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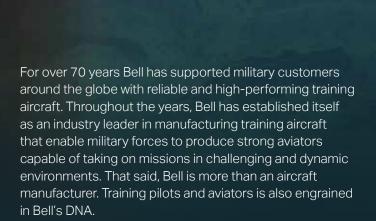
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READY TO TRAIN THE ARMY'S NEXT-GEN AVIATION WARFIGHTERS

BELL'S PROVEN LEGACY AND TRAINING APPROACH



Over the decades Bell has built a long-standing reputation as an industry leader in flight training. This is largely due to the company's emphasis on partnering with our customers to ensure they get the training capability they need.

PARTNERING TO PRODUCE THE FIRST ARMY AVIATORS

While Bell is largely known for delivering training aircraft that supported the U.S. Army including the H-13 Sioux,

UH-1H and TH-67 Creek, we also have a rich history with training Army pilots dating back to 1947. The first formal U.S. Army helicopter pilot training course was conducted at what was known as the Bell Flight School in Buffalo, NY. Through this partnership Bell was able to help the Army produce aviators who were prepared to operate the H-13 in the most demanding missions.

This experience with the Army solidified the benefits of an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) providing instruction and training for their aircraft. As the OEM, we understand our aircraft in a way that no one else does.

TAILORING THE TRAINING SOLUTION TO THE MISSION

Bell's training prowess is recognized globally for our ability to listen to our customers and work with them to develop tailored solutions to fit their needs. Over the last few years, Bell has worked alongside international militaries to not only provide training aircraft, but to help them develop the

training solution that fits their specific requirements. Leveraging the latest advancements in aviation and Bell's own skilled pilots, customers have benefited from our ability to understand the unique needs of each military training organization and thoroughly assess their training requirements, priorities, and goals.

Ongoing work with the Republic of Korea, Jordan and Jamaica Defense Force and other countries demonstrate how Bell collaborates with customers to ensure they have the resources they need to stand up their aviation units or enhance already existing ones.

For example, after purchasing the Bell 505 to support their flight training, the Royal Jordanian Air Force has worked with Bell to develop a full, turn-key solution to launch a next-generation flight school. This solution combines the Bell 505 platform with in-country parts inventory, program support, simulator and courseware/software.

READY TO TRAIN THE NEXT-GENERATION OF ARMY AVIATION WARFIGHTERS

The U.S. Army has started a new program called Flight School Next aimed at revamping its rotary-wing training curriculum, with innovative training concepts, for the next-generation of aviators. Leveraging our decades of experience, Bell seeks to partner with the Army to co-develop training solutions that are grounded in operational reality and position the Army for success.

In support of this program, Bell will provide a turnkey solution that consists of the proven Bell 505, modern training technology and the expertise of our proven group of industry collaborators – DigiFlight, Delaware Resource Group (DRG), Alpha 1 Aerospace, V2X, Semper Fly and Tru Simulation. Through this approach, the Army will train a new generation of aviators that are competent and confident in their ability to complete their mission, no matter the challenges.

Given our history of training Army pilots, Bell has a deep understanding of the support they need. We share a commitment to providing the Army the best training solution for their pilots. Just as Bell helped train the first Army pilots, Bell is excited to have the opportunity to help prepare future pilots through Flight School Next.

Through decades of providing military training to both domestic and international militaries, Bell has proven itself as a trusted partner. We have worked closely with customers to design and execute the training solution that works for them. This approach has yielded tremendous results and ensures that when you come to Bell you get more than a product, you get a partner.







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On The Cover

PAID ADVERTISEMENT: Amentum is the trusted partner for Army Aviation, delivering mission-critical solutions that ensure warfighter readiness today and into the future. We bring unmatched scale, experience, and innovation to every mission. Caption provided by the advertiser.

Briefings

LaNeve Nominated for **VCSA**



LTG Christopher LaNeve was nominated on Oct. 20 by President Donald Trump for a fourth star and to be the Army's next vice chief of staff, replacing GEN James Mingus, who

has been in the position since Jan., 2024. LaNeve became the senior military assistant to Secretary of War Pete Hegseth in April. Prior to advising Hegseth, he served as the commanding general of Eighth Army in the Republic of Korea and as the Special Assistant to the Commanding General of Army Forces Command and the Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Hodne Takes Command

of Newly **Activated** T2COM



command of the Army's newest four-star command.

Transformation and Training Command (T2COM) on Oct. 2. Headquartered in Austin, Texas, T2COM combines Training and Doctrine Command and Army Futures Command which were both inactivated. The two outgoing Army command flags were cased during the ceremony which was held at the University of Texas at Austin, and the new flag and unit patch were revealed.

Aviation Talent Boards Convening



The Army has officially convened Aviation Talent Boards aimed at relocating some 6,500 junior officers and warrant officers who it says are no longer needed in the aviation field. MG Clair Gill. commander of the Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, Alabama, announced on Oct. 22 that talent panels launched in October are intended to keep decision-making power with the soldiers and would not immediately lead to involuntary transfers or reductions. For more information, see the Branch Chief's Corner on page 12 of this issue.

Medal of Honor Army **Aviation Hall of Famer** Namesake of Fort Gordon



In an event last month, hosted by U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence and Fort Gordon Commanding General MG Ryan Janovic, the Army remembered Medal of Honor recipient and Army Aviation Hall of Fame inductee, MSG Gary I. Gordon's heroism and sacrifice with the renaming of Fort Eisenhower back to Fort Gordon. The post which was originally named after Confederate General John B. Gordon, now honors the Medal of Honor recipient known for his heroism during the 1993 "Black Hawk Down" events in Mogadishu, Somalia. Gordon's widow. Carmen Drake-Owens, and son, lan, attended the event.

Army Best Drone Warfighter Competition Coming to Huntsville!







The Army Aviation Association of America, AAAA, in coordination with the U.S. Army Aviation and Maneuver Centers of Excellence. is proud to announce it will sponsor the first Annual Army Best Drone Warfighter Competition, under the theme "Agile, Adaptive, Lethal", February 17-19, 2026. The competition will take place at the University of Alabama Huntsville, (UAH) drone range in Huntsville AL. Drone Technology Workshops will be conducted in the afternoons at the headquarters hotel in Huntsville. Competition details, including scenarios, judging standards, and eligibility, will be announced shortly. Competitors will be limited to UAS operators from invited Army units (Compo 1-3). Awards will be given to the best Army UAS Operators and Teams. Leaders from the Army Drone Team will be present to evaluate and invite competitors to become a part of the Army's Drone Team. There will be opportunities for Industry sponsorship and exhibits at the headquarters hotel as well as at the range itself. Registration and housing arrangements will be announced once the Army Execution Order is released.

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President's Cockpit

Moving Ahead Full-Throttle

AAA is fast approaching our busiest period of the year.

By the time you read this, we will have completed our annual Cribbins Symposium, almost be on top of Thanksgiving, be preparing for Christmas and the holidays, be coordinating the Army Best Drone Warfighter Competition at Huntsville, AL in February, and of course, be getting everything in order for our keystone event, the Summit in April.

The MacArthur Chapter hosted a spectacular Dining Out in September at the Long Island, NY Hyatt. I had the pleasure of joining the Chapter leadership of the MacArthur, Empire and Mohawk Chapters for a very memorable and well attended event. We always say that our 81 chapters are the "life blood" of AAAA. These visits always renew my passion for AAAA and emphasize how important our mission statement to Support the Army Aviation Soldier and Family truly is. My thanks to the Chapter President, MAJ Salvatore W. Garcia; Secretary, CW4 Timothy Scott Dahlen; Senior VP, MG Jack A. James; Treasurer, CPT Richard Siracusano; and Scholarship VP, CW5 James G. Freeman for their leadership, making this a truly great event, and making me feel welcome.

Next, our Executive Director, Bill Harris, and I traveled to Fort Rucker to help celebrate the dedication of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) memorial at the Veterans Memorial Park outside the Army Aviation Museum on September 10, 2025. What a great ceremony this was with hundreds in attendance. The result of over two years of work by Past VHPA President, Art Jacobs, VHPA's current President, Jim Crigler, did a masterful job MCing the event. Art was unable to attend due to a medical issue so Jim read Art's opening remarks which could not have been more impactful, starting with... "Welcome home."

The keynote speaker was GEN Doug Brown, former SO-COM commander and a Vietnam veteran himself. GEN Brown perfectly tied the past heroics of our Vietnam aviators and their incredible dedication, innovation and fearlessness with current developments in Army Aviation, including the integration of unmanned systems. There is no doubt we all stand on the shoulders of these great men who literally changed the course of modern warfare.

Speaking of modern warfare, AAAA continues to embrace the Army Chief of Staff's vision of "Continuous Transformation" by doing everything we can to help support the process through our events and various platforms.

Our AAAA National Secretary, MG Todd Royar, is spear-heading a major effort for AAAA on this front. Specifically, he has worked with the AAAA staff, the Army, and the University of Alabama Huntsville (UAH) to coordinate the first Army Best Drone Warfighter Competition, February 17-19 in Huntsville, AL. The competition itself will take place at the 2,300 acre UAH drone range, and workshops will be conducted in the afternoon each day back at the headquarters hotel. We have already held two onsite visits and one IPR meeting



AAAA National President, MG (Ret.) Wally Golden, pauses for a Kodak moment with the presidents of the MacArthur, Mohawk and Empire Chapters, (left to right, respectively) MAJ Salvatore Garcia, COL Paul Bailie, and LTC Eric Fritz on Sep. 9, 2025 at the 3-142nd Assault Helicopter Battalion dining out.



Dedication of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Memorial Monument, honoring the thousands of aviators and crew members who served during the Vietnam War on Sept. 10 at Veterans Memorial Park, Fort Rucker, AL. Pictured (I to r) AAAA National President, MG (Ret.) Wally Golden; VHPA President, Jim Crigler; CW4 (Ret.) Dave Shepard, Friends of Army Aviation; former commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, GEN (Ret.) Doug Brown; and BG Ken Cole, deputy commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence.

with stakeholders and are pressing ahead to make sure this is a memorable and valuable experience for the Army and our Soldiers. More to follow as we refine the registration, housing, and Army team invites.

Finally, we have opened registration and housing for the April 15-17, 2026, AAAA Annual Summit in Nashville. Housing sold out in the Opryland Hotel in minutes but we do have a number of overflow hotels still available with plenty of capacity. Exhibits are almost sold out, and it looks like another great event with the Hall of Fame and closing Soldier Appreciation Dinner concert featuring Dylan Scott.

Hang on tight, AAAA is moving out smartly. Hope to see you soon at one or all of these events.

On behalf of Jo Ann, myself and the whole AAAA Team, we wish you all a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving!

MG Wally Golden, U.S. Army Retired 37th President, AAAA walter.golden@quad-a.org









Our focus is always on providing The Highest Quality of Work, The Best Product and the Quickest Response to our customers.



Army Aviation Branch Chief's Corner

Aviation Army Transformation Initiative: The Way Ahead By MG Clair A. Gill



The Secretary of the Army and Chief of Staff of the Army released Army Transformation Initiative (ATI) guidance to the force in May 2025 via a letter outlining three key lines of effort: delivering critical warfighting capabilities, optimizing our force structure, and eliminating waste and obsolete programs.

While a detailed recounting of each objective is beyond the scope of this article, the letter's central mandate for Army leaders is paramount: "Leaders, we need you to drive change to ensure we stay lethal, ready, and continue to build cohesive teams that take care of our Soldiers and families." Amidst the many moving parts (equipment/formations) of ATI, it's easy to lose sight of what truly matters — our Soldiers. Rest assured, we are not. While our mission is to fight and win, we rely on the men and women who make up our formations to ensure our success. Soldiers are our Army's lifeblood. Army leaders understand this and are in sync with the ATI letter's central mandate.

The Army's transformation will undoubtedly impact our Soldiers and their families, and we are actively working to ensure we manage our talent at the nametag level and create opportunities out of change.

An AH-64 Apache Longbow of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, "Wings of Victory," is prepal to move into a hangar as an impending snowstorm moves in on Jan. 22, 2025 at Katterbach Army Airfield, Germany.

The Imperative for Change

We operate in a dangerous and dynamic world – you know this; you live it. Our adversaries actively seek to defeat us and create conditions that are hostile to our values. They are analyzing our past operations – as well as observing/supporting conflicts like the Russia/Ukraine War – to develop counter methods to our tactics, techniques, and procedures and improve theirs. Coupled with the rapid pace of technological evolution, these threats are real and immediate. Maintaining the status quo – relying on outdated doctrine, tactics, equipment, and formations – is not an option. Those who fail to change/adapt will suffer mightily. ATI is the mechanism to ensure we do adapt, both now and in the future.

Transforming is neither new to the Army, nor is it a linear process. Before World War I, the horse was the primary mode of transportation, especially for the U.S. Cavalry. Mechanization in the early 20th century began to shift that paradigm. By World War II, the Army had not only mechanized its formations with trucks and tanks, but also integrated aviation, significantly contributing to victory. This technological evolution continued through the Korean and Vietnam Wars with the integration of the helicopter. Following Vietnam, the Army, in collaboration with industry partners, developed the "Big Five" – the AH-64 Apache, UH-60 Black Hawk, M-1 Abrams Tank, Bradley Fighting Vehicle, and Patriot Missile System – designed to maintain

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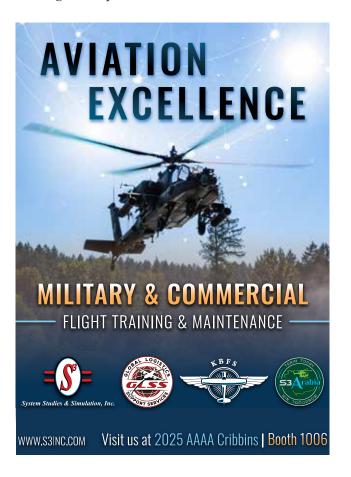
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technological superiority. These systems proved decisive during Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Further, our aviation formations proved essential to rapid and safe maneuver above Iraq and Afghanistan. However, these journeys were never easy; in fact, like all transitions, they were hard. President John F. Kennedy once said, "... We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one we intend to win...."

Just as the space race spurred urgency, so too does the emerging threats of the modern battlefield. ATI will likely follow a similar path, as transformation inherently involves a process of knowns and unknowns. Despite these challenges, initiatives such as Transformation in Contact (TiC) – a methodology focused on rapid prototyping, experimentation, and iterative improvement – will help streamline this process and accelerate our progress for the future.

Army Aviation and the Transformation

ATI, specifically Aviation ATI (AATI), addresses the Aviation branch in two ways: First, aviation platforms are expensive to procure and maintain, including the highly specialized training required for our personnel. Second, aviation stands to benefit greatly from the technological advancements that will replace legacy systems, such as the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (MV-75), and newer UAS and launched effects. The cost savings from divesting outdated systems help offset the investment in these new technologies. These new systems will be more lethal, survivable, and provide a decisive advantage over potential adversaries. In this context, the



AATI divestiture of AH-64Ds, FTUAS, and other systems, while difficult, represents a sound cost-benefit analysis – a clear benefit. The divestiture of 11 Air Cavalry Squadrons (ACS), UH-60 companies in each of the heavy divisions, and two Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigades (ECAB) in COMPO 3 have a real human impact, but they also provide an opportunity to "get well" in remaining units that have consistently experienced personnel shortages, affecting our ability to effectively train and maintain aircraft and equipment. We remain a formidable force and division commanders still see CABs as an indispensable member of the combined arms team, because of the agility and lethality they bring to the fight.

Impact on Soldiers and the Way Forward

Despite future AATI benefits, the actions inevitably impact Soldiers now. While you may understand the rationale behind AATI, you may still ask, "What does this mean for me?" In many cases, it's an opportunity – a chance to learn new skills and operate the most modern, lethal, and survivable systems on the battlefield in defense of the nation. We recognize that change can be unsettling. Therefore, we are actively exploring options to absorb personnel into new systems or other critical Army roles across all COMPOs.

To make informed decisions, we conducted an Aviation Talent Panel (AvTP) to identify and retain the best Aviation talent for our transformed branch. AvTP, with input from the Soldiers' HRC records and their unit leadership, assessed junior officers (LT/CPT) and untracked WO1s/CW2s in COMPO 1. We are further evaluating whether the AvTP will be needed for senior NCOs and assisting USARC with a similar process for COMPO 3. Our desire is to maximize opportunities for these officers within the branch and the Army through diverse options. Branch leaders have counseled those in the affected populations. For junior officers, these options include upcoming Officer Rebranching Program (ORP)/Voluntary Transfer Incentive Program (VTIP) in November and inter-service transfers. In addition to these opportunities, warrant officers can either apply for direct commission or seek to revert to an enlisted MOS. In those instances, the career aspirations of the assessed officers also informed the AvTP, and where their desires align with the needs of the Army, we will do everything possible to ensure a smooth transition, including providing resources and support. AvTP success relies on voluntary participation of officers in these options and will determine if further action is needed. Regardless of the option, leader investment in guiding Soldiers through this transition is essential to mission success. Our Soldiers deserve nothing less!

We want to retain our best and brightest and encourage them to stay and contribute to the future of Army Aviation. However, we recognize that individual circumstances may dictate a different path. Even amidst the challenges ahead, there is always a silver lining. For AATI, the silver lining is our Soldiers, who will write the next chapter of Army Aviation's prestigious legacy in defending our nation. They are the ones who will transform the branch and ensure victory today and in the future!

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 Rucker, AL.





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► AMCOM Commander Update

Army Aviation Advanced Composite Repair Program By MG Lori L. Robinson

As we focus on maintaining and sustaining combat-ready aviation formations across the Army every day at AMCOM, we are also keeping a keen eye on being ready for future requirements.

With the proliferation of advanced composite materials in the aerospace industry – exemplified in the Army by the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft and expanding unmanned aircraft systems platforms – we stand at a pivotal moment for Army aviation maintenance. Our soldiers, schoolhouse and depot must be prepared to repair advanced composite parts and structures to keep our fleets at the highest rates of readiness and available on the battlefield.

For decades, our maintenance expertise has centered on metallic sheet metal airframes. However, the prevalence of composites demands a parallel and equally robust sustainment framework. While we will continue to support our enduring fleets, failing to invest now in composite repair will create an unsustainable reliance on contract logistics support and original equipment manufacturers, which drive up costs and potentially limit operational flexibility. This requires understanding how to integrate temporary and permanent repairs from the aviation support battalion to the depot. We have begun the work to develop a systematic enterprise approach, focusing on training, organization, infrastructure, logistics, cross-functional collaboration and formalizing an Army aviation composite repair program.

As an enterprise, we will review and expand existing sustainment curricula as well as battle damage assessment and



Composite Worker Sammy Cabrera repairs a UH-60 Black Hawk fuel cell panel, specifically a damaged aluminum honeycomb panel.

repair procedures to encompass future requirements. This requires developing specialized courses to build talent, proficiency and a bench of composite repair expertise within our Soldier and civilian artisan ranks. To do this, we also require composite repair facilities at key locations, equipped with the necessary tools - protective gear, clean rooms, autoclaves, specialized tooling and supply chains - where they do not currently exist. Composite repair presents unique challenges in material handling, including controlled storage of prepreg materials, specialized transportation and monitoring of shelf lives. With cross-functional collaboration, we will establish and maintain joint partnerships for training personnel, integrating advanced manufacturing capabilities and leveraging OEM expertise. All of this builds a dedicated Army aviation advanced composite repair program that will continuously adapt to rapidly changing technology and innovation, minimizing future delays due to obsolete or outdated processes.

A new composite repair program will take upfront investment, but the cost of

inaction in preparing to repair the future fleet will be seen in escalating operations and sustainment expenses, diminished operational readiness and a loss of organic maintenance capability. The return on an early investment supports the efforts required to build a more self-sufficient composite repair ecosystem needed to fight and win anywhere.

This is not about replacing our existing sustainment framework; it's about evolving and augmenting it to encompass emerging requirements. It's about building a resilient, adaptable and affordable maintenance system that can support the Army aviation enterprise for decades to come.

I look forward to working with and supporting each of you – leaders, maintainers, logisticians and acquisition professionals – in championing this critical initiative to ensure our platforms remain ready to answer our nation's call.

MG Lori L. Robinson is the commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command headquartered at Redstone Arsenal, AL. Applying commercial best practices to transform the future of Army aviation

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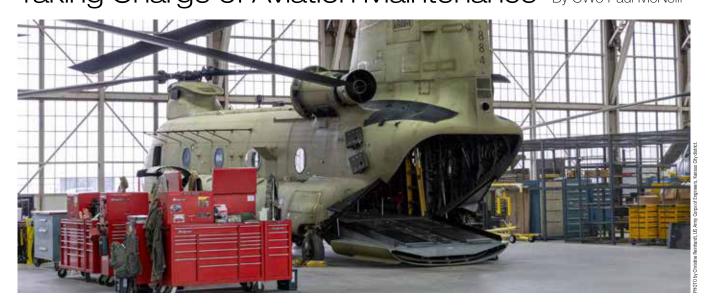






Aviation Branch Maintenance Officer

Stop Letting Capacity Control You: Taking Charge of Aviation Maintenance By CW5 Paul McNeill



A s aviation maintenance managers, we cannot afford to hope for readiness; we must build it. Too often, maintenance capacity dictates our aircraft's capabilities.

It is time to change our approach and assume control. We must proactively shape maintenance plans, invest in people, and optimize resources.

Demand a Seat at the Table

Stop passively accepting operational schedules. We must be involved in the planning process, understanding projected flight hours and potential damage before they have an impact on our workload. Anticipate requirements and build the maintenance plan accordingly. We proactively identify weaknesses and solve problems; we do not wait for a commander to inquire about why an aircraft is down. We track unit performance, pinpoint deficiencies, and ensure these deficiencies are corrected.

Prioritize and Invest in Maintainer Development

Effective maintenance requires a skilled and confident team. We must champion robust training programs that

build technical expertise and empower Soldiers to troubleshoot independently. Training is not merely about learning procedures; it is about understanding the rationale, the why, behind them. We hold personnel accountable for skill maintenance and expect excellence.

Optimize Hangar Space

Hangar space is limited. We must optimize space utilization, streamline workflows, and prioritize maintenance based on mission needs. If space remains a persistent challenge, we will advocate for solutions. We must also ask solution-oriented questions: Can the layout be reconfigured? Can parts storage be improved? Should mobile maintenance teams be deployed? We must continuously seek ways to enhance efficiency.

Integrate and Achieve Results

These elements – synchronization, manpower, and space – are interconnected. A weakness in one area quick-

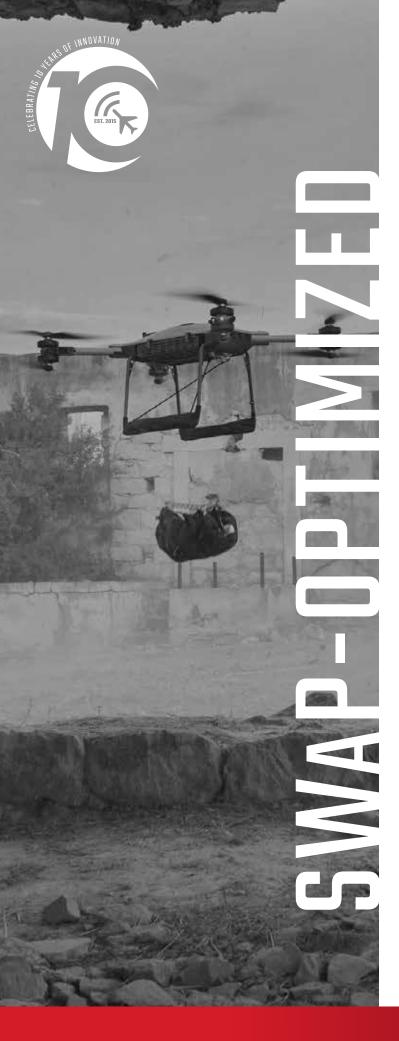
A CH-47 Chinook helicopter sits inside the New Century aviation hangar in New Century, KS, on November 13, 2024. The hangar is home to Bravo Company, 7/158th General Support Aviation Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve. The hangar was built in the 1940s and is in the process of receiving much-needed updates.

ly impacts the others. As maintenance managers, we are the linchpin to achieve success. We understand the requirements for sustained flight operations and have a responsibility to proactively identify and mitigate risks.

We challenge assumptions, demand necessary resources, and hold all personnel accountable – including ourselves.

Our goal remains simple: to deliver safe, reliable, and mission-capable aircraft. It is time to transition from reaction to leadership. Our Soldiers deserve no less.

CW5 Paul McNeill is the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command Aviation Branch Maintenance Officer at Redstone Arsenal, AL





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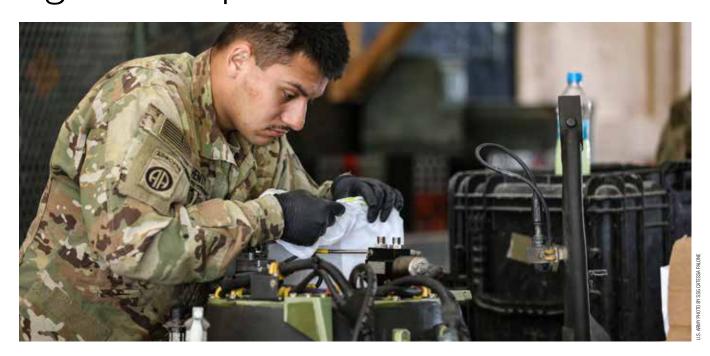
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> AMCOM Command Sergeant Major Update

Managing Risk by Balancing Resources Against Requirements By CSM Christopher T. Doss



A s the Aviation Enterprise navigates the uncertainty surrounding the Army Transformation Initiative, our mission remains. We must effectively manage risk by balancing resources against requirements to maintain the readiness of our Soldiers and weapons systems.

A Paratrooper assigned to Delta Troop, 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, conducts routine maintenance on an AH-64 Apache.

Our current readiness falls short of the standard which should not be a surprise to anyone reading this article. There are conflicting causal factors to this readiness issue which include inexperience, supply issues, insufficient funding, poor planning, lack of dedicated maintenance training, poor troubleshooting, time management, aging airframes and the list goes on and on. The truth is that all these issues are interconnected; none is the singular cause, but all contribute to the situation we are in. We cannot bury our head in the sand and point our finger at a cause external to our sphere of influence and organization.

With limited personnel, time, and

funding, Noncommissioned Officers make things happen. We are focused on executing the mission regardless of difficulty or resource constraints. This is both a blessing and a curse. While we accomplish the mission, we fail to prioritize requirements based on allocated resources which over the long-term obscures risk. The daily grind of task completion replaces long term planning and exhausts resources much faster as we work harder not smarter. In some cases, commanders are unaware of the risk they have assumed because the risk was assumed at a much lower level. A deeper analysis of facts and assumptions is required to highlight this point.

Assumptions

- 1. Risk is being elevated to the appropriate level.
- 2. Our maintenance programs are resourced to support our current FHP.
- 3. AMTP is resourced and executed to standard across the aviation enterprise.
- 4. SMEs in our formations ensure accurate troubleshooting.
- 5. COSIS is appropriately managed as parts are packaged and stored for turn-in.

Facts

1. Risk is often assumed at much lower levels. Our enlisted force is junior both in time and experience and often



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 2024 National winners were featured in the May/June AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit issue.



SGT Polinar U. Inocencio Company F, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment

Air Traffic Controller of the Year, 2022

SGT Polinar U. Inocencio has been an integral part of the overall success of Fox Company, 3-2 General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB), and the 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB). SGT

Inocencio has spearheaded 8 tactical tower missions with the Tactical Terminal Control System, 1 control tower mission with the Mobile Tower System, and 2 Aerial Gunnery missions. In preparation for the Air Traffic Services Command Aviation Resource Management Survey, SGT Inocencio spent countless hours developing his team's crew drills. His efforts led to an overall decrease in the sections' set up time by 50%, ensuring they were error-free. During this period, he led 14 soldiers in their ATTP Phase one proficiency training on their assigned ATS system that has resulted in 14 controllers achieving readiness level one across both the TTCS and MOTS systems. His team was recognized during the ATSCOM ARMS by the inspectors as the "Best Tactical Team in the Army." The ATSCOM ARMS team requested his section's crew drills be "the" example for Army-wide implementation. This type of dedication to his craft speaks volumes to the type of leader he is and his hard work and dedication to excellence identify him as the 2022 Army Aviation Association of America Air Traffic Controller of the Year.

doesn't understand the third and fourth order effects of their decisions.

- 2. Our maintenance programs are not resourced to support the current FHP even if they are 100% manned. Many of these requirements are met by contract maintenance.
- 3. AMTP is used as a cookie cutter requirement and not used to its full potential as a tool. Tasks should be assigned based on METL with a deliberate risk decision made on tasks that will be completed based on experience and needs of the unit.
- 4. Troubleshooting complex systems is problematic based on the requisite experience gap across the enterprise. Our NEOFF (No evidence of fault found) data suggests that 25% of major end items were diagnosed incorrectly.
- 5. COSIS is not properly managed

and costs the enterprise millions of dollars each year.

Recommendations

While the previous points suggest that we are deficient in a few areas, our NCOs do more with less and make impossible things happen daily. With a little prudent planning and shared understanding of the environment, we can overcome these issues and more efficiently maintain our aircraft.

- 1. Deliberate risk discussions for maintenance operations must be integrated from the company level through the brigade levels. Planning maintenance operations over time based on phase capability and bank time assessments will help maximize resources.
- 2. Leadership participation in production control meetings is necessary to en-



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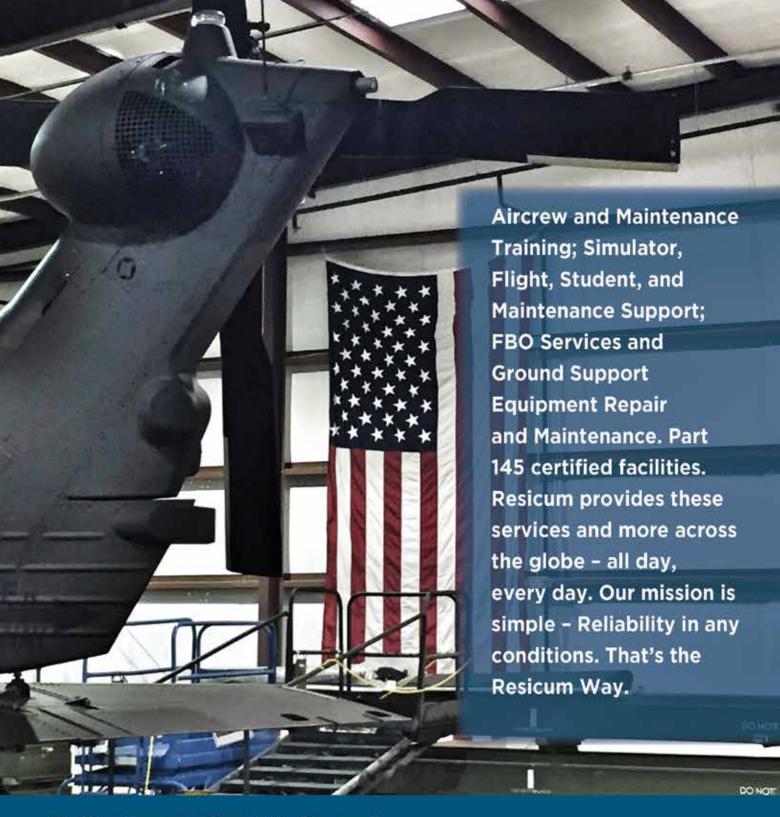
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sure we are prioritizing the right maintenance actions at the right time resulting in the highest level of readiness.

- 3. A renewed focus on AMTP is necessary to ensure we see ourselves and our capability as it exists and plan to improve accordingly. Using it deliberately based on our current experience level balanced by our mission requirements will prioritize the right selection of tasks and increase our capability over time to gain efficiency. Phase team management and maintenance academics designed around increasing the confidence and knowledge of our junior Soldiers will build readiness in the long term.
- 4. Leader presence on the hangar floor is a must. This provides stability and decreases the chance for inaccurate troubleshooting and shortens the decision cycle for subjective maintenance decisions.

While none of these proposed solutions are easy, they provide the best way to maintain our current level of readiness and build efficiencies for the future so we can work smarter, not harder.

CSM Christopher T. Doss currently serves as the Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Aviation and Missile Command.



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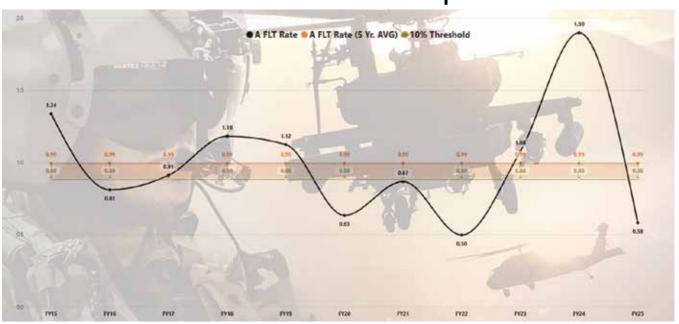
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Combat Readiness Center Update

Standdown or Standup?



10-Year Class A Flight Mishap Rate

n years past, Army Aviation would execute safety standdown days when conditions seemed to indicate the need for a pause and refocus.

The idea was to pause operations and reorient toward safety topics in an attempt to break the cycle of incidents in a unit or the Army as a whole. This often consisted of a unit safety officer being tasked to develop topics at the unit level that may or may not have anything to do with the pattern of events.

This changed in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 after Army Aviation experienced a Class A mishap rate of 2.72 for every 100,000 flight hours, with 12 Class A flight mishaps in the first six months of the FY. The mishap rate was mainly driven by unanticipated right yaw / loss of tail rotor effectiveness (LTE) mishaps. Through multiple mishap investigations and some significant analysis of doctrine and training, it was identified that there was a training gap for unanticipated right yaw / LTE. This drove Army Aviation to adjust formal instruction during flight school; update Training Circular 3-04.4, Fundamentals of Flight; and reintroduce an emergency procedure to ensure aviators could react instinctively to the onset of unanticipated right yaw / LTE.

The question was how to best deliver this information to aircrews in the most impactful way. The Chief of Staff of the Army decided to not make this a "business-as-usual" situation and execute a traditional safety standdown for the Army. Instead, Army Aviation conducted a safety standup.

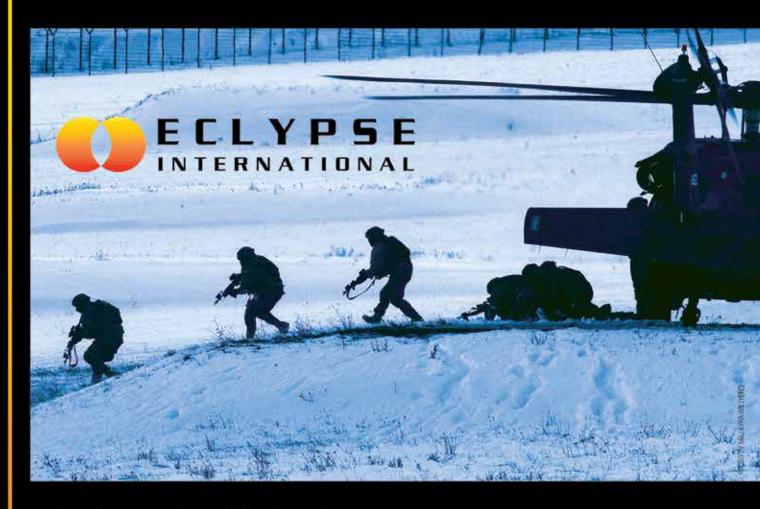
How was this different than a traditional standdown? The first major difference was that aviation units were given a window of time to conduct the training and not stop flight oper-

ations. Additionally, the topics and class material provided focused on the identified trends for that FY, with heavy emphasis on unanticipated right yaw / LTE, including the publication of a STACOM with an emergency procedure for the condition. The intent was to focus aviation units on the problem at hand, drive discussions and provide feedback to their higher echelons.

What was the result? Thanks to a focused, multi-echelon approach between standardization officers, safety officers and commanders, the mishap rate changed significantly for the better. From execution of the safety standup in April 2024 through August 2025, the Class A flight mishap rate dropped to 0.67, and the Class A-C mishap rate went from 8.85 to 8.48. This was a dramatic decrease to the Class A flight mishap rate, which was the focus of the standup.

This FY, Army Aviation is executing another safety standup in the fourth quarter to build on the success of last year's. With a Class A flight mishap rate holding below 1.0, the safety standup is focusing on lower-level mishaps that are only "inches and seconds" from being a Class A mishap. Training material provided by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center (USACRC) includes controlled flight into terrain (CFIT), loss of aircraft control, airfield / landing zone operations, airspace surveillance / maintaining situational awareness and human factors considerations. By focusing Army Aviation's attention on the problem set, we look to engage all echelons in bringing the Class A-C flight mishap rate below the five-year average of 7.16 and curtail smaller mishaps from becoming larger mishaps in the force.

This article was created by the Aviation Division, Directorate of Assessments and Prevention, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, Fort Rucker, AL.



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Reserve Component Aviation Update

Forging the Future of Army Aviation: The Army National Guard's Innovation Branch

By LTC Terry Mullis II

Army National Guard (ARNG) Aviation is responding to the evolving operational environment by establishing an Innovation Branch. Events like the Ukrainian "Spider's Web" operation by the SBU security service, (117 drones targeting 34% of Russia's strategic cruise missile carriers) has validated this requirement.

This branch represents a deliberate shift towards proactive problem-solving and experimentation, aiming to build a more agile and responsive aviation force. The Innovation Branch will serve as a central hub for identifying and vetting new ideas, conducting pilot programs, and advocating for the adoption of proven technologies within the ARNG Aviation fleet. This initiative underscores the ARNG's commitment to remaining a relevant and effective force in a dynamic security environment.

Historically, innovation within the ARNG Aviation community often occurred organically, driven by individual unit initiatives with limited resources. The Innovation Branch formalizes and amplifies this process. The branch is comprised of a small, but highly qualified team of aviation officers and warrant officers with backgrounds in engineering, acquisition, and operational planning. Crucially, the branch is not designed to replace existing innovation efforts, but to connect and accelerate them.

Branch Pillars

Identify: Proactively scanning the operational environment, emerging technologies, and lessons learned to pinpoint critical capability gaps and potential areas for improvement. This includes continuous monitoring of industry trends, academic research and promising efforts

from the 54 States and Territories.

Develop: Facilitating rapid prototyping, experimentation, and the development of innovative solutions. This involves leveraging ARNG units as testbeds for new technologies and concepts, often in collaboration with industry partners and Guard operational units.

Integrate: Working with stakeholders to transition successful prototypes and concepts into standardized doctrine, training, and equipment.

Innovation Branch Benefits

Expanded Experimentation: Unique access to geographically diverse units for large-scale testing of new concepts and technologies.

Cost-Effective R&D: A flexible, reserve component approach to innovation that reduces development costs.

Enhanced Collaboration: Streamlined partnerships with industry, DOD, HQDA, Joint Staff and other Army components to align innovations with modernization priorities.

Current initiatives

Current initiatives include projects focused on unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) integration, Predictive Maintenance using AI/ML, a pilot program utilizing AI and Machine Learning algorithms to analyze maintenance data and predict component failures before they occur, AI-Powered Flight Risk Management, an AI/ML model to

assess flight risk based on pilot experience, weather conditions, aircraft maintenance history, and mission parameters, Hub Based total fleet maintenance management, advanced maintenance technologies, and enhanced situational awareness tools that combine FLIR and DVE capabilities.

Conclusion

The ARNG Aviation Innovation Branch is a strategic investment for the future of Army Aviation. By formalizing and accelerating innovation, and leveraging the National Guard's unique capabilities, it will drive modernization and enhance the Total Army's competitive edge. Success requires continued collaboration and a commitment to experimentation, ensuring a more agile and technologically advanced aviation force prepared for future challenges.

If you don't like change, you are going to like irrelevance even less. - General Eric Shinseki

LTC Terry Mullis II is the Standardization and Innovation Branch Chief, Army National Guard Aviation Division, National Guard Bureau, and the VP of Programs, Washington Potomac Chapter of AAAA.





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▶ 128th Aviation Brigade Update

128th Aviation Brigade Phoenix Week

By CPT Gavin Saucedo

The 128th Aviation Brigade at Fort Eustis, VA is the world's premier aviation maintenance training facility and it has embarked on a transformative journey to enhance the effectiveness of its Advanced Individual Training (AIT) program in building aviation maintenance warfighters.

Central to this evolution is the introduction of *Phoenix Week*, a five-day Field Training Exercise (FTX) that replaces the previous model and redefines how Soldiers are prepared for the demands of modern aviation warfare. This new approach emphasizes foundational soldiering skills, aviation-specific tasks, and tactical readiness, with the goal of producing Aviation Warfighters who serve as force multipliers in their future units.

Phoenix Week begins with two days of classroom instruction where Soldiers rotate through a series of round-robin training sessions. The first day focuses on foundational readiness, equipping Soldiers with a comprehensive understanding of Army systems, values, and behavioral standards. Topics covered include Army values, ethics, customs and courtesies, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), Equal Opportunity (EO), the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A), and a foundational skills capstone. These sessions are designed to instill discipline, professionalism, and a sense of identity within the Army framework.

The second day of classroom instruction shifts toward aviation and field-centric topics, laying the groundwork for the practical challenges ahead. Soldiers receive training in, Pre-Combat Checks and Inspections (PCC/PCI), aviation operations in a Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) environment, field maintenance procedures, P4T3 (Problem, Plan, People, Parts, Time, Tools, and Training), Battle Damage Assessment and Repair (BDAR), and Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) missions. These lessons are critical for building technical proficiency and operational awareness, ensuring Soldiers are equipped to support aviation missions effectively.

Following the classroom phase, Phoenix Week transitions to a three-day field environment where Soldiers apply their knowledge in realistic and demanding scenarios. Day one in the field introduces combat skills lanes including land navigation, Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), weapons familiarization, camouflaged fighting positions, and radio communication protocols such as SPOT reports, SITREPs, and 9-Line MEDEVACs. These exercises reinforce essential soldiering skills and prepare Soldiers for the complexities of battlefield operations.



Soldiers perform basic emergency medical/first aid procedures as part of their field training exercise. The FTX, dubbed "Phoenix Week," is an integral part of their overall training.

On day two in the field, Soldiers face two labor-intensive tasks. The first is a land navigation course through the challenging marshlands of Fort Eustis, where teams must locate three of the five designated points to pass the lane. The second task is a situational training exercise centered on a DART mission, allowing Soldiers to apply aviation-specific skills in a simulated operational environment. This exercise bridges the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application, fostering confidence and competence in mission execution.

The final day of Phoenix Week serves as the capstone event, simulating an LSCO scenario against a near-peer adversary. Soldiers are organized into squads of twenty and receive a mission brief to recover a battle-damaged aircraft. After conducting P4T3 planning and route reconnaissance analysis, they embark on a five-mile tactical road march – each carrying a 35-pound rucksack – while navigating a series of challenge lanes, including react-to-contact, DART operations, and TCCC response. This culminating exercise tests every skill acquired throughout the week and serves as a rite of passage for Soldiers transitioning into their operational roles.

Phoenix Week represents a significant advancement of the 128th Aviation Brigade training methodology. By integrating classroom instruction with rigorous field exercises, the program ensures Soldiers are not only knowledgeable but also capable of executing complex aviation missions under pressure. This holistic approach to training prepares AIT Soldiers to become resilient, skilled, and mission-ready Aviation Warfighters – prepared to serve and succeed in the dynamic landscape of modern military operations.

CPT Gavin Saucedo is currently the S3 for the 1st Battalion, 222nd Aviation Regiment at Fort Eustis, VA.

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Barometric Altimeters By Mr. Steve Braddom

n 1928, Paul Kollsman caused a revolution in aviation when he introduced the first barometric altimeter. allowing pilots to determine altitude based on air pressure. Barometric altimeters are still critical instruments used across military and civilian aviation to this day.

They indicate altitude above Mean Sea Level (MSL) by comparing the pressure measured at a static port on the aircraft to the actual sea level pressure set by the pilot in the "Kollsman Window" of the altimeter (also called the "altimeter setting"). The difference between sea level pressure and the measured static pressure determines the altitude (static pressure decreases as altitude increases).

Barometric altimeters are subject to several different kinds of errors, and there are established tolerances for each individual type of error. These errors are inherent in pressure instruments and are not unique to military aircraft - they are common to all barometric altimeters used in military and civil aviation and are considered in the determination of aircraft separation and obstacle clearance requirements.

Barometric altimeters have two main types of error - instrument error (also called mechanical or calibration error) and position error (also called installation or static position error). These errors are independent and additive, but are not always in the same direction, so they can add to or subtract from each other.

Instrument error is error in the altimeter itself and is composed of elements including calibration errors for the mechanical components, mechanical friction, case leakage, and hysteresis. More modern digital systems using air data computers may not have the same mechanical issues as legacy altimeters, but they are still subject to measurement and calibration errors. When the pitot-static system is checked during routine maintenance or when the altimeter is checked against field elevation before flight, the error being checked is the altimeter instrument error. Instrument error tends to be random and varies from one altimeter to the next. Historically, the tolerances for these errors in military aircraft were provided in military specifications, but similar FAA commercial standards are now more frequently used.

Position error is the error in measuring the actual static pressure due to the location of the static ports and the airflow over the aircraft. Factors such as the angle of the airflow at the static ports due to the influence of the aircraft structure and the specific flight condition can affect the measured static pressure, resulting in position error. Position error is not random and is the same for the same type of aircraft in the same configuration and in the same flight condition (altitude, airspeed, trim, etc.). The tolerance for position error historically has been taken from military specifications, but similar FAA commercial standards are now more commonly used.

Position error is assessed during aircraft qualification using established flight test techniques. One such technique employs a calibrated pitot-static source towed behind the aircraft in a device called a "trailing bomb" at a distance to ensure it is not affected by the aircraft or the rotor wake. Another method is to use an air data boom which includes highly sensitive pressure instruments and extends well forward of the nose of the aircraft to take measurements unaffected by the influence of the aircraft.

Finally, it is important to understand that barometric altimeters determine



UH-60 with air data boom.



UH-60 with trailing bomb.

altitude based on static pressure and an assumed standard atmospheric temperature profile. When trying to determine a true altitude (the actual height above MSL), differences from the standard temperature assumption must be considered (for example, colder than standard temperatures result in the altimeter displaying an altitude higher than the true altitude). For pilots, this temperature correction is typically only used when operating at Cold Temperature Airports (CTA), which are identified with a snowflake icon on the applicable Instrument Approach Procedure (IAP). A discussion of temperature effects and the appropriate corrections can be found in Section 3 of Chapter 7 of the FAA Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM).

Mr. Steven Braddom is the deputy airworthiness engineer at the Systems Readiness Directorate, U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center, Redstone Arsenal, AL.

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Ask the Flight Surgeon

Iron Overload: Understanding Hemochromatosis

in Army Aviation By CPT Brian Jiménez Alicea, MD and MAJ Karl R. Swinson, MD, MPH

■ I was recently diagnosed with hemochromatosis.
I feel fine, but I'm being told this could affect my flight status. What is this condition, and why is it a concern for aircrews?

FS: Hemochromatosis is a genetic disorder that causes the body to absorb and store too much iron. While iron is essential for oxygen transport and energy metabolism, excessive amounts can damage critical organs, including the heart, liver, and pancreas. For Army aviators, peak physical and cognitive performance is non-negotiable. Thus, uncontrolled iron overload can lead to symptoms that directly compromise mission readiness and flight safety.

What Is Hemochromatosis?

Hereditary hemochromatosis most commonly affects individuals of Northern European descent and often becomes apparent between the ages of 20 and 40. Women may be diagnosed later due to natural iron loss through menstruation. Early signs include chronic fatigue, joint pain (especially in the hands), abdominal discomfort, and bronze skin discoloration. If left untreated, iron can deposit in tissues and cause damage resulting in liver scarring, heart failure, diabetes, or cognitive impairment. Even mild issues like heart palpitations or reduced stamina can subtly but significantly impact an aviator's ability to operate in high-demand environments.

Aeromedical Evaluation: What the Army Requires

The Army's Aeromedical Policy Letters outlines specific requirements for aircrew diagnosed with hemochromatosis. These include:

- Blood tests: serum iron, ferritin, and transferring saturation to assess iron levels
- Heart rhythm monitoring (e.g., Holter monitor)

- Heart ultrasound (echocardiogram)
- Liver function evaluation (lab tests and imaging when needed)
- Genetic testing for the *HFE* gene mutations when diagnosis is unclear

Temporary clearance may be granted if the evaluation shows no evidence of organ damage and treatment is minimal. However, aviators who require frequent phlebotomy (blood draws) or chelation therapy (medication to remove excess iron) are typically disqualified. Waivers are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and annual follow-up with repeat labs and cardiac testing is required to maintain clearance.

How Other Services Compare

While the Army allows for waiver consideration with strict monitoring, other branches take a more conservative approach:

- Air Force: Class I/IA applicants are ineligible for waiver. For Class II/III aviators, a 72-hour Duties Not Including Flying (DNIF) period is required after each phlebotomy session.
- Navy: Typically does not grant waivers, especially for designated aviators.
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA): Asymptomatic civilian pilots with stable iron levels and infrequent phlebotomy (no more than once per month) may qualify under the Conditions Aviation Medical Examiners Can Issue (CACI) program. More complex cases require a Special Issuance. The FAA also mandates a no-fly window of 24-72 hours after phlebotomy.

These variations highlight how military aviation standards are uniquely tailored to operational risk and readiness.

What to Do If You're Diagnosed

If you've been diagnosed with hemochromatosis or suspect it due to family history or symptoms, here's what to do:

- See a specialist: internal medicine and cardiology evaluations are required. These specialists help determine if any organ systems have been affected.
- Report symptoms early: fatigue, palpitations, shortness of breath, or changes in physical performance should be evaluated promptly.
- Keep your chain informed: let your flight surgeon know about changes in treatment frequency or lab values. Early communication supports the waiver process and helps avoid unnecessary downtime.

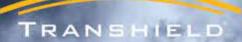
Final Thoughts

A diagnosis of hemochromatosis doesn't mean your aviation career is over. With proper management, most aviators can continue to serve safely and effectively. What matters is early detection, consistent follow-up, and open communication with your flight surgeon. The differences in Army, Navy, Air Force, and FAA standards reflect how each organization balances risk and readiness. Across the board, your health comes first. 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 should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position unless otherwise stated.

CPT (Dr.) Brian Jiménez. Alicea is a flight surgeon and resident in Aerospace Medicine at the Department of Aviation Medicine and MAJ (Dr.) Karl R. Swinson is a flight surgeon and aerospace and occupational medicine specialist at Lyster Army Health Clinic, both at Fort Rucker, AL.



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AMCOM 101:

Connecting the Enterprise to the Warfighter

By Mr. Kenric Smith



The U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, or AMCOM, works to sustain trust with Soldiers and leaders who rely on it every day. To strengthen that trust, AMCOM created the AMCOM 101 Forum. The initiative brings together aviators in the field, Army leaders and the wider aviation enterprise for direct conversations about how AMCOM supports the warfighter. The sessions allow AMCOM to share capabilities, clarify processes and, most importantly, listen to feedback from the formations it serves.

The forum is not about one-way communication. It is about building mutual understanding between tactical units and the sustainment enterprise so that together they can solve problems, enable readiness and prepare the Army for future fights.

Enabling readiness

The chief of staff of the Army has tasked Army Materiel Command and AMCOM with delivering ready combat formations. That readiness is the primary reason AMCOM exists. For aviation units, it means having aircraft that fly when needed, supply chains that deliver parts on time and maintainers who can keep fleets mission-capable in the harshest environments.

Through AMCOM 101, units are walked through the processes, tools and resources available to ensure aircraft readiness. That includes explaining how AMCOM, as a Life Cycle Management Command, integrates engineering expertise, supply support and program oversight into a unified approach.

The forum introduces lesser-known AMCOM agencies such as the U.S. Army Test, Measurement and Diagnostic Equipment Activity, or USATA, and specialized organizations in the AMCOM Logistics Center. These organizations directly support Soldiers, even though units may never see them face to face.

MG Lori Robinson, commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command, engages directly with attendees during the AMCOM 101 - Aviation FY25 Spring Conference. The conference provided aviation leaders with key updates on sustainment, readiness and enterprise-wide collaboration.

One major focus is the role of logistics assistance representatives, or LARs, forward-deployed experts who live alongside units and serve as the direct link back to AMCOM's knowledge base. LARs are the frontline touchpoint for aviation units seeking enterprise support.

Readiness is not just numbers on a spreadsheet. It is a guarantee to commanders that when they launch a mission, Army Aviation will deliver.

Driving cost savings and efficiencies

Every dollar saved in sustainment is a dollar reinvested into combat power. AMCOM 101 provides a transparent look at how efficiencies are pursued across the aviation enterprise.

From explaining how aircraft data is used to create time between overhaul, or TBO, intervals to showing how teams track component failures, AMCOM 101 offers real-world examples of how the command works to lessen the burden of maintainers in the field and get aircraft flying.

Units also learn how to use product quality deficiency reports, or PQDRs efficiently, ensuring they only pay for quality parts while AMCOM communicates feedback to vendors when they don't perform as advertised.

In AMCOM 101 sessions, leaders share these efforts with the force and listen for opportunities where field units see waste or inefficiencies. Many of the best ideas for cost and manpower savings come directly from Soldiers living the sustainment fight every day.

Training opportunities: LAR-U and CCAD artisans

Training is a cornerstone of readiness. AMCOM 101 introduces units to specialized opportunities that develop Soldiers' technical depth and confidence.

One example is LAR University, or LAR-U, a training program that equips new representatives with the skills needed to solve complex field problems. These LARs are embedded worldwide as trusted sustainment advisers for aviation units. Soldiers can also attend the same training to gain experience on complex systems, then return to their units to train peers or maintain their own aircraft.

Artisans at Corpus Christi Army Depot are among the most skilled maintainers in the world. Units can send Soldiers to CCAD to learn directly from these civilian experts, who have decades of hands-on experience repairing transmissions, engines and airframes. When Soldiers return to their formations, they bring new skills and insights that raise the unit's overall maintenance capability. By opening these training pipelines, AMCOM ensures the next generation of Army maintainers is better prepared than the last.

Leveraging enterprise expertise

No single organization can solve the challenges of Army Aviation alone. That is why AMCOM 101 empowers the collective strength of the enterprise — a network of commands, depots, program offices and industry partners all working toward a common goal.

AMCOM brings together partner organizations such as the Program Executive Office for Aviation; engineers at the Aviation and Missile Center, or AVMC; and supply organizations such as the Defense Logistics Agency. Networking and personal relationships are key to understanding problems from all sides. Together, these organizations ensure that from the factory floor to the forward operating base, aviators have the support they need.

The forum highlights real-world examples of how this expertise has solved problems in the field – whether rapidly deploying a modification to counter an emerging threat, standing up a surge repair line to meet operational demands or resolving a long-standing supply chain bottleneck.

AMCOM 101 also includes breakout sessions to provide detailed, program-specific support on areas such as aviation ground support equipment, or AGSE; aviation communications networks, or ACN; unmanned aircraft systems, or UAS; and item management by airframe. When aviators call for help, they are not just reaching out to a single office — they are tapping into an entire enterprise designed to back them up.

Building a shared future

The AMCOM 101 Forum has become more than just a briefing series. It is a semiannual platform where trust is built, innovations are shared, and the next generation of leaders sees firsthand how sustainment underwrites combat power.

For the Army, the future fight will be fast, complex and contested. Aviation units will need every advantage to maintain dominance in the skies. AMCOM 101 ensures they know how to leverage the full weight of the enterprise to stay ready, lethal and resilient.

At its heart, the initiative reflects AMCOM's core promise: to enable Army Aviation to fight and win anytime, anywhere.

Mr. Kenric Smith is the Deputy Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command headquartered at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

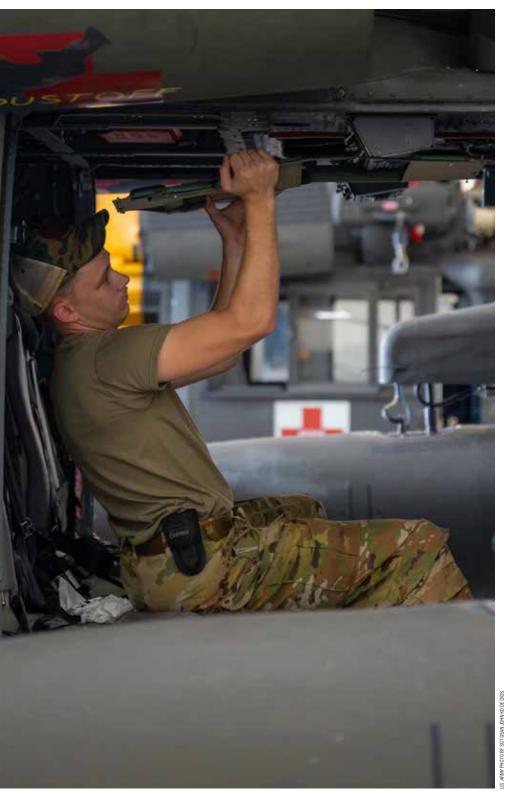




Special Focus > Aviation Sustainment

A Generational Opportunity to Streamline Sustainment for Army Aviation

By Mr. Timothy J. Sweeney

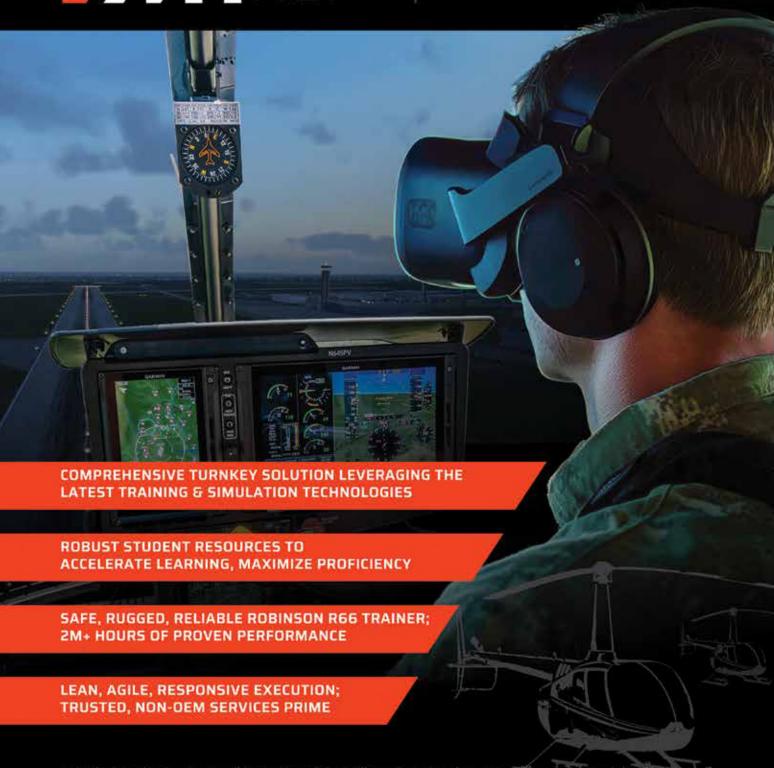


s the Assistant Program Executive Officer for Logistics and Sustainment in the Program Executive Office for Aviation (PEO AVN), I am privileged to witness a transformative era in Army Aviation. The convergence of the Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA), digital thread, predictive logistics, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a generational opportunity to revolutionize sustainment operations. These advancements promise to enhance readiness, reduce costs, and keep our aviation assets at the forefront of technological superiority. However, the true backbone of this transformation lies in the hands of our dedicated U.S. Army maintainers and their effective management, which affects our operational readiness and ability to transform the fight.

Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA)

MOSA is a foundational strategy that promotes open standards for designing and developing systems. This approach facilitates interoperability, flexibility, and scalability, allowing the seamless integration of new technologies and capabilities. For Army Aviation, MOSA enables the rapid incorporation of advanced avionics, sensors, and communication systems without the need for extensive redesigns. By adopting MOSA, we are free of proprietary solutions that often increase lifecycle costs. Instead, we create a competitive marketplace for suppliers, fostering innovation and reducing costs. Furthermore, MOSA enhances our ability to upgrade and maintain aviation platforms, keeping them relevant and capable in the face of evolving threats and mission requirements.

U.S. Army SPC Isaac Pontius, a UH-60 Helicopter Repairer assigned to 4th Attack Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division/ROK-U.S. Combined Division, reinstalls a roof panel for a UH-60 Black Hawk during Ulchi Freedom Shield at Camp Humphreys, South Korea.



M1 Mission First supports all branches of the military in managing, operating, and sustaining large scale aviation training enterprises. At Fort Rucker, we support a 240,000 Flying Hour Program, scheduling, launching, recovering, and maintaining hundreds of aircraft every day. This deep program understanding, combined with our industry leading partners, provides the insight, innovation, and best commercial practices to transform Army Aviation Training for Flight School Next.





Digital Thread

The digital thread connects data and information throughout the lifecycle of a system, from design and manufacturing to sustainment and disposal. For Army Aviation, the digital thread provides a comprehensive and continuous flow of information, encouraging better decision-making and more efficient sustainment processes. By implementing a digital thread, we can achieve a holistic view of an aircraft's history, performance, and maintenance needs. This visibility promotes proactive maintenance planning, reduced downtime and increased operational availability. Additionally, the digital thread supports condition-based maintenance, where the actual condition of components rather than predetermined schedules drive maintenance actions. The digital thread approach extends the life of critical assets and optimizes the use of resources. Currently, the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) program is leveraging the digital thread during the design phase by creating digital twins, which will foster seamless communication and improved decision-making throughout the aircraft's lifecycle.

Predictive Logistics

Predictive logistics uses data analytics and machine learning to forecast maintenance needs and supply chain requirements. In Army Aviation, predictive logistics can transform how we manage spare parts, maintenance schedules, and repair activities. By analyzing historical data and real-time sensor inputs, predictive logistics can identify patterns and trends that indicate potential failures or maintenance needs. This insight allows us to address issues before they become critical, minimizing unscheduled maintenance and improving aircraft availability. Moreover, predictive logistics enhances our ability to manage inventory levels, where the right parts are available at the right time and place, reducing the logistical footprint and associated costs. As part of PEO AVN's Product Support Manager Tool Suite, we use data from in-service monitoring and predictive maintenance algorithms to identify issues and adjust maintenance intervals, thereby reducing unscheduled maintenance at the unit level.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI is transforming sustainment, offering unprecedented capabilities in

data analysis, decision support, and automation. In Army Aviation, AI can be applied to various aspects of sustainment, from predictive maintenance to supply chain optimization. One of the most promising applications is in predictive maintenance, where AI algorithms analyze vast amounts of data from aircraft sensors to predict component failures and recommend maintenance actions. AI predictions can improve aircraft readiness and reduce maintenance costs by preventing unnecessary repairs and part replacements. Additionally, AI can help create a more resilient and responsive supply chain that meets the dynamic needs of Army Aviation by optimizing inventory levels, accurately predicting demand, and identifying potential disruptions before they impact operations. PEO AVN is utilizing AI to improve various aspects of aviation operations and management, enabling us to complete tasks more efficiently and maintain an edge over our adversaries.

The Role of U.S. Army Maintainers

While these technological advancements are crucial, the importance of U.S. Army maintainers cannot be overstated. Our maintainers are the linchpin in effectively implementing and sustaining these technologies. Their expertise, dedication, and management are vital in translating these innovations into operational readiness. Effective management of maintainers involves continuous training, access to the latest tools and technologies, and a robust support system that help them perform their duties efficiently. By investing in our maintainers, we equip them to handle the complexities of modern aviation sustainment, thereby improving the readiness and availability of our aviation assets. PEO AVN has partnered with the Aviation Center of Excellence to develop and distribute virtual learning at the institution and unit level. This digital learning platform can be accessed at www.vte.mil.

Integrating MOSA, Digital Thread, Predictive Logistics, and AI

The true potential of these technologies lies in their integration. By combining MOSA, digital thread, predictive logistics, and AI, we can create a cohesive and adaptive sustainment ecosystem for Army Aviation. For instance, MOSA integrates advanced

sensors and communication systems that feed data into the digital thread. AI algorithms then analyze the data to generate predictive maintenance insights, which inform logistics and supply chain decisions. The result is a seamless flow of information and actions that enhance aircraft readiness, reduce costs, and improve overall mission effectiveness.

Challenges and the Way Forward

While the benefits of these technologies are clear, implementing them is not without challenges. Integrating MOSA, digital thread, predictive logistics, and Al requires a concerted effort across multiple domains, including technology development, policy formulation, and workforce training. Data interoperability and standardization is a primary challenge because the digital thread relies on consistent and accurate data from various sources, which necessitates adopting common data standards and protocols. Given the increased reliance on data and interconnected systems, robust cybersecurity measures must protect sensitive data and prevent unauthorized access. Securing our digital infrastructure is paramount to maintaining the integrity and reliability of our sustainment operations.

To address these challenges, we must foster collaboration between government, industry, and academia. By working together, we can develop and implement the necessary standards, technologies, and training programs to realize the full potential of these advancements.

Conclusion

The convergence of MOSA, digital thread, predictive logistics, and AI presents a generational opportunity to transform Army Aviation. By embracing these technologies and recognizing the critical role of our maintainers, we can enhance readiness, reduce costs, and keep our aviation assets at the cutting edge of capability. As we move forward, we must innovate, collaborate, and invest in the future of Army Aviation sustainment. By doing so, we will meet the challenges of today and the demands of tomorrow, ensuring that our forces remain ready and capable in an ever-changing world.

Mr. Timothy J. Sweeney is the Assistant Program Executive Officer, Aviation for Logistics and Sustainment, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

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Special Focus > Aviation Support



The Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture (AMSA) Project Office designs, develops, and delivers advanced aviation technologies, giving our Soldiers war-winning capabilities and an overmatching operational advantage. Our broad portfolio of products and systems enables Assured Airspace Access, Aerial Communications and Mission Command, Aviation Architecture and Environment Exploitation, and Aviation Ground Support operations.

The AMSA team manages and sustains the fielded aviation mission systems and architectures our Soldiers rely on daily and meets capability requirements supporting Next Generation Command and Control (NGC2), Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS), and the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA). To ensure success and deliver transformational capabilities at the speed of relevance, we turn to our user community and industry partners for creative solutions. As an organization, we adapt to deliver capabilities that meet Army Aviation's emerging requirements.

The AMSA workforce consistently exceeds expectations and matches the increasing pace of transformation within the Aviation Enterprise to be ready for the Soldier of today and the challenges of tomorrow.

Product Manager Assured Airspace Access Systems (A3S)

The A3S Navigation team continues to succeed with the Army's newest navigator, the Enhanced Aviation Global Air Traffic Management (GATM), Localizer Performance with Vertical guidance (LPV), Embedded GPS/Inertial navigation system (EGI), Military Code (M-Code) (EAGLE-M). This form-and-fit replacement for the legacy EGI simplifies installation and maintenance while enhancing performance in both tactical and civil airspace.

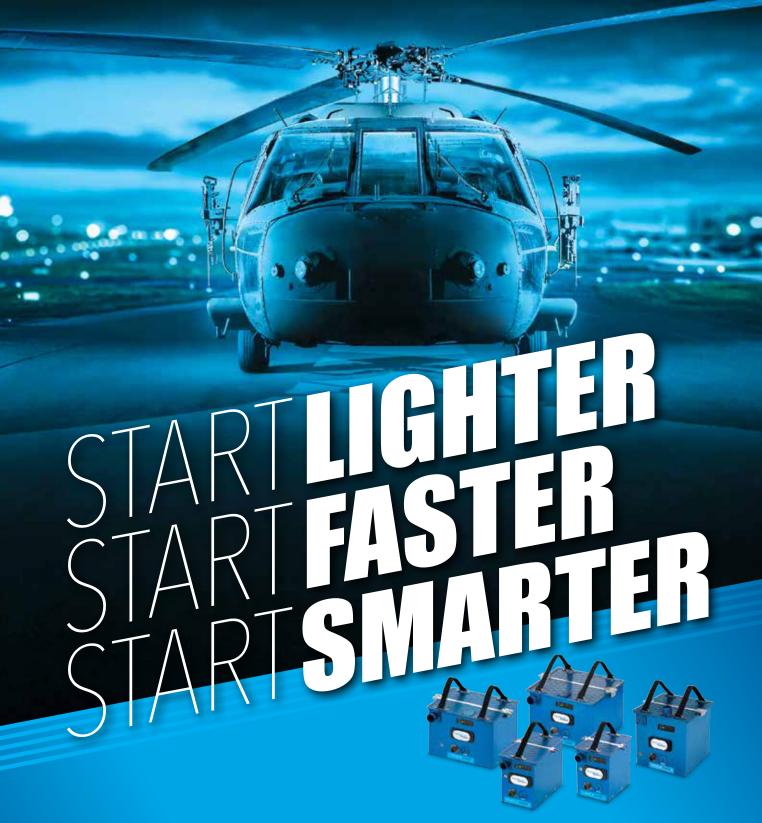
The EAGLE-M strengthens Army Aviation capabilities with precise navigation and timing in environments that may degrade GPS signals, allowing aircraft to safely navigate complex terrain and hostile conditions. With technology assuring uninterrupted operational effectiveness, EAGLE-M aligns with the Army's goal of maintaining our technological advantage to meet modern battlefield challenges.

FY25 concluded with successful U.S. Space Force (USSF) operational testing of the Military GPS User Equipment Increment 1 aviation domain receiver integrated within the EAGLE-M. This testing, conducted in collaboration with A3S, Endurance Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (EUAS), Special Operations

The AMSA Project Office installation team and Soldiers from the 25th CAB with the first aircraft to complete EAGLE-M installation and maintenance test flight at the Wheeler Army Airfield, HI.

Command, and the USSF, demonstrates a commitment to joint modernization of military navigation capabilities. Early FY25 achievements include fielding EAGLE-M on Black Hawk aircraft in the Indo-Pacific Command region and equipping Army National Guard Apache helicopters in North and South Carolina with this improved navigation technology. Today, over 125 Army aircraft operate with the EAGLE-M.

The A3S Product team is accelerating the development and acquisition of the new micro-transponder, the MCX. Component-level testing is ahead of schedule with earlier-than-expected platform-level testing and certification. The MCX project addresses critical shortages of APX-123A transponders and will provide new capabilities in transponder technology as platforms update their onboard software. The A3S team also collaborates with the Utility Helicopter Project Office (UHPO) and the UAS Project Office on critical updates to expand the ca-



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Soldiers verifying an air start work package during the AGPU 1.1 Logistics Demonstration on Redstone Arsenal, AL. Note the air start hose extending from the left side of the AGPU 1.1.

pabilities of the APX-123A. These efforts ensure that military aircraft comply with civilian airspace requirements and operate effectively.

Product Manager Aerial Communications and Mission Command (ACMC)

For the past two decades, the Aviation Mission Planning System (AMPS) and Tactical Airspace Integration System (TAIS) have served aviation mission planners and airspace coordinators worldwide. Today, evolving requirements driven by the advent of NGC2 require a critical assessment of these systems' long-term viability.

The ACMC Product team began evaluating the future of AMPS and TAIS in FY25, exploring options from comprehensive updates to replace them with a new, integrated solution. To inform this decision, the government issued a Request for Information (RFI) to industry partners in July 2025, seeking data and insights into potential solutions to address emerging capabilities and challenges.

ACMC, in collaboration with key stakeholders, will review RFI responses to identify the optimal path forward, a robust, adaptable, and fully integrated solution within the broader NGC2 architecture. This process will identify a solution that meets the needs of aviation mission planners and airspace managers, supporting complex operations in a rapidly changing operational environment.

The Aviation Tactical Communications Systems ARC-231A program

advances modernization efforts for airto-air and air traffic control communications. Following airworthiness certification in May 2025 for the HH/UH-60M and CH-47F platforms, the team began fielding ARC-231A with Software Block 1 to Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs), starting with the 82nd Airborne Division. Fielding continued through July 2025 with the 10th Mountain Division CAB, followed by the August 2025 1st Infantry Division and October 2025 1st Cavalry Division fieldings. Testing and evaluation of the ARC-231A for the AH-64E platform continued throughout FY25, with completion planned in FY26 to support fielding anticipated in early FY27.

This initial rollout gives units a crypto-modernized, software-defined radio with greater communication capabilities. Future software updates will incorporate Tactical Secure Voice Cryptographic Interoperability Specification (TSVCIS) 3.1.1 and the Soldier Advanced Tactical Radio Unified Network (SATURN) waveform. Both enhance operational effectiveness and interoperability within secure tactical environments.

With the NGC2 modernization effort, ACMC aligned the Air Ground Networking Radio (AGNR) program to NGC2 capabilities to improve airto-ground interoperability. The government recently awarded a contract to develop a modular NGC2 kit for the AH-64E Apache helicopter. In August 2026, The Army will achieve a key milestone by demonstrating and validating the NGC2 architecture at

the Project Convergence Capstone 6 (PCC6) using the Apache NGC2 Special User Evaluation (SUE) kit.

The proposed aviation architecture uses the Handheld, Manpack, Small form fit (HMS) MANPACK radio to facilitate crypto-modernized Single Channel Ground and Airborne Radio System (SINCGARS) communications, while simultaneously onboarding data transfer devices and transports that support the NGC2 network.

Aviation Radio Control Manager (ARCM) FY25 activities focused on version 1.2 that gives pilot and co-pilot control of the system. FY26 activities include developing, testing, installing, and demonstrating the Apache NGC2 kit at PCC6. Data collected at PCC6 will inform the NGC2 architecture and support the Army's transition to concept-driven transformation.

Product Manager Aviation Ground Support Equipment (AGSE)

The Army Aviation ground support community benefited from the AGSE Product Office's key achievements in FY25. In addition to fielding the eighth and final Flexible Engine Diagnostic System (FEDS) modification kit to Coleman Barracks, Mannheim, Germany, the team met critical milestones for AGSE's priority acquisition effort, the Aviation Ground Power Unit (AGPU) 1.1 system. This vital system fills ground power and maintenance gaps for the CH-47 and AH-64 fleets and adapts to maintenance requirements for future platforms such as the Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA).

The AGSE Product team accepted the last five of the 14 Low-Rate Initial Production (LRIP) AGPU 1.1 systems, awarded the multiyear Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) production contract, and completed the Logistics Demonstration, Technical Manual (TM) Verification and Instructor/Key Personnel Training (IKPT) events.

After the successful AGPU 1.1 SUEs at Ft. Campbell, KY; Ft. Bragg, NC; and Ft. Rucker, AL in the spring of 2025, the team returned the SUE AGPU 1.1 systems to the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), Sun Test Systems, Inc. for refurbishment before fielding in FY26. These SUEs provided critical Soldier feedback and valuable Reliability, Availability, and Maintainability (RAM) data to support Type Classification (TC)/Materiel Release (MR).

In FY26, the AGSE Product Office



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continues AGPU 1.1 production, achieving TC/MR, and will conduct New Equipment Training (NET) and initial fielding. For the legacy AGPU 1.0, the team is addressing increasing obsolescence challenges with an initiative to increase the AGPU 1.1 acquisition and procurement quantity objectives with a projected HQDA Army Requirements Oversight Council (AROC) update in FY26.

Product Manager, Aviation Architecture and Environment Exploitation (A2E2)

In FY25, the A2E2 Product Office advanced the Army's effort to design a robust, resilient computing platform capable of supporting a diverse range of software applications in a solution that reduces size, weight, and power on the enduring fleet.

The Aviation Mission Common Server (ACMS) prototype effort validated the feasibility of applying open government and industry standards to general-purpose computing acquisition, informing the PEO AVN Enterprise Aviation Mission Computing Environment requirements. Building on this foundational data, the A2E2 Product office solicited industry input through a request for information concerning a

General-Purpose Computing Platform (GPCP). Insights gained from these efforts informed the Army's spring 2025 decision to move forward with the Improved Data Modem (IDM) Open System REMAN (OSR) program.

With its new multi-core processing environment, the IDM OSR is the next step in achieving the larger GPCP. The IDM OSR will host software enabling NGC2 hardware and activities and adopt Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) standardized processing cards, which can transition to a fully compliant GPCP.

In late FY25, the A2E2 Product Office and the UHPO prepared to install the Degraded Visual Environment Pilotage System (DVEPS) onto the UH-60M airframe. This integration will build upon the successful HH-60M DVEPS integration and fielding, demonstrating the Army's Transformation in Contact (TiC) 2.0 principles and commitment to rapid capability adaptation across platforms through iterative development.

Lessons learned and data generated from Soldier Touch Point Events and over 9000 DVEPS flight hours will inform DVEPS software and capability technical insertions. The A2E2-UHPO team will qualify on the UH-60M Black Hawk.

DVEPS allows pilots to navigate and operate in poor visual conditions, particularly brownout landings. This multi-sensor system detects obstacles in the landing zone and improves situational awareness for pilots flying in DVE. As DVEPS proliferates throughout the DoD, the Product Office will collaborate with a collective knowledge network of Soldiers and industry to expand system use cases and deliver relevant capability to the field in a timely and efficient manner.

Over the past year, AMSA efforts advanced the aviation mission and architecture capabilities we design, develop, and deliver. The dedication, adaptability, and professionalism of our workforce ensures we deliver world-class solutions for Army Aviation. We are confident we will meet the evolving challenges and opportunities of the coming year and continue giving our Soldiers the technological advantage they deserve.

Mr. James A. Bamburg is the Project Manager for the Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture Project Office, Program Executive Office, Aviation, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

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Special Focus > Rotary Wing Project Managers

The Apache Project Office: New Tail Rotor Blade Brings Power and Agility

By COL Daniel Thetford

he AH-64E Version 6 (v6) Apache helicopter continues to undergo modernization to maintain its status as the world's most lethal attack helicopter. The Apache Project Office remains focused on improving capabilities, sustainment, safety, lethality, and maintainability to ensure Warfighters are equipped for tomorrow's battlefields. A key component of this modernization strategy is the development and implementation of the Improved Tail Rotor Blade (ITRB) and the Improved Tail Rotor Drive System (ITRDS).

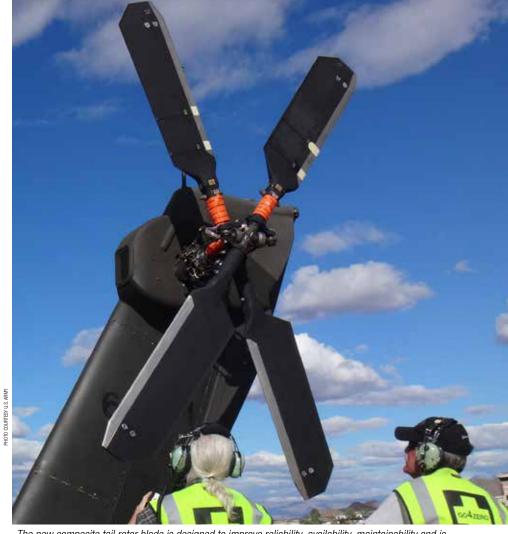
Current Tail Rotor System Challenges

The current tail rotor blade has faced recurring challenges throughout its service life, including structural de-bonding, blade erosion, maintenance difficulties, and premature removal due to Foreign Object Damage (FOD). The composite structure of the current blade is prone to separation under high stress and adverse environmental conditions. FOD can cause significant damage, often requiring blade replacement. While recent efforts have mitigated some of these risks through improved inspection procedures and repair techniques, a redesigned tail rotor system offers a more comprehensive and long-term solution.

Improved Tail Rotor Blade

The Improved Tail Rotor Blade (ITRB) is the Apache Project Office's highest-priority modernization initiative. This redesigned blade uses a glass fiber and carbon fiber-epoxy hybrid composite laminate, a proven material already utilized in the Apache's Composite Main Rotor Blades. The ITRB incorporates several key design enhancements engineered to deliver significant improvements in reliability, maintainability, and performance.

Key Features of the ITRB: Enhanced Strength and Damage Resistance



The new composite tail rotor blade is designed to improve reliability, availability, maintainability and is made to improve the ballistic tolerance with comparable weight. These blades will increase the Apache's performance.

The ITRB uses a refined composite layup schedule, increasing the use of carbon fiber in critical load-bearing areas to improve strength, stiffness, and damage tolerance.

Improved Aerodynamics

The blade's aerodynamic profile has been refined to increase lift and reduce drag, contributing to greater thrust capability.

 A redesigned blade tip geometry reduces tip vortex formation, lowering noise and improving aerodynamic efficiency.

Erosion Protection

The leading edge features an enhanced erosion protection system, including a durable coating and optimized material selection, extending blade life in harsh operating environments.

Ease of Repair

The ITRB design enables easier and more effective damage repair, reducing downtime and lifecycle costs.

Improved Tail Rotor Blade Objectives

The primary objective of the ITRB is to improve manufacturing, reliability, and maintainability metrics. Enhancements to repairability, fatigue life, and damage tolerance will result in:

- Higher Mean Time Between Removals (MTBR) and Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF), equating to longer Time on Wing and increased operational availability.
- Improved Operational Effectiveness: The ITRB will expand the flight envelope when paired with the Improved Tail Rotor Drive System (ITRDS).

Currently, the U.S. Government and Boeing are in the qualification design and testing phase for subcomponents, with plans to transition to full qualification efforts as soon as possible.

Improved Tail Rotor Drive System

The Improved Tail Rotor Drive System (ITRDS) is being developed alongside the ITRB to maximize performance gains. The current Tail Rotor Drive System (TRDS) has torque capacity limitations that restrict the full utilization of increased tail rotor thrust. The ITRDS addresses these limitations through several key upgrades.

Redesigned Gearboxes: Both intermediate and tail rotor gearboxes have been redesigned with stronger driveshafts and bearings to handle increased torque loads.

Improved Cooling and Lubrication: Enhanced airflow around gearbox components ensures adequate cooling and lubrication under higher stress levels.

Increased Torque Capacity: The ITRDS provides approximately a 36% increase in available torque to the tail rotor.

Combined Impact of ITRB and ITRDS

The integration of the ITRB's increased thrust and the ITRDS's enhanced torque capacity will expand the Apache's operating window and flight envelope parameters. These upgrades

will improve:

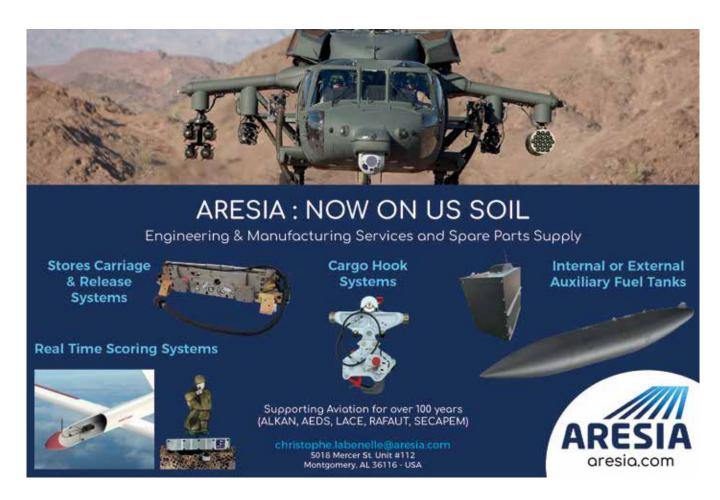
- Maneuverability: Enhanced agility for executing aggressive maneuvers.
- Hover Performance: Greater effectiveness in high-density altitude environments.
- Operational Effectiveness: Improved performance in contested and complex battlefield conditions.

The Improved Tail Rotor Blade and Improved Tail Rotor Drive System represent critical investments in the future of the AH-64E Apache. By addressing existing limitations and leveraging advanced materials and engineering, these upgrades ensure the Apache remains the most lethal attack helicopter in the world. The successful integration of these systems will enhance performance, reduce lifecycle costs, and ensure the Apache is ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow's battlefield.

ATTACK!

COL Daniel Thetford is the project manager for the Apache Project Office, Program Executive Office for Aviation, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.





Special Focus > Rotary Wing Project Managers



Chinook Update

By COL Jennie E. Conlon

he CH-47 Chinook remains the Army's premier heavy-lift helicopter and a cornerstone of vertical lift operations around the globe. As the Army modernizes its aviation fleet to meet the demands of large-scale combat operations and multi-domain warfare, the CH-47F program will evolve in three critical areas: next-generation capability through the Block II upgrade, sustained readiness across the Block I fleet, and international interoperability with allied partners operating Chinooks worldwide. Autonomy remains a key area of interest, and while not yet integrated into the CH-47F platform, the Army is evaluating emerging technologies in autonomous navigation, obstacle avoidance and assisted cargo operations to enhance bat-

tlefield agility and reduce pilot work-load in high-threat environments.

The CH-47F Block II delivers a generational leap in lift, range, and durability. Its design is optimal for dispersed operations, especially in contested and austere regions such as the Indo-Pacific, where standoff distances, logistics challenges, and joint force maneuver require extended reach and reliable payload delivery. At the same time, the Block I fleet remains a vital enabler for current operations. PM Cargo is investing in advanced sustainment practices, obsolescence mitigation, and modular upgrades to ensure the fleet meets mission demands. Internationally, 18 foreign partners fly Chinooks with unique configurations tailored to their national requirements.

These relationships drive modernization synergy and coalition readiness across the global CH-47 enterprise. Together, these efforts ensure commanders can rely on the Chinook fleet for the required lift – anytime, anywhere.

CH-47F Block II: Performance Where It Matters Most

Building upon the proven CH-47F Block I airframe, the Block II variant incorporates three major upgrades: a strengthened fuselage, an improved drivetrain, and an enhanced fuel system. These improvements increase the maximum gross weight, allowing significantly greater lift capacity and range. In recent testing at Fort Campbell, the 6-101st General Support Aviation Battalion demonstrated this increased performance



CH-47F Block II Chinook.

by lifting a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle (M1088) weighing over 22K pounds, a mission profile previously beyond the limits of the Block I configuration.

For commanders planning deep maneuver operations, the ability to move heavier equipment and sustain forward forces enhances battlefield agility. The Block II also supports long-range missions by integrating up to three Extended Range Fuel System (ERFS) tanks, dramatically extending operational reach. This capability means the aircraft can conduct "Fat Cow" refueling operations, increasing fuel availability at the tactical edge and reducing dependence on fixed infrastructure in austere environments.

Project Manager (PM) Cargo is accelerating testing and airworthiness

certification to support the Army's fielding objectives in priority theaters. Testing is on track to complete by early 2027 with initial unit fielding projected for 2028.

Sustaining the CH-47F Fleet with Purpose

While the Block II program progresses, the Army is investing in the CH-47F Block I aircraft which is the bedrock of today's fleet. PM Cargo leads proactive sustainment strategies that ensure the Block I fleet remains mission-capable and interoperable with modernization efforts. PM Cargo employs rigorous obsolescence forecasting and configuration audits to identify atrisk components early. Through formfit-function replacements, last-time buys, and close industry collaboration, component shortages are mitigated before they affect readiness.

The program's Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) supports seamless upgrades across avionics, mission systems, and software. Continuous software development smooths compatibility with evolving technologies and supports Army-wide digital modernization goals. For commanders, this means a stable, predictable platform with reduced lifecycle cost and improved mission responsiveness. Soldiers in the field will benefit from increased availability of Line Replaceable Units that are commodities; decreasing cost and increasing ability to remove and replace items.

PM Cargo's sustainment model integrates performance-based logistics (PBL) for BLK II unique parts such as the drive shaft in the improved drive train, emphasizing collaboration with organic depots, industry, and allied partners. Predictive analytics, condition-based maintenance, and a globally responsive supply chain are central to this approach. These practices maximize aircraft availability, reduce unscheduled maintenance, and keep critical assets in the fight. The transition of aircraft to Maintenance Steering Group (MSG) 3 predictive maintenance enabled more accurate, long-range maintenance planning, which ultimately reduces maintenance workload and improved aircraft availability.

Additional sustainment enablers

include harvesting usable parts from retired airframes, embedding obsolescence-mitigation language in contracts, and leveraging additive manufacturing for legacy or low-volume parts such as aft transmission fans and heater blower fans. These efforts ensure the Chinook fleet remains both mission-relevant and economically sustainable.

Partner Nation Integration and Global Interoperability

The CH-47 program also supports 18 foreign partner nations operating a mix of Chinook variants. There is growing global interest in the CH-47F Block II, with 60 aircraft currently on contract for production and delivery. These FMS efforts benefit the greater Chinook community through the synergy created in the collaboration on modifications, airworthiness testing, and component modernization. Additionally, the Army gains technical data and risk-reduction insight that inform future upgrades. Shared configurations, common training at Fort Rucker and aligned sustainment practices also enhance coalition interoperability and readiness.

Conclusion

For Army Aviation commanders, the CH-47F Block II delivers a modernized, strategically aligned platform that enables heavy-lift dominance across the full spectrum of operations. Whether moving critical supplies over vast ocean distances, supporting Joint Forcible Entry operations, or sustaining maneuver units in contact, the Block II provides the payload, range, and survivability required for decisive outcomes.

At the same time, investments in CH-47F Block I sustainment ensure the entire Chinook fleet remains relevant, adaptable, and ready for future mission demands. With smart modernization, robust logistics, and strong international cooperation, the CH-47F continues to lead the Army's vertical lift capabilities into the future fight.

COL Jennie E. Conlon is the Project Manager for the Cargo Helicopters Project Office, Program Executive Office, Aviation, located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

Special Focus > Rotary Wing Project Managers

MV-75 Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft: The Principles of Modernization

By COL Jeffrey Poquette, Project Manager



he MV-75 Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA) represents the Secretary of the Army's (SECARMY) top priorities and is widely regarded as the Army's most strategically significant aviation program. Poised to redefine Army aviation capabilities, the MV-75 offers unprecedented speed, range, and versatility to meet the demands.

The MV-75 program is essential to the Army's Transformation Initiative (ATI), fulfilling the SECARMY's directives to accelerate modernization efforts while maintaining readiness and strategic superiority on the battlefield. The three foundational principles - Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA), Intellectual Property (IP) management, and the Right to Repair - will guide the MV-75's adaptability and sustainability throughout its life cycle.

Modular Open Systems Approach: An MV-75 Cornerstone

MOSA is a design approach that emphasizes interoperability, modularity, and scalability. For the MV-75 program, MOSA is not merely a technical framework—it is a strategic imperative to ensure the MV-75 can integrate seamlessly with existing and future platforms, reducing complexity and lowering development costs.

MOSA relies on standardized components and interfaces, enabling modular designs that enhance flexibility and simplify integration. This approach minimizes the risk of obsolescence and reduces life cycle costs, allowing the Army to maintain quality and reliability while safeguarding the platform's ability to evolve with emerging technologies and mission requirements.

One of MOSA's most significant advantages is its ability to facilitate rapid upgrades and technology insertions. The battlefield of the future is unpredictable, with threats evolving at an unprecedented pace. MOSA ensures that the MV-75 can quickly adapt to these changes by integrating new capabilities—such as advanced sensors, communication systems, or weaponry—without requiring extensive redesigns, which is enabled by a state of the art digital backbone. This adaptability is essential for maintaining the platform's relevance and effective-

A mockup of Bell's V-280 Valor, on display during the US Army's 250th Birthday (June 14, 2025). Bell's V-280 Valor was a Technical Demonstrator selected by the US Army, during the contract award, to serve as the basic concept for the design of the MV-75 Future Long Range Aircraft (FLRAA).

ness throughout its lifecycle.

MOSA also fosters competition and innovation within the defense industry. By establishing open standards, the Army encourages a diverse range of suppliers to contribute to the program, driving technological advancements and reducing costs. This competitive environment ensures that the MV-75 benefits from the best available technologies while promoting collaboration and progress across the defense sector.

MOSA is a cornerstone of the MV-75, serving as a critical enabler of the weapon system's long-term success. By adhering to MOSA principles, the Army ensures that the MV-75 is equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow's battlefield.



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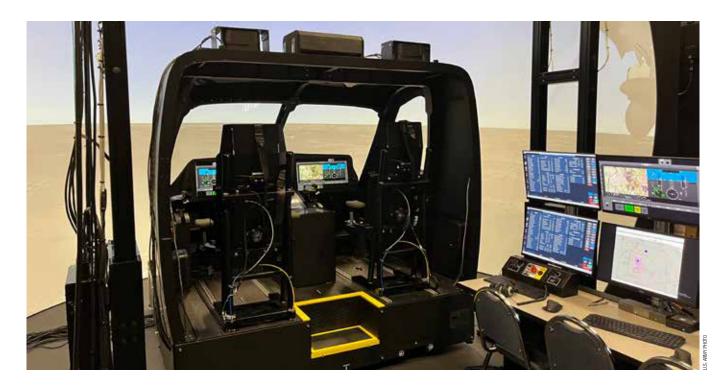
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Intellectual Property: The Balance of Innovation and Collaboration

The management of IP is another critical factor of the MV-75 program. In the defense industry, IP is both a driver of innovation and a potential barrier to collaboration. Protecting proprietary technologies incentivizes contractors to invest in research and development, ensuring that cutting-edge solutions are brought to the table. However, excessive restrictions on IP can hinder the Army's ability to integrate, maintain, and upgrade the platform over time.

Striking the right balance between protecting IP and fostering collaboration is essential. The Army must work closely with contractors to establish clear and fair agreements that define the ownership, use, and sharing of IP. These agreements should ensure that the Army has access to critical technologies while respecting the rights of contractors to protect their innovations. These arrangements provide the Army with the flexibility it needs to sustain and upgrade the MV-75 while preserving the incentives for contractors to innovate.

Effective IP management also supports the principles of MOSA. By ensuring that key technologies are accessible and interoperable, the Army can integrate components from multiple suppliers, fostering competition and reducing dependency on a single vendor. This approach not only enhances the resilience

of the supply chain but also ensures that the MV-75 remains adaptable.

Right to Repair: Enhancing Operational Readiness

The Right to Repair is revolutionizing how the Army sustains its equipment, empowering service members to repair, modify, and maintain critical systems without relying solely on original manufacturers. This capability is vital for maintaining operational readiness, particularly in high-tempo or forward-deployed environments where downtime can have serious consequences. By enabling faster, more efficient responses to maintenance challenges, the Right to Repair strengthens the Army's ability to meet mission demands while reducing costs.

Right to Repair also aligns with the MOSA and IP management goals, ensuring access to the technical data and tools needed to sustain platforms like the MV-75. Beyond its immediate operational benefits, the Right to Repair sets a continuous transformative precedent for the defense industry. By embedding maintainability and upgradability into the design of systems like the MV-75, the Army is fostering a culture of transparency, collaboration, and innovation. This shift not only enhances readiness but also encourages contractors to prioritize user-focused designs, paving the way for a more efficient and adaptable defense ecosystem.

The Warrior Right to Repair Act of

An interior view of the MV-75 FLRAA virtual prototype, delivered to Redstone Arsenal, AL, June 24, 2025.

2025, introduced July 8, 2025, by Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Tim Sheehy (R-Mont.), takes this principle to the next level. Once passed, the bipartisan legislation will mandate that defense contractors provide the DoD with fair access to repair materials—such as parts, tools, and technical data—while eliminating restrictive provisions that force reliance on costly contractor repairs. This approach will streamline maintenance processes, provide significant cost savings, and enhance military readiness across the entire DoD.

Conclusion

The MV-75 FLRAA program is critical to modernizing the Army's aviation capabilities and ensuring its readiness for the challenges of the future battlefield. By leveraging the principles of MOSA, managing IP effectively, and embracing the Right to Repair, the program is well-positioned to achieve its goals of adaptability, sustainability, and continuous modernization.

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Special Focus > Rotary Wing Project Managers

The Black Hawk at Mid-Life: Modernization, Autonomy, and Interoperability

By COL Ryan Nesrsta



or nearly half a century, the Sikorsky H-60 Black Hawk family of rotorcraft has been the backbone of U.S. Army vertical lift operations – a flexible, survivable, and widely exported utility helicopter that has moved troops, evacuated casualties, and supported combat and humanitarian missions worldwide. As the Army balances near-term operational needs with concept driven transformation under Future Vertical Lift (FVL), the Black Hawk program is in a period of rapid transformation to keep the H-60 platform supportable, suitable, and operationally effective well into the 2050s and beyond.

Why Modernize the Black Hawk Now?

The Black Hawk's longevity is a strength – and a liability. As a multi-role helicopter with a utilitarian form factor, the Black Hawk is fielded globally to effectively execute diverse missions worldwide including Troop Transport, Tactical Air Assault, MEDEVAC, Command and Control (C2), Special Operations, and Contested Logistics. However, its aging propulsion system, legacy avionics, and new mission demands (sensor

enabled survivability, launched effects integration, and data-driven mission command) require the Black Hawk to evolve through targeted capability updates. Modernization is about changing how the platform fights and supports the Army Warfighting Concept to counter emerging near-peer threats.

Survivability, Sensors, and Mission Equipment Packages

The modern battlefield demands improved communications, operational awareness and all-weather survivability. Black Hawks are being retrofitted with improved air to ground communications capabilities, Degraded Visual Environment (DVE) sensor suites, and configurable mission equipment packages for MEDEVAC, C2, assault, or Special Operations mission sets. The ability to rapidly reconfigure the Black Hawk ensures maximum operational flexibility and optimizes utilization of the Army's most prolific platform.

Autonomy and Launched Effects: Expanding the Black Hawk's Role

Implementing both federated (near-

term) and integrated (mid to far-term) technologies to utilize autonomy and autonomous behaviors and launched effects changes how the Warfighter employs the Black Hawk in evolving operational environments. These capabilities align with the Army's broader objective of technology maturation and risk reduction for the FVL family of systems; ensuring today's platforms serve as testbeds for tomorrow's doctrinal concepts.

Digital Modernization: MOSA and Open Systems

MOSA represents a fundamental shift from proprietary avionics toward open-architecture systems. This allows the Black Hawk to integrate new sensors and communications packages without full rewiring, accept software-only upgrades for emerging threats or mission requirements, and reduce the time and cost of capability insertion.

Power and Propulsion: The Improved Turbine Engine (T901)

Today, the UH-60 is test flying the T901 Improved Turbine Engine (ITE), which delivers more power across the

operational spectrum paired with reduced fuel consumption resulting in extended range. This demonstrates the potential of the Army's investment in ITE and its potential to reshape operations.

Sustained Modernization and Industrial Base Health

Modernization is enabled by close collaboration and integration with our industrial base partners - commercial and organic. Sikorsky continues to produce the H-60M through multiyear contracts that provide predictable delivery schedules, supplier stability, and critical foreign military sales. Partners at Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) are completing delivery of H-60V while continuing to provide essential sustainment services for the fielded fleet that will improve readiness, extend service life, and deliver modernization at scale. The Army will continue to leverage a whole-of-industry approach to meet global demands for the Black Hawk helicopter.

Conclusion

The Black Hawk program now occupies a pragmatic middle ground: it is neither technologically static nor

Upgrade	Capability Gain	Technology Insertion
Survivability	Advanced missile warning and IR suppression	Ongoing
Autonomy Enablers	Reduced crew workload, route optimization, cooperative teaming, and automated functions	2026+
Launched Effects Integration	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), Electronic Warfare (EW), and Strike	2026+
Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA)	Modular avionics/sensors, rapid technology insertion	2027+
Improved Turbine Engine (T901)	Increased power, fuel efficiency, and reliability	2029+

Modernization Priorities for the H-60 Fleet

scheduled for wholesale replacement. By investing in targeted upgrades, open systems in software and physical architecture, survivability enhancements, autonomy enablers, and launched effects integration, the Army ensures the H-60 remains a central component of the air domain's enhanced maneuver force. In doing so, the Black Hawk becomes more than a perennial workhorse – it becomes a technology incu-

bator, carrying the Army through critical maturation and risk reduction for the FVL family of systems, projecting capability today and transforming the next era of Army Aviation.

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Special Focus Fixed Wing

The Fixed Wing Project Office and Army Fixed Wing Aviation - Transformational A-ISR Capabilities because Lethality Starts with Intelligence

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

he Fixed Wing Project Office (FWPO), in concert with the Project Director Sensors-Aerial Intelligence (PD SAI), continues to modernize Army aerial-intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (A-ISR) assets while systematically divesting legacy turboprop platforms deemed unsuitable for Multi-Domain Operations. These actions directly support two of the three core tenets of the

2025 Army Transformation Initiative (ATI): the rapid delivery of critical warfighting capabilities and the elimination of wasteful or obsolete programs.

Since 2020, the FWPO and PD SAI have aggressively pursued the rapid deployment of transformational A-ISR capabilities. Collaboration with industry partners yielded the first contractor-owned, contractor-operated (COCO) high-altitude, deep-sensing

aerial technology demonstrator (ATD), the Airborne Reconnaissance and Targeting Exploitation Multi-Mission Intelligence System (ARTEMIS), which commenced operations in June 2020 and will be retired after five years of continuously deployed service. Since that first deployment the FWPO has deployed four additional COCO ATDs, providing the Army with a robust capability and enhancing contributions to Joint Force collection efforts.

HADES rendering.

These COCO systems operate daily during the competition phase conducting intelligence collection operations supporting multiple Combatant Commands (COCOMS). Long-endurance collection transpires through flying near sensitive political boundaries within friendly and international



LTG Anthony Hale, Deputy Chief of Staff for Army Intelligence (G-2), accepted delivery of the first Government-owned Bombardier Global 6500 on the Army's behalf during a ceremony held at Bombardier Defense in Wichita, KS.



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airspace. The increased performance over legacy turboprop aircraft, along with aircraft survivability equipment, enables A-ISR operational support to Army intelligence collection requirements up to and through competition below armed conflict. During the conflict phase, standoff distance will be adjusted for survivability as threat conditions allow continuing situational understanding and intelligence support for targeting as deep as possible.

The latest additions to this fleet are the two MAG Aerospace provided Army Theater-Level High Altitude Expeditionary Next Generation A-ISR (ATHENA) aircraft which deployed earlier this year. The next two Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC)-provided ATHENA aircraft are currently undergoing contractor flight testing preparing for deployment. Upon delivery of these last two ATHENA assets, the Army will have a total of six deployed high-altitude, deep-sensing A-ISR assets, while awaiting the development of organic capability.

HADES

The High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES) Lead

Systems Integrator (LSI) contract award in January 2025 was a significant achievement in the development of next-generation Army fixed wing A-ISR capabilities. Leveraging lessons learned from the COCO ATDs, HADES promises groundbreaking improvements in speed, range, payload, and endurance for Army A-ISR.

Offering increased airspeeds and extended endurance, the HADES expands the scope of A-ISR to a significantly larger geographical area. Its capability for global deployment within days—a substantial improvement over the multi-week deployment period for the legacy turboprop fleet-will degrade adversaries' ability to plan and maneuver. HADES is envisioned to provide critical targeting data for longrange precision fire (LRPF), launched effects (LE), electronic warfare/ electronic attack (EW/EA), cyber effects, and command and control (C2).

The FWPO delivery of the first two government-owned Bombardier Global 6500 aircraft to SNC, the LSI for HADES, was a significant milestone. The first Government-owned Bombardier Global 6500 supporting the HADES program was delivered to SNC in January and the second Global 6500 followed in July. These aircraft will serve as the first two HADES prototypes, and throughout 2025 will undergo modification, integration, and testing. Prototype 1 is scheduled for its first operational demonstration in late 2026, followed by Prototype 2 in 2027.

HADES Systems Integration Lab

The HADES program's innovative technical approach began with the acquisition of A-ISR as a service from defense contractors in 2020, initiating a campaign of learning through COCO ATDs. This innovation continues with the establishment of the HA-DES Systems Integration Lab (SIL). The HADES SIL, utilizing an actual Bombardier Global 6500 fuselage, replicates the internal layout of a HADES aircraft, enabling the FWPO and PD SAI to integrate and validate mission systems using a Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) for mission systems on a digital backbone prior to installation on operational platforms. This digital backbone facilitates rapid integration and modification to adapt to evolving mission requirements.





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ATHENA

The ATHENA aircraft, modified Bombardier Global 6500s, are equipped with tailored sensors to meet specific COCOMS requirements, addressing a broad spectrum of A-ISR missions and enhancing the Army's overall intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities. Two ATHENA operated by MAG Aerospace deployed to the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) earlier this year. SNC is currently constructing their two ATHENA aircraft, with delivery and deployment anticipated later this year.

ARTEMIS & ARES

ARTEMIS ATDs are modified Bombardier Challenger 650 aircraft owned and operated by Leidos that continue to provide intelligence gathering capabilities in the European Command (EUCOM) AOR. Since an ARTEMIS was initially deployed in 2020 the Challenger based aircraft have remained operational in EUCOM, supporting both Army and Joint collection requirements and have accumulated over 14,500 flight hours, demonstrating their reliability and effectiveness.

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 to the Army and Joint Force within the INDOPACOM AOR. Since its first flight in 2022, ARES has accumulated over 7,500 flight hours, demonstrating its reliability and effectiveness.

Jet Pilot Training

The transition to jet engine platforms necessitates a robust training program; to this end the FWPO has contracted with Leidos for three Global 6000/6500 aircraft located in Fort Bliss, TX. The second year of the Bombardier Global 6500 jet training program proved successful, with 66 aviators completing the Phase II Aircraft Qualification Course (AQC) this year. This course qualifies pilots in large cabin jet platforms regardless of prior fixed wing experience. The program provides comprehensive curriculum and training materials, with optional support for the development of Army manuals and documentation. Approximately 130 US Army Aviators have completed both the FAA Type Rating and the Phase II flight qualification. The program features four Instructor Pilots who have been certified by the Aviation Center of Excellence (AVCOE) Directorate of Evaluations and Standardization (DES).

Sustaining Transformational Capabilities

Earlier this year, the Secretary of Defense directed the Secretary of the Army to accelerate transformation by divesting outdated programs and prioritizing resources for long-range precision fires, air and missile defense, cyber, electronic warfare, and counterspace capabilities. The FWPO and PD SAI have consistently delivered operational A-ISR capabilities through the deployment of ATDs are poised to deliver an operational HADES prototype within the year. This is critical to support our Army and the Joint Force because lethality starts with intelligence.

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Special Focus > Fixed Wing

Providing Solutions to PED Data Flow/Dissemination By Ms. Julie M. Isaac

roject Director Sensors-Aerial Intelligence (PD SAI) manages the Army's aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) sensor portfolio. This includes everything from unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to manned aerial platforms equipped with intelligence-gathering payloads.

To mitigate Army capability gaps in processing, exploitation, and dissemination (PED) data flow, PD SAI developed a solution to appropriately secure data transfer at different classification levels across multiple systems, formats, domains, enclaves, and users. We developed a solution where the abstraction of a minimal set of parameters could be translated from producer formats to consumer formats at the integration seams of systems. This solution enables a seamless translation between producer and consumer formats at critical system integration points.

In addition, last year PD SAI began to develop and deploy a new automated high-value target (HVT) identification system, named Sensor Automation Support Targeting (SAST), to lessen the need for human interaction to detect and identify enemy threats on the battlefield. Traditionally, these threats could only be detected with a prior knowledge of the threat and threat laydown and man in the loop for confirmation.

By integrating SAST services, Program Executive Office for Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors (PEO IEW&S) sensors will use artificial intelligence and machine learning to address the Army's move to object-based tasking. It will ultimately allow PEO IE&WS sensors to quickly search the battlefield automatically and correlate data to rapidly identify and geolocate threats without any aid from human operators.

SAST is currently being integrated into contractor-owned, contractor-operated (COCO) aerial ISR platforms. This includes the Airborne Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare System (ARES), Airborne Reconnaissance Targeting Exploitation Multi-Mission



A Soldier receiving immersive, task-based training in a modular virtual reality headset. The Virtual Aerial Systems Trainer classroom represents a transformational shift in how the Army can approach mission equipment training, environment, eliminating dependency on scarce flight hours while increasing fidelity, safety, and repeatability of mission-critical tasks.

Intelligence System (ARTEMIS), and Army Theater-Level, High-Altitude Expeditionary Next Airborne (ATHENA), and will be integrated on the High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System integrated on (HADES).

Pivoting to be Program Agnostic

In addition to the work being done with SAST, PD SAI is accelerating the acquisition of new sensors for its portfolio. Two years ago, PD SAI determined a change in strategy was necessary and opted to realign priorities and shift from a platform-centric organization, focused on managing capability at a platform level, to becoming 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.

To better facilitate the sensor-centric transition, PD SAI is developing program-agnostic solutions, enabling

sensor reusability across the portfolio. The intent is to build and maintain a library of sensor capabilities that can then be tailored to meet platform specific requirements.

An example of how we are developing program agnostic solutions is the sensors being developed for the High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES). HADES will be highly mobile and provide deep sensing through the collection of communications intelligence, electronic intelligence, and synthetic aperture radar/moving target indicator. This will allow the system to detect, locate, identify, track, and target critical enemy assets on the ground and serve as a key enabler to Long-Range Precision Fires. HADES will provide increased flexibility in meeting emerging threats, capable of global deployment within hours, greater endurance and range, and has an increased survivability, leveraging stand-off by operating at higher altitudes than older turboprop aircraft.

The program-agnostic design of



Soldiers at Fort Bliss, Texas, get hands on with new Virtual Aerial Systems Trainer (VAST) classroom virtual reality headsets. The VAST classroom represents a transformational shift in how the Army can approach mission equipment training.

HADES sensors will facilitate their reuse across a wider range of programs, including those outside the PD SAI portfolio. This implementation will allow reconfiguration of data flows depending on mission needs, new data types and destinations can easily be added, and will leverage cross-domain solutions.

This transition will enable PD SAI to acquire future commercial-off-the-shelf systems cheaper and faster and get them delivered to Soldiers sooner.

Delivering the Army's first Virtual Aerial Systems Trainer Classroom

In May, PD SAI reached a historic milestone by delivering the first U.S. Army Virtual Aerial Systems Trainer (VAST) classroom. This first-of-its-kind capability is now operational at the 204th Military Intelligence Battalion in Fort Bliss, Texas, and is designed to train both rated and non-rated crewmembers in support of the Army Theater-Level, High-Altitude Expeditionary Next-Generation Aerial Intel-

ligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) (ATHENA) and HADES aerial ISR platforms.

Through a partnership with industry, PD SAI delivered a suite of virtual training modules that provide handson training for pilots and crew members on critical tasks, spanning preflight procedures through advanced system operation and maintenance. This training capability was developed and fielded with exceptional speed, enabling Soldiers to begin training immediately following approval.

The VAST classroom represents a fundamental shift in Army mission equipment training. This immersive, virtual environment reduces reliance on expensive and limited flight hours, while simultaneously increasing training fidelity, safety, and consistency. One of the biggest benefits of moving toward a virtual training environment is time. For example, Soldiers can now quickly learn how to disassemble parts of an aircraft, immediately reset the training when needed without incurring lost

training time to rebuild the aircraft, and easily start the disassembly process again from the beginning. By delivering adaptive, repeatable scenarios, VAST ensures Soldiers will receive consistent skill development that will reduce attrition and accelerate their mission readiness under constrained conditions. The system also allows operators to gain familiarity with aircraft environments before platforms are available, bridging critical training gaps.

The delivery of the VAST classroom signifies not only a leap forward in immersive training technology, but also a commitment to modernizing the ISR crew readiness in a rapidly evolving threat environment.

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FWAATS: West Virginia's Hidden Gem for Army Aviators By MAJ Andrew Tanner



Instructors and student aviators review checklists during fixed-wing training inside a C-12 cockpit at FWAATS.



ocated in Bridgeport, WV and operated out of the North Central West Virginia Airport the Fixed Wing Army Aviation Training Site (FWAATS) is a gem for providing specialized training to Army Aviators. Its location in the mountains of Appalachia West Virginia provides beautiful and challenging flight conditions along with a small-town community feel.

While relatively small in size, it is an integral part of Army Aviation, providing a wide range of specialized training courses for advanced aviators. These courses include a full spectrum of training to qualify and advance in the C-26 Metroliner and C-12 Huron, including Aviator Qualification (Transition) (AQT) courses, Instructor Pilot Courses (IPC), Instructor Pilot Standardization Course (IPC), Senior Instructor Pilot/Instrument Flight Examiner (IFE), and Maintenance Test Pilot (MTP). Uniquely, FWAATS is home to the only C-12

AQT course specifically designed for Army Helicopter Aviators with prerequisite civilian fixed wing ratings and time, looking to transition to a fixed wing platform. This niche course allows aviators to complete the C-12 qualification in an accelerated five-week course compared to the standard twelve-week program.

What truly makes FWAATS unique is its culture of instruction. Each course is diverse yet small, averaging only a handful of students per class, coming from Army, Army Reserves, National Guard, and Air Force units. With this emphasis on a more direct and personal training environment, students are able to quickly build relationships where instructors and students know each other by name, background, career path, and abilities, while maintaining the Army Standard. This mix of backgrounds most often results in a knowledge exchange, where each class is able to learn as much from each other's experiences as they do from the syllabus.

Through this small-group instruction, Soldiers graduate not only proficient in their technical skills but also equipped with professional relationships that enhance flexibility, adaptability, and interoperability within their organizations. These connections extend beyond FWAATS and ripple across the Total Force, building networks that strengthen Army Aviation as a whole.

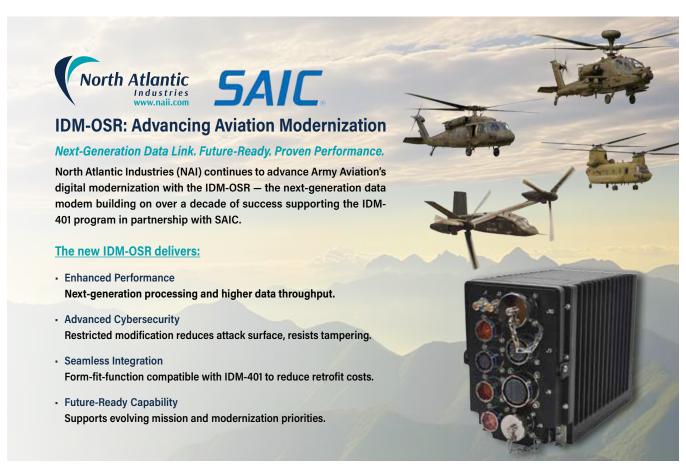
To continue to sustain this mission and meet demand FWAATS is always looking for additional personnel to train. Aviators serving here gain the opportunity to fly in beautiful and challenging Appalachian environments, teach in small class settings, and contribute directly to shaping the Army's fixed-wing community. For those who join, and for those who pass through as students, the combination of people and place makes it one of the Army's most valuable aviation resources.

To learn more visit https://www.wv.ng.mil/Training/Fixed-Wing-Army-Aviation-Training-Site/.

MAJ Andrew Tanner is the Operations Officer for the Fixed Wing Army Aviation Training Site located in Bridgeport, WV.







Special Focus > Army Capability Managers

AH-64E for the Win: Improve Quality, Increase Lethality, and Achieve Common Configuration

By COL Ashley S. Lee

■ he Army Capability Manager for Reconnaissance and Attack (ACM-RA) worked the past year to ensure the AH-64 remains the world's premier rotary-wing attack platform. Although First Person View (FPV) drones have dominated the news coverage of the Ukraine/ Russia Conflict, the maneuverability, survivability, and lethality of the AH-64 remains the greatest advantage to our ground forces in a Large Scale Combat Operation (LSCO). And with plans to experiment Launched Effects (LE) on AH-64 in the next year, the platform stands ready to integrate even further as a combined arms maneuver force.

The team at ACM-RA focused on three priorities in the last year: improve quality, increase lethality, and achieve common configuration. The Army Transformation Initiative is a significant shift for Apache formations and will expedite timelines to achieve the three priorities. The deactivation of the Air Cavalry Squadrons enables the rightsizing of the fleet in terms of aircraft survivability equipment, crypto-mod compliant radios, sensor/sight mods, and level-set critical operator and maintainer positions within the Attack Battalions.

Quality

Improved tail rotor blade, improved tail rotor drive system, and oil-cooled generator are set to field FY30-31. These improvements are critical to increasing directional control margin (5-8%), addressing the four tail-rotor

blade Class A mishaps since 2005, and the near ten-fold improvement of time-before-overhaul of the current air-cooled generator. The continued focus on these three improvements will yield critical improvements to the world's premier attack platform.

Lethality

Increasing lethality for the Apache means extending the reach for the ground commander. ACM-RA and Program Manager for Tactical Air Ground Missiles are working to fund the development of an extended range Joint Air Ground Missile (JAGM) out to 40km. JAGM was already a leap in technology from the Hellfire missile: combining Semi-Active Laser precision with Millimeter Wave Radar to see, hit,



and kill modernized armor through bad weather, enemy countermeasures, and Active Protection Systems. The recent SPIKE missile demonstrations by 101st CAB, 12th CAB, and 16th CAB will inform future requirements for a high-speed direct-strike missile extending well beyond the reach of the current AH-64E on-board sensors.

The South Carolina Army National Guard successfully executed their counter-UAS demonstration last month showcasing the capabilities of the Apache in a counter-UAS role. The demonstration was executed with crews detecting, identifying, and destroying UAS targets with JAGM, L7A Longbow and Romeo HELLFIRE missiles, and Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System.

As Army Aviation and Future Vertical Lift work on leveraging technological advancements and tactical employment of LE, ACM-RA is spearheading the inclusion of the "LE on AH" efforts for the March 2026 Cross-Domain Fires Concept Focused Warfighting Exercise and the July 2026 Project Convergence Capstone 6 event. The team at the Technology Development Directorate Aviation will first validate and test

aircraft modifications and 1ACB will execute in July. These two events will validate the tactical advantage provided to the ground commander in their ability to launch LEs in adverse weather conditions and conduct follow-on direct strike missions with the Apache.

Common Configuration

The goal of achieving a common configuration for both the fielded fleet and the Longbow Crew Trainer is always a challenge. The efforts to put into the hands of Warfighters the newest and most lethal capabilities necessitate enduring multi-version fleets across the formation. The divestiture of the D-models and deactivation of the ACS units will be completed in approximately two years. The Aviation Enterprise will make determinations on cross-leveling critical aircraft survivability equipment, auxiliary fuel tanks, fire control radars, communication packages, and SPIKE mods. Concurrently, version 6.5 will be fielded. Version 6.5 incorporates improvements to Common Infrared Countermeasure Pilot-Vehicle-Interface, Manned-Unmanned Teaming-expanded workload reduction, Cognitive Decision Aiding System, Eagle-embedded GPS Inertial Navigation System, Multi-platform Anti-jam GPS Navigation Antenna, Rover-to-Coyote modem replacement, and Modular Open System Interface.

Conclusion

The Apache is the platform that will keep the Army competitive against adversaries now and into 2050. ACM-RA is 100% committed to meet the needs of the Aviation and Ground Warfighter to dominate and win in a Joint All-Domain Environment. This coupled with defense industry collaboration about emerging technology will drive the modernization process that will ensure dominance in LSCO.

ATTACK!!

COL Ashley S. Lee is the Director of Army Capability Manager for Reconnaissance and Attack, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Rucker, AL.

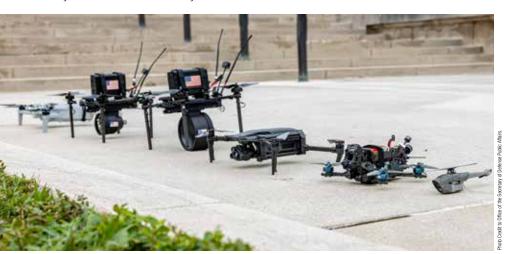




Special Focus > Army Capability Managers

Unleashing Drone Dominance

By COL Nicholas D. Ryan



"Drone technology is advancing so rapidly, our major risk is risk-avoidance."

- SECWAR Pete Hegseth,

Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance, July 10, 2025

round the world, Unmanned Aircraft System proliferation continues at an exponential rate across commercial and military applications. Our allies and adversaries are successfully integrating and proving advanced UAS technology. Yet, despite the April 2025 Army Transformation Initiative, Army-wide fielding of advanced UAS technologies continued at a glacial pace. The primary question that arose was how is everyone else able to procure and integrate UAS technology faster than the Army. The answer is that we are our own worst enemies when it comes to proliferating UAS. The U.S. military faced obstacles that our adversaries and allies did not, including slow bureaucratic processes, overly restrictive policies, risk averse acquisition oversight, and sluggish budget debates that stifled innovation.

For years, we knew things had to change, but the constraints were so massive, it appeared to be an impossible task. It would take aggressive action at the national and Department of War level to truly accelerate transformation. That action came in May 2025.

"I am rescinding restrictive policies that hindered production and limited access to these vital technologies, unleashing the combined potential of American manufacturing and warfighter ingenuity."

- SECWAR Pete Hegseth, Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance, July 10, 2025

In May 2025, the Department of Government Efficiency informed me that I was selected to work as the Army representative on a Joint Service DOGE Team. We had thirty days to author a directive for the Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, that would immediately remove the selfimposed restrictions that stifled the U.S. military's integration of drone technology. Thankfully, these issues and constraints were well known to everyone on the DOGE team, allowing us to immediately focus on advancing the U.S. military's drone dominance. The team's guiding principle was to remove the guardrails on UAS proliferation by delegating authority to each service to manage their own policies, processes and risk.

While authoring this guidance, President Donald Trump released the White House Executive Order for *Unleashing American Drone Dominance*. This executive order from the Commander in





Top left: Small UAS flown by joint service UAS operators during the SECWAR's press release for Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance.

Top right: A U.S. Army UAS flown by SSG Oscar Bravo delivers the Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance directive to Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at the Pentagon, Washington, DC on July 10, 2025.

Lower right: Members of the Army Drone Team competing in their first Joint Military Drone Competition in Washington, DC.

Chief established the authority to rapidly procure, integrate, and train with low-cost high-performing drones manufactured in the United States. Additionally, this executive order expanded beyond the DOW's authority to direct the Department of Transportation, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Department of Commerce, and the Federal Communications Commission to work with the DOW to improve UAS access to airspace and spectrum.

On July 10, 2025, the Secretary Hegseth, released his guidance for Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance. One of the most significant upheavals to DOW's policies and processes, this was the catalyst necessary to breach the obstacles impeding UAS transformation. This guidance established three specific efforts: bolster the nascent U.S. drone manufacturing industrial base; power a technological leapfrog ahead of our adversaries; and employ the latest technology to train as we expect to fight in future conflicts.

The directives outlined in *Unleashing* U.S. Military Drone Dominance will immediately empower warfighters with the technological advantage and lethal capability necessary to outmatch and overwhelm any adversary. First, it rescinded restrictive policies that negatively impacted the procurement, integration, and employment of UAS. The guidance also directed that all supporting agencies with a stake in UAS integration must expedite the development, testing, and fielding of drone technology. Next, it delegated authority previously retained at the SECWAR or Army Staff level down to the colonel and brigadier general level to procure, certify, and train with UAS. Finally, it directed the services to integrate UAS into all training starting at the squad level, including the initiation of force-on-force drone wars. Following the publication of Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance, the Army's next step was to turn this guidance into action.

Operationalizing Drone Dominance

The *Army UAS Strategy* outlines significant efforts to ensure every echelon and warfighting function is enabled with UAS technology. The objectives of the Army UAS Strategy are to embed UAS at every echelon, enable UAS innovation at the tactical edge, achieve universal interoperability and auton-

omy, synchronize Army UAS efforts through one proponent, and institutionalize UAS across every warfighting function. The Army is already driving this transformational change with examples of these significant efforts.

The first example is the establishment of the Army Drone Team. In June 2025, this team competed in its first-ever Joint Military Drone Competition, winning second place just behind the U.S. Marine Corps Drone Team. The Army Drone Team is comprised of the best Army UAS operators of any MOS and routinely competes in Joint and International Drone Competitions. This competitive nature has already proliferated Army-wide, with the Army hosting its first-ever Army Drone Competition in 2026.

The next example is the initiation of the Army's UAS Advanced Lethality Course at Fort Rucker, AL in August 2025. This course takes experienced UAS operators from across the Army and trains them to be subject matter experts on the lethal employment of UAS. They will then return to their home station to advise their commanders on how to implement and execute UAS Lethal Gunnery Training and Qualification.

The last example is the Army UAS Marketplace. This effort, led by the Army Program Manager for UAS, creates an online marketplace for vetted UAS and components. The Army UAS Marketplace will provide freedom of choice and flexibility for operational units to procure the UAS capabilities required for their mission, while also creating opportunities for UAS industry vendors to showcase their capability. This freedom and opportunity will advance UAS technology and vendor competition to ensure Soldiers always have the best UAS capabilities.

The Army is now leading the charge on drone dominance. The procurement, integration, and employment of UAS technology is moving at light speed. With the renewed risk acceptance of our senior leaders, we are not allowing outdated policies, obsolete processes, or the frozen bureaucracy to stop us. We will achieve drone dominance over our adversaries.

COL Nicholas D. Ryan is the Director, Army Capability Manager for Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Army Futures Command, at Fort Rucker, AL.



Special Focus > Airspace Management Army Combat Flight Inspection Services

By CW3 Bradley J. Whitacre



ave you ever been ready to depart your home airfield, only to hear the Tower announce, "Expect delays. Flight Check in progress," followed by the sight of an aircraft performing a low approach down the runway? Flight Check is the callsign used by Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) flight inspection aircraft conducting airborne evaluations of airfields, navigational aids (NAVAIDs), and instrument procedures. These inspections are critical to

ensuring the safety and functionality of the National Airspace System (NAS) and U.S. facilities supporting global military operations.

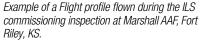
What many may not know is that the FAA's flight inspection enterprise is augmented by a dedicated group of professionals from Army and Air Force formations. Their mission is to provide direct support to U.S. military operations worldwide, enhancing the safe projection of power in all weather conditions.

The Mission

As outlined in Army Regulation 95-2, the United States Army Air Traffic Services Command (ATSCOM) provides subject matter expertise for air traffic and air navigation requirements. This includes planning, development, standardization, and evaluation of ATC systems and services. ATSCOM's team of highly experienced pilots, maintain-

Top left: ATSCOM's Airspace System Inspection Pilots CW3 Thomas Ford and CW4 Adam Stalvey performing obstacle evaluation and flyability check of new procedures for Hohenfels Army Airfield, Germany.

Lower Left: ATSCOM Mission Specialist, SSG Edward Pearson, performing RNAV validation procedures on Allen AAF, Alaska



ers, and air traffic controllers ensures that airborne and ground-based ATC assets operate seamlessly within the National Airspace System (NAS) and at OCONUS U.S. military airfields.

The Flight Inspection Program, while small, punches well above its weight class as a highly impactful element of ATSCOM. Through airborne evaluations of airfield facilities, NAVAIDs, instrument flight procedures, and combat contingency needs, ATSCOM's aircrews support aviation power projection capabilities for the Army and other military branches.

Capabilities and Impact

Each year, the Flight Inspection Team inspects hundreds of NAVAIDs (ILS, VOR, DME, TACAN, GPS, RNP, RNAV, NDB, radars), instrument flight procedures, airport lighting, communication systems, and airborne obstacle assessments worldwide. These missions ensure strict compliance with flight inspection standards while enabling ground maintenance teams to optimize system accuracy for use in both peacetime and combat zones.







Missions range from signal-in-space analysis and obstacle assessments to lighting system checks, air traffic controller training, and facility maintenance support. ATSCOM's broad spectrum of flight inspection capabilities enhances mobility and lethality, enabling force projection for U.S. military operations across the globe.

The Aircrew & The Aircraft

ATSCOM's Flight Inspection Team consists of highly skilled Army aviators certified as FAA Airspace System Inspection Pilots (ASIP) and ATC maintenance technicians trained as Airspace Safety Inspectors. Each team member undergoes rigorous FAA training and multiple check rides to earn the credentials required for this critical mission.

The Army's flight inspection platform is the C-12S aircraft, equipped with extended range capabilities and the FAA-developed Automatic Flight Inspection System (AFIS). This unique aircraft is the only flight inspection platform owned, operated, and maintained by the Department of the Army, allowing tailored support for specific military operations. Outfitted with aircraft survivability equipment, the C-12S can deploy to combat contingency locations worldwide, meeting the needs of the Army and joint forces.

The Process

In coordination with the U.S. Army Aeronautical Services Agency (USAA-SA) and the FAA Flight Operations Group, ATSCOM provides flight inspection and technical assistance to Army fixed-base and tactical ATC systems. Leveraging over 300 combined years of expertise from aviators, air traffic controllers, and ATC maintainers, ATSCOM coaches, teaches, and mentors Soldiers across all COMPOS and civilians performing ATC operations to meet FORSCOM readiness initiatives.

Evaluations (ARMS, QAEs, and ATNAVICS Flight Checks)

ATSCOM conducts Flight Inspection and Quality Assurance Evaluations (QAEs) for Army tactical ATC units during Aviation Resource Management Surveys (ARMS) and for Army installation ATC facilities during QAÉs. ARMS Inspections provide commanders with detailed assessments of their tactical ATC units' capabilities; QAEs evaluate installation ATC operations, including support for aviation warfighters and civilian aircraft within the NAS and OCONUS. These evaluations ensure airfield facilities serve as effective training bases for tactical air traffic controllers and maintenance personnel.

Both ARMS and QAEs include flight checks of Army NAVAIDs, tactical radar systems, airfield lighting systems, and associated ATC facilities. These evaluations also assess airspace management procedures, providing commanders with comprehensive recommendations to mitigate risk, resolve facility issues, and enhance readiness.

The Air Traffic Navigation, Integration, and Coordination System (AT-NAVICS) is the Army's tactical radar system used by units to control air traffic. Employing ATNAVICS is a highly technical process that requires detailed airspace coordination through letters of agreement, radar and radio frequency allocation, airfield data analysis, and the preparation of Minimum Vectoring Altitude (MVA) charts and instrument flight procedures.

The unit's communications and NAVAIDs maintenance team performs equipment certifications, followed by a flyability check to mitigate risk. Task proficiency is validated through flight inspections during collective training events, ARMS, and contingency operations. The ATNAVICS flight check involves precise measurements of the

ATSCOM's CW3 Ford and SSG Pearson conduct ground-based trajectory analysis during a forward combat flight inspection in austere environments.

Precision Approach Radar (PAR), including azimuth, glide path angle, and lower safe limits, all to within hundredths of a degree. The flight crew evaluates air traffic controller performance, radio communications, equipment accuracy, and airfield lighting systems, providing valuable feedback to the Commander. ATSCOM then delivers follow-on training to address any gaps in unit programs.

Modernization and Acquisitions

ATSCOM's Flight Inspection Team is at the forefront of modernizing tactical and installation air navigation systems. In collaboration with ATSCOM's Tactical, Fixed Base, and S4/AMF Directorates, the Flight Team supports efforts to sustain, improve, and expand the Army's all-weather aviation warfighting capabilities.

The team also responds rapidly to equipment outages across facilities, deploying ground technicians alongside flight inspection support to expedite the restoration of critical Army-maintained navigational systems. These systems are essential for enabling U.S. military and coalition partner movements across various theaters of operation.

When you hear the ATSCOM Flight Check call sign, you can rest assured that we are working diligently to enhance flight safety and Army ATC readiness in an ever-changing airspace environment.

CW3 Bradley J. Whitacre is the chief of standardization and certification and an airspace system inspection pilot in the Quality Assurance Division, Air Traffic Services Command located at Fort Rucker, AL.

Special Focus > Airspace Management





Here Am I, Send Me

By LTC Gerardo F. Dominguez

he Army Structure Memorandum (ARSTRUC) 2025-2029, released on February 27, 2024, set in motion significant changes across Army formations. Focused on balancing force structure within end-strength constraints, the ARSTRUC prioritized investments in capabilities to prepare for future conflicts. To achieve this balance, the Army divested legacy counterinsurgency / counterterrorism (COIN/CT) capabilities in alignment with the National Defense Strategy and Defense Planning Guidance, while simultaneously investing in capabilities necessary for Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) and Multi-Domain Operations (MDO). Within the aviation community, these changes are known as the Army Aviation Transition Initiative (AATI).

The restructuring of combat aviation brigades (CABs) worldwide has been a monumental effort, showcasing the dedication of leaders and staff across all echelons. This article highlights a key aspect of AATI – the impact on the 164th Theater Airfield Operations Group (TAOG) and its role in shaping the future of the Army's Air Traffic Services (ATS) enterprise.

The Changes

By the end of AATI in FY28, the 164th TAOG will become the only active-duty (COMPO 1) unit of its kind, with one Airfield Operations Battalion (AOB) and six Airfield Operations Companies (AOCs) stationed across the United States. Two additional AOCs will align with Combatant Commands in Hawaii and Korea, bringing the total to eight. The TAOG also houses the 597th Maintenance Detachment, the Army's sole ATS maintenance unit, which provides global support to COMPO 1 and 2 units, saving time and money while enhancing readiness. Adding complexity to this transition is the deployment of the 1-58th AOB to the Horn of Africa (HOA) in support of CJTF-HOA. To ensure a smooth transition, the TAOG team is in constant coordination with key partners, including Air Traffic Services Command (ATSCOM), U.S Army Forces Command (FORSCOM), Aviation Center of Excellence (AVNCOE), U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command (CECOM), and CONUS Division Sustainment Brigades (DSBs) receiving the AOCs as tenant units.

Assessing Risk

As AATI progresses, TAOG leadership is addressing challenges and risks associated with airspace management. During

Top: LZSO mission in Chievres, Belgium with the U.S. and Belgium Airforces with support of the Belgium AF Airbus A400 Atlas.

Bottom: 597th SMD troubleshoots the ATNAVICS for INARNG, Ft. Rucker, AL, 7 May 2025.

his visit to Fort Rucker in December 2024, General Randy George, Chief of Staff of the Army, emphasized the increasing complexity of modern battle-fields, citing the proliferation of drones and technologies that complicate airspace management. In response, the TAOG conducted a DOTMLPF-P assessment to evaluate current capabilities and chart a path forward.

The assessment revealed that the TAOG's mission and equipment have remained static for 20 years, with modernization efforts lagging behind. To remain relevant, the TAOG must modernize its equipment and develop new employment techniques. The TAOG staff's guiding principle, "Bias for Action," is driving efforts to forge the "Way Ahead."

Key Initiatives

Key initiatives include the establishment of a Doctrine Operational Planning Team (OPT) to revise critical publications such as ATP 3-04.6 (Air Traffic Services Operations), ATP 3-04.16 (Airfield Operations), and TC 3-04.15 (ATS Facility Operations Training and Standards). These updates are essential to ensure readiness and training objectives align with the TAOG's proposed expanded mission of airspace management in conjunction with airfield operations. Additionally, the Air Traffic Services Working Group, part of the Aviation Enterprise Airspace working group, will focus on future organizational structures, ATS capabilities, and core competencies to gain concurrence from senior aviation leaders.

The TAOG Air Traffic Services Standardization Element (ATTSE) is proactively addressing training gaps by developing comprehensive materials to fill the void in the Airspace Integration Course at the schoolhouse. These resources are specifically designed to enhance the integration of manned and unmanned Army aircraft, expediting the transition of Airfield Operations Companies (AOCs) from C5 readiness status to T-level readiness. Additionally, these materials will serve as an exportable product to support a brigade's Air Defense Airspace Management (ADAM) section.

The training focuses on airspace integration and deconfliction, ensuring operational effectiveness and enabling seamless coordination across Army aviation and airspace management elements. The ultimate goal is to pro-

duce trained and mission-ready AOCs capable of supporting Theater Areas of Responsibility (AORs), Corps and Division Airspace Elements, and Combatant Command airspace requirements, enabling seamless airspace management and operational success.

Modernization efforts are also underway, with the 4th Infantry Division testing Next Generation Command and Control (NGC2) systems, including ASTARTE, TAIS, and Anduril Sprint (Lattice Integration), during exercises like Project Convergence Capstone 6 (PCC6). These efforts will inform the TAOG's future mission and equipment requirements. Additionally, the TAOG is partnering with PEO Soldier to test UAVs equipped with 3D mapping capabilities at Fort Rucker and in operational environments like HOA, providing valuable insights into airfield operations and airspace management.

To sustain the AOCs, the TAOG is exploring the feasibility of establishing an ATS ORF/CRF-like capability within the 597th Maintenance Detachment. This initiative would allow 94D maintainers to train on divested ATS

equipment, improving proficiency and reducing reliance on external maintenance contracts, ultimately saving the Army money.

Finally, the TAOG staff is maintaining proficiency by supporting major theater-level exercises such as Northern Strike, Freedom Shield, and Balikatan, ensuring readiness for operations in INDO-PACOM, NORTHCOM, and the Korea Theater of Operations (KTO).

With "Bias for Action" as its hall-mark, the 164th TAOG is driving efforts to modernize doctrine, train the next generation of air traffic controllers and maintainers, and integrate innovative technologies to address airspace management challenges. The end state is a TAOG that is ready to support the Army's evolving mission and mitigate the risks described by General George.

LTC Gerardo F. Dominguez is the executive officer of the 164th Theater Aviation Operations Group located at Fort Rucker, AL.





Special Focus > Airspace Management

Advancing Army Fixed Base Air Traffic Capabilities in 2026 and Beyond

By Henry A. Ivy and Jessica M. Moore

he Assured Airspace Access Systems (A3S) Product Office's Fixed Base Air Traffic Control (ATC) team, in PEO Aviation's Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture (AMSA) Project Office, manages a critical and unique portfolio of ten fixed base ATC systems deployed at more than 80 Army airfields and heliports globally. By tracking fixed and rotary wing aircraft and enabling safe flight operations and navigation in all-weather environments, these essential systems help Army and Joint Force aviators succeed in both combat and non-combat operations. The Fixed Base ATC team maintains ATC capabilities through close coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and partner services throughout the U.S. Department of Defense, leveraging support from A3S and AMSA.

In the past year, the Fixed Base ATC team focused on modernizing the Instrument Landing System (ILS), securing uninterrupted repair of key radio transceivers, and assuming full sustainment responsibility for the ATC portfolio previously managed by the Communications and Electronics Command (CECOM).

Expanding ILS Capabilities at Redstone Arsenal, AL

Force deployment, training and sustained operations depend on Army installation airfields both domestically and abroad. The Army Aviation Installation Air Traffic Control Equipment Strategy identifies the ILS as critical for airfield operations, particularly in challenging weather conditions. A ground-based navigational aid, the ILS enables precision runway approaches at night or in instrument meteorological conditions.

The Army fielded most in-service legacy MARK-20A ILSs in the late 1990's. The A3S Product Office will install and commission over 25 Thales ILS-420 systems over the next decade to modernize these aging systems and replace de-commissioned Fixed Base Precision Approach Radars.

The Thales ILS-420 is a commercial, FAA-certified system that meets International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Category I requirements and complies with national and international spectrum regulations.

This modern solution gives all modernized, manned Army aircraft precision approaches to ensure safe, all-weather operations and enhance Army airfield readiness worldwide. When the opportunity arose to augment Redstone Arsenal's airfield with an ILS-420, the A3S ATC team initiated the installation plan and schedule. Following the prospective site survey at Redstone Army Airfield, A3S ATC collaborated with the Army Reserve's 375th Engineer Company in Huntsville, AL, using their expertise for site earthwork preparation.

The A3S ATC-Army Reserve's collaboration accelerated the project schedule while also training the 375th in critical airfield construction techniques, enhancing both Redstone Army Airfield readiness and Army Reserves Engineering capabilities. Site preparation begins in FY26, followed by ILS-40 installation in FY27.



Instrument Landing System (ILS) installed at Marshall Army Airfield, Fort Riley, KS.

Next Generation (NEXGEN) Radio Replacement Program (RRP)

ATC operations require reliable voice communications. The fielded ATC rack mounted radio system includes the General Dynamics transmitter and receiver and the Harris Corps AN/ PRC-117G. To address the end of original equipment manufacturer transceiver support in FY25, the ATC team awarded a three-year contract for out-of-war-



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ranty repairs as an interim solution until incremental Fixed Base ATC radio replacement begins after FY26.

Sustainment Responsibility

In FY25, AMSA and the A3S Product Office expanded Fixed Base ATC portfolio management by assuming the sustainment role from CECOM, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. AMSA and the Fixed Base ATC team will capitalize upon its extensive technical and fielding expertise to sustain its systems with item management, logistics support, provisioning, and cataloging.

Collectively, these efforts ensure long-term system reliability, operational readiness, and continued assured airspace access for Army Aviation operations worldwide.

Mr. Henry A. Ivy is the Assistant Product Manager (APM) for the Fixed Base Product Team and Ms. Jessica M. Moore is the Systems Acquisition Manager

for the Assured Airspace Access Systems Project Office at Redstone Arsenal, AL.





Special Focus

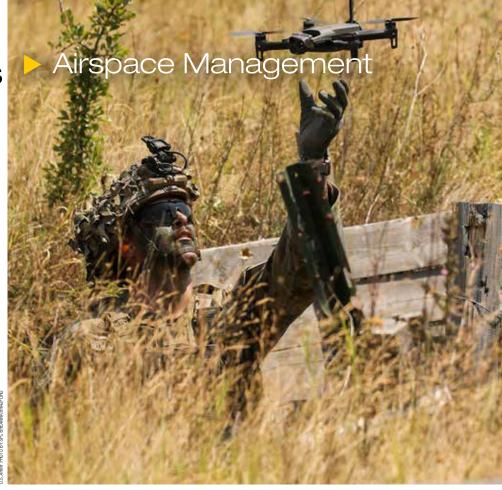
Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance

By COL Ronald Smith, Mr. Barney Owens and LTC David Orzech

n July 10, 2025, The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) released the "Unleashing U.S. Military Drone Dominance" memorandum, in an effort to fully support Presidential Executive Order 14307 and to supercharge drone innovation in the U.S. military. While the intent of the SECDEF's memo is to minimize barriers to drone production, procurement, and integration into realistic training, a key aspect enabling Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) operations in the U.S. National Airspace System (NAS) is policy between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). DoD and FAA policy will allow for relevant combat training while ensuring the safety of manned aircraft and non-participating personnel in the NAS. Operating within active restricted areas remains the most permissive environment for Army UAS.

Army Implementation

The SECDEF memo has far-reaching policy and procedure implications including the rescission of EXORDs and policy that no longer apply; changes to procurement of UAS; DoD methods of compliance with the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act; Blue List management; minimum training standards; exception to policy waivers; and airworthiness release (AWR) requirements. Implementation of the SECDEF's guidance is underway at the policy and operational unit level as it relates to airspace access



A Soldier retrieves a Parrot ANAFI USA drone during a live fire exercise.

through the United States Army Aeronautical Services Agency (USAASA).

USAASA, a Field Operating Agency of the Headquarters Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7, is working closely with the Policy Board on Federal Aviation (PBFA) to update the critical DoD/ FAA UAS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This MOU governs DoD UAS operations in the NAS. It grants the Army the ability to approve many drone operations internally using the Airspace Access Authorization (AAA), while some approvals are retained by the FAA with a Certificate of Authorization (COA). In light of the recent SECDEF memo, the Army and PBFA are negotiating the following changes to the MOU, to increase Army authorities and access to the NAS.

■ National "File and Fly" COA for Groups 4 and 5 UAS. Establish a national DoD COA for operations in Class A airspace within the contiguous U.S. and Alaska. This COA will allow operators to file an Instrument Flight Rules flight plan to a destination and permit him/her to change the destination in flight, in support of mission requirements; avoidance of severe weather conditions; and Army

MQ-1C (Gray Eagle) UAS support to Joint Task Force Southern Border along the nearly 2,000-mile boundary. The COA will enable Gray Eagle operators to loiter along the route to maintain contact with potential targets of interest. The FAA intends to approve the COA with an effective date of 01 November 2025 and cancel all existing FAA COAs operating in Class A airspace.

•No COA or AAA. Authorize the DoD to operate UAS below 0.55 lbs. without an FAA COA or Army AAA. The change will allow the Teledyne FLIR Black Hornet nano-UAS to operate in Class G airspace up to 100 feet above ground level (AGL) without an AAA. Currently, the Black Hornet is operating throughout the NAS and in support of multiple efforts.

■ Army AAA Authority up to Group 3. Authorize the Army to approve operations in Class G airspace for UAS weighing up to 1320 lbs. This change will allow Army Group 3 UAS to operate tactically in Class G airspace with an Army AAA.

■ No AWR for Groups 1 & 2. Remove airworthiness certification requirement for Groups 1 and 2 UAS, with few exceptions. The exceptions include flights over

populated areas, night operations, and multiple UAS flown by a single operator.

No NOTAMs for Groups 1 & 2. Remove NOTAM requirement for Groups 1 and 2 UAS in Class G airspace operating below 400 feet AGL. Publishing of NOTAMs will be at the discretion of the military service.

What Does This Mean For Units Today?

Although the MOU is important for codifying DoD operations in the NAS, the Army is taking immediate action to empower commanders in the field. US-AASA is already streamlining the airspace approval process enabling greater flexibility for commanders. The System Readiness Directorate published a General AWR for non-weaponized, multi-rotor Group 1 UAS (NW-MR-GRP1 UAS). This allows USAASA to approve AAAs for all systems covered by this General AWR. In other words, units can request an AAA for "NW-MR-GRP1 UAS, multi-training area," granting approval to operate all current and future NW-MR-GRP1 UAS systems under one single AAA, at the locations specified. USAASA has exercised this authority several times, including one for 3rd Brigade Combat Teams (BCT), 25th ID that authorizes units to operate NW-MR-GRP1 UAS at multiple training locations on Oahu, HI.

Additionally, while the airspace request requires at least an O6 commander's endorsement, higher level commanders can also endorse UAS airspace requests. A senior mission commander who desires to eliminate the airspace approval burden for all lower echelon units could endorse a single NW-MR-GRP1 UAS AAA for all desired training locations on an installation, thereby receiving airspace approval for all subordinate units to operate current and future NW-MR-GRP1 UAS systems. USAASA has processed and approved a request for three BCTs at Fort Campbell, endorsed at the Assistant Division Commander-Support, 101st Airborne Division, that authorizes units to operate small UAS (sUAS) in the cantonment area on one AAA.

This capability currently only exists for Group 1 UAS; however, the Army anticipates changes to Group 2 AWRs given the SECDEF guidance, potentially extending the Army's authority to Group 2 systems in the future. This will streamline the vast majority of sUAS airspace approvals enabling the FAA

to focus risk analysis and mitigation on Group 3 UAS and larger airspace access requests. Army AAAs and FAA COAs are valid for up to 2 years. In all cases, the local Air Traffic & Airspace Officer and the Department of the Army Representatives (DAR) are the best source of information and guidance for operating UAS within the NAS.

Department of the Army Representatives (DAR)

DARs are the vital link for UAS operations in the NAS, with USAASA acting as the key integrator of aviation operations with the FAA. USAASA's DAR teams - made up of aviation officers and senior NCOs - are regionally aligned and integrated with the FAA headquarters and regional centers in the Eastern, Central, and Western United States. A forward detachment in Sembach, Germany, supports Army aviation operations across Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, while the Western DAR team also oversees the Pacific. These experienced teams are invaluable resources for units planning to operate UAS in the NAS and abroad.

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- FAA HQ LTC Derrick Peters, derrick.peters@faa.gov
- UŠAASĎ-E LTC Joseph Holland, joseph.p.holland.mil@army.mil

Conclusion

UAS operations in the NAS are happening now, and USAASA is leading the airspace access efforts. Units must contact their regional DAR office to stay aligned. As the DoD and FAA finalize the UAS MOU, the Army will update EXORD 228-24 "Army Implementation Guidance of the DoD and FAA UAS MOU for Operations in the National Airspace System," to reflect these changes. While the SECDEF's memo fuels enthusiasm, the FAA holds final authority for UAS operations in the NAS. During this transition, compliance with FAA and Army policies is essential.

COL Ronald Smith is the Commander, U.S. Army Aeronautical Services Agency (USAA-SA), Fort Belvoir, VA; Mr. Barney Owens is the USAASA HQ, Airspace Branch Chief and LTC David Orzech is the Western Service Center, Department of the Army

Representative, Seattle, WA.



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SGT Jared Z. Munsell

Company D, 2nd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) Fort Campbell, Kentucky

Sergeant Jared Z. Munsell has made a profound and enduring impact on Army Aviation through his exceptional contributions to Aircraft Survivability Equipment within Delta Company, 2-160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne). As the Training and Standardization NCO and a Team Leader in the Back Shops Avionics Platoon. SGT Munsell demonstrated unmatched technical expertise, leadership, and dedication to mission success. He achieved Fully Mission Qualified (FMQ) status six months ahead of schedule and successfully mentored four Soldiers to achieve Basic Mission Qualified (BMQ) status, greatly elevating the unit's operational readiness. SGT Munsell conducted over 40 ASE checks across 15 MH-47G Chinook helicopters. He also played key roles in six CONUS training missions, including advanced ASE range operations and integration of next-generation ASE systems, directly enhancing threat detection, countermeasure deployment, and crew survivability. In addition, SGT Munsell completed over 500 hours of Aviator Night Vision Imaging System (ANVIS) maintenance across 350 NVGs, ensuring the unit's capability to execute over 3,400 flight hours in day, night, and low-visibility conditions. His tireless mentorship of junior Soldiers reinforces the professional excellence and technical acumen expected of the "Work Horse" legacy. SGT Munsell's performance has been exemplary making him the only choice for the 2025 Army Aviation Association of America Aircraft Survivability Equipment Award.

2025 CW3 Christopher M. Allgaier Aviation Mission Survivability Officer Award

Sponsored by Miltope Corporation



CW4 Karl D. Poland

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) Fort Lewis, Washington

As the Battalion AMSO, CW4 Karl Poland is an exceptional leader whose expertise and dedication have significantly enhanced the survivability of 26 Special Operations MH-47G Chinook and MH-60M Black Hawk helicopters and over 650 personnel. Over the past year, his proactive leadership was evident in the meticulous planning and execution of several Large Force Joint Denied Area exercises. most notably Brown Flag, where as an Exercise Lead Planner & Rotary Wing Mentor, he expertly integrated Air Force, Navy, Space, Cyber, and SAP/STO Enablers in the execution of a Long Range Helicopter Assault Force (HAF) Raid. CW4 Poland spearheaded the development and implementation of comprehensive counter-UAS strategy. Emissions Control. & near real-time threat awareness, enhancing Multi-Domain awareness at the tactical edge while increasing Survivability. CW4 Poland has connected SOF Rotary-Wing aviation with the Electronic Attack Weapons School, Naval Aviation Warfighting Development Center, and the U.S. Air Force Weapons School, tying Joint Enablers more closely together with SOF Customers. His expertise proved invaluable during the crash of a U.S. Navy EA-18 Growler, where he coordinated recovery efforts, liaising between the 4/160th SOAR (Abn), 1st Special Forces Group, Air Force Recovery Coordination Center, and Whidbey NAS Search and Rescue, ensuring the dignified transfer of Naval Aviators. CW4 Poland's accomplishments clearly identify him as the 2025 AAAA CW3 Christopher M. Allgaier Aviation Mission Survivability Officer Award winner.

2025 Avionics Award

Sponsored by Cubic Defense Systems, Inc.



SGT Ethan J. Crowe

Company D, 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington

SGT Ethan J. Crowe has emerged as one of the most influential junior NCOs in the Army Aviation Avionics community. From July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, his groundbreaking work in avionics modernization and expeditionary readiness has set new benchmarks for sustainment operations across Army Aviation. He played a central role in fielding and validating the latest MH-47G Block II aircraft, integrating critical avionics systems that are now being leveraged as a fleet-wide template for future modernization. His subject matter expertise rapidly positioned him as a key technical voice for avionics troubleshooting, installation protocols, and component validation across the enterprise. SGT Crowe spearheaded the roll-out of the Next Generation Tactical Communications suite, creating scalable training modules and troubleshooting guides that have been shared across multiple aviation units. His expeditionary "roll-on/roll-off" avionics conceptdesigned for rapid deployment in austere environments -has already been reviewed by program-level maintainers and is informing broader modular support strategies within Army's Special Operations Aviation. His execution of the radar altimeter relocation MWO for Arctic survivability, combined with direct support during multinational joint exercises, directly impacted Army Aviation's ability to sustain precision flight operations in extreme environments. SGT Crowe's innovation, initiative, and force-wide perspective mark him as a pivotal contributor to the advancement of Army Aviation Avionics, earning him recognition as the AAAA 2025 Avionics Award winner.



Army Aviation Association of America 2025 National Functional Award Winners

2025 Logistics Support Technician of the Year Award

Sponsored by AAAA



CW2 Jon T. Pew

Company B, 127th Aviation Support
Battalion
1st Armored Division
Combat Aviation Brigade,
Fort Bliss, Texas

CW2 Jon T. Pew has demonstrated exceptional technical expertise, leadership, and innovation as an Aviation Maintenance Technician, Technical Supply Officer, ASES Platoon Leader, and Unit Supply Officer in Bravo Company, 127th ASB, IAD CAB. His efforts were instrumental in completing over 25 phases of maintenance, generating over 23,000 flight hours, and ensuring the combat readiness of 100 aircraft across UH-60L/M, HH-60, AH-64D, and CH-47F platforms. CW2 Pew expertly managed \$25 million in inventory, recovering \$10 million in core deposit value, while training 20 Soldiers in logistics concepts and Global Combat Support System-Army (GCSS-A) utilization, achieving zero loss in accountability. His innovatively re-envisioned Phase Team Leader Course, recognized by AMCOM and FORSCOM, streamlined maintenance cycles, enabling Bravo Company to complete 13 internal aircraft phases and coordinate 8 additional phases with civilian teams. These efforts supported NATO exercises across Europe, generating over 5,500 flight hours. His proactive approach to component repair and overhaul programs resulted in over \$11.7 million in cost savings, including engine and rotor head repairs, swash plate restorations, rotor blade preservation and many other critical component recoveries. His initiatives positioned Bravo Company as the top contender for phase maintenance inspections within FORSCOM, earning recognition as number 1 in July 2025. CW2 Pew's dedication, technical acumen, and leadership identify him as the AAAA 2025 Logistics Support Technician of the Year.

2025 Donald F. Luce Depot Maintenance Artisan Award

Sponsored by GE Aerospace



SGT Thailus A. Mitchell

1108th Theater Aviation Sustainment Group Gulfport, Mississippi

SGT Thailus Mitchell is a trailblazer in the field of military aviation maintenance, whose innovative leadership in additive manufacturing and computer numerical control (CNC) machining has transformed the way aircraft components are produced and sustained. His technical expertise. creative vision, and relentless pursuit of excellence have directly enhanced operational readiness, reduced maintenance turnaround times, and significantly cut costs for the organization. As the lead artisan in advanced manufacturing, SGT Mitchell has spearheaded the evolution of 3D printing and CNC processes, developing precise, mission critical parts that were previously either unavailable or required long lead times. He routinely bridges the gap between concept and execution by designing, programming, and fabricating complex components with unmatched precision and attention to detail. His ability to troubleshoot and adapt solutions in real-time has proven indispensable in supporting aging aircraft fleets and responding to urgent repair needs. His innovations have led to measurable improvements in efficiency. earning recognition from leadership and inspiring the broader adoption of modern machining techniques across the enterprise. His contributions not only solve today's challenges but lay the foundation for future advancements in aviation maintenance. For his groundbreaking work and unwavering commitment to excellence, SGT Mitchell has earned the 2025 AAAA Donald F. Luce Depot Maintenance Artisan of the Year award.

2025 Outstanding Logistics Support Unit of the Year

Sponsored by AAAA



Commander: LTC Nikolas M. Folgert

Senior WO: CW4 Allen A. Bender

96th Aviation Support Battalion

101st Combat Aviation Brigade, Fort Campbell, Kentucky



Senior NCO: CSM Joshua D. Gary

The 96th Aviation Support Battalion plays a vital role in enabling the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade's Long-Range Large Scale Air Assault (L2A2) operations, redefining Army Aviation logistics. Serving as the logistical backbone, the 96th ASB supported five major L2A2 missions, involving 81 aircraft, ten Forward Arming and Refueling Points, in four countries. They distributed over 2.5 million gallons of fuel across the CENTCOM theater and managed sustainment and Downed Aircraft Recovery Team plans across joint task forces. Their aviation maintenance achievements include completing dozens of critical inspections across 121 aircraft, maintaining over 1,400 systems, and achieving a 91 % ground fleet readiness rate while expertly managing \$3.8 million in parts. In supply management, the battalion oversaw \$85 million in inventory and ensured a 90% ground vehicle operational rate through 250+ services and the installation of 7.500 parts. They also maintained the only certified PQAS-E site in northern Iraq and earned a 97% SAPO inspection rating. In deployment operations, the 96th ASB executed record-setting port operations and managed the movement of hundreds of vehicles, containers, and aircraft. Their efforts ensured the 101st CAB led all other brigades in flight hours across FORSCOM and CENTCOM. The achievements of 96th ASB Soldiers identify them as the 2025 AAAA Outstanding Logistics Support Unit of the Year.

2025 Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award For a Contribution by an Individual

Sponsored by AAAA



Janoi Cabrera DigiFlight, Inc. Huntsville, Alabama

Mr. Janoi Cabrera is the Senior Aviation Maintenance Advisor for U.S. Army Security Assistance Training Management Office's (SATMO's) Poland Technical Assistance Fielding Team (TAFT). His exceptional dedication and expertise have already made a profound impact on the readiness and operational effectiveness of SATMO's program to train this vital NATO partner. In addition, he provided TAFT support to two vital international partners in Taiwan and Saudi Arabia's Ministry of the National Guard (MNG) where he trained, advised, and coached the Taiwan Army and the MNG on all aspects of AH-64E maintenance with advanced skills in production control, quality control, and technical supply procedures. His significant contributions span over twenty-seven years supporting U.S. Army Aviation maintainers and warfighters both as a Soldier and civilian. He leads vital training programs including the development of training materials and simulators, ensuring our maintainers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to train, maintain, and lead our junior enlisted soldiers in peace and war. Mr. Cabrera's exemplary performance in training, maintenance support, education, international collaborations and commitment to safety, as well as his unwavering dedication to excellence identify him as the clear choice for the 2025 AAAA Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by an Individual.

2025 Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award For Contributions By A Small Business

Sponsored by AAAA



Mass Virtual Orlando, Florida

Mass Virtual deployed its immersive Virtual Aerial Systems Training (VAST) platform in support of the 204th Military Intelligence Battalion (Aerial Reconnaissance). As the Army transitioned to the jet-powered High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES), Mass Virtual played a critical role in accelerating pilot and crewmember training while preserving aircraft readiness and extending operational reach. VAST delivered scenario-based, extended reality (XR) training tailored to the Bombardier Global 6000/6500 platform. It supported over 6,250 hours of instruction and enabled the sustainment of an operational tempo of 450 flight hours per month. Its impact is now institutional: VAST is a mandated training requirement for non-rated crew members preparing to deploy and has been integrated into Day Zero training for pilots, ensuring it serves as a foundational tool from the outset of their progression. By shifting critical training into an immersive environment, Mass Virtual increased aircraft availability. reduced maintenance burden, and enhanced training throughput. Instructors rely on VAST to deliver effective, repeatable, and missionrelevant training that strengthens the Army's only Jet Aircrew Training Program (ATP). Mass Virtual has redefined how the Army prepares A-ISR crews for global operations and stands as a model for impactful industry partnerships driving measurable readiness outcomes. For these reasons. Mass Virtual is the winner of the 2025 AAAA Materiel Readiness Award for Contributions by a Small Business Organization.

2025 Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award For Contributions By An Industry Team

Sponsored by AAAA



Pinnacle Solutions Huntsville, Alabama

From August 2024 to July 2025, Pinnacle Solutions, an Akima Company, demonstrated unmatched excellence in aviation materiel readiness and logistics support at Fort Huachuca, Arizona. The team achieved 100% readiness in issuing 1,759 sUAS comprised of multiple platforms for use by the 2-13th Aviation Regiment, across five training sites; maintained a >90% daily fleet availability; and completed over 770 aviation maintenance work orders. They also successfully completed the divestment of all equipment and materiel associated with the former Shadow UAS Training Program, valued at over \$2.2M, 45 days ahead of schedule based on the U.S. Army EXORD requirements. Subsequently, the team immediately transitioned to integrate new small UAS platforms in support of evolving training missions. Pinnacle's logistics and property personnel executed more than 19,800 actions supporting inventories, tool calibration, and equipment issuance. The team also facilitated 192 procurement actions and maintained a 100% compliance rate across all external audits. Through disciplined quality assurance, agile logistics, and innovative safety protocols, including a QR code-based equipment tracking system, Pinnacle achieved zero mishaps, zero lost time, and sustained exemplary performance across the board. Pinnacle's adaptability, rigor, and mission-first mindset during a year of transformational change has earned them the 2025 AAAA Materiel Readiness Award for Contributions by an Industry Team.



Army Aviation Association of America 2025 National Functional Award Winners

2025 Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award For Contributions By A Major Contractor

Sponsored by AAAA



CAE USA Tampa, Florida

CAE USA supports 100% of the U.S. Army's advanced rotary-wing flight training at Fort Rucker, Alabama providing simulator and aircraft flight instruction. This includes maintaining operational flight simulators and reconfigurable collective trainers to meet the Army's flight training requirements for the CH-47, UH-60, and AH-64 helicopters. Their proactive approach to maintenance, modernization. and fliaht instructor support ensures training availability and increases operational readiness. CAE USA has been the prime contractor for the U.S. Army Fixed-Wing Flight Training Program since 2016. We provide turnkey training solutions for U.S. Army aircrews operating fixed-wing aircraft such as the C-12U and C-12V. From curriculum development and simulator support to classroom instruction and logistics. CAE ensures these platforms are supported with the highest standards of safety, realism, and training efficacy, In October 2024, CAE USA delivered a FAA Level-D certified Bombardier Global 6500 Full Flight Simulator to support the U.S. Army's newest aerial intelligence. surveillance, reconnaissance aircraft, the High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES). The CAE Dothan Training Center delivers simulated flight training and qualification in a realistic training environment, significantly reducing training cost. Through a combination of technical excellence, integrated support services, and unmatched operational availability rates, CAE USA significantly contributes to the Army's ability to sustain aviation readiness and has earned the 2025 AAAA Materiel Readiness Award for Contributions by a Major Contractor.

2025 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Soldier of the Year Award

Sponsored by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.



CPL Patrick D. O'Hagan
Company E, 3rd Aviation Regiment
3rd Combat Aviation Brigade
Fort Stewart, Georgia

Corporal O'Hagan is an indispensable member of Echo Company, 3rd Aviation Regiment. As a primary Instructor Operator, he led the training of six MQ-IC Operators, conducted 13 standardized flight evaluations, and completed six Aircraft Commander evaluations, directly contributing to the unit's mission readiness. Following the company's staff assistance visit, he played a critical role in restructuring the aviation training program, helping the unit achieve a 93% standardization pass rate during the 2024 Aviation Resource Management Survey. He made history as the first 3rd Infantry Division operator to fly the MQ-IC Gray Eagle from restricted airspace R-3005 to R-3007 over Townsend Bombing Range, expanding division-level UAS training capabilities. After Hurricane Helene, he rapidly developed intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) flight plans within two hours, enabling emergency response operations across Fort Stewart. In March 2025, he flew 142 ISR hours during a Joint Task Force-Southern deployment, supporting Customs and Border Protection. In June, he was one of only two I5Cs selected Armywide to assist with MQ-IC Technical Manual Verification, directly shaping future UAS procedures. Beyond technical excellence, he is a trusted leader and mentor who fosters a collaborative training environment and exemplifies the Army Values. CPL O'Hagan's unmatched professionalism and commitment to excellence make him truly deserving of the 2025 AAAA Unmanned Aircraft Systems Soldier of the Year award.

2025 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations Technician of the Year Award

Sponsored by AAAA



WO1 Moises I. Valdes Company B, 224th Military Intelligence Battalion (Aerial Exploitation) Fort Stewart, Georgia

Warrant Officer One Moises I. Valdes significantly advanced the readiness and operational capabilities of the 224th Military Intelligence Battalion and the MQ-IC Gray Eagle enterprise. As the Flight Platoon UAS Technician, he developed 16 UAS Operators, qualifying three at Readiness Level 1, two as Aircraft Commanders, and three as Instructor Operators. He played a pivotal role in supporting southern border operations. As the MQ-IC lead planner and liaison between the 224th and 15th Military Intelligence Battalions, he coordinated personnel, equipment, and support, enabling the 116th Military Intelligence Brigade to sustain 22-hour continuous MQ-IC operations. His planning directly contributed to over 1,200 flight hours in support of Joint Task Force Southern Border, enhancing operational reach and inter-battalion cooperation. His leadership culminated in the successful execution of the FY25 Q3 Quarterly Training Event, highlighted by the Army's first INSCOM-led longrange MQ-IC repositioning from Georgia to Florida. He pioneered and institutionalized a remote runway survey process, secured a Certificate of Authorization from the FAA. and led a 1,200-mile convoy in support of the operation. These efforts validated rapid, modular UAS deployment and integration into the National Airspace System, setting a new standard for expeditionary unmanned aviation, WO1 Valdes's contributions have redefined Army UAS potential at tactical and strategic levels and identify him as the 2025 AAAA Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations Technician of the Year.

2025 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit of the Year Award

Sponsored by Textron Systems



CPT John R. Larabee

Senior WO: CW2 Jeremiah S.Farmer 1SG Jaime Rivera Cintron

Company D, 10th Aviation Regiment 10th Combat Aviation Brigade Fort Drum, New York

Company D, 10th Aviation Regiment (D/10) is a divisional Gray Eagle company assigned to the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, NY. From 2024-2025, the D/10 "Slayers" deployed to OPERATION IN-HERENT RESOLVE and provided continuous attack, reconnaissance, and surveillance to the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF-OIR). D/10 performed this mission amid the Iran-Israel conflict, the fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, and the threat of renewed 1515 attacks. Fortunately, D/IO's talented Soldiers overcame these challenges and flew 14.115 hours of intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) missions, which included 10 autonomous Hellfire engagements and 25 remote engagements. D/10 also established a new footprint UAS operations that further expanded the area of operation for the Gray Eagle. This movement required the complete relocation of all personnel, ground control stations, maintenance shelters, generators, fuel, and aircraft support equipment. D/I0's successful movement gave increased ISR capability to CJTF-OIR. The company's most unique achievement was the successful execution of the first air-to-air engagement by an MQ-IC in the USCENT-COM area of responsibility. Commissioned by U.S. Army Central, this capability demonstration highlighted the Gray Eagle's ability to detect, identify, and destroy a UAS threat before it threatens friendly forces. The D/10 Slayers earned a phenomenal reputation during OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE which clearly identifies them as the 2025 AAAA Outstanding Unmanned Aircraft System Unit of the Year.

2025 Fixed Wing Unit of the Year Award

Sponsored by CAE USA Defense & Security



MAJ Donald M. MacWillie

Senior WO: Senior NCO. CW5 Philip E. Hebson 1SG Jonathan M. Gieser

Flight Company, **U.S. Army Special Operations Command** Fort Bragg, North Carolina

The USASOC Flight Company (UFC) stands out as the most successful and impactful fixed-wing organization in the Army for 2025. The UFC was hand selected over U.S. Air Force options to demonstrate precision aerial-delivery techniques in GPSdegraded environments to the President of the United States. During JRTC 25-06, the unit's problem-solving skill was put on display as the dynamic air evacuation option demonstrating the Army's Noncombatant Emergency Operations capability during a near-peer invasion. The team prepared 20th Special Forces Group's airborne insertion capabilities for the follow-on arctic exercises in Alaska. They advanced multiple tests of individual equipment, air-launched and controlled UAS employment and aerial-delivery in GPS-degraded environments. The UFC accelerated the request-to-test timeline by working directly with the airworthiness authority, thus affording testing agencies more iterations during the year. The Yuma team supported two exercises on short notice to certify replacement freefall Special Forces Operational Detachments Alpha (SFODA) for EUCOM and INDOPACOM's contingency plans. All told, the UFC flew 3,310 hours averaging 5.2 missions a day to support 22 jumpmaster and instructor courses, 10 culmination exercises and two joint readiness exercises with active, guard, and reserve ground units from across the joint force. The USASOC Flight Company's achievements make them the clear choice for the 2025 AAAA Fixed Wing Unit of the Year.

AAA Awards Excellence!

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#ServeAndSucceed

Historical Perspective

Aeronca L-3 (O-58)

By Mark Albertson





y 1941, it was apparent that the Ground Forces were seeking the use of light aircraft to fulfill their tactical aerial requirements. To win contracts, meant competing with the likes of Piper, Taylorcraft, Stinson, Rearwin... And to do so, Aeronca would have to make changes in its aircraft to conform to Army specifications.

Our story of Aeronca begins with John A. Roche, a French immigrant who was only twelve years old when he arrived in the United States. Yet he enjoyed much acclaim as a model builder; and his prototypes earned awards for success in the air. Indeed, when still in high school, in Dayton, Ohio, he "applied to patent a wing pivoting system, which he claimed stabilized aircraft in turbulent air." By the time he was 21, he had an engineering degree from Columbia.

By 1923, Roche had designed a glider, the GL-2. He would soon be joined by mechanical engineer, John Doshe. The two worked on an aircraft that was of the monoplane design. It was both simple and light and was superior to many of the competing biplanes then available: The Roche-Doshe Flivver. But where to build it?

Welcome to Cincinnati

Enter the Aeronautical Corporation of America which had been formed in November 1928. The company will eventually change its name to Aeronca in 1941. Among its board members

were I.C. Keller of the Dow Chemical and Drug Company and Ohio Senator Robert A. Taft. The company had assets of \$500,000; but at the same time, no means of production. The company would eventually open its headquarters at Cincinnati's Lunken Airport. A deal was made with Roche for his plane, 220 shares of company stock. The Roche-Doshe Flivver proved the basis for the C-2, an affordable light plane selling for \$1,495 (reduced to \$1,295 by June 1931)."²

By 1938, the company had produced an aircraft known as the "Chief." Production run that year was 200 aircraft. In 1939, the Army tested the Chief for training purposes and rejected it, owing, in part, to its side-by-side seating. The aircraft, then, was redesigned so as to conform to Army standards for a contract. Model will be known as the Defender.

The Trainer

Aeronca's trainer began with wings and a tail from the A-50 Aeronca Chief. The fuselage was arranged to accommodate tandem seating as required by the army. In addition, Hardy D. Cannon observed: "Several desirable points were evident at first sight: Having lift struts brought to a point forward of the door minimizes propeller risks, a lot of head room, and the rear stick being well out from the seat permits use of either a seat or back-pack type chute without any adjustments, discomfort or interferenc-

Above left: The 0-58/L-3 Aeronca Trainer/Liaison plane.

Above right: TG-5 glider produced by Aeronca. A trainer for glider pilots, was based off the L-3 fuselage with a forward portion bolted on for training glider pilots. Production run was 253 copies.

es with the back travel of the stick.

It is nice to be able to put on a chute, get in, and move right off without a lot of fuss or having to sit in too much of an abnormal or cramped position.

"The fuselage was made several inches wider at the bottom, allowing for wider seats and more leg room around the rudder pedals. The tail group was made a little smaller with almost two square feet taken out of the rudder area and the new rudder balanced. The elevators were the same except for a wider trim tab of narrower chord.

"The cockpit of the new Defender was another step forward in refinement of the interior of training planes. Special hinges allow the door to swing completely out of the way."³

The Ó-58 or L-3, not only performed well as a trainer, but was employed for anti-submarine patrol off the U.S. Pacific coast. Free French Forces in North Africa employed the L-3 as a trainer and, for liaison duties.

Following OVERLORD, June 6, 1944, L-3s were used on the Continent, again for a variety of liaison duties, and served till V-E Day 1945.

FALLEN HEROES

AAAA is saddened to announce the recent loss of four Aviation Soldiers.

CONUS

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command announced four U.S. Soldiers were killed while on a training mission near Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA. The Soldiers, who were all assigned to 4th Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), the Night Stalkers, died when their MH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed on September 17, 2025 at approximately 9 p.m.







CW3 Kraus



SGT Scott



SGT Good

Soldiers killed were:

Chief Warrant Officer Three Andrew Gunnison Cully, 35, from Sparta, MO; Chief Warrant Officer Three Andrew Joseph Kraus, 39, from Sanibel, FL; Sergeant Donavon Leroy Scott, 25, from Tacoma, WA; and Sergeant Jadalyn Ruth Good, 23, from Mount Vernon, WA.

The accident is presently under investigation.

May they rest in peace.

(Information from Defense Department news releases and other media sources.)

Tale of the Tape

L-3, 54 procured 1942. Tandem seating, Continental engine (O-170-3).

L-3A, 20 procured 1942. Tandem seating, Continental engine (O-170-3), fuselage widened four inches over the L-3.

L-3B, 875 procured, 1942. Tandem seating, Continental engine (O-170-3).

L-3C, 490 procured, 1943. Same as L-3B, except radios removed; Continental engine (O-170-3).

L-3D, 10 procured, 1942. Tandem seating; commercially designated 65-TF, Franklin engine (4AC-176).

L-3E, 10 procured, 1942. Tandem seating; commercially designated 65-CA, Continental engine (A-65-A).

L-3F, 1 procured, 1942. Side-by-side seating; commercially designated 65-CA, Continental engine (A-65-A).

L-3G, 2 procured, 1942. Side-byside seating; commercially designated 65-LB, Lycoming engine (O-145-B1). Super Chiefs.

L-3H, 1 procured, 1942. Tandem seating; commercially designated 65-TL, Lycoming engine (O-145-B1)

L-3J, 2 procured, 1942. Tandem seating; commercially designated 65-TL, Continental engine (A-65-7)⁴

Per the numbers accounted for by Edgar F. Raines, Jr. above, some 1,465 L-3s were procured by the Army. Hardy D. Cannon fixes the number produced at 1,798.⁵ But added here is the glider produced by Aeronca, the TG-5. Borrowed from the L-3 was the tail assembly, rear fuselage and wings, with a front fuselage for glider pilot training bolted on. Each seat had its own controls. The instructor occupied the front seat, with the student pilots filling out the tandem seating which filtered rearward into the L-3 portion of the fuselage. 250 TG-5s were produced. The Navy ordered three additional copies.⁶ Total production run, 253.

Specifications⁷

Dimensions: Wingspan: 35 feet; Length: 21 feet; Height: 7 feet, 8 inches.

Weight: Empty: 866 lbs.; Gross: 1,300 lbs.; 1,860 lbs. (L-3B) and 1,300 lbs. (L-3C).

Power plant: One Continental O-170-3 (A-65-8) four-cylinder, direct-drive, air-cooled rated at 65 hp at 2,300 rpm.

One Freedman-Burnham twobladed, ground-adjustable propeller with an aluminum hub outfitted the L-3A; L-3B & C models mounted a Sensenich two-bladed, fixed-pitch wooden propeller.

Performance: Top speed: 87 mph; Cruising: 79 mph; Service ceiling: 7,750 feet; Range: 190 miles.

Crew capacity: Two, pilot and observer, tandem seating.

Endnotes

1. "The Aeronca 100: The Inside Story of a Rare Bird," *Australia Flying*, July 1, 2011, www.australiaflying.com.au/news/the-aeronca-100.

2. "Aeronca Inc.—Company Profile, Information, Business Description, Background Information on Aeronca Inc.," www.referenceforbusiness.com/bistory2/7/Aeronca, 2.

3. Čhapter Eleven, "The Planes: Aeronca L-3," *Box Seat Over Hell*, by Hardy D. Cannon, 112.

4. "Appendix 'A:' Selected U.S. Army Field Artillery and U.S. Army Air Force Liaison Aircraft and Helicopters, 1942-1945," *Eyes of Artillery*, by Edgar F. Raines, Jr., 328-329.

5. Chapter Four, "Aeronca O-58/L-3 Grasshopper," *L-Birds*. Terry M. Love, 23. 6. Hardy D. Cannon, 115.

7. "Fixed Wing Aircraft of World War II," *Army Aviation*, February 29, 2012, by Mark Albertson, 47.

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

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Special Feature



A Forty-Year Vietnam Tour Finally Comes to an End By Art Jacobs

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

n the morning of 16 September 2008, Steve Davidson, a classmate of mine from Class 67-17, and I witnessed something poignantly beautiful and yet heart-breaking. The remains of CWO Art Chaney, KIA 3 May 1968, were finally laid to rest. For thirty-nine long years the military records for our friend and comrade from the 1st Air Cavalry Division, simply read "BNR" (Body Not Recovered). And then, at last, in the late Spring of 2008, Art's remains were discovered, and in the Summer of 2008, positively identified.

Steve, along with his wife Connie and I, got to spend two filled-with-memories but bittersweet days in Washington, DC with Art's parents, retired Air Force Colonel Hugh Chaney and his lovely wife, Lillian. We heard all the stories of Art's sports prowess, academic accomplishments, and his many dating charms while he attended James Madison High School in Vienna, Virginia.

For as many times as I have attended a military burial with full honors, the part that never fails to put my heart in my throat is when the carefully folded flag is gently handed to the next of kin. A young Major, a Fort Myer Chaplain, knelt in front of Hugh and Lillian. For a moment, they all held the flag together and clasped hands as he whispered his and our grateful nation's condolences. I stood there, sadly watching an 80 yearold man, and his life-long companion, bury their 20 year-old son. I cried with

them, and for them. How difficult that moment must have been - you are not supposed to outlive your children. But, at the same time I saw a very proud career military officer and his dedicated partner achieve important closure and receive the long-delayed honor for their son, and soldier.

I'll briefly take you back to the months and days leading up to Art's death.

Headed to 'Nam

After more than a few memorable and sun-filled weekends at the beach in Panama City, Florida, we graduated from flight school on 24 October 1967, full of our normal quota of piss and vinegar, and knowing full well where we were headed.

The three of us could not believe our good fortune in being assigned to the 1st Air Cavalry Division. After I was to attend the Air Rescue Training School at Fort Sam Houston, I would get to fly Medevac missions with the 15th Medical Battalion of the 1st Cav. Steve went to Company A, 227th. Art went to A Troop, 1/9th. I was secretly a bit envious of Art Chaney because I had actually been TDY with A Troop 1/9th in Korea in 1965! I had been with A Battery, 1/21st Artillery on the Korean DMZ, just before the Cav went back to Fort Benning, Georgia as part of the 11th Air Assault project to become the very first Airmobile Division. Since I was in the Forward Observer Section of A Battery, I spent most of my time with A Troop, the unit we directly supported for artillery.

From my tour in Korea, I was already steeped in the culture of the Cav before I got to flight school. Steve and Art also knew the lore - the wild west history of the Cav with General Custer, and the Cav's war record; First in Manilla, First



in Pyongyang, and then the heroic saga and victory of LZ X-Ray in the Ia Drang Valley in November, 1965. Whatever we didn't know about "The" Cav, our instructors in flight school telling us that it was the premier helicopter outfit in Vietnam only added luster to the dashing image we had in our minds of crossed sabers and bravado.

The three of us survived the hell of the Tet Offensive in Hue, although I was shot (only a flesh wound) on my very first day as an aircraft commander! Art and I saw each other a number of times in April our tents about a 100 meters apart at LZ Sharon just outside of Quang Tri. I last saw Art on 1 May. I walked over to A Troop to say hello, and, as was our convention, popped into his tent loudly asking, "Where's that SOB Chaney?" We shared a warm beer, harassed each other as usual, and made fun of an FNG pilot who still thought the Sundry Pack Chocolate Tropical Bars tasted good (made from candle wax if you ask me).

On 3 May, Art was flying front seat in a AH-1G Cobra. He and Bobby McKain had left LZ Sharon that morning to fly gunship cover for a recon mission near the border of Laos just west of the infamous Khe Sanh. While in a dive engaging an anti-aircraft position, their ship took direct hits and exploded in mid-air. Other helicopters in the area spotted the burning wreckage on the ground but could not get close due to the intense enemy ground fire. The approximate coordinates were called in. Numerous, fruitless attempts were made to recover the lost ship and crew... but then, as usually happens, the center of action and the war moved on. In the Au-

Arthur Fletcher Chaney

Warrant Officer
A TROOP, 1ST SQD, 9TH CAV RGT, 1 CAV DIV
Army of the United States
27 June 1947 - 03 May 1968
Vienna, Virginia
Panel 54E Line 024



tumn of 1968, the 1st Cav moved to III Corps and the "incident" of 3 May inexorably slid into the cold case file.

Learning of Art's Death

I first learned of Art's death on 5 May when I nonchalantly showed up at his tent with our usual "SOB" greeting for each other. And then there was "that" moment, that awful slow-motion moment that will be seared into my brain forever; cold eyes pierced me and I heard a low voice tell me that Art had been killed two days ago. I blankly gazed at the floor, at a footlocker, at the little flap of canvas at the top of the tent for ventilation - anything except the eyes of that boy-pilot packing up Art's personal effects and staring back at me. I don't remember walking back to 15th Med that afternoon - I just recall how physically small, weak, and all alone I felt.

Déjà vu I – 1971: On my second tour I was with the 238th Aerial Weapons Company; the "Gunrunners" out of Tuy Hoa. We were tagged to be opcon to the 101st Airborne and be part of Lam Son 719, the ill-fated invasion of Laos. Our base camp was at

Dong Ha, just south of the DMZ, but we always had at least two platoons standing by at Khe Sanh. Most of our missions were due west into Laos along Highway 9, but I managed to find simple excuses to dogleg southwest over the old Special Forces Camp at Lang Vei and head toward the border and the imposing cliff called Co Roc. I know it was silly, but I low-leveled in and out of Laos a number of times just so I could scan the landscape in vain...somehow, maybe somebody missed something.

Déjà vu II - 1997: I returned to Vietnam on a month-long archeological / historical tour sponsored by The Art Institute of Chicago. We started in Haiphong and Hanoi in the north, ending up in Saigon in the south. In Hue, I sat at a restaurant on the Perfume River looking across at the Citadel. I took a picture of the red flag with the yellow star, remembering the last time I saw that same flag there during Tet. I chatted with one of the waiters; he was willing to take me to Khe Sanh on his motorbike, but we both knew I wouldn't be able to secure the necessary permission of the local authorities in time before the tour moved on to Qui Nhon.

Déjà vu III – 1999: I met a young West Point LTC (and I remember when any LTC was old) who was about to go to Hawaii and be assigned to one of the Southeast Asia MIA recovery teams. I filled his poor head with as much detail as I could remember about 3 May 1968 and Art Chaney. LTC Mike Lerario was good to his word and emailed me periodically. Beyond a few tantalizing tidbits he was privy to that were not generally available to the public, he offered little hope concerning the case file of one Arthur Fletcher Chaney.

Finally, the News: At the VHPA Reunion in San Antonio just this last July, Steve Davidson rushed up to me to tell me that Art's remains had been found. There was a lot of confusion around the circumstances, but one version was that an AC-130 crew, shot down some two years after Art in the same vicinity had been found, and that when some of those aircraft parts turned out to be not "airplane" but "helicopter" and when some of the bones found were not of the Air Force crew, the forensic guys in Hawaii went into overdrive to solve the mystery.

Colonel Chaney and his wife were besieged with requests from the media and all kinds of groups who had heard the news. They wanted interviews, they wanted to be present, they wanted to film the funeral, they wanted "their" story, and they wanted Art Chaney on the 6 o'clock news. To his credit, Hugh Chaney turned them all down – his son's burial would be dignified – it would not become a media circus, or some idiot's attempt at dredging up some anti-war crap. Only one article appeared; a simple, beautiful, and respectful piece by Mirza Kurspahic in the small-circulation Vienna Connection.

And, here's a gut-wrenching and haunting coincidence; Art Chaney was killed on his mother's birthday. Can you even imagine what each subsequent year was like for her – or would be for anyone?

Art Chaney was one of our brother pilots who did not come home, and his story should not be forgotten. Steve Davidson and I would like him to be remembered for the great guy that he was. It was a joy to have known Art Chaney. It was our solemn privilege to have been with Colonel and Mrs. Chaney on 16 September 2008. And, it was our distinct honor to have been in attendance to see our buddy Art Chaney finally laid to rest. We left Arlington that day content in knowing that he was left in the best possible company.

Art Jacobs is a past president and life member of VHPA living in Nashville, TN.



America's Trade Skills Shortages: Bridging the Skills Gap

By CSM (Ret.) Jim Thomson

In recent years, the United States has faced a growing challenge known as the "skills gap," particularly in the skilled trades sector. This gap refers to the discrepancy between the skills employers require and the skills workers possess. As industries evolve and technology advances, the demand for skilled tradespeople has surged, yet the supply has not kept pace. This shortage has significant implications for the economy, businesses, and individuals alike.

The Skills Gap: A Growing Concern

The skills gap in America is a complex issue. On one hand, there is a growing demand for skilled workers in trades such as plumbing, electrical work, carpentry, welding, and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning). These professions are essential for maintaining infrastructure, supporting manufacturing, and ensuring the smooth operation of various industries. However, the number of people entering these fields has been declining.

Several factors contribute to this shortage. First, there is a societal perception that trade jobs are less prestigious compared to white-collar professions. Many young people are encouraged to pursue four-year college degrees, often overlooking the lucrative and rewarding opportunities in the trades. Additionally, the aging workforce in the trades means that many experienced professionals are retiring, leaving a gap that is not being filled quickly enough by new entrants.

The U.S. Labor Department estimates that for every five tradespeople who retire, only two enter the field, creating a significant shortfall.

As Mike Rowe, former host of *Dirty Jobs* and founder of the mikeroweWORKS Foundation, aptly said, "The skills gap is a reflection of what we value. To close the gap, we need to change the way the country feels about work."

The Case for Trade Skills

Despite the challenges posed by the skills gap, there is a strong case for young people to consider careers in the trades. Here are several reasons why entering the trades is an innovative and practical option.

- 1. High Demand and Job Security: The need for skilled tradespeople remains consistently high, ensuring job security for those who choose this path. Unlike some industries that may experience fluctuations, trades are essential services that will always be needed.
- 2. **Competitive Salaries**: Trade jobs often offer competitive pay, with many positions paying well above the national average. Skilled tradespeople can earn a comfortable living, and some trades even provide opportunities for overtime and additional income.
- 3. **Shorter Training Periods**: Unlike traditional four-year college degrees, trade programs usually have shorter training periods. Many vocational schools and apprenticeships can prepare individuals for the workforce in



N GENERATED IN

two years or less, allowing them to start earning sooner.

- 4. Hands-On Work: For those who enjoy working with their hands and seeing tangible results, trades offer a fulfilling and engaging career. Whether it's building structures, repairing systems, or creating products, the work is often varied and rewarding.
- 5. Entrepreneurial Opportunities: Skilled tradespeople have the option to start their own businesses, offering services independently. This entrepreneurial aspect can lead to greater autonomy, financial success, and personal satisfaction.

Addressing the Skills Gap

Did you know that the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) Trade Schools, Licensing and Certification (TLC) Foundation Inc., a non-profit 501 (c) (3), offers financial assistance through grants to eligible AAAA members and their families pursuing a career in the trades. That's right. If you or someone you know is considering a vocation in the "blue-collar" skilled trades and needs financial assistance for training, licensing, or certification costs, or if you'd like to donate to the AAAA TLC Foundation, use this website to learn more – https://www.quad-a.org/tlc.

CSM (Ret.) Jim Thomson served 31 years on active duty in Army Aviation and was the Aviation Branch CSM from 2012 to 2014. He has been a member of the AAAA TLC Foundation Board of Governors since September 2022.



Save the Date



GIVING TUESDAY DECEMBER 2, 2025

Help Us Help Army Aviation Families In 2 Ways

AAAASFI

Rising Costs. Rising Need.

With college tuition ranging from \$11,000 to over \$43,000, many students are struggling to afford higher education. At AAAA Scholarship Foundation, we believe that cost should never be a barrier to opportunity. That's why we're stepping up this Giving Tuesday with a goal to raise \$3,000—enough to award three \$1,000 scholarships to deserving students striving to pursue their education.

Your support can open doors. Give today—change a future.

AAAATLC

On a New Mission.

AAAA Trade Licensing & Certification Program provides financial support for those transitioning out of the military and pursuing skilled trades instead of traditional college. This Giving Tuesday, we aim to raise \$3,000 to meet growing demand—over 500,000 trade jobs are currently unfilled, with 345,000 more expected by 2027-28.

Help us support AAAA soldiers, Veterans and Family Members in building stable, future-proof careers in trades that are handson, tech-integrated, and vital to America's future.





AAAA Chapter Affairs By COL (Ret.) John Broam

I greatly appreciate the support from Mr. Ryan Miedema, the Colonial Virginia Chapter President for authoring and sharing this information to our membership.



Colonial Virginia Chapter



Members of the Colonial Virginia Chapter gather for a quarterly meeting on July 18, 2025 at Frothy Moon Brewhouse in Williamsburg, VA.

The Colonial Virginia Chapter, located in the Southeast corner of Virginia, supports the Tidewater Area which includes Army Aviation units located between Virginia Beach, Hampton, Newport News, Richmond, Williamsburg, and Yorktown.

The predominant units supported are U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), U.S. Army Capability Integration Center (ARCIC), 128th Aviation Training Brigade, and the Aviation Development Directorate-Eustis(ADD-E).

Kev Events

For the last three years, the Colonial Virginia chapter has partnered with the Night Stalker Old Dominion Chapter to host an Aviation Ball for the local aviation community called the Colonial Aviation Ball. This event, held in the spring, provides a traditional military ball experience at a reasonable price for all local Aviation Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve or Retired, and their Family members. This event typically has about 300 people attending and gives us a chance to celebrate our aviation history while recognizing our fellow aviators with Order of Saint Michael and family with Our Lady of Loreto. In May 2025, we were honored to have LTG David Francis, TRADOC Deputy Commanding General, as the guest speaker. This next year, we are excited

to host the next Colonial Aviation Ball on February 13, 2026.

Another opportunity the Colonial Virginia Aviation Chapter hosts is an annual Scholarship Golf tournament. The tournament is typically held in the late spring or early summer. Through this tournament, funds are raised to sponsor scholarships that are offered through the AAAA scholarship process which opens its application process on September 1st. The tournament is slowly resuming its pre-pandemic distinction as being the premier tournament to play on Fort Eustis. The funds raised in 2024 along with the Chapter's endowment fund afforded the Chapter the opportunity to sponsor three \$1,000 scholarships that were awarded to chapter family members to help further their education. The Colonial Virginia Chapter is excited to team with the Wounded Warrior Project for the tournament in 2025.

Recognition

The Colonial Virgina Chapter members do an incredible job recognizing their fellow aviators and family members with nominations for Order of Saint Michael and Our Lady of Loreto. Mr.

Will Cristy, Colonial Virgina Awards Vice President, heads the process by receiving the nominations and managing them through the boarding process. Under Will's guidance and the willingness of the chapter members to recommend their fellow aviators, over 50 individuals have been inducted into either the Silver or Bronze Order of Saint Michael along with 5 family members into Our Lady of Loreto in recent years.

Contact Us!

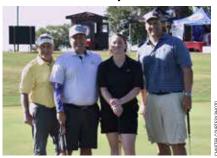
Continuing each month, Chelsea Jarvis, our AAAA Assistant Director of Member Engagement, will host an open Zoom meeting. These will take place on the second Tuesday of each month from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM Eastern Standard Time. Chapter officers are welcome to drop in at any time during the hour to talk about their chapter, ask questions, or get help with anything they need. No appointment is necessary.

Feel free to contact me if you need help with your Chapter, Executive Board support, would like your chapter featured in the AAAA magazine or to obtain clarification of National procedures. Chapters are the backbone of AAAA. If you are not having Fun in AAAA then that needs to change. I look forward to working with you and supporting AAAA.

COL (Ret.) John Broam AAAA VP for Chapter Affairs john.broam@quad-a.org

AAAA Chapter News

Aviation Center Chapter



The Aviation Center Chapter of the Army Aviation Association of America at Fort Rucker, AL hosted its annual academic scholarship fundraising event with a golf tournament raising more than \$17,500 for the chapter's scholarship efforts. The Chapter awarded 23 local-area students with \$32,500.00 in scholarships, all of it raised at the chapter's 2024 tournament and AAAA national's matching contributions. MG Clair Gill (right), Commanding General, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker was a player.

First Troop Philadelphia Chapter



First Troop Philadelphia Chapter of the Army Aviation Association of America recently held a Soldier support event to feed the troopers returning from their annual training. The event was a traditional "Huey's Breakfast" and approximately 50 Soldiers were fed at the armory, many of whom are AAAA members.

Show Me Chapter



The Missouri Aviation Classification and Repair Activity Depot (MO-AVCRAD) in Springfield. MO held their annual workshop recently. The workshop consisted of industry partners within the Army Aviation community to include key leaders from within the MO-AVCRAD 14 state support region, along with leadership from NGB and AMCOM, and provided a venue for interaction within the Army Aviation maintenance and sustainment community and included an AAAA sponsored mixer.

Tennessee Valley Chapter Space Camp Applications





The Tennessee Valley Chapter provides three youth scholarships annually to the Aviation Challenge hosted by the U.S. Space and Rocket Center Space Camp in Huntsville, AL. The age groups are 9-11, 12-14, and 15-18. Applications begin in the fall of each year in September, are due on December 15, and will be awarded early in the new year. For more information on the Aviation Challenge go to https://www.spacecamp.com/aviation. Contact the TVC Chapter for more details on the scholarships and to obtain an application at avnchallengescholarship@gmail.com.

Washington Potomac Chapter



SGT Miquel A. Perez (right), Combat Engineer, 911th Technical Rescue Engineer Company, 12th Aviation Battalion, was recognized as the Washington-Potomac Chapter's 2025 NCO of the 1st Quarter by CSM Alex Collins (left), 12th Aviation Battalion CSM and AAAA Washington-Potomac Chapter's Vice President for Enlisted Affairs, at the 12th Aviation Battalion Headquarters, Davison Army Airfield, Fort Belvoir, VA.



Johnny "John" Tilley (center) received the Washington-Potomac Chapter's Department of the Army Civilian of the Year award from LTC Leala McCollum (left), Operational Support Airlift Activity Battalion Commander, and COL Aaron Schilleci (right), Army National Guard Aviation & Safety Division Chief during his retirement ceremony in Woodbridge, VA recently. Mr. Tilley was recognized for 49 years of faithful service to Army Aviation.

ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL INDUCTEES

Air Assault Chapter



CW5 Robert W. Plotts, Jr. is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, COL (Ret.) Henry "Hawk" Ruth, during a July 25 retirement ceremony at Fox Hangar, General Bryan "Doug" Brown Compound, Fort Campbell, KY. Plotts was recognized for 28 years of service including 14 years in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) with 14 deployments totaling 40 months. He served as the Regiment Maintenance Standardization Officer and culminated his career as the Maintenance Examiner in the Special Operations Aviation Training Battalion (SOATB).

Colonial Virginia Chapter



CW5 Benjamin P. Gregoire is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by CW5 (Ret.) Corey V. Reeves during a ceremony at Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, Williamsburg, VA, June 27th. Gregoire was recognized for his 22 years of Army Aviation Service as a UH-60 Instructor/Standardization Pilot, CH-47 Aviation Mission Standardization Officer, Instructor for the US ARMY SERE School, Mission Pilot and culminating as the Standardization Pilot for Training Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

OSMs continued on next page



OSMs Continued



Mrs. Jieun S. Strickland is inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto by chapter VP Scholarships, LTC (Ret.) Bob Tamplet (left), and LTC (Ret.) Will Cristy, Executive Officer, 1st Bn., 210th Avn. Regiment, on May 2, at Fort Eustis, VA. Strickland was recognized for her leadership in the Family Readiness Group and as a deacon providing emotional and spiritual support to service members and their families across various bases, to include Fort Eustis.

Iron Mike Chapter



COL Christopher Clyde (right) and Mr. Jack Parkhurst (left), FORSCOM G-3/7 Aviation Director and Division Chief, respectively, induct the following individuals assigned to the FORSCOM G-3/7 Aviation Division into the Honorable Order of St. Michael as indicated on July 29, during a hail and farewell at Fort Bragg, NC: (I to r) L. Scott Henry (Silver), AV Programs; CW5 Robert Teague (Silver), ARMS; Garth Peterson

(Bronze), Programs Chief; MSG Butch Umbenhower (Bronze) ARMS; and CW5 Tammy Smith (Knight) ARMS. All awardees made significant and strategic impacts on Army Aviation while serving at FORSCOM headquarters.

Minute Man Chapter



CW5 (Ret.) Matthew J. Cummings was inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter VP Awards, CW5 (Ret.) Michael G. Anderson on Aug. 8 at Blissful Meadows Golf Club, Uxbridge, MA. Cummings was recognized for 25 years of aviation service in the Massachusetts Army National Guard culminating as the commander of Operational Support Airlift Activity (OSA-A) Detachment 12.



CW5 (Ret.) James McCabe is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter VP Awards, CW5 (Ret.) Michael G. Anderson on Aug. 8 at Blissful Meadows Golf Club, Uxbridge, MA. McCabe was recognized for more than 40 years of aviation service in the Massachusetts Army National Guard; enlisting in 1970 as a helicopter mechanic, received a direct appointment to WO1 as the maintenance warrant in 1978. He graduated flight school in 1981 and retired in 2011.

Tennessee Valley Chapter



Mr. Robert Frazier. PM Apache's System Safety Engineer, was inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of Saint Michael Award on Aug. 12 at Redstone Arsenal by COL Daniel Thetford, PM Apache. Frazier was recognized for developing and implementing the "Supplemental Safety Change Assessment Report" process which evaluated the safety implications of modifications and architectural changes, significantly reducing



MAJ Roberta Woronowicz is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by LTC Jacob Brady, Product Manager, CH-47F, PM Cargo Helicopters, and CW4 (Ret.) Tom

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO IF YOU DO NOT GO TO COLLEGE?

WHO: AAAA Members and Family Members WHAT: Grants for Trade Schools/Grants for Certifications/Grant for Licensing WHEN: Apply Anytime - Rolling Applications

WEBSITE TO APPLY: quad-a.org/tlc POC: Contact MSG Art Agnew, Ret. at tlc@quad-a.org or 931.249.2165 with questions

TLC awards grants for education in the trades



AAAA TLC FOUNDATION INC. TRADE SCHOOLS, LICENSING, AND CERTIFICATION



Miskowiec on June 18 at Redstone Arsenal, AL. Woronowicz was recognized for initiating and continuously improving the PM Cargo obsolescence management program as she changes duty to attend the University of Alabama, Huntsville.



MAJ Caleb D. Hughes is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael on July 10, in Huntsville, AL by LTC Brandon Nixon (left) and CW3 (Ret.) Rob Seybold, product manager and deputy PM respectively for the Air Warrior Product Management Office. Hughes was recognized for overseeing the total lifecycle management of the Rotary Wing Helmet and development and contract award for the Aircrew Combat Equipment vest. He moves to Fort Benning, GA where he will serve as the requirements developer for Counter Small UAS.

Washington Potomac Chapter



CSM Alex "AC" Collins is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by

CW4 (Ret.) Dan Curry, chapter VP Awards, and COL Andrew J. DeForest and CSM Scott P. Campbell, commander and senior NCO of The Army Aviation Brigade, on June 18 at Davison Army Airfield, VA. Collins was recognized for 30 years of dedicated service to the nation and AAAA culminating as the command sergeant major of 12th Aviation Battalion.



LTC (Ret.) Frank A. Tedeschi is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by AAAA National Past President, MG (Ret.) Walt Davis (right) and chapter president, COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow on June 27th during a chapter Final Fridays at the Crystal City Sports Pub, Arlington, VA. Tedeschi was recognized for his outstanding service on the AAAA National Scholarship Foundation



Board of Governors and as the chapter Treasurer.

LTC Adam J. Kemp (center) and MSG Joseph A. Stringer are inducted into the

Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow (right), COL Aaron Schilleci (second from left), Chief, Aviation and Safety Division, Army National Guard, and division senior enlisted advisor, SGM Derrick Kuhns, on July 1st in Arlington, VA. Kemp was recognized for his distinguished aviation service in a variety of command and staff positions and his continued outstanding performance as the Army National Guard Aviation Maintenance Branch Chief. Stringer was recognized for being a national authority in Army flight paramedicine during his exceptional service in the Army National



Guard Aviation and medical communities.

LTC Gregory C. Holownia and Mrs. Lexi Schooler are inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto by CW4 (Ret.) Dan Curry (right), chapter VP Awards, on June 18 at Davison Army Airfield, VA. Holownia was recognized for his outstanding leadership and support of 12th Army Aviation Battalion's Soldier Family Readiness Group which his wife, LTC Erika A. Holownia (left), commanded. Schooler was recognized for her dedication and support to the 12th Avn. Bn. FRG. Also

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Donate directly from your IRA to the AAAA Scholarship Foundation—your gift can count toward your RMD without raising your taxable income.

Questions? Contact Joanne Hansrote: 203-268-2450 x130 or scholarship@quad-a.org.



AAAA Membership Update by COL (Ret.) Liz Martin

Why AAAA is Critical to Army Aviation: A Branch in Transformation By COL (Ret.) Liz Martin

with heightened uncertainty throughout the ranks due to changes in Aviation force structure and continuous transformative efforts across the U.S. Army to increase the pace of fielding uncrewed capacity to ground commanders, the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) is arguably more critical to the Aviation Branch now than in recent decades.

The evolving threats of today and future contested battlefield environments continue to demonstrate how rapid advancements technological vital to compete with and dominate adversaries. Technology evolutions and warfighting enhancements are not static. As Army Senior Leaders continue to rollout the path for how Aviation formations will integrate and simultaneously power project crewed & uncrewed aerial platforms to dominate across a dynamic, contested Air-Ground Littoral fight - increased Aviation Enterprise collaboration, crosstalk, feedback, and Soldier support are vital to get it right.

Transformation in Contact is necessary and it is inherently difficult ... and for Army Aviation – it is fiercely technical and complex. Uncertainty, change, turmoil, advancements, and stress all go hand in hand. The focal point of concept-driven transformation



AAPI ARCHIVES / U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC JAVION SIDERS, 92ND COMBAT CAMERA COMPANY / U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SFC JOSHUA JOYNER, 101ST ABN DIV

is not the aviation platform; it remains the Aviation Professional (and how they leverage technological advancements) and their Family.

So, how does AAAA fit into the continuous transformation of Army Aviation? To understand the road ahead, it is important to reflect on the past.

The Army Aviation Association of America is a platform agnostic, multi-component Army Aviation professional organization with roots laid by World War II Artillery Piper Cub L-4 aviators known as the "Cub Club" who helped establish organic Army Aviation dating back to June 6, 1942. After Fort Rucker was designated as the U.S. Army Aviation Center in 1955, AAAA was founded on April 18, 1957, decades before the U.S. Army designated the Aviation Branch in 1983.

AAAA has supported the Aviation Warfighter and Family, through multiple transformational periods, centered on the pillars of Networking, Recognition, Voice, and Support. For 68 years, AAAA has served as a staunch proponent and advocate for many facets and issues concerning Army Aviation (i.e., push for Aviation

Career Incentive Pay, Flight Pay Insurance, etc.).

Key components that enable effective transformational change leverage information sharing, authentic dialogue to resolve issues, organizational connection, community bonding, unity of effort, advocacy, and support. AAAA is here to assist with all of these aspects.

Be sure to leverage all of the tools, forums, resources, and connection opportunities that AAAA offers. If you have an idea to share or a topic consideration for the Army Aviation Congressional Caucus or Army Senior Leader advocacy, please share with us at AAAA@quad-a.org.

As Army Aviation's professional organization, AAAA remains centered on the Army Aviation Professional & their Families.

Bottomline:

We hear you & we are here for you – throughout every step of this transformative process and beyond.

Fly Army!

COL (Ret.) Liz Martin AAAA Vice President for Membership liz.martin@quad-a.org



New AAAA Life Members

Alaskan Midnight Sun Chapter COL Reggie Harper Aloha Chapter CW4 Daniel Keslar Arizona Chapter Mr. Nathan Peper COL Michael C. Striplin, Ret. Aviation Center Chapter CW5 W. Michael Clarke, III Central Florida Chapter LTC Michael H. Harmes, Ret. Colonial Virginia Chapter Mr. Joseph B. Warren, II Connecticut Chapter CPT Brandon J. Moore Cowboy Chapter COL Stuart J. McRae Diamond State Chapter CW3 Christopher Abel CW4 Thomas Mitchell First Troop Philadelphia City Chapter CPT Ryan Leonard Idaho Snake River Chapter CW4 Eric Dillman 1SG Kevin L. Owen MAJ Richard T. Volz, Ret. Iowa Chapter CPT Joshua Dunt Land of Lincoln Chapter COL Jason Celletti MacArthur Chapter CW5 Victor Figliuolo Minuteman Chapter WO2 Thomas Harrigan Narragansett Bay Chapter CW5 Mark De Souza CPT Jeffrey Knez Straight Arrows Chapter SGT Michael Larson Tennessee Valley Chapter SSG Fric Clontz COL Peter A. Fast, Ret. MG William K. Gayler, Ret. Mr. Bernhard Wiegand Voodoo Chapter MAJ Wayne Albert Washington-Potomac Chapter LTC Matt Baldwin Mr. Jose Soto-Echevarria

New AAAA Members

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AAAA Family Forum By Judy Konitzer

Welcome to THE VET CENTER

y husband Tom and I recently attended a Veterans Ministry presentation at our church and, along with many others, discovered a hidden resource in our community.

We were amazed at how many of us were genuinely unaware of the Vet Center, which made me wonder how many of our readers are also not familiar with this asset. During the Transition Assistance Program, service members are informed about this resource, however it can easily get lost with information overload.

The Vet Center is a component within the Veterans Health Administration; however, you don't need to be enrolled in VA health care or have a serviceconnected disability to utilize it. The Centers are community based in a non-medical setting. There is no cost, and your records cannot be accessed by other VA or DoD offices, military units, or other community networks and providers without your permission or unless required to avert a life-threatening situation. For many, this makes it more comfortable when reaching out for help, especially when needing mental health counseling. The services are available to eligible veterans and their families, including National Guard and Reserve components.

All Centers are staffed with a Director, Outreach Specialist, Program Support Assistants and Counselors. The number of counselors is dependent on the community's needs. Many of the clinicians are veterans themselves. This makes them uniquely able to understand and appreciate the needs of those seeking help. Some centers also have bilingual counselors.

VECENTER Conn.

Connection.
Camaraderie.
Community.

Some of their services include individual, group, couple, and family counseling to talk through problems related to transitioning from military to civilian life. Counselors understand the stress of deployments, military service-related trauma including PTSD, sexual trauma, depression, bereavement, as well as help to understand earned VA benefits such as the VA disability claims process. Their counselors brainstorm solutions and provide what resources are available by working with you to create effective and practical plans. If you are not eligible for VA services, they will work with you to find available community resources that may be more suitable. And if they are unable to help you due to eligibility, they will find someone who can. I had to laugh when one counselor shared how often they receive calls looking for veterinarians, yet they still helped these folks find a clinic even when they were not eligible for actual Vet Center services.

There are over 300 actual Vet Centers across the U.S., Guam, Virgin Islands, and American Samoa along with over 83 mobile centers and a Vet Call Center that operates 24/7. I personally spoke with the Directors at a variety of these Centers near military bases to verify their programs, and along with regular benefits and resource services some offered additional workshops and group therapy. For instance, Tacoma Vet Center near Joint Base Lewis McChord, WA offers Technology Assistance for video contacts and resume preparation for federal and state employment. Killeen Heights near Fort Hood, TX has golf and bowling groups and campaign (Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan related) groups. Watertown near Fort Drum, NY offers Dialectical Behavior coping skills group, Expresso Yourself group, and Men's combat PTSD group. Huntsville, AL offers a yoga group and a Global War on Terrorism group. Alexandria near Fort Polk, LA offers a Female Recreational Group. The Augusta center near Ft. Gordon, GA offers guitar lessons. This is not meant to single out any Center, but just to share that individual centers have much to offer with groups being facilitated based on community needs.

Vet Center outreach specialists routinely attend community events to promote awareness of their services. Through outreach and networking efforts, the Vet Center receives referrals from the VA Medical Centers, Behavior Health Clinics on posts, and community partners along with peer referrals.

in the Blue Search Bar. In the prompt Use your location then add Vet Center in facility type.) It will list locations or call centers, phone numbers, hours of operation, eligibility requirements and services near your community. You can also call Vet Center Call Center at 1-877-927-9387 anytime 24/7 for a confidential conversation about issues

Visit www.va.gov. (Find a location

Judy Konitzer is the Family Forum editor for ARMY AVIATION, questions or suggestions may be directed to her at Judy@quad-a.org,

related to readjusting to civilian life



Mrs. Scarlett Graham



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AAAA Scholarship Foundation

By COL (Ret.) Michelle (Shelley) Yarborough

Securing Futures: How Legacy Giving Supports Army Aviation Families Through Scholarship

or more than 63 years, the Army Aviation Association of America Scholarship Foundation, Inc. (AAAASFI) has stood as a pillar of support for Army Aviation Soldiers and their families.

Through scholarships designed to ease the burden of higher education, the Foundation has empowered thousands of deserving students to pursue their academic and professional goals –backed by a deep belief in service, sacrifice, and opportunity.

Rising Costs, Rising Need

Each year, the AAAASFI relies on generous support from both industry leaders and patriotic individuals who understand the unique challenges faced by military families. Scholarships are often funded in conjunction with the Association's annual Summit and through year-end giving campaigns, but the land-scape of higher education is changing—and with it, the need to think more strategically about the future.

As college tuition continues to climb, so does the financial strain on military families. According to a September 2024 *U.S. News & World Report* article by Sarah Wood, the average in-state tuition and fees at a ranked public college now stand at \$11,011, while out-of-state students face costs of \$24,513. For private colleges, the average is a staggering \$43,505 – figures that do not include housing, meals, books, or other critical expenses.

For families navigating frequent moves, inconsistent state residency, and the broader uncertainties of military life, these numbers can feel insurmountable.

Building a Sustainable Future Through Legacy Giving

To meet this growing challenge, the Foundation is expanding its focus on legacy giving – a long-term strategy that strengthens the predictability of scholarship funding and helps ensure enduring support for future generations.

Three legacy options are now available, each tailored to offer both financial and emotional rewards to donors while solidifying the Foundation's ability to plan and provide.

The cornerstone of AAAASFI's legacy giving program, a *Perpetual Scholarships (PS)* requires a total contribution of \$28,750 to fund a recurring \$1,000 scholarship in perpetuity. This lasting gift can be funded over a period of up to 10

years, making it accessible to a wide range of donors.

Perpetual Scholarships are often established in memory of a loved one, in recognition of a corporation's values, or in honor of a local AAAA chapter or association. Each one carries a legacy of its own, a tribute that lives on in the lives of scholarship recipients year after year.

Additionally, to encourage participation, the Foundation offers potential **matching funds** to help donors reach the threshold sooner – available for up to three donors annually.

As a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, AAAASFI can also provide donors with possible tax advantages, depending on their individual situation.

Another impactful way to leave a legacy is through *Estate Planning & Planned Giving (EP/PG)*. By naming AAAAS-FI in your will or trust, you ensure that your commitment to Army Aviation families extends beyond your lifetime. The Foundation is available to assist with information and sample language to facilitate discussions with your family or legal counsel, making this a meaningful and seamless addition to your estate plans.

For donors aged 70½ and older, the IRS allows for Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) directly to a charitable organization like AAAASFI. These *RMD Donations* can fulfill required withdrawals while supporting a cause you believe in—without increasing your taxable income.

The Foundation is ready to assist you and your financial advisor with the necessary details to make this process simple and beneficial.

Every Dollar Makes a Difference

Whether you choose to support AAAASFI through a legacy opportunity or with a recurring annual gift, know that your contributions have a direct and meaningful impact. 100% of every dollar, less investment brokerage fees, received goes directly to a scholarship's principal, or is paid out in scholarship grants.

Together, we can continue to uplift the Army Aviation community – creating a future where educational dreams are within reach for every qualified applicant, no matter their financial background.

To learn more about legacy giving opportunities or to donate, please visit *quad-a.org/scholarship* or call Joanne Hansrote at (203) 268-2450, ext. 130.

COL (Ret.) Shelley Yarborough is the president of the AAAA Scholarship Foundation.



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 October 2024 through October 2025. 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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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.

Marilyn C. Rickmeyer

Brandon W Crosby-IHO George Munson

Richard E. Crogan



Industry News Announcements Related to Army Aviation Matters

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

Army Taps General Atomics to Add EW Capability to **Gray Eagle**



The U.S. Army has awarded General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) a new contract to add a C5ISR Modular Open Suite of Standards (CMOSS)-compliant open architecture Electronic Warfare (EW) capability onto the MQ-1C Gray Eagle® Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). This will be the third EW capability that has been integrated into the CMOSS chassis, showing how quickly and easily new plug-and-play capabilities can be integrated into the Grav Eagle platform. Other recent additions include Electronic Attack. Communications Relay, Counter-UAS, and Signals Intelligence. GA-ASI will collaborate with AeroVironment, Inc. to integrate the company's SharkCage Expeditionary C5ISR Chassis (ECCv3) onto the platform.

Bell Selects Curtiss-Wright To Provide Encrypted Flight **Recorders For FLRAA**



Curtiss-Wright Corporation announced on Oct. 13 that it has been selected by Bell Textron Inc., a Textron Inc. company, to provide encrypted flight data recorder technology that will operate over the digital backbone on the U.S. Army's MV-75 Future Long Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA). Under the contract, Curtiss-Wright will supply Bell with a combined cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and flight data recorder (FDR) using encryption technology. Curtiss-Wright's first phase of the program began in July 2025 and will continue through full-rate production.

Boeing and Leonardo Partner To Propose Flight **School Next Solution**



Boeing and Leonardo announced on Oct. 13 they will offer a contractor-owned, contractoroperated solution for the U.S. Army's Flight School Next program aimed at creating a more flexible and scalable approach to rotarywing training by going back to the basics to include using a single-engine helicopter. The companies propose that the combination of Boeing's experience and Leonardo's AW119T training helicopter will provide a strong solution for a complete training package. Leonardo's single-engine trainer has logged more than 100,000 flight hours, including over 16,000 hours under instrument flight rules, and 40,000 touchdown autorotations. according to the statement.

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

AAR Allen Services Inc., Wellington, KS, was awarded a \$25,090,834 firmfixed-price contract for overhaul of the CH-47-cylinder assembly: work locations and funding will be determined with each order, with an estimated completion date of Sept. 29, 2030.

CAE USA Inc., Tampa, FL, was awarded a \$29,248.615 modification to contract W9124G-23-C-0002 for fixed wing flight training, training support, and training service support; work will be performed in Fort Rucker, Alabama, with an estimated completion date of March 9, 2032.

The Boeing Co., Ridley Park, PA, was awarded two contracts: a \$52,682,574 firm-fixed-price contract for maintenance and overhaul of the mechanical transmission for the CH-47 Chinook; work locations and funding will be determined with each order, with an estimated completion date of Sept. 28, 2029; and a \$125,575,000 modification to contract W58RGZ-23-F-0272 for CH-47 Lot Four Aircraft; work locations and funding will be determined with each order, with an estimated completion date of Oct. 1, 2030.

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UPCOMING SPECIAL FOCUS



December

Industry Partners Directory Industry Support and Challenges Research & Development Science & Technology UAS/AI/Launched Effects/Future Vertical Lift

January

Unmanned Aircraft Systems Sensors & Weapons Bonus Distribution -Army Best Drone Warfighter Competition: Agile, Adaptive, Lethal)

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AAAA Salutes the Following Departed...

COL Eugene F. Crooks, Ret - Deceased 9/5/2025 Mr. Keith E. Gay - Deceased 8/12/2025 COL Bill G. Lockwood, Ret. - Deceased 8/25/2025 LTC Stuart A. Miller, Ret. - Deceased 4/26/2025 CW5 William E. Pfau, Ret. - Deceased 8/11/2025 CW5 Christopher A. Rau - Deceased 9/24/2025 Mr. Gary L. Smith - Deceased 7/27/2025 Mr. William H. Squires - Deceased 10/14/2025





Aviation General Officer Promotions/ Assignments

Pollak Assumes Command of ARAC

Incoming commander, COL Patrick L. Pollak, receives the Army Reserve Aviation Command colors from MG Martin Klein, Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Army Reserve, during a change of command ceremony, Aug. 24, 2025 at Godman Army Airfield, Fort Knox, KY. Pollak, who was promoted to BG on Sep. 2, 2025, assumed command from BG Roger F. Deon, who retired with more than 38 years of service.

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, Fort Rucker, AL.

48 Officers July 24, 2025 Class 25-019

Commissioned Officers 1LT Crawford, Evan G. -DG 1LT McKinney, Stephen W. -HG 1LT Morrison, Robert A. -HG 2LT Arkle, Gabrielle F. 1LT Cannon, Alexander J. 2LT Fields, Dillon R. 2LT Hegedty, Logan J. 2LT Klebs, Allison R. 2LT Klepper, Bianca C. * 1LT Lasater, Austin A. 1LT McGurrin, Patrick M. 1LT Patel, Bhavan D. CPT Potter, Montgomery E. 3 2LT Schneiderhan, Jensen E. * 1LT Slevin, Madison E. 1LT Tuttle, Kord A. Warrant Officers

WO1 Black, Corbin M. -DG

CW2 Brainerd, Daniel S. -HG WO1 Gray, Bryan J. -HG WO1 Gresham, Joshua D. * -HG WO1 Kannegieter, Aaron R. -HG WO1 Alvarez Diaz, Lazaro E. * WO1 Arredondo, Carlos A. WO1 Calle Flores, David J. * WO1 Davison, Samuel L. WO1 Delarosa, Mark U. WO1 Griffith, William T., III W01 Khalil, Eslam M. W01 Kirby, Reece E. W01 Layman, Justin J. WO1 Lokits, Kevin J., Jr. * WO1 Martinson, Roscoe W. WO1 Mohamed Hassan, Omar M WO1 Myers, Michael D. 3

WO1 Olmstead, Seth L. WO1 Ramirez Vega, Marco A. WO1 Rangel, Ramiro J., Jr. WO1 Reid, Kallie M. WO1 Roa, Spencer N. WO1 Sadek, Amir W01 Sanfeliz Rivera, Kenny W01 Stewart, Michael K. WO1 Tello, Ramon WO1 Thompson, Andrew J. WO1 Weaver Shull, Derek J. WO1 Wheeler, Riley W. WO1 Woodbury, Paige A. *

35 Officers August 7, 2025 Class 25-020

Commissioned Officers 2LT Wasson, Julia N. * -DG

1LT Biland, Alfred J., Jr. -DG 2LT Bayer-Grimes, Samantha M. * CPT Bone, Jeremy A. * 2LT Browning, Tyler J. * 1LT Davis, Kristopher L. 1LT Duenas, Nicholas A. 2LT Henry, Reagan E. * 1LT Phelps, Caleb E. 2LT Priddy, Zachary E. CPT Van Slyke, Jacob S. *

Warrant Officers WO1 Hall, Aaron A. -DG

WO1 Barker, Kasey C. WO1 Boyd, Alexander N. WO1 Brewer, Benjamin T. WO1 Carreno, Timothy E. W01 Cordova, Zackary R. * WO1 Dyer, Keaton G. WO1 Ellis, John J. W01 Estes, Zackary D.

WO1 Anderson, Kristin M.

WO1 Austin, Stephen E.

WO1 Kapugi, Jesse E. WO1 Mishler, Joseph W. WO1 Nesbit, Daniel B.









WO1 Noel, Niko K. WO1 Richardson, Justin J. *

W01 Saterfield, Zachary N. * W01 Swiger, Levi W.

WO1 Troublefield, Franklin R. *

WO1 Turner, Deron N. *

WO1 Washburn, Luke A. WO1 Westbury, Matthew C.

42 Officers August 21, 2025

Class 25-021 Commissioned Officers

1LT Widner, Timothy A. -DG 1LT Gregory, Tyler J. -HG 1LT Aoun, Anthony T. 1LT Centanni, Michael P. 1LT Corsaro, Jacob M. 1LT Doll. Davlen C.

2LT Genualdo, Nikolas D. * 1LT Johnson, James R.

2LT Krusell, Jacob A. CPT Logsdon, Daniel W. *

1LT Naughton, Kavan D. 2LT Schofield, Noah G.

Warrant Officers

WO1 Rieder, Anthony J. * -DG WO1 Atchison, Chance A. * -HG WO1 Holbert, Gregory C. -HG WO1 Poole, Andrew W. -HG WO1 Whiteford, Joseph C. *-HG WO1 An, Erik T.

WO1 Bacon, Kori W., Jr. *

WO1 Cavan, Stevie M. 7

WO1 Cormier, Jarrett J. *

WO1 Farler, Jennifer E.

W01 Franco, Isaac B. 7

WO1 Gibson, Storm T.

WO1 Green, Chandler F.

WO1 Henry, Tabatha D. 7

WO1 Henschen, Dillon J.

WO1 Herry, Noll D. *

WO1 Margaillan, Lyle R. 7

WO1 Mooney, Daniel M.

WO1 Murray, Michael J.

WO1 Olecki, Andrea G.

WO1 Oros Lopez, Ariel H. WO1 Painter, Brandon R.

WO1 Paulson, Garrett B.

WO1 Puth. Jonathan

WO1 Randall, Garrett W.

WO1 Richards, Christopher J.

WO1 Serrano Ayala, Joabdel

WO1 Tamayo, Luis E.

WO1 Weems, Matthew R. WO1 Whitson, Corev M.

31 Officers September 4, 2025

Class 25-022

Commissioned Officers

2LT Kennis, Jed L., II -DG 2LT Daigle, Thomas R. * -HG 2LT Durand, Bryce M. * -HG 2LT Bender, Aaron A. 7

2LT Boyd, Luke A.

2LT Coons, Kade R. *

2LT Flynn, John F.

1LT Greathouse, Laura M. *

2LT Lacas, Meghan R. 1LT Langston, Jonathan T. *

1LT LeMay, Alyssa M.

2LT McGrath, Dylan A.

2LT Proper, Alexander L. 3 2LT Pumphrey, Megan E. * 2LT Thompson, Coleman K.

2LT Wilkey, Jeremy G. 7 Warrant Officers

WO1 Smith, Tyler G. * -DG

WO1 Maneely, Luke P.-HG

WO1 Rodriguez, Sarah M. -HG

WO1 Allen, Craig M.

WO1 Brickner, Kevin J.

WO1 Demerly, Seth R. 7

WO1 Gatley, Kory L.3

WO1 Granza, Dylan C. *

W01 Justice, Jordan M. WO1 McCartney, Macey N. *

WO1 Ortiz, Marco A.

W01 Parrales Muekay, Christopher 3





WO1 Strebs Stelps, Alexander* WO1 Threatt, Charles N. * WO1 Troxel, Joseph E. *

-DG: Distinguished Graduate

-HG: Honor Graduate = AAAA Member

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. Rucker, AL.

Aviation Maintenance Technician

Class 003-25 WO1 Katleia Elaine Vargas* -DG WO1 Cody John Gallmeier WO1 Desmond Troy Lee WO1 Blane H. Moreno WO1 Rodney Joseph Rios Class 004-25

WO1 Conner Winstead * -DG WO1 Quinton Bulloch WO1 Vohnte Fielding WO1 Tammy Mendez

AH-64 Attack Helicopter

WO1 Travis Smith

Repairer (15R) Class 027-25 PFC Michael A. Berry * -DG PV2 Lakin Roy Ellison PVT Donna Marie C. Johnston SPC Nathan Donald Newman PFC Aaron Michael Rose PV2 Nikolaos George Versis Class 028-25 PFC Norbely G.Santiago * -DG PV2 Brodie Leroy Babcock

PFC Ryan Clair Calkins SPC Zachary A.Chitwood PV2 Tyler Jeffrey Conaway PFC Arianna Kate Farias PFC Melanie Aline Foster PFC Noah Rae Lance SPC Jacob Scott Sevmer CPL Henry James Swearingen Class 029-25 PVT Brian Anthony Frady *-DG PVT Oscar E. Altamirano PFC Ivan Mario Escobedo PV2 Melba Elsa George PFC Estanislao M.Lansangan SPC Rylan Alexander Miller PFC Forrest Michael Tuffe **PVT Houston Shane Vincent** Class 030-25

PV2 Brayden Wyatt Eddy *-DG PFC Jordan Kaleb Bodnar PVT Antonio E. C. Arroyo PVT Jeremy Omar Huggins SPC Giovanny A. Rosarioramos PV2 Nathan Allen Schramm PV2 Harriet N. Wairimu Class 031-25 PFC Olivia L. Brunson* -DG PV2 Jonathan M.Sheehan SPC Wesley Lee Harden PV2 Jacob Ortell Kennington PV2 Matthew Dayvon Lawson PFC Austin Taylor Lee Pv1 Jacob Daniel Rodriguez SPC William Bruce Scott, Jr. PV2 Adam Archer Underwood PV2 Jackson Casey Williams

Class 032-25 SPC Wyclef Etienne * -DG PVT Ashton Riley Davis PFC Whalen Micheal Frei SPC Cameron Karl Frohmader PV2 Luke Chadwick Gaskins SPC Aidan Douglas Hampton PVT Nicholas Ray Hernandez PVT Kanuri Lashaun Johnson PVT David Martinez, Jr. SPC Bijay Rai PV2 Moses Sage Roberts PV2 Jacob Matthew Watson

UH-60 Helicopter Repairer (15T)

Class 046-25 SPC Joshua Eli Waldron * -DG



ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING (AIT) GRADUATIONS

SSG Ayed Nasser M. Asseri SPC Noah Michael Barwinski PFC Cadance Mroz Bowman PFC Jesse Sloan Bridges PFC Chaz Raykent Crookham PFC Anthony B. Diaz-De Jesus SSG Ibrahim Saleh I Dokhan PFC Joshua McCain Farr PFC Deangelo Kevin Gore SPC Jannes G. Viola Taccad PFC Benjamin Luke Thomas Class 047-25 PFC Duncan H. Bauman * -DG PV2 Pedro Cruz PFC Carl C.Domnick, Jr. PFC Fletcher Cole Frotton PFC Peyton Alexander Havner PV2 Colton Jace Henderson SPC Quintin Eugene Howard PV2 Torris Kelly, Jr. SPC Matthew Bolton Maynard PFC Robert Ferrel Price PV2 Jaden Anthony Saponari PFC Jonathan Richard Wilson Class 049-25 PFC Benjamin J.Silano, Jr.*-DG PFC Grayson Conner Brown PFC Juan F. Estrada PV2 Mya Belle Freund PFC Thomas Luke Johnson PFC Jacob Andrew King PV2 Garrett Samuel Mohr PFC Gabriel Anthony Morales PFC Ethan Charles Reifsnider SPC Anthony Solomon Chaminade Jr Salavea PFC Kadin Nyieem Shaw PV2 Nathen Robert Westcott Class 050-25 PV2 Samuel R. Moseman * -DG PFC Corey Sebastian Giles PFC Tyler Christopher Hayden PFC Connor Patrick Hurley SPC Isabella Leigh Kline SPC Kendrel L. Luster, Jr. SPC Brynna J. McLaughlin PFC Christopher Luke Mick SPC Frederick J. Parker, III SPC Jeremy Sylvester Pierce SPC Kevin Rios Class 051-25 PV2 James Robert Tullis * -DG PFC Regina Alondra Benitez PV2 Gabrial Leon Guzman PFC Alexander J.Johnson SPC William Matthew Mayer PFC Gavin Howard McKee PFC Lindsav Parkin PV2 Brady Lee Roberts PFC Gabriel F. Torres Rosas PFC Blake Edward Tweedie PV2 Sila Loisulu Kawena Umu PFC Landon Todd Weber Class 052-25 PV2 Martin C. Hernandez * -DG PFC Nicholas Michael Borek PV2 Theodore Isaiah Buck PV2 Carter Joel Clouatre SPC Tyler Eugene Eagledale PV2 Jagger Steven Engle PFC Ryan Owen Frazier SPC Henrique F.Goncalves PFC Maximilian Duncan Grice SPC Ahmed Houri PFC John Mark Olson PFC Kohl Edward Ramsay Class 054-25 SPC Tanner T. McDonald * -DG PFC Maggie Kay Carter PV2 Jesus Angel Gamez SPC Kasen Avery Paredes PFC Travis Lee Puckett SPC Axel Rivera SPC Luke Samuel Rosen PFC Andrew Robert Scharnhorst PFC Brady John Schiltz PFC Bijay Bal Tamang PV2 Cody Austin Taylor PFC Keira Kay Watson Class 055-25 PFC Colin P. Anderson * -DG PV2 Garrett Keith Dillard PV2 Larry Joseph Dooley PVT John Noble Graham PFC Bryson Keith Grover SPC Joshua B. Kelsch PFC Andrew T.McCullough PFC Samuel A.Monroy, Jr. SPC Alfred Kwasi Oboubi PFC Anass Nour Ouardi SPC James Ryan Salter PFC Austin Tyler Webb Class 057-25 PFC Sarah Anne Adkins * -DG PFC Samantha Jade Barker PFC Jasmine Marie Lazcano PFC Joseph Eldon Manna PV2 Joshua Caleb Pagan PFC Vazco S. Paredes Varillas SPC Elizardo Paredes, Jr. PFC Cathleen K. P. Reverente PFC Aaron Jacob Robinson PFC Angela Rose Szymanski PFC Ethan Vincent Veenendall Class 058-25 SPC Matthew D.Jubb * -DG PFC Hericeldo Joao Mendonca Camuto PFC Francisco Carrillo **PVT Hector Tatthep Davis** PV2 Tristen Michael Edwards PFC Kaleb Brian Faust PFC David Felix-Hernandez PFC Clark William Fouts PFC Elias James Harrison PV2 Joey William Larson

PFC Jacob Emmanuel Ward

SPC Gregory Vazquez, Jr.*-DG

Class 060-25

PFC Selena Michelle Balcazar PFC Marissa Lorraine Banning SPC Kameron K. Butler Archie PFC Joshua R. A. Gallarde PV2 Bryden K. Gladstone PV2 Kathryn Elizabeth Howell PFC Elijiah J. Charles Lambert PFC Jett Parker Stephenson PV2 Kaylee Jo Verschelden Class 061-25 PFC Zachary D. Jordan -DG PFC Elijah Jonathan Awe PFC Anthony Adolfo Cabezas SPC Harrison Hursh Eberly PFC Dagen Blaze Henderson PFC Zackary Taylor Lawrence SPC Edward Pecina, III PFC Yoel Salgado PFC Nicolas Elliott Sanchez SPC Tyler Dane Schmitt PFC Logan Alexander Self PFC Ismail J. Mumin Wilson Class 062-25 PFC Kaiden Lee Gannaway*-DG PFC Evan K. Digdigan Buscato PV2 Ian Ridan Carballo PFC Junghyun Chin PFC Gabriel Joseph Fox PV2 Daniel James Gillingham SPC Levaughn Lennox Gray PFC Logan Oneil Joyce PV2 Dylan Deearle Logsdon PFC Tugrul Yasin Oksum PFC Kyle Bradley Paris PFC Rachael Patricia Snyder Class 063-25 PV2 James M.Rogers * -DG PFC Landon Robert Boyd SPC Garrett Lee Calahan SPC Briton Douglas Cook SPC Chandler Mark Miller PFC Jessie D. N.Gutierrez SPC Cenk Ozer PV2 Joshua K. James Pusillo PFC Race Bannon Salyers PFC David K Tatum, Jr. PFC Dalton Ray Williams Class 065-25 PFC Nicholas A. Franklin * -DG PFC Zain Mason Allen PV2 Zachry Mark Ammons PFC Christopher J. Callari PV2 James Hale Carmon PFC Connor Steven Coombs PFC Andrew John Gosselin PFC Rilley Grace Harkins PFC Andrew Ray Johnson PFC Jackson Cole Kirk PFC Victoria Rose Kramer PFC Ethan Andrew Neef Class 066-25 SPC Russell Kyle Miller * -DG PFC Izail Israel Gonzalez SPC Tad Stephens Hammill SPC Keeghan Robert Kester

PFC Michael Cameron Lee SPC Blake Donald Lykins PFC Erick Gabriel M.Bautista PFC Blake Alexander Prescott SPC Jasmin Leann Rose PFC Devon Michael Warren PFC Keegen James Wilson Class 067-25 PFC Jace A. Ocampo * -DG PFC Cole M. Wayne Bailey PFC Luis Yanacio Collado PFC Jaxon Daniel Ebey SPC David A. Hornschemeier PFC Avden Curtis Hostetter PFC Lilly Marie Johnson PFC Eduardo Lopez PV2 Trenten Jaydix Rogers PV2 Fernando S. Yacuta Class 068-25 PFC Conner T. M. Lee * -DG PFC Tajj Jamie Anderson PFC Koa Radovan Biork SPC Dominic T.Campbell PFC Abisahim F. Cortes Ortiz SPC Joemichael K.Cristobal PFC Justin Gordon Hams PFC Ty Alan Howell PV2 Alexander J. Lawless SPC Sergiy Morgun PFC Knigel Alexander Obrien

Cargo Helicopter Repairer (15U)

Class 019-25 PV2 Oscar O. Hernandez * -DG SPC Ethan James Dardis PFC Garrett James Green SPC Marco Jossue Hernandez-Ortiz PV2 Julian Gabriel Paz PV2 Brandon M.Popovice SPC Javier W. Springsteed PV2 Jackson James Tesoro Class 020-25 PFC Talon Skyler Fain * -DG PFC Axel Betancurt PV2 Sebastian Michael Green PV2 Anthony S. J. Inguagiato PV2 Jorey D.Lindsey-Joseph PVT Havden Leon Pierce PV2 Colby C. Scofield PFC Elijah Owen Scofield Class 022-25 SPC Ketrin Deangelo Lewis*-DG SPC Michael David Burgoyne SPC Jaden Skylar Derosa SPC Madison Pauline Drake SPC Joshua Scott Duncan SPC Kristofer Dylan Furner SGT Vivian J. Gianelloni, IV PFC Christiaan Daniel King PFC Subash Panthi SPC Dean Lawrence Shanks PV2 James Edward Shumake SPC Taiki Cabrera Vick

PV2 Nicholas E.Woods * -DG SGT Margues Nairay Burnett SPC Marc Anthony Flowers SPC Alexander Carroll Mitchell SPC Gregory Ryan Mobley PV2 Alexander Nunez PV2 David Omar Ortiz Cruz PV2 Samuel T. Parkinson SPC James Clint Rinker PFC Jacob Ray Schulte SPC Johnathon P.A.Shaughnessy SPC Steven Gregory Wright Class 024-25 PFC Joshua D. Hutcheson*-DG PV2 Nathaniel Wavne Bear PV2 Diego Ezekiel Flores PV2 Joseph Donald Jones PV2 Mason James Kokkeler PV2 Tanner Joseph Myers PV2 Asher R.Nottingham Class 026-25 PV2 Alejandro S. Alvarez * -DG PV2 Timothy G.Backhus SPC Tristan Cody Brown SPC Tristen James Brown SPC Jake Michael Chasser PV2 Austin Taylor Chromy SPC Nathaniel James Holm SPC Joshua Matve Rutledge SPC Jesse R.Schnablegger, Jr. SPC Garrett S.Thomas SPC Kedarreis Ray Precious Mason Tims-Kirkendoll SPC Angelo N. Young Class 027-25 PFC Kevin E. Bustillos * -DG SPC Andrew Steven Bath PV2 Tyler James Beiter SPC Michael Thomas Bergen PFC Zakaria Abdi Ibrahim SPC Ty Chase Tullous SPC Heath Eulan Ward PV2 Dalton James Wenzel PFC Martin A.Zupanchick

Class 023-25

Aircraft Powerplant Repairer (15B)

Class 005-25 SPC Darrell N. Ambersley*-DG PFC Christopher David Bucher PFC Sean Michael Davis PV2 Hunter Adam Edwards SPC Adrian Carl Ferguson SPC Lucas Mever Hauser PFC Liam Pierce Kinlan SPC Javanshir Nurmammadli SSG Patrick Lynn Reddick PV2 Hayden Tres Robins PV2 Farrell Bonmanin Tienoui PFC Brayan Fidel Torres PV2 Brandon C. Wilson, Sr. Class 006-25 PVT Nathan W. Prestrud * -DG PFC Cooper M.Cunningham



ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING (AIT) GRADUATIONS

PFC Carlos Daniel Garcia PVT Darion W. Travon Havden PFC Emily Faye Jenkins PV2 Jace Rawlins Mayeux PFC Jacob Benjamin Spears PV2 Deshawn C.Williamson

Aircraft Powertrain Repairer (15D)

Class 004-25 PV2 Joshua A. Fredricks *-DG SPC Joseph Thomas Albert PV2 William Cody Garner PV2 Xavier F.Hilbmann PV2 Steven Andrew Irving, Jr. PFC Shawn Gil Laurio SPC Frank Harding Logan, IV SPC Kajahl Lavaughn Marison Class 005-25 PV2 Charles A. Waeltz * -DG PV2 Tristan Dale Bolton PV2 Jack Patrick Chapa PFC Anthony Zander Delgais PFC Felix Donald K.Donfack PVT Nicholas Scott Robison

Aircraft Electrician (15F)

Class 009-25

PV2 Richard T. Glennon * -DG PV2 Muntadharnabilmh Alaamery PV2 Herlinson T.F.Mercado PV2 Chris Nyika Joshua PFC Gabriel T. Bates Schmidt PV2 Gerardo Trujillo Class 011-25 PFC Reginald S. De Los Reyes * -DG SPC Davian Demaro Hope PFC Julio Juarez SPC Milinda Senaka Nan Rajarama Brahmanalage PFC Zane Edward Smith PFC Joshua James Wright

Aircraft Structural Repairer (15G)

Class 006-25 PVT Oliver J.Deleissegues*-DG PFC Javanni Tafari Decordova SPC Evan Michael Divito PFC Tifton C Paxton PV2 Lukas Polacek PV2 Deiner Rosa, Jr PV2 Mackenzie T.Rosenberg PV2 Jackson Lee Yates Class 007-25

PFC Jerome C.Curfman, III*-DG PFC Kyla Josephine Comstock PFC Devron Tashman Davis PFC Geovanni Di Carlo Alves Rangel PV2 Henry James Gadzik PVT Victor A. Rosas Gonzalez PFC Mosese Q.Soronakadavu PV2 Camden Brian Ward PV2 Stephen M.Williamson

Aircraft Pneudraulics Repairer (15H)

Class 006-25 PFC Brevin A. Higgins * -DG SPC Austin Michael Kummer PFC Robert Stewart McClary PFC Parker James Morehouse PV2 Dallas Eric Pearson Class 007-25 PFC Jancarlos Pagan PV2 Owen G.Richardson PFC Nikko J. D.Stevenson PVT Jaiden C Weidman-Fish

Avionic Repairer (15N)

Class 007-25 SPC Lauren E. Bubarth * -DG PV2 Shellby F. Renee Bundy PV2 Brodie Myles Emery PV2 Jaime Rebecca Sansing Class 008-25 PV2 Edwin Hernandez * -DG SGT Seth Jacob Ackermann PV2 Brandon Daniel Hurt, II PV2 Julio Angel Morenorivera PFC Brandon A. Ramirez PV2 Dominic Michael Sisk PFC Bryden Daniel Tolle Class 009-25 PFC Shad M. Harkless * -DG PFC Joshua David Frazee PFC Denis Garley SPC Christian Ray Keller SPC Ivan Mauricio Lopez SGT Andrew Michael Lynn SPC Joaquin Moreno SPC Anthony Pinon Class 010-25 PFC James Mitchell * -DG

SPC John Paul Cofield

PFC Jordan Alion Hyatt

PFC Tika Dhamala

PV2 Hunter Reid Boyles

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

Class 011-25 PFC Ricardo B.Sanchez * -DG PV2 Shane Henry Barton PFC David Wayne Buelow, Jr. PV2 Edgar Castellanos Santos PV2 Kaden Brashaw Cross PV2 Andrew Isiah Herrera PV2 Robert Derek Howard PV2 Valaree Veronica Jones PV2 Michael Kevin Roberts PFC Brooke Ann Sands Class 012-25 PFC Levi John Costales * -DG PFC Tyler Hunter Bush SPC Marquis Xavian Dorsey PFC Altesa James Gillman PFC Edgar L. Quinones-Morales SPC Kevin Michael Slaight SPC Joseph Blake Weaver

-DG: Distinguished Graduate

-HG: Honor Graduate * = AAAA Member



RTX



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RTX is the world's largest aerospace and defense company. With more than 185,000 global employees, we push the limits of technology and science to redefine how we connect and protect our world. Through industry-leading businesses – Collins Aerospace, Pratt & Whitney, and Raytheon – we are advancing aviation, engineering integrated defense systems for operational success, and developing nextgeneration technology solutions and manufacturing to help global customers address their most critical challenges. The company, with 2024 sales of more than \$80 billion, is headquartered in Arlington, Virginia.

SIZE OF COMPANY: Large 1,000 Employees and Up

CATEGORIES: Manufacturing

https://www.rtx.com/

Each month, starting with the January 2026 issue, one company will be spotlighted in ARMY AVIATION Magazine in the Advertiser Spotlight section. If chosen, your company may submit newsworthy information that will appeal to the Army Aviation community. To qualify, your company must have a signed 2026 insertion order for print advertising (1 Ad Minimum). Selected company will be randomly chosen by the 15th of the month prior.



UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS) GRADUATIONS

Tactical Unmanned **Aerial Systems** (TUAS) Operations Technician

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

TUAS Technician

12 Graduates, 3 September 2025

WO1 John Thomas Jr -HG WO1 Wilfredo Alemany Aponte

WO1 Addison Crews

WO1 Dustin Degner

WO1 Brandon Johnston

WO1 Taylor Miller WO1 Ethan Moore

WO1 Justin Serfass WO1 Anthony Willbanks

UAS REPAIRER

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

Shadow UAS Repairer Course

8 Graduates, 6 August 2025 PEC Seth Dike -DG

PV2 Riley Balmaceda -HG

PFC Jan Muñiz

PFC Jose Muñoz

PV2 Domonick Gavaller **PVT Fthan Coates**

PVT Cole Landon

PV2 Gabriel McCollum

8 Graduates, 26 August 2025

PFC Braden Robertson -DG

PV2 Dvlan David -HG

PFC Brandon Axe PFC Sasha Crumpton

PV2 Alex Turner

PV2 Hunter Godwin

PV2 Bryson Lewis

PV2 Brandon Zerwas

Gray Eagle Repairer Course

14 Graduates, 15 August 2025

SPC Jared Bergstrom

PFC Julio Giraldi

PFC Gerardo Marquez PFC Gage Owens

PFC William McLess

PFC Cass Williams

PV2 Spencer Chambers

PV2 Jacob Huber

PV2 Joshua Jackson

PV2 Cody Mann

PV2 Noah Miller PV2 Hector Rodriguez PV2 Jackson Talbott PV2 Luis Zuniga

UAS Operator

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

Gray Eagle Operator Course

6 Graduates, 2 September

PFC Konnor Roach -DG

SGT Jared Clark -HG

CPL Anthony Duong SPC Wyatt Huber

PFC Sharon Rorex

PFC Matthew Sherman

Shadow UAS Operator Course

8 Graduates, 31 July 2025 PFC Codi Pinheiro -DG

SGT Donte McKinnev

SPC Michael Baird

PFC Noah Link

PV2 Traeger Hatfield

PV2 Chandler Perdue PV2 Alex Rodriguez Herrera

PV2 Julian Elizalde

AVIATION SENIOR AND LEGACY LEADERS!



We are looking for former colored hat wearers to serve as the guest speaker for our current Flight School Color Hat Ceremonies. Fill out the form at the QR code or link below to join our roster.



https://forms.osi.apps.mil/r/pwZgHvDtgs

9 Graduates, 20 August 2025 PFC Zane Belvoir Aylett -DG

SPC Taylor Frayley

PFC Chyanne Holloway

PFC Luke Pierron

PV2 Elijah Bastos

PV2 Ryan Diana

PV2 Zander McVev

PV2 Joseph Pavey PV2 John Zeh

5 Graduates, 10 SEP 2025

PFC Isaiah Martinez -DG

PV2 Nathaniel Brice

SPC Jesse Gonzalez

SPC Benton Wight

PFC Jeaneth Osorio

ARMY AVIATION MUSEUM FOUNDATION PROUDLY SUPPORTING THE US ARMY AVIATION MUSEUM SINCE 1970







MAAAA Legislative Report

By LTC (Ret.) Kevin Cochie AAAA Representative to the Military Coalition (TMC)

kevin.cochie@guad-a.org

FY26 Limbo - Shutdown -Pay and Readiness Impacts

As the fiscal year wound to a close without a new appropriations bill or a stopgap continuing resolution, the U.S. entered a full government shutdown on October 1. That means the Department of Defense (DoD) is operating under lapse-of-appropriations rules—an outcome with immediate and serious implications for Army aviation readiness and the pay status of aviators and their supporting crews.

Under the Antideficiency Act and related guidance, active duty servicemembers are required to continue performing their duties even though appropriations have run out. However, unless Congress enacts a separate measure guaranteeing their pay (as was done in 2013 via the Pay Our Military Act) they may not receive their paycheck on schedule. With the shutdown dragging into mid-Oct, the Pentagon was able to divert funding from programs to pay servicemembers the Oct mid-month paycheck, but it is unlikely they can continue to do so if the shutdown persists into November which many believe will be the case.

For Army aviators and their families, this uncertainty brings immediate stress; housing costs, family support obligations, readiness-payments, flight pay, aviation incentive pay, and other entitlements are all built around predictable pay cycles. Missing a paycheck disrupts morale, distracts from mission focus, and places additional burdens on spouses and dependents.

How long will it last? The over/under was 30 days and it appears we are quickly approaching the over as the end of Oct nears. Ideally, by the time this hits your mailbox it will be behind us and even if so, the impacts of it will not, and the leadership in the Army will have to play catch up with everything from moral to readiness, to modernization programs.

National Defense Authorization Act (FY26) Conference

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) and the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) are actively working to reconcile their differing versions of the FY26 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). While both chambers have already passed their own policy bills; HASC with its version and SASC with its version, conferees drawn primarily from each committee are now negotiating a final

text for full congressional approval.

For Army aviation, these negotiations hold critical importance. The aviation portfolio; covering aircraft procurement (platforms and systems), readiness initiatives (initial entry rotary wing flight training, training, maintenance funding), and modernization (FLRRA and other developmental programs); depends on the authorizing language of the NDAA. Once the conference report is agreed. aviation-specific programs can gain clarity on funding levels, modernization priorities and sustainment authorities.

Among the key areas of interest for Army aviation stakeholders: assurance that authorizations match the modernization tempo of platforms; maintaining or increasing flight hour allocations to sustain readiness; and strengthening logistics and parts procurement authorities to reduce maintenance bottlenecks. As HASC and SASC work through trade-offs, (industrial base constraints, budget caps, and emerging threats) the outcome will directly influence how our aviation force will train, fight, and sustain in the years to come.

Congress Could Play Role in Army's Aviation Cuts

Beyond budget fights, Congress is also positioned to shape major Army personnel decisions. In September, the Army announced plans to cut 6,500 active-duty aviation positions as part of a sweeping modernization initiative. The move is framed to build a leaner, more technologically advanced aviation force that integrates drones and other emerging capabilities.

Congress, however, retains significant influence. Through the appropriations process and the NDAA, lawmakers could delay, alter, or block personnel reductions. Hearings and committee inquiries may also question whether the cuts undermine readiness or exacerbate safety concerns, particularly given the Army's recent rise in aviation mishap rates.

The Army plans to implement the reductions using talent panels starting in October. These panels will review junior warrant officers, lieutenants, and captains in Apache and Black Hawk units, determining whether to retain them in aviation or reclassify them into other branches. Similar reviews for enlisted aviation troops are under consideration. While Army leaders argue that the transformation is necessary to align resources with future needs, members of Congress may resist if the cuts appear to weaken near-term capability or impact installations and jobs in their states and districts.

As the Army pursues modernization, lawmakers may respond by inserting guardrails into the defense bill, mandating minimum aviation staffing levels, extending timelines, or directing the Army to explore other cost-saving measures first. The outcome is likely to reflect a familiar dynamic; military leaders driving change to meet future threats, and Congress exercising oversight to protect readiness, accountability, and local interests tied to Army aviation.

Van Epps wins Primary in Tennessee - 7 Special **Election**

Matt Van Epps, Army aviator and West Point graduate, has won the Republican primary for the special election in Tennessee's 7th Congressional District, securing the GOP nomination on October 7. He will now face Democrat Aftyn Behn in the general election, scheduled for December 2, 2025. If elected, Matt will join a handful of Army Aviators serving in the House of Representative and expanding our Army Aviation reach further in Congress. For those of you in the Clarksville/Ft. Campbell area, get out to vote on December 2nd.

UPCOMING AAAA EVENTS

DECEMBER 2025

13 The 126th Army-Navy Game, M&T Bank Stadium, Baltimore, MD

9-11 SAE DoD Maintenance Symposium, Louisville, KY

9-11 Association of Old Crows, 62nd Annual Intnl Symposium & Convention, National Harbor, MD

15 Submission Deadline - Scholarship Applications

JANUARY 2026

1 Submission Deadline – National Awards and Top Chapter

13 ARMY AVIATION Magazine 2025 Photo Contest Deadline

15 Submission Deadline - Scholarship Application Supporting Documents 26-30 Aviation Senior Leaders Forum, Ft. Rucker, AL



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, 2000

Rescue

Last August, an Air Force F-15 from Nellis Air Force Base crashed during exercises. The fighter went down some 125

miles north of Las Vegas. A UH-60 Black Hawk from the Oklahoma National Guard, Company B, 108th Aviation Regiment, was detached to rescue the pilot. The Black Hawk pilot flew his helicopter through the smoke enshrouded crash site to pick up Captain Christopher Kirby.

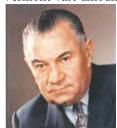
Correction

Ms. Alyssa M. Bridge is the winner of the 2000 AAAA Upperclassman Scholarship of \$1,000. She is the daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Donald W. Bridge, Jr., from Richmond Hill, Georgia. Ms. Bridge will attend Boston College.



Hall of Fame

Lawrence D. Bell was inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame in 1986. His contributions to American military aviation are storied indeed. Starting in 1941, Bell Aircraft Corporation produced 400 fighter planes per month in Buffalo, New York; B-29 Superfortress in Georgia; and from Vermont vast amounts of machine gun mounts and mortar



shells. His company produced the first U.S. designed jet fighter, the P-59; the world's first aircraft to crack the speed of sound. In 1944, Lawrence Bell was the recipient of the Daniel Guggenheim Medal for "achievement in design and construction of military aircraft and for outstanding contributions to methods of construction." But he will always

be known for his contributions to the helicopter. Among his contributions here, the first turbine-powered utility helicopter, the famous UH-1 Iroquois or "Huey."



50 Years Ago November, 1975

"Show and Tell"

Briefing General Charles E. Canedy (second from left), Army Aviation Officer at D.A., on the Synthetic Flight Training

System at USAAVNC are Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred H. Wittekind, Chief, Flight Simulation Division, DOAT; Don Hickman, Department of Standardization; and Colonel Howard E. Brown, DOAT Director. Brigadier General Canedy had been visiting Fort Rucker for a two-day program review and post tour.



"Top Air Controller"



November 1, Fort Huachuca, Arizona: More than 80 persons attended an awards banquet honoring SSG Frederick L. Wiesner as the Army's "Air Traffic Controller of the Year." Wiesner is assigned to the Army Communications Com-

mand's 284th Aviation Company in Korea. Major General Jack A. Albright (right) A.C.C. commander, presented the plaque to the top controller of the 1,700 who are in the Army.

Gift of Life

J.L. Winton (left), District Director for the El Paso Blood Services, presents the Community Services Award to Major Eldon H. Ideus, Commander of the 283rd Medical Detachment [HA] on behalf of all 283rd personnel. The detachment has been in service less than three years and has delivered 307 pints of emergency blood to El Paso hospitals.





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 Rucker, AL.

The deadline for nominations for the 2027 induction is June 1, 2026

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

Chief Warrant Officer Five Daniel R. Jollota, Retired

Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2021 Induction -Huntsville, AL



W5 (Ret.) Daniel R. Jollota's accomplishments inspire awe. His 40 years of service, 30 years as an Army Aviator, assigned to every Special Operations Aviation unit, 8,000 flight hours, 3,500 under night vision goggles, tell the tale.

Graduating flight school, he set his sights on the most challenging assignments and missions. After a tour in Korea with the 2nd Infantry Division, he volunteered for the 617th Special Operations Aviation Detachment in Panama, where he was instrumental in securing the western corridor during the invasion of Panama. After a move to Company D, 1st Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) in 1990, he would achieve every level of leadership as a standardization pilot and an assault and attack helicopter flight-lead, proving his mettle under fire during Operation Gothic Serpent. When his MH-60 was struck by a rocket propelled grenade while at a hover, he had the fortitude to hold his position while the remaining rangers fast-roped from the aircraft. After returning the stricken Black Hawk to base, he returned to the fight for a total of 18 hours in the cockpit that day.

He sought more challenges with a special mission unit, and after ten years, was hand-picked to be the commander of the 2nd Aviation Flight Detachment at West Point, New York. His mentorship, professionalism and drive resulted in the integration of the LUH-72 Lakota helicopter into the detachment five years sooner than scheduled. His next assignment was to another special mission unit, eventually serving as the unit's first Command Chief Warrant Officer, a position he held until his retirement in 2016.

CW5 (Ret.) Dan Jollota is the epitome of an Army Aviator – selfless service, dedication to duty and flawless professionalism. His exploits and accomplishments should be taught to our youngest aviators, an example for all.



