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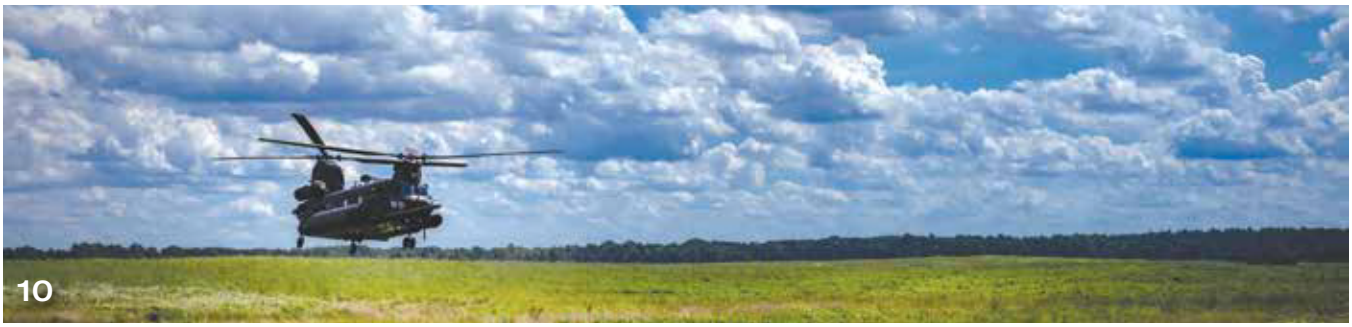

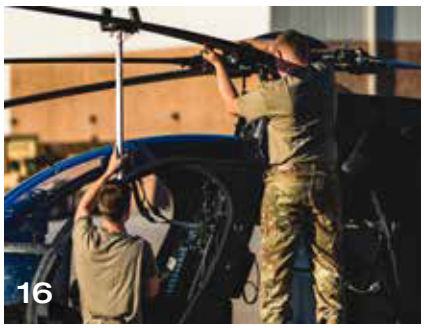

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FROM THE FIELD

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ARMY AVIATION COMMUNITY NEWS

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On The Cover

Briefings ▶ *Late Breaking News - Announcements*

Feinberg Confirmed as DSECDEF

DOD PHOTO

The Senate confirmed Stephen A. Feinberg as the Defense Department's 36th deputy defense secretary on March 14. Feinberg, a New York native and businessman, last worked in government as chair of President Donald J. Trump's Intelligence Advisory Board during the president's first administration from 2018 to 2021. As deputy defense secretary, he will be responsible for DOD's day-to-day business, including executing the defense secretary's priorities and managing the department's budget.

Obadal Nominated as USA

LINKEDIN PHOTO

President Donald Trump nominated Michael Obadal to serve as the Undersecretary of the Army, the White House announced on March 11. Obadal, a retired Army colonel, is currently a senior director at defense technology company Anduril. Before joining Anduril, Obadal, a Virginia Military Institute alumnus, served for more than 27 years in the Army, including as an attack helicopter officer and a unit and task force leader for Army Special Operations Command and Joint Special Operations Command. If confirmed by the Senate, Obadal would work directly for Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll and be the Army's chief management officer, helping oversee a budget of more than $185 billion and the manning, training and equipping of the force.

Kendrick Takes Over as ARNG CSM

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

CSM James Brian Kendrick officially assumed the role of 14th command sergeant major of the Army National Guard at a ceremony at the Herbert R. Temple Jr. Army National Guard Readiness Center, Arlington, VA on Feb. 18. Kendrick, whose Army career spans over 35 years, succeeded CSM John T. Raines, who assumed the role of seventh senior enlisted advisor to the chief of the National Guard Bureau in November.

Fort Moore Reverts to Fort Benning

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth signed a memorandum on March 3, directing Fort Moore, Georgia, to be renamed Fort Benning. The installation will now be renamed in honor of Army Cpl. Fred G. Benning, who "served with extraordinary heroism during World War I with the United States Army, and in recognition of the installation's storied history of service to the United States of America," according to the memo.

Rees Training Center Gets Upgrade

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

A new 6-mile tank driver training course is now open at the Oregon Army National Guard's Raymond F. Rees Training Center. The new course allows local Guard units to conduct essential training without traveling hundreds of miles to out-of-state facilities. The center namesake, MG "Fred" Rees is a retired Army Aviator who served nearly nine years as the Adjutant General of Oregon; one year as Director of the Army National Guard; over five years as Vice Chief, National Guard Bureau; 14 months as Acting Chief, National Guard Bureau; and Chief of Staff (dual-hatted), Headquarters North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). He is currently a National Executive Board Member at Large Emeritus of AAAA.

Happy 42nd Birthday
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Summit Is Almost Here!

AAPI PHOTO BY AUBREY CANALES

The Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit brings together all facets of the Army Aviation Enterprise and community, including our foreign military and industry partners.

As we enter the final days of preparation for the AAAA Annual Summit in Nashville May 14-16, 2025, we recognize the importance of your Association to serve as THE catalyst and enabler for the gathering of our entire Army Aviation Community.

So grateful to be able to report that we are looking at our largest annual gathering ever in terms of attendee registration and Industry commitment and sponsorship. The Gaylord Opryland is sold out (with over 800 folks on the waiting list), exhibits are sold out, and we are opening a second exhibit area to accommodate the incredible support and commitment from our Aviation Community. Our Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Randy George, is working around his Congressional testimony to make every effort to attend and deliver the Keynote address. And with the current world situation dramatically increasing foreign Defense budgets, International interest in meeting our exhibitors is the highest it has ever been.

Building on our 'Four Pillars' of actualizing our mission statement to Support the Army Aviation Soldier and Family, the Summit provides our greatest annual opportunity for realizing those Pillars – Networking, Recognition, Voice, and Support. From interacting with our Industry Partners, to attending the Aviation Hall of Fame inductions and awards ceremonies honoring our legacy and current Aviation patriots, to our closing Soldier Appreciation Concert featuring the great Craig Morgan, a committed Army Veteran, the Summit is truly the premier Army Aviation Family gathering.

Having just gathered in Huntsville, AL for AUSA Global, I again thank GEN (Ret.) J. D. Thurman and the other members of our Senior Executive Associates for their support and enduring leadership. What an impactful discussion with our Aviation General Officer Steering Committee leadership about the critical Aviation Branch priorities and challenges to determine how best to support our Army and Branch. Additionally, as I write this, we are looking forward to our Congressional Aviation Caucus event on 9 April that will help ensure key Congressional decision makers understand the posture of our Army Aviation force… and I will have had the honor to be among the AAAA Morning Calm Chapter in Korea for their annual Formal, and to be part of the GOLD Order of St. Michael presentation to one of our incredible Army and Aviation leaders, MG Hank Taylor.

There is a lot going on in our Army and especially in our Army Aviation Branch. We could not have a more dedicated, invested, and capable Army Aviation Leadership Team and we truly look forward to working with them and you together at the Summit and beyond, to ensure we know how best to support our U.S. Army Aviation Soldier and Family. Hope you all have a productive and FUN Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit! Know for sure your AAAA Team will always be there for you and our entire Army Aviation Family!

Above the Best!

MG Walt Davis, U.S. Army Retired
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USASOAC Commander Update

Editor's Note: For this Special Operations Aviation focused issue, the branch chief, MG Clair Gill, has coordinated having the commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command, his command chief warrant officer, and command sergeant major provide the lead, "To the Field," command group articles.

U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation: Innovative, Integrated, and Interoperable

By COL Roger P. Waleski, Jr.

U.S. ARMY 160TH SOAR (ABN) COURTESY PHOTO

An MH-47G Chinook lifts off from an HLZ at Fort Campbell, KY to deliver jumpers for a military free-fall airborne operation.

It's no doubt that today's strategic environment presents unique challenges to our warfighters.

The rapid change in technology is changing the character of warfare at a tremendous pace, allowing our adversaries to use technical capabilities to challenge our military dominance and adversely influence populations worldwide. Autonomous systems, deep sensing, advanced integrated air defense systems, and a myriad of other capabilities are the realities we will face during the next conflict. Today, the US Army Special Operations Aviation Command remains ready to answer the Nation's call in the face of this complex situation. Innovative, integrated, and interoperable, the talented team throughout the Army Special Operations Aviation Command continues to advance lethal capabilities and employ ARSOA forces who can fight and dominate during a crisis or large-scale combat operation.

Innovative

Innovation is a mindset in SOF because those who adapt to the changing character of warfare quickest win. Within the command, we rely heavily on the teams at the Systems Integration Management Office (SIMO) and the Technology Applications Program Office (TAPO) to innovate material capabilities for our warfighters. SIMO is our frontline to define requirements and innovate rapid material capabilities for our Night Stalkers. SIMO rigorously incorporates operationally experienced aircrew members with material developers to progress relevant breakthrough systems. With acquisition oversight from PM-SOF Rotary Wing, TAPO conducts the life-cycle program management for all Army Special Operations Aircraft and all supporting mission equipment, including avionics, aircraft survivability equipment, sensors, and weapons to ensure prompt material fielding. From Degraded Visual Equipment Pilotage System (DVEPS), to software mission planning, to sensor data fusion, these professionals ensure our manned and unmanned systems remain dominate in the air-ground littoral.

Innovation in the command also

happens at all levels. The 160th SOAR's Aviation Denied Area Planning Team (ADAPT) has incorporated experienced intelligence experts, senior Aviation Mission Survivability Officers (AMSOs), and kinetic and non-kinetic (space, cyber, electronic warfare) planners into a fusion cell to enable rotary-wing and unmanned maneuver in contested environments. Likewise, the ARSOAC Aviation Maintenance Detachment (AAMD) is at the forefront of data analytics and machine learning to ensure aircraft availability while managing sustainment costs. In parallel with SIMO, both ADAPT and AAMD are moving towards artificial intelligence to further our Night Stalkers lethality.

U.S. ARMY 160TH SOAR (ABN) COURTESY PHOTO

MH-60M Black Hawks prepare for multi-ship operations during a recent training exercise.

Integrated

The U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command has never been more integrated with the Army and the Aviation Branch. Our operational force, including the Special Operations Aviation Advisory Directorate (SOAAD), routinely synchronizes operations with our Theater Armies and Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs) to ensure that our efforts are mutually supporting. In training and exercises, the 160th SOAR (Abn) has participated in our Combined Training Centers exercises and Project Convergence, coordinating complex aviation operations with maneuver commanders and Combat Aviation Brigades. This interaction facilitates the passing of best lessons learned and enables SOF integration during combat operations.

Likewise, our acquisition and sustainment professionals remain integrated with Army Futures Command (FVL-CFT), AMCOM, and PEO Aviation. The innovation conducted and capabilities developed within the command help inform material solutions or directly transition to the greater Army, exponentially increasing lethality and survivability across multiple formations. Conversely, we coordinate and synchronize our material, doctrinal, and organizational capabilities with multiple Army commands to ensure we stay nested with larger programs and warfighting concepts. As a team of teams, we understand that it is an imperative to stay integrated because the partnerships across commands will lead to greater effectiveness on the battlefield.

Interoperable

A unique aspect of Army Special Operations Aviation is that we must regularly work with the Joint Force and our allies and partners. This requires a high level of interoperability to conduct complex operations in contested environments. The 160th SOAR (Abn) maintains a rigorous training schedule that not only includes Joint SOF, but also incorporates critical sustainment, attack, and lift assets from our Combat Aviation Brigades. Likewise, elements from the Multi-Domain Task Forces have participated in our annual Brown Flag event designed to teach aircrew members and staffs how to synchronize multi-domain effects in A2/AD environments.

The SOAAD also spearheads our efforts to increase interoperability with allies and partners. Conducting training "left of start," the expertise of senior Night Stalkers builds partner capability and furthers compatibilities critical during combined operations. During this fiscal year, the SOAAD will conduct engagements in over 30 different countries – a true testament to this team's exceptional competence.

In closing, Army Special Operations Aviation remains a dominate force ready to respond to a crisis or large-scale conflict. Our people, however, will not become complacent. They will continue to adapt and innovate new capabilities that will continue to give us the edge over our adversaries.

Volare Optimos! To fly the best!

COL Roger P. Waleski, Jr. is the eighth commander of the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command at Fort Bragg, NC.

Army Special Operations Aviation Warrant Officers – Driving Transformation in the Era of Great Power Competition

By CW5 Paul Dulfer

Left: An MH-60M Black Hawk approaches a rooftop to infiltrate Army Special Operations Forces at a Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain (MOUT) training facility at Fort Campbell, KY.

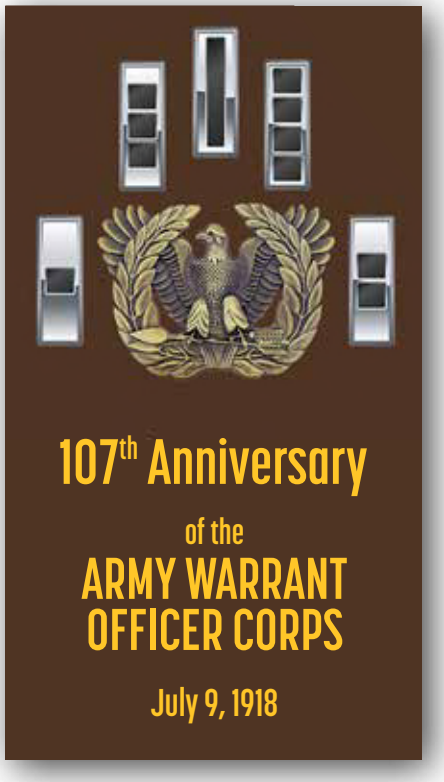
Right: An AH-6M Little Bird lifts off following rearming at an aerial gunnery range.

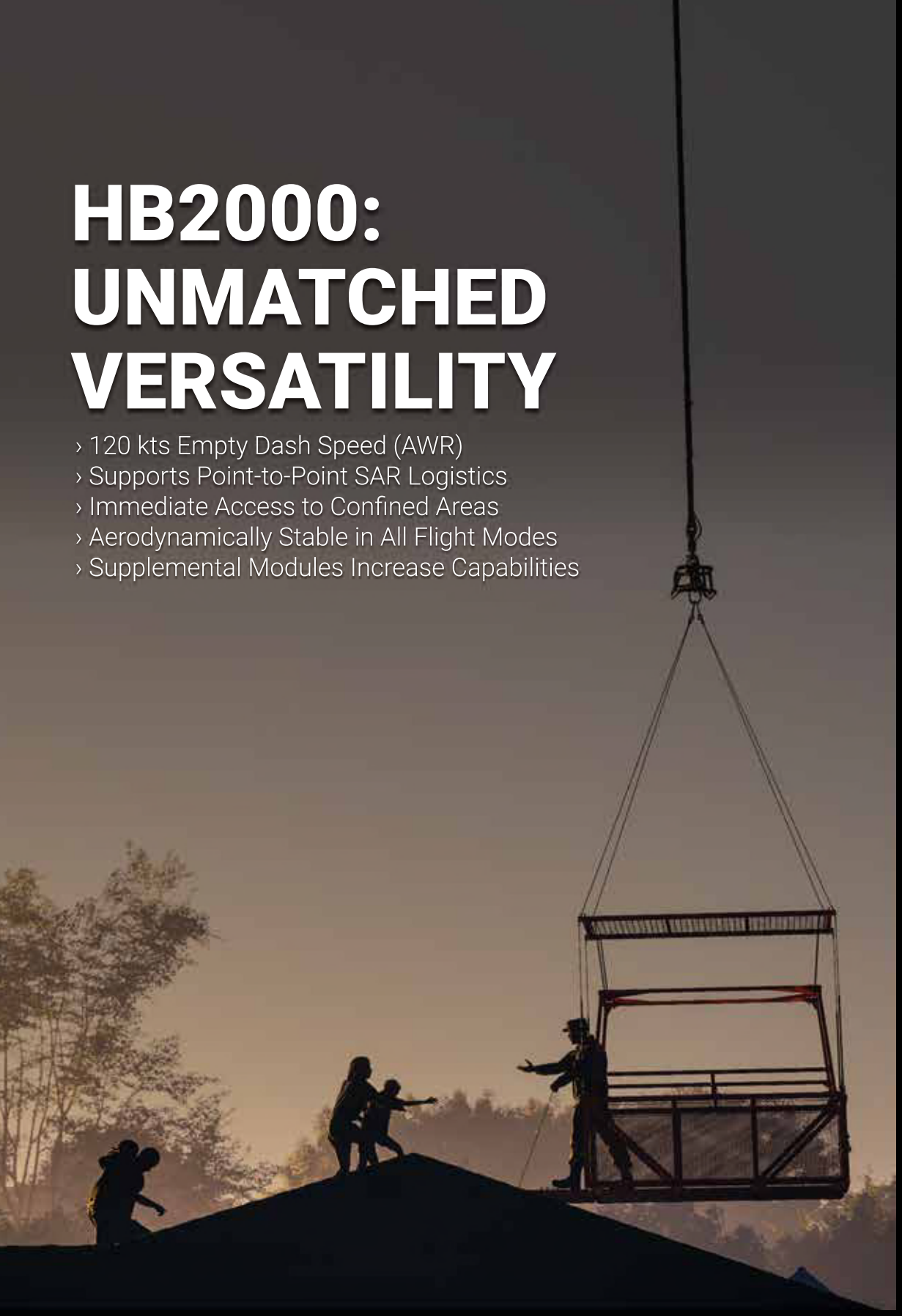
The modern Great Power Competition has pushed U.S. special operations aviation into more contested environments than ever before.

Near-peer adversaries field sophisticated air defenses, electronic jamming, and multi-domain threats that challenge traditional tactics. The U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command (USASOAC) – which includes the famed 160th SOAR "Night Stalkers" – must continuously adapt to maintain an edge. Central to this adaptation are Army Special Operations Aviation Warrant Officers. These Warrant Officers serve as the Army's premier technical and tactical experts in aviation, and they have taken on leading roles in transformation and innovation to ensure Army Special Operations Aviation (ARSOA) can fight and win in contested, denied domains. In fact, Army Aviation WOs have long been the "foundational force" for developing innovative training, technologies, and operational solutions to keep aviation units ahead of modernization and retain asymmetric advantages. Today, their contributions are evident in USASOAC through Warrant Officer-led projects that enhance mission planning, communications, and tactics for high-end conflict.

Warrant Officers as Innovators and Technical Leaders

Within USASOAC, Warrant Officers provide continuity, deep expertise, and bottom-up innovation. They leverage years of experience to identify capability gaps and experiment with solutions. This bottom-up approach aligns with the Army's broader Transformation In Contact initiative – rapidly fielding and testing new tech with sol-





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diers at the unit level. In USASOAC, WOs embrace this mindset, driving changes in how special operations aviators plan missions, communicate, and fight. These WOs approach problems pragmatically, often prototyping tools or tactics in-house.

Their leadership is evident in several key projects: the development of a new NYX mission planning software, fielding of next-generation tactical communications gear (NGTC), and creation of advanced Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) through exercises like Brown Flag. Each of these efforts is Warrant Officer-led, reflecting how USASOAC empowers its technical experts to spearhead modernization.

NYX Mission Planning Software – Streamlining Complex Operations

One of the most impactful WO-driven innovations is the NYX mission planning platform. Recognizing that new, modernized planning software was needed for fast-paced, multi-domain missions, a team of USASOAC Warrant Officers partnered with developers to create NYX as the "mission planning of tomorrow, today." NYX unifies multiple streams of data (threat, terrain, weather, intelligence) into a cohesive, intuitive application, allowing planners to incorporate far more information more accurately and in far less time than legacy planning suites.

Uniquely, NYX was built with constant user feedback from pilots and mission planners, ensuring the interface is intuitive and requires minimal training. This user-centric design put control in the hands of the operators. Importantly for contested environments, NYX enables real-time collaborative planning – multiple planners can concurrently adjust routes, payloads, and contingencies with changes instantly synchronized across the team. Such capability is critical when missions may need last-minute re-routing to avoid new threats or dynamic re-tasking during execution. By leading the development of NYX, USASOAC Warrant Officers have dramatically enhanced the unit's mission planning agility and precision. Complex special operations aviation missions that once took many hours to plan can now be built faster and with greater confidence in the data. This improves speed of action and adaptability, which are decisive advantages against near-peer adversaries.

Next-Generation Tactical Communications in Contested Domains

Another area of transformation led by USASOAC WOs is tactical communications. In a great power conflict, maintaining reliable communications for command and control is a constant battle due to multiple environmental factors and the vast distances involved. Warrant officers have been at the forefront of integrating NGTC systems for Army special operations aviation by not only helping test and evaluate these radios; they developed techniques to employ multiple communication pathways (satellite, LOS, mesh networks) simultaneously to ensure there's always a backup link mirroring the Army's push for network transport diversity. By leading the fielding of next-gen comms, WOs have vastly improved the command-and-control robustness of SOF aviation. Even in denied environments, Night Stalker crews can communicate targeting data, receive updated taskings, and

coordinate with joint forces – a decisive edge to "stay connected, informed and lethal" on modern battlefields.

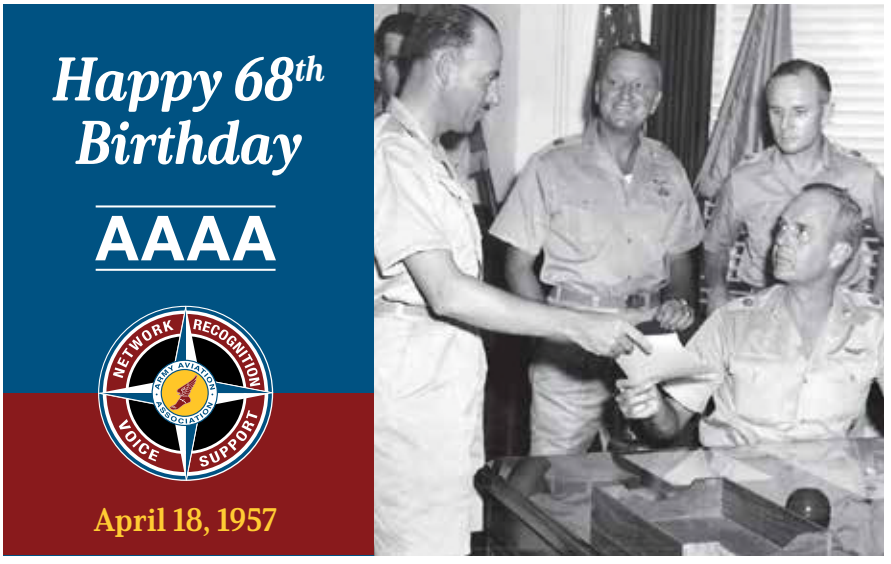
Advanced Training for a High-End Fight

Perhaps the most vivid demonstration of Warrant Officer leadership in innovation is the Brown Flag exercise series. Created as a USASOAC answer to USAF's Red Flag, "Brown Flag" is a Night Stalkers-led large-force exercise specifically tailored to mimic the type of environments we envision operating in during MDO conflict. Seasoned WOs were instrumental in designing Brown Flag scenarios that simulate facing near-peer adversaries. During these exercises, special operations aviators must attempt to anticipate the challenges they would likely encounter during great power conflict. The lessons learned from Brown Flag directly inform USASOAC's modernization plans. TTPs are refined by Warrant Officers during the exercise and are now being codified across the force. In short, Brown Flag has become a crucible for ARSOA tactics, and WOs are at the helm of its execution.

Conclusion

The transformation of Army Special Operations Aviation in response to Great Power Competition is a complex and multifaceted challenge. ARSOA Warrant Officers are at the forefront of this transformation, leveraging their expertise in aviation technology, training, mission planning, and multi-domain operations to ensure that SOF aviation remains the premier force in high-end conflict scenarios.

CW5 Paul Dulfer is the seventh command chief warrant officer of the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command at Fort Bragg, NC.



ARSOAC Command Sergeant Major Update

Editor's Note: CSM Telesco asked the USASOAC G-3 senior enlisted advisor to provide the article for this issue.

Maintenance Level Progression –

Can SOF and Conventional Army Aviation make this program more relevant both in and out of service?

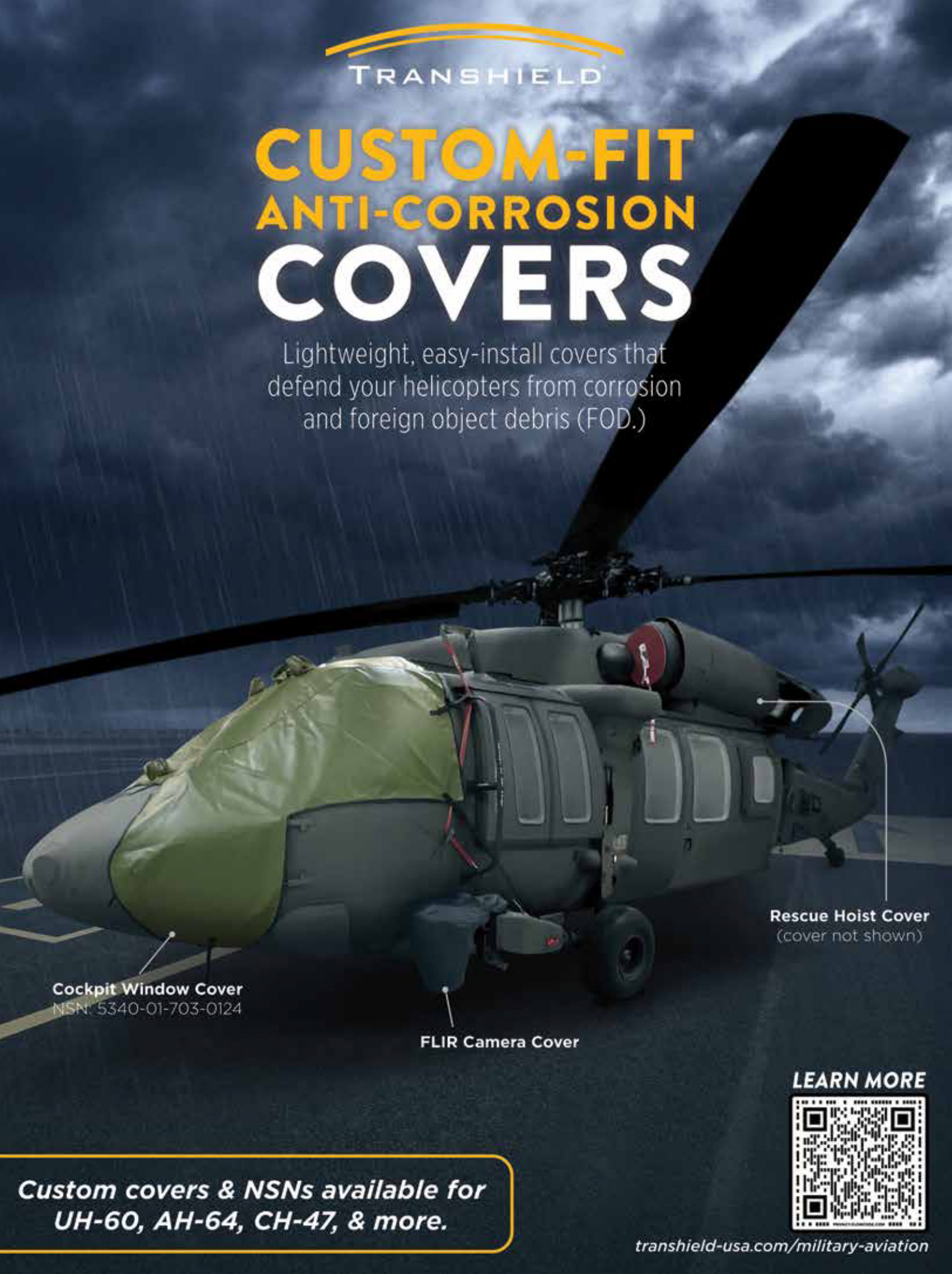
By MSG Ryan Aderman and MSG Chris Burlee

In the past, progressing in Army aviation was not so much a matter of your qualifications but how well your reputation preceded you at your next unit and having to re-prove yourself at your new duty station.

A Soldier could spend 3 years in an aviation support battalion, participate in seven phases along with a National Training Center (NTC) rotation and a six-month tour to Iraq or Syria. What would not have been captured was that they only did write ups for seven phases, went to NTC as a driver, and spent six months in the orderly room because they were not trusted to do aircraft maintenance. To properly capture maintainers experience, in 2018, the Army began to implement the Aviation Maintenance Training Program (AMTP) and by October 2021 it was fully implemented at the unit level. Since that time, the program has been evaluated during the ARMS inspections, integrated into daily maintenance, and evaluations have taken place to progress Soldiers through the Maintenance Levels (ML) and even regress their rating as applicable based on performance. So, is it working as it was intended, or is it just another program of record that will be pencil whipped to comply every two years?

Conventional and SOF Army aviation elements have been consistently deployed in support of OEF, OIF, OFS, OIR, and other GWOT and contingency operations for the past 23 years and counting. Back-to-back to back rotations were commonplace for Soldiers that stayed for more than one enlistment and those getting out had no quantifiable way to prove what they had accomplished during their tenure accept to say that the deployed multiple times. This trend was known to senior leaders, but the fix would not be easy or fast so the groundwork had to be set for how aviation maintainers would be able to capture the knowledge and experience they had gained. Fixing this would help Soldiers when they transitioned to civilian sector aviation, but also to make sure that the right NCOs filled the right positions in critical locations like QC, PC, Stands, and maintenance platoon sergeant roles.

The 160th SOAR has been conducting internal progression from Basic Mission Trained (BMT) to Basic Mission Qualified (BMQ) to Fully Mission Qualified (FMQ) for decades. New Soldiers will have 90 days (typically) to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Enlisted Aviation Soldier Spotlight

Each issue 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 will be featured in the May/June AAAA Annual Summit issue.

AAPI PHOTO BY IRENE IBAÑEZ

AAAA Unmanned Aircraft Systems Soldier of the Year Award, 2022
Sponsored by General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.

SPC Antonio L. Feliz

Tactical UAS Detachment, Military Intelligence Company,
Group Support Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne)
Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

SPC Antonio Feliz is a 15W, RQ-7Bv2 Operator assigned to 7th SFG(A), GSB, MICO, TUAS Platoon. He went through multiple joint training exercises, Special Forces Basic Combat Course-Support (SFBCCS) and participated in five airborne operations in less than three months leading up to his deployment to Syria during Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) in support of Special Operation Task Force – Levant (SOTF-L). Once deployed, he quickly adapted and demonstrated his proficiency on the RQ-7Bv2 Shadow platform in a combat environment. During clearance operations, he provided over-watch eliminating imminent threats, resulting in the successful interdiction of 128 Da'esh fighters captured and two EKIA. As a switchblade UAS tactical missile system subject matter expert, he enabled multiple kinetic strikes on several combatants during attempts to attack partner force bases by ISIS fighters. SPC Feliz flew the RQ-7Bv2 for a total of 470 combat hours in addition to mastering Group I & II UAS. He served a critical role in the Legion Air platoon successfully conducting 383 flights and 2,924 combat flight hours of ISR in support of AOB-Syria and SOTF-L. Following his redeployment, he was designated as the next Unit SUAS Master Trainer. SPC Feliz's dedication and outstanding performance clearly identifies him as the Army Aviation Association of America 2022 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Soldier of the Year.

progress to BMT then they are on the clock to progress to BMQ, times would vary based on your job and level of complexity. Once BMQ status was attained you had to be recommended to progress to FMQ even if you were able to complete the task list. This progression kept maintainers active in their own career, gave them goals to aspire to, and a timeline to achieve them in. This was the basis (perhaps arguably) for the ML progression now used in conventional aviation as maintainers now have a clear understanding of what it takes to progress and allows them to set goals, strive to achieve them, and allows leaders to recognize and grow talent.

ML progression will benefit aviation maintainers in the private sector but how can it benefit those maintainers who decide to continue to serve? Tools that currently exist and could potentially be available to commands are things like "W' codes, where those serving in ML3 or ML 4 designated positions at a CAB could be stabilized at a duty station for the critical skill set they possess. However, this would require a change in Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) to include additional skill identifiers (ASIs) for specific positions and approval from HQDA to authorize the "W" code be used for that reason. Another tool is Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP) for Soldiers in ML 2-ML4 positions that also possess their Airframe and Powerplant certification, it could be applied as follows: SD1 for ML2, SD2 for ML3, SD3 for ML4 and SD4 for ML4 in the battalion and brigade standardization positions.

The positions would be limited by MTOE, and the Soldier would have to be filling the position in IPPS-A to receive the pay. Army aviation would benefit since experienced and well-trained maintainers would now have a financial incentive to progress and seek higher levels of proficiency and professional certification. Turnover at the senior level can throw AMTP into a tailspin as evaluators and ML three to four maintainers move to their next units, evaluations could be missed, progressions may be sidelined, and ARMS inspections compromised which is why stabilization is crucial to support the program.

It is incumbent upon the aviation NCO corps to uphold a standard in ML progression for our Soldiers as they will become the future leaders that take our place. A program is only as good as the people who run it, and it is critical to progress those who can maintain higher ML ratings and not just achieve them one time to get paid. Just like any other system of record, keeping up with ML progression can be painful due to the amount of time it takes to update records, perform progression evaluations, conduct no-notice evals and audit records for ARMS. Advanced technology tools, like the Virtual Maintenance Trainer from Pinnacle Solutions, already exist as commercial off the shelf products that help Soldiers and leaders with ML progression and evaluations as well as prepare for phases and complex maintenance tasks. When we cheat the system to help our Soldiers or peers, we are only hurting ourselves and chipping away at our own integrity. If what we did was easy, everyone would do it. One of my mentors told me during a deployment to always improve your foxhole and ML progression is our foxhole in aviation. If we hope to implement lasting change across conventional and SOF aviation, we need to apply that approach to ML progression and leave a permeant impact on Soldiers we serve now and future Soldiers wishing to serve in Army aviation.

Special thanks to SSG Jon Bodi (82nd CAB) for his input and expertise into this article.

Above the best!
Volare Optimus!

CSM Michael Telesco is the Command Sergeant Major for the US Army Special Operations Aviation Command; MSG Ryan Aderman serves as the USASOAC G3 SGM, and MSG Chris Burlee serves as the USASOAC G33 NCOIC all located at Fort Bragg, NC.


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The Strategic Value of the Army Reserve Aviation Command in Active Component Missions

By MAJ Jeffrey Windmueller

The Army Reserve Aviation Command (ARAC) continues to play a vital role in sustaining the operational readiness of the Active Component through its provision of critical medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) capabilities.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SSG MATT FORD, C/5-159th AVN

"Bourbon Dustoff," C Company, 5-159th lands on a hospital helipad in nearby Syracuse, N.Y., before transferring a patient during a mission last fall. MEDEVAC.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SSG MATT FORD, C/5-159th AVN

A critical care flight paramedic with "Bourbon Dustoff," C Company, 5-159th General Support Aviation Battalion, monitors a patient while preparing to transport them to a nearby hospital outside of Fort Drum, NY.

The ongoing mission at Fort Drum, New York, where C/5-159th General Support Aviation Battalion (GSAB) has assumed MEDEVAC responsibilities, underscores the indispensable support the Army Reserve provides. By ensuring uninterrupted emergency medical transport while the 10th Combat Aviation Brigade is deployed overseas, ARAC directly enhances the Army's strategic flexibility and readiness.

The ARAC's first line of effort has been to support the Active Component's mission and exercises, and it is proving to be invaluable as units are engaged in other operations. The deployment of C/5-159th GSAB to Fort Drum is not an isolated event; it is part of a broader, ongoing effort to ensure that critical functions are never compromised. The unit's execution of 19 life-saving missions demonstrates how ARAC's capabilities extend beyond combat readiness into essential homeland support. Among the real-world scenarios have been successful missions where they transported a woman in active labor to a hospital with advanced neonatal care, responded to the site of a MASCAL (Mass Casualty) vehicular wreck and saved the life of 10th Mountain Soldiers during field exercises. These real-world scenarios reinforce the argument that Reserve Aviation assets are not merely supplementary; they are integral to the Army's operational success.

Moreover, the ARAC's adaptability in diverse mission sets further strengthens its case as a force multiplier for the Active Component. From conducting live hoist rescues in harsh weather conditions to rapidly evacuating trauma patients from remote locations, ARAC units provide a level of flexibility that enhances the Army's overall operational reach. This adaptability is not accidental but is cultivated through rigorous training, as seen in Golf Company, 7-158th GSAB's urban MEDEVAC preparations in California. By practicing rooftop landings at major hospitals and coordinating with civilian emergency services, ARAC units ensure

Eyes in the Sky

KYARNG PHOTO BY SSG JESSICA ELDRIDGE

A Kentucky Army National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk flies over waterways in eastern Kentucky in search of stranded flood survivors, Feb. 17, 2025. The Kentucky National Guard continues to work with local authorities to help Kentuckians in need.

seamless integration with both military and civilian healthcare systems.

The "SoCal Dustoff" team of 7-158 will soon take over the active MEDEVAC mission at Fort Bliss, fitting to the practical constraints of force structure and resource allocation. These operational demands, particularly in a globally engaged military, necessitate the strategic use of Reserve forces to fill critical gaps. Without ARAC's support, installations like Fort Drum and Fort Bliss would experience significant capability shortfalls during Active Component deployments, potentially compromising both military readiness and emergency response effectiveness.

Beyond its direct MEDEVAC contributions, the ARAC has enhanced national defense through its involvement in Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) missions. In January 2024, 1-158th Assault Helicopter Battalion responded to a severe weather emergency in Texas, exemplifying ARAC's ability to pivot between military and civilian operational needs. This dual-purpose functionality strengthens the argument that ARAC is not merely a backup force but a crucial component of the Army's overall strategic framework.

As it continues these missions, the Army Reserve Aviation Command provides an indispensable value proposition to the Active Component by ensuring continuity of essential MEDEVAC services, enhancing operational flexibility, and contributing to broader national defense efforts. Its proven track record in high-stakes missions, whether in combat zones, training environments, or domestic emergency response—demonstrates that ARAC is not just a reserve force, but a critical enabler of Army readiness. As operational demands continue to evolve, the necessity of ARAC's contributions will only become more pronounced, solidifying its role as a cornerstone of strategic Aviation support.

MAJ Jeffrey Windmueller is the chief of Public Affairs for the Army Reserve Aviation Command at Fort Knox, KY.

Maximizing Aviation Professional Education: Institutional Delivered Credentialing

By SFC John Bell

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

SFC Bell provides information on the IDC program to Service Members at Schofield Barracks, HI.

Credentialing Assistance and Tuition Assistance are commonly known avenues for Service Members to obtain civilian education.

Army Aviation offers an additional pathway for Aviation-related Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) to receive funding for civilian credentials.

Institutional Delivered Credentialing (IDC) offers significant benefits to Army Aviation by streamlining the process of earning Aviation-related credentials, enhancing both individual and organizational effectiveness. Through IDC, Army aviators can earn Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certifications and other industry-recognized credentials based on their military training and experience. This eliminates redundant training, saves time, and reduces costs for both the servicemember and the Army.

One major advantage of IDC is that it directly aligns military Aviation skills with civilian standards, ensuring that Army aviators are credentialed to the same level as their civilian counterparts. This enhances operational readiness by validating competencies and improving interoperability with joint and civilian agencies. Additionally, it helps bridge the gap between military and civilian careers, providing service members with a smoother transition to post-military employment in Aviation.

IDC also supports Army Aviation's talent management initiatives by incentivizing professional development. Soldiers who earn credentials demonstrate increased proficiency and expertise, which can lead to career advancement opportunities. Moreover, credentialing contributes to overall force retention by increasing job satisfaction and professional growth. By leveraging IDC, Army Aviation maximizes the value of its training programs while equipping aviators with recognized credentials that benefit both military operations and long-term career success.

Institutional Delivered Credentialing Facts:

- Funding Source: Funded through the Combined Arms Center (CAC) and Aviation Proponent, specifically for Aviation MOSs.
- Flexibility: IDC provides $800 per fiscal year for MOS-related credentials. For credentials exceeding this amount, a waiver may be submitted.
- Out-of-Pocket Costs for the credential: For example, the FAA A&P license costs approximately $3,000 – IDC can reimburse these costs, while CAC would not cover the full amount.
- Reimbursement Policy: Unlike CAC, IDC reimburses you regardless of pass or fail, ensuring Soldiers aren't financially penalized for challenging themselves.
- Dedicated Budget: IDC boasts an annual budget of over $400,000 exclusively for Aviation credentials.

Why Choose IDC?

With the growing list of Aviation-related credentials, Soldiers often face a difficult choice: pay out of pocket or forgo additional education. IDC allows Service Members to continue to pursue professional education by obtaining critical Aviation certifications. IDC offers 33 individual credentials throughout the Army's 24 Aviation MOSs. Taking advantage of educational benefits like IDC ensures Service Members are continuing to progress in their education and skills. The more these programs are utilized, the better positioned our Service Members are to enhance their careers – both in the Army and beyond.

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For more information on the Aviation Center of Excellence IDC program, visit:

- Army COOL–Costs and Funding: *https://www.cool.osd.mil/army/costs_and_funding/index.html?MOSProponentFunding*
- Army University IDC Proponents: *https://armyuniversity.edu/IDC/Proponents?p=A*

Or reach out directly via email: *usarmy.novosel.avncoe.mbx.atzq-td-credentialing@army.mil*

SFC John Bell is the Credentialing Program Manager for the Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Novosel, AL

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Maneuverability and Agility, A Closer Look?

By Mr. F. Scott Smith

As the Aviation industry progresses and rotorcraft design and development practices evolve, the terms "maneuverability" and "agility" are frequently used to describe improvements in aircraft performance.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC. JOSHUA ZAYAS-SABOGAL

An AH-64 Apache helicopter assigned to the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, supporting the 4th Infantry Division, conducting evasive maneuvers at low altitude.

However, these terms are often used interchangeably, which leads to some confusion. Technically, they refer to different aspects of aircraft performance. This article aims to offer a clearer understanding of both terms and explore their respective impacts on rotorcraft design.

Let's begin with maneuverability. Maneuverability refers to an aircraft's ability to change its flight path to execute specific or complex maneuvers. These maneuvers can include climbing, descending, rolling, turning, stalling, or performing aerobatics. In essence, maneuverability is how effective the aircraft can change its state in response to pilot inputs. Quantifying maneuverability is essential for the evaluation of how the aircraft performs under various flight conditions. Typical metrics used when describing maneuverability are the aircraft's turn radius, sustained g-force, speed, and achievable attitude. These characteristics are critical in the design and development of an aircraft because they are the product of the users' desired performance requirements.

On the other hand, agility refers to the aircraft's ability to rapidly and effectively adapt to complex maneuvers, transitions, and disturbances. The emphasis is now on the aircraft's responsiveness, the transitions between maneuvers and disturbances, and the aircraft's attitude predictability for a given pilot input. Agility is often quantified using metrics such as the achievable roll rate, pitch rate, yaw rate, or speed to satisfy a specific aircraft state with minimal overshoot. For example, an agile aircraft should be designed to roll rapidly to a reference attitude without excessive lag.

For military aircraft, maneuverability and agility are critical characteristics. The importance of these characteristics is largely dependent on the aircraft's mission. Military aircraft are typically designed to perform a specific mission, such as combat or tactical operation, where high maneuverability and agility are paramount (such as fighter or attack aircraft). In contrast, commercial aircraft are typically optimized for stability, comfort, and ease of handling. However, there are some exceptions with purposely built aircraft, like the Pitts S-2C and Extra 330SC aerobatic aircraft, which are designed with high maneuverability and agility.

As performance requirements increase, so do the aircraft's aerodynamic loads. To accommodate these higher loads, advanced composite materials are introduced to the design of airframe structures and control surfaces. These stronger and lighter materials offer better strength-to-weight ratios over conventional materials. Composite materials enable unconventional airframe shapes that can improve maneuverability and agility. However, such exotic shapes often have adverse effects on aircraft stability, which sets the stage for advanced flight control systems.

One of the key technologies that enables improved maneuverability and agility is Fly-by-Wire (FBW) control systems. These systems replace the mechanical flight controls with electronic controls allowing for more precise aircraft control and stability management. By using advanced flight control algorithms and flight control laws, the FBW system ensures the aircraft maintains its high-performance requirements without negatively affecting the overall safety and stability.

In conclusion, understanding the distinctions between maneuverability and agility will aid engineers and pilots during development and testing, and will aid users and program managers during the requirements generation phase of the acquisition process. Maneuverability focuses on the aircraft's ability to execute precise, controlled maneuvers while agility refers to the aircraft's responsiveness to transitions and disturbances. As technology progresses, innovations like composite materials and Fly-by-Wire control systems are enhancing aircraft maneuverability and agility, all while reducing weight and ensuring stability. These advancements are shaping the future of rotorcraft design and ensuring that aircraft can meet the demanding performance requirements of modern Aviation.

Mr. F. Scott Smith is the Handling Qualities Team Lead, Aeromechanics, Systems Readiness Directorate, U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center, Redstone Arsenal, AL.

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Misuse and Abuse: Prescriptions and Illicit Substances

By CPT Brian Jiménez Alicea, M.D. and CPT Antwana Drayton, Psy.D.

Q: I've heard stories of prescription medication misuse and substance abuse amongst peers. What are the warning signs, and what can be done if I suspect myself or a coworker to be struggling?

FS: The challenges of Army Aviation—stress, long hours, and physical demands—can make substance misuse a hidden but serious issue. Whether it's prescription medications or illicit substances, these behaviors compromise safety, readiness, and careers. Here's what you need to know.

Recognizing a Problem

Health care providers use the DSM-5-TR to assess the key components of Substance Use Disorders (SUDs). SUDs are a collection of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms denoting continued substance use despite significant substance-related difficulties. These substances are federally controlled and classified by addiction potential or risk of side effects. They consist of both illicit drugs and prescription medications. Some common examples include pain medications (such as OxyContin and Vicodin), anxiety (such as Xanax and Valium), and attention disorders (such as Concerta and Adderall). Dependence on these substances is often unintentional. For example, most individuals are introduced to illicit substances during adolescence. 70% of those using before age 13 develop a SUD within 7 years of use. A painkiller prescribed after surgery or injury may lead to misuse if taken longer or in larger doses than prescribed, with opiate-derivates having one of the highest relapse rates of any drugs. Severe SUDs occur when a person continues use of a problematic substance despite interference with daily life. Common signs of substance misuse include:

- Increasing use to achieve the same effect (tolerance)
- Withdrawal symptoms like restlessness, nausea, or irritability when not using
- Using medications not prescribed to you or in unintended ways
- Neglecting responsibilities or social commitments due to substance use
- Continued use despite negative impacts on health, performance, or relationships

Army Aviation requires high performance, precision, adaptability, and expertise in aerial support. Misuse of any substance—prescription or illicit—is incompatible with demonstration of these principles and overall safe operations.

What to Do If You're Concerned

If you suspect substance misuse by yourself or a coworker, take prompt action.

1. Evaluate Your Own Behavior: Ask yourself if you've taken medications outside of the prescribed guidelines or used substances to cope with stress. Recognizing early signs is the first step toward prevention.

2. Encourage Dialogue: If a colleague's behavior raises concerns, approach them in a supportive, nonjudgmental manner. Communicate specific observations like mood changes, missed responsibilities, or unusual behavior. Increased alcohol use may also indicate a developing SUD.

3. Report Concerns Appropriately: Misuse of substances compromises everyone's safety. If private conversations don't yield results, escalate your concerns through the chain of command and consult your flight surgeon.

4. Seek Professional Assistance: The Substance Use Disorder Clinical Care (SUDCC) program is an excellent resource. For prescription misuse, early intervention may prevent grounding or disqualification from Aviation duties.

5. Understand Waivers: For diagnosed substance use disorders, Aeromedical Policy Letters (APLs) require abstinence, treatment, and ongoing participation in recovery programs before waiver consideration. Relapses may lead to permanent grounding.

Prevention Strategies

To maintain operational readiness and personal health, consider the following:

- Follow Prescriptions Strictly: Always use medications as directed. Avoid taking others' prescriptions or exceeding prescribed doses.
- Address Stress Head-On: Use healthy coping strategies like exercise, peer support, or counseling instead of relying on substances, as illicit substance use is prohibited.
- Stay Educated: Understand the risks of commonly abused substances and the potential consequences for Aviation duties.
- Support a Positive Culture: Foster an environment where seeking help is encouraged and not condemned.

Substance misuse is a serious threat to Army Aviation. If you or a colleague are struggling, consult your flight surgeon or the SUDCC program immediately. Recovery is possible, and seeking help ensures the safety of you, your team, and your mission.

Fly Safe!

Questions?

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 of Aerospace Medicine and CPT (Dr.) Antwana Drayton is an Aeromedical psychologist working in support of Lyster Army Health Clinic at Fort Novosel, AL.

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Building Fires Expertise: Preparing Army Aviation's Rotary Wing Community for Future Conflicts

By MAJ Kyle Branigan

Through decades of transformative combat experiences, Army Aviation's rotary wing fires community has tested aircrews in dynamic and uncertain environments against determined enemies. Notably, the rotary wing fires community has gained technical and tactical fires experience through numerous iterations of overhead fires support against deliberate and unplanned targets in response to troops-in-contact during the Global War on Terrorism. Today, Army Aviation's rotary wing fires community faces a monumental challenge in the near and short term. Army Aviation must prepare to maneuver and employ weapon systems against a near-peer adversary during large-scale combat operations while maintaining expertise in employing overhead fires in close proximity to friendly forces when facing irregular or hybrid threats. While our Combat Training Centers provide world-class venues for testing and validating many elements of our combat power, are they alone enough to prepare Army Aviation's rotary wing fires community for the future fight throughout the range of military operations?

The 160th SOAR (Abn)'s MH-60 Direct Action Penetrator (DAP) and AH-6M fires companies face the same challenge. As a microcosm of the broader Army Aviation rotary wing fires community, these fires companies must find creative ways to test, validate, and build valued learning experiences for aircrews without the battle lab of the Global War on Terrorism. Although the Combat Training Centers are an excellent venue to test and validate Army Aviation units once trained, the 160th SOAR (Abn) is focusing on how to train its rotary wing fires companies before a culminating training event or exercise. To address this, the 160th SOAR (Abn) has taken a multifaceted approach to build pragmatic experience by developing weekly iterative training scenarios, building resident knowledge through joint fires schools, and tracking individual aircrew progress more thoroughly to tailor future training.

The Approach

The 160th SOAR (Abn)'s first line of effort focuses on building iterative fires training for aircrews by providing them with hundreds of repetitions annually of communicating with ground maneuver elements. While some iterations involve live ordnance, most do not. Dry-fire scenarios often offer more value for junior aviators, allowing them to learn the maneuver and employment of their weapon systems without live-fire range constraints. For example, a team of AH-6Ms may conduct a live-fire gunnery range while communicating with a static or maneuvering ground

U.S. ARMY 160TH SOAR (ABN) COURTESY PHOTO

Opposite page: A pair of MH-60M Direct Action Penetrators (DAPs) prepare to execute aerial gunnery training at a range on Fort Campbell, KY.

Above: An MH-60M Direct Action Penetrator (DAP) lifts off from an armament pad at an aerial gunnery range at Fort Campbell, KY.

force element to practice a Close-Air-Support 5-Line brief and attack during both day and night iterations. Later that training week, the same team of AH-6Ms may conduct a dry-fire Game Plan and 9-line Close-Air-Support brief in support of a notional target against simulated threats using additional aircraft or a ground maneuver element to simulate additional fires assets.

Furthermore, a secondary line of effort is to build resident expertise through fires schools in a "train-the-trainer" approach. For example, the 160th SOAR (Abn) sends aircraft and aircrews to the United States Marine Corps Weapons & Tactics Instructor (WTI) course and the United States Air Force Weapon School Integration (WSINT) exercise to build resident fires expertise. The WSINT and WTI-trained rotary wing fires experts then create realistic and effective company-level training, building experiences for non-trained aviators. These company-level training objectives then progress to battalion-level or larger exercises as additional maneuver elements and joint partners integrate into the training to simulate the employment of fires in a Special Operations combined arms environment.

In practice, each company conducts individual, crew, and collective flight training weekly, scoped to fight a near-peer adversary, focused on communicating with ground maneuver elements, or a combination of both dynamics. To track progress, instructors provide detailed feedback to each crew member on mission planning, briefing, and execution, enabling them to build experience over time. Although Aircrew Training Program (ATP) Commanders, Standardization Pilots, and Instructor Pilots track progress broadly on the DA7122 and DA7120 in an aircrew member's individual aircrew training folder, instructors also use a thorough progression tracker that gives narrative-style feedback to the individual pilot after each flight. Subsequently, ATP Commanders can then tailor individual, crew, and collective training that is focused on aircrew deficiencies to save both time and resources and generate fires proficiency more effectively.

In summary, the 160th SOAR (Abn) is preparing its rotary wing fires companies to face near-peer, irregular, or hybrid threats by supporting iterative training events, building resident fires expertise through schools like WTI and WSINT, and tracking individual progress to inform effective training. While nothing may replicate the transformative experiences of supporting ground forces with overhead fires in countries like Iraq or Afghanistan, the 160th SOAR (Abn) is investing in its rotary wing fires companies to build fires expertise and prepare for future conflicts.

MAJ Kyle Branigan is a pseudonym for a Battalion Executive Officer assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) at Fort Campbell, KY.

A Night Stalker looks reverently towards the 160th SOAR Memorial Wall located across from the 160th SOAR HQ during a recent memorial service held on Brown Compound, Fort Campbell, KY.

U.S. ARMY 160TH SOAR (ABN) COURTESY PHOTO

The People and The Purpose – Our "Why"

By MAJ Justin Farmer

As the Army looks to better tell its story to improve recruitment and retention of top talent, it must explore the drive, motivation, and reasons individuals serve. Answers to the question "Why do you serve?" must be dissected and deeply analyzed. When walking the hangar floors and flight lines of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne), there are countless Night Stalkers who have profound answers to this question, as they serve well beyond their commitments and the 20-year retirement mark. What drives them to continue serving? This article attempts to scratch the surface of the answers to that simple question, but not in a traditional approach. This is not a scientifically researched, data-backed thesis, nor is there any way to measure and quantify these answers. Instead, below is a small sample of responses that reflect the collective sentiment found within the Night Stalker culture. These are four short stories prompted by the question "Why do you serve?" Their answers are representative of the predominant and recurring themes found in nearly every answer from hundreds of similar stories: the people and the purpose.

"Mediocrity knows nothing higher than itself, but talent instantly recognizes genius."
– Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

"The people. It's simple. I serve for the men and women I work with," explained the CW4, with over 24 years of service. "Night Stalkers are the best in the world. Our pilots, crew chiefs, maintainers, and leaders – they are all the best. Quite literally, everyone in this unit is unmatched in their craft, the best in the world. More importantly, everyone here wants to be here. That's the secret ingredient. So, every day I come to work, I am surrounded by extremely talented people who want to be here, doing extremely demanding work. Being fully surrounded by such high performers creates a unique environment of continuous improvement. It's not the toxic competitiveness that some assume, because everyone truly wants everyone to succeed. Iron sharpens iron. It's an environment that forces you to rise to your full potential. It forces you to 'Be All You Can Be,' to borrow our Army slogan."

"People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf."
– George Orwell

"Why do I serve? How about a brief war story to illustrate," began the CW3, who supported over 85 direct action raids during his 12 combat deployments as a Night Stalker. "We infilled 49 members of the ground force to a target in eastern Afghanistan on a routine mission. Fast-

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U.S. Army Special Operations Soldiers fast rope from an MH-47G Chinook onto a rooftop during a capabilities exercise at Fort Bragg, NC.

U.S. ARMY 160TH SOAR (ABN) COURTESY PHOTO

forward two days, we received an urgent call for an emergency exfil of that same team. Due to the extremely poor weather conditions, the ground force knew it was very unlikely that helicopters could reach them. However, the 160th SOAR (Abn) is a group of specially selected and well-trained soldiers who are equipped with the most advanced aircraft and technology in the world. The ground force was correct; most helicopters would not be able to reach them, but we could. We safely flew through horrendous weather and landed precisely on the HLZ without ever being able to see outside the aircraft. In the incredibly still moments after the intense exfil, the ground force commander plugged into the aircraft, and I will never forget his words: 'Chief, you guys are insane. I don't know how the heck you got here, or how you didn't get shot down, but I do know I owe you my life. Every one of us would be dead without you landing when you did. Thank you.' A routine night at work for us: 49 lives saved. That's why I serve. The people I serve – the ground force – they stand ready to do the nation's most dangerous work, and they depend on us in their most vulnerable moments. I serve to support them; that's our whole reason for existence."

"The true soldier fights not because he hates what is in front of him, but because he loves what is behind him."

- Gilbert Keith Chesterton

"War" said the CW5 with a bluntness that shocked the room. "It's all I have known in the Army. In fact, it's why I stayed in the Army past my initial contract and why I continue to serve after 27 years. War. Having joined the Army prior to 9/11, I honestly had no idea what I was getting myself into. Then, the next thing I know, I was on a C-17 flying to Afghanistan. Fast forward to the withdrawal in 2021, I had completed 23 deployments to Afghanistan and flown over 1700 hours supporting combat operations. It's all I know; all my family knows. I raised my kids during the war; grew my best friendships. It was a deep sense of purpose. The world needed me. America needed me. My family and the men and women next to me needed me. But it wasn't about the war, it was about the why, the purpose of protecting our nation and the people willing to stand next to me in combat. I serve because I find a deep sense of purpose in my job."

"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." *- John 15:13*

"The Night Stalker Creed closes with "I serve in the memory and pride of those who have gone before me for they loved to fight, fought to win, and would rather die than quit." That's my why. That is genuinely why I continue to serve," explained a MAJ with 14 years of service and seven deployments to the Middle East. "Most Army units who honor their fallen, do so through distant memories of stories told by folks who have long since departed the unit. Here in the 160th, it's different. Not only do we have Night Stalkers in our formation who knew our fallen, we have their best friends, their mentors, and in some cases their family members serving in our ranks. It is commonplace to be greeted at remembrance ceremonies by Night Stalkers with firsthand stories of the incredible humans that have gone before us. I personally was on an MH-47 that crashed in combat resulting in the loss of one of our brothers. I was sitting less than an arms distance away from him when he died. I knew him well; I knew his family well. Every time I consider getting out of the Army I see his face and hear his voice. I think of him, and I instantly become grateful. Grateful for knowing him, grateful for his friendship, for his sacrifice, and grateful that I have been blessed with the ability to choose whether to continue to serve or not. That's a choice the fallen don't have. So yeah, I serve in the memory and pride of those who have gone before me. I serve in their honor. That's why I serve."

In conclusion, it's the people and the purpose. That's why Night Stalkers serve. That's why Soldiers serve. That is our "why".

MAJ Justin Farmer is a pseudonym for a Battalion Executive Officer assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) at Hunter Army Airfield, GA.

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Delivering Vertical Envelopment Solutions to the World's Most Pressing Crises:

A Strategic Imperative for the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR)

By CW4 Jay Helton

An MH-47G Chinook lifts off from a snow-covered landing zone during a training exercise in Colorado.

U.S. ARMY 160TH SOAR(A) COURTESY PHOTO

In an increasingly complex and dynamic global landscape, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), affectionately known as the Night Stalkers, has established itself as a preeminent force in addressing the world's most pressing crises. As a special operations force, we have honed our expertise in navigating the most challenging environments, where adaptability, creativity, and critical thinking are essential for success. Our unique blend of advanced training, specialized skills, and innovative mindset enables us to approach complex problems from multiple angles, ensuring effective solutions to the most daunting challenges.

At the heart of our success lies a rigorous and specialized training program, designed to simulate real-world scenarios and equip our Night Stalkers with the skills necessary to thrive in high-stress, high-risk environments. Our training regimen includes advanced Aviation skills, tactical operations, and problem-solving exercises, all of which contribute to the development of a distinctive mindset and skillset. This expertise is further refined through extensive experience and teamwork, fostering a culture of collaboration and communication that enables us to pool our expertise, share knowledge, and approach problems from diverse perspectives.

Innovation

The 160th SOAR's reputation for innovation and unconventional problem-solving is rooted in our encouragement of creative thinking and experimentation. We empower our Night Stalkers to challenge assumptions, explore new solutions, and push the boundaries of what is possible. This mindset is embodied in our motto, "Night Stalkers Don't Quit," which reflects our unwavering commitment to finding novel solutions to the most complex challenges. By embracing a culture of innovation and calculated risk-taking, we remain at the forefront of special operations Aviation, continually adapting and evolving to stay ahead of emerging threats and challenges.

The ability to perform under stress is a hallmark of our Night Stalkers, who are trained to think clearly and make quick decisions in high-pressure environments. This unique problem-solving mindset is adaptable to a wide range of situations, enabling us to remain calm and focused, even in the face of uncertainty and adversity. Our mission focus is rooted in our commitment to supporting US and allied forces, and we provide the highest level of service and support to our partners. This focus drives us to stay motivated and directed, even in the face of complex and challenging problems.

The Future Fight

As we look to the future, the 4th Battalion, 160th SOAR (Abn) will play a pivotal role in shaping the future fight against great power competitors, such as China and Russia, in the Pacific and Arctic regions. Our operations will require a high degree of flexibility, adaptability, and innovation, as we navigate the complexities of modern warfare in a multi-domain environment, including air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace. We will be at the forefront of the fight, conducting missions that demand precision, speed, and stealth, and our ability to operate in diverse environments will be essential in denying our adversaries the ability to operate freely.

In this global competition, our role is critical in countering the growing military capabilities of our near-peer adver-

saries. The 160th SOAR's unique capability to conduct operations in any environment, whether it's the frozen tundra, the dense foliage of the jungle, or the concrete canyons of an urban city, will provide a critical advantage in the pursuit of our national security objectives.

The future fight presents numerous challenges in advancing Aviation technology, tactics, techniques, and procedures. We must stay at the forefront of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, hypersonics, and cyber warfare, to maintain our competitive edge. Our ability to adapt and innovate will be critical in addressing the evolving threats and challenges of the 21st century. To meet these challenges, we are investing in the development of new technologies and capabilities, such as advanced sensors, communication systems, and unmanned aerial vehicles. We are also focusing on the development of our people, providing them with the training and education needed to operate effectively in a rapidly changing environment.

By combining cutting-edge technology with highly skilled and experienced personnel, we will be able to stay ahead of the curve and address the complex challenges of the future. Our commitment to innovation, adaptability, and excellence will ensure that the Night Stalkers of the 160th SOAR remain an indispensable asset in the fight against great power competitors. As we move forward, we will continue to evolve, innovate, and push the boundaries of what is possible, always staying true to our motto and our mission to deliver vertical envelopment solutions to the world's most pressing crises.

The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) is uniquely positioned to address the complex challenges of the future. Our advanced training, specialized skills, and innovative mindset make us an essential component of the US military's special operations forces. As we navigate the complexities of modern warfare, we will keep pace with special operations Aviation, continually adapting and evolving to stay ahead of emerging threats and challenges. Our commitment to delivering vertical envelopment solutions to the world's most pressing crises will remain unwavering, and we will continue to support US and allied forces with distinction, upholding the highest standards of excellence and professionalism.

The Night Stalkers' ability to operate in a variety of environments, from the most austere and remote locations to the most densely populated urban areas, makes us a versatile and valuable asset in the pursuit of national security objectives. Our expertise in conducting operations in multiple domains, including air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace, enables us to provide a unique and critical capability to the joint force. As we look to the future, we will continue to invest in the development of new technologies and capabilities, ensuring that we remain at the forefront of special operations Aviation and continue to support US and allied forces with distinction.

The 160th SOAR's role in shaping the future fight against great power competitors is critical, and our ability to operate in a multi-domain environment will be essential in denying our adversaries the ability to operate freely. We will work closely with our allies and partners to build their capacity, share intelligence, and conduct joint operations that demonstrate our collective resolve to defend our interests and values. By doing so, we will help maintain the balance of power, deter aggression, and protect the freedom of action that is essential to our national security.

In the years to come, the Night Stalkers of the 160th SOAR will continue to be a driving force in the pursuit of national security objectives. Our commitment to delivering vertical envelopment solutions to the world's most pressing crises will remain unwavering, and we will continue to support US and allied forces with distinction. We will stay at the forefront of special operations Aviation, continually adapting and evolving to stay ahead of emerging threats and challenges. Our expertise, versatility, and innovative mindset make us an indispensable asset in the fight against great power competitors, and we will continue to uphold the highest standards of excellence and professionalism in all that we do.

U.S. ARMY 160TH SOAR(A) COURTESY PHOTO

An MH-60M Black Hawk conducts cold weather environment training during an exercise in Colorado.

CW4 Jay Helton is a pseudonym for a Regiment Flight Lead assigned to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY DAVID HYLTON, PEO AVN PAO

Sky Robots: The Ever-Changing Dynamic of Unmanned Aircraft Systems

By Ms. Rebecca Marden

The Griffon Valiant during an FTUAS flight demonstration.

The transition from wartime into an era of strategic competition has allowed for the Department of Defense to focus more intently on the capability and employment of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) in Large Scale Multi Domain Combat Operations (LSMDCO). In early 2024, General Randy George, Chief of Staff of the Army, shook up the Army UAS footprint by directing the divestment of the RQ-11 Raven and the RQ-7 Shadow.

In parallel, he established the "Transformation in Contact" (TiC) strategy, opening multiple opportunities for Soldiers to get hands-on with emerging robotics technologies. This allowed them to provide real time feedback to inform requirements for future systems and simultaneously exercised the Army's ability to rapidly acquire, integrate and employ emerging technologies. The divestment also reinforced Army Special Operations' ongoing strategy to restructure UAS platoons, making UAS operators the Subject Matter Experts by training them to build and maintain their own robots capable of operating in the air, ground, and maritime domains.

Effectiveness of UAS

Special Operations' new modularity in the most difficult locations around the world will provide a tactical and operational advantage in LSMDCO, but highlights needed changes to outdated GWOT Tactics, Techniques and Procedures. Observations from TiC and especially Ukraine, show that drones in the small UAS space are currently killing it (figuratively and literally), which raises questions to the relevancy of bigger, more expensive platforms for projected future operations in contested airspace.

However, technology that captures information and data in useful ways will be the currency of every realm; innovative information collection assets and integrated intelligence systems in support of mission command will be critical. The days of pushing an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle onto a runway and controlling it from a stuffy control shelter are gone; all Tactical UAS ("Group 3 UAS") initiatives must ditch the clunk and become expeditionary. The reduced operational footprint and expeditionary nature of the next Tactical UAS will not only enable quick system transport with organic vehicles but also allow for rapid employment and maneuver throughout the air domain.

The ability to unpack, set up and put a bird in the sky in less than an hour – from the side of the road or the coastline – and keep eyes on a target for 10+ hours will give Commanders a tactical edge and real time relevant data for informed decision making. Commanders at every echelon will also have the organic ability to strike targets further beyond the Forward Line of Troops (FLOT). Overall, the bigger the system, the more capability it can carry; with one platform, Special Operations will be able to see, sense and strike.

Logistics

LSMDCO challenges UAS platoons to be self-sufficient; having to rapidly deploy into an austere environment means operating without contractor support and needing to create organic support. 1st Special Forces Command understood the assignment: by creating the Army Special Operations Robotics Detachments (SORDs) along with courses like the Special Operations Robotics Capabilities Course (SORCC). UAS operators are learning how to build, fix and employ organic drones.

In operation, they can 3D print and build small drones for specialized missions and they can maintain bigger drones to achieve long term sustainment. The SORDs create a community of practice that leads all training to deepen skill sets through a singular focus on robotics and unmanned systems: "once you can build a flying robot, you can absolutely conceptualize requirements to integrate capabilities onto a ground or water robot." This effort sparked synergy between Army Special Operations and the conventional Army: Army Special Operations has developed a program of instruction and is assisting the Army to develop a program of their own.

Another aspect of LSMDCO logistics is being able to move large quantities of various classes of supply without the infrastructure for a large supply chain. The problem with delivering supplies by air is it's easily detected; therefore, dangerous. LSMDCO will demand the need for signature reduction which means limiting the force structure in each area.

The Textron Aerosonde 4.8 HQ during an FTUAS flight demonstration.

The ability to employ unmanned systems with larger payloads for resupply enables Special Operations to maintain a small operational footprint and increase mobility in large scale combat.

Special Operations is postured for success in LSMDCO – understanding of the overall environment, specifically the tactical need for robotics, CHECK; training and motivation to pace with the organic manufacturing rate of our adversaries, CHECK. Now we need a platform, or multiple platforms, to go train with and employ. Special Operations and the Army both are taking every opportunity to move fast and get their hands on Tactical UAS platforms.

New Technologies

Thankfully, industry is jumping to support, and Government processes are doing their best to adapt to the pace of the adversary. We're able to observe a plethora of emerging technologies at annual innovation exercises like Project Convergence, Experimental Demonstration Gateway Event (EDGE) and Vanguard, and evaluate technology and capabilities that can shape the Army of 2030/2040. The Army has always emphasized the "Train as you Fight" – the Joint Training Readiness Center (JRTC) provides operators an opportunity to do just that.

JRTC is integrating TiC into training exercises, allowing Soldiers to learn new technologies and apply modern techniques during exercises. For their rotation, Special Operations will choose and bring robots that are potentially most applicable to their mission. Not only will this provide more relevant training but will also encourage more feedback from those participating in the exercise to shape the future capability.

Other initiatives this Fiscal Year will allow Special Operators the chance to gain experience, whether it's a demo or hands-on training, with up to a dozen other systems in the Tactical category. This will allow exposure to a multitude of capabilities, some unique, some tried-and-true and some with the potential for emerging use cases. We're talkin' lethality, autonomous target identification/tracking, electronic warfare, communications relay, synthetic aperture radar, satellite communications, cargo, and good ol' eyes in the sky.

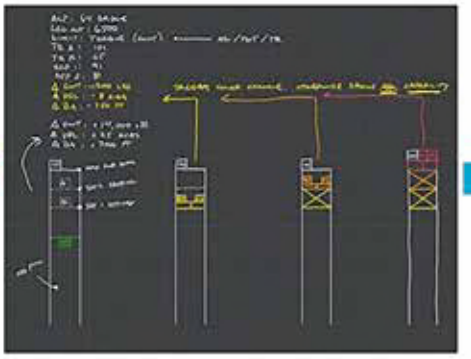
Army Special Operations is working together with the Maneuver and Aviation Capabilities Development and Integration Directorates to continue to build requirements and select capabilities to benefit the greater Army. Whereas right now it appears that we're throwing Tactical spaghetti at the wall to see what sticks, what sticks could truly redefine the relationship between Soldier and robot. Bring on more spaghetti.

Ms. Rebecca Marden is a requirements specialist assigned to U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command.

The Evolution of a Sticky Note:

Integrating End Users into Software Development from

The Evolution of a Sticky Note



USASOAC SMO II ILLUSTRATION

1 Idea captured from a user-centered design sprint

2 Preliminary designs & initial logic created

3 Features designed and developed

The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) is synonymous with precision, adaptability, and excellence in executing its assigned mission set. The Regiment's success hinges not only on its personnel but also on the tools and technologies that support their operations. Among these tools is NYX, a next-generation Aviation mission planning application. NYX is a transformative software-based capability that is designed to meet the demanding needs of special operations Aviation mission planners. Like any modern software development, a relentless commitment to incorporating user feedback, empowering subject matter experts within the 160th SOAR(Abn), and having a full time Government Product Owner has been key to decision making and development prioritization. By engaging end-users from the outset, the development process ensures that NYX is not only functional, but also operationally relevant, efficient, effective, and intuitive.

End-User Involvement from Day Zero

The journey of NYX began with the understanding that special operations Aviation users are the ultimate arbiters of the application's success. These are the pilots and operational staff who will interact with the platform daily, relying on it to streamline mission planning, reduce cognitive load, and provide actionable insights. From the outset, involving end-users ensures that the development team's priorities align with operational needs. This was accomplished through Vision Sprints and a series of User Centered Design Sprints with the Product Team from our developer TheIncLab and special operations pilots. This early feedback allowed the developer to:

Map Workflows: Developers must understand and fully map the planning process to account for all user requirements.

Identify User Pain Points: By engaging users early, the team can pinpoint inefficiencies and frustrations in existing tools or processes. For example, legacy systems often require redundant data entry or cumbersome navigation.

Design Wireframes: Wireframes are used to iterate through initial designs to ensure user needs and wants are met.

Collect User Feedback: This is the most important step. To truly iterate the team must collect and implement user feedback early and often.

Foster a Collaborative Culture: Early engagement sets the tone for a partnership between users and developers, creating a sense of shared ownership over the application's success.

During NYX's development, end-users were involved in design sprints, usability testing, and iterative reviews from the very beginning. Their input shaped everything from the layout of mission planning dashboards to the integration of advanced analytics tools. Developers prioritized features like intuitive map overlays, simple first limit indicator-based power management, and seamless integration with other mission planning tools through data interoperability and standardization. All of this stemmed directly from early user input and an understanding by the developers of how their software would fit into the larger Aviation mission planning process. By fostering this early collaboration, the development team ensured that NYX would be a tool designed with its users, rather than for them.

The Role of Government Product Owners

The Product Owner serves as the linchpin between the program office, development team, and end users. Their daily interactions with developers ensure that user feedback is continuously integrated into the application's evolution. Currently the Mission Planning Branch Chief within the Army Special Operations Aviation Command Sys-

tem Integration Management Office fulfills this pivotal role.

Product Owners oversee the backlog of development tasks, prioritize features, supervise Operational Testing and serve as advocates for end-users. Their key responsibilities include:

Translating Feedback into Action: Product Owners distill user feedback into actionable development tasks, ensuring that the most critical issues are addressed promptly.

Maintaining Focus: By continuously prioritizing the backlog, product owners ensure the development team focuses on high-value features that align with end user needs.

Facilitating Communication: Acting as a bridge between developers, subject matter experts and end-users, Product Owners ensure that all parties remain aligned on goals and expectations.

The Product Owner is deeply involved in quarterly program increment planning, sprint planning, and retrospectives – key facets of modern, agile software development practices. Their presence ensures that the iterative development process remained tightly coupled with user feedback. For example, when special operations pilots identified a requirement for additional hover performance data, the Product Owner scoped requirements, coordinated with the development team to ensure data accuracy, and prioritized the feature development above other backlog requirements so that the additional capability could be delivered and tested by the end users during the next Operational Test.

By maintaining this close interface between the development team and operational users, Product Owners have played a pivotal role in ensuring that NYX evolves in lockstep with ever evolving user needs.

The Role of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

Aviation Mission Planning is an exceptionally complex endeavor when you look at the whole of the problem set. Between the aeronautical data, aircraft specific data, cyber security and Risk Management Framework standards, it's nearly impossible for one individual to fully grasp the problem set. This is before we introduce the special operations specific planning standards and tactics techniques and procedures (TTPs) unique to special operations mission sets. Subject Matter Experts act as translators between the operational and technical domains. Their contributions include:

Clarifying Operational Requirements: SMEs help articulate complex operational needs in ways that developers can understand and implement

Ensuring Technical Accuracy: By validating technical implementations against operational standards, SMEs ensure the application's outputs are both reliable and actionable.

Driving Innovation: With their deep understanding of user needs, SMEs often propose creative solutions to longstanding challenges.

Throughout the development of NYX, SMEs were not only consulted but actively empowered to drive decisions. Bi-Weekly sprint ceremonies and technical deep-dives provided SMEs with opportunities to directly influence feature prioritization and system design. One notable example was their role in refining NYX's real-time collaboration tools, ensuring they could support joint mission planning across a planning cell. By embedding SMEs into the development lifecycle, NYX has achieved a level of operational fidelity that would have been impossible without their expertise.

Developing a next-generation tool like NYX is no small feat, particularly for an organization as specialized and demanding as the 160th SOAR (Abn). By involving end-users from Day Zero, integrating government Product Owners and empowering SMEs the Program Office has created an application that embodies the principles of user-centric design and operational excellence. The success of NYX underscores a broader lesson: in any mission-critical endeavor, the voices of those who will use the system must guide its creation. For the Night Stalkers, whose missions often define the boundaries of what is possible, NYX represents not just a technological achievement but a testament to the power of collaboration and feedback.

CW4 Tom Dillard is a pseudonym for the Mission Planning Branch Chief assigned to the Systems Integration and Management Office at Fort Campbell, KY.

The 160th SOAR (Abn)'s Commitment to Strengthening Army Intelligence Capabilities

By CPT Shane Matthews and Mr. Michael Keber

ALL PHOTOS ARSOA SOATB COURTESY PHOTO

A 160th SOAR Night Stalker with the Airborne Service Detachment prepares to fuel aircraft at a Forward Arming and Refueling Point during training at Fort Campbell, KY.

America's success in modern conflicts increasingly depends on the seamless integration of multi-domain intelligence with aviation operations. The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), renowned for its elite aviation missions and capabilities, is now extending its niche intelligence expertise to the broader Army community. Through the Intelligence Support to Aviation (ISTA) initiative, 160th SOAR (Abn)'s Training Battalion is providing Military Intelligence (MI) Soldiers across the Army (and other services) with the skills required to meet the unique demands of conducting aviation operations within a contested multi-domain environment – bridging critical gaps in the Army's training and increasing operational effectiveness.

Identifying the Knowledge Gap

A significant challenge facing Army Aviation wholistically is the limited availability of MI Soldiers with the specialized knowledge required to support aviation operations. Less than 3% of all Army MI professionals will ever serve within an aviation unit during their career. Currently required Professional Military Education (PME) for MI Soldiers and officers lack any focus on aviation-specific intelligence requirements, as most Army MI Professionals will serve in maneuver or intelligence support units.

This training shortfall leaves MI personnel who are assigned to aviation units ill-equipped to tackle the complex intelligence demands of aviation operations. These training shortfalls within the MI Corps gained increased notoriety post-GWOT, as Army Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs) began training to operate within Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) environments against active enemy Integrated Air Defense Systems (IADS) in support of potential Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO).

The ISTA Solution

160th SOAR (Abn) suffered from these systemic training shortfalls as well. To address these gaps internally, the 160th SOAR (Abn) worked with the senior Threat To Air Operations (TTAO) experts within the Regiment to develop structured progression plans and specialized training for MI Soldiers and officers assigned to the unit. These efforts eventually grew into the ISTA program – a comprehensive three-week course that consolidates decades of 160th SOAR (Abn) operational experience, refined Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and battle-tested tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). ISTA's Program of Instruction (POI) was submitted and quickly received approval by TRADOC, the DA G-2's FOUNDRY program, the USA-

ICoE, and the USAJFKSWCS. ISTA has become a vital training ground – enabling MI professionals to bridge this knowledge gap while serving in aviation units.

ISTA delivers a progressive curriculum tailored to aviation intelligence needs:

- Week 1: Foundational training in radar theory, IADS, TTAO, and Army aviation vernacular and capabilities.
- Week 2: Focused instruction on aviation-specific planning processes, intelligence databases and modeling software, kill-chain analysis, aviation-focused analytical methodologies, and mission enabler capabilities.
- Week 3: A capstone exercise is executed where students perform multi-domain Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB) and route penetration analysis; culminating in a formal Air Mission Brief (AMB) presented to senior SOAR aviators, commanders, and intelligence professionals.
- Students also gain proficiency with advanced software tools like FADE/MIST, IMOM, Palantir, and DCGS-A, all while using real-world intelligence (no canned data) further enhancing their analytical capabilities.

Transformative Impact on the Army

The ISTA's impact has been transformative. Since its pilot course in 2021, more than 350 students – including personnel from every Army CAB, as well as Reserve and National Guard units, have graduated. These analysts return to their units with a newfound ability to directly influence mission planning and execution. Exemplifying this fact, leaders from the 1st Infantry Division, 3rd Infantry Division, and the 25th Infantry Division have praised ISTA graduates for their immediate and critical contributions to brigade operations and SOP refinements.

The program's success has also catalyzed broader changes within Army culture. The U.S. Army's Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE) sent their Aviation Mission Survivability Officer (AMSO) Course Manager and Senior Instructors through ISTA to help understand and facilitate ISTA's methodologies into the AMSO certification course. These types of collaborative events ensure aviation intelligence expertise becomes more widespread across the force and is forefront in Army aviation Planner's minds when conducting mission planning.

Looking Ahead

The 160th SOAR (Abn)'s commitment to sharing its niche expertise highlights the potential for specialized units to enhance the broader Army. By leveraging its unique operational knowledge, the 160th SOAR (Abn) is not only preparing MI Soldiers and officers for the complexities of modern aviation missions but also setting a precedent for collaboration between special operations and conventional forces. As Army aviation units face increasingly sophisticated adversaries, the skills imparted through ISTA will be indispensable. Programs like ISTA exemplify how the Army can harness the expertise of elite units to build a more capable and cohesive force, ensuring mission success across all domains.

For those interested in learning more about the ISTA program or scheduling future training opportunities, the 160th SOAR's training battalion can be contacted at *160-SOATB-S2@socom.mil*.

CPT Shane Matthews is a pseudonym for an Intelligence Officer and Mr. Michael Keber is an ISTA Instructor, both assigned to the Special Operations Aviation Training Battalion at Fort Campbell, KY.

Tactical Aviation and Ground MunitionsProject Management Office Lethality Update

By Mr. Craig Riedel

Troopers assigned to 4-6 Air Cavalry Squadron, 16th Combat Aviation Brigade fire an AGM-114 Hellfire missile from their AH-64E Apache helicopter at Yakima Training Center, WA.

Greetings from your Tactical Aviation and Ground Munitions Project Management (TAGM). Our focus and commitment remain unchanged – to develop, field and sustain versatile weapon systems that provide a decisive advantage. As our battlespace shifts to new global environments and threats, as our nation's enemies adapt, and as technology evolves, we are more focused than ever on the versatility and effectiveness of the munitions and support equipment we deliver for warfighting.

How do we adapt our current munitions for new targets? How can we use our munitions in novel ways to increase options for commanders across joint services? How can we increase the return on investment for our nation's financial expenditure in munitions? How can our munitions continue to provide dependable options for commanders and allies, and create dilemmas to deter and defeat enemies? In our world of competing priorities, TAGM incorporates these questions into the daily execution of our lifecycle management duties. More importantly, TAGM responds to these challenges to increase our relevance on current battlefields, and ensure our warfighters have an affordable, tactical advantage by advancing the capabilities of our current munitions and expanding capability with new ones. Finally, the TAGM portfolio has a robust sustainment plan that is demonstrated to provide adaptive capability well beyond the intended useful life.

Advancing the Capability of Current Munitions

The Joint Air-to-Ground Missile (JAGM) is replacing HELLFIRE as the tactical missile for Army Apache helicopters. The operational similarities will remain familiar to Apache crews yet provide crews options to engage targets by combining laser and radar seekers.

Two areas we find ourselves increasing focus are in defeating the globally emerging unmanned Aviation system (UAS) threats, and increasing the distance Aviators can engage threat systems with confidence. Among the many capabilities that JAGM advances from its HELLFIRE predecessor, JAGM's millimeter wave radar and target intercept algorithms make it an effective and affordable option to defeat enemy UAS. JAGM will formally have fielded software once the developmental software package is through its qualification and materiel release processes which will enable JAGM counter-UAS (C-UAS) capability. However, users currently have a very capable C-UAS missile which is available now from Longbow HELLFIRE. Joint and international users are already using Longbow HELLFIRE for their counter-UAS needs globally, with great success. JAGM will need to fill that role as the Longbow inventory dwindles and missiles continue to age out. JAGM's range extension effort from 8km to 16km continues to gain traction with Army, Navy, and international partner interest to ensure interested users have a say in requirements and share the cost of the developmental effort.

Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) is also expanding in utility on the battlefield. The AGR-21C also known as the "Single Variant Block Upgrade" provides a nominal effective range increase from 5km to 7km. In addition, the APKWS has begun larger scale proliferation as a C-UAS interceptor in both air-to-air and ground-to-air uses. Its low-cost relative to other interceptors makes it an important tool in winning the "cost equation" of the C-UAS fight. The addition of a proximity fuse has increased probability of kill in this application. There are also efforts under way to explore using an IR seeker for APKWS to significantly reduce the time required with laser on target which increases rate of fire while decreasing operator workload and complexity.

TAGM also continues to push the limits of what tactical missiles can do through science and technology (S&T) efforts and software development cycles. Though our S&T and Software Teams are small, they remain connected with research facilities across the DoD and have core competencies focused on new energetic material that will provide more tailored warhead effects such as increased armor penetration. The same energetic research shows promise to harness increased energy to make missile rocket motors optimize energy to arrive at targets with more effective intercept angles for the variety of targets they will be asked to engage. Our software team continues to learn about threat behavior on the battlefield and is in a constant state of software refinement to optimize intercept angles for its different targets, flyout trajectories, and validates cost-saving simulations to ensure the missile that Aviators and the ground forces they support are confident in the precise effects of their missiles.

New Capabilities

In addition to extending the range of JAGM, Army Aviation has invested in new weapons to provide lethal solutions at increased standoff. The Army has outfitted some of its Apache fleet to employ the Spike NLOS missile. Spike NLOS can engage targets up to 32km away and allows for different guidance modes providing flexibility in different scenarios and environments. The Army procured three different warhead types allowing for multiple targets to be engaged. These missiles first entered the inventory in late 2024 and deliveries will continue throughout 2025.

In July 2024, the Army approved a Middle-Tier Acquisition Rapid Prototyping (MTA-RP) effort for the Long-Range Precision Munition (LRPM). The LRPM addresses the requirements for the mid-range lethal variant of Launched Effects and can strike at a range of well over 100km. LRPM is not your typical loitering munition. This program is benefitting from tremendous work done under multiple S&T projects where technologies were developed and matured that provide critical navigation, aided targeting, survivability and lethality enhancements needed on today's complex battlefield. LRPM is entering into developmental tests this year and will be operationally demonstrated in fiscal year 2027.

Supporting the Warfighter Before and After Delivery

An overlooked aspect of warfighting and preparation is battlefield sustainment and logistics. TAGM manages a portfolio of several munitions with some having history as far back as America's conflict in Vietnam. These munitions remain relevant because of their enduring usefulness on battlefields, their adaptability, and their ruggedness among other attributes. Our TAGM team will never stop seeking areas to make the systems we manage more effective – like a laser seeker on a previously unguided rocket, integrate them on a non-traditional launching system – like Aviation rockets onto a vehicle-mounted rocket pod or Longbow HELLFIRE launched from Navy Destroyers, or finding ways to provide aircrews more lethal loading options through modular launchers.

The possibilities can be as broad as the imagination and usually only limited by the Pentagon's budget. TAGM is excited to have the shared support of user representatives, capability developers, and senior leaders at Fort Novosel who are ensuring Army Aviators have increased options for engaging enemy targets, and increased standoff from sophisticated enemy systems.

We cannot do it without our amazing partners in Army Futures Command and industry who make all this possible. We exist for our users and will never stop improving Army Aviation's lethality, and trust and confidence in the systems we manage. If TAGM can better serve you, our users, please reach out to us directly through our offices on Redstone Arsenal, or through your Army Capability Manager's office at Fort Novosel.

Mr. Craig Riedel is the project manager of the Tactical Air and Ground Munitions Office at Redstone Arsenal, AL.

The Arctic Aviation Command Charts a Course to Strengthen the Arctic Division

By COL Russell W. Vanderlugt and CW4 Michael D. Harms

1-25th Avn. Bn. Lands at a FARP

In December 2024, the 11th Airborne Division (Arctic) trained and certified its headquarters at Warfighter Exercise (WFX) 25-02 and leveraged the Army's newest aviation unit to achieve a significant readiness milestone. The Arctic Aviation Command (AAC) was established as a brigade-level headquarters in August 2024 to provide command and control, risk management, and training oversight for all aviation elements assigned to the 11th Airborne Division. The unit's inaugural Warfighter Exercise charted a critical path for the AAC to strengthen the Arctic Division with the aviation combat power needed to fight and win in Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO).

The AAC headquarters is a reportable, non-deployable, table of distribution and allowances (TDA) organization consisting of 20 personnel. It represents a fraction of a standard combat aviation brigade (CAB) and is responsible for two deployable Battalions assigned to the 11th Division, consisting of 1,300 Soldiers and 71 aircraft.

Though the division is the "unit of action" in LSCO, the newly activated 11th Airborne is the only active-duty division without an assigned CAB. Aviation combat power is a consequential force multiplier across all warfighting functions. Aviation's seamless integration into the division's scheme of maneuver remained in high demand despite the unique task organization within the Arctic Division.

Warfighter was the perfect venue to test and validate the capabilities and limitations of the arctic organization, but not without equipping the AAC with additional resources. Within four months of activation, the AAC assembled a modest CAB response cell with augmentation from the 11th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade (ECAB) from the Army Reserves in Fort Carson, Colorado.

The minimally staffed brigade-level response cell presented challenges at echelon for the Arctic Division, but the AAC quickly discovered acceptable solutions that economized the operations process. Although not ideal, successful aviation operations resulted from: 1) applying the correct aviation inputs into limited battle rhythm events, 2) balancing planning processes with product development, and 3) integrating competent aviation leaders at the right time and place.

Protracted combat operations will reduce the capabilities of CABs across a theater of war. The experiences of the AAC at Warfighter are not unique to Alaska. The rapid formation of

new teams – including integration across Army components – with limited time and resources is inevitable for every aviation unit at the onset of combat-related attrition.

The modern battlefield challenges mission command. Smaller command posts leveraging distributed command and control techniques increase survivability. But the Army aviation enterprise cannot ignore the imbalances and demands of applying maximum aviation combat power for the division with minimum brigade-level resources. To maintain aviation combat power – personnel, aircraft, and equipment – the CAB must effectively integrate into the division at critical junctures with fewer resources.

Incorporating Aviation Operations in the Division Battle Rhythm

The division's battle rhythm during the exercise outpaced the AAC's capabilities, even with augmentation from the 11th ECAB. It was not sustainable for aviation to attend most of the division's battle rhythm events. However, the AAC achieved success by regularly attending two key meetings: the division's operational planning team (OPT) and the target coordination board (TCB).

A daily OPT hosted by Division G35 built trust between units and enabled collaborative plans for future operations. The OPT anchored air assaults and aerial attacks throughout the division's scheme of maneuver. This meeting served as a warning order and started a timeline—the 1/3rd 2/3rds rule—for subordinate aviation units to prepare for the mission. Accurate aviation running estimates defined how and when aviation shaped the battle for the ground force commanders.

The TCB convened after the OPT to match units to targets based on their capabilities and limitations. Running estimates for munitions were critical to the effective distribution of an already constrained Class V inventory. TCB planning included the critical suppression of enemy air defense (SEAD). Limited participation of aviation within the TCB increased the risk of ineffective SEAD and resulted in a larger depletion of surface-to-surface munitions.

Together, the OPT and TCB provided the framework to visualize convergence – the timely and strategic alignment of kinetic and non-kinetic effects to apply an overwhelming amount of combat power at decisive points in the battle. Aviation leaders cannot successfully plan, prepare, and execute aviation missions within convergence windows unless they prioritize and attend critical battle rhythm events.

Balancing Mission Planning Processes with Product Development

Planning products inherently burden aviation units, yet complex operations require detail. The division's size, scale, and scope of operations created natural ambiguity. The AAC approached this challenge by prioritizing divisional planning over the development of internal CAB products. Greater situational awareness from collaborative planning came at the cost of reduced product development, which impacted battalion and company efforts and awareness. Both objectives were subject to the scarcity of time and required balance and prioritization within the limited CAB response cell.

The synchronization matrix (SYNCMAT), target synchronization matrix (TSM), and commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) emerged as the AAC's most crucial fighting products. Like prioritizing battle rhythm events, the AAC utilized the resources and personnel best suited to develop these specific products. An acceptable balance between comprehensive planning and detailed product creation required constant adjustment.

1-25th Avn. Bn. Conduct Environmental Training – White Out Conditions

The division's SYNCMAT functioned as mission orders. It created shared understanding and established mutual trust by clearly defining the time and place of the division's operations, including convergence windows. The daily OPT provided the AAC with opportunities to improve branches and sequels that strengthened the division's SYNCMAT.

The division's TSM was just as important as the SYNCMAT. Deviations to targeting altered multiple lines of effort. Without aviation's precision-guided missiles, area weapon systems – like artillery-spent additional ammunition on high payoff targets. Likewise, the removal of SEAD assets from the TSM compromised aviation operations. The TSM also informed branches and sequels within the SYNCMAT. Together, these products were critical to identifying relevant friendly forces information requirements (FFIR) for decision-makers.

Poor time management has tremendous potential to devastate aviation operations. It is unrealistic for smaller, decentralized brigade-level command posts to attend every division plan-

ALL PHOTOS 11TH AAC COURTESY PHOTO

Bravo Company, 1-25th Avn. Bn. operating at high elevations, high latitudes, and extremely cold temperatures.

ning event or produce the typical planning products in a resource constrained environment. But the Army aviation enterprise must find a way to continue to deliver excellence to the division, despite the challenges. All CABs must continue to test their systems and process during future Warfighter exercises as they strive to balance the cycle of planning, preparation, and execution throughout protracted combat operations.

The Significance of Resource Management

Aviation leaders must be comfortable managing fewer resources as they function within the division or lead operations within their command post. The 11th Division's Warfighter exercise was a reminder that combat operations are unpredictable. The people, processes, networks, and command posts necessary for aviation to fight and win demand flexible resource management. The right thing must be done by the right people at the right time.

The challenges facing the AAC throughout Warfighter 25-02 revealed a path to strengthen America's Arctic Division, the "Arctic Angels." If examined closely, the exercise offers valuable insight into what CABs can expect throughout large-scale combat operations. Combat-related attrition will constrain and reduce organic resources. Integrating aviation assets from the U.S. Army Reserves and National Guard is inevitable. The time to chart a successful course and build cohesive teams for these occurrences is not when a conflict erupts; the time is now.

Wings of the Arctic–Above the Angels!

COL Russell W. Vanderlugt assumed command of the Arctic Aviation Command, 11th Airborne Division (Arctic) on August 8th, 2024, at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. CW4 Michael D. Harms is the AAC's Aviation Mission Survivability Officer.

The Tide is Changing

By BG (Ret.) Howard Yellen and Mrs. Jennifer Potts

In December 2024, the NBC Evening News broadcast an insightful piece pertaining to the transition of high school seniors to trade schools rather than colleges *(https://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/video/more-young-people-are-choosing-trades-over-going-to-college-228181061716*).

With significant shortfalls in many areas ranging from carpentry to commercial trucking, to Information Technology it is obvious that GEN Z is becoming the 'Toolbelt Generation.' It is a realization not lost on industries that are endeavoring to fill these technical shortfalls. It is the driving force behind the creation of the TLC to provide a level of financial support that empowers deserving individuals to achieve career aspirations beyond high school.

It is estimated that 45% of jobs in the U.S. career fields require a college degree, with indications this percentage will decline in the coming years. Consider again: more than half of U.S. jobs do not need a college degree. However, many of these career fields require some form of trade school, licensing, or certification. Many working adults, those desiring to enter or re-enter the workforce, and transitioning high school students, will opt this year to pursue a certified trade school or obtain a professional license or certification that will allow the transition to a new career. These pursuits have very real financial implications; however, career fields that do not seek a traditional college education are ineligible to obtain resources from traditional College scholarship funds.

The TLC has money available now for applicants once their application is accepted and approved. Going forward the TLC requires investment to remain viable for future applicants. The TLC needs the help of both industry and individuals alike in financial partnering.

We understand that the demand for philanthropic contributions to be directed toward the mission is huge and we don't take the ask lightly. The United States is saturated with nonprofit organizations that fulfill unique and critical missions; however, the TLC Foundation has a distinctive mission that is unique to AAAA members and families. No other non-profit organizations deal exclusively with Aviation Soldiers, Industry partners, and families (past and present) in trade schools, credentialing, and licensing. As a fully accredited 501(c)3 your one-time contribution or recurring tax-deductible financial commitment allows for the TLC to reach more qualified applicants and provide grants to individuals as they pursue their career aspirations.

As we prepare for the AAAA Summit in May, we ask the AAAA community to consider partnering with TLC through financial contributions. For AAAA members, this is an opportunity to assist in funding meaningful career aspirations to other members of the AAAA member network and their families. For AAAA Industry Partners, this is an opportunity to invest in and reach motivated candidates by:

- Partnering with TLC to post your trade, licensing and certification positions at jobs.quad-a.org. Your willingness to share jobs may motivate more of our high potential 20,000+ member pool and extended network of qualified family members to seek TLC grants
- Connect with grant recipients through partnership with TLC
- Opportunity for first right of refusal for interested, qualified recipients actively pursuing career accreditation that satisfy your organizational needs

We'd consider it a privilege to speak with you and share more information about the TLC and your opportunities to financially partner with it!! We encourage you to contact us so we can share more with you at the Summit in Nashville or at a place and time of your choosing. We look forward to seeing you there!

For more information regarding the TLC Fundraising opportunities, please contact BG (Ret.) Howard Yellen at *hyellen160@gmail.com* or Jennifer (Jen) Potts at *pottsjennifer2005@gmail.com.*

BG (Ret.) Howard Yellen is a past AAAA President and current Vice President of the Trade School Licensing and Certification Foundation and Mrs. Jennifer Potts serves as a member of the TLC Board of Directors.

From Army Aviation Magazine, Vol. 13, No. 4, Army Aviation Publications, Inc., Westport, CT, April 1964.

"Crane!"

CH-54A SKYCRANE

By MAJ Robert J. La Haie

Edited by Mark Albertson

ALL PHOTOS AAP FILE PHOTO

CH-54A pod for hauling equipment and vehicles

CH-54A showcasing the sling load.

What in the world is that? Is an often heard expression when first viewing the CH-54A. "That, gentlemen, is the Sikorsky-designed-and-manufactured answer to a U.S. Army requirement for a heavy lift helicopter." As is so often the case in our modern technocracy the design is functional and is not a thing of beauty. While it may look unusual, it is capable of doing a job it was designed to do.

Ten Year Development

The civilian version of the CH-54A (S-64) was developed over a ten-year period beginning in the early 1950s. Design evolution led to the manufacture of the first three models produced in their present configuration. Two were sold to the Federal Republic of Germany and the third retained by the manufacturer.

In late 1963, this aircraft was leased by the U.S. Army for limited testing. A joint test by the 11th Air Assault Division (air mobility concept test) was conducted during the period June through December 1963. A firm purchase order has been accomplished for six production-model CH-54A "Sky Cranes" from Sikorsky for further evaluation and hardware testing. Improved features discovered during the joint test will be incorporated in these Cranes.

Largest Helicopter

What the CH-54A is, can best be answered by the following brief description: The largest and most powerful helicopter produced in the free world today, the "Sky Crane" is powered by twin Pratt-Whitney free

turbine engines (4,050 shaft horsepower each) and has a design gross weight of 38,000 pounds.

A rearward-facing pilot's station with hover controls is incorporated in the design in addition to two forward-facing pilot stations. For the first time this enables the pilot to observe directly external load attachment/detachment and be able to pinpoint load placement.

Single-Point Suspension

The helicopter features a single-point and a four-point suspension system. The single-point system with its winch and 100 feet of cable is suitable for retrieving downed aircraft, raising and lowering pods and pallets from or into confined areas where a landing is not possible, and normal sling load operations. The single-point suspension system is presently limited to 8 ½ ton loads.

Four-Point Suspension

The four-point suspension system incorporates a raising (jacking) and lowering (kneeling) device in the main landing gear which allows the helicopter frame to be raised or lowered to the load height. Power winches and cables at the four suspension points facilitate load attachment/detachment. The rigidity and streamlining of the four-point suspension system permit greater operational speeds than can be attained with a single-point suspension system sling load.

Present weight limitation with the four-point suspension system approximates 12 ton loads.

Special Purpose Pods

Special purpose pods with an almost limitless potential (Signal Command posts, Mobile Army Surgical Hospital facilities, perishable resupply points, maintenance and repair shops, personnel shelters, etc.) are included in the overall design system.

The growth potential of the CH-54A design can mean improved mobility for future commanders. The Army-industry effort to develop equipment capable of being air lifted leaves only to the imagination those items which will be air lifted in the future.

Major Robert J. La Haie was assigned to the Army Aviation Test Board when this article was written. Mark Albertson is the award-winning Army Aviation Publications Historian and a contributing editor to ARMY AVIATION magazine.

Bottoms Out!

By Michael Bergman, Spur 21

Editor's Note: These two articles are the next in a series taken throughout the year 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

This is a story that I have told again and again. I don't think my story is the only one of its kind but I hope it was rare. I graduated from rotary wing training at Fort Rucker in August of 1970. Of course, it is customary for those going to Vietnam to be awarded 30-day leave prior to reporting to Oakland, California for your trip to Southeast Asia. My student flight class was 70-24 and there were many of the officers in this class that started appearing at the check in station in Oakland, California prior to our flight to Vietnam. It was a reunion of sorts and good to see everyone even though we all had the same orders.

Once we arrived in Vietnam after what seemed to be a 20-24- hour flight, we all reported to the center where the unit assignments were made. The second morning at the center after breakfast we were told to report to this one room. Once there, we started seeing various unit reps come in. You could tell by their patches which unit they represented but not their location. The reps started holding up the number of fingers to represent the number of pilots they needed that day. Unit reps and new pilots would start leaving the room to return to their headquarters. One rep held up two fingers and a friend and fellow 70-24 classmate, Lt. Rus Spicer, and I said, hey lets go thinking it will be nice knowing someone halfway around the world.

We proceeded from Long Binh to the headquarters for the 3/17th Air Cav in Di An, III corp. It was not a long trip. Once there we were assigned a barracks and informed we would be assigned to Alpha Troop. After getting checked in and unpacked, we were told to report to the Troop commander and officially be welcomed to our new unit. The commander was a major and not exactly warm. Without much conversation, the major told us, "Boys we are so glad to see you." For about three seconds Rus and I felt pretty good with that welcome. Then the bomb dropped: the major continued his conversation and said, " We have lost three Cobra front seats in two weeks and that's where you will be flying." I turned to Rus and said, "We are screwed."

Following that piece of news, we started meeting the Cobra pilots we would be flying with. They all seemed well grounded but the Cobra section leader, Capt. Smith, seemed a little high on ego. Our day started early and we worked areas 20-30 miles from our base with Cobras covering Bell OH-58s close to the ground searching for enemy personnel or signs of activity. Cobra and OH-58 teams would take turns in the AO performing search missions while there was a rescue team standing close by in case of a downed aircraft or engagement was evident.

Rus and I rotated and actually got to fly with all the Cobra pilots in the unit and found that there were some terrific pilots who knew their stuff. One day about two months into our time in country, I was front seat for the section leader, Capt. Smith. The first stop for us was the POL site. That day, Capt. Smith had assigned himself what we called the heavy hog; two 18 rocket pods on each side with full armament: That's 72 rockets. For some reason I stayed in the aircraft while the Captain got fuel. I don't recall having fuel gauges in the front seat but Capt. Smith completed refueling, said he topped off, got back in, and cranked up.

Then it happened. Capt. Smith tilted the nose, rotated for takeoff and with only a three–five-foot altitude and little forward speed I heard the main rotor speed reduce and then the aircraft slammed down to the ground with skids split. We were sitting on our belly. We hit so hard that my chicken plate bounced off my chin. Another one of our unit's Cobras flown by WO Mike Billow with Rus Spicer in the front seat had also taxied in. They saw the entire fiasco and never let me forget it. Rus Spicer took the opportunity, as with many other situations, to seize the moment with humor. From that point forward, Capt. Smith was known as, in private, Capt. America. I recall flying with Capt. Smith one other time when we lost hydraulics.

I wondered if I was jinxed with this pilot or it was by accident or design. Rus and I were told we would transition to Cobras in country when slots became available but that never happened as we started getting rated Cobra pilots in and we went back to lift section.

Michael Bergman is a VHPA life member living in Roanoke, TX.

Practice Makes Perfect or We Play How We Practice

By Dave Landoll, Stingray 49 / Hawk 15

They should have had spelling, punctuation and typing classes in flight school. If you took the number of pilots who served in Vietnam and multiplied that number by six you still wouldn't know the number of war stories that are going unwritten from Vietnam. And your story must start with "There I was at 2,500 feet, lost, at night, in the rain, out of ammo, out of fuel, and out of ideas". Well, I don't have a story starting like that. I also don't need to change any names to protect the innocent, because I don't remember any names other than my own. My story is also a bit educational. I feel there is a message for old pilots, bold pilots, good pilots, poor pilots, new pilots, even non pilots.

I, along with three other new Cobra pilots, arrived at Dong Tam B Company 9th Infantry on the same day the unit received their first Cobra gunship. Company B at the time had a maintenance officer who had just come back from Vung Tau with a fresh Cobra qualification. They also had one line pilot in Vung Tau getting his in-country checkout. The other experienced pilots were flying the Charlie model gunship.

In their infinite wisdom someone in charge assigned us to go across the street and fly co-pilot with a Cav. unit to get some experience under our belt. The Cav. unit was flying hunter killer teams. We flew a few uneventful hours my first morning out. I sat in the front seat observing and keeping an eye on the loach before heading back to base camp for a break and lunch. On the flight back to Dong Tam, the Aircraft commander asked if I would like to fly, which of course I did.

After lunch (I didn't need naps in those days) we duplicated the morning mission. Once again it was uneventful. After the mission I was once more invited to take the controls flying back, again, I gladly accepted. We exchanged controls with the normal verbiage, and the AC added "see if you can execute a normal approach this time". I was po'ed and embarrassed at the same time.

To myself I was thinking "I'm not in flight school anymore, I am in Vietnam. I shouldn't need to listen to your too high, too low etc." I felt I only needed to transition from flying to landing in the right area, but, I worked hard to make a good normal approach, and I did not get a critique from the back seat.

Over the next couple of weeks, I was privileged to fly with the same AC as well as other ACs in their unit. However, every time I had the opportunity to fly with others, I worked hard at shooting a good approach. I wasn't about to be embarrassed again. A few weeks, or months, later I became aware in the middle of an approach, what a good approach I was making.

I certainly owe that first AC a debt of gratitude. What he did for me served me well for fifty-three years. My only hope is for one person to learn from my story whether it be flying, football, or digging a ditch.

Practice makes perfect, well… maybe not perfect, but pretty good at least!

Dave Landoll is a VHPA life member living in Bel Aire, KS.

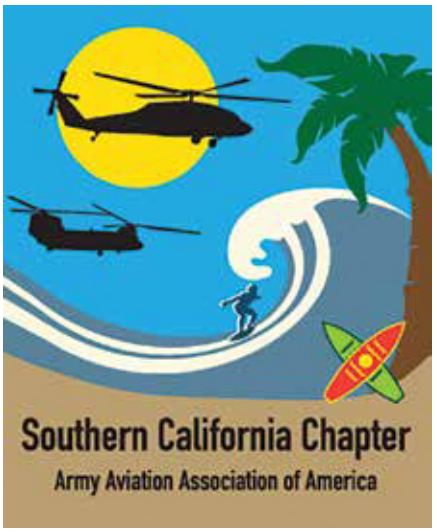
AAAA **Chapter** Affairs

By LTC (Ret.) Jan Drabczuk

I greatly appreciate the support from John Hendrickson, the Southern California Chapter President, for authoring and sharing this information to our membership.

The Southern California Chapter

The Southern California Chapter encompasses the Southern half of the state approximately from Vandenberg AFB on the West to Bakersfield on the East and all points South, to and including San Diego.



AAPI GRAPHIC

Well over 50% of the average 350 per year membership are industry members, another 20% active, guard and reserve personnel, with the remaining 25% individual and retired. More than 10% of the membership are Life Members. The Chapter's center-of mass and focus on the Army Aviation Soldier and Family, is the Los Alamitos Army Airfield located on the Joint Forces Training Base in Los Alamitos, CA, Orange County, 35 miles South of Los Angeles. The primary units supported include company size elements of the 6-52 Aviation Regiment, U.S. Army Reserve, and those of the 40th Infantry Division, CAARNG. Two battalions of the 40th ID's CAB, the 1-140th Assault Helicopter Bn and the 640th Aviation Support Bn are located at the Los Alamitos Army Airfield.

Network

The Chapter holds several meetings each year in conjunction with events sponsored by other organizations, such as the VHPA. An Annual Los Alamitos Army Airfield Legacy Aircrew social and dinner draws up to 200 airmen and guests. With such a large gathering, a quarterly and annual Chapter business meeting is held just prior to this event. In addition, the first weekend in October is a very busy time on the Los Alamitos Army Airfield, as it hosts the "staging area" for military flight demonstration teams from near and far, participating in the annual Huntington Beach Pacific Airshow. Chapter members are afforded an ideal setting to view "static displays" as well as numerous take offs and landings of the world's premier combat aircraft. This venue provides an ideal venue for the Chapter to host a "social" gathering for its members and to recruit new members. At least two of the quarterly Chapter meetings are scheduled and held on "drill weekends" at the JFTB in order for the Chapter to gain visibility for AAAA and its mission, and to build membership. At least one quarterly meeting per year is industry focused where the Chapter goes on a "plant tour" or receive a presentation from one of their industry members.

Recognition

The Chapter has a Soldier of the Quarter program for the units assigned to the Los Alamitos Army Airfield. Annually, the Chapter sponsors a junior aviation soldier of the year awardee to attend the AAAA Summit. This past year the Chapter awarded more than eight Bronze Order of Saint Michaels, and an Order of Our Lady of Loreto.

Support

The Chapter consistently provided a $1000 COL Jake Benjamin Memorial College matching Scholarship award. Two years ago, with the generous donations received from several sources, the Chapter was able to commit to a second scholarship: the Los Alamitos Army Airfield Legacy Aircrew scholarship. Almost continuously, a CAARNG aviation unit is either deployed overseas, fighting forest fires or supporting other natural disasters, providing ample opportunities for the Chapter to help support those in need. The Chapter actively seeks out opportunities to support activities such as Battalion level Changes of Command, by providing funds for post event socials. An annual Christmas present drive for Soldiers and their families, sponsored by the city Los Alamitos Chamber of Commerce, is fully supported, financially and with presents, by the Chapter.

Voice

The Chapter takes advantage of every opportunity; at meetings and participation in events such as Changes of Command, the Airshow, OSM presentations etc. to "fly the AAAA flag." A great example of the dedication the Chapter membership has for "sharing" AAAA, occurred this past February 2024, in Anaheim, CA. The Helicopter Association International (HAI) held their 3-day annual convention at the Anaheim Convention Center. The Southern California Chapter volunteered to "man" an AAAA booth at the convention, to share the AAAA story and soliciting membership. The Chapter took the additional opportunity of the "draw" of the convention to hold a "social" meeting at the conclusion of the event, drawing nearly 100 in attendance. Another, convenient "in conjunction with" event.

Contact

Feel free to contact me if you need help with your Chapter, establish a new Chapter, Executive Board support, would like your Chapter featured in the AAAA magazine or to obtain clarification of National procedures.

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

AAAA Chapter News

Washington Potomac Chapter Soldier Recognition


PFC Moore


SPC Miller

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTOS

PFC Daniel B. Moore, UH-60 Maintainer, Company D, 12th Aviation Battalion, The Army Aviation Brigade (TAAB), and **SPC Cole T. Miller,** UH-60 Crew Chief, Company B, 12th Aviation Battalion, The Army Aviation Brigade (TAAB), were recognized as the Washington-Potomac Chapter's 2024 Soldier of the 4th Quarter and Soldier of the Month, respectively by CSM Alex Collins, 12th Aviation Battalion CSM and AAAA Washington-Potomac Chapter's Vice President for Enlisted Affairs, on February 25th, 2025 at Davison Army Airfield, Fort Belvoir, VA.

SSG Dylan M. Formby, C-37 Flight Engineer, United States Army Priority Air Transport Battalion (USAPAT), The Army Aviation Brigade (TAAB), was recognized as the Washington-Potomac Chapter's 2024 NCO of the 4th Quarter by CSM Dave Bowen, USPAT CSM, on March 7th, 2025 at Joint Base Andrews, Andrews AFB, MD.

ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL INDUCTEES

Connecticut Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO BY MAJ. HARVEY GABER

CW4(R) Shai M. Bardfield is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by Navy CAPT Daniel C. Short, commander of Defense Contract Management Agency-Sikorsky Aircraft., on Jan. 31, 2025 at the Sikorsky Aircraft Company flight hangar, Stratford, CT. Bardfield was recognized for more than 30 years of service to the Army and Army Aviation. He will continue flying S-92s with PHI.

Mid Atlantic Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO BY LTC TERESA M. PARROTTA

CW4 Edward W Benedict is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, COL (Ret.) Charles H. Schulze, and 29th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade commander, COL Louis P. Hawkins at Aberdeen Proving Ground (Edgewood Arsenal), MD on Mar. 8, 2025. Benedict was recognized for his achievements over more than 20 years of service and while serving as the 29th ECAB Standardization Officer.

Mount Rainier Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO BY MS. SARAH HOLTEN

LTC Nicholas Holten is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by CW5 Barry Sledd (left), chapter VP, and COL (Ret.) William Reeder, former Army Aviator and Vietnam Prisoner of War on February 20, 2025 at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA. Holten was recognized for his achievements while serving as Innovations Director for the 1st Multi-Domain Task Force where his efforts led to the successful fielding of multiple ultra-long endurance (ULE) unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and high-altitude balloons (HABs), helping to redefine how Army Aviation will be used on the forward edge of future conflict to enable operations in degraded and denied environments.

Tennessee Valley Chapter

CHAPTER PHOTO BY BELINDA BAGNET

LTC Nick Yerby is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by COL Dan Thetford, Project Manager Apache, at the Stovehouse in Huntsville, AL on Mar. 5, 2025. Yerby was recognized for his achievements over 22 years of service culminating with his service as the Product Manager for Development and Modernization in the PM Apache office.

Washington Potomac Chapter

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTOS

CW5 Travis M. Haney is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow (left), chapter president and BG Matt Braman (right), HQDA G-3/5/7 Director of Aviation on March 13th, 2025, during his retirement ceremony in the Pentagon Hall of Heroes, Washington, DC. Haney was recognized for his remarkable and enduring contributions to Army Aviation over a distinguished career spanning more than three decades and culminating as the Aircraft Survivability Equipment Officer within the HQDA G-3/5/7 Aviation Directorate.

New AAAA Life Members

Aviation Center Chapter
LTC Andy Thaggard
Connecticut Chapter
MAJ Kevin D. Moll
Flint Hills Chapter
CW2 John Fitzmaurice
Idaho Snake River Chapter
1LT Alex J. Counter
Iowa Chapter
LTC Mark J. Scherbring
Iron Mike Chapter
MAJ Travis B. Holland
Keystone Chapter
MAJ Andrew Vu
Phantom Corps Chapter
LTC Garry P. McNiesh
Savannah Chapter
LTC Joseph M. Natter, Ret.
ShowMe Chapter
CW5 James Nix

New AAAA Members

Air Assault Chapter
CW3 Matthew Haynes
CW4 Timothy Vincent
SGT Glen West
Dr. Michael Zimmermann
Aloha Chapter
SFC Christopher Calderon
PFC Maili Mae Cisneros
CW2 Joseph Mortensen
CPT Vinh Phan
Arizona Chapter
Ms. Jessica Jonasson
PFC Kevin Octavio Lopez Ortiz
Mr. Ryan Masel
Maj. Gen. Michael McGuire
Mr. Christopher Oliver
Mr. Benedikt Urban
CW5 Ryan Wells
Aviation Center Chapter
LTC Edward Adams
WO1 Nathaniel E. Begley
CPT Brandon Brown
2LT Paul M. Cain
2LT Mitchell A. Clements
MAJ Clayton Cushing
2LT Erika M. Ellison
SFC Jeremy Fantroy
MSG Tabatha Farmer
Phillip Fluke
WO1 Logan Y. Franks
WO1 Anthony J. French
WO1 Eric O. Henderson
WO1 Joseph B. Holden
WO1 Stephanie L. Lee
2LT Isaac A. Lewis
LTC Sean O'Connell
2LT Caleb M. Putnam
WO1 Robert M. Smith
Badger Chapter
Mr. Chris Anderson
Mr. David Atlas
PV2 Matthew Jacob Glass
PV2 Ayden Pryce Snyder
Bayou Chapter
MAJ Sheena Poole
Big Sky Chapter
Mr. Mclaine Heringer
Mr. Patrick Kelleher
Mr. Jedidiah Wagner
Black Knights Chapter
SPC Declan Thomas O'Connor
Bluegrass Chapter
WO1 Christopher A. Santiago
Central Florida Chapter
CDT Steven Alvarez
Mr. Niall Campion
Mr. Trevor Estes
CWO5 Jack Johnston, Ret.
Mr. Michael Lukens
SSG Christopher petty
CDT Nicholas Plasse
PFC Yariel Luis Rivera Bernabe
CDT Ryan Sanders
CPT Carla Shapira
CDT Chad Taylor
SGT Sylvester Terry
Mr. Andrew Touchet
Colonial Virginia Chapter
SFC Jonathon Alarcon
MSG Stephina Reyes
SSG Montana Woolman
Connecticut Chapter
SFC Michael Boscarino
CW5 Christopher Mattson
Corpus Christi Chapter
PV2 Joe Hediger
Mr. Brian Hoover
Mr. Alfred Jimenez
Mr. Daniel Johnson
Mr. Martin Zuniga
Cowboy Chapter
SGT Bryson Baker
SGT Devin Mazzone
1SG Tyler Neff
Delaware Valley Chapter
Mr. Kevin Alexander
Mr. Pete Briglia
Mr. Michael Glover
Mr. James J. Hays
Mr. Brad H. Hershey
Mr. William V. Hunt
SSG David Kenderdine
Mr. Michael J. Lancellotti
Ms. Maureen Segal
Mr. Garrett Terwilleger
Mr. Jason P. Travaglini
Mr. Lukas Wood
Desert Oasis Chapter
SFC Robert McAlister
Embry Riddle Eagle Chapter
Miss Amber Alicea
CDT Brendan Conneely
WO1 Robert Hernandez
Empire Chapter
Mrs. Anna Cosh
Flint Hills Chapter
MAJ Tyler Lewis
Mr. Steve Patrick
Free Dominion Chapter
SSG Schuyler A. Burton
SPC Kayla J. Kruckenberg
SPC Josh Loving
SGT Kody A. Provencher
SPC Adam Sprouse
Frontier Army Chapter
LTC Raymond Warren Hanson
Gold Standard Chapter
MAJ James Benton
Mr. Donald Holder
CW4 John McElwee
CW4 Rourk Petersen
CPT Justin Price
Mr. Anthony Welch
Great Lakes Chapter
Mr. Ray Errer
Greater Atlanta Chapter
PFC Olivia Connell
Ms. Debra Denton
MAJ Brandon Long
Green Mountain Boys Chapter
WOC Andrew Vernon
Griffin Chapter
SFC Luis Rios
Mr. Keary Salls
Grizzly Chapter
CW3 Andrew Hovey
MAJ Christopher Matteson
CW4 Emmanuel Sanchez
High Desert Chapter
SFC Nicola Del Negro
SFC Jacob Remoket
Idaho Snake River Chapter
PFC Logan Thomas Henry
Iowa Chapter
SPC Andrew Jeffrey Rushing
Iron Mike Chapter
MAJ Travis B. Holland
LTC Tad Lefler
CW4 Timothy Woznica
Jack H. Dibrell/Alamo Chapter
LTC Juan M. Bedia, Jr.
SGT Darrien Jones
Keystone Chapter
MAJ Andrew Vu
Land of Lincoln Chapter
SPC Sierra Enh Peih Stark
PFC Ean Michael Tom
Lindbergh Chapter
Mr. John Goings
Mr. Bob McKeown
Lonestar Chapter
MSG Luis Puacmejia
PV2 Connor Nicholas Taylor
MacArthur Chapter
SSG Michael P. Benjamin
SSG Chad Bowden
2LT Brendan Hogan
1LT Andrew Holomshek
CW3 Cameron Kalmon
Mr. Eric Mansholt
SPC Nataly Michelle Mayancela Pichazaca
SPC Gabriel E. Montalvo
2LT Duke Nguyen
1SG Joseph Rubino
PFC Carlos Miguel Shultz
SFC Jonathan Warshauer
Magnolia Chapter
Mr. Kye Allen
Mr. Christopher J. Maslowski
Mid-Atlantic Chapter
Mr. John Anglin
Mr. Peter Steinke
Minuteman Chapter
Mr. Thomas Auer
Mr. Mark Lepczyk
Mr. Jim Mitchell
Mohawk Chapter
CPT Michael Betts
Mount Rainier Chapter
Mr. Daniel Denton
LTC Kim Schilperoort
Narragansett Bay Chapter
SGT Maurice Remillard
North Country Chapter
SFC Joseph H. Converse
1SG Justin T. Dosker
1SG Randy V. Kemper
MAJ Daniel T. Liebetreu
1SG Jacob Schmitt
North Star Chapter
PFC Andrew Davis Harshman
CDR Charles Laingen
North Texas Chapter
CPT Jessie Erwin
PFC Bijay Rai
Mr. Jason Rubin
Northern Lights Chapter
WO1 Nathan Fitch
Old Tucson Chapter
PV2 Maddux Cass Baird
Mr. Joseph Boomer
Mr. Piero Cola
Mr. Tom Cothrun
Mr. Travis Devening
Ms. Kayla Dickey
Mrs. Hannah Elias
Mr. Kyle Gratien
Ms. Julie Hadder
Ms. Jennifer Jerrick
Ms. Dawn McClain
Mr. Nicodemus Phaklides
Mr. Anthony Sanchez
Mr. Daniel Stinski
Mrs. Stephanie Stinski
Phantom Corps Chapter
SFC Raymond Longtin
Mr. Jamie Luster
Mr. Mike Mason
Mr. Sarath Ramamurthy
Mr. Sivasubramanian Sivaramakrishnan
Pikes Peak Chapter
Ms. Brandi N. Colvin-Schweitzer
Ms. Amy Golberg
Mr. Tyler Hanzlik
Mr. Max Liben
CSM Juan Lozano
Mr. Eric Maciolek
Mr. Nate Schroeder
LTC Bowman Spillane
Mr. Jason Sylvestre
Rio Grande Chapter
WO1 James Serrano
Rising Sun Chapter
LTC Dustin Durst
SGT Stephen Giggard
Savannah Chapter
LTC Austin D. Allen
SGT Brian Murphy
LTC Joseph M. Natter, Ret.
WO1 Moises Valdes
ShowMe Chapter
CW4 John Fouch
CW5 Aaron Kellner
CSM Robert Koelling
SPC Dallas Larsen
CW5 Robert A. Murrell
CW5 James Nix
Southern California Chapter
Miss Loretta Conley
Ms. Annie Duong
Ms. Robyn Eagles
LTC Timothy J. Escobar
Mr. William Fulton
PFC Jon Magnus Kimo Guimond
Mr. David Herbst
Mr. Alex Kerner
Ms. Katherine Kerner
Mr. Jim Moore
Mr. John Phelan
Ms. Brittney San Miguel
Mr. Boris Sorochinsky
Mr. Mike Wills
Tarheel Chapter
Mr. James S. Edwards
SGM Mark Finney
LTC Jason Nam
Mr. Tracy Rector, DAC Retired
SFC Christopher Robins
Tennessee Valley Chapter
Ms. Angela Branch
PV2 Luis Carrillo
Mr. Jason Evans
Mr. Richard Gragido
Jonathan Grover
Ms. Avery Hutto
CW3 Taylor L. Kiel
Mr. Ramon C. Lugos
Mr. Michael E. Mittlebeeler
MSGT William Nessola
Ms. Amanda Parsons
Thunderbird Chapter
PFC Brogan Alexander Marshall
Mr. Ty Tomison
Mr. William Whittiker
Utah Chapter
Mr. Jeff Classen
SFC Jay Wettstein
Volunteer Chapter
Mr. Brad Baier
Voodoo Chapter
CWO Elida Baehr
MAJ Scott Nowicki
Washington-Potomac Chapter
CPT Nicole A. Battaglia
SPC Joseph Brown
Mr. Clyde Campos
Miss Emma Doyle
MAJ Benjamin Gonzalez
MAJ Evan Henry
Mrs. Tara Karaniuk
Mr. John Lepore
Mr. Mel Marker
CDT Samantha Mauk
MAJ Darim Nessler
SGT Miguel A. Perez
Mr. Michael Savarese
Mr. Justin Smith
Mr. Jerry Steward
2LT Derek Yorek
Winged Warriors Chapter
CDT Ayden Abreu
Wright Brothers Chapter
Mr. John Donnellan
Mr. Jason Martin
Mr. Christopher O'Connell
Mr. David Rieth
No Chapter Affiliation
MAJ Vincent Bartlett
Ms. Christie Clark
Mr. Kenneth Daniel
Mr. Nate Green
Mr. James Helsham
Mr. Steve Herner
Mr. Dave Jenny
Ms. Grace Keighley
Mr. Kelly King
Mr. Daniel Martineau
Mrs. Ayala Pinhasi
Mr. Ray Polumbo
Mr. Mick Richmond
Mr. Jason Stephens
Mr. Mike Stoltzfus
Maj. Gaston Villemure
SMSgt Urban Volcinius

Lost AAAA Members

Help AAAA locate a lost member on this list and receive a FREE one month extension to your membership.
CPT Robert S. Boham
Mr. Harold V. Bowie, Jr.
LTC Jeffery D. Brown
MAJ James E. Bruckart
Mr. E. W. Cavanaugh
LTC Richard G. Cercone, Jr.
LTC Tzu-Shan Chang
MAJ Harry L. Connors, Jr. Ret.
Mr. Bruno Cussigh
Ms. Lauryn Dawkins
Mr. Porf Dubón
CPT Jordan M. Francis
Mr. William H. Gillispie
Mr. Michael F. Glass
MAJ Gregory W. Glover
COL Gerhard Granz, Ret.
LT Tyler Grubic, PhD
COL Jose L. Hinojosa, Ret.
LTC Randy K. Jackson
Ms. Alisha Jacobs
CW3 Jeffrey J. Jelonek
MAJ David A. Jobe
Dr. Morey J. Kolber, PhD
LTC Peter D. Kowal
CW3 Vladimir Kultschizky
CW3 Timothy J. Larz
MSG David W. Little, Ret.
CPT Alexander A. Magg
LT Chad Milam
SGM Ivonne M. Morrison, Ret.
MAJ Darrel B. Nerove
Mr. Fred A. Newcomb
1LT Andrew J. Norton
SFC Henry R. Rathbone, Ret.
Mr. Steve Santjer
LTC Martin Scheld
Mr. Thomas R. Schiltz
LTC Jerry D. Scott
LTC Friedrich Stern
Ms. Praxie J. Uy
MAJ L.D. Walker
Ms. Jessica Williams

OSMs *Continued*

Washington Potomac Chapter

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

From left to right, **LTC Jeremy Smith, SFC James Pierce, SFC Pablo Naupari, SFC Benjamin Johnson, CW3 Joe Overstreet, MAJ Zachary Sinnen,** and **MSG Brian Piggee** were inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by COL Aaron Schilleci (back center), Army National Guard Aviation and Safety Division Chief, SGM Derrick Kuhns (fourth from right), SGM to the Army National Guard Assistant Director of Aviation, Intelligence, & Information and COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow (second from right), chapter president, on March 14th, 2025, during a Quarterly Hail and Farewell at the Celtic House Irish Pub and Restaurant in Arlington, VA. As a result of their selfless service and outstanding leadership, mentorship and lasting contributions, they have made significant impacts across the Army National Guard Aviation enterprise.

CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

Mrs. Ashley Berry is inducted into the Honorable Order of our Lady of Loreto on March 7th, 2025 at Davison Army Airfield, Fort Belvoir, VA by (left to right) CW4 Michael P. Cooper (Senior Warrant Officer Advisor, 12th Aviation Battalion), CSM Alex Collins (CSM, 12th Aviation Battalion), CW4 Charles R. Berry III (Standardization Instructor Pilot, 12th Aviation Battalion), and LTC Erika A. Holownia (Commander, 12th Aviation Battalion). Mrs. Berry was recognized for 21 years of dedicated service and lasting contributions supporting Army Aviation Families across the Army Aviation Enterprise while serving in various community volunteer and multiple Soldier and Family Readiness Groups (SFRG).

AAAA Awards Excellence!

AAAA Functional Awards

Suspense: August 1

- Unmanned Aircraft Systems Soldier of the Year Award
- Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operation Technician of the Year Award
- Army Aviation Fixed Wing Unit Award
- Army Aviation Logistics Support Unit of the Year Award
- Army Aviation Outstanding Logistics Technician of the Year Award
- Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award for Contributions by an Individual Member of Industry
- Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award for Contributions by an Industry Team, Group,or Special Unit
- Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award for Contributions by a Small Business Organization
- Army Aviation Materiel Readiness Award for Contributions by a Major Contractor

Suspense: September 1

- Air/Sea Rescue Award
- ATC Controller of the Year Award
- ATC Technician of the Year Award
- ATC Manager of the Year Award
- ATC Facility of the Year Award
- ATC Unit of the Year Award
- DUSTOFF Medic of the Year Award
- Medicine Award
- Trainer of the Year Award

Send in Your Nominations Today!

Nomination forms for all of the AAAA Awards are available on our website:

quad-a.org

AAAA **Family Forum** By Judy Konitzer

"My Daddy!"

By Judy Konitzer and Hannah Hall

ALL PHOTOS AAPI PHOTO

The gathering for the Aviation Leaders Conference at Fort Novosel in January provided a unique opportunity to meet and be captivated by 3-year-old Miss Scarlett Hall, the daughter of SFC Alexander Hall, the AAAA Functional Award 2024 Trainer of the Year.

Scarlett's mom, Hannah, and Alex met in 2010 while attending Angelo State University in San Angelo, Texas. In 2011 Alex joined the Army and was stationed at Fort Cavasos as a medic assigned to a Civil Affairs Unit. They married in August 2012 and 3 months later Alex deployed to Afghanistan. In 2016 he joined the 160th as a Nightstalker flight medic and from there went to Fayetteville, NC to attend SOCM. His first duty station as a Nightstalker was at Joint Base Lewis McChord where they lived until 2022 and where they welcomed Scarlett Leigh. They currently are stationed at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Hannah expressed pride for Alex's "dedication and countless hours to the flight medic program and his hard work and commitment to his Soldiers and students. The instructors before him laid the foundation and Alex has built upon it, strengthening the program into a challenging flight medic course that will train the future medics of the 160th."

While acknowledging that "a Night Stalker's job is incredibly demanding and time-consuming," Hannah found that her time during the last three years was best spent at home with Scarlett: "a role I've fully embraced. Her big personality keeps me endlessly entertained. To fill our times we attend gymnastic classes, soccer, story time at the library, and play dates." Hannah will begin obtaining her Master of Legal Studies and plans to work when Scarlett starts school.

The Halls knew that from the moment they heard Alex was receiving this award, they wanted Scarlett to be there for the celebration. "She adores her Daddy, and we knew she'd be over the moon watching him on stage. Of course, bringing a three-year old to formal events always comes with a bit of unpredictability, but we took our chances."

The Hall's first event was the awardee dinner at the Enterprise Country Club. Scarlett, the only child there and initially a little shy, was thrilled to wear her "princess" dress.

At the next night's award ceremony in the Aviation Museum, Scarlett seemed enthralled by all the helicopters she saw. Her mom said, "She is no stranger to aircraft. She has seen plenty of helicopters at her dad's work, watched Santa arrive in a Black Hawk, and waves at every passing helicopter calling out 'Hi, Daddy!"

Hannah and Scarlett were beaming with pride watching their Soldier receive the attention he so richly deserves. And while it was Alexander's night, Scarlett stole the show! So sweet and so proud of her Daddy! I think Hannah and Scarlett's presence made for the best awards ceremony I have attended.

The Halls were very appreciative of everyone's kindness "welcoming our girl with open arms. And sharing that no matter where the journey takes us, Scarlett will always be there with us bringing her charming personality and infectious spirit-cheering her daddy on every step of the way."

We too shared pride and excitement when Scarlett called out "My Daddy" as SFC Hall walked on stage to accept his award.

Ms. Hannah Hall is the wife of SFC Alexander Hall; and Judy Konitzer is the family forum editor for ARMY AVIATION; questions and suggestions can be directed to her at judy@quad-a.org.

AAAA Awards

Order of St. Michael Inductees

Silver

Air Assault Chapter
COL Jacob B. Couch, Jr
CW5 Frank Escamilla
CW5 Mark A. Jackson
Aloha Chapter
MAJ Zachary D. Daker
CW4 Peter Mansoor, Ret.
COL Matthew J. Scher
Arizona Chapter
CW4 Marvin R. Mueller
Aviation Center Chapter
CSM Caleb T. Baugh
CW4 Butch Daniel, Ret.
Black Knights Chapter
COL Richard Melnyk
Mid-Atlantic Chapter
COL David M. Paolucci
Morning Calm Chapter
CSM Jason M. Palm
Mount Rainier Chapter
CW5 Christopher B. Zimprich
Phantom Corps Chapter
CSM Alan T. Hash
CW4 Reginald E. Oliver
ShowMe Chapter
COL Timothy A. Hodges
Tennessee Valley Chapter
LTC Bradley N. Bruce Ret.
Michael J. Meely
Charles E. Strowbridge
Thunder Mountain Chapter
SGM Nathan Schussler
Thunderbird Chapter
CW4 Chase E. Duarte
COL Heidi Munro
Washington-Potomac Chapter
CW5 Daniel R. Curry, Ret.
CW5 Travis Haney
CW5 Matthew Ingmire
Ronald G. Lukow
LTC Frank A. Tedeschi, Ret.

Bronze

Aloha Chapter
CPT Miles Anthony III
1SG Samantha Norwood
1SG Mark Norwood
SFC Keith Sallee
MAJ Alexis Thorne
CPT Jonathan D. Wynne
Aviation Center Chapter
CW4 Carlos J. Spruill
Colonial Virginia Chapter
CW5 Jason L. Anderson
SSG Sean M. Cantley
SFC Raul Channer
CW4 Stephen L. Cory
SGM Michael J. Sullivan
Connecticut Chapter
CW3 Michael T. Horrigan
Gold Standard Chapter
COL Adam C. Stanley
Mid-Atlantic Chapter
CW4 Edward W. Benedict
Minuteman Chapter
LTC Ryan L. Chandler, Ret.
Morning Calm Chapter
1SG James A. Deadrick
Mount Rainier Chapter
SGM Ronald Cardenas
LTC Benjamin R. Gering
CW3 Kelse B. Gilliard
CW4 Christopher S. Pimley
CW3 Jordan Uzzo
Phantom Corps Chapter
SFC Carl X. Allen
CW4 Joshua D. Batchelor
LTC Michael A. Fish
CW5 Nicholas A. Laplante
SFC Raymond A. Longtin
CW4 Jeff Myers
CW2 Robert D. Waid
Pikes Peak Chapter
1SG Luis G. Baez-Ramos
CW3 Richard E. D'Arata
MAJ Joshua J. Greene
MSG Brian J. Hosford
SFC Sergio A. McCluskey
1SG Charles E. Pomelear
Rio Grande Chapter
1SG Jesse T. Boaz
Savannah Chapter
CPT Jose J. Barraza
CW3 Christopher D. Bridges
CW3 Kimberly Bridges
CW3 Harold J. Martin
MAJ Gray A. Slother
ShowMe Chapter
COL Dennis Arroyo
LTC Adrienne Spadavecchia
MAJ Wes Tuley
Tarheel Chapter
1SG Regina L. Mack
SSG Thomas J. Mullaney
SFC Charles R. Woodruff
Tennessee Valley Chapter
John B. Mullinix II
SSG Mark L. Nelson, Ret.*
Thunderbird Chapter
CW3 Timothy D. Hunt, Ret.
WO1 Jessie S. Ramirez
Washington-PotomacChapter
CW4 Thomas J. Bottini Jr.
LTC Matthew A. Hill
MSG Robert W. Johnson
LTC Adam J. Kemp
LTC Anthony L. Marston
SFC Pablo A. Naupari
1SG Brian D. Piggee
MAJ Zachary B. Sinnen
LTC Jeremy A. Smith
MSG Joseph A. Stringer
Yellowhammer Chapter
BG Johnny R. Bass, Ret.

Knight

Jack H. Dibrell/Alamo Chapter
CW3 Juan C. Sanchez
Pikes Peak Chapter
1LT Megan E. Raftery
ShowMe Chapter
SSG Robert O. Bailey

Our Lady of Loreto

Black Knights Chapter
Cindy Melnyk
Live Free or Die Chapter
Virginia (Ginger) M. Munson
Minuteman Chapter
Carin Paulette
Pikes Peak Chapter
Jessica Farmer

*indicates a posthumous award

Rex Gooch, an award-winning author and proud Vietnam veteran who served as an Air Cavalry Trooper, is on a mission to preserve the rich history of Cavalry hats. He is gathering compelling stories and striking photos of Cavalry hats worn in the post-Vietnam era.

If you have a story or photograph highlighting the significance of these hats, Rex would love to hear from you.

Please reach out to him at *LK23@mac.com* and contribute to this important narrative.

AAAA Legislative Report

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

FY25 Appropriations Complete – Sort Of!

In mid-March, just hours before a government shutdown, Senate Democrats approved a House-passed budget for the remainder of FY25 (through September 30). This came in the form of a full-year continuing resolution (CR).

The CR, while limiting Pentagon buying power due to inflation, includes provisions granting the Defense Department financial flexibility. It consolidates funds into top-level accounts and permits new-start programs listed in FY25 House and Senate appropriations bills. The bill extends funding through September 30, allocating $892.5 billion for national defense.

Despite lower-than-desired funding levels, the outcome was favorable for the Department of Defense and Army Aviation. The FLRAA program received its full $1.25 billion request, avoiding cuts. Modernization efforts were preserved, with Apache Block III funded at $557 million (just below the $570 million request), the Black Hawk program increased to $769 million (including one additional aircraft for the ARNG), and Chinook fully funded at $699 million. While a CR is not ideal, key programs remained intact.

Army Aviation on Capitol Hill—Your Next Mission?

Did you know Army Aviators aren't just dominating the skies but also making waves in Congress? We've got some heavy hitters up there – Reps. Scott Perry (PA), John James (MI), Wesley Hunt (TX), and Tom Barrett (MI). And Michigan? It's practically an Army Aviation hot spot, with Rep. Jack Bergman (MI) bringing his experience as a Marine Aviator who served as an Army Warrant Officer for a period of time before returning to the USMC and retiring as a lieutenant general. But it's not just elected officials – there are plenty of Army Aviators working behind the scenes as military legislative assistants, Chiefs of Staff, and even on the Armed Services Committee.

But here's where it gets even more interesting: you could be next.

Yep, if you're an O3, E8-E9, or a Warrant Officer, you have the opportunity to serve on Capitol Hill through the Army's Congressional Fellowship Program. Think of it as an unexpected but high-impact mission – working in a congressional office, shaping policy, and being a voice for Army Aviation where decisions are made.

Not convinced? Why step away from leading soldiers and flying aircraft? The answer is simple: Army Aviation needs you beyond the cockpit, too. The Army, DoD, and Congress all play a massive role in shaping our branch's future, and we need more aviators in the fight – not just in the air but in the rooms where the big decisions happen.

Take Major Darim Nessler, for example. She's currently serving as an Army Congressional Fellow for Rep. Ro Khanna (CA-17), helping shape policy that directly impacts the military and, on some issues, Army Aviation directly.

After earning a master's degree in legislative affairs from George Washington University, she jumped into the legislative world, advising Rep. Khanna and his staff on Army and DoD issues. Sure, she was hesitant at first – giving up flying and leading soldiers for a couple of years wasn't easy – but now, she's making a real impact on Army Aviation's future. Her uniform for the next year is a business suit and her commander is a Member of Congress that sits on the House Armed Services Committee and her mission is to represent the Army by advising and assisting the shaping of funding and policy that include issues that tie directly to Army Aviation readiness and modernization. When asked why she applied, MAJ Nessler had this to say, "I wanted to better understand how decisions made in Congress directly affect the warfighter. Being a part of that process has been insightful and incredibly rewarding, working directly for a member and with his very competent and capable staff." And after just a few months in the job her thoughts, "It's an incredible program, starting from the master's degree to working in a member's office. As defense fellows, we also add value to the members' offices as experts in our respective fields."

So, how do you apply? Well, that's a conversation we can have offline informally (and formally with your branch manager), but the first step is keeping an open mind about your career path. Leading soldiers and flying is incredible, no doubt. But stepping into a career-broadening assignment like this? It's a game-changer – for you and for Army Aviation.

If you're curious, let's talk. Message me, and I'll connect you with Darim or other former fellows who've walked this path. One thing's for sure – the future of Army Aviation isn't just shaped in the skies. It's shaped in the halls of Congress, too. We need talent in every arena, and that talent could be you.

Are you up for the mission?

UPCOMING AAAA EVENTS

MAY 2025
5-8 GSOF Special Operations Forces Week (formerly SOFIC), Tampa, FL
14-16 AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit, Nashville, TN

JUNE 2025
6 Army Aviation 83rd Birthday 1942
14 U.S. Army 250th Birthday

IN MEMORIAM

Mr. Joel DiMaggio

AAPI FILE PHOTO

It is with great sadness that AAAA announces the passing of Mr. Joel "Joe" DiMaggio on February 15, 2025. He was 87.

A part of the OV-1 Mohawk program since 1960, Joe started with Grumman as a flight line technician, later becoming a technical representative in Germany for 4 years, then in Vietnam from 1968 to1969 as team leader for the SEAMORE program. He later became Grumman's Director for Army Marketing until the Army retired the Mohawk in 1996. Since then, he has been a member of the OV-1 Mohawk Association, and a member of the Melville, NY Fire Department.

Joe was also a long-standing member of the AAAA National Volunteer Staff, assisting at the annual conventions and was integral in the production of the AAAA 50th Anniversary Coffee Table book. His gentle smile and welcoming personality greeted everyone who entered the AAAA Convention HQ for many years and will be greatly missed.

May he rest in peace.

Mrs. Ingrid Strange

STRANGE FAMILY PHOTO

It is also with great sadness that AAAA announces Mrs. Ingrid Strange passed away peacefully on March 9, 2025 in Daleville, AL. She was 85.

Born in Eppendorf, Germany, she immigrated to the U.S. while still a teenager and later became a naturalized U.S. citizen. She married Gerald C. Strange in Folkston, GA, and soon after encouraged Gerald to join the Army as an Army Flight School candidate.

Their final Army assignment brought them back to Fort Rucker, AL, where Gerald retired from the Army as a CW4. Having already settled in Daleville, they continued to raise their youngest daughter, Kirsten. It was also in Daleville where Ingrid opened her first jewelry and gift shop, Ingrid's Jewelers, which she eventually moved to its current location on Sansbury St.

Ingrid continued to dedicate her life to her family, community, the U.S. Army and the thousands of Soldiers who transitioned through Fort Rucker, now Fort Novosel. The profound impact Ingrid made on her community will be felt for years to come.

May she rest in peace.

AAAA Scholarship Foundation

Where Have the Last Two Years Gone?

I am honored to have served as President of AAAASFI during this time and am so proud of the amazing individuals currently serving on our Board of Governors who have worked over these last two years, accomplishing several important initiatives that improve the Scholarship program.

AAPI PHOTO

COL (Ret.) Karen Lloyd receives a donation in honor of MG Carl H. McNair, Jr., deceased, from BG (Ret.) Myrna Williamson during the 2024 Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit.

I am most proud of the Strategic Planning, Alumni and Marketing and Publicity Committees who worked very closely together to achieve significant results. The Strategic Planning Committee, led by Shelley Yarborough, along with the Marketing and Publicity Committee, led by Scott Hollingsworth, and the Alumni Committee, led by Kelly Brown developed four videos that assist the AAAA membership understanding how the Scholarship program works. These videos cover:

- Why Your Essay Matters,
- How Applications are Evaluated,
- 10 Tips to Improve your application
- Evaluators are Important.

Another significant result included the development of a guide to provide information to the Chapter's leadership to help them understand not only how the Scholarship program works but also how they can fund a Chapter sponsored scholarship that benefits their members through matching funds available from the National office.

The Board of Governors responded to the feedback we received from the membership and aligned the scholarship timeline, so awardees receive their recognition in May instead of September. This required working closely with the AAAA National Leadership to adjust our budget and conduct a close-out audit in a timely manner—no small feat.

Kelly Brown single handedly held multiple Zoom classes to teach and/or refresh the important knowledge needed by our evaluators on how to score the applications to ensure the best students are recognized. Based on feedback she is working to record full videos, which will be posted on the AAAA website, so they are available as a resource for evaluators.

Jan Smith, Chair of the Fund-Raising Committee, significantly increased the capital designated for our General Fund. This provides critical matching funds for our Chapters and individual donors, allowing us to increase available scholarships. Jessica Wright led the Wreaths Across America effort which quadrupled donations to the General Fund.

Scott Hollingsworth and his Marketing and Publicity Committee also connected with our award winners to start a successful campaign to publicly thank the many generous donors who fund scholarships. As a thank you, 100 awardees have submitted photos, and he is now using those pictures in our advertising campaign – look for them in future magazines. Scott understands the importance of saying thank you and convinced the awardees to support this effort. Brilliant work!

It is also important to recognize the members that quietly work to improve how we accomplish our mission – Terry Reininger, Mike Flowers and Harry Bendorf are specific examples of this selfless service. Terry Reininger and his Finance Committee did an incredible job managing our funds during a very challenging time and I am grateful for his expertise. Harry Bendorf not only served as parliamentarian but also rewrote our by-laws to ensure we aligned with our biggest benefactor (AAAA) and Connecticut law. Mike Flowers worked hard to put together an outstanding slate of officers to lead AAAASFI over the next two years.

I continue to be so grateful for the continued support of the AAAA National leadership which has provided funding for our expenses, organizing our fund-raising dinners at the Cribbins Symposium and encouraging their leadership to sign up to be evaluators. Without their support the Scholarship Foundation would not be able to give back so generously to AAAA membership and their families.

Again, what an amazing two years it has been!

COL (Ret.) Karen Lloyd is the president of the AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc. Board of Governors.

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 March 2024 through March 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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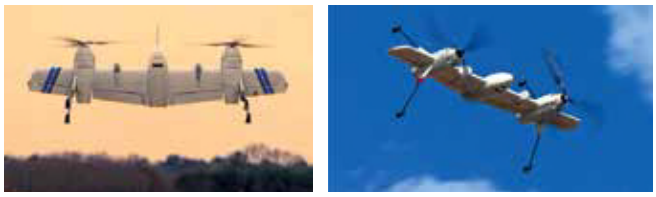
Industry News

Announcements Related to Army Aviation Matters

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

Sikorsky Proves Rotor Blown Wing Capability



LOCKHEED MARTIN SIKORSKY PHOTO

Lockheed Martin Sikorsky announced on March 10, it has proven the capability of a "rotor blown wing" unmanned aircraft system that can fly like a helicopter or an airplane. The drone is a 115-pound, battery-powered twin prop-rotor aircraft that the company said can be scaled larger, "requiring hybrid-electric propulsion." The company's rapid prototyping group, Sikorsky Innovations, took development through preliminary design, simulation and tethered and untethered flight. In January 2025, Sikorsky Innovations successfully completed more than 40 take-offs and landings with the 10.3-ft composite wingspan aircraft, according to the statement. Sikorsky said the aircraft also performed 30 transitions between helicopter and airplane modes, calling it the "most complex maneuver demanded of the design." The drone also reached a top cruise speed of 86 knots and Sikorsky will incorporate its MATRIX flight autonomy system in all variants of the drone, according to the statement.

GA-ASI's Gray Eagle ER Makes First PLEO Flights

GA-ASI PHOTO

General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc. (GA-ASI) conducted its first flight test series of the Gray Eagle Extended Range (GE-ER) Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) using a Proliferated Low Earth Orbit (PLEO) satellite constellation for aircraft communications. Contracted by the U.S. Army, the flight tests began in January 2025 and mark a significant milestone, making GE-ER the first U.S. Army aircraft to be controlled over the new satellite service. Gray Eagle is also the only U.S. Army UAS capable of leveraging Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO), Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and PLEO constellations for secure, inflight adaptable and resilient communication, navigation and data management. The initial testing focused on flight-critical operations, including core aircraft control functions as well as sensor and communications systems. To date, GA-ASI has conducted two GE-ER flights and a series of ground test events using PLEO. Future flight testing is in the planning stages and includes operations across the full flight regime.

Boeing to Stop Production of Its Little Bird

U.S. ARMY SOF AT&L PHOTO)

Boeing expects to shut down its production of the Little Bird light helicopter after fulfilling a current contract with the Thai armed forces. The Little Bird saw service beginning in Vietnam and is well known for its continued service with the U.S. Army's famed 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR)(Abn), which operates the helicopter in AH-6 light attack and MH-6 assault configurations. Boeing announced in February 2025 "We are on track to conclude production of the program with completion of our current orders, and will transition to a focus on sustainment and support for the platform's customer base." Versions of the iconic helicopter will remain in production through MD Helicopters.

Avion Announces Next-Gen Blade Balancing System

AVION COURTESY PHOTO

AVION GRAPHIC

Avion Manufacturing Inc. (Avion), a global leader in helicopter rotor blade balancing systems, has achieved a major milestone with the delivery of its 500th rotor balancing system. The company also announced the launch of its next-generation Universal Static Balance Fixture (USBF-III) (photo), designed for improved efficiency, ease of use and enhanced durability. Since 1992, Avion has provided rotor balancing systems for military and commercial helicopters, originally focusing on the CH-47 Chinook series. Today, Avion's Universal Static Balance Fixture (USBF) supports more than 30 different main rotor blade types, while its Virtual Master Blade (VMB) balances over 15 types of tail rotors.

Advertisers Index

People On The Move

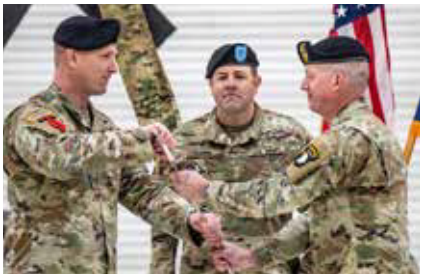
Aviation General Officer Promotions/Assignments

RING PHOTO BY SSG TERRY PARSONSMITH

On Jan. 31, 2025, the Rhode Island National Guard held a Change of Command ceremony, bidding farewell to MG Christopher P. Callahan and welcoming BG Andrew J. Chevalier as the 45th Adjutant General of the RING. Both are Army Aviators and members of the AAAA Narragansett Bay Chapter. During the Jan. 31, 2025 ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Providence, Callahan was inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by Chevalier for his over 40 years of dedicated service.

Changes of Command/ Responsibility

Phillips Departs 101st CAB



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SSG VINCENT LEVELEY

CW5 Robert B. Phillips prepares to relinquish the sabre of the Command Chief Warrant Officer of the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) to 101CAB commander, COL Tyler Partridge, during a Relinquishment of Responsibility at Fort Campbell, KY, January 22, 2025. Phillips moves to his new assignment as the Army Aviation Standardization Officer assigned to DAMO-AV, the Pentagon; his replacement, CW5 Alberto Santillan, will arrive in April.

Awards

The Legacy Continues

U.S. ARMY PHOTO

2LT Liam T. Ohle is presented an AAAA Life Membership by U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence Chief of Staff, COL Clint Cody on behalf of Ohle's grandfather, LTG (Ret.) Dave Ohle on February 28, 2025 at Fort Novosel, AL. 2LT Ohle is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and presently a student at USAACE.

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 Novosel, AL.

41 Officers
March 6, 2025
Class 25-009

Commissioned Officers
1LT Dack, Cole A. -DG
1LT Kellogg, Joseph W. * -HG
1LT Prichard, Tyler D. -HG
2LT Verner, Ryan J. -HG
2LT Buchanan, Floyd W.*
2LT Cashmer, Hunter J.
1LT Dack, Emily J.
2LT Gutierrez, Kevin *
2LT Harrington, Griffin D.
2LT Hernandez, Vincent M.*
1LT Hidalgo, Raymond A.
2LT James, Ryan J.
2LT Karmazin, Christopher S.*
2LT Klinger, Garrett T.*
2LT Roou, Finn L.*
2LT Russell, Marcus D.*
2LT Stephens, Aaron J.*
2LT Ulu, Morgan T. *

Warrant Officers
WO1 Stern, Martin B., Jr.* -DG

FSXXI Class 25-009

ALL PHOTOS U.S. ARMY PHOTO, FORT RUCKER PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WO1 Garrett, Bryce E. -HG
WO1 Hallman, Derek S.* -HG
WO1 Meyer, Wesley Q. * -HG
WO1 Wunder, Samuel R.* -HG
WO1 Ballard, Shawn L.*
WO1 Chrouk, Santechetra
WO1 Coffin, Thomas A. *
WO1 Cordero, Tyler R.
WO1 Creamer, Aimee R. *
WO1 Day, Christy M.*
WO1 Easter, John S.
WO1 Henry, Samantha J.*
WO1 Holmes, Andrew D. *
WO1 Lapine, James T. *
WO1 Marshbank, Eli W.
WO1 Nicosia, Ethan J.
WO1 Ntakirutimana, Jocelyn V.*
WO1 Patton, Mack C., III
WO1 Stephens, Nathan C. *
WO1 Stuart, Jacob J.
WO1 Swenson, Zachary D. *
WO1 Thomas, Andrew D.

* = AAAA Member

Continued next page

People On The Move

Flight School Graduates

Continued

11 Officers March 20, 2025

Class 25-10

Commissioned Officers

2LT Blumthal, Michael E.*
2LT Witter, Corey M. *
Warrant Officers
WO1 Roman, Mario I. * -DG
WO1 Szabries, Tyler A.* -HG
WO1 Ertel, Nickolas A.
WO1 Huff, Benjamin C.*
WO1 Losert, Ricardo A.
WO1 Petrie, Andrew T. *
WO1 Powell, Eric J. *
WO1 Smith, Donovan P. *WO1
Waterman, Micah N.

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

FSXXI Class 25-010

ADVANCED INDIVIDUALTRAINING (AIT) GRADUATIONS

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

AH-64 Attack Helicopter Repairer (15R)

Class 048-24
PFC Maili Mae Cisneros * -DG
PV2 Scott Matthew Austin
PV2 Colton David Kuntz
CPL Aleksander Mazur
PVT Isaiah Angel Melgoza
PFC Jaxxsin Evan Morse
PV2 Lucas Robert Odle
SPC Daniel Odoch
PV2 Andrew Robert Simpson
SPC Jonathan Jeffrey Sticka
PV2 Todd George Wendt
Class 001-25
PFC Thacher H. Jones -DG
PV2 Andrea Albarran
PFC Cameron Joseph Baginski
PV2 Shane Jennings Bates
PVT Alexander S. K. H. Corniuk
PV2 Tyreak Anthony Creighton
PFC Kaylin Sophie Fardella
PVT Julius Roscoe Frailey
PFC Nathaniel Ryan Haskins
PFC Dylan Dayvin Lipford
PFC Jacob Michael Mcdonald
PFC Hannah Lynn Merritt
Class 002-25
PV2 Bijay Rai * -DG
SGT James Owen Clemons, III
PV2 Ryland Lucas Fletcher
SPC Joseph Francisco Flores
SPC Xavier Jamane Hopkins
PFC Andrew Ethan Muller
PV2 Dayton Alexander Newton
PFC Alexander M.Rockwell
Class 003-25
PFC Joshua A. Hernandez -DG
PFC Javier Carter, Jr
SPC Hayden Lee Gonzales
PFC Brendon Mathew Sample
Class 004-25
PVT Omarion D. Stormer
PVT Isaiah Lee Dozal
PFC Priscilla N.Hernandez
PV2 Craig Arthur Leinen
PFC Nicolas Allen Marler
PFC Charles Nordan
PFC Diego Pasillas
PV2 Allen Macray Scott

UH-60 Helicopter Repairer (15T)

Class 001-25
SPC Declan T. O'connor * -DG
PFC Benjamin M.C.Blair
SPC Billy Milton Brown, III
PV2 Luis Alejandro Carrillo *
SPC Cian A. Corcoles Reilly *
PFC Shawn Tyler Craddock
PV2 Joseph A. B. Dela Cruz
PFC Thomas Anderson Evans
PFC Justin Charles George
PV2 Levi Monroe Hayden
PFC Jack Stanley Rekers
PFC Ayden Michael Sturgis
Class 002-25
PV2 Connor Nicholas Taylor * -DG
PV2 Gabriel Alejandro Alcorta
PFC Samuel Patrick Brasher
PFC Cyre Angelo D. R.Bustamante
PV2 Kaleb Ferrell Chance
PFC Sean Ryley Diaz
PV2 Jonathan Haigh Garfi, Jr.
PV2 Zakary Joe Hennington
PFC Kiron Rene Villa
SPC Christian Roderick Wade *
PFC Huan Zhao
Class 004-25
SPC Nataly M. Pichazaca * -DG
PFC Nia Corrine Greenwood
PFC Uriah Izec Henson
PFC Leonardo Hernandez, Jr.
PV2 Robert Vernon Hinds
PV2 Daniel James Johnson
PFC Blaine Thomas Lee
PV2 Marcus Keeten Montes
PFC Karson Lance Owen
PV2 Nicholas Upton Severin
PV2 William Dean Small
Class 005-25
PFC Taelan Alexander Ardrey
SPC Jason Adam Brace
PFC Dane Tyler Cross
SPC Eban Yuri Badal Demafeliz
PFC Jacob Martin Herbers
SPC Daniel Paul Hicks
PFC Trevor Lane Holt
SPC Tyler Joseph Knopp
PV2 Arya Nileshbhai Patel
PV2 Andrew Thomas Pearce
PFC Braden Lee Tucker
PFC Jean Albert Vanderpool, Jr.
Class 006-25
SPC Sierra Enh Peih Stark * -DG
PFC Evan Matthew Allain
PFC Wyatt Isaac Brenneman
PV2 Thomas Lee Broach
PFC Cicily Claudia Cardenas
PV2 Zachary David Clevenger
PFC James Wyatt Cooke
PV2 Matthew David Ellis
Class 007-25
PFC Jon M. K. Guimond * -DG
PFC Tyler Gregory Allmon
PV2 Fox Josey Barnard
SPC Mathis Blaine Buskill
PFC Raul Eldon Hernandez
PFC Riley C. Loucks-Mackenzie
PFC Jackson David Mazey
SPC Cadence Scott Posey
PFC Johnathan Ray Rogers
PV2 Jonathan A. Rucker, Jr.
PV2 Seth Steven Tommila
SGT Rashaad Shamone Ward
Class 009-25
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SPC Grayson Clark Guthrie
SPC Joseph Chun Ho Hui
PFC Ethan Louis Laborde
PFC Garrison James Lee
PFC Harrison Arthur Lynch
PV2 Elizabeth Keryn Tossey
SPC Darryl Arthur Young, III
Class 010-25
PV2 Matthew Jacob Glass * -DG
PFC Alexander J. Caceres
PFC Cody Lee Campbell
SPC Jayden Lee Downie
PFC Brody Lynn George
PV2 Joseph Gordon Houser
PFC Caden Ray Hughes
PFC Owen Edward Morgan
PFC Deacon Landing Palmer
PFC Sanjay P. Sivakumar

Cargo Helicopter Repairer (15U)

Class 043-24
SPC Andrew J.Rushing * -DG
PFC Benjamin Wallace Fischer
PFC Traven Matthew Fletcher
PFC Aditya Gupta
PFC Zachary James Hosier
SPC Benjamin Alan Neff
PFC Jimmy Manuel Nunez, Jr.
PV2 Callub Bernard Tattersall
PFC Lucas Charles Walton
PFC Aden Jameslewis Ward
PV2 David M. Wegscheider, Jr.
PV2 Trevor Aidan Welch
Class 001-25
PV2 Maddux Cass Baird * -DG
SPC Yawittha Auttamamunee
PV2 Mason A. Contreras
PFC Jeffrey Eric Debona
SPC Wadson Dutra, Jr
PFC Cooper Lee Ervin
PFC Gabriel James Johnson
PV2 Hunter Chase Martin
PFC Tyler Jaden Morrow
SPC Gardenia Itzel Ortiz
PV2 Zane Mathew Sanchez
PFC Daniel Robert Tiller
Class 002-25
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PFC Travis Carl Butler
PFC Lillian Denise Kale
PV2 Manuel Perez Uriarte
PV2 Garrett Michael Reddy
PV2 John Michael Schultz
Class 003-25
PFC Jeffrey Alonzo Wood * -DG
PV2 Hunter George Erb
SPC Eric Camilo Romero
PV2 Cole Richard Sacco
PFC Colton Keith Sheridan
PFC Christopher W. Yarborough, Jr.
PFC Christopher B. Zombor

Aircraft Powerplant Repairer (15B)

Class 010-24
PFC Ean Michael Tom * -DG
PV2 Ta Jeune Nigel Smith
SPC Wayne Donovan Quail
Class 011-24
PFC Andrew D. Harshman * -DG
PFC Lance Ethan Beasley
PFC Bryton Lynn Cole
SPC Nicholas D.Dalessandro
PFC Jonathan Ross Daman
PFC Mark Graham Putman
SPC Sarah Elizabeth Regan

Aircraft Powertrain Repairer (15D)

Class 010-24
PFC Brogan A. Marshall * -DG
PFC Kenneth Brody Canion
PFC James Feliciano Munoz
PFC Jayden Jacob Lizardi
PFC Andersen W.Slaughter
CPL Michael Zachary Sprague

People On The Move

Aircraft Structural Repairer (15G)
Class 002-25
PFC Kevin Octavio L. Ortiz * -DG
PV2 Gilbert Manuel Anaya
PFC Simon Joel Arteaga
PV2 Timothy Marshall Grace
PV2 Alexander James Johnson
PV2 Harold Eugene Miller
PV2 Luis Manuel Ruiz Tizoc
SPC Ethan Wyatthester Tant

Aircraft Pneudraulics Repairer (15H)
Class 001-25
PFC Yariel Luis R.Bernabe * -DG
PFC Anthony Joel Arroyo
SSG David William Crabaugh *
PFC Stellamana D.Cyubahiro
SPC Benjamin Ian Steffens

Avionic Repairer (15N)
Class 020-24
PV2 Robin Lynn Denheyer
PV2 Parker Michelle Denmark
SPC Daylue Goah
PFC Michael Jefferey Mills
SPC Ciara May Tipton
Class 021-24
SPC Nazir Levi Bailey
PV2 Talon Michael Earlywine
SPC Evan Paul Fayas
PFC Matthew Robert Fuentes
SPC Garrett Allen Vezain
PFC Thomas Lawrence Yates

Aviation Operations Specialist (15P)
Class 25-008
SPC Grob Tanner A. -DG
PFC Alt Mareike
PFC Dinis Byanna L.
PV2 Kadjo Jacob R.
PVT Ramirez Adrian J.
PFC Rivera Americus
PFC Romero-Valdez Sean D.
Class 25-009
PFC Allen Grace E.
PV2 Bimbona Kihembo J.
PV2 Bush Caelan R.
PV2 Farrag Omar E.
PFC Myers Brandon C.
PV2 Oseguera Jazzlyn
Class 25-010
SPC Brauer Lindsey V.
PVT Correa Villafran Mia S.
SPC Dejose Cielo D.
PV2 Espinosa-Gonzalez Adrian A.
PV2 Gutierrez-Mautino Jose A.
SPC Jones Brandon R.
PVT Lutz Ethan J.
PV2 Martinez Kevin
PVT Montiel Nicholas F.
PFC Zeba Diambro J.

Air Traffic Control Operator (15Q)
Class 25-001
PFC Bowler Stetson M.
PVT Huang Daniel W.
PFC Martinez Christian E.
Class 25-002
PV2 Joehnk Hunter D.
PV2 Kelly James W.
PFC Maneafaiga Zyrus S.
PFC Rocha-Gastelum Manuel A.
PFC Slader Judon M.
PV2 Van Tran Andrea K.

AH-64 Armament/Electrical/ Avionic Systems Repairer (15Y)
Class 018-24
PFC Carlos Miguel Shultz * -DG
SPC Sudi Raymond Battle
SPC Kyshun Thomas Jordan
PFC Sandy Montes De Oca
PVT Dim Mung
PVT Kody Chasen Odonnell
PFC Hunter Michael Theriot
SPC Gavin Taylor Wyke
Class 019-24
PFC Logan Thomas Henry * -DG
SSG Abdulaziz D. S. Alammari
PVT Christopher Wayne Bell
PFC Bryce Lee Calkins
PV2 Gabriel Anthony Davis
SGT Reda El Hadiri
1LT Hatim El-Aoufy
SPC Bleck Jean Charles
SGT Mouhcine Mekkaoui
SSG Abderrahim Nady
PV2 Garry Glenn Scott, III
PFC Brandon Chadicloi Young

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

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Graduations

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

(TUAS) Operations Technician
12 Graduates, 19 March 2025
WO1 Delarosa Jonathan K.
WO1 Fulton Bradyn M. *
WO1 Mitchell Austin M.
WO1 Nelson Markus A.
WO1 Phillippi Devon J.
WO1 Robinson Riggs W.
WO1 Shatteen Hailey Y.
WO1 Shive Adam W. *
WO1 Slentz Travis A.
WO1 Trevinogutierrez Steven L.
WO1 Wilding Mark A.
WO1 Young Anthony A.

UAS Repairer

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

Shadow UAS Repairer
8 Graduates, 13 March 2025
PVT Tanner Riley Dylan -HG
PV2 Cupak Everett Addison
SPC Gannon Jeffrey Dillon
PV2 Hauck Jeffrey Martin, III
PV2 Hebert Waylon Joseph
PV2 Kahler Trevor Samuel
SSG Larsen Amanda L.
PFC Thetford Tyler Lee

UAS Operator

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

Shadow UAS Operator Course
3 Graduates, 13 March 2025
PVT Ferraz Qiante M.
PFC Lugo Juan Enrique
SPC Russell Justin G.

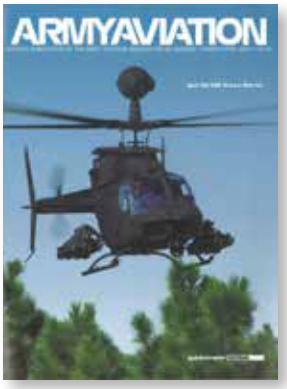
Grey Eagle UAS Operator
7 Graduates, 17 March 2025
PV2 Keen W. Christopher -DG
PV2 Jones Evan P. -HG
PV2 Cazares Quijada Ivette I.
PFC Davis Jason Andrew, Jr.
SPC Le Viet
PVT Lewis Zane C.
PFC Palafox Ulisses Antonio

* = AAAA Member

Art's Attic

By Mark Albertson

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



25 Years Ago

April, 2000

Recognized

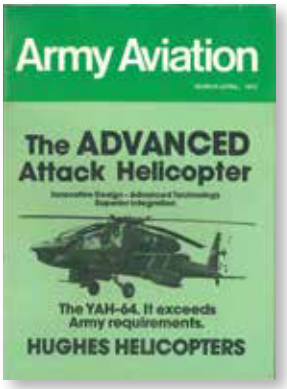
Aviation operations specialist, SSgt. Waldemar Ramos, was one of several recognized by Army Chief of Staff, General Eric K. Shinseki. Ramos was distinguished for his excellence in recruiting. Ramos, a member of the Miami Recruiting Battalion's, Mayaquez, Puerto Rico, recruiting station, was one of 34 recruiters so recognized at a February 1 Pentagon awards ceremony.

Aviator of the Year

CWO3 Daniel R. Zimmerman, A Troop, 2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry, Illshein, Germany, was named Aviator of the Year. Zimmerman is the Standardization Instructor Pilot for Alpha Troop. He was the 2nd Squadron's most experienced AH-64 pilot during a recent deployment to Tirana, Albania, with Task Force Hawk, as part of the NATO's Operation Allied Force. Zimmerman, who has more than 2,400 hours in Apaches, displayed much leadership during combat and reconnaissance missions between Albania and Macedonia.

Hall of Fame

Inducted into the Army Aviation Hall of Fame for 1990, was Medal-of Honor recipient, Major Patrick H. Brady. October 6, 1968, near Chu Lai, South Vietnam, Brady, piloting a UH-1H ambulance, volunteered to rescue wounded from enemy held territory. Braving relentless enemy fire, he made four flights into two highly contested zones, to which he evacuated both American and South Vietnamese wounded. Owing to battle damage, he went through three Hueys; yet, he was able to deliver 51 wounded soldiers to doctor's care.



50 Years Ago

April, 1975

Army Aviation Hall of Fame Candidates:

Delbert L. Bristol, Major, USA, for 1942-1949 Period

One of the original Air Observation Post aviators, Bristol was assigned to Flight "A" of the famed Class Before One, during maneuvers, spring 1942. Assigned overseas as part of the faculty of the Department of Air Training, he helped to organize the training school for Air OPs in North Africa. Bristol served as II Corps Air Artillery Officer during the Tunisian and Sicilian campaigns, honing the Air OPs into a superlative arm of the Field Artillery. He continued his innovative leadership, 1944-1945, as the First Army Air Artillery Officer in Northern Europe. Major Bristol was a Master Aviator with nearly 30 years of service. He retired as a colonel in July 1971.

Spurgeon Neel, Lieutenant Colonel, MC, for 1950-1959 Period

LTC Neel was a pioneer in the development of aeromedical evacuation of battlefield casualties. Indeed, he chaired a board which recommended the helicopter as a battle casualty ambulance, which was put to use in Korea. 1954, Neel became the Army's first Aviation Medical Officer. 1955, he served on the Army board conducting design competitions for the new utility helicopter, later the UH-1. 1956, Neel established the Aviation branch within the Office of the Surgeon General, becoming its first chief. He established a formal program for Board Certification of Army Medical Officers in Army Medicine, while laying the groundwork for the Army's Aviation Medical Training and Research Program.

Army Aviation Hall of Fame

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

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

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

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

CW5 Douglas M. Englen

Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2020 Induction – Huntsville, AL

No aviator in the history of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) has been more impactful or achieved a higher level of excellence than CW5 Douglas M. Englen. He has flown over 7,000 hours of fixed and rotary wing flight time with 34 combat tours executing over 2,500 missions in support of the global war on terrorism.

He was assessed into the 160th SOAR(A) at Ft. Campbell, KY in May 1998 where he quickly became a flight lead and standardization officer. On October 19, 2001, he helped lead a 10-ship rotary wing force and 65 ship fixed wing force to respond to the nation's call immediately following the terror attacks on 9/11. He was in the lead aircraft that led the longest helicopter air assault in U.S. military history, logging over 14 hours and covering a distance over 1,400 nm with 4 in-flight air refuel events.

On May 1, 2011 he was awarded his first Silver Star for his actions as a flight lead pilot for a joint task force. He successfully penetrated a fully integrated and highly sophisticated air defense network, arrived at the objective undetected, and delivered the ground forces to the target. He flawlessly reacted to multiple contingencies to include the loss of an aircraft and allowed the ground force to complete its extremely high-risk mission.

He received his second Silver Star for his actions as the flight lead pilot in command responding to a distress call for a high-risk casualty evacuation mission in a known area of dense insurgent activity. He flawlessly reacted to multiple contingencies to include the loss of an aircraft and allowed the ground force to complete its extremely high-risk mission; ultimately eliminating the number one terrorist of modern time.

He continued to serve working directly for the Secretary of the Army as the U.S. Army Senior Warrant Officer Advisor for Talent Management – his impact on Army Aviation cannot be overstated.

FUTURE LONG RANGE ASSAULT AIRCRAFT

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