have accomplished great things in support of Airmen, Veterans, their families and this association. The following pages highlight the 2015 AFSA Award recipients.



THE WILLIAM H. PITSENBARGER HEROISM AWARD Tech. Sgt. Daniel S. Flechsenhaar

Tech. Sgt. Daniel S. Flechsenhaar distinguished himself as a Pararescueman from the 24th Special Tactics Squadron, 724th Special Tactics Group, 24th Special Operations Wing, Air Force Special Operations Command, Pope Field, North Carolina, during a 12-day raid on Al Qaeda in 2015. During this period, Sgt. Flechsenhaar demonstrated heroism in combat, personally saving the lives of 12 partner-nation special operations commandos during intense firefights and directly engaging the enemy during multiple ambushes in enemy territory, which resulted in the protection of his combined US-partner-nation special operations force. Sgt. Flechsenhaar also protected his force through coordinating air strikes, surveillance, and indirect fire to thwart a 200-man enemy ambush. Sgt. Flechsenhaar's tremendous courage, selfless devotion to his fellow service members and absolute dedication to duty in the face of extreme danger are clearly in the highest traditions of the United States Air Force.



Tech. Sgt. Flechsenhaar receives the Pitensbarger Award during the Honors Banquet. (Pictured left to right) International President Dan Yeomans, Tech. Sgt. Flechsenhaar, and CMSAF James A. Cody.

AFSA INTERNATIONAL AWARDS



2015 AFSA EXCELLENCE IN MILITARY LEADERSHIP AWARD Gen. Mark A. Welsh III (Ret.)

Throughout his 40-year career, Gen. Mark Anthony Welsh III has been a staunch advocate for improving the quality of the lives of Air Force enlisted members and their families. He is a rare leader who is both a visionary strategist with an intense warrior spirit. and one who has an incredibly humane focus on Airmen. As the 20th Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, he led the service through the excruciating effects of sequestration; directing headquarters Air Force to minimize impact to Airmen and their families. Gen. Welsh supported advanced opportunities for enlisted Airmen to include the Air Force Developmental Special Duty process and enhanced professional military education, as well as opening the door for enlisted Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) pilots. At the same time, he worked tirelessly to enhance work environments and secured military construction funding for housing, dormitories, fitness centers, child development centers, temporary living facilities, and community and youth centers. No matter where the general travels, he always takes time to shake the hands of enlisted members, ask them about their lives and solicit their views. During his tenure as the Air Force Chief of Staff, he has made it a point to clear his calendar to visit and address this conference every year-more appearances than any of his predecessors. While establishing himself as an incredibly effective and decisive leader, he has always kept his focus on his people, truly "an enlisted member's general." His consistent record of support for those whom AFSA represents has been and remains an integral part of his leadership.



L. MENDEL RIVERS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE Senator Barbara Ann Mikulski

Senator Barbara Ann Mikulski (D-MD) has led the fight against privatization of the commissary benefit for the past two years. She introduced bipartisan amendments to the Senate's fiscal 2016 and 2017 defense bills that would prevent the Pentagon from privatizing commissaries at five major installations next year and instead require the Department to first conduct an assessment for the purpose of reporting to Congress the potential costs and benefits of privatizing commissaries. This critical language was included in the final 2016 defense policy bill and has already been accepted in the Senate version of the 2017 NDAA. Senator Mikulski introduced or promoted legislation that protected TRICARE benefits; canceled the 1 percent COLA cut for working-age disabled veterans and survivors; helped reduce homelessness among our nation's veterans; made it more difficult for colleges to take Veteran and taxpayers' dollars for unaccredited and unlicensed degree programs; reduced the VA claims backlog; improved job opportunities for military spouses and enhanced benefits for military survivors. Senator Mikulski's efforts are second to none in supporting legislation to protect the quality of the lives of our military service members and their families.

AFSA MEMBER OF THE YEAR Tech. Sgt. Michael J. Burd

Tech. Sgt. Michael J. Burd is the Commander's Executive Assistant assigned to the 412th Mission Support Group at Edwards AFB, CA. His primary duty is to manage the group's workflow program. Sgt. Burd also excelled as the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of Wing Cyber Security, managing eight cyber professionals who provide 74 squadrons with cyber security in support of the Air Force Test Center's \$31 billion mission and safeguard of Edward's \$75 million network ensuring continued operations for more than 8,000 network users. Sgt. Burd was born in San Antonio, Texas, and comes from a military family. He graduated in 2000 from Jacksonville High School, Arkansas, and went on to join the Air Force in March of 2004. After completing technical school, he was assigned to the Combined Air & Space Operational Center, Nellis AFB, Nevada. In May of 2009, he changed duty stations to the 99th Communications Squadron at Nellis. Sgt. Burd deployed in August of 2007 to Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Division, Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. His passion for computers led him to join the Air Force as a Cyber Surety Technician; his technical expertise has earned him positions on tiger teams such as Edwards AFB network boundary modernization, defense biometric identification systems, and Air Force Network migration. He devotes much of his off-duty time to Chapter 1328, serving as 2011 Legislative Trustee and Vice President from January 2012 to December 2013, participating in various events both on and off Edwards AFB, where he promotes Air Force Sergeants Association legislative initiatives and membership drives.



AFSA FAMILY MEMBER OF THE YEAR Debbie Oesterreich

Mrs. Debbie Oesterreich is the Community Affairs Trustee for AFSA Chapter 615. She is a Life Time Member of AFSA and has been enthusiastically involved and devoted to AFSA for many, many years. Debbie has held almost every position available of the AFSA Auxiliary, and continues to work to welcome new members and keep her Chapter actively involved within the community. Mrs. Oesterreich was born and raised in Wisconsin. She is married to Wenzel Oesterreich, CMSgt (Ret). Their assignments included: KI Sawyer AFB MI, Moody AFB GA and BAFB LA. They have four daughters; Angela, Jill, Vicky and Tami. Her pride and joy are her four grandchildren; Sydney, Jacob, Delaney and Daniel. Currently, Debbie is President of Astrike Investments, LLC, and stays involved as a Member of VFW Auxiliary 5951 and the American Business Women's Association. In her free time she enjoys reading, travel, dancing and going to the movies. Also, she loves people, animals and, on occasion, a good party.



CMSGT RICHARD L. ETCHENBERGER NCO OF THE YEAR AWARD Tech. Sgt. Jessi L. Baugh

Tech. Sgt. Jessi L. Baugh is a Health Services Management Craftsman, assigned to the 17th Medical Support Squadron, Goodfellow AFB, Texas. She arrived at Lackland AFB. Texas, on November 22, 2005, for basic military training. Upon graduation, she attended the Health Services Management Apprentice Course at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. In April 2006, she arrived to her first duty assignment, RAF Lakenheath, UK where she was initially assigned as a Medical Records technician and then the Medical Readiness Training Manager, before finally serving as the 48th Medical Group Unit Deployment Manager, in charge of preparing and training over 600 medical personnel. She earned Senior Airman Below The Zone for unparalleled achievement and earned the rank of Staff Sergeant on her first attempt. In April 2009, she PCS'd to Goodfellow AFB as the Medical Evaluation Board and Special Needs Identification and Coordination Section NCOIC. While assigned in this position, Sgt. Baugh was able to lead the first Integrated Disability Evaluation System with Veteran's Affairs at Goodfellow AFB, making the first vital strides in shortening the length of time disabled veteran's waited for benefits and care. Answering the USAF's need for Military Training Leaders, she volunteered to work outside her comfort zone and serve in a greater capacity. Sgt. Baugh completed the Military Training Leader course at Lackland Air Force Base in August of 2011 and soon after, began as a Military Training Leader for the 315th Training Squadron, Goodfellow AFB. Her accomplishments during this short time have already identified her as the 17th Medical Group NCO of the Fourth Quarter for 2015. Her dedication to the United States Air Force and her family is unmatched.



AFSA AIRMAN OF THE YEAR Sr. Airman Bryan W. Holland

Sr. Airman Bryan W. Holland is assigned to 614th Air and Space Operations Center as a Line Evaluator for the Space Surveillance Division, Vandenberg AFB, California. Airman Holland enlisted in the Air Force in July of 2013. After graduating basic military training as an Honor Graduate, he was assigned to Vandenberg AFB to attend technical training at the 533d Training Squadron. He received Academic Achievement for both Enlisted Undergraduate Space Training and the Space Defense Operations Center course. Serving as the AFSA Vice President, Secretary and Airman Activities Coordinator has helped hone his leadership abilities and prepare him for future responsibilities. His military awards include 2014 Vandenberg AFB AFSA Airman of the Year, 2014 614th AOC AFSA Member of the Year, 2015 Vandenberg AFB First Quarter Airman of the Quarter, 2015 14 AF Lance P. Sijan Award, 2015 SSD Airman of the Quarter, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Air Force Basic Military Training Honor Graduate Ribbon, Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon (Rifle) and AF Training Ribbon. He is currently attending American Military University, working towards a bachelor's degree in Space Studies.



AFSA 2016 AMERICANISM AWARD The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS)

The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is a national organization providing compassionate care for the families of America's fallen military heroes and has offered support to more than 55,000 surviving family members of our fallen military and their caregivers since 1994. TAPS provides peer-based emotional support, grief and trauma resources, grief seminars and retreats for adults, Good Grief Camps for children, case work assistance, connections to community-based care, online and in-person support groups, as well as a 24/7 resource and information helpline for all who have been affected by a death in the Armed Forces. All of these services are provided free of charge. Coping with the loss of a servicemember is one of the hardest challenges that a military family will ever face. In a time often riddled with darkness and hurdles previously unknown, TAPS can provide a glimmer of light by way of guidance or contribution to the family members of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation. Regardless of the relationship to the deceased or the circumstance of the death, they are a true resource for anyone who has suffered the loss of a military loved one. This award is presented for the development of programs, ceremonies or other initiatives furthering patriotism in America, which TAPS embodies whole-heartedly.



Representing the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors is Ms. Cheryl Lankford, the surviving spouse of Army Command Sgt. Maj. Johnathan Lankford who died in Iraq on September 22, 2007.

AFSA TOP PERFORMERS

AFSA International Membership Achievement Award Division 1: SMSgt Joe C. Dittman, Chapter 751 Wright-Patterson AFB, OH

AFSA Chapter of the Year Over 500 Division 4: Chapter 652, Keesler AFB, MS

AFSA Chapter of the Year Under 500 Division 6: Chapter 1253, Creech AFB, NV AFSA CMSgt Richard L. Etchberger Chapter Communication Award Division 2: Chapter 404, Robins AFB, GA

AFSA CMSgt Richard L. Etchberger Division Communication Award Division 3: Omaha, NE

AFSA VSP of the Year Award Recipient Division 2: SMSgt Kristi M. Tellier, Chapter 358 Langley AFB, VA AFSA VAVS Award Recipient Division 4: MSgt (ret) William A. Braidwood, Chapter 615, Barksdale AFB, LA

AFSA International Legislative Award (Chapter) Division 2: Chapter 404, Robins AFB, GA AFSA International Legislative Award (Individual) Thorval Munksgaard, Chapter 404, Robins AFB, GA

AFSA Community Service Award Recipient Division 3: Chapter 985, Tinker AFB, OK



IT'S BINNICKER'S WAY

STREET NAMED FOR AFEV PAST PRESIDENT

Air Force Enlisted Village (AFEV) board of directors honored CMSAF#9 James C. Binnicker, AFEV's past president and CEO, by naming a street after him at Bob Hope Village in an October 18, 2016, dedication ceremony.

Residents and friends of AFEV gathered on Memory Lane, the street leading to the Bob Hope Village Commons, to honor Binnicker by renaming Memory Lane as Binnicker's Way. Binnicker served as the president and CEO from January 2000 until his passing in March of last year.

Current AFEV president and CEO, Brooke McLean, said the board of directors had been planning the honor for some time.

"In my mind, at least, Chief Binnicker will always be THE president and THE CEO," McLean said. McLean said that Binnicker was the kind of person who did not seek out such honors as he was a humble man.

Air Force Enlisted Village President and CEO Brooke McLean, left, gets some help unveiling a street sign from Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody. The AFEV renamed Memory Lane to Binnicker's Way in honor of the late James Binnicker, the ninth Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force and the former CEO and president of the organization. (Kelly Humphrey/Daily News)

"The county told us we couldn't put an apostrophe in the street name, but we're doing it anyway," he said. "Because this name is possessive. It stands for Binnicker's Way because his way was the right way."

CMSAF James Cody joined in with McLean to unveil the Binnicker's Way street sign. Cody remembered Binnicker's heart and sense of humor.

"It could cut like a knife," Cody said. "But it was like a knife cutting cake, because there was always something good."



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ORCE ENLISTED

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"We worked together to support -Marjorie, Bob Hope Village resident

Read Marjorie's story at afev.us/news

our family and our country."

NAVIGATOR Four Star Ch

To make a contribution to your Air Force Enlisted Village, visit afev.us/giving

For more information about residency at Bob Hope Village or Hawthorn House, call 800-258-1413 Air Force Enlisted Village | info@afev.us | 92 Sunset Lane, Shalimar, FL 32579

The Air Force Enlisted Village is an official charity of the United States Air Force and a worthy charity of the Air Force Sergeants Association.

AFSA INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT'S ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS



International President's Award Jim Crissinger



International President's Special Achievement Award Marylynn Scherlin

AFSA FOUR PILLARS

The Four Pillars Awards recognize those members who have excelled in one of the areas represented by AFSA's four pillars: Communications, Fraternity, Legislation and Membership. The awardees are selected by the International President with input from the Executive Council.



Four Pillars Achievement Award for Legislation Mark Clark – accepted by DP Steve Zalensky



Four Pillars Achievement Award for Membership Dan Kazumura



Four Pillars Achievement Award for Communications Jewell Hicks – accepted by DP Jim Crissinger



Four Pillars Achievement Award for Fraternalism Stan Staples – accepted by DP Jim Crissinger

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CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE AWARDS



Active Duty Recruiter of the Year MSgt Eric T. Hart, Health Professions Recruiter, 342nd Recruiting Squadron, Smyrna, GA



ANG Retention Office Manager of the Year MSgt Joshua Brown, Montana Air National Guard



Honor Guard Member of the Year SSgt William J. Chavanu, AFSPC



AFRC Recruiter of the Year MSgt Adam Eldard, March AFB, CA



ANG Recruiter of the Year MSgt Curtis Nelson, Oregon



First Sergeant of the Year SMSgt Jason Dahlquist, AETC



Military Training Instructor of the Year MSgt Raul Hernandez Jr., 326 TRS



Honor Guard Manager of the Year SrA Amanda L. Jolly USAFE/ Africa



Military Training Leader of the Year MSgt Kyle Mullen, Keesler AFB, MS

A C-130 H of the 94th Tactical Airlift Wing lands in Bolivia in 1987 after a flight from Howard Air Base, Panama. Bolivia, like more than 70 other countries around the world, employs the Hercules as part of their air force. USAF enlisted personnel stand near the truck while helmeted Bolivian MPs stand at left. *(Lockheed photo)*

STILL HAULING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS...

THE POWER AND STRENGTH OF THE C-130 HERCULES

by Sean M. Miskimins

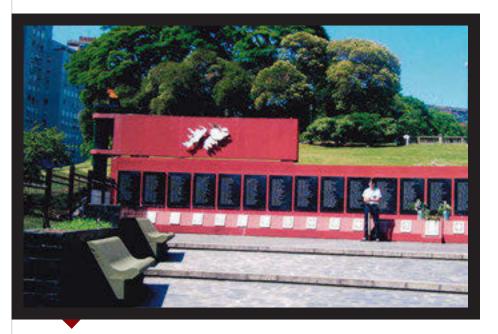
By the early 1950s, aircraft production in the United States was entering its second decade of "booming" expansion. The tumultuous travesty that was WWII saw the world's armies take to the air big-time in comparison to the forgotten war of 25 years earlier. This seeming "overproduction" of planes left Air Forces with surpluses. Many of these surplus aircraft (like the DC-3) would become the backbone of America's fledgling airline industry in the late 1940s. So while use of both Air Force and civilian aircraft soared. development, design and production was still being spearheaded with a military motive. Thus the creation of a new big "hauler" was soon seen.

The Lockheed C-130 Hercules first flew in 1954—on the heels of the Korean War (1950-53) when the need for a faster cargo plane became a priority. True, the C-130 topping out at 335 MPH was indeed faster than the C-46s, C-47s and C-54s of the period, but what else besides speed could this new bird bring to the USAF? Flexibility, in terms of what it could carry, was



Twin fins jut down from the horizontal stabilizer of a C-130E. Although the fins were added to improve fuel consumption in the early 1980s models of the Hercules, they didn't improve the plane's speed of 335 MPH. (Lockheed photo)

a big plus for the Hercules. Manned with a crew of 5, the C-130 had true variety in terms of what you wanted it to haul. It could carry 92 passengers or 64 Airborne troops along with their equipment. Should you need



The Falkland Islands War Memorial in downtown Buenos Aires, Argentina. The short-lived 1982 war between Argentina and England saw the Argentine Air Force get "creative" with their use of C-130s doing supply drops to the islands. England won the war and hundreds of Argentinian military perished. (*Miskimins photo*)

a medical evacuation aircraft, it could do that too, with its ability to carry 74 stretchers/litters at one time. Bulk cargo could also be moved by Lockheed's newest big beast. Whether six fully packed pallets, or in more modern times, three Humvees, the C-130 brought size, room and adaptability. It is characteristics like this that have kept the C-130 flying in USAF service for over six decades now—a rare feat.

The Hercules's skill set was soon admired by other Air Forces around the globe and, to date, over 70 have incorporated the C-130 into their fleets. Some air forces have had to get creative as their military budgets are not the same as that of the good ol' USA. For example, during the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965, the Pakistani Air Force (which is still buying new C-130s today [2016]) modified their small fleet of C-130s so that they could carry a 20,000 pound bombload. They hit Indian targets, such as bridges, with some success while also managing to shoot down 17 Indian Air Force aircraft with the guns they installed on their C-130s. While the USAF did not alter their Herculeses for bombing duties, they too turned some C-130s into AC-130 gunships for the close-combat conditions of the Vietnam War (1961–75). The AC-130 was a workhorse for the USAF in southeast Asia with many missions launching out of Naha Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, and Tachikawa Air Base, Japan. These adapted C-130s, with a range of 2,000 miles, were able to operate over the skies above Vietnam and get back to Japan afterwards (should they avoid being hit by Communist gunfire).

While the Hercules has been a staple of the USAF fleet, it has also set its share of aviation records over the decades as well. In 1963, it became the heaviest aircraft to ever land on an aircraft carrier. It also set the record for longest sustained flight on October 22–24, 1997, when it was refueled in flight 7 times by a KC-135. Whether setting records, or just performing rudimentary duty, the Hercules is ultra-reliable. It is cited as having a markedly low attrition rate (slightly

less than 5 percent), this despite losing over 5 dozen in the Vietnam War. Since the Vietnam War, the only major U.S. combat operation the C-130 has missed was the 1986 action against Libya (Operation El Dorado Canyon).

As mentioned before, flexibility is one of the gifts that the Hercules brings to the table-whether they are in foreign air forces, the USAF service or other actions. Quite a few C-130s that have been retired from USAF service have been maintained by the U.S. Forest Service where they frequently use them in places such as Arizona and California to combat annual wildfires. In the short 1982 Falkland Islands War, the Argentine Air Force used them as blockade runners to airdrop supplies to their troops on the islands since the British Navy had blocked the passage of all ships to the Falklands. The epic 2010 Gulf of Mexico oil spill saw Hercules aircraft used to drop oil dispersing agents into the water in an attempt to help quickly dissipate the

crude oil that was so environmentally damaging and abundant.

For those thinking that soon we will see the last of these gallant haulers, think again. Recent contracts signed for Fiscal Year 2016 have called for Lockheed Martin to produce 28 new C-130Js for the USAF. Air forces of the world, such as those from France, Norway, Israel, Indonesia and the Philippines, just to name a few, have also ordered C-130s for this coming year. It may be a "classic," but there is never a substitute for efficiency and dependability! Kudos to the C-130 Hercules, and all the enlisted personnel who dutifully maintain them.

NOTE: Given her "birth" during the Cold War (1945-1990), I should note that a USAF C-130 was shot down over Armenia by a Soviet MiG-17 in 1958.

Sources;

Jane's Encyclopedia of Aircraft and Air Forces Monthly, March, April and May 2016 editions.



A C-130 in flight over the state of Washington, circa 2000. The diversity of what the Hercules could haul was quite an upgrade for the Cold War Air Force of the 1950s. (USAF photo)





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Remembering Jacqueline Hopkins, fourth AFSA Auxiliary President

It is with our deepest sorrow that we inform you of the passing of Jacqueline Hopkins, our fourth AFSA Auxiliary President. Funeral services were held Wednesday, September 7, 2016, in Carmichael, California. Jacqueline proudly served as Auxiliary President from 1979 through 1981. Her husband, Marvin, asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be made directly to the American Cancer Society.

Bobby E. Bedwell WICHITA, KS

Joseph B. Belhumeur ARNOLD. MO

Virginia L. Bennethum RONKS, PA

Boyd S. Bennett EAGLE RIVER, AK

Chester F. Beres WILLIAMSVILLE, NY

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Laury Arturo Carter CHESAPEAKE, VA

Boyd A. Caskey TENAHA, TX

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