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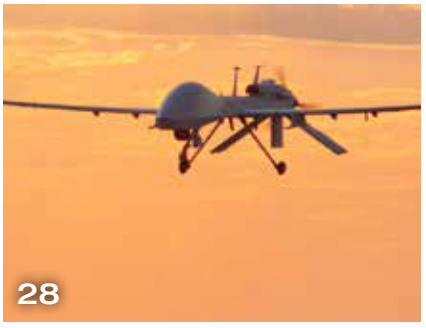

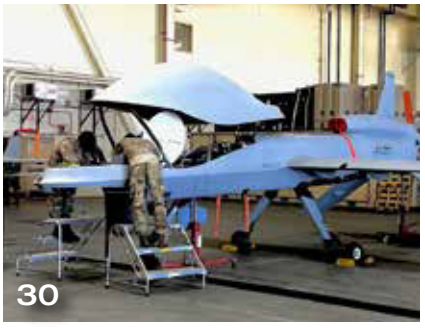

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ARMY AVIATION COMMUNITY NEWS

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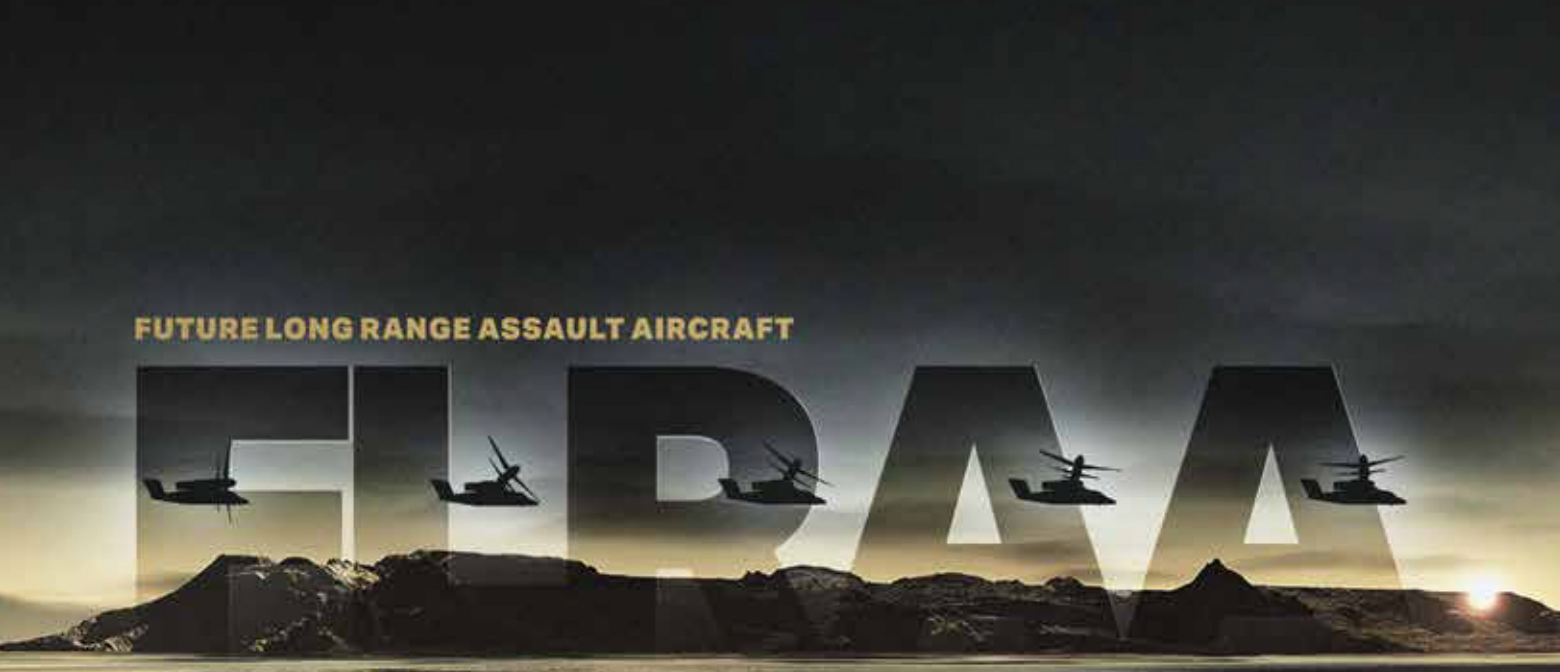

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On The Cover

Briefings

Nordhaus New CNGB

NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU PHOTO BY SFC ZACH SHEELY

Air Force Gen. Steven Nordhaus received the flag of the National Guard Bureau during an assumption of responsibility ceremony at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Arlington, VA, Oct. 15, 2024. Nordhaus also becomes the newest member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Navy Adm. Christopher W. Grady, the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, presided over the ceremony. Nordhaus succeeds Army Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson, who retired from the position in August.

Operational Deployment Pay Here to Stay

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY PFC ISRAEL FERNANDEZ

Soldiers on operational deployments of 60 days or more now qualify for a new $240 monthly benefit. Army Secretary Christine Wormuth made the announcement on Oct. 14 and said the pay is effective immediately and retroactive to Oct. 1. It also is rank-immaterial, and there currently is no end date. Wormuth said instead, it is the new standard for operational deployment pay moving forward.

Vietnam War DUSTOFF Crews Congressional Gold Medal

DUSTOFF ASSOC. GRAPHIC

On Sept. 17, 2024, President Joe Biden signed into law the "Dustoff Crews of the Vietnam War Congressional Gold Medal Act," which provides for the award of a Congressional Gold Medal to the United States Army Dustoff crews of the Vietnam War, collectively, in recognition of their extraordinary heroism and life-saving actions in Vietnam. The official Congressional Gold Medal ceremony will take place once the U.S. Mint finishes striking the single gold medal.

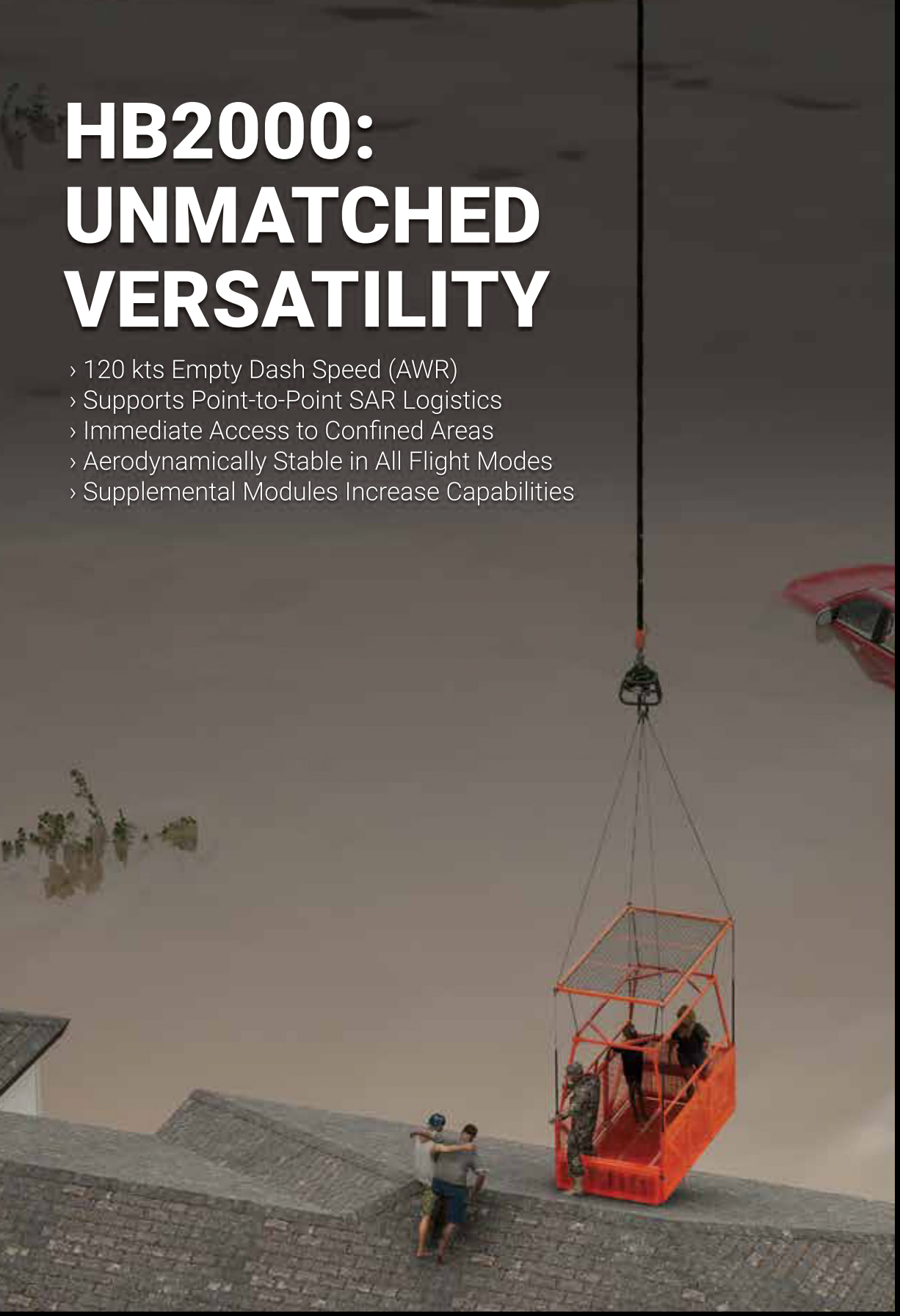
DOD Starts Child Care Reimbursement Test Program

U.S. SPACEFORCE PHOTO

Servicemembers who have moved to a new duty station and can't get childcare at the military child development center, can be reimbursed for their own temporary childcare provider expense as a result of a new pilot program that took effect Oct. 1. The program covers reimbursement for the travel of a temporary childcare provider to a service member's new duty location. Those eligible may get reimbursed up to $1,500 for travel of that childcare provider to or from overseas, and up to $500 for travel within domestic locations. Troops may be eligible for this travel reimbursement if they have requested childcare at their military child development center and it's not available within 30 days. The childcare provider would typically be a relative or family friend, but it could also be an au pair, officials said when announcing the program. Servicemembers who have PCS orders authorizing a move with a dependent are eligible for the program. If the move is to a location or installation where there isn't a military child development center, this travel cost reimbursement isn't authorized. Contact your local travel office for more details.

SUSPENSES:

December 15 – AAAA Scholarship Foundation Application Submission
January 1 – AAAA National Awards



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Much To Be Thankful For

It is great to continue the rhythm of events and activities that showcase Army Aviation's essential capabilities, and your Association's contribution to enabling the pillars of Networking, Voice, Recognition and Support for our Army Aviation soldiers and families.

PHOTO BY CPT AUSTIN LACHANCE

Aircraft from the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade conduct a flyover of Nissan Stadium as a part of the Tennessee Titans' Salute to Service over Veterans Day Weekend.

On November 7, I had the privilege and honor to represent the Association at the U.S. Southern Command Change of Command and retirement ceremony for GEN Laura Richardson and induct her into the Gold Order of Saint Michael in recognition of her incredible accomplishments, service, and support to our Army, Joint Force, and the Army Aviation Community.

The event served as a reminder of how fortunate we are to now have five retired Aviation four-star generals (GEN Doug Brown, GEN Dick Cody, GEN Dan Hokanson, and GEN Jim McConville) that have been incredibly impactful and supportive of our Army Aviation family and Association. Additionally, I was honored to attend the retirement ceremony of CW5 Wade Ziegler, the 6th Command Chief Warrant Officer of the Army Special Operations Aviation Command and present him with the Gold Order of Saint Michael in recognition of his more than 32 years of dedicated service and accomplishments in support of our Army, Army Aviation, and the Army Special Operations community. What an incredible Army Aviation force we have!

Let me transition and speak about our AAAA Senior Executive Associates. Conceived over two decades ago by GEN Crosby E. 'Butch' Saint and Brig. Gen. Harry Bendorf, USAF (who at that time headed our AAAA Strategic Planning Committee), this is the group of our retired, non-Aviation Flag Officers, who volunteer their time to help generate understanding of Army Aviation capabilities, priorities, and challenges outside of the Army Aviation community.

The Associates come together twice annually to meet with the Chief of Staff of the Army and the Army Aviation General Officer Steering Committee led by our Branch Chief, MG Clair Gill… with our most recent meeting occurring on the heels of the Association of the United States Army's Annual Meeting and Exhibition in mid-October. Our Senior Executive Associates perspective from the 'Big Army' point of view, as former Division, Corp, and Army Commanders, is simply invaluable. Under the leadership of the Chairman, GEN J.D. Thurman, Generals Dan Allyn, J.C. Campbell, Dave Perkins, Gus Perna, and Steve Townsend, along with Lieutenant Generals Dave Halverson, Mike Oates, Jim Pasquarette, Roger Schultz and Frank Wiercinski, work very effectively to ensure Army Aviation's value is understood. We can't thank them enough for their volunteer efforts in support of the Army Aviation Community and our Army Aviation soldiers and families.

By the time you read this we will have completed our second largest gathering of the year. The AAAA Cribbins Readiness Conference is always a signature event as we gather in Huntsville, AL to present and discuss all things acquisition and sustainment, in the context of being able to fight tonight and prepare for future operations with all the new emerging technology before us. Exciting times for sure as we meet the challenge of gaining effectiveness and advantage in protection, lethality, and supportability through the integration of uncrewed aircraft systems, launched effects, the modular open systems approach, and the realization of the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft.

Finally, if you haven't already… please make sure to sign up and join us for the AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit, May 14-16, 2025, in Nashville.

From all of us at the AAAA Global Headquarters, we hope you and your families had a wonderful Thanksgiving! Thanks for all you do in support of Army Aviation!

Above the Best!

MG Walt Davis, U.S. Army Retired
36th President, AAAA
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UAS: Are We Ready?

By MG Clair A. Gill

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY PFC MATTHEW KEEGAN

PFC Christian Hare, a Paratrooper assigned to 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, prepares to launch an RQ-28A short-range reconnaissance quadcopter drone system to start a live fire exercise as a part of Panther Avalanche on Fort Liberty, North Carolina, July 28, 2024.

I am reminded of the FedEx commercial during Super Bowl XXXVIII, which was a take on the 2000 "Cast Away" movie, starring Tom Hanks.

In the movie, Hanks' character, a FedEx employee, is marooned for four years on a deserted island by himself after the FedEx plane he was on crashed. As motivation, he vowed to deliver one of the packages to its rightful owner, if he survived and made it off the island. He did indeed survive and was later rescued.

This is where the Super Bowl commercial picks up: In the commercial, Hanks' character finds the house of the package owner. He knocks on the door, where it is answered by a lady. He hands her the package and explains why he is delivering this package. She thanks him and compliments his diligence and dedication. As he turns to leave, he asks her, "What's in the package?" She says, "Just a satellite phone, GPS locator, fishing rod, water purifier, and some seeds. Just silly stuff."

The Challenge

Like the contents of the fictional FedEx package, the Army needs critical technology that will enable us to fight and win in future large-scale combat; it is not "just silly stuff." A recent article in the September/October 2024 edition of Foreign Affairs magazine entitled "America Isn't Ready for the Wars of the Future: And They're Already Here" written by GEN (Ret.) Mark Milley (former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Army Chief of Staff) and Eric Schmidt (former CEO and Chair of Google) stated, "Future wars will no longer be about who can mass the most people or field the best jets, ships, and tanks. Instead, they will be dominated by increasingly autonomous weapons systems and powerful algorithms. Unfortunately, this is a future for which the United States remains unprepared."

They support their premise with allegations that our Soldiers are not ready to fight in an environment in which they don't enjoy surprises; our equipment cannot defend against the onslaught of drone attacks, and we, as an Army, have not embraced Artificial

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U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC ALIYAH VIMER

Shown is an RQ-28A short range reconnaissance quadcopter used during a field training exercise at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, June 6, 2024.

Intelligence (AI). Conversely, our potential adversaries are already using AI-powered drones in Ukraine and the Middle East and, in the case of China, restructuring their military to become a technology-driven force.

The article prescribes that the U.S. must quickly shift course and reform our structure, tactics, and leadership and better train our Soldiers to operate drones and leverage the power of AI. Additionally, we need to revamp how we procure equipment to keep pace with the speed of technological change.

The article is prescriptive on how the U.S. must address this concern. It submits, "If it wants to remain the preeminent global power, the United States must shift course quickly. The country needs to reform the structure of its armed forces. The US military needs to reform its tactics and leadership development. It needs new ways to procure equipment. It needs to buy new types of gear. And it needs to train Soldiers better to operate drones and use AI."

While your agreement with the premise of the article may vary, one of its prescriptions is undeniable – to train soldiers better to operate drones and use AI.

From our observations on the use of drones in Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh, and even Gaza, we note not only their vast proliferation, but their increasing effectiveness too. It's critically important that we understand their implications and what we must do, as a military, to engage, procure, and train this technology for our use and counter-use on the battlefield.

The Way Ahead

In February, the Army's senior leadership rebalanced the Aviation portfolio. An aftermath of this decision was an increase of investments in cutting-edge, effective, capable, and survivable unmanned aerial reconnaissance capabilities and commercial small unmanned systems procurement. These investments will be continuous and agile to stay ahead of emerging battlefield requirements.

Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) are vital to our future fight. We must first make contact with unmanned systems – shame on us, if we don't. We are on a path to autonomy. Human-machine teaming will evolve as technology accelerates. While complete human machine integrated (HMI) formations are the future, they are not yet ready. Some small-scale individual technologies may exist, but the cost to integrate at an Army-wide scale is not yet viable/acceptable. The unmanned systems' reliability, resilience, endurance, sustainment, maintenance, universal control, modular open systems approach (MOSA), AI/machine learning, and autonomous behaviors to reduce logistics chain and Soldier workload across an entire formation are yet to be fully developed and integrated.

As we mature UAS, we must determine the right balance of manned and unmanned systems supporting our Army, and therein contemplate Army Aviation's unique role. We are still analyzing what that balance should be, but the proper equilibrium for the warfighter will govern it. UAS serves a need and purpose on the future battlefield, but manned assets will always have a role. Unmanned systems can and should conduct "dull, dirty, and dangerous" missions, such as enduring reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) flights of objective areas, flying in areas that are contaminated, radioactive, and suboptimal for humans, and executing high-risk, high-threat missions on the extended battlefield.

However, we must have the right policy and strategy for optionally manned capabilities, which will allow the commander to employ manned or unmanned systems to support his/her mission. We also must contend with the employment of human-in-the-loop and human-on-the-loop, as well as their implications. We are pursuing both technology and policy to allow a path to full autonomy with no human interaction beyond initial launch for specific non-lethal missions or for lethal engagements in a specified area of operations beyond the Forward Line of Troops where a fully autonomous system will perform its mission, positively identify targets, and lethally engage with no further human authorization. Ukraine and Israel are already doing this, and we would be foolish to assume our adversaries won't follow suit. We must be ready to authorize this type of employment in large-scale combat operations (LSCO).

As we tackle these issues, we no longer pursue enduring programs of

record with long-term Army-wide fielding plans. We must change at the speed of technology. Divisions will likely have different fielded UAS systems. We will continuously field new technology updates and iterative system variants a few brigades at a time. We must have leaders, operators, and maintainers who are technologically savvy and platform-agnostic UAS experts. We have already modernized training programs of instruction (POIs) at 2-13th Aviation Regiment at Fort Huachuca to train 150U, 15W, and 15E on a variety of Group 1-3 UAS systems, and we will continue to rapidly adapt POIs as we field FTUAS and future UAS systems.

In essence, we will be "transforming in contact," and our partnership with industry is critical to successfully implementing this transformation. This will require our partners to provide equipment at a reasonable cost, in time to meet safety and reliability requirements. Our collaboration with industry is essential to put the right equipment and capabilities in our Soldier's hands, enabling them to win decisively.

Further, we've got to be "joined at the hip" with the other Centers of Excellence (COEs) on UAS. It's our duty to support the joint and combined arms forces on the ground, and we have to collaborate to know the totality of Army requirements. A close relationship with other COEs will help us accomplish this. Whether the Maneuver, Fires, Intel, Medical, or Sustainment COE, we must synchronize UAS development and support requirements. In that vein, I see my role as the Army's UAS Force Modernization proponent to:

- Drive change across DOTMLPF-P and promote technology advancements or material solutions.
- Modernize UAS training and policies to allow rapid integration of new technology across our formations at the forward edge and enable "transforming in contact."
- Modernize employment concepts for manned and unmanned aviation in LSCO.
- Establish and advocate for Aviation's modernization, funding, and acquisition priorities to keep us ahead of the threat.
- Synchronize and advocate with other COEs for their modernization, funding, and acquisition priorities that are critically dependent for the success of the Army's warfighting requirements.

The Endstate

Let's prove the premise of the Foreign Affairs article wrong. We see what our allies and adversaries do in current conflicts, but we know the U.S. Army can be an order of magnitude better. Army Aviation can integrate unmanned and manned capabilities with joint/combined fires and maneuvers to penetrate, disintegrate, and destroy our adversaries during all combat phases. We also can operate in degraded environments.

We are overcoming the transformation inertia – we are an Army in transition! Get ready for an exciting future, because Army Aviation provides the decisive advantage to the Army, joint, allied, and coalition forces engaged in combat – and UAS will certainly play a critical part.

Above the Best!

Fly Army!

MG Clair A. Gill is the Army Aviation branch chief and commander of the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Novosel, AL.

Chief Warrant Officer of the Branch Update

For this issue, I have asked CW5 Khristian A. Kitselman, the Senior Warrant Officer Advisor for the 2nd Battalion, 13th Aviation Regiment, to talk about UAS Warrant Officer Professional Military Education. –CW5 Mike Corsaro

The Future of UAS Warrant Officer Professional Military Education

By CW5 Khristian A. Kitselman

In an issue of Aviation Digest, CW5 Van Loan wrote an article that sought to better define the role of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Operations Technicians (150Us), referencing a substantial list of supporting Army doctrine and regulation along the way.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY HANNAH BODENSTAB, AUDIO/VISUAL CONTRACTOR

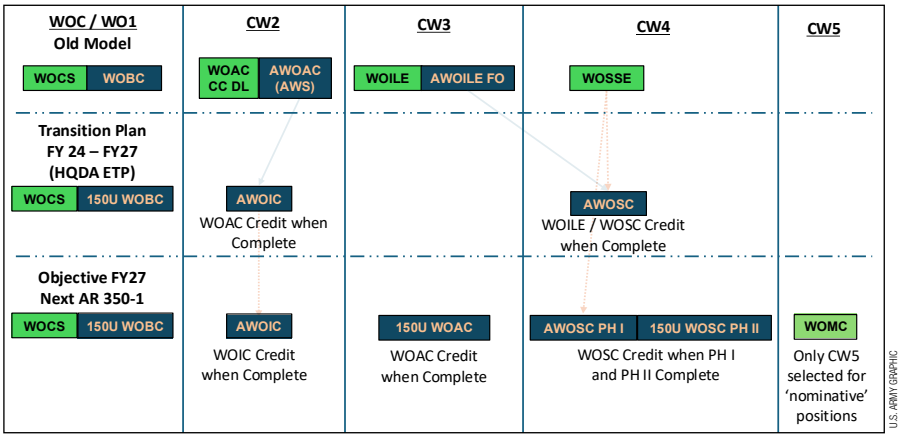
150U WOBC students, class 24-006, learn about aviation history over Microsoft Teams from the USAACE historian at Fort Novosel, AL while attending class at Fort Huachuca, AZ.

The article, *Defining the Role of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations Technician,* remains valuable reading for both 150Us and those who work alongside them. The conclusion of the article is clear: "while there are doctrinal sources that generally define 150U roles and responsibilities, it unfortunately takes some analysis to reach detailed understanding." (Van Loan, 2022, p. 10). A potential gap in reaching a detailed understanding of the 150Us role is limited formal education, outside of the Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC), dedicated to teaching 150Us their mission-specific roles at brigade, division, and corps staff (Van Loan, 2022). It has been almost two years since the publishing of that article, and it is time for an azimuth check.

Gaps in AWO PME

Recent and ongoing enterprise-wide analysis conducted at the US Army Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE) has already identified several gaps, one of which includes Aviation Warrant Officer Professional Military Education (PME). In response to these gaps, USAACE has been actively modernizing aviation warrant officer PME for the last several years. Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) recently approved the USAACE Aviation Branch Warrant Officer Professional Military Education Transformation Plan.

This approved plan directs the creation of new Aviation Warrant Officer Advanced Courses (WOAC) and Aviation Warrant Officer Senior Courses (WOSC) for specific MOSs. In anticipation of this approval, designs for the 150U WOAC and WOSC follow-on courses began in April 2024 and are currently awaiting review and approval by Training and Doctrine Command. Once approved, the next step will be to recruit talented 150Us to Fort Novosel as course managers and instructors. Pending final approval and instructor staffing, these courses should be available to the 150U population starting in Fiscal Year 2027. While modernized course information is exciting, the real interest is around anticipated course learning outcomes.



U.S. ARMY GRAPHIC

150U Professional Military Education Timeline, Old Model Through Transition Plan.

Future Courses

The 150U WOAC follow-on will be a new course that students will attend between the current WOAC and the new Aviation WOSC. This four-week course will teach CW2(P)

and CW3 150Us how to serve on a battalion or brigade staff. According to a 2024 memorandum by USAACE Directorate of Training and Doctrine (DOTD), some key skills that a 150U can expect to learn include:

- Developing and evaluating training based on a training and evaluation outline.
- Integrating UAS operations into civilian and tactical airspace.
- Enforcing aircrew training program requirements.
- Conducting brigade aviation element operations.
- Evaluating threat capabilities and limitations.
- Understanding the Army targeting process.
- Writing operations orders.

In short, graduates will be prepared to create UAS training guidance, set conditions for subordinate units, participate better in Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP), and more effectively integrate UAS operations into their unit information collection and fires plans.

150Us in the rank of CW3(P) and CW4 preparing for positions as division or corps UAS operations officers will attend a two-week aviation common core WOSC and a two-week 150U specific WOSC follow-on. During this follow-on course, USAACE DOTD anticipates that 150Us will be introduced to the following:

- Division and corps staff structure, function, and organization.
- The joint targeting cycle.
- The joint intelligence preparation of operational environment process
- The role of the division Joint Air Ground Integration Center (JAGIC).

Students will also spend a week practicing MDMP in support of division and corps UAS operations in large-scale combat operational environments. Graduates of the course will be able to confidently contribute to division and corps planning and provide an invaluable link between the G-2 collections cell, the G-3 aviation cell, and the JAGIC.

Current WO PME

While these courses are templated to come online in FY 2027, some 150Us are probably considering what can be done now to enhance their development. First, do not wait for these new courses to complete your PME. Current warrant officer PME offers a lot of value and is important for career progression. Second, if you want to learn more about the topics covered in these new courses before 2027, I recommend attending the following two-week courses: the Air Cavalry Leaders Course, the Echelons Above Brigade Airspace Course, the Joint Firepower Course, and the Army Basic Space Cadre Course. Last, the best thing any warrant officer can do to become more proficient and learn new skills is to show up for training. Command post exercises, field training exercises, gunnery, combined arms live fire exercises, warfighter exercises, and National Training Center rotations all expose 150Us to MDMP and force them to plan and build products. These educational and training opportunities are where failure and success happen, and lessons are learned.

I remain confident that future warrant officer PME will help make aviation warrant officers more confident and capable warfighters. In the meantime, stay curious and stay engaged!

Fly Army! Above the Best!

CW5 Khristian A Kitselman is the Senior Warrant Officer Advisor for the 2nd Battalion, 13th Aviation Regiment at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. CW5 Michael A. Corsaro is the tenth chief warrant officer of the Aviation Branch with the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Novosel, AL.

Things are Changing: UAS, the Modern Battlefield, and the Aviation Soldier

By CSM Kirk R. Coley

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SGT CHARLIE DUKE

Soldier preparing an Anduril Ghost X while training at Fort Irwin, California.

Many of you probably remember my article from July, Transforming in Contact: Building Highly Lethal Unmanned Professionals.

In that article, I discussed EXORD 178-24 which details the divestment of the RQ-7B and RQ-11 and a path forward for 15W and 15E Soldiers. Again, the whole of the US Army Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE) acknowledges the intent and subsequent challenges of that order. We also understand our tech-savvy unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) Soldiers are aware such legacy equipment had no place in our future formations or the next fight. The way we fight is undergoing significant change, and the whole of UAS is experiencing more than modernization, it's a revolution. Army and branch senior leaders acknowledge UAS capability and technology must change with war, and the Aviation Branch UAS Soldier remains our key to success.

Things are Changing – Competition, Conflict, and UAS

In this month's Branch Chief's Corner, MG Gill discusses UAS readiness, specifically from a technological standpoint that considers both current global conflicts and the widespread use of unmanned systems. Those in conflict in Ukraine and Gaza consistently have their operations turned on their heads because of drone and UAS activity! The unconventional employment of drones, sensors, and autonomous elements regularly disrupts traditional battlefield tactics and systems.

I am certain many of our UAS Soldiers are familiar with the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War. During this conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the media reported wide utilization of drones in addition to heavy artillery and even trench warfare. Videos showcasing the use of UAS and drones during this fight are all over the internet, allowing the world to watch the effective and substantial employment of drones against standard formations. The footage of that employment made many realize that combat was changing before our eyes.

While the Nagorno-Karabakh War got the attention of military leaders around the world, it would pale in comparison to the subsequent Russian reinvasion of Ukraine. Medium-altitude long-endurance UAS certainly assisted Ukraine in the opening moments of the war; however, these legacy vehicles ended up being far too large, becoming easy prey for air defense systems. This prompted a change on that battlefield, and the change in tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) on the ground required a change in technology. Forces in Ukraine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Enlisted Aviation Soldier Spotlight

Each month we will feature a past AAAA National or Functional Enlisted or NCO Award winner as part of our ongoing recognition of the Best of the Best in our Aviation Branch. The CY 2022 National winners were featured in the April/May AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit issue.

AAPI FILE PHOTO

UAS Soldier of the Year, 2021

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SGT Damian P. Del Rae

Company F, 2nd Battalion,
160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment
Fort Campbell, Kentucky

SGT Damian Del Rae is a standout innovator in a company known for being at the forefront of Army UAS modernization. In the past twelve months, he was selected to lead the mission planning cells for the company's two most significant training events, during which groundbreaking UAS advancements were made. He has managed significant events such as establishing the company's first expeditionary tactical operations center (TOC) out of an Expando Van. In addition, when the company took the lead on developing tactical solutions to counter a near-peer threat, as the lead planner in the planning cell, he assisted in the development and testing of these tactics to include flying at 500 feet above ground level (AGL) and using terrain masking. Further, during this same training event, the company was tasked to test flying in National Airspace, something usually only accomplished by Air Force UAS. Once again, he eagerly accepted the challenge and made all necessary coordination, resulting in the first flight in National Airspace by a 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) UAS. SGT Del Rae consistently performs above standard with limited guidance. His incredible ability to identify problems, develop innovative solutions, and execute flawlessly clearly identify him as the Army Aviation Association of America's 2021 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Soldier of the Year.

quickly started looking for commercial off the shelf solutions in place of former larger systems. The day of the combat tested small UAS (sUAS) had arrived. Media sources focused on Ukraine report that an sUAS can now be built with an explosive warhead for as little as $500. The addition of the deadly sUAS capability, to include the threat of swarms, has led the Army to invest heavily in modernizing its unmanned capability.

None of these events have eliminated the need for big armies and their associated weapon systems. However, the impact of drones on the modern battlefield has caused senior leaders to reevaluate our UAS doctrine, TTPs, capabilities, and equipment. Nothing is sacred in the effort to correct our course with respect to UAS and other drone-based capabilities, including launched effects and counter unmanned aircraft systems (C-UAS). The reality is that unmanned vehicles are here to stay, whether through future human machine integration or increased automation, and the professionals that empower formations to use them successfully are a necessity. The future for the field of UAS appears to be one of constant change. The one thing that cannot change is the real capability sitting behind the technology and that is the skill and drive of the Aviation Branch UAS Soldier. It is important for all 15W and 15E Soldiers to realize they will be in the future fight, but some things are bound to change.

Things are Changing – The Resolute Aviation Soldier and Experimentation

The Army has been through change before, and it is never comfortable. The Army as a team must change to keep pace with the ever-evolving operational environment. However, change is far better than being stagnant, or worse irrelevant. During this period of change, the Army, and Aviation specifically, must consider what MG Gill has said in this month's Branch Chief Corner and work to "determine the right balance of manned and unmanned systems supporting our Army." The work to find the right balance of unmanned systems must not be rushed, but it cannot be slow either. Instead, our movement into the future must be mindful of both the technology and Soldier.

We know and feel the frustration of the change following the divestment of the RQ-7B and RQ-11. However, let me tell you what is going on in the field, and it is progressive gain, not loss. General Rainey of Army Futures Command speaks to transformation initiatives often, citing the fastest method as Transformation in Contact, or TiC. In MG Gill's article, you will read the idea of transformation as "change at the speed of technology." While some may not see it, transformation is happening right now, with 15W and 15E series Soldiers at the front of the formation leading change.

Second brigade, 101st Air Assault Division is a unit actively experiencing TiC and at the leading edge of that innovative pace. Soldiers of the 101st are experimenting with sUAS, Soldier-borne sensors, and other technology paving the way for eventual fully realized future unmanned aerial systems (FTUAS). Aviation Branch UAS Soldiers are using cutting-edge technology today and the future is now! Those Soldiers are part of the enduring effort to measure the balance of manned and unmanned systems, reconsidering TTPs and other doctrine in real time. This means that UAS Soldiers are experimenting with being closer to the fight than ever before. These 15W and 15E Soldiers are growing in responsibility, training sUAS users, increasing integration of unmanned aviation capability with the ground force com-

mander, and serving as a voice of aviation expertise. The future is happening in real time for these Soldiers. The future will happen for you, too!

Things are Changing – How will You Change

Yes, some of you are still feeling the loss of your system at the moment, or maybe even unsure about your future in the Army. The reality is you are simply at a mark-time march. Three brigades are currently undergoing TiC, and there are more to come. After all, change is a process. The branch asks that our 15E and 15W Soldiers currently in the force awaiting their next opportunity do so with optimism and resilience, because you are critical to the future of the branch.

Your turn to experience change is coming, and your brothers and sisters within the community are shaping how that next chapter in the UAS story will appear. The Aviation Branch is striving to ensure you are aware of coming opportunities within your field of expertise. For instance, a FRAGO will soon release to EXORD 178-24. That order will contain guidance regarding positive change in your career field and further information to keep you ready for the future. This order is just the first in an effort to ensure you know what to do while waiting for change.

Aviation Branch leadership wants each of you to know your value to the future fight. It will be your aviation experience and expertise at the center of our future unmanned capability. Without the well-trained aviation Soldier, UAS has no future. In that sense, the branch insists you be mindful of the coming future. It is also important to consider and learn about how your roles may change in the future fight. As pointed out, UAS have been employed in unconventional ways, and every operator, from Group 1 to 3, may find themselves closer to the battlefield than in previous wars. This will also change field maintenance of UAS, potentially employing expeditionary capability, such as 3D-printed technology, in support of sustaining the UAS fleets of tomorrow.

All of you promise to be the tip of the spear in the future fight. While at a mark-time march, continue to develop yourselves through formal and informal means. This self-development should involve continued learning about operations, staying invested in the developments of your branch, and attending schooling at every opportunity. Have you considered exploring FAA credentialing? The point is each of you must stay ready for the future fight by remaining competent and qualified to perform your roles as Aviation Soldiers. While some units and Soldiers are already experiencing TiC and contributing to the future of Army Aviation, your turn is around the corner.

Rest assured that Aviation Branch leadership remain hard at work to cultivate a variety of coming opportunities to continue your great service in the US Army. Remember, throughout our great military history, the Army has always depended upon the knowledge, drive, and expertise of the Soldiers in their formations more so than equipment. Equipment will come and go, but the Soldier will be here forever. Stay Army!

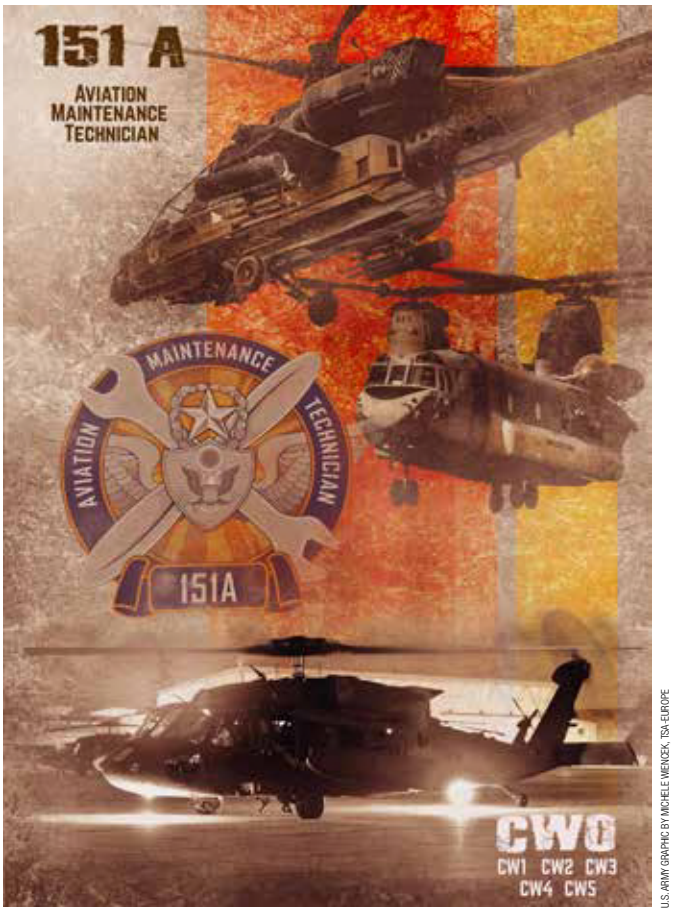
Above the Best, Fly Army!

CSM Kirk R. Coley is the command sergeant major of the Aviation Branch at the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Novosel, AL.

151A Aviation Maintenance Technicians, Sustainment Enablers for Aviation in a Large-Scale Combat Environment

By CW5 Donald Chambers

Army 151A Aviation Maintenance Technicians (AMTs) are Aviation combat force multipliers responsible for providing Aviation maintenance and logistical support at echelons ranging from company to combatant command.



U.S. ARMY GRAPHIC BY MICHELE WIENCEK, TSA-EUROPE

Warrant Officers in this field have keen insight into all Aviation aircraft systems and associated ground support equipment, they are responsible for management of class IX supplies and repair parts, and they ensure aircraft and support are serviceable, mission capable, and ready to launch at a moment's notice.

151As in Large Scale Combat (LSC) environments serve as the primary enablers for Aviation sustainment functions. They routinely fill crucial positions in Combat Aviation Brigades (CAB) and at echelons above brigade and serve as subject matter experts in their field. There are 11 positions slated for 151A AMTs in each of the CABs that support the warfighter mission during LSC. AMTs are also found in Army Divisions, Corps, Army Service Component Commands (ASCC), Theater Sustainment Command (TSC) G4 directorates, and senior staff for General Officers. 151A Warrant Officers are dynamic problem solvers and possess the technical skills necessary to find solutions to complex Aviation maintenance and logistic challenges caused by the maneuver-stricken environments, contested forward-positions, and rapidly depleted supply stockpiles that characterize LSC engagements. By maintaining communication as production control managers and supply stakeholders, AMTs can overcome many of the obstacles found during LSC fights and focus on the job of supporting Aviation aircraft system readiness. Additionally, 151A AMTs are charged with remaining current on modern and advanced technologies, regulations, and procedures that will serve them well in the future with the innovative advancements of Future Vertical Lift initiatives, Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA and Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA).

Ultimately, the future of the Army Aviation sustainment operations in an LSC environment will depend on the U.S Army Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE) and the 128th Aviation Brigade Warrant Officer Training Division's ability to develop the next generation of 151A AMTs. Through a new initiative to **generate**, **develop,** and **shape** subject matter maintenance experts and leaders, the collaborative hopes to do just that with the addition of the Warrant Officer Intermediate Course (WIOC) and Warrant Officer Senior Course (WOSC). AMTs will receive training that will enable them to play a critical role during LSC and to keep pace with changing developments in Aviation technologies under the Force Design Update of 2030 and beyond.

Born Under Fire!

CW5 Donald (Don) Chambers is the Command Chief Warrant Officer of the 128th Aviation Brigade and Senior Warrant Advisor of the 151A Aviation Maintenance Technicians at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

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Parasitic Drag Impacts on Mission Performance

By Christopher E. Hamm

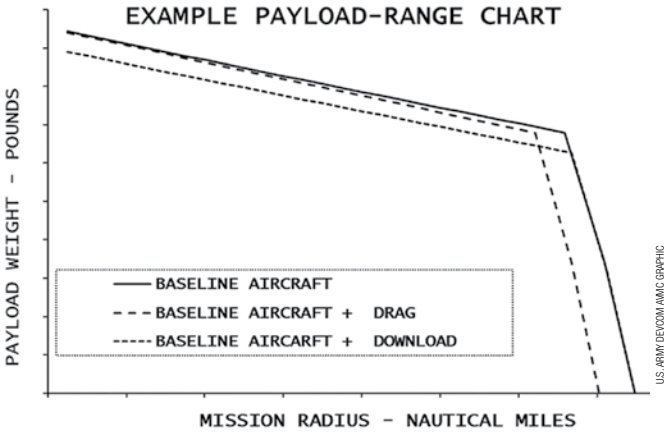
Considering the recent legacy fleet modernization efforts and development of a new generation of aircraft for Future Vertical Lift (FVL), it is a fitting time to think about mission performance impacts due to aerodynamic drag.

Over an aircraft's lifecycle, total drag tends to increase due to the obsolescence and subsequent replacement of external items, or through modernization efforts and the need for additional or improved capabilities that necessitate outer mold line (OML) changes. While the effects of any single modification to an aircraft may not have a significant effect on mission performance, the increase in drag resulting from numerous changes over the lifetime of an aircraft will eventually degrade its mission capabilities.

Parasite drag, usually quoted in units of ft^2, encompasses all drag forces contributed by the airframe itself, as well as any external loads, stores, antennae, sensors, open windows or doors, and any other protuberances. Essentially, any physical body that has an impact on OML should be accounted for in an estimate of aircraft parasitic drag. Also, the drag of a given item cannot be considered in isolation. Rather, the total drag impact of an item depends on its location, and even the aircraft attitude, as the flow impacting the item is influenced by the rotor, fuselage, and other airframe external components. Even swapping from one antenna type to a similar antenna may impact parasitic drag.

Often such smaller modifications are treated as having a negligible drag impact. However, over time, the stacking of many "negligible" drags can have enough of an effect to impact mission performance. Regardless of the reason for the modification, the drag impact to flight performance will be manifested through an increase in power required to maintain a given airspeed and a commensurate increase in fuel consumption, resulting in a reduction of specific range and maximum airspeed.

A system's key performance parameters (KPPs) have varying sensitivities to drag changes. Payload-carrying missions with relatively short mission ranges have a low, but not negligible, sensitivity to drag changes. Conversely, a self-deploy or long-range or long-duration mission will be highly sensitive to drag due to increased fuel consumption over the longer mission. Because the change in rotor torque required to maintain airspeed due to a given drag is proportional to the cube of the aircraft's airspeed (V^3), any mission that necessitates cruise at higher airspeeds will be much more sensitive to drag. Effects of vertical drag, or download, are most strongly experienced in hover or low speed flight



and are often modeled as an effective increase to aircraft gross weight. Download is reduced when the rotor downwash moves aft and away from the body as forward airspeed increases. An increase in download thus reduces hover efficiency, analogous to the reduction in cruise efficiency due to horizonal drag. Any mission with a vertical flight segment will therefore be affected by changes in download. Because download acts as an effective increase to gross weight, the resulting mission impact in conditions where hover is limited by power available is a reduction in either payload or fuel-carrying capability.

A common analysis used to illustrate impacts on KPP mission performance is a payload-range chart. Figure 1 shows that increased download forces a reduction in payload due to a corresponding reduction in takeoff weight, while increased drag primarily reduces mission range with a slight reduction in payload capability that increases with mission radius due to the loss in cruise efficiency.

When the effects of accumulating drag and download have had a notable mission performance impact, steps have been taken to address these issues with varying degrees of success. For rotorcraft, drag reduction programs tend to occur relatively infrequently, and often are focused on improving individual modifications such as antennae or engine exhaust treatments. Drag impacts on mission performance pose an interesting technical challenge to FVL aircraft as the required cruise speeds are significantly greater than those of currently fielded rotorcraft. Given the historical trend of aircraft drag growth, coupled with their already high degree of sensitivity to drag changes, the ability of FVL aircraft to maintain mission performance KPPs in the years after fielding will pose additional engineering challenges relative to our current fleet.

Christopher E. Hamm is an aerospace engineer with the Systems Readiness Directorate U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center Redstone Arsenal, AL

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Chronic Pain Treatment Options

By CPT Nichelle Pascoe, DPT, LTC Sonya H. Heidt, M.D., FS, and LTC Peter Q. Dinh, D.O., FS

Q: I have chronic calf pain after an injury that required multiple surgeries. I want to continue to fly, and I don't want to take any medications for pain. Are there treatment options for my chronic pain that do not use medications?

FS: There are several options for managing chronic pain that do not necessitate the use of medication or more surgery. Some options may require temporary grounding, while others will not.

Let's start by discussing chronic pain, which is generally defined as continuous or recurrent pain lasting longer than three months. You have pain receptors throughout your body and when activated, the receptors send signals through pain fibers and "highways" to your brain. Your brain receives the signal and translates the signal to potentially warn you about an injury. Ideally this will prevent further harm and allow the area to heal. Unfortunately, the more times the pain pathway is activated, the increased likelihood that it may also impact your mental and emotional health. For instance, chronic pain can impair our quality and quantity of sleep as well as detract from your professional and leisurely activities. Though you may never be completely pain-free at baseline, there may be some alternatives that make the symptoms more tolerable and less impactful.

A highly recommended publication for military personnel and veterans regarding chronic pain is through the Army Public Health Center entitled "Your Nerves on Guard Duty: A Pain Neuroscience Approach to Stress and Pain in Soldiers" by Timothy Benedict, PhD, DPT.

Non-medication chronic pain treatment options include the following modalities:

- **Acupuncture and Dry Needling:** thin needles placed into your skin aimed at strategic points to decrease pain
- **Botulinum toxin injection:** small amount of a toxin injected to weaken or paralyze muscles to decrease pain and improve range of motion
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy:** effective psychological approach for managing chronic pain focused on changing the negative patterns of thought and behavior that can contribute to a person's pain experience
- **Compression cryotherapy:** simultaneous external application using a "sleeve" of air compression and ice-cold water to reduce swelling and pain and promote healing
- **Electrical muscle stimulation:** electrical impulses that can be used to promote tissue healing or improve muscle function
- **Joint manipulation:** movements aimed at stretching and maneuvering body parts to improve joint mobility and relieve pain
- **Myofascial release:** applying light pressure by hand to stiff, painful areas
- **Muscle energy:** patient contracts muscles in a certain direction while a physical therapist applies resistance in the opposite direction to help relax the muscle group to which the therapist is applying pressure
- **Osteopathic manipulative treatment:** hands-on techniques to move and manipulate muscles and joints to correct an impairment
- **Percussive therapy:** uses rapid and repetitive pulses or vibrations on muscles and tissues to increase blood flow and promote healing
- **Pneumatic compression:** an external cuff or "sleeve" applied to the body which applies local pressure to improve blood flow and promote healing
- **Soft tissue mobilization:** applying pressure by hand to muscles to improve range of motion and reduce pain
- **Therapeutic exercise:** physical activity to help restore function and reduce pain

Your chronic pain and certain therapies may require an aeromedical waiver. As a note waiver may be considered if the treatment modality is effective; you are able to safely perform flight duties; there are no side effects that prevent safety of flight; there are no other concurrent conditions (and/or treatments) that restrict flight status; and there is no risk of sudden or subtle incapacitation. Some treatments necessitate temporary grounding after each session.

Chronic pain treatment plan is unique to the individual. You may benefit from consults with behavioral health, physical therapy, occupational therapy, chiropractor, sports medicine, pain management, and/or physical medicine.

Fly Safe!

Questions for the Flight Surgeon?
If you have a question that you would like addressed, email it to *AskFS@quad-a.org*. We will try to address it in the future. See your unit flight surgeon for your personal health issues.

The views and opinions offered are those of the authors and researchers and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position unless otherwise stated.

CPT (Dr.) Nichelle Pascoe is a physical therapist, certified strength and conditioning specialist, tactical strength and conditioning facilitator, and chief of the physical therapy clinic at Lyster Army Health Clinic; LTC (Dr.) Sonya H. Heidt is a flight surgeon and LTC (Dr.) Peter Q. Dinh is a flight surgeon and an aerospace and occupational medicine specialist at the Department of Aviation Medicine. All are stationed at Fort Novosel, AL.

Veterans Airlift Command – Charitable Service Born from Personal Experience

By MG K. Todd Royar, U.S. Army Retired

As a Nation, we are blessed to have numerous charitable organizations that provide comprehensive services to combat-injured veterans. Many of us know Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen or Marines who were directly assisted by one of these groups. However, one organization that I did not personally know about until a few months ago, but wish I had known about much earlier, is the Veterans Airlift Command (VAC).

Veterans Airlift Command was founded by Walt Fricke, a Vietnam-era Army aviator. Walt formed VAC in 2006 after reflecting on his own service to the Nation and subsequent experiences. As a UH-1 pilot, Walt flew hundreds of combat missions in Vietnam with the 68th Assault Helicopter Company. On his final mission, Walt sustained severe wounds to his leg, was medevac'd out of country, and spent six months of recovery in the hospital. Years later as a multi-engine instrument rated commercial airplane pilot and helicopter pilot, Walt decided he could help make travel for combat wounded veterans far easier by providing them with a private flight as opposed to having them navigate the challenges of congested airports.

Walt discussed his idea with a friend who encouraged him to start a non-profit and enlist the assistance of countless aircraft owners/operators to make the most impact possible. Consequently, Walt established the VAC to provide free, private air transportation to our nation's combat-injured veterans for medical or other compassionate purposes through a national network of volunteer aircraft owners and pilots.

Starting from the ground up, Walt found that people were eager to help. With just a simple email to only a few friends, his first request for assistance to transport a single wounded veteran quickly spread throughout the aviation community resulting in five owner/operators immediately volunteering to assist. At that point, Walt recognized the potential impact that VAC could make for injured veterans and their families.

VAC COURTESY PHOTO

SGT (Ret.) Mike Bennett and his wife Raquel thank Jenna Deibel (VAC Mission Coordinator) for her assistance.

Through Walt's leadership and the volunteers that make up the VAC, the results are impressive. VAC currently has over 2,500 aircraft owner/volunteers from all over the world who have transported over 21,000 combat wounded veterans and their family members in need since its inception. Because it is a non-profit, VAC keeps costs down by not having a brick-and-mortar facility – just a sincere desire to help wounded veterans. As a result, VAC spends less than 5% of operating expenses on administrative costs. As an organization, they pride themselves on being high on compassion and low on red tape.

Do you know a combat injured veteran who potentially needs VAC assistance or an owner/operator that might like to help provide transportation? The application process is easy. Applicants can simply go to the VAC website at *https://veteransairlift.org* and submit a travel request or volunteer to assist those in need. As stated on their website, "Serving our combat injured veterans is our highest honor. Every flight will change a life."

MG (Ret.) Todd Royar is the AAAA National Secretary.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY DANIEL HENKE

AURORA FLIGHT SCIENCES PHOTO

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Special Focus ▶
Unmanned Aircraft Systems

PM Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Update

By Mr. Rodney A. Davis and COL Danielle R. Medaglia

The Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) space has experienced significant growth in recent years, with commercial and military applications driving innovation and technological advancements. As the Army develops its UAS strategy, it can leverage lessons learned from the commercial sector and the conflict in Ukraine to inform its requirements and capabilities. The commercial sector has demonstrated the potential for rapid prototyping and fielding of UAS, as well as the ability to integrate new payloads and sensors to meet mission requirements. In Ukraine, the use of UAS by both sides has highlighted the importance of resilient, redundant, and rapidly upgradable systems. By incorporating these lessons learned, the Army can ensure that its UAS strategy remains flexible, adaptable, and responsive to emerging threats and technologies.

The Army UAS strategy encompasses the breadth and depth of Army formations and relies on both military and commercial innovations to deliver capabilities at echelon. Army UAS capabilities include reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition (RSTA), communications extension relay, Lethality (Anti-Personnel & Anti-Materiel), Electronic Warfare (EW)-Sensing & Attack, automated aerial resupply, etc.

Top photo: The Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Project Management Office and the U.S. Special Operations Command successfully demonstrated the first air launch of the Air-Launched, Tube-Integrated Unmanned System (Altius) 700 air vehicle on Dec. 3, at Fort Campbell, KY.

Middle photo: Demonstrating the system's adaptability, Aurora Flight Sciences ground launched an Anduril Altius-700 during the tests at Dugway Proving Grounds, UT.

Lower photo: Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division train mobile recovery operations of the Short Range Reconnaissance system at Fort Campbell, KY. The Skydio RQ-28A is the Army's first program of record quadcopter and delivers a much-needed capability to Soldiers.

Strategy

Real world threats, global lessons learned, and future understanding of the battlefield inform the Army's UAS requirements. A layered UAS employment will shape fires and maneuver while extending the ground commander's operational reach. In short, the strategy integrates UAS across formations in a combined arms fight that synchronizes with fires and maneuver across phases to penetrate, exploit, and defeat a near-peer adversary.

The Army UAS strategy ensures that we first engage with sensors and robotics, and do not "sacrifice blood for first contact." To realize this objective, the Army must have adequate UAS throughout the force to achieve a layered approach that builds resiliency. Additionally, the Uncrewed Vehicle Control (UVC) command and control software for all air and ground robots disseminates operational and tactical information across the battlefield. It populates the Common Operating Picture, in real-time, providing warfighters the required intelligence to succeed. Thus, we are designing all current and future UAS programs to achieve this synergy.

The simultaneous development and procurement of platoon to brigade-level UAS allows the assets to quickly populate the formation. Given the fast pace of change, the Army recognizes that similar units across the Army will not have identical equipment, which would slow capability growth. Simultaneously, steady procurement builds a healthy industrial base with a robust supply chain thereby reducing costs and accelerating technological advancements.

The chart at Figure 1, while not to scale, depicts the employment of these systems at echelon, providing appropri-

ate capability levels commensurate with the unit size and mission. While there are similar types of capabilities across these systems, larger systems tend to have higher capability levels. For example, an electro-optical (EO) sensor on a Gray Eagle is superior to an EO sensor on a hand-held quad copter. This dynamic applies to all payloads across the capability spectrum.

Current Initiatives

Short Range Reconnaissance (SRR) operates at the platoon level. The SRR is comprised of two planned capability tranches. Each tranche will be competed to take advantage of technological improvements in the commercial space. Tranche 1 SRR fielding is nearing completion. Tranche 2 provides additional capability beyond Tranche 1, leveraging the speed of technology and is informed by user needs.

Medium Range Reconnaissance (MRR) operates at the company level. In September, the Army awarded a contract against the Company-Level Directed Requirement that facilitates fielding starting in November 2024. MRR enables maneuver companies to conduct reconnaissance, communications extension relay, Lethality Anti-Personnel / Anti-Materiel, EW-Sensing / Signal Intelligence missions, etc. The acquisition approach maximizes affordability through continuous competition to support the Army's cost, performance and schedule metrics while allowing flexibility to keep pace with technology and stay ahead of emerging threats.

Long Range Reconnaissance (LRR) will operate at the battalion level. The UAS Project Office is currently evaluating solutions for the LRR. It will provide battalion-level formations with an independent ISR capability, reducing dependence on brigade and division assets, and providing real-time data on the Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) battlefield.

Joint Tactical Autonomous Aerial Resupply System (JTAARS) will operate at the brigade level. Currently in demonstration, JTAARS is an autonomous aerial cargo delivery system organic to the maneuver commander, providing options for rapid and agile sustainment of mobile, dispersed combat forces operating in the tactical support and close areas. Following the demonstration phase, the Army is on track for a fielding decision or a pivot to a solution with additional capabilities beyond the 125 lb. payload capacity. In parallel, the Army is developing a requirement for a JTAARS capable of autonomously delivering a 2000 lb. payload.

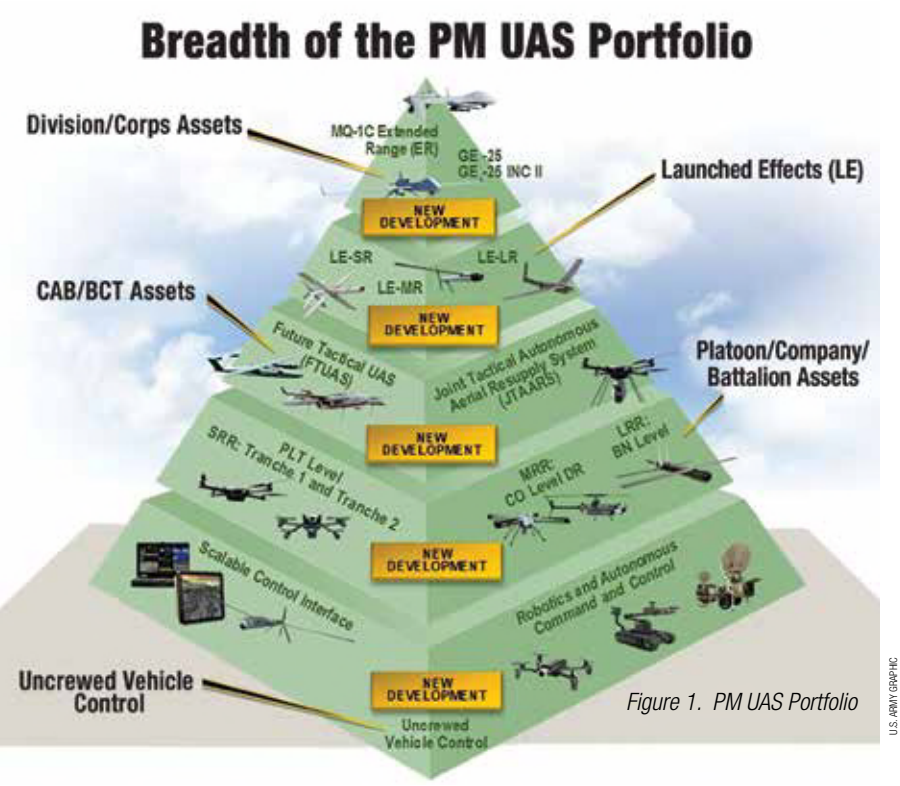


Figure 1. PM UAS Portfolio

Future Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System (FTUAS) will operate at the brigade level. The Army will replace the Shadow with the FTUAS. Key attributes of the FTUAS are runway independence, on-the-move command and control capability, and organic sustainment. The Army is leveraging rapid technology growth and innovation across its formations for emerging FTUAS capability development.

MQ-1C Gray Eagle operates at the corps and division levels. The Gray Eagle has served well in the counter insurgency fight over the last 20+ years. Efforts to increase capability payloads, open the software architecture and modernize data links are underway, giving the Gray Eagle the capability required for LSCO.

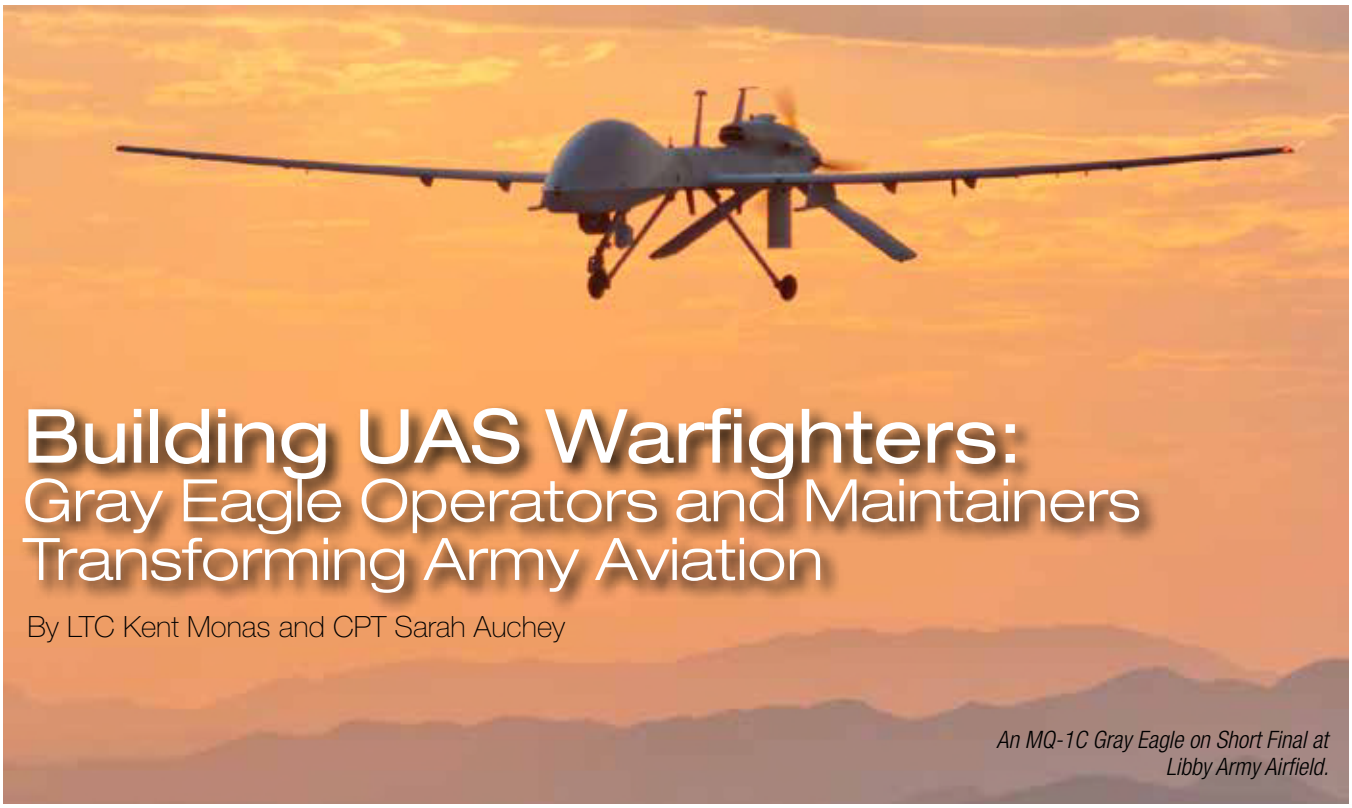
Launched Effects (LE) will operate across all echelons. Launched Effects supports both air and ground forces and are divided into three separate categories depending on their operational characteristics and range. At each range category, a desired array of payloads meets the required missions. The Army is leveraging rapid technology growth and innovation across its formations for emerging LE capability development.

Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) and unified control of heterogenous uncrewed systems across the battlefield under the UVC program are foundational to our UAS Strategy.

MOSA will ensure that no capability is beholden to a single supplier and the government retains the ability to on/off ramp vendors who can provide needed technology as it matures. Air vehicle, payloads, and mission systems define most UAS, and, for this discussion, effectors. The Army UAS strategy will ensure that each element is independently upgradeable across the range of our UAS capabilities, providing synergy and competition throughout these efforts.

To match the pace at which UAS and subsystems mature, the Army will conduct more frequent systems and subsystem competitions. Competition ensures our Soldiers have the latest systems to defeat any adversary. Given the ever-changing strategic environment with the rapidly evolving, sensor-rich, contested battlefield, the Army must develop, acquire, and integrate continuously updated capabilities for warfighting formations to deliver lethal and survivable land power capabilities to the joint force.

Mr. Rodney A. Davis is the Deputy Program Executive Officer, Aviation; and COL Danielle R. Medaglia is the Project Manager, Uncrewed Aircraft Systems – both are located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.



Building UAS Warfighters:
Gray Eagle Operators and Maintainers Transforming Army Aviation

By LTC Kent Monas and CPT Sarah Auchey

An MQ-1C Gray Eagle on Short Final at Libby Army Airfield.

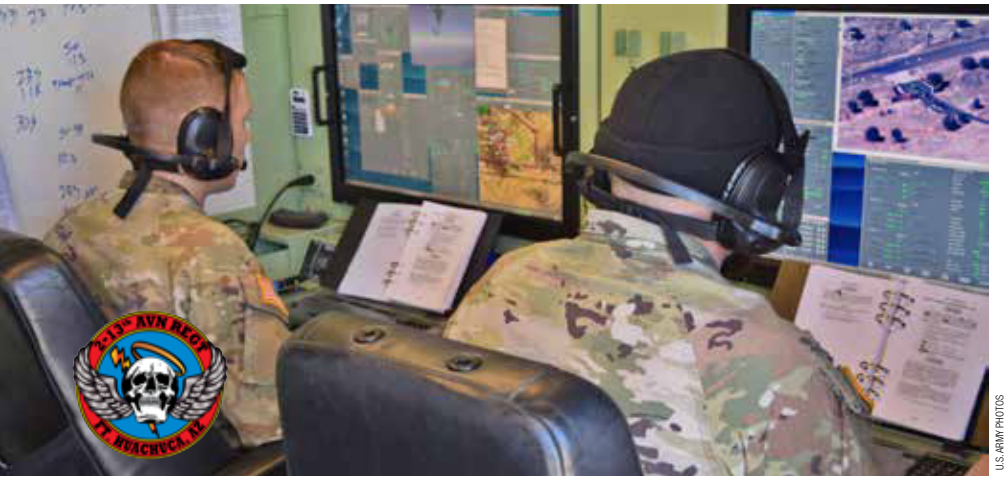
U.S. ARMY PHOTO

The MQ-1C Gray Eagle Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) is arguably the greatest Army acquisition success of the 21st century. The Soldiers who operate and maintain these systems possess a wealth of knowledge and combat experience that rivals their manned Aviation comrades. C Company "Coyotes", 2nd Battalion, 13th Aviation Regiment trains all Gray Eagle Operators and Maintainers and boast a Cadre of the most talented and experienced UAS Warfighters in the world. C Company is upgrading its aircraft fleet, creating new tactical simulator scenarios, and completing a major simulator building renovation to provide world class training to our Soldiers. These dedicated instructors are transforming UAS training to uphold Army Aviation's sacred trust with our supported ground forces.

The MQ-1C Gray Eagle emerged from the Air Force's MQ-1 Predator Program, but unlike the Air Force system, which was primarily flown by commissioned officers who were rated Aviators, Army Aviation proved that well trained enlisted Soldiers could pilot these new drone systems and engage targets with Hellfire Missiles.

The skill of these MQ-1C operators (15C) cannot be overstated, as they often must acquire, track, and engage moving targets via satellite connection which induces a delay in the video feed requiring skill, anticipation, and extensive practice. 15Cs do all this while navigating through the battlespace and communicating with Joint Tactical Controllers, ATC Services, and other Aircraft to achieve Manned Unmanned Teaming.

Gray Eagle Maintainers (15M) also possess a unique skill set which is unlike other Aviation Maintainers who focus on one system or aircraft, 15M's must be experts at engine maintenance, electrical, weapons systems and payloads, ground control stations, fiber optics, satellite and radar theory, as well as refuel, rearm, launch and recover of the aircraft. 15M's must also establish forward launch recovery sites, conduct runway surveys, and maintain an array of generators to power all these systems.



U.S. ARMY PHOTOS

A 15C Gray Eagle Operator class in session at 2-13th Avn. Regt.

15C Instructors: Gray Eagle Operator

C Company, 2-13th AVN REGT's 15C Instructors take a new private from Basic Combat Training and in 23 weeks make that Soldier into a UAS Warfighter, capable of mission planning, launching, navigating to the engagement area, conducting recon utilizing a variety of payloads, then acquiring a target and engaging with a Hellfire Missile. C Company instructors have experience in FORSCOM, INSCOM and SOCOM averaging over 1,600 flight hours, the majority in combat, with one instructor having over 130 remote and autonomous engagements. C Company's secret to success is a strong cohort of Department of the Army Civilians who possess operational experience in UAS dating back to the RQ-5 Hunter, circa 1995.

15Cs career progression moves from operator to Aircraft Commander (AC), like Pilot in Command, to Instructor Operator (IO), then Standardization Operator (SO). 15C NCOs are also selected to attend advanced schools, such as Master Gunner, Air Cavalry Leaders Course (ACLC), and the Joint Fire Powers Course. The recommended next step in 15C development is to allow UAS Operators to attend the Aviation Tactical Operations and Safety Courses to further Manned Unmanned Teaming. C Company's major initiative in UAS transformation is the tactics simulator scenario in the 15C Program of Instruction (POI). Previous scenarios were Counter Insurgency Operations where the Gray Eagle operated in uncontested airspace. C Company instructors were tasked with modernizing the scenario to reflect Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) in a contested airspace. To meet this challenge, 15C instructors served as guest Observer Coach/Trainers at the National Training Center. Utilizing knowledge gained from advanced courses, in combination with NTC rotations, these instructors are revitalizing the simulations POI to ensure students leave as qualified Gray Eagle Operators with an understanding of LSCO tactics. The Gray Eagle can be effective in the LSCO environment, but it requires skilled 15Cs to plan missions that leverage the full capability of their system to support the ground force.

SGT Thuy Tran is a C Company 15C Instructor who exemplifies the skill, experience, and dedication of the Cadre. SGT Tran became a 15C in 2017 and has amassed a total of over 3,100 flight hours, 2,755 of them logged as combat in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Enduring Freedom, in Afghanistan (2018) and Iraq (2020, 2022) when she was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division. It wasn't until her deployment to Iraq 2020 as an E5 and Aircraft Commander (AC) that she "fully understood her role as a UAS operator, and how I impacted operators and the mission on the ground." Her biggest challenge as a junior NCO in 2020 and 2022 was "relaying the mission in a way that junior Soldiers could understand their impact on the battlefield. Once they understood their purpose, it was easier to maintain morale and give them reasons to keep up with the high operations tempo of those missions." Her biggest challenge as an instructor is separating her combat knowledge from the foundational and technical knowledge taught at the training company. She reinforced the need to "teach the foundation knowledge, not necessarily the techniques, but once they grasp what they need to know, [she] uses stories from her experience to correlate what they are doing to what they can see in the operational force." SGT Tran chose to come to C Company to teach the 15C10 POI in 2023.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS

A 15M Gray Eagle UAS Repairer class in session at 2-13th Avn. Regt.

15M Instructors: Gray Eagle Maintainer

A true jack of all trades, the 15M Gray Eagle Maintainer is tasked with being the subject matter expert on all maintenance items that relate to the MQ-1C Gray Eagle, performing Crew Chief duties while maintaining the Gray Eagle systems and weapons armament, the Ground Control Station (GCS), Universal Ground Data Terminal (UGDT) and the Tactical Common Data Link (TDCL). This differs from typical Aviation Military Occupational Specialties where Soldiers are assigned specific areas of responsibilities.

The 15M Instructors at C Company are carefully selected from across the Army, to deliver the most proficient 15M MQ-1C Maintainers and are comprised of E5-E7 Soldiers and DACs, who average 18 years of maintenance experience with deployments supporting operations around the world. 15M instructors have conducted fleet fielding of the -15-version aircraft over the past year and are postured to field the -25 version to ensure the generating force remains in step with the operational force.

Conclusion

Gray Eagle Soldiers are in high demand across our Army, maintaining a high operational tempo in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and INDOPAC theaters. C Company, 2-13th AVN REGT is transforming the UAS Generating Force to build UAS Warfighters for our Army. 15C Operators and 15M Maintainers are ushering Army Aviation into the drone age and it is imperative that we leverage the talent and experience of these dedicated American Soldiers. We must continue to invest in education, training, and resources to allow our UAS Warfighters to uphold Army Aviation's sacred trust with our ground forces.

LTC Kent Monas is the battalion commander and CPT Sarah Auchey the C Company commander, 2-13th AVN REGT, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Huachuca, AZ.

Formation of the 2/160th SOAR (ABN) UAS Maintenance Detachment (MXD)

By Alex Smith

The Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS) Maintenance Detachment (MXD) from the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) (Abn) was established in February 2023; the Detachment is currently authorized 88 Soldiers, all of whom collectively serve roles in UAS maintenance. The Detachment aims to collaborate maintenance efforts between Echo and Fox Company, the only two UAS companies in the Regiment. Before 2023, the flight companies each upheld maintenance platoons consisting of the following sections: tech supply, tool room, quality control, and production control. The platoons had separate leadership nodes, consisting of a platoon leader and platoon sergeant, with separate standard operating procedures. Both Echo and Fox Companies' maintenance activities were focused on the same two priorities: conducting routine maintenance procedures and managing a maintenance program.

Routine maintenance procedures include operational flight inspections, scheduled maintenance, and unscheduled maintenance. Managing a company maintenance program includes operating a centralized tool room, standardizing procedures and practices, and scheduling tasks. Maintenance priorities were the same across the two companies; however, there was not a common standard. With the conception of MXD, leaders established one standard practice, centralizing expertise across both companies and more efficiently executing the above priorities.

Unique Organization

In FORSCOM, Gray Eagle companies are comprised of headquarters, flight platoons, a maintenance platoon, and a ground maintenance platoon. The FORSCOM model makes sense for maintenance, because FORSCOM units typically support one flight company whose efforts are either focused on training flights stateside or mission flights conducted in a deployed environment. FORSCOM units do not typically support stateside and overseas flights simultaneously. MXD, however, has a unique problem set. The Detachment supports two flight companies with parallel lines of effort, a mission that is complex and of utmost importance. The Regiment's UAS companies conduct training exercises at Fort Campbell and support exercises across the continental United States, while deployed to multiple sites overseas. As an entity separated from the flight companies, MXD more accurately reflects a maintenance company from a traditional combat Aviation brigade per ATP 3.04.7.

Another key difference from traditional Gray Eagle companies is MXD's utilization of the maintenance manager position. The maintenance manager fills roles from the production control officer, production control non-commissioned officer, and platoon sergeants from a standard UAS company. In the Detachment, the maintenance manager is a fully mission-qualified maintainer responsible for facilitating and ensuring unscheduled and scheduled maintenance completion. This position is helpful because, unlike a conventional company, MXD deploys with significantly smaller nodes. Since the Regiment's UAS companies do not have a production control forward, deployed maintainers streamline communications through the maintenance manager back at home station. This promotes continuous communication between deployed nodes and stateside operations and increases awareness of the Detachment.

Benefits

An impactful benefit of consolidating the maintenance platoons into one detachment is the streamlined and standardized training program for maintainers and technical inspectors. This unified training program, based on the Individual Critical Task Lists and the Maintenance Readiness Level

program, has significantly improved the overall maintenance culture. Soldiers no longer feel that progressions vastly differ between the companies, promoting a sense of equality and fairness. The improvements in the training program have not only promoted teamwork but also reassured the audience about the competence of the maintainers. Soldiers now complete tasks faster, contributing to a healthier fully mission capable rate for the Regiment as a whole. The days of maintainers from one Company finishing maintenance early and departing for home before the other Company's maintainers are a thing of the past as Soldiers from the Detachment learn to work as a team. Becoming one entity has aided in improving comradery among the Soldiers. The Detachment gives maintainers the opportunity to work more closely together (through routine maintenance tasks and deployments) and creates healthier work relationships.

Challenges

Of course, there are some challenges when creating a new structural organization. One of the cons of the consolidation included increasing the workload for Soldiers who were used to managing only one company's worth of aircraft and equipment. Initially, the Detachment struggled with encouraging Soldiers to broaden the scope of their responsibilities. Influencing a "battalion-level" mindset for the airworthiness and functionality of two flight companies proved difficult. In the Detachment's initial stages, leadership highlighted the Regiment-level impacts on UAS maintenance amongst the non-commissioned officer corps. This helped create buy-in amongst all Soldiers for the consolidation.

Additionally, MXD was formed from Echo and Fox Company's maintenance platoon slots, so building staff positions for headquarters sections like operations and tool room needed to be revised. With a formation primarily made up of 15Ms, the Detachment fills these positions with maintainers, removing them from executing duties specific to their MOS. MXD combats this problem by rotating these positions amongst the 15M population yearly.

Conclusion

As MXD continues to solely focus on maintenance, the Detachment is committed to affecting change across the Army's UAS fleet. Since its inception, MXD's quality control section has submitted five DA Form 2028s (recommendations for change to publications) to implement changes in the aircraft's technical manual. Additionally, the section actively submits maintenance engineers' calls and engineering orders that allow Soldiers to conduct tasks previously completed solely by a field support representative. These procedures include installation of the modified gearbox lines, torquing stainless steel lines, propeller damage repairs, tire changes and non-destructive inspection testing. As the first and only UAS Maintenance Detachment, the topics discussed are only a few changes MXD hopes to influence. Despite the challenges, the Detachment is resolute in its mission to become a self-sufficient and standardized maintenance company. The MXD aims to pave the way for the future of uncrewed aerial system maintenance, instilling a sense of hope and optimism in the audience about the future of UAS maintenance.

Alex Smith is a pseudonym for an officer serving in the 160th SOAR(ABN).

The Future of the Theater Airfield Operations Group: Army Force Design Update 2026

MAJ Daniel Pickett

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY CPT STEVEN L. WISOLOWSKI

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SGT STEVEN GILMORE

Left: U.S. Army SGT Ernesto De La Pena, GCA facility chief for Foxtrot Company, 2-149th GSAB, 36th CAB (left), and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Olivia Garza, terminal platoon leader from Foxtrot Company, attend to a sheltered operations station of an AN/TPN-31 ATNAVICS, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Jan. 20, 2023.

Right: A mobile communication tower sits off the runway of an air strip during a combine training exercise between Army active-duty units and North Carolina National Guard air traffic controllers at Harnett Regional Jetport, N.C., May 10, 2017.

The 164th Aviation Group, organized as a Theater Airfield Operations Group (TAOG), is leading the transformation of active-component air traffic control units through the Army Force Design Update (FDU) set to take effect in fiscal year 2026.

The TAOG, stationed at Fort Novosel, AL, will undergo significant changes through the FDU. The staff is completing planning and coordination with partners from Air Traffic Services Command (ATSCOM), U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE), and U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM) to ensure a smooth transition throughout this process.

New Structure

The new TAOG force structure will have one Airfield Operations Battalion (AOB) and eight Airfield Operations Companies (AOCs) to support theater and large-scale combat operations (LSCO) by the end of fiscal year 2028. Six of the companies will report to the AOB, and two companies are regionally aligned with U.S. Army Pacific and U.S. Forces Korea. The FDU includes personnel changes in the TAOG staff in logistics, human resources, and communications to enable management of the AOCs. The TAOG and AOB also assume training and readiness authority (TRA) for the six U.S. based AOCs.

This transformation will enable the TAOG to refocus on theater-level operations and training mission essential tasks (METs) during major exercises. The staff is attending coordination and planning conferences with Army component commands to participate in Operation Pathways, Defender Europe, and Freedom Shield exercise series. These exercises provide shared understanding between component commands and the TAOG staff regarding theater-level objectives and the current operating environment.

Another benefit of this coordination is the ability of the TAOG staff to become more proficient in warfighting tasks focused on setting and maintaining the theater. The TAOG enables the theater Army to support and sustain the operational area through aerial port operations.

A relevant article from *Military Review* emphasized the importance of this relationship during Operation United Assistance. U.S. Army Africa (USARAF) planners identified Roberts International Airport in Monrovia, Liberia as the only airfield suitable for C-17 and C-130 theater airfield requirements. A hasty airfield assessment determined that the runway needed repair prior to use by heavy C-17s. This led to flight restrictions and reduced equipment flow during the initial phases of the operation. USARAF planners identified the requirement for a set-the-theater framework to conduct regular airfield surveys to understand the conditions in theater. In addition to these airfield assessments, the TAOG staff is working with component command planners to update LSCO contingency plans to integrate the new AOCs.

The Future

The recently published Army Structure (ARSTRUC) 2025-2029 document also influenced the future of the TAOG. The TAOG inactivates 3rd Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment Aviation Operations Battalion (AOB) in February 2025 leaving 1st Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment as the only active duty AOB in the Army. As part of the FDU, the AOB transitions from a tactical air traffic control unit to an administrative management headquarters. This battalion remains based at Fort Novosel, AL with the TAOG headquarters.

The senior airfield authority (SAA) for joint operations is normally a lieutenant colonel (LTC). With the restructuring, when the Army sends an AOC, for instance to Africa, the unit no longer has an LTC battalion commander to assume responsibility for the airfield. The TAOG is working to address this capability gap through conversations with the FORSCOM staff.

Under the current Army force structure, there are 14 air traffic services (ATS) organizations in the active-duty component with airfield management and airspace control responsibilities. This includes two AOBs and 12 ATS companies currently part of general support Aviation battalions within combat Aviation brigades (CABs). The Aviation FDU deactivates four ATS companies and redesignates the remaining ATS companies as AOCs aligned under the TAOG. The end state of the FDU is eight AOCs with airfield management and airspace control responsibilities compared to the previous 14 organizations. Following the transition, the AOCs will reside in six disparate locations throughout the United States. Two companies remain regionally aligned in Hawaii and South Korea. None of the companies will be co-located with their parent battalion and brigade headquarters at Fort Novosel.

The new AOCs closely resemble the current ATS company structure in terms of personnel and equipment. The main change is the addition of low-density military occupational specialty (MOS) personnel to support autonomous mission command and day-to-day operations. The TAOG expects the AOCs to keep the current METs for airfield management and airspace control responsibilities. Under the FDU, CABs retain a small section of air traffic control operators and a tactical terminal control system (TTCS) to support dynamic and short-term Aviation operations.

The reorganized AOC, AOB, and TAOG structures support LSCO. The AOCs enable the theater Army to support and sustain the operational area through managing aerial port operations. This includes supporting division and corps operations by establishing and managing airfields during contingency and combat operations. As the training and readiness authority for the AOCs, the TAOG staff is focused on how to provide ready and proficient units for theater support. The integration of the TAOG in Army component command exercises provides opportunities to conduct multi-echelon training for the AOCs.

The first company transitioning to an AOC is based at Fort Cavazos, TX and will be designated Company B, 58th Aviation Regiment. This first transformation will help to build the framework for the remaining AOC transitions starting in December 2026 and ending by June 2028. The TAOG continues to assess the best way forward to implement the transition of air traffic services while supporting Army missions worldwide.

MAJ Daniel Pickett is the executive officer of the 164th Theater Aviation Operations Group located at Fort Novosel, AL.

Army Fixed Base Air Traffic Control Update

By Daresse Henry, Henry Ivy, Lyle Voyles, and Chris Piette

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

A runway view of the ILS system.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

The National Airspace Voice Recorder.

One of the most unique system portfolios within the Program Executive Office Aviation, and within the Army, belongs to the Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture Project Office at Redstone Arsenal, AL. The Fixed Base Air Traffic Control (ATC) Product Team, part of the Assured Airspace Access Systems (A3S) Product Office, manages the ten fixed base ATC products in service across the Army worldwide, including over 60 Army Airfields and 22 Army Heliports. This portfolio enables safe aviation operation for Army and Joint Force aviators. It requires extensive coordination and collaboration across all the services and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Army ATC operations track fixed and rotary wing aircraft, maintain critical safe flight operations, and enable safe navigation in all-weather environments to ensure mission success in both combat and non-combat operations.

Instrument Landing System (ILS) / ILS-420

Army installation airfields are essential for deploying forces, conducting training, and sustaining operations within and outside of the Continental United States. The Army Aviation Installation Air Traffic Control Equipment Strategy, endorsed by the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence Commanding General, identifies the ILS as critical for airfield operations.

The ILS is a ground-based navigational aid that enables precision runway approaches at night or in instrument meteorological conditions. The Army fielded most in service ILSs over 25 years ago. To modernize and replace these ageing systems, as well as replace de-commissioned Fixed Base Precision Approach Radars at most locations, the A3S Product Office is installing and commissioning twenty-five ILS-420 systems over the next ten years.

The ILS-420, developed and manufactured by Thales, provides a modern and complete ILS solution for the Army. The ILS is a Commercial Off the Shelf, FAA certified, ground-based aircraft instrument precision approach system suitable for all modernized, manned Army aircraft. The ILS meets the International Civil Aviation Organization Category I approach requirements and

The AAAS controller screen displaying airfield information.

is fully compliant with National and International spectrum requirements.

Army Airfield Automation System (AAAS)

The AAAS displays weather information derived from the Air Force's Joint Environmental Toolkit. A total of 289 AAAS workstations are currently located in Army control towers, radar facilities, base operations, and Airspace Information Centers. The AAAS provides much more than critical weather information. It also interfaces with the Digital Automatic Terminal Information Systems, which provides a high quality and fully automated replacement to manually produced Automatic Terminal Information Service broadcasts, as well as the Digital Range Information Systems, which provides tools to track, display, and coordinate all aspects of range activities. Additional features include the consolidation and display of current and forecasted weather information, as well as airfield, airspace, and navigational aid status, Notice to Air Missions, aviation maps and terminal instrument procedures, controller reference materials, facility administrative information, remote video surveillance, and Flight Data Input and Output.

National Airspace (NAS) Voice Recorder (NVR)

The NVR replaces the existing Digital Audio Legal Recorder (DALR). The NVR records all communications in and out of the air traffic control facilities on an airfield. The system provides reliable, Voice over Internet Protocol compatible, Air-to-Ground and Ground-to-Ground voice recording for use during accident /incident investigations, training, search & rescue operations and to respond to Freedom of Information Act requests. The NVR has replaced over two thirds of the legacy DALRs. Fielding started in 2022 and is scheduled to be completed in 2026.

Radio Replacement Program (RRP)

Reliable voice communications are the bedrock of all ATC operations. The legacy system, the General Dynamics CM-300(V1) family consists of ATC rack mounted transmitter (CM-300 U/VT) and receiver (CM-300 U/VR) systems and the Harris Corps AN/PRC-117G. After FY25, the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) will no longer support the transceivers. The ATC team is posturing for out-of-warranty repairs as an interim solution to eventual replacement. Incremental replacement of Fixed Base ATC radios is expected to begin in FY27.

Sustainment Responsibility Transition

The A3S Product Office has coordinated fielding, technical assistance to sites, logistics support, asset tracking, and design of the aforementioned systems. In addition to these ongoing responsibilities, A3S will soon assume the sustainment role. Responsibility for Fixed Base ATC products' sustainment previously belonged to the Communications and Electronics Command (CECOM) at Aberdeen Proving Ground. CECOM collaborated with the FAA and several of the OEMs to sustain these systems with item management, logistics support, provisioning, and cataloging.

The A3S Product Office gains sustainment responsibility starting in Fiscal Year 2025. We are working with the FAA, various product vendors, and the United States Air Force and Navy to deliver the same level of effort and support that CECOM has provided for years. This is a new role for the A3S team; however, the team is confident of a seamless transition for the Army user community. A3S will work relentlessly with the Army Aviation enterprise to continue providing quality support for the fielded systems in the years to come.

Daresse Henry is the Assistant Product Manager (APM) for the Fixed Base Product Team; Henry Ivy is the Systems Acquisition Manager for DASR/DAAS/ILS/DVOR/PAR2020; Lyle Voyles is the Systems Acquisition Manager for the AAAS/NVR/RRP/FDIO/IVSR; and Chris Piette is the Logistics Manager for the Fixed Base Product Team – all assigned to the Assured Airspace Access Systems (A3S) Product Office, Redstone Arsenal, AL.

Army Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Integration into the National Airspace System:

How the US Army Aeronautical Service Agency (USAASA) Enables Multi-domain Training

By COL Gabriel Wolfe, Mr. Barney Owens, and LTC Dave Orzech

As the Army evolves and adapts for Large Scale Combat Operations through the Continuous Transformation process, there has been a proliferation of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and Small UAS (sUAS) throughout the formation. As units train, develop, and integrate these unique capabilities into their tactics, it is important to have processes established to facilitate training. All UAS require approval to fly regardless of size, outside Army restricted airspace. USAASA, Air Traffic and Airspace (AT&A) Officers, and our regional Department of the Army Representatives (DARs) to the FAA are here to enable our warfighters.

Overview of UAS Airspace Requirements

The Army's UAS are given authority to operate in National Airspace System (NAS) in accordance with the "Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between the Department of Defense (DoD) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for UAS Operations in the National Airspace System," dated 19 May 2019. The current MOU is the 3rd edition and increases the DoD's access and authority to operate UAS in the NAS outside of restricted, warning or prohibited areas. By law, operations must comply with all Army and FAA regulations and meet the equivalent level of safety for manned aircraft. Units flying UASs must provide ground observers, chase planes, or a Ground Base See and Avoid system to meet "See and Avoid" requirements.

Commanders can use two processes to gain approval to operate UAS in the NAS:

First, an Army Airspace Access Authorization (AAA) may be issued for UAS operations in Army-delegated airspace, small UAS (sUAS) in Class G airspace, and sUAS flights over populated areas with an airworthiness release. Once approved, AAAs are valid for 24 months unless they change aircraft.

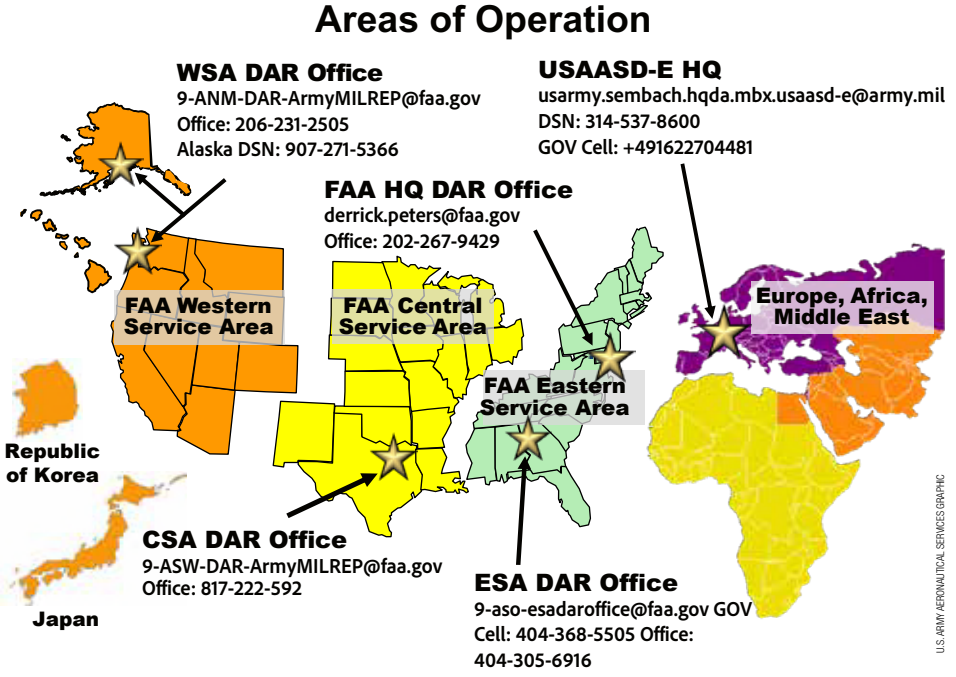
Second, the FAA may issue a Certificate of Authorization (COA) for UAS operations in the NAS outside of Army-delegated airspace, UAS larger than 55 pounds access to Class G airspace, and UAS operations requiring a waiver to operate in the NAS.

HQDA EXORD 029-20, "Army Implementation of the DoD and FAA MOU for UAS Operations in the NAS," outlines the procedures for UAS operations in the NAS and assigns USAASA the authorities and responsibilities to implement those procedures.

In all cases, your local AT&A and the DAR are the best source of information and guidance for operating UAS within the NAS. The DAR office that services your facility will request an FAA COA Application Processing System / Drone Zone (CADZ) account for your unit to apply for an AAA or COA for airspace access approval.

Requests for an AAA must be staffed, endorsed and submitted to the DAR by an O–6 (or above) in the unit's chain of command 14 days before the operation. However, most AAAs are approved within days of receipt. Upon completion of the DAR review, the request will be forwarded to USAASA HQ for processing. USAASA Airspace Branch will review the request and the USAASA Commander will approve **Low-** and **Medium-risk** operations. **High-Risk** operations will be adjudicated by the Director of Army Aviation (DAMO-AV). The approved AAA will then be sent through the DAR back to the requesting unit.

For UAS operations outside Army-delegated airspace, sUAS access in Class G airspace or UAS operations



requiring a waiver, an FAA COA is required. The FAA will process requests within 60 business days of receipt.

sUAS Operating in Army-delegated and Class G Airspace

As maneuver units acquire new sUAS, there will be a need to train in their local area and on installations. Every sUAS, no matter how small, must have an approved AAA to operate outside restricted airspace. The entire Army Aviation community needs to help inform and educate our non-Aviation teammates about the process as more and more non-Aviation units acquire sUAS.

In its simplest form, the AAA process requires an application signed by the first O6 or higher in the Chain of Command showing which sUAS they intend to use, the applicable Air Worthiness Release (AWR), and the proposed operating location. USAASA is working with Ft. Campbell for a consolidated AAA that covers multiple Brigades on the same installation. Their local AT&A Officer is assisting to validate the coordination measures within the Army airspace, submit the AAA to the DAR, and track processing and approval at USAASA.

Emergency Use for First Responders, Natural Disasters, or Other Emergency Situations

The FAA also provides emergency airspace authorizations for first responders and agencies/organizations responding to natural disasters or other emergency situations with expedited approval through a Special Governmental Interest process. To submit a waiver, contact the FAA's System Operations Support Center at *9-ator-hq-sosc@faa.gov*. The Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has received two emergency authorizations in the last six months. The first enabled damage assessment and 3-D images of the Francis Scott Key bridge after collapsing from being struck by a container ship. The second identified cracks in the Holt Dam in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The FAA provided expedited verbal approval, and USAASA followed up with Army AAAs to replace the emergency authorizations.

Department of the Army Representative (DAR) to the FAA

DARs serve as the critical link for UAS operations in the NAS. One of USAASA's primary roles is to be the integrating entity between the US Army, DoD, and the FAA. To accomplish this mission, USAASA has four regionally aligned DARs, comprised of a team of an Officer and senior NCOs, to support Army units globally. USAASA has teams integrated with the FAA Headquarters and a team for each FAA region, Eastern, Central and Western. As well as a unique element located in Germany, the U.S. Army Aeronautical Services Detachment-Europe (USAASD-E), that integrates Aviation operations in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. The Western DAR team has responsibility for the Pacific AOR.

DARs are available to help commands navigate a myriad of requirements that need to be coordinated with the FAA and host nations. Their responsibilities include airspace proposals, UAS COAs, obstacle evaluation analysis, and potential pilot deviations. They have a wealth of information and experience as fellow Aviators representing the Army at the FAA Service headquarters. If you need help with coordinating anything within the NAS, your DAR is the gateway for information and approval.

Conclusion

The Army has numerous paths to enable training and operations in the National Airspace System. The MOU between the DoD and FAA for UAS Operations in the NAS sets forth provisions that will incrementally increase the Army's access and authority to operate UAS outside of restricted, warning or prohibited areas. It is the Army's long-term goal to operate UAS seamlessly with manned aircraft in all classes of airspace without the need for airspace segregation or special authorizations, such as an Army AAA or FAA COA, and USAASA will work continuously to that end. The current processes can support Army requirements and is evidenced by the 191 AAAs and 36 FAA COAs that have been approved and are active. As the Army continues to roll along, USAASA, your DARs, and AT&A Officers are here to facilitate the process and support operations across the enterprise.

COL Gabriel M. Wolfe is the USAASA Chief of Staff, Mr. Barney Owens is the Airspace Branch Chief, and LTC Dave Orzech is the Western Service Area DAR.

The High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES).

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

The Fixed Wing Project Office and Army Fixed Wing Aviation –

Deliberate Transformation for Multi-Domain Operations Relevance

By COL Joe S. Minor and Ms. Tracey E. Ayres

The Army is significantly updating its capabilities for 2030. For the Fixed Wing Project Office (FWPO), this means modernizing the fixed wing aerial-intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (A-ISR) fleet to meet the Army's needs for multi-domain operations. Given the evolving and complex future operational environment, the Army must have a high-altitude, long-range A-ISR fleet capable of deep sensing to support Army precision targeting by long-range fires.

In 2024, the FWPO divested 16 legacy turboprop A-ISR aircraft and closed three bed-down bases rendered obsolete by the improved capabilities of future aircraft. The aerial technology demonstrators (ATDs), the Airborne Reconnaissance and Targeting Exploitation Multi-Mission Intelligence System (ARTEMIS) and the Airborne Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare System (ARES) completed missions and supported combatant commanders in two areas of responsibility (AORs). Modifications continued for the Army Theater-level High-altitude Expeditionary Next-generation A-ISR aircraft (ATHENA) with planned aircraft deliveries in FY25.

Army aviator training on Bombardier Global 6500 aircraft to expand the pilots' type ratings has been ongoing for the past two years. This training will allow pilots to acquaint themselves with the platform before the ATHENA aircraft's arrival and ultimately the High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES) aircraft.

The award of the Lead Systems Integrator (LSI) contract for HADES to the Sierra Nevada Corporation was the most significant accomplishment in 2024 for the FWPO with the assistance of the Army Contracting Command-Redstone.

HADES

The HADES LSI award signifies a transformative milestone for a new generation of Army fixed wing A-ISR capabilities. The HADES system will bring groundbreaking enhancements in speed, range, payload, and endurance for Army A-ISR capabilities.

By offering increased airspeeds and extended endurance, HADES broadens the scope of A-ISR to a significantly larger geographical area. It also allows global deployment within a matter of days, which is substantially faster than the current multi-week transition period for the legacy

turboprop fleet. Swift deployment will degrade adversaries' ability to plan and maneuver.

General James E. Rainey, the Commanding General of Army Futures Command, emphasized that the Army Warfighting Concept is centered around three fundamental principles. The first principle is for the Army to preserve and enhance its current strengths, which include its personnel and its expertise in combined arms maneuver. The second principle is for the Army to rapidly integrate new technology and adapt faster than any adversary. The third principle is for the Army to significantly increase its endurance, encompassing both the Army's and the industrial base's capability and capacity, to ensure success in protracted conflicts.

Not only is HADES aligned with these principles, but it is also poised to lead them. Jet-based platforms expand the Army's reach, standoff capabilities, sustainability, and efficiency by eliminating numerous OCONUS required legacy fleet bed-down bases. HADES' exceptional speed and range enable global deployment within 24 hours, significantly enhancing the Army's organic capabilities to contribute to both Army and Joint collection efforts. The Army can share the data that HADES gathers with potential allied partners, further developing interoperability and strengthening relationships.

By incorporating a modular open systems approach in the HADES platforms, the system facilitates rapid and cost-effective integration of future sensors and capabilities throughout its lifecycle. This adaptability ensures that HADES remains responsive to the evolving threat environment and technological advancements, maximizing its relevance and effectiveness in future Army A-ISR missions.

Until HADES becomes fully operational, the aerial ISR bridging aircraft will meet the Army fixed wing A-ISR intelligence collection requirements.

ATHENA

The ATHENA bridging aircraft are being integrated and flight tested in the United States. MAG Aerospace/L3Harris are building two ATHENA aircraft while Sierra Nevada Corporation is building another two. The Army expects delivery of the four modified Bombardier Global 6500 aircraft in early FY25.

Contractor-owned and contractor-operated, the ATHENA aircraft will carry tailored sensors to meet the specific requirements of combatant commanders, address a wide range of A-ISR mission requirements and enhance the Army's overall intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

ARTEMIS & ARES

The Airborne Reconnaissance and Targeting Exploitation ARTEMIS ATD, which are modified Bombardier Challenger 650 aircraft owned and managed by Leidos, regularly gather intelligence in the European Command (EUCOM) AOR. Since their initial deployment in 2020 (ARTEMIS I) and 2023 (ARTEMIS II), both aircraft have remained operational in EUCOM, fulfilling Army and Joint collection requirements. Combined, ARTEMIS I and II have accumulated over 10,000 flight hours, demonstrating their reliability and effectiveness in supporting A-ISR missions.

The Airborne Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare System (ARES) ATD, a modified Bombardier Global 6000 aircraft owned and operated by L3Harris, consistently delivers A-ISR data for the Army within the Indo-Pacific Command AOR. Since its maiden flight in 2022, the ARES aircraft has accumulated over 5,000 flight hours, showcasing its reliability and effectiveness in supporting A-ISR missions. Featuring a larger size, longer ranges, and higher altitude capabilities compared to ARTEMIS, the ARES aircraft better aligns with the long-term objectives of the HADES Program of Record (POR), making it valuable to the Army's A-ISR collection needs.

Pilot Training

The PM Fixed Wing contracted jet training program facilitates aviators' transition from turboprop aircraft to business-class jet aircraft, enhancing their high-speed/high-altitude air sense, enabling them to safely perform aircraft and mission tasks while fostering effective teamwork in a crew environment during the transitional phase between legacy turboprop platforms and the Army's HADES POR. The program offers pilot training (ground and flight) in Bombardier Global 6500 aircraft, including training aircraft, instructor pilots, curriculum, essential training support materials, and optional support for Army manuals and training documentation development. Forty-three Army aviators have successfully completed the Phase II Aircrew Qualification Course (AQC). The first option year of the contract, awarded in September, offers up to eight AQC Phase II slots per month and 300 hours of flight time through FY25. This program ensures a smooth transition for Army aviators to the new jet-based platforms.

HAP

In January 2023, the Army designated the FWPO as the office of primary responsibility for High Altitude Platforms (HAPs) and became involved in experimentation and demonstration of stratospheric capabilities. These HAP systems encompass super pressure High Altitude Balloons (HABs), zero pressure HABs, and stratospheric solar aircraft.

The stratosphere, absent of traditional weather effects, minimal winds and abundant solar power, offers a unique material and sensing environment for high altitude systems. Although HAPs will not replace existing fielded systems, they may serve as a resilient and redundant layer for the Multi Domain Sensing System mission, addressing the long-range challenges posed by advanced weapons systems. The Army conducted HAP experiments and demonstrations throughout 2024, with plans to continue these activities in 2025, further exploring the potential of these high-altitude systems in enhancing the Army's sensing capabilities.

Continuous Transformation

The Army is evolving its organizational structure, training methods, equipment and combat strategies to meet its mission and counter emerging threats. By employing Aerial Technology Demonstrators, A-ISR bridging assets, and eventually HADES, the Army and Joint Force can better predict, engage, and triumph in future conflicts where all domains are contested. The Fixed Wing Project Office is instrumental in transforming A-ISR collection for the Army of 2030 and contributing to the design of the Army of 2040 ensuring that the service remains adaptable and effective in the face of evolving threats and technological advancements.

COL Joe S. Minor is the Project Manager for the Fixed Wing Project Office, Program Executive Office, Aviation; and Ms. Tracey E. Ayres supports the Fixed Wing Project Office as a Strategic Communications Lead with KBR. Both are located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

Defending the Stratosphere

By Ms. Julie M. Isaac

Left: A High-Altitude Balloon (HAB) being tested during Project Convergence Capstone 4 earlier this year, platform operating in the stratosphere and enabling penetration into highly defended threat operational areas.

Right: A micro–High-Altitude Balloon (micro-HAB) getting ready to be launched as part of an exercise for Vanguard 24 this past September at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

Project Director Sensors-Aerial Intelligence (PD SAI) has a long history of developing and delivering sensor capabilities for the Army's aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) fleet. As the Army's lead agency for lifecycle management of airborne ISR sensors, PD SAI partners with crewed and uncrewed platform program offices to provide layered solutions to the intelligence and tactical communities.

The United States' adversaries challenge us in all domains, employ multiple layers of standoff, and leverage vast amounts of competition space across the globe. In response, the Army requires layered technology solutions to support Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) to penetrate the anti-access area denial bubble, sense deeply and persistently, and fight in disrupted, disconnected, intermittent, and limited-bandwidth environments.

To meet these needs, one of the newest capabilities being pursued by PD SAI is the High-Altitude Balloon (HAB). HABs (both large and micro) will add a high-altitude layer to the Multi-Domain Sensing System family of systems (FoS), offering an uncrewed, low-signature, long-endurance, attritable platform operating in the stratosphere and enabling penetration into highly defended threat operational areas. This provides deep sensing and persistence for a deep fight and makes it available to address possible threats in theater.

MicroHABS

PD SAI is currently working to mature a smaller HAB, the microHAB, that will serve as an Army capability

that will be readily available to Soldiers. Although similar to the larger HABs, the microHABs will provide different capabilities due to its variance in size.

The microHABs will serve as a quick reaction capability that can be deployed by only two to three Soldiers from anywhere on the battlefield. One of the greatest benefits of maturing this technology is that it is forcing the Army and industry to miniaturize sensors in a way that can be used on a plethora of platforms to not only include stratospheric balloons, but also aerial and maritime assets for the future of the Army in multi-domain operations.

By maturing the smaller HABs, it would make it possible for the large HABs, which possess the required physical specifications, to possibly mount several payloads (i.e., multiple sensors) and therefore could make this capability even more critical in support of Army Intelligence and Fires communities. The addition of smaller sensors may also mean more of them on the battlefield, which would assist the Army with developing a complex engineering and intelligence architecture that will be able to support various sensors and many deployed at the same time.

There are many benefits to using various sizes of HABs all at once, one being that microHABs could be employed as a communications relay providing line of sight (LOS) with large and/or medium HABs, which could hold electronic intelligence (ELINT), communications intelligence (COMINT), or synthetic aperture radar (SAR)/moving target indicator sensors, or a combination of them. The microHABs would provide this LOS ability and thereby reduce latency, while beyond line of sight (BLOS) could be attained using low Earth orbit satellite services.

Maturing microHAB technology makes these concepts achievable in the very near future.

The Pivot to Sensor-Centric

PD SAI is working to better speed up the acquisition of new sensors for not just the HABs, but for the entire PD SAI portfolio. By pivoting from being a platform-centric organization, focused on managing capability at a platform level, PD SAI will become sensor-centric, focused on providing full life-cycle sensing capability and support to include ensuring sensing technology is pacing emerging threats, ensuring that sensing technology aligns to operational goals, mission requirements, and the selected platforms constraints. This pivot will steer the organization away from the traditional custom developed sensors per platform to sensors that are interoperable across multiple platforms.

By making sensors interoperable across multiple platforms, one payload can be used on different types of Aviation platforms for varying missions. This will have a tremendous impact not just on HABs, but on all emerging systems including the High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES), Launched Effects (LE), and future platforms.

HADES will provide a multi-faceted sensing capability on a business jet platform. It will offer deep sensing against peer and near-peer adversaries in all phases of the MDO.

The LE program is intended to meet the Army's need to provide reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition to the Aviation fleet, off-board survivability, and situational awareness. The Program Executive Office (PEO) for Aviation is leading efforts to define the LE payload strategy. As the lifecycle management of sensors across the Army's aerial fleet, PD SAI partners with PEO Aviation to ensure seamless integration of platform and Mission Equipment Package.

Additional capability acquisitions being planned are the High Efficiency Radio Frequency Monitoring and Exploitation System (HERMES) and Aerial Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT) System (ARGoS). The HERMES requirement is focused on the sensor development, independent of platform. The HERMES requirement provides PD SAI the ability to develop and mature COMINT and ELINT sensors to comply with the size, weight, and power requirements of multiple intelligence collection platforms. The ARGoS requirement document provides PD SAI the ability to develop GEOINT sensors such as electro-optical/infrared, light detection and ranging, hyper spectral imagery, and synthetic aperture radar.

PD SAI plans to use the future HERMES and ARGoS program requirements to mature payloads to the point they can and will support multiple platforms and Multi-Domain Operations.

Ms. Julie M. Isaac is the Project Director, Sensors-Aerial Intelligence in the Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare & Sensors at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland.

The Fixed Wing Army Aviation Training Site (FWAATS)

By CPT Brant A. Ravenscroft

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

FWAATS is not just a training site; it is a lifestyle. Nestled in the surrounding mountains of central West Virginia is the home of the Army National Guard Fixed Wing Army Aviation Training Site (FWAATS). FWAATS' mission is to conduct NGB-directed individual aircrew member qualification training with an emphasis on fixed-wing skills. The school provides aviation quality assurance and develops courses of instruction that standardize in-flight procedures.

Since 1992, FWAATS has been a hub for training thousands of Soldiers, airmen, and sailors from the active and reserve components. It's not just a training site; it's a community. Fixed-wing Aviators are drawn to this facility to broaden their education on the C-12 Huron, C-26 Metroliner, and instrument skills in the UH-72 Lakota SFTS. Given the limited flying hours an Aviator may encounter at their home station, FWAATS can help bridge that gap with its structured learning environment, experienced instructors, and outstanding maintenance contractor support. FWAATS' course catalog comprises 10 comprehensive courses designed to provide a thorough understanding of the subject matter. This article will discuss a variety of these courses.

FWAATS is home to all C-26 instruction, a National Guard asset comprising of 11 aircraft. These courses include a five-week C-26 Aviator Qualification (AQT) that includes two weeks in a simulator before arriving at the schoolhouse. Students can further challenge and advance themselves in either the C-26 Instructor Course (IPC), the C-26 IP Standardization Course (IPS), or the Senior IP/Instrument Flight Examiner (IFE) Course.

At FWAATS, the Army provides a C-12 Aircraft Transition Course, which transitions a Rotary Wing pilot with 500+ hours of airplane flying experience and qualifies them for the C-12. FWAATS program streamlines a pilot's transition by utilizing the Aviator's past fixed-wing experience and condensing the ordinary 12-week training course to a 6-week training course, which includes a first week at Flight Safety in Concord, North Carolina. Other courses include the Senior Instructor Pilot (IP) Instrument Flight Examiner, a demanding, challenging, and rewarding graduate-level Course. FWAATS also provides the Army's only formal C-12 Maintenance Test Pilot Course. This Course encompasses a very system-heavy academic portion. The mornings begin with detailed academics that investigate DOD forms, manuals, and regulations. The Course takes the academic knowledge into applying a maintenance test flight in the afternoon that builds on the knowledge gained in the morning. These comprehensive courses ensure that students feel well-prepared and confident in their abilities.

The newest Course offered at FWAATS is the Instrument Flight Examiner Prep

(IFE-P) Course, a two-week course that prepares Aviators who plan on attending the demanding IFE Course. Students utilize the realistic UH-72 SFTS Lakota Simulator while an instructor conducts mock instrument evaluations. The IFE-P is one of the most offered courses and one of the more popular ones, and class seats fill up fast. FWAATS also instructed active-duty members in this Course from the active-duty Air Force this past fiscal year. Like all the classes, students leave with a new knowledge base to share with future aircrews and peers.

Commander LTC Joe Jurkowitz leads a highly experienced team of professional instructors consisting of Army Aviators previously qualified in almost every airframe in the Army inventory. These instructors have diverse backgrounds, including special operations, active-duty, and National Guard. Instructors are dedicated to pursuing excellence for themselves and, more importantly, their students. Their dedication ensures that every student is in good hands and can feel reassured about their training.

There is an outstanding instructor staff and a very experienced NCO staff. Behind the scenes in every course is a highly knowledgeable NCO staff member. The NCO staff has years of dedicated service to FWAATS that make the daily operations of classes possible.

Mr. Wes Hood was a civilian contractor providing support to FWAATS.

FWAATS is also very proud of its civilian maintenance contractors. Contractors like Mr. Wes Hood, whose dedication to the C-26 community spanned over twenty years. A former Marine who was a pillar to the C-26 maintenance community and who, at one time or another, maintained every single C-26 in the National Guard inventory. Wes's dedication to FWAATS, the hundreds of students who have been through courses, and his mentorship will be missed as he unexpectedly passed away this year.

LTC Jurkowitz and his diverse team continually seek experienced instructors to join their ranks. FWAATS offers opportunities for personal growth and the direct capability to contribute to the future of Army Aviation.

CPT Brant A. Ravenscroft is The Army School System (TASS) commander at the Fixed Wing Army Aviation Training Site in Bridgeport, WV.

The Role of America's Depot in Future Conflict

By COL Kevin J. Consedine

CCAD PHOTO ARCHIVES

CCAD artisans work on a CH-47.

The Corpus Christi Army Depot's (CCAD) primary function is to sustain the current fleet and maintain the lethality of Army Aviation. The perception of most depots and arsenals within the Organic Industrial Base (OIB) is that of citadels far from the tactical edge where critical sustainment needs are most required – units must come to the depot for support. Over the last ten years, thousands of CCAD teammates deployed worldwide to provide artisan support to Aviation Warfighters. With respect to Warfighter support and building combat ready formations on future battlefields, CCAD brings the depot to the unit.

My first car was a 1993 Honda Civic. My father told me that car would run forever provided I changed the oil and kept up with routine services. He stressed that if you do routine maintenance routinely, the car will be ready when you need it most. A similar axiom could be applied to the Army's fleet of rotary wing platforms. If properly maintained, the average life cycle of an aircraft exceeds 25 years. Considering the reliance on the current fleet to be viable and lethal beyond 2040, predictable funding for aviation sustainment is critical.

The Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) is the future, but we cannot neglect the present if we want the fleet ready when we need it most. The depot's expeditionary capacity represents a critical capability in future fights where supply chains will be extensive and interior lines of support unlikely. However, this capability is predicated on the depot's people and continuous, predictable funding to accomplish CCAD's key tasks of supporting the Warfighter and building combat-ready formations.

Supporting the Warfighter

Army Aviation has not met Operational Readiness (OR) goals across any platform in over a decade. At the height of the Global War on Terrorism, it was not unusual for a maintainer to acquire three years of experience in a single combat deployment. That is not the case today; gone are the days of launch-recover-launch in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Consequently, maintainer experience at the unit level is not what it was 10 years ago; the Army is asking fewer experienced maintainers to preserve the combat viability of a 20th century fleet on a 21st Century battlefield. To build sustainer proficiency, CCAD mentors over 200 Soldiers annually in various depot-level tasks through familiarization and engaging seasoned artisans. Working with Combat Aviation Brigades, CCAD can design a tailored curriculum of maintenance instruction specific to warfighter needs. Ultimately, Soldiers will acquire more confidence in their mission tasks and greater proficiency in the essential skills that keep the Army flying.

Building Combat Ready Formations

After decades of flight, every aircraft requires an overhaul or recapitalization to restore it to like-new condition or address obsolescence of select systems. Funding for such initiatives was reduced over the last ten years, leaving units with growing sustainment costs

which reduce the buying power of the flight hour program. As sustainment funding declined, the expeditionary capability of CCAD increased in utilization. Since 2014, nearly 1,000 Depot Field Teams (DFTs) deployed, providing depot-level capability at the tactical edge. Over the last three years, DFT deployments surged to 66 in FY22, 99 in FY23 and nearly 90 in FY24.

DFTs represent a critical capability of America's Depot and a means of cost savings and avoidance. In one instance, a DFT conducted a structural repair of an AH-64 on the Korean Peninsula for ~$150,000 using a portable blue light scanner. The same repair at the depot, largely due to travel and transportation costs, would have exceeded $7 million. An aging fleet will require seasoned mechanics, and CCAD can send them anywhere in the world to build unit readiness.

A modern OIB must be more than a distant method of support whose ways and means are rooted in the byzantine structure of the industrial revolution. Depots and arsenals must be responsive and available to the needs of their principal customer. Beyond 2040, Army Aviation will be challenged to sustain a fleet consisting of 80-year-old CH-47 airframes at one extreme and the V-280 Valor at the other. As a result, CCAD is undergoing a modernization strategy to engender the flexibility and agility necessary to bring critical assets of the depot to the unit. Success will require sustained energy and funding as part of the overall OIB modernization strategy. While the emerging capability of Army Aviation far exceeds that of my 1993 Honda Civic, the fundamentals of maintenance remain the same – invest in routine maintenance routinely; from tail rotor to tilt rotor.

COL Kevin J. Consedine is the commander of Corpus Christi Army Depot in Corpus Christi, TX.

Reestablishing Connections:
The Imperative for Army Acquisition Officers to Engage with Operational Units

By MAJ Stuart S. Brimmer

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC CHARLES CLARK

PEO Aviation staff receive input from 25th CAB leadership during a user touchpoint September 9th, 2024, to ensure FLRAA meets operational needs. Coordination for these events can be burdensome and time consuming and having an integration officer in the unit will allow for faster coordination and better user touchpoint events.

In the ever-evolving landscape of modern warfare, collaboration between acquisition officers and operational units has never been more critical. The unique challenges faced by today's armed forces require a seamless integration of cutting-edge technology with real-world operational needs. For this reason, it is imperative that Army acquisition officers return to operational units to serve as integration officers. This move can serve to reconnect them with the operational Army, streamline coordination, understand the evolving needs of battlefield operations, build trust with program managers (PMs), and facilitate the Army's transformation in contact.

Reconnecting with the Operational Army

War is inherently a human endeavor, and acquisition officers need to always remember the humans they support. It is all too easy to fixate on the engineering, financing, and contractual logistics that embody the military procurement process; too often, the specifics of soldierly experience can get lost amidst the administrative intricacies. Every piece of equipment the acquisition corps produces should be guided by an unwavering focus on the Soldiers' best interests and operational effectiveness. By placing the Soldiers' needs at the heart of their work, acquisition officers will foster an environment that inspires innovation and enhances military capability.

Streamlining Coordination

Bureaucratic hurdles often impede agile and timely responses to the evolving needs on the battlefield. By re-engaging with operational units, acquisition officers can work hand-in-hand with Soldiers and command staff to streamline coordination processes. This proximity enables more robust communication channels, eliminating misinterpretations between acquisition directives and operational needs. Officers who understand the user environment can help ensure a more responsive and adaptive procurement process, where the technologies needed are delivered promptly and efficiently.

Understanding Operational Needs

The distinct operational needs of combat units can change dramatically depending on the theater of war, mission parameters, and prevailing threats. Acquisition officers returning to these units will gain critical insights that can directly inform procurement strategies. Specific brigades, such as the 101st

and 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, are strategic in nature, making it essential for acquisition officers embedded within these units to fully understand how emerging technologies can most effectively enhance combat operations.

Building Trust in Project Managers

Trust remains a willful necessity in military operations, underpinning both Soldier morale and operational efficiency. When acquisition officers work closely with operational units, the opportunity arises for them to build rapport with PMs and frontline personnel. This collaboration strengthens the sense of unity and shared purpose among Soldiers, ensures more robust integration of brand-new systems, and increases confidence in the logistics chain responsible for deploying these systems. Trust in PMs translates to trust in the technologies being implemented, making operational personnel more willing to embrace new equipment under their command.

Transformation in Contact

The successful introduction of new equipment within military frameworks relies heavily on the synergy between design, procurement, and actual usage in the field. This integral relationship becomes increasingly vital as armed forces continuously seek innovative solutions to meet their persistent operational demands. However, technology transitions can be fraught with challenges, challenges that a deeper engagement with operational units can help alleviate. Notably, experienced aviation officers who return to operational staffs play a critical role in this process, particularly within the aforementioned strategic Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs). These officers carry the burden of vital knowledge that enables the rapid integration of novel technologies into active service, training Soldiers in their effective usage while simultaneously generating essential feedback that informs the procurement cycles to follow. This symbiotic relationship between the forces and the technical advancements enhances overall unit readiness and fosters technological superiority—two vital components in sustaining an operational edge.

As the Army embarks on what GEN James Rainey, Commanding General, U.S. Army Futures Command, describes as transformation in contact, the significance of integration officers becomes more pronounced. These officers function as the linchpins in achieving seamless technology integration within the operational framework. The introduction of new technologies –demonstrated through initiatives such as launched effects (LE) – serves as an illustrative example of how these officers can effectively prototype, operationally test, and promptly deploy new technological advancements. Drawing on their contemporary operational experience and tactical understanding, integration officers can translate nuanced operator feedback into actionable insights for research and development.

Yet, the ambiguity of technological requirements presents complexities that complicate the landscape of military innovation. LE represents technology essential for today's Army aviation platforms; however, the process of finalizing these requirements demands years—time that the rapid pace of technological advancement hardly affords. By the time a requirement undergoes refinement and standardization, much of the technology may have already become obsolete, further widening the chasm between emergent capabilities and the rigid procurement cycle. Within this dynamic framework, an integration officer's ability to liaise effective communication between end-users and PEO Aviation is invaluable. They bring a pragmatic understanding of real-world Soldier needs—offering crucial user requirements that ensure the operational viability of new technologies—thereby promoting efficiency amid bureaucracy. With the backing of swift technological advancements and clear communication corridors, the integration officer can aid in the coordination of relevant operational tests and secure the requisite approvals for field deployments. This compressed timeline enhances responsiveness without sacrificing thoroughness, facilitating rapid adaptation to requirements within the two-year window demanded for transformation in contact.

Therefore, robust collaboration between integration officers, end-users, developers, and procurement teams is the bedrock upon which effective modernization is built. Future advancements will not exist in a vacuum; they will require a joint effort wherein technology is shaped by the hands of the very personnel expected to wield it. With a fundamental commitment to operational excellence and an urgency toward fostering a flourishing ecosystem of technological integration, armed forces can ensure they remain ahead amidst the shifts prompted by imminent threats and the evolving landscape of global warfare. It is only through continual learning, adaptation, and integration that armed forces will command the foremost position in a rapidly transforming battlefield landscape. Hence, the emphasis on developing and empowering integration officers becomes less a matter of preference and irrevocably a necessity, forming the crux enabling military efficacy and innovation in the most demanding of environments.

Recommendation and Conclusion

Not every acquisition officer should be required to report back to a CAB, nor is every CAB in need of an acquisition officer. However, appointing the right officer, equipped with relevant experience and sent to the appropriate CAB at the right moment, will facilitate effectual modernization. Specifically, the 101st CAB, due to its close proximity to the PEO and its role as the Joint Forcible Entry CAB, along with the strategically positioned 12th CAB, will greatly benefit from having an acquisition officer who also acts as an integration officer. This integration officer will coordinate user interactions while gaining insight into how new equipment addresses operational challenges, quickly incorporating new tools and tackling immediate problems associated with emerging technologies. With the right officer possessing the necessary experience, trust in equipment will be established through their technical knowledge and immediate problem-solving skills. The lessons garnered from their experiences supporting, flying, and fighting alongside the Soldiers will enhance the vital relationship between the PEO and CABs, ensuring future acquisition leaders have a deep understanding of the Soldiers they serve.

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, DOD, or the U.S. Government.

MAJ Stuart S. Brimmer is the assistant product manager for development and modernization with the Utility Helicopter Project Office at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

12th CAB and Army Futures Command – Modernizing the FARP

By CPT Lydia LaRue

The Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) is a critical lifeline on the modern battlefield for aviation assets. While long recognized for their vital role, the FARP also presents inherent challenges for today's warfighters in Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO). The 12th Combat Aviation Brigade recently invited the Army Applications Laboratory (AAL) to observe operations at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels, Germany for a firsthand look at the current FARP and the growing need for modernization.

AAL, a direct reporting unit to Army Futures Command, is the U.S. Army's dedicated innovation unit, focused on rapidly identifying, developing, and deploying cutting-edge technologies to enhance Soldier capabilities. Recognizing the need for more efficient FARPs, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade and AAL launched the Helicopter Expedited Refueling Operations (HERO) project, aimed at addressing the inefficiencies and vulnerabilities inherent in current FARP operations.

The HERO project's problem statement is clear: FARP operations are inefficient, leading to extended periods of aircraft unavailability, which in turn leaves ground combat teams without the vital support they need. Additionally, the longer FARPs and personnel remain stationary to conduct refueling and arming, the more vulnerable they become to enemy attack.

To address these challenges, the Army is seeking solutions that expedite the aggregation, assembly, setup, and breakdown of FARP vehicles, hoses, and equipment; decrease aircraft refueling times (while adhering to safety regulations and pressure limits); improve pumping systems, valves, hoses, and other FARP equipment; and decrease aircraft wait/loiter times.

The Challenge

For decades, FARPs have served as the backbone of Army aviation operations, providing the essential fuel and ammunition needed to keep aircraft in the fight. However, the demands of modern warfare, with its emphasis on speed, agility, and flexibility, have exposed the limitations of the current FARP design.

The challenges are multi-faceted:

- ***Manpower intensive:*** FARPs require a significant number of personnel to set up and operate, along with the requirement for security during a combat environment.
- ***Vulnerable to attack:*** Their static nature, concentration of vital resources, and need to be in an open, unobscured location make FARPs attractive targets for enemy forces.
- ***Logistical challenges:*** Establishing and maintaining FARPs can be logistically complex, particularly in austere environments.

HERO's Visit

The HERO team visited Echo Company, 1-3 Attack Battalion as they conducted logistical operations during Saber Junction at the JMRC in Hohenfels. This provided the team with a unique opportunity to observe FARP operations firsthand and gain valuable insights for the challenges faced directly by the Soldiers on the ground. "Soldier feedback is invaluable in helping companies to identify key areas for improvement and to focus our efforts on developing solutions that will make a difference for the Army," said Mr. Thomas Mead, AAL Program Manager.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY MAJ.ROBERTO RIVERA

An Echo Company, 1-3 Attack Battalion Soldier describes fuel operations and the M978A4 fuel truck to a representative from the Army Applications Laboratory (AAL) at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) in Hohenfels, Germany.

The Future of FARPs

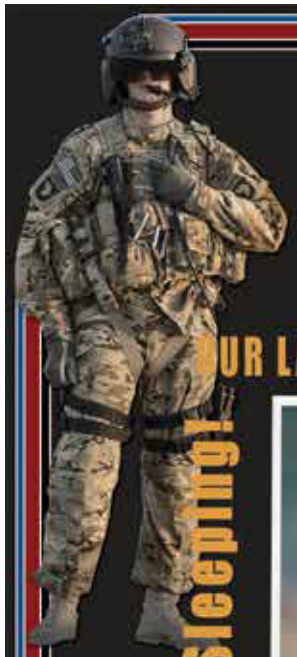
The HERO project's partnership with Beacon Industries and Integrated Solutions For Systems (IS4S) marks a significant step forward in the quest to redesign FARP for the 21st century and LSCO. These companies, with their expertise in fuel systems and robotics, are poised to deliver groundbreaking solutions that will address the challenges identified during HERO's visit to Germany.

Beacon Industries presented their new pump, which utilizes turbine technology capable of pumping fuel three times faster than our current 300 gallons per minute (GPM) pumps. They demonstrated a life-size working replica powered by AA batteries and introduced a sensor capable of inspecting and testing fuel in real-time, offering a significant technological upgrade. IS4S showcased their robotic fueling solution, built on a Bobcat chassis, which autonomously or remotely fuels aircraft. The robot's main camera allows ground analysis for precise fueling operations. The system offers both autonomous and Soldier-operated modes for versatility.

Conclusion

The HERO team's visit and their partnership with industry leaders represents a significant milestone in the effort to modernize FARPs. "This visit was a testament to the Army's commitment to innovation," said COL Ryan Kendall, 12th CAB commander. "12th CAB is excited to be at the forefront of this transformation and assist the Army Application Lab's HERO project in modernizing the FARP for the Army as a whole."

CPT Lydia LaRue is the public affairs officer for 12th Combat Aviation Brigade.



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50 Years Ago – Women in Army Aviation: Major General Jessica Garfola Wright, U.S. Army Retired

By Mark Albertson

There was a time when I was viewed as being a mentor for women soldiers.

This was incorrect.

I was a mentor of soldiers, whether men or women…

Major General
Jessica Garfola Wright,
July 28, 2024.

AAPI FILE PHOTO

1LT Jessica Garfola Wright at the controls of a CH-47.

U.S. DOD PHOTO

The Honorable Jessica Garfola Wright, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness.

A half-century ago, the United States Army was caught in that vacuum of change.

The reality of political defeat in Southeast Asia motivated officers such as Generals William DePuy and Donn Starry to revamp the Army and transform it from a counterinsurgency to a Combined Arms Maneuver. They used the mass and speed of conventional warfare to counter the potential confrontation with the masses of Soviet tank armies in Europe.

The new era began with the typical post-war drawdown in men and equipment. It was punctuated by efforts to raise an appreciation of the Army with the American public following Vietnam, in addition to the fact that America was in a period of decline in its birth rates, which the same has been covered in an earlier installment.

Yet all was not lost. For example, in World War II, when many of the young, able-bodied men were in uniform, leaving our industrial capacity in need of skilled workers, it was women who stepped up to the plate and took their places, ensuring our industrial base met the expected output in both capacity and quality. This change in our workforce forged an unrivaled quiver in the Arsenal of Democracy.

Once again, in the early '70s, when recruits were needed to fill the ranks for America's new All Volunteer Model Army, women again stepped up to the plate. One was a young lady from the Keystone State, Jessica Garfola, and later, Wright.

She enlisted in the Pennsylvania National Guard in 1975. That same year, she was commissioned through the Women's Army Corps Orientation, Officers Candidate School, Fort McClellan, Alabama. By July 1977, she was in flight school.

"There were some 'anxiety-producing moments,'" she recalled. "It was difficult for all of us, both men and women. Most, if not all, of these aviators were seasoned combat veterans fresh out of Vietnam. I was not seasoned at all. I was a 'woman' in what was traditionally a man's world. I had to hold my ground, and I had to hone my skills as an aviator. Yes, it was tough; I credit those few combat aviators who took a chance on me. They went from mentors to valuable friends."

One such mentor was SFC Al Minskey, who, as Wright observed, was your typical '70s sergeant. "He smoked like a chimney," said Wright, "and he was not fond of women. His first comment was, 'I do not like women in the military.' My comment back was, 'It looks like this is your opportunity to get over it.'"

"The most important part of this relationship was friendship and learning.

Al taught me so much about life and being a soldier. For the rest of his life, I kept in touch with Al. When we lived in different places, I would send him old postcards. When I moved back to PA, I made a point to see him. Al passed away on 17 October 2023. I knew a part of me went with him."

Jessica Wright became the first female commissioned officer in the National Guard to go to flight school. She constantly strove to develop her skills and capabilities to make her the best she could be while pursuing her Army career. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Social Work at Alderson Broaddus College, Philippi, West Virginia, in 1974. Later, she attended Webster University, St. Louis, Missouri, for her Master of Arts in Management and the U.S. Army War College, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC.

Jessica began honing her aviation and leadership skills in her first assignment out of flight school as a CH-47 pilot in the 228th Aviation Company, 28th Aviation Battalion, from February 1977 to August 1979, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She was selected to become a CH-54 pilot based on her demonstrated potential.

In June 1997 she was selected to command the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, 28th Infantry Division, Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Following an extremely successful brigade command, she became the Assistant Adjutant General-Army, Pennsylvania Joint Force Headquarters, Annville, Pennsylvania, ultimately becoming the Adjutant General of Pennsylvania in February 2004. She retired from the Army National Guard as a major general.

The Nation subsequently called again, tapping her as the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD-PR), serving the men and women in uniform, their families, and the civilian workforce. She held the position from January 1, 2013, until March 31, 2015, when she retired after 40 years of service to our Nation.

Wright saw and participated in many changes within our Army, from her enlistment as a WAC to Major General and, ultimately, the USD-PR. There were few positions she could aspire to hold when she enlisted as a WAC. When she served as the USD-PR, at the direction of the Secretary of Defense, she orchestrated the coordination among the Services to remove the gender/combat exclusion barrier from all military positions. This was accomplished in January 2016.

If you know or have served with Jessica, you know she is a humble and selfless servant who takes her many accomplishments in stride. She was the first female Army National Guard officer to attend flight training, the first female combat brigade commander in the Army, and the first female Adjutant General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Once again, in typical Jesse fashion, she remarked, "But being the first is not important; it is important that I was allowed to do these things. Those who come after me will be afforded the same opportunities and achieve even more outstanding results. People such as LTC (Ret.) Sheryl Rozman, a former instructor at the Eastern Army National Guard Aviation Training Site; CW4 (Ret.) Angie Nolt, a combat aviator, is now a first officer with United Airlines; CPT Abby Yox, a combat aviator, is now working at the Eastern Army National Guard Aviation training site and is the maintenance company commander.

Though she has retired from active government service, she still provides her talent and leadership to several organizations, including the Army Aviation Association of America. She currently serves as a board member on the Scholarship Foundation (AAAASFI) where she established the connection with Wreaths Across America (WAA) which raises money for WAA and the AAAASFI by selling wreaths for display in cemeteries to those who wish to remember and honor veterans.

She is also the secretary of the newly formed AAAA Trade School, Licensing, and Certifications Foundation (TLC), which offers grants to those pursuing careers and training in the trades. It is elementary to see where she is placing her time and talent – continuing to support the future of the Nation's youth in their aspirations and dreams while remembering those who have given their all in the service of the United States of America.

As Wright stated, "My mentors and leadership took a chance on this young novice in a uniform, but then who went on to take the bumps to become a soldier and a mentor herself."

Although she has already given forty years of her life to government and military service, Major General Jessica Wright, U.S. Army Retired, continues to serve.

Mark Albertson is the award-winning Army Aviation Publications Historian and a contributing editor to ARMY AVIATION magazine.

Editor's Note: Throughout 2024 we will be celebrating the inclusion of women in Army Aviation with articles about the 50-year history.

Editor's Note: This is the next in a series of articles throughout the year taken from the pages of The VHPA AVIATOR, the newsletter of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association. Preserving the Legacy! Enjoy
CW4 (Ret.) Joe Pisano, RVN 1970-1971

Tactical Instrument Ticket.... Was it Effective? Yes – Lives Were Saved!

By LTC (Ret.) Charles E. Magaw

I was a member of the Red Caps... Flight Training class #67, with training divided between Fort Wolters, Texas and Fort Rucker, Alabama, graduating in the summer of 1967 with a follow-on assignment to the Republic of Vietnam arriving in August 1967.

My initial aviation assignment was with the 4th Aviation 4th Infantry Division, specifically the Blackjack lift company flying the UH-1D. I became involved in the administration of the company as well as flying right seat during assigned missions. As a recently promoted captain and with administrative experience as an enlisted soldier it seemed a natural fit.

Life was good. We had well maintained aircraft, I had flown several successful insertions flights and lots of experienced pilots to help with my flight development and in country orientation! I became adjusted and comfortable with my new friends.

It would not be long before my tactical instrument training at Ft. Rucker would be put to the test. Little did I realize the significance of this rather limited instrument training while it was being administered. Just how important is illustrated by what follows.

It was on a late afternoon/early November 1967 evening mission to return LTC Baldwin, Cdr. 4/39th Infantry to his headquarters firebase. We had a crew of three, LTC Baldwin and five of his soldiers on board. The weather in the vicinity of Banh Me Thuot was misty with moderate fog. We were flying low and at a slower airspeed than usual. The doors were open with a misty rain in the area making it difficult to find the firebase landing zone. Flares were being used to assist however this only made things worse. To this point I had been in control of the aircraft and at some point, recommended to my aircraft commander WO1 Baker that we abort the mission, spend the night in Banh Me Thuot and complete the mission in the morning.

WO1 Baker decided to take the controls and make another attempt to complete the mission. My decision to keep my eyes on the instruments as repeatedly emphasized during training was crucial for the following minutes. It was shortly after he took control that I realized that the aircraft was initially climbing, and then I noticed that the nose was being lowered and we were gaining airspeed. Instinctively I must have sensed WO1 Baker had lost control of the aircraft. I loudly informed my AC that I had the controls and fortunately he released the aircraft to me. As I had been trained, I immediately established a 500 foot per minute climb maintained a constant airspeed and maintained my heading with needle and ball centered. I must admit that I did all this while talking to myself through the intercom. I have no recollection of any conversation with my AC during my climb eventually leveling off at 6,000 feet.

I knew I would have to make a crucial decision now that I was certain there were no obstacles to our flight. Since I had no visual reference and no flight aids to use my decision was to turn due South. Time was not on my mind; all I know is that at some point we flew into a clear star filled night. Again, the NDB at Banh Me Thuot was not operational, but we were able to locate the landing strip, land, secure the aircraft, have a beer, and some lighthearted conversation about the experience. It was then that the crew chief told us he was standing on the gun mount and was leaving at the first sign of any trees! We got some sleep and completed our mission early the next day.

So yes, the tactical instrument training we received was useful. I am confident that my experience is not unique and that many lives were saved as a result.

LTC (Ret.) Charles E. Magaw is a VHPA life member living in Winter Springs, FL.

In the Summer of 1970

By Cheryl Clark

CHERYL CLARK PERSONAL PHOTO

Cheryl Clark (left) with friend Vicki Johnson.

In the summer of 1970, a year after college, I flew to Saigon via Ft. Dix, NJ to work as a civilian in a recreation center for the enlisted men. Like the Officers and NCO Clubs, the rec centers provided the enlisted a place to relax and forget about the war for a time. They had libraries, pool tables, musical instruments, some had a swimming pool, to offer a bit of "home" to the GI.

I was assigned to the Venable Club in Phu Loi, III Corps, where myself and two other young women from the states worked. We offered waffles on Sunday morning by scrounging from the mess halls on the post. The line went around the building and at times the wait was two hours! For Easter we scored real eggs from Saigon too and had an assembly line going to dye the eggs and then hide them. Smaller USO events came to the base, and there was sometimes a live band. We had an occasional Luau at the pool with steaks. We showed movies, played bingo and held pool tournaments in the evenings for the guys to get a break from the day, unless of course we had incoming, or sappers in the wire, and then it was back to reality and into the bunker.

On my day off, sometimes I would climb the tower and catch a ride to a Fire Support Base or go to Long Binh for lunch at the Loon Foon restaurant. At times we would swap locations with other clubs to support each other for larger events.

In the Spring of 1970, the club had an electrical fire and burned to the ground. We managed to save some musical instruments and furniture and just enough equipment to set up a temporary club to continue our work.

For Christmas, I arranged a helicopter to take me to Da Lat, where some MPs met me in a jeep and we cut a few fir trees, so we would have fresh greenery. We also made an eight-foot snowman out of chicken wire and napkins. As I recall, Christmas was pretty quiet, but the perimeter lit up at midnight on New Year's Eve, with guys shooting off M16s and flares... not a good time for pilots trying to fly home from a mission.

One of the pilots from INFANT NETT, a night seeing gun ship company, fortunately landed to refuel just before midnight in Chu Chi and watched the Phu Loi fireworks. He landed safely after the fireworks. Our fireworks were just beginning! We were married 52 years ago on July 31st.

Cheryl Clark is the wife of a VHPA member.

AAAA TLC

Trade School Licensing & Certification Foundation

Building better futures, one grant at a time!

Questions and Answers

By COL Scott Schisser

Welcome to the Questions and Answers (Q&As) article for the Trade School, Licensing, and Certification Foundation application process.

These questions and answers are here to provide clarity and guidance on questions that we have received reference the TLC. Below, you'll find answers to common inquiries that may arise during your application journey. If you have additional questions not covered here, please contact MG (Ret.) Jessica Wright for further assistance. We are committed to supporting you in submitting a solid and accurate application.

Q. Does TLC provide grants to cover total program costs?

A: The TLC Foundation is committed to aiding based on funds available from our generous donors. We generally do not cover total program costs as we are trying to help as many eligible persons as possible; however, recipients can re-apply for an additional grant each year if they remain in an approved program. Additionally, TLC grants can only be applied for before and during your program of study and are not offered retroactive for courses already completed.

Q. Does TLC provide grants for college courses?

A: Together, The AAAA Scholarship Foundation and the TLC Foundation create an umbrella that assists eligible members in pursuing post-secondary education opportunities. The Scholarship Foundation supports those attending college to obtain a degree (Bachelor's, Master's, etc.). At the same time, the TLC Foundation supports those not attending college to acquire specific Trade school, Licensing, or Certification credentials. TLC grants can be applied to Trade Schools, Licensing, and Certification authorities and to Community colleges offering Trade Schools, Licensing, and/or Certifications, but not as part of any college-level classes that could be applied towards an associate, bachelor, or master's degree. Eligible members should apply through the AAAA Scholarship Foundation for assistance with college-level courses.

Q. Can I apply for a TLC grant and use the funds to acquire a private pilot's license, instrument rating, or Certified Flight Instructor rating?

A: The TLC is designed to provide a unique skill that will allow an eligible person to start a new career. It is specifically targeted towards the Trade-school, Licensing & Certifications (other than flight-related training). Therefore, we do not award grants to eligible members solely to build time to get a private pilot's license, instrument ratings, or certified instructor pilot ratings.

Q. What is the purpose of the Reference Letter, and what should it include?

A: Your reference letter provides an independent assessment of your character and preparedness to pursue your selected field of study. At a minimum, it should address evidence of your interest in and previously completed/related course work, the applicant's potential to successfully complete the desired field of study and employment opportunities once complete and should indicate the endorser has personal knowledge of your circumstance and desires; and provide evidence of the endorser's credentials.

Q. Are there essential items that should be addressed in the applicant's explanation of why they are enrolling in a selected course?

A: It's essential you highlight what motivates you to pursue your selected course of study; what life skills you have or will possess upon completion of this course; related course work of volunteer activities you are involved in or have already completed, and what career field and opportunities this course prepares you for.

Q. Can a teacher who has moved from one state to another and requires recertification apply for a TLC Grant?

A: Yes, teachers may apply for recertification and Continuing Education Training (CET) requirements.

Q. Can you apply for training certification based on your military skills that will provide a path to a civilian career, such as an FAA A&P License, a Class II CDL for driving a truck, or an automotive mechanic?

A: Yes, this is one of the reasons the AAAA TLC grant program was created; the other was for individuals seeking an alternative to college for their post-secondary education.

If you have a question that did not appear in this edition of Q&A, please submit them to MG (Ret.) Jessica Wright at *jessica.garfola.wright@gmail.com*

COL (Ret.) Scott Schisser is a member of Trade School, Licensing, and Certification Foundation board.

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AAAA Chapter Affairs

By LTC (Ret.) Jan Drabczuk

I greatly appreciate the support from CW2 Fred Bittner, the Utah Chapter Treasurer and Secretary for authoring and sharing this information to our membership.

The Utah Chapter

Utah Chapter members at a recent meeting.

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

The Utah Chapter is coming into a new age. For quite a few years, the Utah Chapter took up the practice of hibernation, and they are waking up to start getting involved again.

Two years ago, the Chapter members got an email saying that if the financial report was not filed for the Chapter by December, the Chapter would be closed. That started a few members to get involved and go on a brief quest to find out what the Chapter needed to do to prevent the Chapter's closure.

Chapter Support

The Utah Chapter supports the 97th Aviation Troop command of the Utah Army National Guard which operates 6 airframes: UH-60L, HH-60M, LUH-72, LUH-72B, C-12, and AH-64Ds. At the annual safety conference, the Chapter new vice president Matt Garrand stood up and asked a simple question, "What has AAAA done for you? Not much for quite a few years, but they bought you lunch, so go enjoy it and consider being active in the organization." The Chapter used the funds left in the bank account to pay for that lunch then they started fresh with new leadership and ideas.

After that little boost and a reminder of the opportunities that AAAA provided, more people started to participate. The Utah Chapter held their first Chapter meeting in a LONG time at TopGolf in Salt Lake City, voted to get more of their Chapter positions filled and then got to work.

AAAA National was helpful in making sure that the Chapter could navigate the paperwork process, and the Chapter has been able to hold more planning meetings, an awards ceremony to honor quite a few aviators who retired recently, and to give their members and their families a good place outside of work to interact and reach out beyond to the generations of Aviation comrades currently in the Chapter.

Recognizing People

In 2023 the Utah Chapter held an awards ceremony in Snowbird Utah, a beautiful ski resort tucked away in the mountains above Salt Lake City. The Chapter decided to look back through the people who had retired since AAAA had gone into hibernation and see if there were some people who the Chapter could honor with awards. The Chapter also extended an invitation to those old-timers to get involved again. It worked, and now the Chapter has a thriving opportunity to keep moving forward.

In 2024, the Chapter again had their Chapter meeting at TopGolf, this time with almost double the attendance. The Chapter has upcoming events planned to include a hockey game, and another awards ceremony. To anyone who finds that their Chapter might be lagging, or that their numbers need a jumpstart, the Chapter's advice would be to take the plunge. Reach out to AAAA national and get events planned. It's straightforward, the main office is there to help!

New Name in the Works

Finally, the Chapter will let you in on a little secret, they have been brainstorming ideas for a new Chapter name. May be called The Salty Chapter, after the Great Salt Lake, and pending their new artwork and a bit of tax filing, the Utah Chapter hopes to welcome in 2025 with a new name and a new outlook on helping Army Aviation families and Soldiers stay connected with the past present and future!

Feel free to contact me if you need help for your Chapter, Executive Board support, would like your Chapter featured in the AAAA magazine or to obtain clarification of National procedures. I can be reached at *jan.drabczuk@quad-a.org*. Looking forward to working with you and supporting AAAA.

LTC (Ret.) Jan S. Drabczuk
AAAA VP for Chapter Affairs
jan.drabczuk@quad-a.org.

AAAA Chapter News

SOCAL Chapter Meets at Airshow

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

The Southern California Chapter held its 4th quarter, 2024 meeting on Friday, October 4, 2024 at the Los Alamitos Army Airfield on the grounds of the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos, CA. This meeting was held in conjunction with and to take advantage of the "draw" to the airfield of members and guests, to witness all the takeoffs and landings of various types of military aircraft who "staged" there for the annual Huntington Beach Airshow.

ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL INDUCTEES

Air Assault Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO BY SFC REED KNUTSON

During his retirement ceremony, CW5 **Mark A. Jackso**n, 1st Bn., 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), was inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, COL (Ret.) Henry C. "Hawk" Ruth, while COL Michael Snowden, Commander, 1-160th SOAR (ABN), looks on at Campbell Army Airfield, Ft. Campbell, KY, on Friday, September 6, 2024.

Black Knights Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO BY LTC ASHLIE CHRISTIAN

CPT Lauren A. Swiniarski is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, COL Richard V. Melnyk on Jul. 31, 2024 at the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY. Swiniarski was recognized for her more than 10 years of service to Army Aviation and as the Aviation and Medical Services Corps accessions officer at USMA where she has guided and mentored over 250 future Army Aviation leaders. Her next assignment is as an assistant professor of military science at Boston University.

Colonial Virginia Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO BY CW5 SAM PUENTES

CW4 Kyle O. Davis is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by CW4 Steven L. Cory, the fixed wing detachment standardization pilot, on Sept. 11, 2024 at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA. Davis departs to take command of a training company after serving outstandingly as the fixed wing detachment executive officer.

Show Me Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO BY SSGS ROSE DITROLIO

CW5 Isom E. Folsom is inducted as a Knight of the Honorable Order of St. Michael by BG Charlie Hausman, deputy director of the Civilian Protection Center of Excellence, on Aug. 2, 2024 at the Missouri State Capital Building, Jefferson City, MO. Folsom served 38 years in the Missouri National Guard with a majority of his service with the 35th Combat Aviation Brigade as the Senior HR Tech overseeing HR services for thousands of Missouri Guard Aviation Soldiers stateside and for Soldiers across all three Compos during his two deployments to the Middle East.

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Tennessee Valley Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO

SFC Selwyn James is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by COL Dan Thetford, PM Apache Product Manager on Oct. 3, 2024 at the Sparkman Center, Redstone Arsenal, AL. James distinguished himself throughout his 21-year career by providing exceptional service to Army Aviation culminating as the Program Management Office (PMO) Senior Enlisted AH-64D/E Maintenance Subject Matter Expert (SME).

CHAPTER PHOTO BY WILLIAM L. SUGGS

MAJ Maria M. Orozco is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by COL Ryan Nesrsta, Project Manager, Utility Helicopters, on Aug. 29, 2024, at Redstone Arsenal, AL. Orozco was recognized for her significant and long-lasting contributions in support of Army Aviation over the last 20 plus years serving flawlessly as the Procurement & Production APM for the Utility Helicopters Project Office, the UH-60, a Major Defense Acquisition Program.

CHAPTER PHOTO BY SHANNON MURPHY

Mr. Daniel Suggs is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, Gary Nenninger, on

Continued on next page

OSMs *Continued*

Sept. 26, 2024 in Huntsville, AL. Suggs was recognized for serving in pivotal DA Civilian roles across his twenty-plus-year career to include his assignment as the deputy product manager for the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA) Product Office. He will continue serving in the Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Project Management Office.

CHAPTER PHOTO BY GLORIA P. BELL

Mr. Steven Potts is inducted as a Knight of the Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter VP awards, CSM (Ret.) Randy Wise, on Sept. 25, 2024, at Redstone Arsenal, AL. Potts was recognized for over 38 years of service supporting military aviation munitions with final position as the Logistics Director, Tactical Aviation and Ground Munitions.

CHAPTER PHOTO BY WILLIAM L. SUGGS

Mrs. Dewanna J. Ross is inducted as a Knight of the Honorable Order of St. Michael by COL Ryan Nesrsta, Utility Helicopters Project Manager on Aug. 29, 2024 at Redstone Arsenal, AL. Ross was recognized for her lasting contributions in support of Army Aviation over the last 16 years serving flawlessly as the senior security manager for the Utility Helicopters Project Office, the UH-60M, UH-60V and UH-72 Major Defense Acquisition Programs.

CHAPTER PHOTO BY GLORIA P. BELL

Ms. Anita L. Swearengen is inducted as a Knight of the Honorable Order of St. Michael by Mr. Jimmie Downs, deputy project manager for Tactical Aviation and Ground Munitions (TAGM) on Sept. 26, 2024 in Huntsville, AL. Swearengen was recognized for over 37 years of service supporting military aviation munitions with final position as the Engineering Director, Tactical Aviation and Ground Munitions.

Washington Potomac Chapter

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

COL Brendan J. Cullinan is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow (left), and MG Trevor Bredenkamp, commanding general of the Joint Task Force-National Capitol Region and the U.S. Army Military District of Washington on Aug. 9, 2024, at Davison Army Airfield, Fort Belvoir, VA. Cullinan was recognized for his enduring impacts on Aviation Soldiers and Families over a 25-year distinguished career culminating with his command of The Army Aviation Brigade. His

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

wife, **Rebecca Cullinan** was inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto during the same ceremony for her lasting contributions to Army Aviation Families while serving in various Family Readiness Group (FRG) roles for over 20 years.

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

Dr. John M. Jacocks is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow (left), and COL Brendan Cullinan, commander of The Army Aviation Brigade on Aug. 9, 2024, at Davison Army Airfield, Ft. Belvoir, VA. Jacocks was recognized for his unwavering dedication as Chief Flight Surgeon with the TAAB, ensuring that over 650 Soldiers and DA Civilians had unfettered access to the highest standard of medical resources available.

Thank You to Our Scholarship Fund Donors

AAAA recognizes the generosity of the following individuals, chapters and organizations that have donated to the Scholarship Foundation, Inc. from November 2023 through November 2024. The list includes donations received for all scholarships, as well as the General Fund which provides funding to enable the chapter, corporate, heritage and individual matching fund programs as well as national grants. Every penny donated to the Scholarship Foundation goes directly towards scholarships as a result of the Army Aviation Association of America subsidizing all administrative costs (minus investment brokerage fees).

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7/17th Cavalry Association
7/17th Cavalry Association-IHO Barbara Inglett
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AAAA Arizona Chapter
AAAA Aviation Center Chapter
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AAAA Gold Standard Chapter
AAAA Griffin Chapter
AAAA Grizzly Chapter
AAAA Idaho Snake River Chapter
AAAA Keystone Chapter
AAAA Lindbergh Chapter
AAAA MacArthur Chapter
AAAA Mid-Atlantic Chapter
AAAA Minuteman Chapter
AAAA Mohawk Chapter
AAAA Mount Rainier Chapter
AAAA North Star Chapter
AAAA North Texas Chapter
AAAA Oregon Chapter
AAAA Phantom Corps Chapter
AAAA Prairie Soldier Chapter
AAAA Southern California Chapter
AAAA Tarheel Chapter
AAAA Tennessee Valley Chapter
AAAA Washington Potomac-Chapter
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Stephen T. Mauro
Patricia McBride-IHO COL Gary David
Charles E. McCormick
Thomas P. McGurn
MG and Mrs. Carl H McNair, Ret.
Rudy Mendez
Jane F. Merryman-IHO Joyce Hesson
Krista Mills
William H. Morris
Stephen D. Mundt
Donald T. Munsch, Munsch & Co. Aeromechanics
MyHy Liquid Hydration Mix
James T. Naylor
Network for Good
Northrop Grumman Corporation
Kathleen O'Connor
Elizabeth Oneill
Matthew Orlowsi-IHO Booker & Kelly Families
Ostovich Enterprises, Inc.
The OV-1 Mohawk Association
Amber & Brent Pafford
Elaine & Clarence Patnode
Patriot Taxiway Industries
Daniel C. Pearson
Peduzzi Associates, LTD
Janet Penny
Phantom Products, Inc.
Piasecki Foundation
Gaines T. Pickett-IHO Bob Johnson
PM Apache
Billingsley G. Pogue
Kyle Poppell
Janet M. Powers Fund-IHO Joyce Hesson
Susan & John Ramsey
Patricia & Brian Ranson
Marc L. Rassler
Ian Reardon-IHO James C. Reardon
Jaros C. Rickmeyer
Marilyn C. Rickmeyer
John M. Riggs
Roberson Giving Fund
Kenneth Todd Royar
S3-System Studies & Simulation, Inc.
Latny & Jonathan Salt
Pat J Salvo-IHO COL Gary David
Michael Woodrow Schrumpf
The Sendak Family
Matthew D. Shattuck
Mary & William Shelt
Billie K. Sikes
Bradford L. Smith
Alan M. Smith
Jan Smith
Judith & Mark Smith
Heather Snoe
Barry J. Speare-IHO Diane Speare
Marian Spencer
Diane L. Spencer
Tracey & Karl Stahlecker
Celia Stump
William E. Sturges
Tito's Handmade Vodka
Truck & Transportation
Terry L. Truett
Kevin Valdes
Justino Vega
Vertx
Veterans Home Association of the Whitemarsh Valley
Vita Inclinata Technologies
Peter L. Weiland
Leslie H. Weinstein-IHO Joyce Hesson
Erin Whitaker-IHO Joyce Hesson
Karen White-IHO CW5 Frank E. White
Myrna Williamson-IHO MG Carl McNair
Corey Womack
Wreaths Across America
Jessica & Chuck Wright
Michelle F. Yarborough
Michelle Yarborough-IHO CW4 Thompson
Zieff Family Fund-IHO Bill Harris & Janis Arena

For more information about the Foundation or to make a contribution, go online to www.quad-a.org; contributions can also be mailed to AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc., 593 Main Street, Monroe, CT 06468-2806.

AAAA **Membership** Update By CW4 (Ret.) Becki Chambers

The Membership Corner

I'm not sure if everyone knows this, but service on the AAAA National Executive Group is a volunteer position, along with all the Chapter Officers.

My paid employment is as the Executive Director of the Special Operations Fund, a non-profit organization founded in 1992 with a primary mission of providing educational support to Gold Star family members (spouses and children) of those assigned to six specific JSOC Special Mission Units.

In this position, I have met some amazing people for a very sad reason – their Service Member died. One couple I met is CW4 (Ret.) Derrick Rodriguez and his lovely wife Breanne. Derrick is the son of MSG Eloy Rodriguez Jr., who died in a helicopter accident in Operation Desert Storm on February 21, 1991. Derrick was one of the first recipients of funding from the Special Operations Fund.

Derrick grew up everywhere the military took his family, but primarily in Florida and North Carolina. After graduation from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Derrick joined the Army in 2005 and attended Warrant Officer Candidate School. Breanne grew up in Orlando, FL, briefly leaving to attend college at Florida State University, but then returned to Orlando. They met because their grandmothers were best friends for over 40 years. Although they had run into each other at various family events over the years, it was not until after Breanne graduated college that they started dating.

Derrick joined the military out of a sense of duty and a calling to serve. Primarily he spent his time instructing students on the ground and in the air in a multitude of aircraft. He is qualified in the OH-58D, Mi-17, MD 500, UH-60A/L/M, and UH-72. Six months after retirement in 2023, he was hired as a Federal Employee at 1-223rd Battalion as a Flight Quality Assurance Control Instructor Pilot. In this position, he administers the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan for the Army's Initial Entry Rotary Wing Common Core Helicopter Flight Training program with over 1,350 students annually.

After moving to Alabama, Breanne was hired at Omni Marketing Group performing graphic design for multiple local businesses and sports associations. Fortunately, she has the most understanding boss due to Derrick and Breanne's ever changing family dynamic and challenges.

Although Derrick and Breanne didn't have kids of their own, just prior to Derrick's retirement they felt a strong need to give back to others. Derrick felt blessed by many people who took the time to help him get to where he was. That thought never left him so just when most others were becoming empty nesters, they started fostering children. At first it was short term placements but now three of those children have become long term placements.

RODRIGUEZ PERSONAL PHOTO

Derrick and Breanne Rodriguez

Derrick and Breanne are active members of their church and spend time daily in their faith. It is very important to them to raise children in their house in the ways of the Bible. Every day with foster children presents its own unique challenges and teaches them to rely even more on prayer and God's sovereignty.

When asked why it's important to join a professional organization like AAAA, Derrick's reply was: Networking. Networking. Networking. He couldn't emphasize that enough. People spend so much time becoming subject matter experts in their specific area of concentration they often do not see the whole picture. No one person has all the information; it needs to be shared with the whole team.

"The person who designed the car doesn't build the engine of the car. Nor does that person also service the car or refine the fuel for the car. To produce the best final project, it takes a lot of specialists performing to the best of their ability along the way. A much better product is built when all these professionals cooperate. That is what organizations have to offer: a chance for end consumers, designers, and manufacturers to communicate."

CW4 Becki Chambers
AAAA Vice President for Membership

New AAAA Life Members

Frontier Army Chapter
LTC Scott Jackson
Grizzly Chapter
LTC David Lovett
Jack H. Dibrell/Alamo Chapter
LTC Ken W. Pruitt, Ret.
Mount Rainier Chapter
1LT Jack Johnston, Ret

New AAAA Members

Air Assault Chapter
PV2 Michael Austin Favre
Aloha Chapter
1SG Michael Obryan
Arizona Chapter
Mr. Jakson Clark
Aviation Center Chapter
CPT Benjamin Amason
LtCol Raymond Helmhout
CSM Jeff Michau
CW4 Derrick Rodriguez
Bavarian Chapter
CPT Chris Feigenbaum
Bayou Chapter
Mrs. Chelsea Chavez
Bluegrass Chapter
Mr. Clinton Hall
Central Florida Chapter
Mr. Scott Conover
Mr. Jesus Flores
Mr. Craig Fournier
Mr. Mitchell A. Hamilton
Mr. Adrian Little
Ms. Whitney Metsker
Ms. Kaley Minich
Mr. Tony Morash
Mr. Matthew Potvin
Mr. Brad Simmons
Mrs. Kacy Speed
Ms. Teresa Sturges
Mr. John Waddington
COL Brian Walsh
PFC Ariston Joshua Withrow
Colonial Virginia Chapter
SSG Eric Arguelles
Mrs. Marva M. Ellis
Mr. David Gingras
Ms. Stacy L. Harden
SSG Brian D. Heffernan, Jr.
Mr. Joseph Heins
SFC William Holzhauser
Mrs. Syneeta C. Smith
Connecticut Chapter
Mr. Richard Aikman
Mr. Eugene Cho
Mr. Mark Garamella
PV2 Zamair R. Lebeach
Mr. Dennis McBride
Fran Recck
Mrs. Deb Taddey
COL Vincent L. Vannoorbeeck
Mr. Steve Weber
Corpus Christi Chapter
Mr. Scott Southworth
Delaware Valley Chapter
Ms. Angela Floyd
Mr. Anthony Grythe
PFC Dustyn Hunter Petyan
Mr. Michael Vaughn
Desert Oasis Chapter
SGT John Paul Beer
SFC Emanuel Diaz Morales
SFC Jonathan Gray
LTC Aaron Masson
CPT Jonathan Othman
Mr. Shawyon Salimnejad
Flint Hills Chapter
Mr. Michael Hurst
Follow Me Chapter
COL Andrew Lawfield
Free Dominion Chapter
SPC Mason K. Domazos
MAJ Zach Hayth
1SG Paul Radford
SPC Summer Woods
Frontier Army Chapter
LTC Scott Jackson
Gold Standard Chapter
Mr. Christian Delumpa
SGT Michael Fangman
Ms. Celestyn Lendor
Mr. Christopher J. Nord
Mr. Christopher Pulling
Great Lakes Chapter
PFC Christopher Ismael Bendickson
Ms. Nikki Nestor
CW5 Mark Snauko
Greater Atlanta Chapter
PFC Audrey Taylor Vanscoy
Grizzly Chapter
Mr. Ethan Plotkin
Iron Mike Chapter
CPT Jacob Doran
Jimmy Doolittle Chapter
PFC Evan Matthew Hammond
Lindbergh Chapter
Mrs. Ashley Curry
Lonestar Chapter
SSG Jared Lancaster
SGT Jeff Wyatt
MacArthur Chapter
Mr. John Ciarlo
Magnolia Chapter
Ms. Suzanne Stair
Mid-Atlantic Chapter
SGT Brandon Brown
Ms. Meg McConky
SGT Alejandra Norris
1st LT Michael Popielski
SPC Desmond Powell
MSG Garnett Reid
Minuteman Chapter
CW4 David Breton
Mr. Mel Clauson
Mr. Bryan Eyring
Ms. Sadie Ide-Sinkler
Mr. Joe Moritz
Mr. Eric Smith
Mohawk Chapter
SGT Lindsay Gravell
Morning Calm Chapter
1LT Genevieve Marschall
Mount Rainier Chapter
1Sgt Christopher Diaz-Rose
SGT Ira Chriel Sapanghila
PFC William Paul Stanley
North Country Chapter
Mr. Francis Norbury
North Star Chapter
SSG Corey Dahlstrom
CW3 Scott Dickmeyer
CW4 Brent Freese
CW3 Andrew Geipel
CW3 Jared LaBere
CW4 Shelby LeNoue
North Texas Chapter
SFC Troy W. Lord
PFC Julius Cezar Lourenco
CW3 Nicholas Self
PFC Cameron J. Simmon
Phantom Corps Chapter
SSG Manuel Alvarez
1LT Jonathan Evans
CW2 Dionte Sullivan
SFC Brent Uchiyama
Pikes Peak Chapter
Mr. Ryan Gabrukiewicz
Mr. Layton Harrington
Rio Grande Chapter
Mr. Jay Fullerton
CPT Austin Griffin
Savannah Chapter
CW3 Stephen Lowe
Southern California Chapter
Mr. George Grant
Mr. Jose Guerra
Mr. Arpit Malaviya
Mr. Alexander Martinez
Mr. Leonardo Martinez
Mr. Michael Matyas
CW3 Trac B. Pham, Ret.
Tennessee Valley Chapter
Ms. Hollie Flanner
SPC Elijah Frazier
Ms. Korinne Hemm
LtCol Simon Hill
Mr. Scott King
Mr. Nicholas Lipari
Mr. Christopher Lundy
Mr. Michael Murdzek
Mr. Mark Murray
Mr. Luke Reavis
Thunder Mountain Chapter
PV2 Santana Emilio Nunez
CW3 Ron Rivera
WO1 Adam Shive
Thunderbird Chapter
SGT Jacob Brantley
Utah Chapter
CW2 Brandon Adams
CW4 Brady Cloward
PFC Austin Cruise Edgar
Mr. Colin Smith
Washington-Potomac Chapter
Mr. Donald Campbell
Mr. Dylan Evers
Mr. Alex Gaffney
Mr. Timothy Gowen
Mr. Dave McCracken
Mr. Owen Munford
Mr. Josh Must
SPC Noah Henri Schwartz
Mr. Carter Sednaoui
LTC Stephanie Vandenbrink
Ms. Cait Wax
Zia Chapter
PFC Jorge Erik Cueto
No Chapter Affiliation
Mr. Kobe Avinu
Mr. Ilia Baskin
SSG Colton Belmore
Mr. Steven Berenyl
Mr. Joseph Bonita
Mrs. Lanie Buehrlen
Mr. Ross Cairns
Mr. Adam Cohen
Mr. Chad Corneil
Mr. Dan Davidson
Dr. Timothy Day, PhD
Mr. Jim Farrier
Mr. Heath Fearnow
Mr. Amir Govrin
Mr. William Guerrero
CW5 Nathan L. Hall
Ms. Emily Hayes
Ms. Traci Ho
Mr. Eli Israeli
Ms. Kat Kans
Mr. Mike Kodner
Mr. Jeremy Krubsack
Mr. Alexander Kushnirsky
Mr. Lance Lacoax
Mr. Chad Lacy
Mr. Jared Lukowski
Dr. Eyal Madar
Mr. Arturo Martinez
Mr. Seth McGowan
Mr. Clint Mendinsky
Mr. Yonathan Mizrahi
Mr. Ido Molad
Col. Eric D. North
Mr. Aldo Paredes
Mr. Brandon Paredes
Mr. Kevin Paredes
Mr. Glenn Piper
Mr. Arik Priel
Ms. Chelsea Schuckman
Mr. Sean Schwelm
Mrs. Sara Sparks
Mr. Thomas Tran
Mr. Andrew Trinchero
Mr. Tom Woosley

Lost Members

Help AAAA locate a lost member on this list and receive a free one month extension to your membership.
CPT Robert S. Boham
Mr. Harold V. Bowie, Jr.
LTC Jeffery D. Brown
Mr. Rickey J. Brown
MAJ James E. Bruckart
Mr. E. W. Cavanaugh
LTC Richard G. Cercone, Jr.
LTC Tzu-Shan Chang
MAJ Harry L. Connors, Jr. Ret.
Mr. Bruno Cussigh
CPT Jordan M. Francis
Mr. William H. Gillispie
Mr. Michael F. Glass
MAJ Gregory W. Glover
COL Gerhard Granz, Ret.
LT Tyler Grubic, PhD
COL Jose L. Hinojosa, Ret.
LTC Randy K. Jackson
Ms. Alisha Jacobs
CW3 Jeffrey J. Jelonek
MAJ David A. Jobe
1LT Anna K. Knight
Dr. Morey J. Kolber, PhD

AAAA Family Forum By Judy Konitzer

A Bark Out For Our Heroic Military War Dogs

Have you ever given thought to a special breed of heroes, our military working dogs (MWD)? I recently watched a true story about Cpl. Megan Leavey on Netflix and felt such compassion for Megan, and for SGT Rex, her MWD.

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY MATTHEW DILLON

Four bronze canines with a handler on a granite platform honor Military Working Dog Teams of all the U.S. Branches at a monument located at the parade grounds at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

Got me to really thinking about who these heroes are, what actions they are trained to perform, and what happens to them when they are required to retire.

German Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, and Labrador Retrievers are the most common dog breeds used for military service, because they are highly intelligent, loyal, and have a strong work ethic, thus making them excellent police or military dogs. Their training involves learning skills, like obedience, drug and explosive detection, search and rescue, countless vital tasks to ensure the safety and well-being of those in the line of duty, and even therapy to assist individuals with physical or mental disabilities.

Although dogs were employed during World War I, their role was not officially recognized until March 13, 1942, when Dogs For Defense was established to recruit dogs for the US Military War Dog Program known as K-9 Corps. Years later April 1, 1994, Air Force 341st Training Squadron officially became responsible for training MWD dogs along with the Handler program in San Antonio, Texas. The course is 55 days long and broken into Classroom, Detection, Hands-On Training, and written tests. Currently there are 1600 MWDs serving and spread throughout all the branches.

What happens to MWDs when they are retired from service?

Regardless of the circumstances, these dogs having served our country deserve a peaceful retirement where they can relax and enjoy their remaining years as beloved pets in a loving forever home.

During their career, an MWD can have up to five handlers, and the government usually selects one of them to adopt when the time comes. But if not, many MWDs still need homes and can be adopted by the public.

The 341st Military Working Dog Center considers applicants who meet minimal requirements and are willing to travel to San Antonio at their expense to meet the available dogs.

Some eligibility criteria for adopting include: Be at least 18 years of age, citizens or legal residents of the country where the military working dog is being retired, provide a fenced yard, have sufficient indoor space with designated sleeping area, only have children over the age of 5, have previous dog ownership or not owning more than three dogs, can identify a primary veterinarian, agree not to breed, be prepared to continue training and socializing, and be able to provide appropriate care and support if the MWD has special needs.

Working dogs, either contract or veteran, were trained for a purpose and followed specific routines throughout their entire career, so adjusting to retirement and a new home can be overwhelming for them. Realizing this, it is essential to understand they may initially have some behavioral issues, such as separation anxiety or aggression towards other animals. This will require patience, understanding, and proper training to help them adjust to their new way of life.

For more information about breeding, early foster care, or adopting military dogs contact *MWD.Foster@us.af.mil or MWD.Adoptions@us.af.mil.*

Judy Konitzer is the family forum editor for ARMY AVIATION; questions and suggestions can be directed to her at judy@quad-a.org.

AAAA **Awards**

Order of St. Michael

Gold
Tennessee Valley Chapter
MG Thomas W. O'Connor

Silver
Air Assault Chapter
COL Roger P. Waleski Jr.
Arizona Chapter
CW4 Antoine R. Edwards
Aviation Center Chapter
COL Matthew L. Parker
COL Bryan T. Woody
LTC Jason R. Yellman
Colonial Virginia Chapter
Robert Tamplet
Grizzly Chapter
COL William B. Gentle
Morning Calm Chapter
LTC James Brant
Mount Rainier Chapter
CSM Dexter B. Clemmons
National Office
Ralph A. Troisio
Phantom Corps Chapter
COL Timothy R. Jaeger
COL Jeremy W. James
LTC Brent J. Pafford
Ragin' Cajun Chapter
CSM Jack J. Essig
Rio Grande Chapter
COL John A. Morris III
Tennessee Valley Chapter
COL David R. Bunker
Robert Sheibley
CW5 John J. Ulmer
Washington-Potomac Chapter
LTC David W. Crocker

Bronze
Air Assault Chapter
CW3 Logan T. Allie
MAJ Samuel Calvert
1SG John W. Fielder
MSG Ramon L. F.Santiago
1SG Nicholas A. Gardner
SFC Nicholas E. Johnston
MAJ Joshua Kassel
SFC Anthony Lewis
MAJ Craig Maddy
SFC Matthew F. Samuelson
SFC James B. Singleton
1SG Aaron R. Trompeter
CW3 Codi A. Walker
1SG Jeremy M. Wicklin
MAJ Kristin R. Yampaglia
Aviation Center Chapter
1SG Matthew J. Caputo
Bavarian Chapter
CPT Abigail Blount
Colonial Virginia Chapter
MAJ John A. Gomber
SFC Samuel V. Hirschauer
SFC Eric O. Rivera
Desert Oasis Chapter
SFC Brent Bednarik
SFC Justin L. Clevenstine
SFC Richard C. Huey III
SFC Anthony Jackson
SFC Eric G. Vigil
Green Mountain Boys Chapter
MAJ David A. Johnston
Griffin Chapter
1SG Colin D. Maas
Mid-Atlantic Chapter
CSM James M. Autry
CW3 Thomas P. Gurrera
Minuteman Chapter
COL James J. Lonchidias
Mount Rainier Chapter
1SG Jonathan M. Gieser
Narragansett Bay Chapter
CW5 Jon Campbell
Phantom Corps Chapter
Raquel A. Fox
Rio Grande Chapter
CSM Eduardo Santiago
Tennessee Valley Chapter
Amanda Higginbotham
Scott Thovson

Knight

Air Assault Chapter
Marissa Bazzano
MAJ Andrew Keithley
Carolyn Petit
SGM Mark Richardson, Ret.
SSG Franco A. Rosas
Aviation Center Chapter
MAJ Eelco S. Tolsma
Phantom Corps Chapter
SFC Alejandra Rodarte
ShowMe Chapter
CW5 Isom E. Folsom
Tennessee Valley Chapter
Anette Carnes
Binh Dinh
MAJ Corey W. King
Steven Potts
Anita Swearengen

Our Lady of Loreto

Air Assault Chapter
Nicole M. Calvert
Alissa D. Gardner
Tennessee Valley Chapter
April Thovson
Winged Warriors Chapter
MAJ Amanda Haralson
Tracy Santiago
No Chapter Affiliation
Lisa Lansford

AAAA Salutes the Following Departed...

Mr. Nigel G. Exelby
Deceased April 2024
Life Member

Mrs. Evelyn A. Soucek
Deceased 3/20/2024
Life Member

UPCOMING AAAA EVENTS

DECEMBER 2024

5-6	AAAA Luther G. Jones Army Aviation Depot Forum, Corpus Christi, TX
14	The 124th Army-Navy Game, FedEx Field, Landover, MD
11-13	Association of Old Crows, 61st Annual Intnl Symposium & Convention, Washington, DC

JANUARY 2025

1	New Year's Day
1	Submission Deadline – National Awards and Top Chapter
15	Submission Deadline – Scholarship Application Supporting Documents
15	ARMY AVIATION Magazine 2024 Photo Contest Deadline
20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day

AAAA **Legislative** Report

By LTC (Ret.) Patrick "Josh" Baker
AAAA Representative to the Military Coalition (TMC)
josh.baker@quad-a.org

Continuing Resolution "Ground Hog" Day

There are a few certainties in life – death, taxes, daughters are expensive, and Continuing Resolutions (CR). CRs remain the annual norm on the Hill. Members continue to "kick" the proverbial budget can to the right regardless of the dire need for on time appropriations. Much like Bill Murray waking up to "Ground Hog" day in the 90's classic movie, our Aviation General Officer Steering Committee (GOSC aka "Six Pack") contends with late funding over and over again. Funding for the branch desperately requires timely delivery for the GOSC to drive significant strategic shifts to align the branch to current and future global requirements. Programs are currently capped to FY 24 levels until 20 December 2024.

Hill insiders believe there will be an extension beyond the current CR date after the inauguration and start of the new Congress. Members do not want bad press for a Defense Bill vote prior to an election and they are all about pushing things to the "next Congress." Much work awaits Members when they return and focus on passage of the Defense Authorizations and Appropriations bills. Conference activities still need to occur on the Defense Bills before they will be sent to the President for passage. Moreover, potential shifts to the majority in the House or Senate following the election could significantly impact how/when the bills are passed. Or if they are even passed at all. A yearlong CR is never out of the question. The Presidential election captivates the country but what happens with House and Senate elections matters just as much when it comes to Defense spending priorities.

Checks and Balances

All too often the U.S. is consumed by polarizing Presidential elections and forgets that the founding fathers instituted checks and balances for a reason. The President can only do "so much" with Executive Orders yet holds the power of veto and ultimately signs legislation into law. This is why it's imperative to track which party wins/retains control of the House and Senate during elections as well. The House and Senate can prevent legislation getting to the President in the first place. The balance of control in the House and Senate remains razor close. The Republicans currently control the House with the Democrats controlling the Senate.

The House's entire 435 seats are up for grabs. The House's two-year election cycle is setting up a very important show down. The Senate has 34 seats up for grab because they partition election cycles. This means the shift of power in the House and Senate are very much in play during the November election.

What does this mean to defense? Specifically, what does it mean to the FY 25 Defense Bills waiting for Members to return for conference and ultimate passage. The answer is it depends. If either party gains a total majority (Presidency, House and Senate) it could mean significant changes during conference. Top or bottom lines could shift tremendously for various efforts and programs. If the election results retain a mixed balance of power much like the current scenario it could mean more CRs. At this point it's difficult to call. The 2024 election will not disappoint. Hopefully, no matter who retains power, the Bills will be swiftly passed so Army Aviation can continue forward.

Thank You and Goodbye!

This issue's article is my final "Legislative Update" contribution to Army Aviation Magazine. Serving in this role for nearly 3 years was a true honor. I sincerely hope that my simple contribution helped those in uniform, defense industry and Army Aviation supporters alike. I look forward to watching the branch evolve as I focus on personal commitments and family life. Kevin Cochie is taking back the reins. Kevin is a tremendous asset for AAAA, is close to the Hill, and highly respected by many in our community. All the best and Above the Best!

Editor's Note: We at ARMY AVIATION Magazine thank Josh for his years of service and support and wish him well in the future.

People On The Move

Aviation General Officer Promotions/Assignments


42ND INFANTRY DIVISION FACEBOOK PAGE

MG Jack A. James was promoted to his current rank and assumed command of the 42nd Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard on Sept. 21, 2024 at the Joint Forces Headquarters in Latham, NY.

Flight School Graduates

AAAA provides standard aviator wings to all graduates and sterling silver aviator wings to the distiguished graduates of each flight class ... *another example of AAAA's **SUPPORT** for the U.S. Army Aviation Soldier and Family.*

AAAA congratulates the following officers graduating from Flight School XXI at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Novosel, AL.

40 Officers 5 September 2024
Class 24-022
Commissioned Officers
1LT Gutierrez, Christopher M. * -DG
1LT Brede, Kameron S. * -HG
1LT Moelter, Hayden G. * -HG
2LT Murphy, Morgan B. * -HG
2LT Bertrand, Thomas M.
1LT Eckerle, Houston A. *
1LT Edwards, Thomas M.
2LT Gillum, Zackary I. *
1LT Gosselin, Anthony P. *
1LT Gray, Nathaniel G.
CPT Greengrass, Chance M. *
1LT Hoyle, Jason A. *
2LT Hughes, Jacob D. *
1LT Lamm, Logan M.
1LT Matthews, Kamdyn D. *
CPT Pace, Eric W.
1LT Polovitch, Randall S. *
2LT Sanvictores, Raphael V.
1LT Wolde, Seble M.
2LT Wong, Kevin *
Warrant Officers
WO1 Welsh, Brian R. * -DG
WO1 D'Angelo, Mark W. * -HG
WO1 Diaz Aguirre, Edgar E. * -HG
WO1 Quinby, Blain V. -HG
WO1 Swanson, James B. * -HG
WO1 Acidera, Danny R.
WO1 Alejandro, Maya N.
WO1 Andersen, Brandon J.
WO1 Brant, Tristan M. *
WO1 Cole, Keith J. *
WO1 Doynow, William J. *
WO1 Jacob, Patrick M., Jr.
WO1 Jang, Yongsoo
WO1 Jones, Glenn T., Jr. *
WO1 Kalivoda, Kameron A.
WO1 MacKay, Joshua M. *
WO1 Martinson, Trace A.
WO1 Meeks, David W. *
WO1 Muchoki, Dadson M. *
WO1 Nicolosi, Samuel U.
WO1 Ollison, Deonte J.
WO1 Polizzi, Dominick V. *
WO1 Rogers, Nathan D.
WO1 Staniewicz, Daniel A.
WO1 Tangonan, John Paul S.
WO1 Warren, Brigham W. *

35 Officers September 19, 2024
Class 24-023
Commissioned Officers
2LT Davis, Trevor A., Jr. -DG
2LT Edwards, Seth M. * -HG
2LT Kobe, Muritz D. -HG
2LT Alexander, Charles T. *
2LT Aulakh, Jagroop S. *
1LT Bane, Emma R.
2LT Carlson, Jack C. *
2LT Gonzales, Joseph R.
1LT Gordon, John C.
2LT Harber, Michael R. *
2LT Hong, David B. *
2LT Pendleton, Carlton D., III *
1LT Poole, Benjamin T. *
2LT Rodriguez Cedano, Hanlet A.
1LT Saavedra, Miguel A.
1LT Schauer, Kalista C. *
Warrant Officers
WO1 McCloskey, Travis M. -DG
WO1 Bridges, Jeremy M. * -HG
WO1 McDermott, Jacob J. -HG
WO1 Speed, Chiqwuima C. * -HG
WO1 Connor, D'Narius J. *
WO1 Dukes, Derrell B., Jr.
WO1 Dyal, Heath J.
WO1 Ellison, Dylan H. *
WO1 Fassler, Hayden J.
WO1 Fink, Cody J. *
WO1 Freeman, Aaron J.
WO1 Gresham, Jacob G.
WO1 Hughes, Thomas D.
WO1 Lee, Nathanael J. *
WO1 Ludwig, Jace B. *
WO1 Maitland, Demario G.
WO1 Simison, Thomas M. *
WO1 Tibbs, Tyshone M.
WO1 Xu, Tong

51 Officers October 3, 2024
Class 24-024
Commissioned Officers
1LT Douglas, Benjamin S. -DG
1LT Forkey, Timothy J. -HG
2LT Gonzalez, Austin R. -HG
1LT Moger, Aidan W. -HG
1LT Tjelta, Ian A. -HG
1LT Umana, Christopher M. -HG
2LT Alvarez Lamela, Amanda B. *
1LT Becker, Jacob N.
2LT Buonora, Valaree A.
1LT Chapman, Nicholas T.
2LT Cooper, Nathan R. *
2LT Delgado, Alexandria M. *
1LT Erwin, William L. *
2LT Espinoza Garcia, Edwarth J. *
2LT Geary, Thomas D. *
1LT Lee, Anna L.
1LT Page, Daniel B. *
2LT Pal, Jessica R. *
2LT Schwab, Grace A.
2LT Stout, Thomas W. *
2LT Terry, James L. *
1LT Tigges, Mark A.
1LT Vender, Emma L. *
1LT Withers, Jacob M. *
Warrant Officers
WO1 Flood, Dustin R. * -HG
WO1 McKnight, Jacob W. * -HG
WO1 Prentice-Wattson, SophiaM. * -HG
WO1 Saha, Aksshat J. -HG
WO1 Cook, Antonio B. *
WO1 Curtis, Bryce T.
WO1 Dauray, Nicholas B. *
WO1 Davis, Randall T. *
WO1 Denna, Adam L.
WO1 Drake, Paul R.
WO1 Franklin, Joseph L.
WO1 Hall, Blaine L. *
WO1 Hernandez, Eli N.

Continued on next page


FSXXI Class 24-022


FSXXI Class 24-023

People On The Move

Flight School Graduates *Continued*

WO1 Hillman, Corbin R.
WO1 Johnson, Hailey F. *
WO1 KamiKawa, Michael M. *
WO1 Kanthak, Eric *
WO1 Kelley, Kyle S.
WO1 Lee, Dustin T.
WO1 Moore, Jaelon R. *
WO1 Parrotte, Aaron J. *
WO1 Tee, Stephen M. *
WO1 Thompson, Eric C. *
WO1 Tilton, Daniel F.
WO1 Todd, Tyler A. *
WO1 Townsend, Wade A. *
WO1 White, Matthew S.

51 Officers October 17, 2024
Class 24-025

Commissioned Officers

2LT Bornick, Logan B. * -DG
1LT Cirincione, Jake W. -HG
2LT Giles, Ryan M. * -HG
2LT Ayres, Finn X.
2LT Garcia, Andrew J. *
2LT Green, Dallis M. *
2LT Hafele, Zachary M. *
2LT Kammerer, Robert L.
2LT Knepper, Zane D. *
2LT Maxam, Jesse L. *
2LT Michie, Lindsey M. *
1LT Migli, Nicholas J.
2LT Nauman, Jacob A. *
2LT Ryerson, Cole M. *
2LT Swindler, Kyle R. *
2LT Weaver, Andrew N. *
2LT Wood, Timothy J.

Warrant Officers

WO1 Brady, Benjamin M. -DG
WO1 Cartmill, John L. * -DG
WO1 Bell, Jameson P. -HG
WO1 Cooper, Anthony Q. -HG
WO1 Henley, Ian M. * -HG
WO1 Lemieux, Isaiah J. * -HG
WO1 Bokoskie, Isaac J. *
WO1 Forte, Darius T. *
WO1 Getz, Zachary J. *
WO1 Gray, Kareem T. *

FSXXI Class 24-024

FSXXI Class 24-025

WO1 Light, Bradley K. *
WO1 Matthews-Tveit, Roscoe J. *
WO1 Miller, Christopher D.
WO1 Miller, Kaden L. *
WO1 Mills, Nevin T.
WO1 Mora, Marc A. *
WO1 Mului, Kevin M.
WO1 Nausadis, Jacob A. *
WO1 Park, Daniel A.
WO1 Robb, Sean A.
WO1 Santana, Nicholas L. *
WO1 Sellers, Chase L.
WO1 Shedivy, Ryan M. *
WO1 Wood, Ryal E. *
WO1 Zacniewski, Anthony M. *

-DG: Distinguished Graduate
-HG: Honor Graduate
* = AAAA Member

Non-Rated Warrant Officer Graduates

US ARMY PHOTO

AAAA congratulates the following officers graduating from the Aviation Maintenance Warrant Officer Basic course at the U.S. Army Aviation Logistics School, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA.

9 Officers September 6, 2024

Class 002-24

CW2 Henry Rosso Aguilar-DG
CW2 Kendall Liner-HG
CW3 Jeffrey Gunnoe
CW2 Christian Grimm
CW2 Corbin Long
CW2 Joel Martin
CW2 Jerome Penwright
CW2 James White
CW3 Charles Wood

People On The Move

ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING (AIT) GRADUATIONS

AAAA congratulates the following Army graduates of the indicated Advanced Individual Training (AIT) courses at the 128th Aviation Brigade, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA and the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Ft. Novosel, AL.

AH-64 Attack Helicopter Repairer (15R)

Class 031-24
PV2 Zamair Ricardo Labeach * -DG
SPC Noah James Marines
SPC Justin Edward Maurer
PFC Madeleine Pilkinton
PV2 Brycen Alejandro Reese
PV1 Braden L. Simmons Kooping
PV2 Diamondte K.M. H.Thomas
PV2 Gavin Robert Wilkinson
PFC Carson Walter Hernandez
Class 032-24
PFC Cameron J.M. Simmons * -DG
PV2 Brandon Thomas Boyle
PV2 Joseph Michael Cocozza
SGT Omar Driouich
1LT Hassan Makrane
PV1 Misael Ruiz Tarazon
SGT Mohammed Serbouti
SGT Jaylene Brianna Smith
PV2 Caleb Ryan Williams
SPC Thomas Raquelee Wolf, III
SPC Chad Lewis Wright

UH-60 Helicopter Repairer (15T)

Class 058-24
PFC Audrey Taylor Vanscoy * -DG
PFC Jacob Paul Adams
PV2 Aidan Justus Buschbacher
PFC Parker Wesley Crain
PV2 Justyn Escobar
PFC Benjamin David Farr
PFC Kainoa Holt Garcia
PFC Wade Michael Garza
PV2 Aidan Timothy Hardt
PV2 Andrew Durell May
PV2 Gabriela G. Mejia Moran
PFC Hong Yu Tai
Class 059-24
PFC Nicholas C. E. Wilhelm * -DG
PFC Juan Francisco Mendez
SPC Joshua Ray Perez
SPC Razim Rahman
PV2 Logan Ryan Reiser
PV2 Jonah Matthew Silas
PV2 Brandon Lee Smith
SPC Clayton Alexander Stewart
PFC Jayr Lee Thompson
PV2 Aleksei Ivanovich Varygin
SPC Joshua Isaiah White
Class 060-24
PFC Evan M. Hammond * -DG
PFC Kyle Francis Collins
PV2 Jake Cole Cuitkovic
PV2 Brandon Diaz
PFC William Edison Evans
PV2 Hayden Richard Fleming
PV2 Mason Jordan Kubacki
PFC Kenley Morgan Lichvar
PV2 Christopher Vladimir Stone
Class 061-24
PFC William Paul Staley * -DG
SPC Orlando Martinezcota
Pvt Gabriel James Mullanix
SPC Jesse David Pugh
PFC Andrew Joseph Spano
Class 062-24
PV2 Michael Austin Favre * -DG
PFC Abrham Nigirt Arearesso
PFC Rebecca Ellen Daniel
PV2 Joseph Ricardo Diaz
PV2 Casey Nicholas Farrell
PFC Lwe Ka Pru Htoo
PV2 Johnathan Michael Jandro
PV2 Ethan Klosinski
PFC Osvaldo J.Lacourt-Alvira
PV2 Caleb Edward Roberts
PV2 Robert Seth Robinson
PV2 Jason Youm
Class 063-24
SGT Neil Addison Corvin
PFC Charlotte Erica Galt
SPC Walter Douglas Gill
PFC Gregory Daniel Grammer
SPC Mason Gregory Lansdale
SPC Sephton Mark Reid
SPC Christian Lang Roh
SPC Cristobal Soto
Class 064-24
PFC Austin Cruise Edgar * -DG
PFC Raul Agustin Barragan
PV2 Nathaniel Vincent Butler
PV2 Victor Manuel Colon
Pvt Michael Chancellor Marsh
PV2 Shelby Nevaeh South
PV2 Thatcher Gene Tomblin
PFC Jeremy Luis Torres-Soto
Class 065-24
PFC Jorge Erik Cueto Lopez * -DG
SPC Emmanuel Cabulay Arce
SPC Brady Joseph Cook
SPC Joshua Micah Garza
PFC Jacob William Hughes
PFC Christian Avery Jordan
PFC Chanze Gabryel Snook
SGT Lucia Claudina Tallman
SPC Benjamin McIntyre Tenze
SPC Catherine Anne Verduzco

Cargo Helicopter Repairer (15U)

Class 025-24
PFC Daniel W. Hutchinson * -DG
SPC Calistus Tekom Agwo
PFC Japhet Arturo Benavides
SPC Bryce Alexander Carr
SGT Jacob Austin Fenter
PFC Zachary Kevin Horst
SPC Maximilian A. Killough
SGT Shane Micheal Loechner
SPC Casey Lee Wells
Elizabeth Diane Wills
SPC Francis Omondi Yongah
Class 026-24
SPC Noah Henri Schwartz * -DG
SPC Anthony Adam Anschroeder
SPC Maurizio Arango
PFC Mahkayla Marie Cole
SPC Thuan Trinhcam Huynh
SPC Dalton Wyatt Klein
SGT Noah Isaac Klewin
PV2 Woodrow Dyrold Ortega
SPC Phillip Riley Pipkin, III
PV2 Danny Elsworth Reis, Jr
SPC Adam Eric Tschida
PFC Daniel Lee Young
Class 027-24
PFC Julius C. Lourenco * -DG
PFC Matthew James Bell
CPL Michael John Lopez
PV2 Zackary Harrison Mules
PFC Zachary Ryan Naputi
PFC Primus Tazoacha Nkangu
SPC Bernard Kyei-Mensah
PFC Nicholas A. Rodgers
PFC Kayla Nicola Sommer
PV2 Atzin Alfredo Soriano
PFC Dakota Justin Walden

Aircraft Powerplant Repairer (15B)

Class 006-24
PFC Dustyn H. Petyan * -DG
SGT Samuel Ian Contreras
PFC Michael Scott Dutton
PFC Aiden Michael Fink

Continued on next page

People On The Move

AIT Graduations

Continued

PV2 John Morgan Henderson
PV2 Tessa Lashae Jones
SGT Andrew Jacob Roberson

Aircraft Powertrain Repairer (15D)

Class 006-24
PV2 Jose Manuel Velasco * -DG
PFC Nathan Ryan Alexander
PVT Johnny C. Campbell
SPC Matthew Bryson Gasaway
PFC Gia Quoc Binh Hoang
PV2 Brendan Chase Jones
PFC Henrique Pauka Pereira
PV2 Justin Rob Roundy
SPC Michelle Lauren Whitmer

Aircraft Electrician (15F)

Class 010-24
SPC Eliseo Roberto Ayala
SSG Bradley Michael Bafford
PV2 Denver Collin Breece
PV2 Octavious J. D. J. Mahogany
PV2 Jordan D.Rodriguez-Jerez
PV2 Dominick Rubio

Aircraft Structural Repairer (15G)

Class 008-24
PV2 Santana Emilio Nunez * -DG
PV2 Makayla Janae Chargualaf
Pvt Julian Scott Degrood
PFC Cade Thomas Fierro
PV2 Alberto Longoria Morales
PFC April Jean Obrien
SPC Samuel David Palomino
PFC Caleb Michael Petersen
PV2 Alejandro J.Portillocastillo
PFC Santa Bir Rai
PFC Adrian G. Salazar Aripre
SGT Jack Logan Secrest
PV2 Jacob Thomas Smith

Avionic Repairer (15N)

Class 010-24
PFC Christopher I.Bendickson * -DG
PFC Hector Uriel Aranda Rubio
PV2 Angel Noe Buentelloperez
PV2 Kevin Isaac Chilin Tello
PFC Grace Abigail Dronenburg
PFC Kaydan Susane Johnston
PFC Monnys Saramaisa Mena
Class 011-24
PFC Ariston J. Withrow * -DG
SPC Elijah Sadler Akers
PV2 Jayme John Alberto Diaz
PFC Anthony Mikael French
PFC Russell Medina, Jr
SPC Garrett Kenneth Muller
PV2 Trace A. D. Tennison
PFC Kahlil Maurice Thomas

AH-64 Armament/Electrical/ Avionic Systems Repairer (15Y)

Class 010-24
PFC Tyler Eron Voss * -DG
PFC Maxwell Windsor Bell
PV2 Gabriel Isaac Brown
PV2 Matthew Marcus Diaz, Jr
PFC Anthony Dean Facello
SPC David Galarza
1LT Kamil Godlewski
PV2 Leonard Jelisavcic
PFC Maribelle De La Luz Trujillo
SPC Edwin Joesph Waller
PFC Caden Lane Wardyn
Class 011-24
PFC Anthony Adan Torres * -DG
SPC Emmanuel Agostocandelaria
PFC Dylan Jacob Appell
PV1 Jacob Charles Champion
PV2 Alivia Joi Collins
PV2 William Tanner Holt
PFC Milton Maldonado
SSG Adrian Niestrata
SPC Seth Fournier Sannicolas
PV2 Juan Esteban Toro Zuniga

DG - Distinguished Graduate
HG - Honor Graduate
* = AAAA Member

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Graduations

AAAA congratulates the following Army graduates of the Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations Technician MOS 150U, at Fort Huachuca, AZ.

Tactical Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations Technician

10 Graduates, 13 September 2024
WO1 Adcock Kaipo D -HG
WO1 Heredia Anthony P -HG
WO1 Bowen Brandon D
WO1 Garrido Alejandro Jr
WO1 Gentry Joshua B
WO1 Olson Michael L
WO1 Porres Carlos R Jr
WO1 Smith Zachary E
WO1 Valdes Moises I
WO1 Wellington Taylor Q

UAS REPAIRER

AAAA congratulates the following Army graduates of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Repairer Course, MOS 15E and 15M, at Fort Huachuca, AZ.

Grey Eagle UAS Repairer Course

7 Graduates, 19 September 2024
PFC Strain Christopher Thomas -DG
PFC Anderson Grace Rose
PFC Bernard-Perez Abimael A
PFC Bertholf Michael
PV2 Busby Brady James
PVT Gutierrez Elisa Mailani
SGT Musselman Andrew J

UAS Operator

AAAA congratulates the following Army graduates of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operator Course, MOS 15W, and 15C at Fort Huachuca, AZ.

Shadow UAS Operator Course

6 Graduates, 16 August 2024
PFC Cordovarangel Jesus
SPC Huskey Jonathan Tyler
SPC Kramolinski Ventsislav
PV2 Neumann Caleb Blaise
PVT Palmer Colyn Micah
PV2 Salas Garza Yahir Y
7 Graduates, 3 September 2024
PFC Darsam Evan M
PV2 Kippes Dylan J
PVT Miele Vincent A
PFC Owens David Nathaniel
PV2 Smith James Michael II
PV2 Trent Brandon A
PFC Whitt Josiah Chance

DG - Distinguished Graduate
HG - Honor Graduate

Industry News

Announcements Related to Army Aviation Matters

Editor's note: Companies can send their Army Aviation related news releases and information to editor@quad-a.org.

DARPA Taps Sikorsky to Add Autonomy to U.S. Army-Owned Black Hawk Helicopter

SIKORSKY PHOTOS

Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company, has received a $6 million award from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to install the company's ALIAS/MATRIX™ flight autonomy system onto the U.S. Army's experimental fly-by-wire UH-60M Black Hawk® helicopter. Designated MX, the upgraded aircraft will enable the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) to test and evaluate a wide range of autonomy capabilities, from single pilot operation to fully uninhabited flight. Sikorsky will integrate the MATRIX system into the MX helicopter in 2025.

Honeywell Awarded Next-Gen Radar Altimeter System Contract

U.S. DOD PHOTO BY TECH. SGT. MATT HECHT

Honeywell has been awarded a $103 million contract by the U.S. Army, through the Defense Logistics Agency, to provide its Next-Generation APN-209 Radar Altimeter system on a wide variety of Army aircraft. A direct replacement for its legacy APN-209, which has been the primary radar altimeter on numerous U.S. Army aircraft since its introduction in 1975, this modernized system offers higher reliability and environmental performance, advanced common-core architecture, and flexible integration options.

BAE Systems Completes Delivery of Advanced Missile Warning Systems

BAE GRAPHIC

BAE Systems has successfully completed the delivery of 400 2-Color Advanced Warning Systems (2CAWS) to the U.S. Army as part of the Limited Interim Missile Warning System (LIMWS) program. Under the LIMWS Quick Reaction Capability (QRC) contract, BAE Systems designed, developed, and delivered 2CAWS which provides highly effective, next-generation threat detection and warning capabilities using modern multi-spectral sensors, a high-speed digital backbone, and machine learning algorithms to detect threats quickly and accurately in complex environments, and cue laser-based and expendable countermeasures.

IS&S's ThrustSense® Autothrottle Selected for U.S. Army C-12 Fleet

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY LTC ANDY THAGGARD

Innovative Solutions & Support, Inc.'s patented ThrustSense® Autothrottle system has been selected by the U.S. Army to be installed on their C-12 aircraft equipped with ProLine 21 avionics suites. The ThrustSense Autothrottle reduces pilot workload by computing and adjusting power levels automatically. It ensures stabilized approaches by maintaining optimal descent speeds and protects against critical flight conditions, including overtorque, overtemperature, and dangerously slow or fast speeds during high-workload scenarios. Additionally, ThrustSense guards against VMCa (Minimum Control Speed in Air), proportionally reducing engine power to maintain directional control. Deliveries and installation began in September 2024.

ADVERTISER INDEX

Contracts – (From various sources. An "*" by a company name indicates a small business contract / "**" indicates a woman-owned small business)

Simmonds Precision Products Inc., Vergennes, VT, was awarded a $45,949,918 firm-fixed-price contract for maintenance and overhaul of the Data Analysis Control for the UH-60 Black Hawk; work locations and funding will be determined with each order, with an estimated completion date of Sept. 29, 2029.

Art's Attic

By Mark Albertson

Art's Attic is a look back each issue at 25 and 50 years ago to see what was going on in ARMY AVIATION Magazine. Contributing editor Mark Albertson has selected a few key items from each decade's issues. Art Kesten is our founder and first publisher from 1953 to 1987. He is also the founder of the AAAA in 1957 and served as its Executive Vice President. The cartoon, right, was created back in 1953 by LT Joe Gayhart, a friend of Art's and an Army Aviator, showing the chaos of his apartment-office in New York City where it all began.

25 Years Ago

November 30, 1999

Another First for Women

Army Reserve CW4 Gwen Schallow has become the first female pilot-in-command of an AH-64 Apache helicopter. In civilian life, CW4 Schallow is a pilot for Continental Airlines. Schallow is assigned to the 8th Battalion, 229th Aviation Regiment, Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Washington-Potomac Chapter

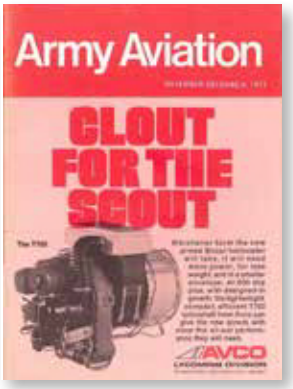
Retiring CWO4 Stephen W. Peckham (center), is congratulated by Colonel Lawrence Johnson. Colonel Johnson is the assistant chief of staff for logistics of the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Colonel Johnson presented CW4 Peckham with the Legion of Merit and AAAA's Order of Saint Michaels Bronze Award. Pictured as well is CW4 Peckham's wife, Michelle Peckham.

Aircraft Maintenance Manager's Course

Pictured below (from left to right) is CW3 Antonio Lascano, AMMC; SMC Instructor, Captain James Allen seated); and, CW4 Warren Jackson, AMMC Instructor.

Pre-Flight Inspection

During their pre-flight inspection, WO1 Allen Kinwood checks the Apache's main rotor while CW4 Gwen Schallow inspects the helicopter's port engine.



50 Years Ago

November, December 1974

"Give us a Hand Army!"

Standing in the Atlantic, some fifteen miles off Virginia Beach, Virginia, is the U.S. Coast Guard Light Tower, "Chesapeake." Atop the tower sat a NASA-owned portable searchlight cart . . . and, the 2,000 pound cart had to be removed. CW4 Don Joyce and SFC Don Jackson, from the T-School's Air Transport Committee, rigged the cart to be airlifted. Transport was to be by an Air Force CH-47, piloted by AAAA members CW3 Steve Murphy and CW3 Ron Frye. While Murphy and Frye hovered overhead, Joyce and Jackson worked to attach the cart for removal. Mission accomplished.

"Test Run"

In test runs conducted by MAASTER at Fort Hood, Texas, a Huey is shown using a smoke device to demonstrate wind patterns. In addition, small metallic and fiber glass strips that are generally used to disrupt enemy radar were dropped. The chaff was used to gauge its effects on aircraft engines.

Master

Lieutenant Colonel Albert Fournier (center) receives his Master Army Aviator wings. Pinning on the coveted wings is Robert H. Stanton (right), Director Eastern Region of the Federal Aviation Administration. The October ceremony was held at the FAA headquarters at JFK International Airport, Jamaica, New York. Lieutenant Colonel Jimmie Kinder, Aeronautical Services Officer, Cameron Station, Virginia, looks on, as the 5,100-hour veteran is awarded.

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Army Aviation Hall of Fame

50 YEARS 1974-2024

The Army Aviation Hall of Fame, sponsored by the Army Aviation Association of America, Inc., recognizes those individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to Army Aviation.

The actual Hall of Fame is located in the Army Aviation Museum, Fort Novosel, AL.

The deadline for nominations for the 2026 induction is June 1, 2025

Contact the AAAA National Office for details and nomination forms at (203) 268-2450 or visit www.quad-a.org

Army Aviation Hall of Fame

Lieutenant General John J. Tolson III

By Mark Albertson

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

John Jarvis Tolson III was born October 22, 1915, in New Bern, North Carolina. He graduated from New Bern High School in 1932 and briefly attended the University of North Carolina followed by Braden Hall in Cornwall-on-Hudson, New York. His final stop was the United States Military Academy, sponsored by five-time North Carolina Representative to Congress, Charles Laban Abernethy. He entered West Point with 400 classmates, July 1, 1933, as no. 10998 where he played football, basketball, lacrosse and golf; and joined the Chapel Cadet Choir and Lecture Committee. Second Lieutenant Tolson graduated in 1937.

Initially posted with the 19th Regiment at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, following America's entry into the war, he was assigned to the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, spending three years in the Southwest Pacific. He took part in four campaigns, including three parachute drops, one of which was Corregidor. In 1946, Tolson was ordered to Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery. Alabama and subsequently was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. By 1951, he was attending the British Staff College as the Army Airborne representative and, the following year, he attended the Army War College.

Tolson headed the Army Aviation Department of the Infantry School at Fort Benning in 1955 and achieved his pilot's rating for both fixed and rotary wing aircraft at Fort Rucker, AL from 1956-1957. For two years, he served as the Assistant Commandant of the Army Aviation School.

Following a two year posting as the chief of the U.S. Military Assistance Group, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, he returned to Rucker and commanded the Army Aviation Center.

Then Major General Tolson was assigned to Vietnam in April 1967 as commander of 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). He commanded some 15,000 troops with 400 helicopters, taking on North Vietnamese Army regulars and Vietcong guerrillas. "…he deployed them in such major encounters as the relief of Khe Sanh and the counter thrust to the Communists' TET offensive of 1968. Through his skill as an aviator and his insight as a military strategist, he saw the helicopter's inherent value on the battlefield."[1] He received the Master Army Aviator Badge in 1968.

Following Vietnam, Tolson was promoted to Lieutenant General and commanded the XVIII Airborne Corps; he retired in March 1973.

He and his wife, Margaret, moved to Raleigh, North Carolina where he was appointed as the Director of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs in the administration of Governor James Holshouser.

Tolson was inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame in 1975, as a representative of the 1950-1959 period and continued his support of Army Aviation as a member of the Army Aviation Association of America National Executive Board ultimately serving as Vice President from 1987-1990.

Lieutenant General John J. Tolson died of a massive heart attack, at the Rex Hospital in North Carolina, December 2, 1991.

He was interred with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

Endnote

1 - See page 68, "LTG John J. Tolson, III," Army Aviation, January 31, 1992. Tolson authored a history of airmobility in Vietnam, Vietnam Studies: Airmobility, 1961-1971.

Mark Albertson is the award-winning Army Aviation Publications Historian and a contributing editor to ARMY AVIATION magazine.

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