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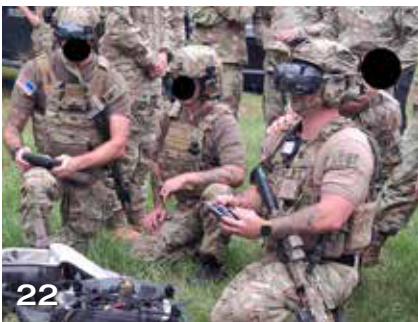
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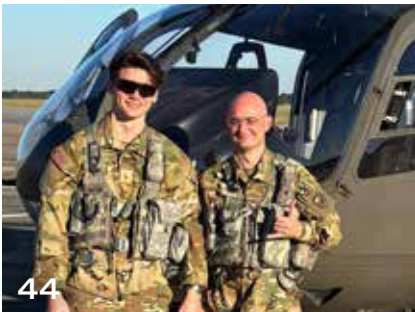
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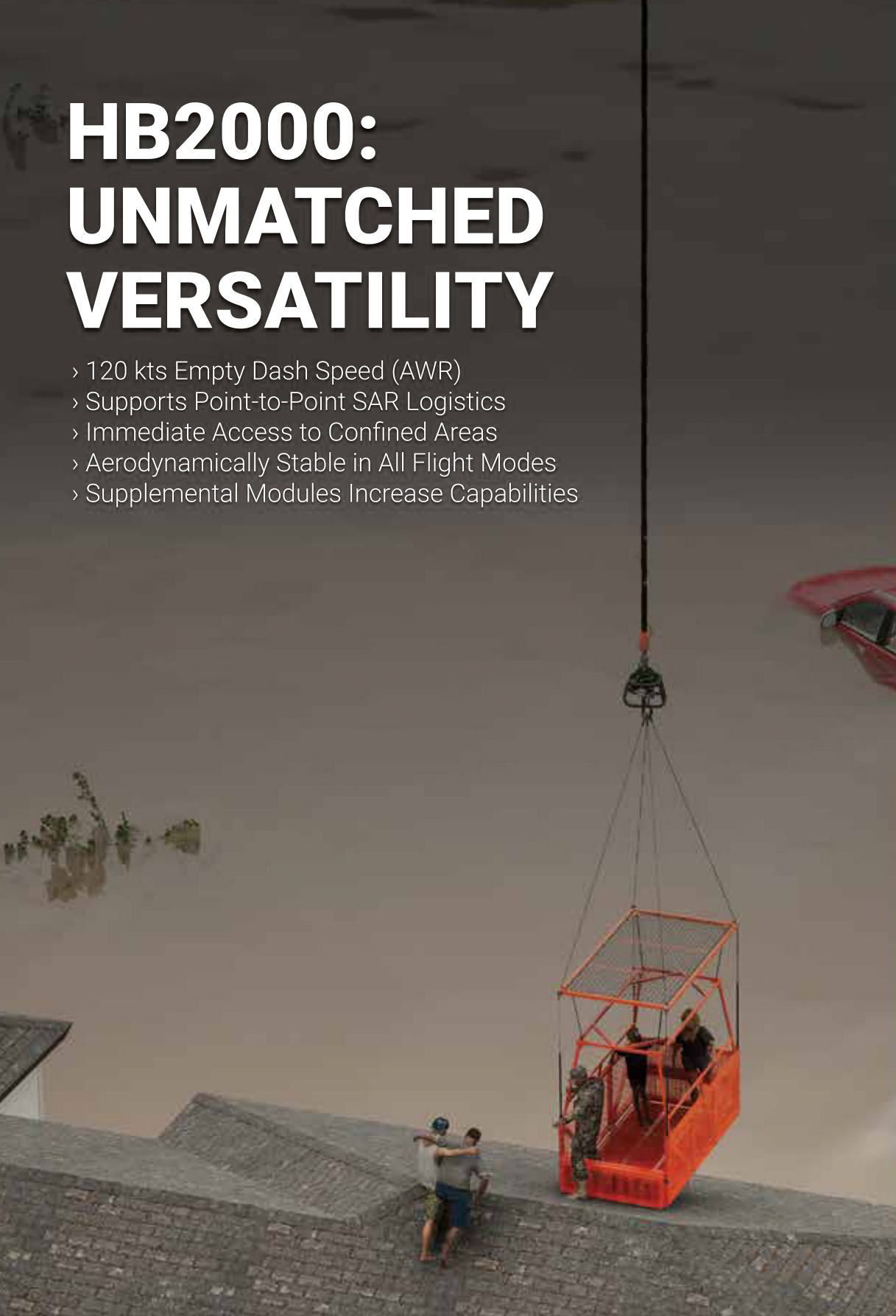
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## On The Cover

PAID ADVERTISEMENT: Gray Eagle 25M modernizes the Army's mainstay unmanned aircraft with enhanced performance, expeditionary mobility, and increased multi-domain interoperability. A robust new engine and advanced MOSA-compliant avionics allow for a revolutionary suite of onboard sensors and control of Air-Launched Effects, providing intelligent teaming and versatile stand-in capability. *Caption provided by the advertiser.*

# Briefings

## Nelson Receives Medal of Honor



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY HENRY WILLIAMS

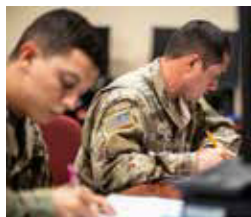
President Joe Biden presents the Medal of Honor for former U.S. Army CPT Hugh R. Nelson Jr., to his daughter, Debra Nelson McKnight, during a Medal of Honor ceremony at the White House, Jan. 3, 2025. Nelson – one of seven U.S. Soldiers from the Korean and Vietnam Wars to receive the Medal of Honor at the White House that day – was posthumously recognized and honored for his acts of extraordinary heroism in saving the lives of his crew members under enemy fire during the Vietnam War on June 5, 1966, while serving as the aircraft commander of an armed Huey helicopter with the 114th Aviation Company (Airmobile Light), 13th Aviation Battalion, near Moc Hoa, Republic of Vietnam.

## Military Pay Increase On the Way

Service members will receive a 4.5% pay increase under the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act. Approved by Congress in December and signed into law on Dec. 23 by President Joe Biden, the bill also gives junior enlisted troops an additional 10% increase, for a total 14.5% increase. The 4.5% increase takes effect in January, and the additional 10% for those in the pay grades of E-1 through E-4 will begin in April. According to military.com, the 14.5% increase will give junior troops about \$3,000 to \$6,000 more a year, depending on rank.

## Tuition Assistance Program Gets Bump Up/ Credentialing Program to Drop

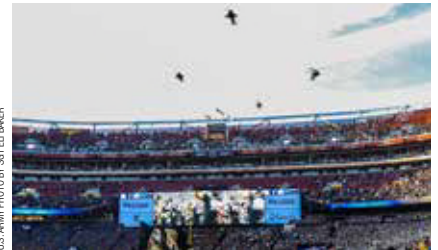
The Army announced on Dec. 11, it will immediately boost its tuition assistance program from \$4,000 annually to \$4,500 a year, acknowledging the ever-rising cost of higher education; and is



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY ANSE BRANN-HAMILTON

planning to cut payments for the credentialing assistance program from \$4,000 to \$2,000 and block commissioned officers from participating in the education initiative, according to a statement from John Stoneburg IV, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Army officials said most credentialing programs averaged about \$1,700 and they do not anticipate major problems. However, blocking officers from participating will be more significant. About one-quarter of enrollees are currently commissioned officers. Additionally, all participants will be restricted to one credentialing course per year, and three over the course of 10 years. Current regulations will have to be amended to put the new rules in place, a process that Stoneburg said could take several months or longer. Those AAAA members and family members seeking credentialing assistance funding can also apply to AAAA's Trade Schools, Licensing and Credentialing program for assistance. For more information – <https://www.quad-a.org/TLC/>

## Black Knights Fall to the Midshipmen



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SOTTELEBNER

Four AH-64 Apache helicopters assigned to 1-17 Air Cavalry Squadron, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), 82nd Airborne Division, conducted a flyover during the Army-Navy football game in Northwest Stadium, Landover, MD, Dec. 14, 2024. The Midshipmen won this year's 125th clash 31-13, to increase their all-time series lead, 63-55-7, and end a two-game losing streak to the Black Knights.

## CORRECTIONS:

On page 6, December 2024 issue, the reference to only 3 Army soldiers having earned the Astronaut Device is incorrect – all Army Aviators earned the device after flying in space.

**AAAA TLC**  
*Building Better Futures,  
One Grant at a Time!*



The AAAA Trade-School, Licensing, and Certification Foundation, TLC was formed in 2021 as a 501(c)(3) Charity to benefit AAAA members and families. The TLC is focused on providing financial grants for attaining skills like getting your civilian Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) license, Commercial Drivers License, (CDL), welding certification, etc. Applicants for grants see page 38 for more details.



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# Working With Congress and Holiday Wishes



U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND PHOTO

Welcome to 2025... a quarter of the way through the 21st century! From all of us at AAAA, we hope you all had a fantastic Holiday season with your family and loved ones.

*GEN Laura J. Richardson is inducted into the Gold Honorable Order of St. Michael at U.S. Southern Command headquarters in Doral, FL, just prior to her change of command on November 7, 2024.*

By the time you read this, the AAAA National Executive Group, along with our Executive Director Bill Harris, will have attended the Aviation Senior Leaders Forum at Fort Novosel. We are always so grateful to our Branch Chiefs, now MG Clair Gill, for including the Aviation 'Graybeards' in this incredibly comprehensive and inciteful conference for the senior leaders and command teams of the Total Army Aviation Force. It provides our Association with an understanding and appreciation for the priorities and challenges of our Branch across the entirety of the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel and Facilities spectrum. Additionally, we are honored each year to be part of the annual Ellis D. Parker and AAAA National functional awards dinner, including the presentation of the Trainer of the Year, Air-Sea Rescue, multiple Air Traffic Control Awards, and Flight Medic of the Year awards (beginning on page 26 in this issue).

I'd like to reiterate that I've had the great privilege and honor of presenting the Gold Order of St. Michael to one of our foremost Aviation Leaders as she retired in November, GEN Laura Richardson. She joins GEN Doug Brown, GEN Dick Cody, and recently retired GEN Dan Hokanson as powerful voices indeed for our Army Aviation Branch, and we look forward to being able to leverage and engage this 'Star Power' to strengthen our Association in support of our Aviation soldiers and families.

Also, as you read this, our new Administration and Congress will be seated in Washington D.C. As I mentioned last month, we expect the Army Aviation Caucus to be organized and functioning in the first quarter (thank you Mr. Bill Harris and Mr. Josh Baker for your efforts at energizing this outcome!). There is certainly a lot to educate the Caucus on, and we look forward to significant engagements over this year on your behalf.

I'd also like to report that both the Luther G. Jones Army Aviation Depot

Forum February 11-12 in Corpus Christi, TX and especially the Annual Summit May 14-16 in Nashville, TN are shaping up nicely. The Summit is just about sold out of exhibit space and is on track for our most robust attendance ever. We are literally running at over twice the pre-registrations we had at the same time out from the last time we were in Nashville in 2023. Notably, Craig Morgan will be our entertainment at the closing Soldier Appreciation Dinner Concert this year. A Soldier himself, Craig does a fantastic show. Check out the AAAA website for the latest details. With our U.S. Army Chief of Staff, GEN Randy George keynoting the Summit, we really look forward to a very dynamic event and robust discussions about what our great Aviation Force contributes to the Army and Joint Force.

Above the Best!

MG Walt Davis, U.S. Army Retired  
36th President, AAAA  
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# Why Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA)?

By BG Phillip C. Baker



BELL COURTESY PHOTO



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SGT LILIANA WAGGON, 82ND CAB PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Army Aviation exists for one reason only, that is the mission to support the ground commander. Commanders require flexibility, survivability, and reliability to conduct expanded maneuver on the battlefield today and tomorrow.

Developing capability for our Army and the Joint Force requires that we develop Army Aviation platforms that provide speed and the ability to quickly onboard new technology to remain ahead of the threat curve. Through a deliberate process of identifying the capability gaps and the requirements necessary to achieve results informed through over 100 experimentation and demonstration events, high-fidelity modeling efforts, studies, and Soldier driven events the Army chose a “clean-sheet design” to close the gaps. Utilizing innovative digital engineering and reinforcing the need to own data rights so that FLRAA can be rapidly updated and upgraded as new technology matures and becomes available leveraging Modular Open System Approach (MOSA), which not only meets current threat but remains relevant for the life of its program.

FLRAA is the aircraft that will supply Army and Joint force commanders with a next-generation rotorcraft that combines the speed of an airplane and the utility of vertical lift to conduct long-range air assaults, maritime interdiction, aeromedical evacuation, combat search and rescue, humanitarian relief, and tactical resupply. FLRAA will fly twice as fast and twice

Left: The Bell V-280 Technology Demonstrator

Right: Flight Paramedics from the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade conduct medical tasks on the Future MEDEVAC Cabin – Tech Demonstrator (FMC-TD) to test and provide feedback for improvements to the FLRAA MEDEVAC variant.

as far as previous Army aircraft, a capability that GEN James E. Rainey, commanding general of Army Futures Command, testified is essential for operations.

Analysis demonstrated FLRAA provides this capability while also restoring the full infantry squad payload capacity lost over the last 40 years due to increased payload weight.

## From Concept to Reality

FLRAA will provide a transformational capability never seen before in a land force due to its increased speed, range, and with fly-by-wire capability enabling operator enhancements and greater levels of autonomy over time. Its design is grounded in technological innovation that has been confirmed through the Joint Multi-Role Technology Demonstration (JMR-TD) program with nine technology maturation efforts, including development of MOSA, two rounds of Competitive Demonstrations and Risk Reduction periods, and hundreds of flight hours. With all that innovation in hand, Bell Helicopter was awarded the contract to design, develop, and test the FLRAA Version 1, starting with delivery of a digital FLRAA prototype in 2025. In February 2024, the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) reviewed and approved the FLRAA Version 1 Capability Development Document (CDD), then in July 2024, FLRAA



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## Enlisted Aviation Soldier Spotlight ▶

Each month we will feature a past AAAA National or Functional Enlisted or NCO Award winner as part of our ongoing recognition of the Best of the Best in our Aviation Branch. The CY 2023 National winners were featured in the April/May AAAA Army Aviation Mission Solutions Summit issue.



### Henry Q. Dunn Crew Chief of the Year

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### SSG Travis J. Wilson

**Company C, 1st Battalion,  
160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne)  
Fort Campbell, Kentucky**

**S**SG Wilson has served as the Charlie Company Standardization Instructor (SI) and a Fully Mission Qualified crew chief for the Army's only attack helicopter company consisting of 13 highly modified MH-60M Direct Action Penetrator Black Hawks. In his position as SI, he has personally overseen and managed the training and qualification of crew tasks such as aerial gunnery, deck landing qualifications, helicopter aerial refueling, close air support, strategic airlift operations and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and

Nuclear Individual and crew tasks. During a no-notice overseas contingency operation, he was awarded the Air Medal with Valor for repeatedly exposing himself to withering enemy fire and directly engaging the enemy, with his rifle, from the cabin of the MH-60M DAP. He is a seasoned professional and combat leader who has flown over 1,600 flight hours (370 hours in combat), conducted over 175 named combat operations, and has led the execution of 10 combat deployments, 3 of which were no-notice contingency operations directed by the National Command Authority. His leadership in the role of company SI was instrumental in the training and proficiency of 36 non-rated crew members. SSG Wilson's tenacity, professionalism, and unparalleled contributions to the defense of our nation's vital interests identify him as the AAAA Henry Q. Dunn Crew Chief of the Year.

received Milestone B acquisition approval and entered the next stage of development. This is the first new design Army Aviation platform requirements document to be approved by the Army in 31 years, and the first Aviation system to go through and complete the JROC process.

### Air Assault Variant Informed Requirements

To meet the commanders' requirements, it is important that we seek Leader and Soldier feedback into all continuous transformation efforts, and FLRAA continues to include agile integration of feedback into the aircraft design.

From a leadership perspective, the 101st Airborne Division included FLRAA into the planning and execution of their 2024 Warfighter Exercise. Its inclusion successfully demonstrated that FLRAA is the platform that will allow the division to conduct a Large-Scale Long-Range Air Assault (L2A2). MG Brett Sylvia, commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, defined the L2A2, as the ability to deliver one brigade combat team at a distance of over 500 miles during one period of darkness, arriving behind enemy lines and then conducting sustained combat operations.

Presently the Army lacks this ability, which the 101st Airborne Division validated during their recent self-deployment to the joint readiness training center rotation (JRTC) at Fort Johnson, Louisiana. During the operation, the division had to pre-position Soldiers, equipment, and fuel; and then took multiple periods of darkness to accomplish the L2A2 operation. With FLRAA and the addition of a CH-47 heavy-lift battalion the 101st Airborne Division could accomplish this brigade combat team movement in one-period of darkness achieving the division's goal and providing the Army with a Joint Force Entry (JVE) capability.

In terms of Soldier feedback, Bell is working to refine the design of the aircraft's cockpit and cabin for the assault platform. 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers from Fort Cavazos, Texas participated in the initial Special User Evaluation (SUE) in December 2023. During the second SUE, Bell transported the FLRAA mock-up to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, where 25th Infantry Division Soldiers conducted battle drills and provided additional feedback that will be used to inform the cabin configuration that optimizes equipment storage, warfighter ingress and egress, and door gunner/crewmember positioning.

### Aeromedical Evacuation Variant Informed Requirements

The Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) configuration is critically important to the Army and the Joint Force. The Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) developed a Future MEDEVAC Cabin-Technical Demonstrator (FMC-TD) that is being used to inform the FLRAA MEDEVAC variant. Over the next year, the demonstrator will move to multiple locations across FORSCOM, TRADOC, and National Guard training sites to support user evaluations and allow Critical Care Flight Paramedics to perform interventions inside the mock-up and inform the FLRAA MEDEVAC variant design.

This past November, the technical demonstrator traveled to Fort Liberty, North Carolina for the first planned SUE. Participating medics were monitored by human factors engineers as they performed various medical treatment scenarios and took part in exit interviews to help inform future changes or updates to the variant. The technical demonstrator allows for a rapidly reconfigurable space to exhibit potential patient handling system layouts. For example, it can be configured for two stacks of three litter patients or three stacks of two litter patients.

Finally, the demonstrator is showcasing new litter pans that can be manipulated and slide out like a drawer to “create space where there is none.” Ultimately, FLRAA MEDEVAC will have the capacity for a combination of six litter or ambulatory patients, allowing it to “clear the battlefield” and use the extended range and speed to save lives during conflict.

### Way Forward

As the Army looks forward to delivering this transformational aircraft, stakeholders are beginning to refine and update the requirements to be built into FLRAA Version 2. The intention is not to develop a separately fielded aircraft, but rather an iterative effort to leverage the benefits of MOSA to update and upgrade FLRAA with the latest technology. This process will continue through the life cycle of the aircraft.

As the stakeholders work to improve future versions of FLRAA, there are several areas of opportunity the Army can investigate to ensure it continues to provide future maneuver commanders and warfighters with the best capability possible that allows units to fight and win in a future large-scale combat operation (LSCO).

FLRAA is going to operate at low-level and at much greater speeds than our current aviators have ever operated at before. Based on these speeds, utilizing terrain to mask movement to provide survivability, there is the capability requirement that expands Pilots sensing capability. Systems like heads up, eyes out capability that displays terrain and obstacle sensing solutions, that possesses increased processing capability that will reduce pilot workload and leverage the environment to fight and fly in all conditions.

As the Army works to deliver the next-generation command

and control capability, Army Aviation should move away from “box” based radios to “software-defined radios” via an open chassis and card-based solutions. This will allow FLRAA to use new waveforms and antennas that support the ground commander and their evolving communications needs and threat conditions.

Through FLRAA’s clean sheet design and fly-by-wire, with MOSA enablement the Army can incrementally incorporate “supervised autonomy” in future versions as this technology matures. Automating specific tasks while keeping humans in or on the loop will enhance situational awareness, reduce cognitive workload, and increase survivability. Future autonomy can be paired with FLRAA’s fly-by-wire flight control system as the pathway towards a fully autonomous aircraft.

The Army must have the ability to deploy an agnostic, air and ground, launched effect (LE) capability. FLRAA version 2 provides the Army with another platform with which to carry and deploy LEs, thereby providing ground commanders with the expanded capacity and rapid flexibility in ensuring LE employment is delivered at the right place, at the right time.

### Conclusion

FLRAA’s new design and proven technology will bring unprecedented capability to the Army. FLRAA will provide speed, range, flexibility, and capacity that the Army and Joint Force will need as part of expanded maneuver to fight and win America’s wars, while setting a baseline with MOSA that enables continued cost efficient and warfighter effective upgrades to maintain the technological edge.

*BG Phillip C. Baker is the director of the Future Vertical Lift Cross Functional Team located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.*





# USAR Blood Program By MAJ Jeffery Windmueller

As the C-12 Huron takes off from Fort Knox's Godman Army Airfield, the seats are empty, and strapped tightly to the floor are cargo boxes marked "HUMAN BLOOD" in bold red letters.

The pilots from Charlie Company, 6-52nd Theater Aviation Battalion (TAB), are on a critical mission, transporting life-saving blood donated by young ROTC cadets. With steady hands on the throttle, they ascend above the clouds, navigating a storm brewing across the southeast, and head toward their destination: Fort Moore, Ga., where the precious cargo will soon be put to good use.

"We really have three main missions as C-12 pilots: personnel transport, cargo transport, and CASEVAC," says CW3 Chris Armbrust, one of the key planners for the mission. "We provide support to the blood program from Fort Knox to Fort Moore, Fort Leavenworth and Fort Campbell."

Each summer, the Army Reserve Aviation Command provides aerial support to the Army Blood Program (ABP), which plays a vital role in ensuring that Soldiers and military personnel have access to the blood products they need during times of conflict, training, and emergencies. Operating under the U.S. Army Medical Command, the program is responsible for the collection, testing, processing, and distribution of blood and blood products, ensuring they meet the highest safety and quality standards.

For the pilots in 6-52, it's an opportunity to participate in something meaningful while maintaining flight hours and mission planning. CW3 Armbrust takes pleasure in a mission each summer that carries blood from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington to Sitka, Alaska. Landing in the mountainous area tucked into a bay against the Pacific Ocean adds its own challenges. "If you land long, you get wet; if you land short, you get wetter," he explained.

During this flight to Fort Moore, Georgia, CW4 Patrick Cotter uses the opportunity to run through training and prepare his co-pilot, CW3 Ryan Rennecker. It is only the second time CW3 Rennecker has piloted the aircraft since transferring to fixed wing earlier that summer.

"So, this was my second full-time mission, which was really awesome to partake in something like this," CW3 Rennecker said. "It's huge to know that you're that out there helping people, that you're able to utilize the Army resources to help others in need."

CW4 Cotter is proud of the work the Army Reserve has been able to provide when utilized across the world. Other CASEVAC and medical transport missions were utilized during exercises like African Lion and Kerris Strike in



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

CW4 Patrick Cotter (far right) and CW3 Ryan Rennecker hand off boxes of human blood products to SFC Glen Rossman at Fort Moore, GA. The crew flew the cargo as part of the Army Blood Program.

Malaysia during 2024.

While the pilots all agree, their mission set is mostly focused on transporting personnel, the ABP mission allows them to reach out and truly strengthen other capabilities. Each journey means taking time to configure the aircraft for cargo, properly calculating and distributing weight while planning the safest routes.

It was the first time Rennecker had even used the large cargo door on the side of the aircraft, allowing a quicker and easier load for the large boxes, which contain not only blood, but other medical equipment used by ABP.

When the pilots arrived at Fort Moore, they jumped at the opportunity to be hands-on, offloading the boxes into the arms of Soldiers and civilian personnel from Medical Command to a civilian truck parked closely on the runway.

"The mission's set up and it's all streamlined so we can do this usually better than the cargo carriers," CW4 Cotter said.

Even as the Army finds new ways to preserve blood products – to include freeze-drying for longer storage – everything has a shelf life. CW3 Armbrust said he's seen what has happened when other carriers leave the boxes packed with dry ice out too long on a hot tarmac.

"It's just cargo to them – to us, it's sometimes to save a Soldier's life," he said.

---

*MAJ Jeffery Windmueller is the Public Affairs Officer for the Army Reserve Aviation Command at Fort Knox, KY.*



# FY24 Army Aviation End-of-Year Review

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 will be one that Army Aviation looks back on in hopes of never repeating. After years of steady decline in mishap rates per 100,000 hours beginning in 2006, FY23 saw a twofold increase in mishap rates from FY22's record-low 0.50 Class A mishaps per 100,000 hours.

Then, FY24 produced a Class A flight mishap rate almost four times greater than FY22, with a rate of 1.90. FY24 had the most Class A flight mishaps since FY14, and the worst Class A flight mishap rate per 100,000 hours since FY07. There were 15 Class A flight mishaps and two Class A aircraft ground mishaps in FY24, compared to nine flight and one aircraft ground in FY23, and four flight and four aircraft ground mishaps in FY22. Nine Soldiers, one contractor and one U.S. Customs and Border Protection agent died in flight mishaps, and another contractor died in an aircraft ground mishap.

The most obvious trend in the FY24 mishaps was the AH-64 fleet being over-represented with nine of the 15 Class A flight mishaps. Eight of the AH-64 mishaps were attributed to human error, with two of those being attributed to maintenance errors. The final AH-64 mishap was a bird strike. Additionally, the UH-72 had three Class A mishaps, which was more than any year since its fielding. There were single mishaps in variants of the UH-60, the CH-47 and the C-12. There was also a Class A environmental event that damaged more than 40 aircraft, and a C-12 Class A aircraft ground mishap during maintenance operations.

As part of the analysis involved in the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center's mission, we looked at AH-64E mishaps that involved un-commanded right yaws at high power settings and low airspeeds. In FY23 and FY24, there have been five of these mishaps. Analysis of the mishap data from the data recorders indicates that in every case, the crew never achieved a full left pedal input to offset the right yaw. This led to the yaw accelerating and the crew being unable to recover. As a result of this and other analysis, power manage-

ment and loss of tail rotor effectiveness became key areas for training during the Army wide safety stand-up.

Another area of analysis into the increase in mishaps over the last two FYs is a comparison study of aviator flight experience between 2013 and 2023 data. Centralized Aviation Flight Records System data was analyzed across the active force, and we found that the average flight experience across the force is down approximately 300 flight hours per aviator over the 10-year period. While crew experi-

ence was not cited in every mishap, this overall loss of experience is a hazard that must be considered. Initial results from a similar study of Compo 2 and 3 aviators indicate a drop in experience, but not as significant as the active force.

Even in a year with significant issues, there is some good news. After the Army wide safety stand-up in April, the Class A mishap rate for the remainder of the FY was 0.86 per 100,000 hours, which compares favorably with the FY19-23 five-year average of 0.85 per 100,000 hours. Also, as of this writing, there have been no Class A Aviation mishaps in the first quarter of FY25. Let's keep that going.

**Fly Army Safe!**

*The article was authored by the Directorate of Analysis and Prevention at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center, Fort Novosel, Alabama.*

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## ► 128th Aviation Brigade Update



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SSG BRANDIN MICHANEY

Left to right are PV2 Miranda, SGT Jones, and PFC Davis conducting UH-60 DAFCS troubleshooting.

# Aviation Enlisted Maintenance Modernization Efforts

By SFC Eric Preckl

Is our Army Aviation enlisted maintenance training utilizing the best, most efficient, and effective tools, tactics, techniques, and procedures?

While we are making great strides across the branch in analysis and procurement of modernization efforts, the constant and rapid growth and evolution of technology demands constant analysis and evolution of how we train and the resources we train with. It is imperative that enlisted maintenance training be adaptive, responsive, and efficient to provide operational Aviation with proficient mechanics prepared to impact readiness immediately.

One emerging technology being used in training environments is the use of augmented, virtual, mixed reality (AR/VR/MR), or extended reality (XR) which encompasses all three. Our sister service Aviation mechanics and some of our vehicle-based maintainers are already incorporating some forms of XR into their training. The Aviation Center of Excellence (AVCOE) and the 128th Aviation Brigade (AB) have initiated dialogue with these partners and begun exploring various options to execute an XR proof of concept specifically for Army Aviation mechanics.

To help shape the future of our branch and enable the best training in both the institutional and operational force, AVCOE and the 128th AB are already underway with task analysis to facilitate a short-term proof of concept with potential long term, wide scale adaptation.

Concurrence and modernization of training devices and methodologies is critical for keeping pace with changes to aircraft systems and ensuring operational Aviation units are strengthened with well-trained maintainers to keep Non-Mission Capable Maintenance rates within Department of the Army standards. In a resource constrained environment, efficiently funded trainers become ever more important. Deliberate planning and programming of funds must include input

from the end user to ensure media and fidelity analysis meet requirements. By actively involving stakeholders throughout the procurement process, we ensure that training requirements are thoroughly identified and aligned with hardware and software solutions. This collaborative approach fosters seamless integration between training programs and technological advancements, enhancing both institutional and operational force readiness.

Engaging stakeholders early and continuously enables a proactive, holistic strategy that supports the successful deployment of systems and maximizes the effectiveness of training, driving operational success and mission accomplishment. AVCOE and the 128th AB subject matter experts, in coordination with operational partners, are working to test emerging technologies prior to wide scale implementation to maximize efficiency within current and future programs of instruction (POI).

The current training environment is no less dynamic than the operational environment and demands adaptive, responsive, and efficient use of resources, and forward-thinking solutions. Current and future Army Aviation enlisted maintenance training depend on the procurement, concurrence, and modernization of training devices and modalities to produce proficient mechanics.

These efforts depend on the hard work and dedication of the instructors and course management offices, developing and implementing POI – while also informing modernization efforts – to set conditions for the future of each Army Aviation MOS.

### **Born Under Fire!**

*SFC Eric Preckl is the S3 Operations NCOIC for 1-210th Aviation Regiment, 128th Aviation Brigade, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA.*



# Vortex Ring State:

## Part 1 – Description By Dr. Thomas L. Thompson

Vortex Ring State (VRS) is characterized by a sudden loss of rotor thrust and increase in power required at relatively high descent rates in hover and low-speed flight.

VRS has been a lead or contributing factor in a few rotorcraft accidents, typically when pilots were flying a steep approach or maneuvering aggressively near the ground. Changes in wind speed or direction in these conditions may trigger the onset of VRS, resulting in a sudden loss of thrust and altitude from which the pilot may not be able to recover. This article (Part 1) will discuss the aerodynamics of VRS, the combinations of airspeed and descent rate for which it occurs, and how it affects a pilot’s ability to control a rotorcraft. The next article (Part 2) will discuss how to recover from VRS.

The generation of lift on a rotor produces a wake of helical vortices that trail from the tips of the blades. Several revolutions of the trailing vortices may be seen when observing a helicopter hovering on a humid day or when conducting flow visualization experiments in a wind tunnel. As the rotor enters descending flight, the vertical spacing between the tip vortices decreases, and some pairing or bundling of vortices may be observed. As the descent velocity increases, more of the tip vortices bundle together into rings but then break up as they pass further below the rotor. Full VRS is reached when the descent velocity increases to where it is approximately equal to the value of the rotor induced velocity in hover. In this state, the rings are clustered near the rotor plane (the rings have been described as a “recirculating donut of air”), which increases the downward flow of air through the rotor and reduces the angle of attack of the blade airfoils and the total lift of the rotor. The loss of lift due to increased inflow at the rotor plane causes an abrupt increase in rate of descent and a loss of altitude. Also, the unsteadiness of the wake airflow caused by the large donut of air moving above and below the rotor plane increases aircraft vibration and makes the aircraft more difficult to control.

While the aerodynamics of VRS are somewhat difficult to model and understand, the flight conditions where VRS occurs are relatively well-defined from flight and wind tunnel testing. These tests typically define VRS boundaries (depicted notionally in Figure 1) in terms of forward airspeed and descent velocity. Results may also be depicted non-dimensionally (i.e., dividing the airspeed and descent velocity by the value of the hover induced velocity) to account for changes in aircraft gross weight and density altitude. In flight

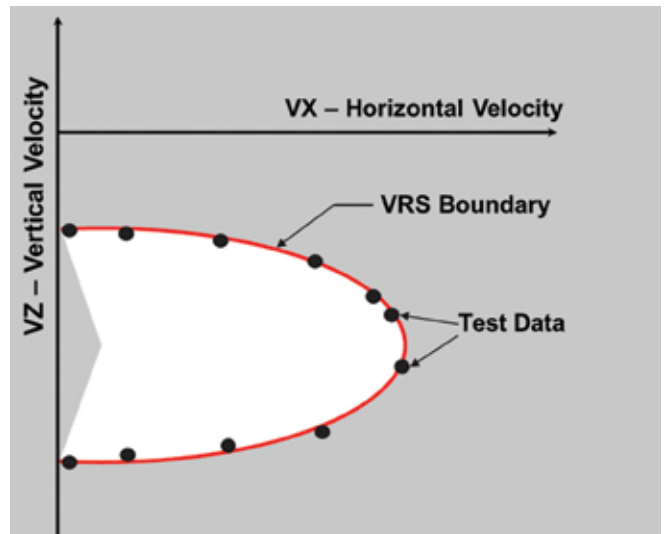


Fig. 1 – VRS boundary from test data.

testing, points forming the boundary may be determined by flying at a constant airspeed and then decreasing collective pitch gradually until an abrupt increase in descent velocity is measured. Additional points defining the boundary may be determined by establishing a steady descent rate, and then decreasing airspeed until VRS is reached. Extensive flight tests conducted by NAVAIR and Bell Helicopter in the early 2000s defined VRS boundaries for the V-22 tiltrotor aircraft. As the boundary was approached, aircraft vibration increased and some fluctuation in thrust of the rotors was measured. As VRS developed, thrust asymmetry between the two rotors increased, and finally, when VRS was fully developed, the thrust asymmetry exceeded the available aircraft roll control authority and a “roll-off” occurred.

The boundaries derived from testing are used to develop flight manual charts and warnings that help prevent pilots from entering VRS. As noted above, the aircraft is often more difficult to control in VRS, particularly in the vertical axis for a helicopter, where collective pitch may be ineffective at arresting rate of descent, and in the lateral axis for a tiltrotor, where lateral cyclic and differential collective pitch may not have sufficient authority to counter the unbalanced roll moment. Fortunately, however, there are well-established VRS recovery techniques for both helicopters and tiltrotors, which we will discuss in Part 2.

*Dr. Thomas L. Thompson is the Chief Engineer for Aeromechanics at the Systems Readiness Directorate, U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Aviation & Missile Center, Redstone Arsenal, AL.*



# Dehydration

By CPT Jesse Laverdiere, D.O., FS

**Q**. Doc, I've been hearing a lot about dehydration and its effects on performance. As a pilot, how serious is dehydration, and what can I do to avoid it?

**FS:** Dehydration is a critical yet often underestimated concern for aviators. Even mild dehydration can impair cognitive and physical performance, which are essential for safe flight operations. Let's break it down.

## What is dehydration, and why does it matter?

Dehydration occurs when the body loses more fluids than it takes in. This imbalance can result from sweating, urination, or insufficient water intake. Aviators are particularly susceptible due to extended periods in dry cockpit environments, high altitudes, and the use of personal protective equipment that limits water consumption.

Even a 2% reduction in body weight due to fluid loss can significantly impair attention, short-term memory, and decision-making abilities—key skills for any pilot. Severe dehydration can lead to dizziness, confusion, and even fainting.

## What are the signs of dehydration?

It's crucial to recognize the early signs of dehydration, which include:

- Thirst
- Dark yellow urine
- Dry mouth and lips
- Fatigue or weakness
- Headaches

Ignoring these symptoms can escalate to heat exhaustion or heat stroke in high-temperature environments, compounding the risk.

## Prevention: What can you do?

**1. Hydrate Early and Often:** Start your day with water and continue drinking throughout the day, even if you're not thirsty. Aim for 8-12 cups (2-3 liters) of water daily, adjusting for climate and activity level.

**2. Electrolyte Balance:** Incorporate drinks that replenish electrolytes if you're sweating heavily or spending long hours in a cockpit. Avoid sugary or caffeinated beverages as they can contribute to fluid loss.

**3. Monitor Your Intake:** Use visual cues like the color of your urine — pale yellow is ideal. Dark urine indicates dehydration.



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

*Hoist Training with the Idaho Army National Guard's State Aviation Group and Boise Fire Department, October 31, 2024.*

**4. Plan Ahead:** Carry a water bottle to flights or training sessions and prioritize hydration during breaks. For missions longer than 2-3 hours, ensure access to hydration systems approved for flight use.

## Flight Surgeon's Advice

Dehydration is preventable. However, if you experience persistent symptoms such as dizziness, confusion, or an inability to stay hydrated, consult your flight surgeon. Chronic dehydration may signal underlying health conditions that require evaluation.

Remember, hydration isn't just about comfort. It's a vital aspect of operational readiness and safety. Stay vigilant and keep your water bottle handy!

**Stay safe!**

## Questions for the Flight Surgeon?

If you have a question that you would like addressed, email it to [AskFS@quad-a.org](mailto: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 author and researchers and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position unless otherwise stated.

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*CPT (Dr.) Jesse Laverdiere is a flight surgeon at the U.S. Army Department of Aviation Medicine, Fort Novosel, AL.*

## News Spotlight ►

# Continuing to Serve—Well Done, “Commander” Cody!



*GEN (Ret.) Dick Cody in front of his Little Bird in Burnsville, NC surrounded by some of the many volunteers helping to bring relief supplies to the victims of Hurricane Helene.*

FOX News Media honored GEN (Ret.) Richard Cody with the FOX Weather Ultimate Patriot Award on December 5 at the 2024 Patriot Awards at the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts in Brookeville, NY, where nine awards were given to those who went above and beyond in service to community and country.

Cody was recognized for his heroic efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. While quick access to those in North Carolina’s mountain communities became limited due to impassable roads, the former Master Army Aviator and Vice Chief of Staff of the Army used his privately owned Little Bird helicopter to de-

liver much needed cold weather supplies to families impacted by Hurricane Helene.

With historic flooding and widespread devastation nearly wiping out entire communities, volunteers rushed to the Tar Heel State to help with rescue and recovery efforts. Cody joined the list of volunteers, flying his helicopter to deliver emergency supplies to residents suffering in the western Appalachian region, including generators, fuel and blankets. Samaritan’s Purse, an international relief organization based in Boone, NC, provided much needed supplies.

“America’s Newsroom” co-anchors Bill Hemmer and Dana Perino pre-

sented Cody with the FOX Weather “Ultimate Patriot Award,” honoring his service to the affected communities in the Tar Heel State. Samaritan’s Purse Chief Operating Officer Edward Graham joined Cody on stage to receive the award.

“I was just one of probably 100 helicopter pilots that showed up and answered the call to duty one more time for the devastation in North Carolina,” Cody said. He went on to say “A lot of civilian helicopters, a lot of active duty helicopter pilots and stuff... So, I accept this award very humbly on behalf of all of them, because they did some great work out there.”



*Off-loading supplies*



*With the President and Chief Executive Officer of Samaritan’s Purse, the Reverend William Franklin Graham, III, son of the renowned evangelist Billy Graham.*

ALL PHOTOS WICKI CODY/FACEBOOK PAGE

# Autonomy in the UAS Airspace

By COL Danielle R. Medaglia

**T**he Army continues to transform at a rapid pace as it seeks to recognize change and adapt faster than any other military in the world. The time to achieve advantage on the battlefield is now and the Army is delivering new capabilities to the field.

As part of this effort, the Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) Project Office is at the heart of the Army's expansion and modernization of UAS capabilities. Across the portfolio, from a small three-pound Short Range Reconnaissance aircraft to the Group 4, MQ-1C Gray Eagle, we must put more capability in Soldiers' hands. These new capabilities will make a difference on the battlefield. A major part of this effort are new, flex-



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SSG ROSE D. TROUD



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SGT KOURNIEY NUNNEY

*Above: U.S. Army SGT Hunter Moody, a drone operator assigned to Bravo Company, 2nd Infantry Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, in support of Task Force Pegasus, raises his drone at the Nursipalu Training Area near Camp Taara, Estonia, Nov. 13, 2024. Drone operations are an essential component of modern tactics. Task Force Pegasus' mission is to engage in multinational training and exercises across the continent, strengthening interoperability with NATO allies and regional security partners, which provides competent and ready forces to V Corps, America's forward-deployed corps in Europe.*

*Left: U.S. Army SPC Zachary Scarpetti, assigned to Delta Company, 317th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division performs operator qualifications for the Medium Range Reconnaissance system (MRR) near Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase (MKAB), Romania on Nov. 25, 2024. This unit is the first unit in the U.S. Army to be fielded these systems and the Soldiers learned how to assemble, disassemble, conduct flights and surveillance.*

ible systems that allow previously unavailable adaptability, maneuverability, survivability and operational reach. To accomplish and maintain this vision, the systems must continue to advance and incorporate autonomy.

People are often surprised that autonomy is not new to the UAS space. Autonomy is not a single capability but a spectrum with multiple incremental steps from the low to high end. We see this regularly in the automotive industry where the low end of the autonomy spectrum is minimal (like driver assistance features to adjust cruise control, steering or braking) and the high end is full driving automation without the need for a driver. The same principle applies to UAS. Low end capabilities represent simple automation, such as enabling flight by waypoints instead of traditional “stick and rudder” control. All Army UAS systems today use low level autonomy to reduce Soldier workload, by making aircraft navigation easier. This is the first step in mitigating the risk of lost data links, and helps Soldiers fly pre-planned routes.

The modernized Army UAS needs to push further and faster up the autonomy spectrum as autonomy is mission critical

in denied and contested environments. It is also fundamental to collaborative teaming and distributed mission execution to increase survivability. The software for these missions will be composed of multiple behaviors that will likely come from more than one vendor /stakeholder and will require updates regularly to remain relevant.

PM UAS, along with Army stakeholders and partner services, is planning this future. Implementing autonomy will require fielding new capabilities quickly and iteratively improving on the capability based on Soldier feedback. As an example, during the Launched Effects Industry Day in February 2024, PM UAS described a two-pronged approach to the short range variant. We are executing both approaches in parallel with line of effort (LOE) 1 acquiring mature, off-the-shelf capability available now and LOE 2 acquiring capability, which can change iteratively over the following years (including vendors). Throughout LOE 2, the autonomous capability will improve in both the behavior and the ability to modify employing a modular open systems approach (MOSA). The feedback that PM UAS gained from

Industry Day was that the Army’s UAS MOSA strategy should include autonomy as a major system component.

MOSA will provide the adaptability needed for UAS success on future battlefields. It will allow multiple vendors to work together on rapidly evolving autonomy solutions while providing a means of rapidly integrating new and emerging hardware capabilities. MOSA will speed capability deliveries to the field by allowing the sharing of new software and hardware across platforms, which will also reduce costs.

The autonomous capabilities of UAS continue to grow and the improvement for Soldiers will only accelerate. Incremental improvements based on a Soldier and industry feedback loop will lead to success. This future business environment will encourage robust competition, and reward innovation will ensure that Soldiers have the best technology available.








*COL Danielle R. Medaglia is the Project Manager, Uncrewed Aircraft Systems located at Redstone Arsenal, AL.*

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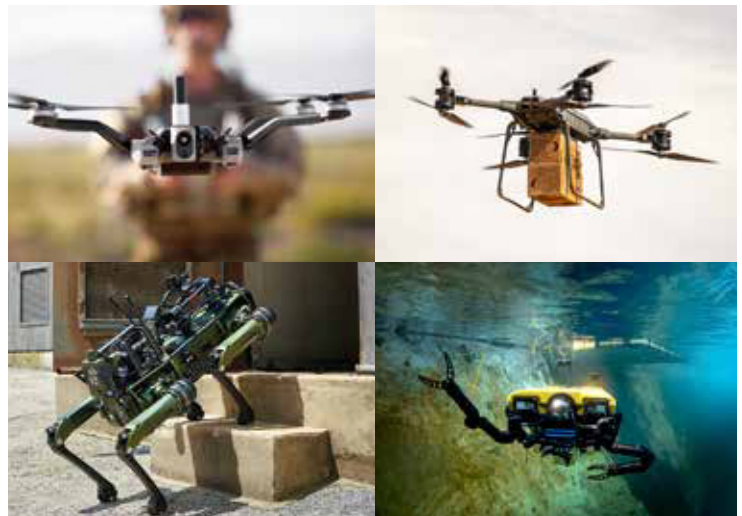
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# Special Focus ▶ Unmanned Aircraft Systems Sensors & Weapons



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## UAS Transformation in Contact

By COL Nicholas D. Ryan

**S**ince the announcement of the Aviation Restructuring Initiative (ARI) in early 2024, the Army initiated a transformation to its Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) approach. Every aspect of how the Army builds, buys, trains, employs, and fights UAS is changing. Much of this transformation is informed by real world lessons and observations from the on-going conflict in Ukraine, on both the friendly and adversary sides, in a technology saturated and contested environment.

One of the main lessons is the U.S. Army must be able to innovate, adapt, change, and upgrade its UAS technology and employment techniques faster than the adversary, on a scale of hours, days, and a maximum of a few weeks. Otherwise, the adversary will adapt to our technology, render our technology useless, outmaneuver us, and seize the advantage.

### Observations from Ukraine

Throughout 2024 ACM-UAS sent multiple teams of UAS experts to Europe to gather lessons from the on-going conflict. We have met with U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (SOF) teams, U.S. Army UAS trainers at the Joint Multi-



national Readiness Center (JMRC), and Ukrainian UAS operators to gather observations and lessons of their successes and failures from UAS employment against Russian forces. While we have learned many things, the main thing we have learned is that the Russian forces are smart and are adopting new technology every day to counter the Ukrainians.

Ukrainian UAS teams have been so successful against Russian forces for two reasons. First, they can rapidly acquire massive quantities of small cheap UAS at the front lines to overwhelm Russian

*Top left: Members of the 75th Ranger Regiment demonstrate FPV UAS tactics to the Director of Futures and Concepts Center, LTG David Hodne (right), at Fort Moore, Georgia.*

*Top Right: LTC Nelson of the 101st Airborne Division briefs the Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Randy George, on the 101st Airborne Division's Project EagleWerks Innovation Lab.*

*Above: A 101st Airborne Division Soldier hand launching a WingXpand xRAI COTS UAS.*

forces. Second, Soldiers at the front lines have the tools and resources to quickly modify, fabricate, and upgrade the hard-

ware and software on these UAS. This allows them to rapidly adapt to the Russian's Counter UAS tactics and continue flying their UAS to achieve mission success. As part of the U.S. Army's UAS transformation, we have been working to integrate this rapid innovation strategy into the U.S. Army's doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPFP).

### A Two-Prong Approach

While there are many lessons from Ukraine, we recognize that the U.S. Army does not have to adopt them precisely. Ukraine is fighting their war their way, within the limits of their resources, training, and tactics. The U.S. Army can and will do things different within our way of war. For UAS, we recognize that there is value in both mass and precision, so we are pursuing a two-prong approach.

First, we will continue to invest and pursue our unique Program of Record UAS that can operate in any environment against any adversary to strike any target with precision when and where the commander dictates. Second, we will pursue more affordable and attritable UAS to provide the mass and quantity that allows a commander to continuously harass, confuse, and overwhelm the adversary. A commander needs both tools in their toolbox, both a hammer and a scalpel, to accomplish their mission.

### Transforming in Contact

Throughout 2024 multiple agencies across the Army have driven change across DOTMLPFP to enable this transformation. First, Corps and Divisions have used operational funds to establish local Innovations Labs to start 3D printing, additive manufacturing, modification, fabrication, software programming, and coding of small UAS at the brigade level. Next, the Aviation Center of Excellence's Department of Training and Doctrine (DOTD) partnered with the 2-13th Aviation Regiment at Fort Huachuca, Arizona to initiate a Program of Instruction for 3D Printing and CAD Design for new 15E UAS Maintainers to standardize this innovation.

Then, the Army's Combat Capabilities Development Command (DEVCOM) Aviation and Missile Center's (AvMC) Systems Readiness Division (SRD) published an Airworthiness Release (AWR) for small UAS that gives units, commanders, and Soldiers the latitude to purchase, build, modify, fabricate, and innovate with non-lethal

Group 1 UAS below 20 pounds.

In late 2024 ACM-UAS partnered with the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) for the DIU Blue List Refresh. The goal was to update the DIU Blue List with a broader variety of UAS and components that are National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) compliant, met Army requirements, and are more affordable for units to purchase. ACM-UAS led a team of UAS subject matter experts and UAS operators from across the Army to evaluate over 360 Commercial Off the Shelf (COTS) UAS submissions. Over a series of weeks which culminated in hands-on fly-off evaluations, this team determined that about twenty UAS, from Group 1 to Group 3, and many components, including payloads, engines, controllers, and radios, met the DIU and Army criteria for NDAA compliance, Army demand, and affordability.

DEVCOM SRD was on-site to provide AWRs for these UAS as they are published on the DIU Blue List. This will provide a much broader variety of affordable NDAA compliant COTS UAS and components that units can immediately purchase to use for training, innovation, and tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) development. The Army's Transform in Contact BCTs are already using these DIU Blue List UAS for training at Combat Training Centers.

### Deliberate Transformation

As part of Army Futures Command (AFC), we are always looking over the horizon to change DOTMLPFP for

the future Army. We recognize that the speed of technology and our adversary's ability to change is rapidly outpacing many of our Department of Defense (DoD) and Army processes. One advantage we must adopt and resource is our Soldiers' creative ability to innovate against enemy tactics at the front line. As the commander of AFC, GEN James Rainey, always says, we must "Think big, start small, and go fast."

Although these initial UAS DOTMLPFP changes and additions to the DIU Blue List are relatively small, they are the start of changing the mindset and culture of the DoD and U.S. Army. The long-term vision is that in a future conflict, front line Soldiers will have the technology, resources, skills, and organizational structure to rapidly acquire, upgrade, modify, or fabricate any hardware or software on their robotics in a matter of minutes or hours to operate in any type of contested environment or adversary counter tactics. No matter what the enemy throws at us, we will brush it off and keep going. We cannot allow our processes to hinder our ability to rapidly innovate.

*COL Nicholas D. Ryan is the Army Capability Manager for Unmanned*

*Aircraft Systems, Aviation Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, Army Futures Command, at Fort Novosel, AL.*



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■ Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by an Individual Member of Industry  
■ Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by a Major Contractor  
■ Materiel Readiness Award for a Contribution by an Industry Team, Group, or Special Unit  
■ UAS Soldier of the Year ■ UAS Unit of the Year ■ Fixed Wing Unit of the Year

**Suspense: September 1** ■ Air/Sea Rescue ■ ATC Facility of the Year  
■ ATC Unit of the Year ■ ATC Technician of the Year ■ ATC Controller of the Year  
■ ATC Manager of the Year ■ DUSTOFF Medic of the Year ■ Medicine Award  
■ Trainer of the Year

### AAAA Hall of Fame Inductions

**Suspense: June 1**  
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**Award Nomination Forms can be found at [quad-a.org](http://quad-a.org)**

# Special Focus ►

## Unmanned Aircraft Systems Sensors & Weapons



U.S. ARMY PHOTOS

Left: Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (cUAS) dronebuster operations.

Above: 15M students conducting identify friend or foe (IFF) test on MQ-1C Gray Eagle.

Below: RQ-28 Skydio 3D printed grenade drop demonstration.

# Domination through Innovation: Forging the Next-Generation of UAS Warfighters

By MAJ Nickolas D. Lupo

The United States Army is adjusting its Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) strategy to enhance adaptability, survivability, and achieve cost-effectiveness in modern conflicts. Following the divestment of older, less survivable models, the Army spurred industry to meet demand signals for future UAS systems that feature smaller equipment/personnel footprints, lower acoustic signatures, runway independence, lower maintenance costs, and modular payloads to provide lethality and intelligence collection capabilities at echelons below Brigade Combat Teams. Furthermore, global conflict has informed the tactical employment of UAS and hinted at an emerging revolution in military affairs. These initiatives and innovative approaches to UAS coalesce at the 2-13th

Aviation Regiment at Ft. Huachuca, Arizona. 2-13th AVN Regiment (the UAS Training Battalion), is pursuing numerous lines of effort (LOE) to redefine the 15W/15E Military Occupational Specialties (MOS), generate the best UAS operators and repairers to the operational force, and mature UAS capabilities to inform future Programs of Record for the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and the Army.

### Initiatives and Approaches

First among these LOE is an initiative to *redefine the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) descriptions* of 15E (TUAS Repairer) and 15W (TUAS Operator) to convey their reality – i.e., enduring relevance in a field of exponential growth. 15E/W MOS descriptions still reference legacy sys-

tems; nevertheless, the MOS awarding Programs of Instruction (POI) have evolved to equip the operational force with operators and repairers that are armed with expert knowledge on a diverse array of UAS platforms whilst providing the foundational skills required for the emergence of TUAS (Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems). Graduates of the 15E Course are trained on commercial off the shelf (COTS) and small UAS (sUAS) Groups 1-2 (beneath 55lbs, <3500 AGL), familiarized with sUAS fabrication and repair, and postured to perform TUAS (Group 3, <1320lbs, <18000ft) maintainer tasks. Graduates of the 15W Course are trained as Groups 1-3 subject matter experts, harness a robust knowledge of Class A-E airspace operations, and can provide sUAS combat power at echelon



to supported ground forces. To date, the UAS Training Battalion has generated 6 classes with these skill sets to the operational force.

On October 18, 2024, the Chief of Staff of the Army published a Directed Requirement (DR) for Transformation in Contact (TiC) that directed the acquisition of unmanned aircraft for select Brigade Combat Teams to educate and inform Army force development, including Human Machine Integrated Formations, and deliver capabilities while supporting perpetual and continuous transformation efforts. The DR specified fielding of the selected system to the UAS Training Battalion to accelerate procurement, increase capability attainment, and mature the operational capability to inform future Programs of Record for TRADOC. This LOE comprises new equipment training and fielding of the DR to students and instructors by QTR 1 FY 26. By integrating the DR into 15W POI without compromising the MOS qualification, the UAS Training Battalion will generate UAS Operators with airframe agnostic, diversified experience and inform the rapid fielding and implementation of Future TUAS (FTUAS). The DR's two-tiered approach expediently introduces vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) platforms with Modular Mission Payloads capable of +12-hour endurance in Tier 1 while encouraging industry to meet increased capabilities prior to the fielding of Tier 2.

Observations of recent conflicts highlight the increased presence and lethality of First Person View (FPV) drones on the battlefield. Inexpensive, readily available, fast, and capable of delivering lethal payloads, FPV drones are changing the landscape of modern warfare. The UAS Training Battalion is conducting the military decision-making process (MDMP) to establish an FPV Initial Qualification Course that alternates quarterly with the 15W Instructor Operator Course (IOC). Leveraging Commercial off the Shelf (COTS) air vehicles, such as the ORQA MRM-10, the UAS Training Battalion hopes to minimize equipment damage to air vehicles by, initially, limiting operational trials to Instructor Operators with sUAS qualifications. This approach leverages the tactical experience of operators, minimizes airframe loss, is attainable in a no-growth environment, and introduces FPV as a system 'cue-able' by higher Groups of

sUAS to deliver lethal effects.

Another LOE within the UAS Training Battalion is "monster garage" – a training initiative that enables Soldier's the opportunity to learn and innovate on sUAS with 3D printing, additive manufacturing, and UAS fabrication from components to construct, modify, and repair Group 1 UAS. When operated in accordance with the sUAS Airworthiness Release 266200 and DOD/FAA Memorandums of Understanding, "monster garage" trains the rapid assembly of Group 1 sUAS from inexpensive components to integrate hastily constructed and attritable platforms to meet immediate lethal or intelligence collection needs. This initiative greatly enhances the 15E's repertoire, enabling customizable sUAS for specific mission requirements and increasing diagnosis and troubleshooting effectiveness while decentralizing capabilities to increase self-sufficiency at the unit level.

Initial Entry Training 15W and 15E Soldiers also require a comprehensive understanding of the UAS threat environment. The UAS Training Battalion leveraged the Emergent Threat, Training, and Readiness Capability (ET2RC) to introduce cadre and students to **counter UAS (cUAS)** threats

and incorporate training into POI. Currently, this exposure occurs within the 15 Series' Capstone event, in which Soldiers securing a downed air vehicle must respond to enemy UAS. They are taught how cUAS systems can halt, seize, or return enemy UAS to their points of origin.

The UAS Training Battalion strives to innovate training at the pace of emerging technologies and threats. It aims to generate the best possible UAS warfighters to the operational force. The Chief of Staff of the Army's UAS training strategy implemented at the UAS Training BN represents a significant shift toward more versatile operators and repairers. By training 15E and 15W soldiers on a broad range of UAS platforms and incorporating skills like rapid sUAS assembly and FPV drone operation, the UAS Training Battalion will generate enduring skill sets to the operational and adapt to a rapidly evolving military landscape.

*MAJ Nickolas D. Lupo is the battalion S-3, 2-13th Aviation Regiment, U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Huachuca, AZ.*



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# Special Focus ► Unmanned Aircraft Systems Sensors & Weapons



## Well-Trained Soldiers and Adaptive Learning Continue the Fight By WO1 Anthony Young

In the expanse of the Pacific Ocean islands, two MQ-1C Gray Eagles ascend to the sky. The Gray Eagles launch on a mission to find and fix maritime threats, one equipped with a STARLite radar system, and the other with the diverse capabilities of a Signal Intelligence payload. A similar scene unfolds thousands of miles away in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula.

Across separate continents, aircrews leverage three powerful forms of intelligence—signals, radar, and imagery—to formulate dynamic threat assessments. The crews simultaneously protect forward forces, provide close combat support, and pursue maritime targets, showcasing their ability to offer versatile reconnaissance support. By repurposing aging technology alongside new intelligence-gathering payloads, aircrews operate the MQ-1Cs with remarkable ingenuity and adaptability, successfully addressing complex problems in diverse environments. The adaptability of the MQ-1C is on full display as aircrews effectively integrate multiple forms of intelligence to create a comprehensive threat picture and demonstrate the drone's versatility and effectiveness across a variety of mission sets.

### The Global War on Terror and the MQ-1C

Over the past 14 years, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) has solidified the MQ-1C's role as a vital tool in modern warfare. E and F Companies demonstrated exceptional professionalism and skill during deployments in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) and beyond. During the GWOT, the MQ-1C was used primarily as an additional CAS platform, providing overwatch and protection to the Soldiers and partner forces on ground. The Soldiers of E and F Company have proven their ability to support these operations, proven during a period in 2018, of being the most accurate and lethal unit in the Armed Forces. The proficiency of the operators had warranted them respect

and reliance from partner forces, requesting the aircraft and its crews by name.

Post-GWOT, as combat engagements decreased, the MQ-1C adapted to prioritize surveillance and reconnaissance. Soldiers used its capabilities to support diverse missions and joint operations, continually refining tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to maximize the system's utility, without the requirement of new technologies. Despite challenges posed by legacy systems like the Small Tactical Radar-Lightweight (STARLite) payload, these aircrews found innovative ways to maintain mission effectiveness, demonstrating the importance of adaptability. The legacy systems available to the MQ-1C provide consistent challenges for the Soldiers to overcome, such as the STARLite payload.

### Revitalizing the STARLite Payload

Introduced during the Afghanistan campaign, the STARLite payload has evolved into a cornerstone of the MQ-1C's reconnaissance capabilities. Its radar provides detailed imagery and allows operators to detect environmental changes, define metallic objects, and track movement within a specific area. The Motion Tracking Indicator (MTI) adds another layer of utility by identifying motion, enhancing the drone's situational awareness with being able to define movement on the speeds of the objects. Initially, STARLite's effectiveness was limited by insufficient processing, exploitation, and dissemination (PED) support. However, over time, the integration of third-party intelligence addressed this challenge, enabling the system to deliver near-real-time actionable intelligence. This advancement significantly enhanced the MQ-1C's ability to locate and engage targets accurately and efficiently, contributing to its operational success.

Today, STARLite supports multi-domain operations, including countering maritime threats. Its adaptability

and capacity for simultaneous intelligence collection and passive pattern recognition make it a critical asset in modern military strategy. By leveraging its capabilities in innovative ways, aircrews have demonstrated that well-maintained and strategically adapted systems can remain effective despite evolving operational demands. STARLite's ability to operate in diverse environments further highlights its value. Whether monitoring expansive desert terrain or tracking maritime activity, its radar system has proven essential in creating a comprehensive threat picture. As the 160th SOAR (Abn) expands its mission focus, the system's versatility continues to enhance the MQ-1C's effectiveness across different theaters of operation.

### The Human Element to Mission Success

The 160th SOAR (Abn) stands at the forefront of experimentation with UAS, driving advancements that shape future capabilities and ensure competitiveness against near-peer adversaries. While the developments and functionality provide a newfound implementation of the MQ-1C, the gap between successful testing and availability for operational implementation needs to be addressed regarding effectiveness. While advanced technology and equipment can enhance capabilities, they are only as effective as those employed. The ease of sustainment and the emphasis on ongoing training are critical to maintaining strategic and tactical advantages. As threats evolve and technology advances, continuous training allows Soldiers to stay ahead, effectively integrating innovations while honing their core skills. Sustaining and training a force to maximize the utility of existing systems ensures long-term feasibility and operational readiness in unpredictable environments.

No unit withstands the consequences of time, and with it, the inevitable loss of human resources. However, the 160th SOAR (Abn) allows for stability within the unit. This has been the hidden blessing behind the longevity and effectiveness of the MQ-1C across the multiple operational theaters in which it has been employed. The time afforded to the Soldiers in the 160th SOAR (Abn) allows for passing knowledge and proficiencies; far surpassing the capability advantages of new technologies. The unit's senior operators' knowledge and skillsets are the greatest assets to the mission's success. New requirements in the training pipeline are consistently incorporated to ensure that the capability and problem-solving nature of the operators is best suited for mission accomplishment in a variety of situations.

### Conclusion

Competent and well-trained Soldiers are more important than acquiring new hardware. The SOF Truth, "Humans are more important than hardware," underscores that the success of any mission depends on the skills, resilience, and adaptability of the individuals executing it rather than solely on the tools they use. This human-centric approach fosters ingenuity and adaptability, ensuring that the joint force remains agile, resilient, and capable of overcoming challenges in complex and dynamic operational landscapes. In the end, it is the human element that genuinely defines mission success.

*WO1 Young is a 150U Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems (TUAS) Operations Technician who has previously served as an MQ-1C Standardization Instructor Operator in E Co 160th SOAR (Abn) for 11 years.*



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# 2024 National Functional Award Winners

## Army Aviation Association of America

### ARMY AVIATION TRAINER OF THE YEAR

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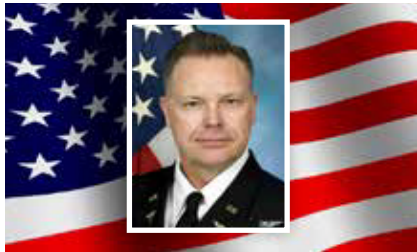


**SFC Alexander I. Hall**  
Company B,  
Special Operations Aviation  
Training Battalion  
Fort Campbell, KY

SFC Alexander Hall is the Aviation Medical Professional and trainer all should strive to be. From authoring 21 new lessons for incoming flight medics to conducting flight training events consisting of 150 flight hours and 32 separate events, he is leading the way. His dedication directly contributed to 12 graduates of the Special Operations Medic Indoctrination Course. SFC Hall serves as a critical member of the flight medic modernization team; he was personally responsible for the training and management of 3 flight medic instructors and executing realistic training for the students and cadre alike. He successfully planned and executed cross training with the U.S. Air Force Pararescue Jumpers, the Special Forces Medics (18D) and the Coast Guard rescue swimmers. This cross pollination and learning results in making the Special Operations Medics better and more capable. His accomplishments inside and outside the organization have been extraordinary. No one throughout the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) has contributed more or achieved the level of excellence as a trainer throughout the past year than SFC Hall. His exemplary professionalism, dedication to mission success, superior technical competence, and performance consistently beyond the call of duty identify him as the 2024 AAAA Trainer of the Year.

### ARMY AVIATION MEDICINE AWARD

*Sponsored by Gentex Corporation*



**LTC Vincent J. Reed**  
Headquarters and Headquarters  
Company  
1st Battalion,  
224th Aviation Regiment  
Task Force Freedom

LTC Vincent Reed is the epitome of a true Army Medical professional. Serving as the Battalion Flight Surgeon he made significant contributions to aviation and aviation medicine through his focus and dedication while assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-224th Aviation Security and Support Battalion, 29th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, Maryland Army National Guard and Task Force Freedom. LTC Reed focused diligently to prepare the battalion for deployment to the Southwest Border of the United States and successfully facilitated a home station mobilization. From September 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, LTC Reed served the entire 29th ECAB as the only active aeromedical provider in the State while maintaining a medical readiness status >90% plus operating the aviation medical clinic. From April until August 31, 2024, LTC Reed deployed as the Battalion Flight Surgeon to the Southwest Border of the United States with Task Force Freedom in support of counter-drug operations. During the deployment, LTC Reed traveled the entire 2,000 miles of the Southwest Border monthly to maintain the flight physicals, flying status, and medical readiness of the 350+ soldiers deployed with the battalion, a monumental task. His unwavering commitment and singular efforts make him the choice for the Army Aviation Association of America's 2024 Army Aviation Medicine Award.

### ARMY AVIATION DUSTOFF FLIGHT MEDIC OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored by Air Methods Corporation*



**SSG Alex R. Henson**  
2nd Battalion,  
160th Special Operations Aviation  
Regiment (Airborne)  
Fort Campbell, Kentucky

SSG Alex Henson is the quiet professional, exemplified by his decisive actions and warrior focus. While deployed to the CENTCOM theater of operations in 2023 he treated 21 patients with Traumatic Brain Injuries and shrapnel wounds after multiple one-way unmanned aerial system and missile attacks. Due to the increased threat during his deployment, he led over 20 Night Stalker First Responder training events, ensuring cross-training for non-medical personnel since he was the only medic for a force of over 50 personnel. During the same deployment, he played a vital role in resuscitating two separate civilian contractors in cardiac arrest. His leadership and medical expertise directly resulted in one individual making a complete recovery after a myocardial infarction. After identifying areas of improvement from the first resuscitation event, SSG Henson took the initiative and conducted advanced medical training with collocated medics across the base, resulting in improved team dynamics during the second cardiac event. Following redeployment, SSG Henson completed the Certified Flight Paramedic Course through the Mayo Clinic and became a Fast Rope Insertion and Extraction System Master. SSG Henson's patient care during combat, medical leadership, and personal commitment to improvement, establish him as the 2024 AAAA DUSTOFF Flight Medic of the year.



# 2024 National Functional Award Winners

## Army Aviation Association of America

### ARMY AVIATION AIR/SEA RESCUE AWARD

Sponsored By: Collins Aerospace



Pilot in Command:  
CW3 Joshua A. Mason

Pilot:  
CPT Mark A. Dente

Crew Chief:  
SGT Brandon R. Bessette



Flight Paramedic:  
SSG Matthew A. Madeiros

Flight Paramedic:  
SSG Ryan P. Farley

### Vital 36 Samaritan

#### Company C, 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment

#### North Kingstown, Rhode Island

On January 22nd, 2024, while deployed to Kosovo, the crew of Vital 36 Samaritan, consisting of CW3 Joshua Mason, CPT Mark Dente, SSG Matthew Medeiros, SGT Brandon Bessette, and SSG Ryan Farley, distinguished themselves during a complex aeromedical evacuation mission in the Albanian Alps. Responding to an evacuation request at 1237 hours local time, the crew launched in less than 15 minutes and flew to a remote snow-covered mountain draw, with challenging weather conditions and a treacherous landing zone. With limited communication capabilities and no over-the-horizon communication, the crew relied on their skill and training to navigate the difficult terrain and execute a complex hoist operation above 7,000 feet. Despite

the challenges, the crew successfully extracted two injured personnel requiring emergent medical care, and provided critical treatment for their injuries, including frostbite, hypothermia, and trauma sustained during an avalanche. The crew's superior airmanship, discipline, and technical skill ensured the successful completion of the rescue, which was unprecedented in the history of KFOR32 MEDEVAC operations and their actions were recognized by the Albanian Defense Ministry. Their exceptional performance and teamwork demonstrated their unwavering commitment to their unit, the mission, and to those they serve and identify them as the recipient of the 2024 AAAA Air/Sea Rescue Award.



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# 2024 National Functional Award Winners

## Army Aviation Association of America

### ARMY AVIATION AIRSPACE MANAGER OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored By: AAAA*



**CW3 Jerid R. Hitchens**  
3rd Battlefield Coordination  
Detachment-Korea  
8th U.S. Army, Republic of Korea

CW3 Hitchens is the go-to airspace subject matter expert for the Korean Theater of Operations. Among all echelons and components of the combined force from 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade to 8th Army, from the Airforce Combat Plans Division to the Republic of Korea's Ground Component Command, he is the most sought-after airspace technician on the peninsula. He has attended and led multiple airspace seminars for both U.S. and Korean airspace operators this year. During the two, week-long Korean Contingency Airspace Management Seminars this year he instructed and coordinated the training of 60+ airspace managers from all echelons of the Army and Air Force on a variety of topics. He coordinated multiple agencies to include the Army Joint Support Team, numerous Air Force agencies, and the Combined Joint Fires Element to bring in multiple perspectives and a variety of expertise to the seminar. Working as the link between the U.S. and ROK ground and air components, his constant input and refinements enabled successful execution of both exercises. His role as a leader and airspace expert has been fundamental in building the alliance's airspace operations and ensuring the ability to "Fight Tonight." These achievements and his unwavering commitment to his craft and his team earned for him the AAAA 2024 Airspace Manager of the Year Award.

### AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored By: Raytheon Company*



**SPC(P) Thomas S. Cyrus**  
3rd Battalion,  
58th Aviation Regiment  
Fort Liberty, North Carolina

During his deployment to the Horn of Africa, SPC Cyrus served as the Senior Systems Maintainer, a role in which he excelled beyond expectations. His expertise and proactive approach were crucial in maintaining all Air Traffic Services (ATS) systems and airfield lighting. He meticulously coordinated the procuring of all necessary parts and equipment, ensuring that all systems remained operational with minimal non-mission capable (NMC) time. His efforts prevented any significant gaps in capability on the airfield, directly contributing to the success of ongoing operations. His role extended beyond maintenance; he also took on the responsibility of training and mentoring three other maintainers deployed in the Horn of Africa. As both a trainer and examiner, he provided invaluable guidance, ensuring that these maintainers made significant progress in their proficiency with ATS systems. His commitment to developing his fellow soldiers not only enhanced their capabilities but also strengthened the overall effectiveness of the maintenance team in theater. His ability to maintain critical systems with minimal downtime and his leadership in training others is a testament to his expertise and commitment. SPC Cyrus' exceptional performance, technical acumen, and dedication to operational success identify him as the 2024 Army Aviation Association of America Air Traffic Control Maintenance Technician of the Year.

### AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER OF THE YEAR

*Sponsored By: Raytheon Company*



**SFC Christopher M. Miller**  
Company F, 3rd Battalion,  
82nd Aviation Regiment  
Fort Liberty, North Carolina

Sergeant First Class Miller's commitment to excellence and leadership qualities were highlighted in his distinguished service as a platoon sergeant in Operation Inherent Resolve. He assumed the role of non-commissioned officer in charge in Syria, where he led a team of 33 Paratroopers from different subordinate units of the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB), overseeing their health, safety, and accountability. He demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, resulting in the team's effective operation and successful deployment. Additionally, he oversaw thousands of incident-free rotary-wing, fixed-wing and unmanned aircraft system (UAS) movements and coordinated with various units and commands, contributing to the efficient and secure operation of the base. SFC Miller served as a liaison between TF Wolverine stationed at Syria and TF Nighthawk stationed at Erbil Airbase. During one hostile fire event, disregarding his own safety, he ensured the Scan Eagle was cleared to launch, which provided the base defense operations center with critical information that allowed them to prosecute the threat. He also played a key role in establishing and implementing precision approaches for aircraft during degraded weather conditions. SFC Miller's achievements and dedication to excellence identify him as the 2024 Army Aviation Association of America Air Traffic Controller of the Year.



# 2024 National Functional Award Winners

## Army Aviation Association of America

### AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

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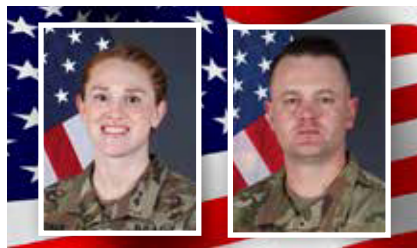


**CW2 Brandon C. Delk**  
Company F, 2nd Battalion,  
1st Aviation Regiment  
Fort Riley, Kansas

CW2 Brandon C. Delk excelled as the commander of F/2-1 Aviation, 1st Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. He deployed as a platoon leader to Europe in support of OPERATION ATLANTIC RESOLVE in September 2023 and assumed command from March to August 2024. He set records for the fastest establishment and first successful Federal Aviation Administration accredited flight inspection of the Air Traffic Navigation, Integration, and Coordination System (ATNAVICS), and the first synchronization of the ATNAVICS with the Mobile Tower System on an active army airfield in the European theater. He provided a Tactical Aviation Control Team in support of Immediate Response 24 in Finland, making his unit the first air traffic service company in history to deploy within 60 miles of the Russian border. His unit became so proficient at expeditionary deployment operations that it redeployed over \$400 million worth of equipment on behalf of every battalion in the brigade. He provided air traffic service support for the aircraft movement of two brigades during port operations, sustained the highest operational readiness rate in the task force, and facilitated a live hand grenade range. CW2 Delk has unequivocally earned the Army Aviation Association of America 2024 ATC Manager of the Year award.

### AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL FACILITY OF THE YEAR

Sponsored By: Raytheon Company



Commander: CPT Shelby L. Swain  
Senior NCO: 1SG Jacob A. Durski

**Holmes Airspace  
Information Center**  
Fort Novosel, Alabama

Holmes Airspace Information Center, Company B, 1st Battalion, 11th Aviation Regiment is the quintessence of Air Traffic Control (ATC) facilities in the U.S. Army. The facility and personnel stand-alone and represent what it means to be the finest in professionalism, dedication, and mission execution. The year started off with a massive reduction in manning levels where personnel consistently worked ten-hour days, every single day, and despite this the Holmes Team successfully and safely controlled 231,296 aircraft movements enabling the development of future Army Aviation Warfighters. Over the course of the year, the manning situation improved, which served to increase the exceptional performance already demonstrated by Holmes personnel. Their newfound freedom to maneuver enabled them to develop as professionals which produced 2 Soldiers selected for Warrant Officer Candidate School, 12 Soldiers promoted to sergeant or above, 2 Soldiers of the Month, 1 Soldier selected for induction in the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, and much more. Competing against 21 facilities from 1-11th AVN Regiment, Holmes won facility of the month for two of eight months in 2024. The facility excelled through a demanding year supporting the USAACE mission. Holmes Airspace Information Center personnel consistently prove they are, without a doubt, the 2024 ATC Facility of the Year.

### ARMY AVIATION ATC UNIT OF THE YEAR

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Commander: LTC Douglas T. Lindsay  
Senior NCO: 1SG Daniel A. Benson

**3rd Battalion,  
58th Aviation Regiment**  
Fort Liberty, North Carolina

3-58th Airfield Operations Battalion "Guardian Raptors" distinguished themselves by providing exceptional air traffic control and airfield management services in three countries as an integral combat enabler for Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). Throughout the nine-month deployment, the unit's air traffic controllers controlled 23,465 tower movements, 150 Precision Approach Radar approaches, and 20 temporary landing zones in Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya with a flawless safety record. The battalion headquarters in Djibouti provided drop zone and landing zone support for 18 Marine and Air Forces-Africa missions, supported 40 C-UAS missions, and validated the airfield suitability of over 37 Cooperative Security Locations for 15 U.S. embassy evacuation plans. As the Senior Airfield Authority-Somalia, the battalion provided 24/7 airfield management services and air traffic advisories to two austere airfields including installing 20,000 feet of airfield lighting to sustain current operations, constructing a 700-foot taxiway, and providing airfield assessments to three nearby LZs in support of Joint Special Operations Task Force - Somalia. At home station, the unit's Rear Detachment simultaneously conducted preparations for the unit's February 2025 deactivation by turning in 443 (45%) pieces of battalion equipment while providing world-class support to Raptor families. This professional effort identifies the Guardian Raptors as the Army Aviation Association of America 2024 ATC Unit of the Year.



# Army National Guard Aviation, Answering the Call

By COL Daniel J. McAuliffe

**T**he Army National Guard Aviation enterprise has the unique challenge of preparing air crews and support personnel to execute both their War Time and Domestic Operations mission. This challenge was recently put to the test in western North Carolina.

On September 28, 2024, Tropical Storm Helene arrived on the southern border of North Carolina. Following several days of heavy rain, Helene's effects included heavy flooding throughout the North Carolina mountain region, with mudslides that destroyed numerous roads and bridges. Additionally, strong winds, coupled with flash flooding, downed trees, resulting in widespread power outages and a severely degraded 800-Megahertz emergency response radio communication infrastructure in the western part of the state. All these storm impacts created a high demand for rotary-wing assets.

Prior to the storm, the North Carolina Army National Guard (NCARNG) activated the first of what would rapidly become three Aviation Task Forces (ATFs). Aviation Task Force North (ATFN) op-

erated out of the Mid-Carolina Regional Airport, North Carolina and was operational and conducting missions within hours of the storm's passage. Aviation Task Force South (ATFS) operated out of Donaldson Field, South Carolina, and was operational and conducting missions one day later. ATFN and ATFS consisted solely of NCARNG and Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) aircraft. Aviation Task Force West (ATFW) composed solely of Active-Duty aircraft operated out of Asheville Airport, North Carolina and were operational and conducting missions on October 2, 2024. Standing up three ATFs within five days required a total Army Aviation approach with the National Guard leading the effort. Accomplishing this extremely complex mission is a true testament to the partnerships, training, and leadership in both the National Guard and Active Duty.

ATFN and ATFS consisted of UH-60 Black Hawk, UH-72 Lakota, and CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the NCARNG and the EMAC partner

*Soldiers assigned to the Connecticut, Maryland and North Carolina National Guard work together to distribute food and water to local first responders in Avery County on Sept. 29, 2024. National Guard air crews from Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Iowa supported the NC Emergency Management and NCNG in response to the devastating impacts of Hurricane Helene.*

states. The partner states providing EMAC aircraft included South Carolina, Maryland, Oklahoma, Ohio, Georgia, Florida, Connecticut, Minnesota, Iowa, New York, and Pennsylvania. ATFW consisted of seven CH-47 Chinooks from the 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) from Fort Liberty. Other Aviation assets/organizations who played a critical role as part of these ATFs included the North Carolina State Highway Patrol (NCSHP), the United States Coast Guard, the United States Air Force Para-Rescue, and the North Carolina Civil Air Patrol.

Task Force Aviation UH-60 Black Hawks, UH-72 Lakotas, and Coast Guard aircraft started conducting around-



the-clock Search and Rescue (SAR) missions within hours of storm passage. Within 24-48 hours, ARNG Aviation helicopters, along with Active-Duty Air Force SAR assets from across the country joined the NCARNG Task Force under a unified command structure, to ensure unity of effort and effective Joint Service integration. Although the mission focus in the first 12-28 hours was on SAR, aerial resupply missions and the building of a logistics hub at Asheville airport (KAVL) was conducted concurrently. The Asheville airport became the center of gravity for logistics and refueling operations, thus increasing helicopter station time and operational reach to the most severely impacted areas in the western part of the state.

Task Force Aviation achieved many impressive accomplishments. Within the first 24-48 hours, 579 rescues were completed, of which 165 were complex hoist rescues. Within three days of operations, the ATF completed 145 missions, delivered 579,000 pounds of food and water, and flew 294 flight hours. During the height of the operation, the ATF was executing 40 missions per day and was composed of 21 CH-47 Chinooks, 7 UH-60 Black Hawks, 4 UH-72 Lakota, 2 NCSHP aircraft, and 4 Civil Air Patrol fixed-wing aircraft. Aviation missions continued until approximately October 7, 2024, which was followed by a sharp reduction in aerial mission requests. As of November 1, 2024, Task Force Aviation achieved the following:

- Missions Flown: 468
- Flight Hours Executed: 1,261
- Rescues: 546 (hoist accounted for 196)
- SAR Personnel Moved: 1,040
- Resources Moved: 3.9 million pounds

The statistics and mission accomplishments cited above could not have been achieved without the professionalism, leadership, sacrifice, training, and selfless service of all who were involved. This team effort could only have been accomplished through the prior relationships that had been established and the all-component, multi-agency, unity of effort spearheaded by Army Aviation.

Above the Best!

*COL Daniel J. McAuliffe  
is the State Army Aviation  
Officer for the North  
Carolina Army National  
Guard.*



U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY SFC LETCHA SAMUELS

*Army National Guard Aircrews from Connecticut, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Iowa, work together with the NC Emergency Management and North Carolina National Guard to distribute food and water to local first responders in Avery County on Sept. 29, 2024 in response to Hurricane Helene.*



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# Historical Perspective ▶

From page 26, *ARMY AVIATION Magazine*, Vol. 18, No.3, Westport, CT, March 31, 1969.

## Ford E. Allcorn Dies in St. Louis

Edited by Mark Albertson



One of the L-4 Cubs from Captain Allcorn's little squadron on the flight deck of USS Ranger prior to the ill-fated flight, November 9, 1942.

Colonel Ford E. Allcorn

The first Army aviator to lead a flight of Air Observation Post aviators into combat died in St. Louis, February 15, 1969 from a heart attack. Retired Colonel Ford E. "Ace" Allcorn, 59, of Hazelwood, Missouri, was buried with full military honors, February 19 in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, following a graveside ceremony at 11:00 AM.

A native of Boonville, where his mother, Mrs. H.E. Fiscus still resides, Colonel Allcorn entered military service from the Missouri National Guard prior to World War II. A barnstorming pilot friend had taught him to fly from a pasture near Boonville, so Allcorn was already a pilot when he entered Army flight training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

### To Combat

Graduating flight school in October 1942, Colonel Allcorn flew into Army Aviation history a month later when he led a three-plane flight of L-4 Piper Cubs<sup>1</sup> from the deck of the aircraft carrier USS Ranger (CV-4)<sup>2</sup> during the invasion of French North Africa, landing in the Casablanca area.<sup>3</sup> Radio silence enforced during the trip from the carrier resulted in an unexpected hazard as Allcorn's flight closed the beaches. A breakdown

during the planning stages of the operation ensured that the support fleet for the landings had not been privy to the Cubs' arrival, and therefore, fired on them.

The light cruiser Brooklyn (CL-40) opened the action, winking like a Christmas tree. A five-inch 38 caliber nearly took out Lieutenant Shell, bursting in the wake of his lumbering Cub. Allcorn and his wing mates dived for the deck. Other ships in the task force opened up. Tracers whizzed round the Cubs like angry bees. Flak puffs blossomed like flowers.

Allcorn wave-hopped towards the beach; bullets splashed all around him. A forest of geysers rose and fell. About a hundred yards from the breaking surf, Allcorn brought the Cub round hard and raced along the beach. Machine gunners from the 2nd Armored Division bracketed the intruder. The Cub's windscreen shattered, showering Allcorn with glass shards. Smoke belched from under the cowling, trailing off into the slipstream.

Vichy machine guns joined the raucous cacophony and French slugs chewed the wings, undersides and fuselage. Pain shot up Allcorn's right side, as bullets tore into his leg. The beleaguered aviator found a spot, coaxed the mor-

tally wounded Cub in and pancaked in a rush of broken gear, snapping struts and shredded fabric. He hauled himself from the wreck, then dragged himself clear as the L-4 tore itself to bits in an explosion of smoke and flame.

Meanwhile Butler and Shell, together with Captain DeVol had set down near Vichy lines and were taken prisoner.<sup>4</sup> They were soon released and rejoined friendly lines. Allcorn was assisted by civilians to American lines.

The gallant aviator paid a hefty price for his brief passage in the history books: The first Army aviator to fly off a carrier; the first in combat; the first to be shot down and the first to be wounded. He was evacuated to Walter Reed Hospital. Colonel Allcorn later flew in the Italian Campaign, chauffeuring the likes of General Mark Clark and British Field Marshal Herald Alexander.

Colonel Allcorn flew in seven major campaigns in World War II. He became one of the Army's early helicopter pilots. By the time he retired in 1961, he held every Army rating, plus a commercial pilot's license and had accumulated some 6,000 hours in the air. Since his retirement from the Army, he had been employed by the McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft Corporation in St. Louis.

## Director at AVSCOM

Colonel Allcorn had been a member of what is now the Army Aviation Systems Command some years ago, serving primarily as Director of Maintenance. He is survived by his wife, Lucille, and two children: Seth, serving with the Navy in the Pacific and Becky, presently a college student.

Among the Army aviators at the graveside service were two contemporaries: Colonel Delbert L. Bristol and Colonel J. Elmore Swenson, both of whom had been assigned to the Army Aviation Systems Command. Like Allcorn, both Bristol and Swenson had been pilots in the early days of Army Aviation when it was still the Air Observation Post.

## Endnotes

1. Besides Captain Allcorn, Captain Brenton A. DeVol, Jr. rode shotgun in a Cub flown by Lieutenant William H. Butler. The remaining Cub was piloted by Lieutenant John R. Shell.

2. USS Ranger (CV-4), launched February 25, 1933, was the first American flattop designed as a carrier from the keel up. Langley (CV-1) had been a converted coal collier, the Jupiter. Lexington (CV-2) and Saratoga (CV-3) had been originally designed as battle cruisers. In accordance with the limitations on naval armaments set forth by the Washington Naval Agreement of February 8, 1922, the pair's construction as surface combatants ceased and both were converted

to aircraft carriers.

3. It must be understood, too, that once Allcorn's flight took off from Ranger, absolute radio silence was a necessity because Ranger was the only fleet carrier available for Operation TORCH. Lexington had been lost at the battle of the Coral Sea on May 8, 1942. Yorktown (CV-5) had been lost at Midway, June 7, 1942. Wasp (CV-7) took the deep six off Espiritu Santo, September 15, 1942, torpedoes from the Japanese submarine I-15. And the gallant Hornet (CV-8), which had launched Doolittle's Raiders on April 18, 1942, was lost at the battle of Santa Cruz Islands, October 26, 1942. Saratoga and Enterprise (CV-6) were licking wounds incurred following battle actions in the Solomons; and none of the new Essex-class flattops were as yet in commission. Hence the Navy's reliance on converted tanker hulls as small carriers to supplement Ranger for TORCH.

4. See page 150, Chapter 5, "Initial Deployment and Combat in the North African and Mediterranean Theaters," *Eyes of Artillery: The Origins of Modern Army Aviation*, by Edgar F. Raines, Jr. Raines offers that Butler and DeVol had been captured by the Vichy French; while Lieutenant Shell managed to land his L-4 at the race track at Fedala.

---

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



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# Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Special Feature



## One Pretty Snake!

By Randy Duncan

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

*Editor's Note: The names of the CO and First Sergeant have been replaced with Doe and Jones respectively.*

Anyone who has ever been in the Army understands the relationship between the Company Commander, the First Sergeant and the men. It's a love/hate relationship. If the CO and Top were OK, it was also one of respect. We respected them and loved them, but we didn't like them very much. If we could embarrass them or put them in an embarrassing situation, we would. Especially if you were a Warrant Officer. Warrant Officers are different. They are somewhere between real officers and enlisted men. Sort of just out there; a class of their own. How many times did the CO say, "Those damned Warrant Officers?" But as officers they were given assignments beyond their MOS.

I was a Warrant Officer. While assigned to the 3rd Aviation Co. at Yuma Proving Grounds, I was given my choice of extra assignments. I used to tinker with cars quite a bit, so I chose maintenance. My duties included overseeing a great bunch of guys who knew a whole lot more about fixing helicopters than I ever would. I didn't have to do any real overseeing. They fixed 'em and I flew 'em. Perfect. In the winter of '71 it afforded me an opportunity I'll never forget.

Third Aviation Co. had borrowed three Cobras from an outfit in Texas and it came time to return them. The CO, then Major Doe, announced that he and First Sergeant Jones would be flying one of them. The lights went on and I discussed a plan with two real maintenance warrant officers, Bill Medsker and Chuck Goodroe. I went into the Old Man's office and told him that we had just replaced a transmission oil line on his Cobra and needed to be there when he cranked it up to make sure it didn't leak. I remember his reply as something like "Well, by God, you'd better be at the flight line at 0600 because that's when we lift off!" I saluted sharply and said, "Yes sir, we'll be there" then jumped in my car and headed for Yuma to find a department store that sold water-based paint and flower stickers. Big ones.

The next morning my two co-conspirators and I were waiting at the flight line when Major Doe and Sergeant Nick arrived. As they buckled in, we opened the transmission cowling doors. Major Doe cranked her up and we went to work. Bill and Chuck started pasting flower stickers on the side and I pulled out a quart of pre-mixed whitewash that I had hidden in my flight jacket. I painted a huge Peace Symbol on one side and wrote "Love" in giant letters on the other side. For contrast I named it "The War Wagon" in large lettering down the length of the tail boom. It was a well-coordinated effort. After a few minutes of observing the transmission we closed the doors and gave them a thumbs up.

Somehow a number of people had heard some rumors and were there to see them off, including the press! Noticing the crowd waving goodbye, Major Doe did a high hover and a few pedal turns to show off. This gave everyone a good look at the artwork. I know there were lots of pictures taken and I believe one or two ended up in the Post Gazette. I would appreciate hearing from someone who might have saved a copy. And I know there are others out there who can add to this story. It didn't end with their departure.

### Dale Abersold adds:

It was a long time ago, but I sure remember the incident. There had been some talk about it before but everyone tried to be discreet. After we took off for destinations to the east, it was hard to keep the bird straight and level because I was laughing a lot. The thought of Doe up in the front of the formation of three, chin stuck out, Dudley Do-Right leading us to Texas. His navigational abilities were not too good, however since I had to remind him one time that we were a couple of miles inside of Mexico. When we landed at our first refueling stop, he was really ticked off. I think there was some snow on the ground and he tried to clean off the paint with that, but it didn't do too much good. The second stop was for an RON and we had to clean it up before we went to the hotel. He was really cussing about those damn maintenance warrants.

Two more funny things happened on the flight. As we were nearing an Air Force base in Texas, Doe's radios went out and he called for me to take over the lead of the flight. I was just cooling it and had no idea where the airport was. We had no navigational radios and to top it off, my flight charts

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were behind me. The front seat guy was a crew chief and he couldn't control the aircraft so I was reaching back, trying my best to get the charts, and to keep the helicopter upright. I eventually got the charts so I knew what frequency to use for the radio, and I guessed at where we were and fortunately they saw us and gave us a radar vector. I think I had reported we were east, but we were almost due south.

The last incident was flying into Corpus Christi itself. Doe's radios were back operational, so he was leading the flight. As we came in we noticed a large formation of soldiers and civilians. It turns out that there was a large parade with a couple of generals in the VIP section. It sure would have been funny – and career ending – if we still had the peace symbol on the Cobra.

### Randy Duncan adds:

I was hoping for others to confirm it, but I seem to remember someone telling me that 1SG Jones talked Doe out of washing it with the snow on the ground at their first refueling stop because it would cause an *icing* condition.

Major Doe never retaliated. I think he enjoyed the limelight and I believe it boosted morale at Yuma Proving Grounds. We talked about it for a long time. Jones and I became good friends. He even invited me to the EM club one night for a few drinks. He ended up on the floor, but that's another story.

---

*Randy Duncan is a VHPA life member living in San Diego, CA; and Dale Abersold is a VHPA member living in Olympia, WA.*

## AVIATION SENIOR AND LEGACY LEADERS!



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# Got Skills?

By CSM (Ret.) Jim Thomson

In today's ever-evolving job market, pursuing a trade skill is a compelling alternative to traditional academic paths.

Trade skills often require less time and financial investment to master, and they also offer a high degree of job security, growth potential, and satisfaction.

### Why consider a job in the trades?

**Quick Entry into the Workforce.** Trade schools and apprenticeship programs typically require less time than a traditional four-year college degree. Most programs can be completed in two years or less, allowing individuals to enter the workforce quickly. This efficiency translates into earlier earnings and less student debt, enabling a smoother financial start.

### High Demand for Skilled Trades.

There is a growing demand for skilled trade workers across various industries. As experienced tradespeople retire, a significant gap must be filled, creating numerous job opportunities. Many trades are considered essential services, ensuring stable employment even during economic downturns.

### Competitive Salaries and Benefits.

Contrary to the common misconception that trades offer lower wages, many trade jobs provide competitive salaries that can exceed those of college graduates. Additionally, trades often come with comprehensive benefits packages, including health insurance, retirement plans, and paid time off, contributing to overall financial security and job satisfaction.



Senior Airman Angelica Gutierrez, 380th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron electrical systems journeyman, identifies wires in a junction box at Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates.

### Tangible and Fulfilling Work.

Working in the trades offers a sense of accomplishment from creating, repairing, or maintaining something tangible. This hands-on work can be highly satisfying, providing a direct understanding of contribution and impact.

Data analysis from the *U.S. Department of Labor*, *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*, *indeed*, and *Zippia* indicate a U.S. labor shortage in several construction trades and an emerging need for skills in the technology, medical, and sustainability fields. Currently, the top three sought-after trades in the U.S. are electricians, plumbers, and HVAC technicians.

**Electricians** are in high demand due to the constant need for electrical systems installation, maintenance, and repair in residential, commercial, and industrial settings. With advancements in technology and renewable energy sources, the role of electricians is becoming increasingly critical. (Hourly rate: \$23.49 to \$48.49)

**Plumbers** are essential for maintaining and repairing the infrastructure that delivers water and gas and removes waste. Their expertise is vital in the construction and maintenance sectors, ensuring that sanitation and heat-

ing systems function correctly. (Hourly rate: \$29.24 to \$52.63)

### Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) technicians

install, maintain, and repair climate control systems. As the demand for energy-efficient and environmentally friendly systems grows, so does the need for skilled HVAC technicians. (Hourly rate: \$26.20 to \$47.53)

Did you know that the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) Trade Schools, Licensing, and Certification (TLC) Foundation Inc., a Not-for-Profit 501c3, provides financial assistance in the form of grants to eligible AAAA members and their families pursuing a career in the trades? That's right. If you or someone you know is considering a vocation in the "blue-collar" skilled trades and seeks financial assistance for the costs of training, licensing, or certification, or if you'd like to donate to the AAAA TLC Foundation, learn more about how at the *AAAA TLC Foundation*.

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

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY SENIOR AIRMAN MIAMI CROSSBY

# Thank You for Your Support of Wreaths Across America

By MG (Ret.) Jessica Garfola Wright



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA, COURTESY PHOTO

On behalf of the Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) Scholarship Foundation, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our members for their unwavering support and generous sponsorship of wreaths through Wreaths Across America.

Your dedication and contributions have made a meaningful impact by honoring our fallen heroes and supporting the AAAA Scholarship Fund. As you know, the Scholarship Foundation receives a five-dollar donation for every sponsored wreath.

Every December, Wreaths Across America poignantly reminds us of the sacrifices made by servicemen and women. This initiative ensures that the graves of our nation's heroes are adorned with wreaths, a powerful symbol of remembrance and respect. Thanks to your generosity, thousands of wreaths were placed this year, creating a profound and moving tribute to those who served our country.

Your sponsorship goes beyond remembrance. By supporting this effort, you have also strengthened our AAAA Scholarship Fund, a cornerstone of our mission to provide educational scholarships for AAAA members and their families. The scholarship fund enables us to invest in the futures of students who aspire to make a difference, just as

their loved ones have through their service. Your contributions directly support these deserving individuals, allowing them to pursue their dreams and achieve academic excellence.

This year, we also had two generous donors who matched the first and second thousand dollars raised through wreath sponsorship: thank you, Jan Smith and Karen Lloyd. Your donations make a huge difference. Each AAAA member who sponsored a wreath highlights the deep commitment within our Aviation community to honor the past while investing in the future.

The impact of your support is immeasurable. For the families of our fallen, seeing their loved ones remembered through the simple yet profound gesture of a wreath brings comfort and a sense of pride. For our scholarship recipients, your generosity represents opportunity and hope, empowering them to strive for excellence and uphold the legacy of service.

As we reflect on this year's accomplishments, we find inspiration in the



MG, JESSICA WRIGHT PERSONAL PHOTO

strength of our Aviation family and the enduring bonds that connect us. Your support is a powerful reminder of our Aviation community, whether deployed or at home. You are the difference made when we unite for a common purpose.

Thank you for embodying the spirit of giving and being steadfast champions of the Scholarship Foundation. We have honored the past, supported the present, and invested in the future. We look forward to continuing this journey with you in the years ahead.

With gratitude,  
Jessica Wright

*MG (Ret.) Jessica Garfola Wright is a subcommittee member of the AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc. Fundraising Committee.*



## AAAA Chapter Affairs By LTC (Ret.) Jan Drabczuk

*I greatly appreciate the support from LTC Derrick Jennings, the ShowMe Chapter President, for authoring and sharing this information to our membership.*



# The ShowMe Chapter



CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

Activated in May 1998, the ShowMe Chapter serves over 1,300 Aviation Warfighters and their families assigned to the 35th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade (ECAB), the 1107th Aviation Group, and the Missouri AVCRAD Shop.

The 35th ECAB and the 1107th Aviation Group both have dual missions: to deploy under Title 10 authority as part of the greater Joint Force and to deploy stateside under the direction of the governor to conduct domestic operations.

The 35th ECAB, consisting of war trace units spread across the US, has been deployed three times to the Central Command (CENTCOM) theater. In Missouri, the 35th ECAB consists of the 1-135th Assault Battalion and the 935th Aviation Support Battalion. Additionally, subordinate to the 35th ECAB are B(-), 1-376th S&S, Det 2, G-Co, 2-238th Avn (MEDEVAC), & Det 2, C-Co, 2-245th Avn (FW).

The 1107th Aviation Group is one of only four Theater Aviation Support Maintenance Groups (TASMG) in the Army's inventory and has deployed seven times to the CENTCOM Theater since the start of OIF in 2003. The Missouri AVCRAD Shop is the limited depot maintenance TDA unit of the TASMG that supports a 14-state region of National Guard Aviation units with a total of 369 aircraft.

### Key Events and Initiatives

In March 2023, the ShowMe Chapter conducted its first annual Aviation Ball at the Lodge of the Four Seasons in Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. The Chapter graciously hosted over 300 Soldiers, family members, and retirees for a night of recognition, reconnecting, and reminiscing. The ShowMe Chapter was honored to host the AAAAA President, MG(Ret.) Tim Crosby as their guest speaker. The highlight of the evening was awarding several of their Aviation Warfighters the Order of St. Michael for their exceptional contributions to the Army

*The ShowMe Chapter sponsored an IERW selection Board.*

Aviation Enterprise. The Chapter hosted their second annual ball in March 2024 with an equally large and energetic crowd. At the 2024 ball, the ShowMe Chapter hosted BG(Ret.) Ray Davis, a member of the AAAAA National Executive Board, who presented the ShowMe Chapter's first Order of St. Michael Gold awardee to BG Charlie Hausman, the former commander of the 35th ECAB.

The Chapter sponsors a social event twice annually as part of the Missouri National Guard's two-day IERW selection board. The social event allows IERW candidates to network with recent IERW graduates to learn the rigors of Army flight school and for candidates to gain perspectives on Army Aviation from seasoned Army Aviators.

The ShowMe Chapter continually looks to educate its members on the benefits of AAAAA, and several members have taken advantage of the scholarship opportunities. The Chapter continues to grow its membership by encouraging new and old Aviation comrades to join AAAAA. Additionally, they have taken advantage of the one-year free memberships for deployed servicemembers to help increase their membership. As a result, the Chapter has realized an increase in membership of 67% in the past 18 months. The Chapter continues efforts to raise awareness of AAAAA and their membership.

### Conclusion and Invitation

The ShowMe remains dedicated to the four initiatives displayed in the AAAAA logo. They create Networking opportunities for their Soldiers and Families, emphasize Recognition through AAAAA awards, Support their future aviators through sponsorship opportunities, and remain their Voice for Army Aviation at the National level.

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 AAAAA magazine, or to obtain clarification of National procedures.

LTC (Ret.) Jan S. Drabczuk  
 AAAAA VP for Chapter Affairs  
[jan.drabczuk@quad-a.org](mailto:jan.drabczuk@quad-a.org)



## AAAA Chapter News

### Grizzly Chapter Feeds Over 700 Vets for Free



CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

In partnership with Fresno State and the California Army National Guard, the Army Aviation Association of America – Grizzly Chapter (Central Valley) fed over 700 Veteran’s for Free at the September 14, 2024 Fresno State University “HEROES NIGHT,” Football Game. The 1106th TASMG from the California ARNG landed a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter on the soccer field on the East side of the football stadium before kickoff as a static display and flew a CH-47F over the football stadium after the National Anthem was sung. The HEROES NIGHT game is a great opportunity for the chapter to support and recognize all Veteran’s from the Central Valley. The chapter also organized a flag football game between the 40th Combat Aviation Brigade and the 1106th TASMG known as the “Wrenches vs Rotors,” Bowl. Both teams were quarterbacked by former Fresno State QBs. Former #1 NFL Draft Pick David Carr and former Fresno State QB Marcus McMaryion. Finally, the chapter gave a \$500 scholarship to Mr. Gonzalez who is a former Marine Avionics Mechanic and is a current Student Veteran attending Fresno State and is working on his Electrical Engineering degree.

### Washington Potomac Chapter Recognizes DACs of the Quarter



CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

The Washington-Potomac Chapter 2nd and 3rd Quarter, FY24 Department of the Army Civilian of the Quarter awards were presented to Mr. Isaac Perry (3rd from left) and Mr. Jose Soto-Echevarria (2nd from

left), respectively, on September 18th, 2024 at Davison Army Airfield, Fort Belvoir, VA. The awards were presented by (from left to right), COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow, President of the AAAA Washington-Potomac Chapter, Mr. James Boyd, Chief of Staff, The U.S. Army Aviation Brigade (TAAB), and COL Andy DeForest, Commander, TAAB. Mr. Perry, as the Supervisory Logistics Management Specialist for the TAAB S-4, and Mr. Soto-Echevarria, as a TAAB Training Specialist, were recognized for their outstanding support to the unit’s Soldiers and their relentless dedication to mission accomplishment.

## ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL INDUCTEES

### Colonial Virginia Chapter



CHAPTER PHOTO BY KELLY J. MHALCOE

**Mr. Robert A. “Bob” Tamplet** is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael with his wife, Donna, by his side on August 29, 2024 in Jamestown, VA by COL Paul Moreshead (right), 128th Aviation Brigade commander. Tamplet was recognized for more than 45 years of service culminating as the deputy to the 128th Avn. Bde. commander. Pictured (l to r) are: CW5 Don Chambers, brigade command chief warrant officer, Mr. Will Cristy-Department of the Army Civilian, executive officer of 1st Bn., 210th Avn. Regt., the Tamplets, and COL Moreshead. Tamplet will continue serving as a contractor in the Aviation and Safety Division, Army National Guard, Arlington, VA.

### Connecticut Chapter



CHAPTER PHOTO BY SGT MIE JUSTO

**LTC Christopher J. Barker** is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael

and his wife, **Melissa Barker**, is inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto, on December 8, 2024 at the Windsor Locks Readiness Center by COL Stephan Nowakowski and CSM Tony Savino, the commander and command sergeant major of the 1109th Theater Aviation Support Maintenance Group. The Barkers were recognized for his successful command of the 1st Bn., 169th Avn. Regt. and her support for her husband the family support programs of the battalion.

### Mid Atlantic Chapter



CHAPTER PHOTO BY CSM SCOTT SAUER

**CSM Thomas J. Suraci** is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter senior VP, COL David Paolucci and COL Louis Hawkins, commander 29th Cbt. Avn. Bde. on Dec. 7, 2024 at Weide Army Aviation Support Facility, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD. Suraci was recognized for his support of Army Aviation while serving as the 29 CAB CSM as he retires and continues his service as the National Guard Bureau Regional Aviation Phase Sustainment Center Program Manager.

### Southern California Chapter



CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

**Ms. Erin Letson** is inducted into the Honorable Order of Our Lady of Loreto on Dec. 7, 2024 by chapter president, LTC (Ret.) John Hendrickson, for her continuous and outstanding support to AAAA and the chapter especially her support to the annual Adopt-A-Military Family Christmas present drive for Army Aviation soldiers stationed at the Joint Forces Training Base, Los Alamitos, CA.



## Tennessee Valley Chapter



CHAPTER PHOTO BY MOLLY HALL

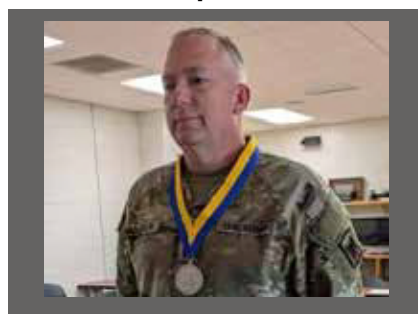
**Mr. Kent Smith** is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael on Dec. 12, 2024 in Huntsville, AL, by chapter VP Awards, CSM (Ret.) Randy Wise. Smith was recognized for his 37 years of service culminating with his achievements as the survivability lead for the Future Attack Reconnaissance Aircraft Project Office.



CHAPTER PHOTO BY SHERY DORNER

**Mr. Scott West** is inducted as a Knight of the Honorable Order of St. Michael by Mr. Jeff Watteau, deputy threat warning product director, PM Aircraft Survivability Equipment on Dec. 5, 2024 in Huntsville, AL. West was recognized for his 32 years as a Department of the Army Civilian working as an engineer and test lead in the PM ASE Project Management Office.

## Thunderbird Chapter



CHAPTER PHOTO BY SSG ROBERT W. SLIPPEY

**SGM Nathan R. Schussler** is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by CW5 Ryan Eyre (not pictured), ARNG Aviation Resource Management Survey Evaluation Team Lead, on Sept. 22, 2024 at the Army Aviation Support Facility #2, Jackson, MS. Schussler was recognized for his 33 years of service to Army aviation, including his present role as Maintenance Lead, Reply by Endorsement (RBE) Coordinator, ARNG ARMS Evaluation Team.

## Washington Potomac Chapter



CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

**CW5 Matthew Ingmire** is inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael by chapter president, COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow, COL Aaron Schilleci, ARNG Avn. & Safety Div. chief, and SGM Derrick Kuhns, Sr. Enlisted Advisor to the ARNG Assistant Director of Aviation, Intelligence & Information. Ingmire was recognized for his 30 years of Army Aviation service culminating as the ARNG Aviation Maintenance Officer.



CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

**1SG (Ret.) Harry Hall** is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by

chapter president, COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow, COL Aaron Schilleci, ARNG Avn. & Safety Div. chief, and SGM Derrick Kuhns, Sr. Enlisted Advisor to the ARNG Assistant Director of Aviation, Intelligence & Information. Hall was recognized for nearly 5 decades of military and civilian service, to include his current achievements as Management and Program Analyst and primary Operational Needs Statement processor/validator for Army National Guard Aviation.



CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

**Mr. Mark Ward** is inducted into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael by COL Brendan Cullinan, Commander of The Army Aviation Brigade (TAAB) and COL (Ret.) Ron Lukow, chapter president, on August 9th, 2024 at Davison Army Airfield, Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Ward was recognized for his excellence and unwavering dedication as Chief Flight Surgeon with the TAAB ensuring the more than 650 Soldiers and DA Civilians had unfettered access to the highest standard of medical resources available.

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

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 AAAA Idaho Snake River Chapter  
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 AAAA Mid-Atlantic Chapter  
 AAAA Minuteman Chapter  
 AAAA Mohawk Chapter  
 AAAA Mount Rainier Chapter  
 AAAA North Star Chapter  
 AAAA North Texas Chapter  
 AAAA Oregon Chapter  
 AAAA Phantom Corps Chapter  
 AAAA Prairie Soldier Chapter  
 AAAA Southern California Chapter  
 AAAA Tarheel Chapter  
 AAAA Tennessee Valley Chapter  
 AAAA Washington Potomac-Chapter  
 AAPI  
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 Art & Jenn Agnew  
 Air Shelters USA, LLC (ZUMRO)  
 Airbus U.S. Space & Defense, Inc.  
 Aircrafters, LLC  
 American Creek Landowner's Association  
 Laura & Jon Arena  
 Janis Arena  
 Army Aviation Association of America  
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 Aseptic Health  
 Shannon E. Austin  
 Gerald Babor  
 Charles D. Bayless  
 Thomas Beck  
 Belkin International  
 Bell Textron Inc.  
 Joseph & Helen Bergantz  
 The Boeing Company  
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 Fred Bonyadian  
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 BT Mack  
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 Luann J Burnham-IHO COL John March  
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 Capital Interior Contractors, Inc.  
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 Collins Aerospace  
 Commonwealth Turbocharger  
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 Patrick F. Curran-IHO Fallen Aviation  
 Brethren  
 Davidson Brown, Inc.  
 Gail Davis-IHO Don and Ruth Luce  
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 Robert L. Davis, Jr.  
 Walter L. Davis  
 Anthony Denogean  
 Richard L. Dickerson-IHO Dotty  
 Kesten  
 Todd Digeronimo  
 DigiFlight, Inc.  
 Dominion Energy  
 Gail & Jan Drabczuk  
 Angela & Paul Duff  
 The Dustoff Association  
 Timothy J. Edens  
 James Emerson-IHO Sandra  
 Emerson  
 ESS-Eye Safety Systems  
 Facility Engineering Associates, P.C.  
 Teresa Ferraro  
 Michael C. Flowers  
 FORTS Services  
 Laura Lee Fortunato  
 James G. Freeman  
 Craig Gable-IHO COL Gary L. David  
 Jenny & Paul Gale  
 Galvion  
 GE Aerospace  
 George J. Gluski-IHO COL Gary David  
 Gerard J. Golofski  
 George C. Goodman, Jr.  
 Jacqueline & Thomas Gordon  
 Mary Gorman Trust-IHO William H.  
 Gorman  
 Jon Graft  
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Daniel and Jeannine Hale  
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 Helibasket LLC  
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 Kathryn's High Tea  
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 Beth N. Kramer  
 Ronald Kurowsky  
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 Jerry Leehy  
 Shane C. Leipertz  
 Karen Lloyd  
 Lockheed Martin  
 Missy & Brenton Logan  
 Timothy A. Lunger  
 Joel S. Magsig  
 Benjamin  
 Tommy L. Marks  
 Stephen T. Mauro  
 Patricia McBride-IHO COL Gary David  
 Mathew K. McCauley  
 Charles E. McCormick  
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 MG and Mrs. Carl H McNair, Ret.  
 Jane F. Merryman-IHO Joyce Hesson  
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 Mission First Services, LLC  
 Stephen & Gail Mundt  
 Donald T. Munsch, Munsch & Co.  
 Aeromechanics  
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 Network for Good  
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 Fredric F. Robins  
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 Kenneth Todd Royar  
 Nicholas Ryan-IHO CPT Luke Yustin  
 S3-System Studies & Simulation  
 Latny & Jonathan Salt  
 Pat J Salvo-IHO COL Gary David  
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 Christopher Wimsatt  
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IHO – In Honor Of

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



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

## The Membership Corner

Some of you know that our oldest son, Dylan Chambers, is in flight school. I had the pleasure of attending Dylan’s flight school class’s family day and was able to meet his stick buddy, WO1 Nik Sanso.

WO1 Sanso grew up in Greenville, SC, with his younger brother Xastin Sanso and sister Bonny (Maggie) Sanso. Their parents separated when they were young, but they were so blessed to have the best of both worlds. Nik cannot imagine growing up any other way. His brother is the only immediate family that has served in the military, he was a firefighter at Nellis AFB, Las Vegas, NV. He had some older cousins that joined the services as well. Nik obtained a BA in Criminal Justice from The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina.

Nik decided to join the Army because he arrived at a point in his life where he felt like he would regret not following what was set in his heart to do. His favorite lesson learned from The Citadel was that to become a great leader you first must become a good follower, and that is forged into you in the first year, which ultimately led him to enlist with the intention on pursuing a Commission.

Nik enlisted in 2015 in the Infantry and served 4 years in 1BCT at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA. It was an amazing experience, and he owes a lot of his Army leadership development and Soldier fundamentals to the lifestyle and mentality that derives from the leadership and soldiers he had in the Infantry. Near the end of his first enlistment, Nik felt like he could do “more” and briefly thought about getting out and trying to pursue Federal Law Enforcement. However, he was accepted into the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) in 2019, graduated as a Special Agent in 2020, and served 4 more years at Ft. Campbell, KY. CID was truly an amazing experience, he felt like he contributed to a lot of good things for the Army and the local community in pursuit of the CID mission. He would like to say thank you to the good men and women of law enforcement.

Nik decided to apply and try to become an Aviator when that “itch” to do something “more” as a Soldier became a nagging thought that he would, again, regret not trying. He prayed about his next move and ended up on a “gnarly” training mission the next day that began on UH-60s. Nik knew immediately that flying would be his next move and would like to fly CH-47’s.

As for transitioning from enlisted to warrant, Nik shared that there has been a change in his mentality towards his projected appearance of being seen as a Soldier who can get things done to a Soldier that seemingly possesses some



RODRIGUEZ PERSONAL PHOTO

WO1 Nik Sanso (right) and his stick buddy, WO1 Dylan Chambers. Both are proud members of AAAA.

unique knowledge or skills and can teach, lead, and advise competently.

Nik has too many to thank by name for mentoring him in his career but shared this with me. First and foremost, his faith in God, followed by the love and support of his family and friends, and the good leadership, bad leadership, good soldiers, bad soldiers, good friends, bad friends, great situations and not so great situations, all of which have impacted the development of who he is as a person, and he is very grateful.

When asked why it’s important to belong to a professional organization like the Army Aviation Association, Nik replied, “There is a saying that “knowledge is power” and being a part of an organization that extends across so many aspects of the community continuously builds a wealth of knowledge that, especially for those just getting involved, may not have ever even become an afterthought. Having access to, or being involved in, or contributing to such a diverse platform only helps to make people better.”

CW4 Becki Chambers  
AAAA Vice President for Membership



**New AAAA Life Members**

*Aviation Center Chapter*  
CW5 Michael L. Lewis, Jr. Ret.  
*Grizzly Chapter*  
Ms. Anna-Jane Lewis  
*Savannah Chapter*  
CAPT Kurt Hartley  
*Volunteer Chapter*  
CSM Gary W. Bailey

**New AAAAMembers**

*Air Assault Chapter*  
CW3 Caleb Grandy  
*Aloha Chapter*  
LTC Matthew McNeal  
*Aviation Center Chapter*  
WO1 Matthew P. Alfeiri  
2LT Michael S. Ashley  
2LT Nicholas E. Atkinson  
2LT Samuel F. Aycock  
2LT Skyler J. Bachman  
2LT Samuel G. Baldwin  
2LT Shai E. Bennett  
WO1 Allison R. Bister  
2LT Zachary T. Bone  
WO1 James C. Bradley  
WO1 Devyn T. Brass  
WO1 Malcolm L. Brelpreston  
2LT Adler W. Briningger  
2LT Ryan A. Brockington  
WO1 Jackson T. Buffington  
2LT Jacob F. Bukowski  
WO1 Christopher C. Burrell  
WO1 Devin A. Caravetta  
2LT Gabriel E. Castillo del Muro  
2LT Gunar L. Daniels  
2LT Andrew W. Davis  
WO1 Alec M. Delzer  
2LT Quentin A. Destailleur  
2LT Joshua R. Dotson  
2LT Kyle A. Elbert  
WO1 Jesse Fishinghawk  
2LT Thomas A. Frazier  
WO1 Jaren T. Fry  
WO1 Jacob G. Fuchs  
2LT Emma E. Genter  
2LT Anthony M. Gibson  
WO1 Tanner D. Goins  
2LT Sylvia R. Goldsmith  
WO1 Bryan C. Graham  
WO1 David A. Greer  
WO1 Kyle J. Hadley  
2LT Charles R.D. Hill  
WO1 Jalen C. Hoeldtke  
2LT Aiden O. Hopping  
2LT Clayton C. House  
WO2 Najair K. Jackson  
2LT Taisyn K. Kavhaahaa  
WO1 Brian T. Kennedy  
2LT Cade M. Knox  
2LT Tricia C. Lee  
2LT Zahraa K. Leonhardt  
2LT Isaac D. Lerner  
WO1 Jonathan R. Little  
WO1 Francisco A. Lugo Ortiz  
WO1 Rahanskas Lukas  
2LT Nicholas R. Machowicz  
WO1 Evan J. McClure  
WO1 Brian C. Melenorez  
1LT Johannes Michel  
2LT Fabian Moench  
WO1 Bailey A. Moore  
WO1 Logan G. Morris  
WO1 Shane G. Nelson  
2LT Gary W. Oliver  
2LT Remus T. Padilla  
WO1 Jonathan P. Painter  
Mr. Justo Perez, III  
WO1 Eric N. Perper  
2LT Micah P. Poor  
2LT Theodore M. Race  
WO1 Austen J. Ramirez

WO1 Travis D. Rogers  
WO1 Andrew J. Sayre  
Mr. Andrew V. Smith  
2LT Kenneth J. Smith  
1LT Cydnee R. Somera  
WO1 Hunter S. Soreide  
2LT Samuel W. Stowell  
WO2 Aubrey M. Stuber  
CW4 Chris Thorn  
WO1 Thomas B. Tipton  
2LT Joseph R. Walker  
2LT Elijah C. Wallace  
WO1 Thomas J. Weems  
2LT Nicholas A. Wentling  
2LT Riley C. Worshek  
WO1 Jared J. Wurst  
WO1 Ian A. Zaeske  
*Bavarian Chapter*  
SSG Javier Resto  
CW3 Hai Ha Vu  
*Big Sky Chapter*  
CW4 JD Nose  
*Central Florida Chapter*  
SPC Christopher Francis  
*Colonial Virginia Chapter*  
LTC Jeff Rains, Ret.  
*Connecticut Chapter*  
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Mr. Philip J. Mader, P.E.  
Mr. Matt Renninghoff  
*Corpus Christi Chapter*  
Matt Chapman  
*Free Dominion Chapter*  
CW5 Richard G. Brown  
*Frontier Army Chapter*  
PV2 Isaac Landon Alvarado  
MSG James Michael Wilson, Ret.  
*Great Lakes Chapter*  
Mr. John Arnold  
Mr. Austin Lloyd  
Mr. Ricardo Rodriguez  
PFC Gracelynn Marie Shattuck  
Mrs. Jamie Stinson  
Mr. Mike Topoly  
*Greater Atlanta Chapter*  
Ms. Maggie Akins  
Mr. Tom Holst  
Mr. Blake Ladd  
Mr. Dalton Rawson  
Mr. Sam Ray  
Mr. Chris Starr  
*Griffin Chapter*  
SPC Garrett E. Borini  
CW2 Zane J. Brandes  
SGT Jacob D. Brown  
CPL Christopher C. Carr  
Mrs. Denise A. Diaz  
SSG Christopher R. Doyle  
CPL Luis N. Echemendia  
WO1 Travis A. Edwards  
CPL Aiden S. Goddara  
SSG Sierra S. Guthrie  
CW2 Shawn M. Hoose  
SGT Tyler R. Laird  
SGT Dillon R. Lane  
SGT Long H. Le  
SPC Jacob M. Leal  
CPL Mason A. Logdahl  
WO1 Hunter J. McLachlan  
SPC Dalton L. Mitchell  
WO1 Chase A. Peters  
CW2 Stephen Z. Pfister  
WO1 Dakota D. Phillips  
CW3 Zachary S. Pickard  
CW2 Matthew T. Rappisi  
CW4 Amanda G. Rast  
WO1 Dario Ribin  
CPL Nathaniel A. Ritchie  
WO1 Jonathan R. Rivera  
PFC Joshua R. Sousa  
PFC Jake P. Story  
WO1 Kevin L. Stowe  
1LT Jack H. Thomsen  
CPT Spencer L. Welton  
SGT Timothy M. Yenter

**FALLEN HEROES**

*AAAA is saddened to announce the recent loss of an Aviation Soldier.*



PFC Edwin Thomas

**OCONUS**

2nd Infantry Division announced the flight-related death of a helicopter repair soldier assigned to the 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade in South Korea. **PFC Edwin Thomas**, 20, was pronounced dead at 12:13 p.m. on Dec. 19 at the Brian D. Allgood Army Community Hospital at Camp Humphreys, where he was taken after an accident earlier that day.

Thomas, a CH-47 Chinook helicopter repairer, joined the U.S. Army in August 2023 and had been assigned to 3rd Battalion, 2nd Aviation Regiment since April 2024.

No further information is available and the accident is presently under investigation.

May he rest in peace.

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

CW2 Zachary G. Ylander  
SFC Jose L. Zarate  
*Grizzly Chapter*  
Ms. Stephanie Dias  
Ms. Anna-Jane Lewis  
SPC Meybellin Osuna-Hernandez  
SSG Junior Thao  
*Iowa Chapter*  
Mrs. Monica Lyons  
*Jimmy Doolittle Chapter*  
Ms. Esther Hall  
Ms. Alexandra Harris  
*Keystone Chapter*  
Dr. Samuel Collins  
Vinson Nash  
*Lonestar Chapter*  
MSG Charles Lee Cox, III  
SFC Eric Mena  
*MacArthur Chapter*  
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*Magnolia Chapter*  
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*Mid-Atlantic Chapter*  
SPC Jaheim Damian Murphy  
Ms. April Perry  
Ms. Jennifer Quinones  
MAJ John B. Swift, Ret.  
*Minuteman Chapter*  
Ms. Erin Donlan  
Mr. Dan Gordon  
SFC Richard Sokolowski  
*Mohawk Chapter*  
SGT Stephen Erickson  
*Narragansett Bay Chapter*  
Mrs. Tracy Levesque  
*North Country Chapter*  
Timothy Duddleston  
CW4 Michael Pracht  
SGT Coltin Waibel  
*North Star Chapter*  
Mark Peloski  
Joshua Ranfranz  
SFC Tanner Walker  
*North Texas Chapter*

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Mr. Nick Khoury  
SSG Victor Lara  
SSG Mario Lugo  
SSG Manuel Salyers  
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*Phantom Corps Chapter*  
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MAJ Sarah Christie Kelley  
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Ms. Megan Barnett  
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Mr. Joe Greene  
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Mr. Charles Jesse  
SPC Shelagh Mansfield  
Mr. Michael Heath Montgomery  
PV2 Jackson Ryan Rielly  
Mr. Rick Shaffer  
Mr. Art Sharpe  
Ms. Sheree M. Simms  
Mrs. Katherine Sketo  
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Mr. Jordan West  
CPT Kathryn Winski  
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Ashley Weber  
Mr. Sean Whisenhunt  
*Utah Chapter*  
LTC Penny McCarthy  
PFC Conner Z. Nelson  
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CSM Gary W. Bailey  
CW3 Douglas Burchfield  
CW2 Nathan Dungan  
SGT Nicholas Kannard  
CMSgt Joseph Lilly  
SGT Edward McAdams  
CW2 Zachary Mccoin  
SGT David R. Starks  
CPL David Williams  
SFC Thomas Yates  
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SFC Major Jerome Wilburn  
*Wright Brothers Chapter*  
SPC Taylor Elean Dively  
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CAPT Matthew Perley  
Mr. Stephen D. Smith, Jr.  
*Zia Chapter*  
CW3 Brian Philipbar  
*No Chapter Affiliation*  
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Mr. Jeff Berger  
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Mr. John Bylsma  
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# AAA

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## AAA Family Forum By Judy Konitzer

# A Big Welcome to Our Foreign-Born Spouses

Life can be challenging for any new spouse marrying into today's military, but for foreign born spouses (no current number established), it adds an extra layer of stress. Many times, these spouses feel like fish out of water.

Their native community doesn't always understand what they will be or are currently experiencing, and their new military 'tribe' sometimes doesn't understand their customs or why they do things the way they do.

There are somewhat simple things like being bombarded by acronyms and unfamiliar American expressions; living on or near a military base with personnel walking around in uniforms or helicopters flying overhead all hours of the day and night; learning to drive to include driving on the opposite side of the road; converting measurements when ordering groceries like deli meats in pounds vs. kilos; interpreting recipes from American cookbooks; translating words in your head before saying them out loud; sending thank you cards versus just saying thank you; mingling at military events; or even more challenges such as transferring international degrees or obtaining employment, especially if they require security clearances of any kind; becoming citizens if desired; or having a family without your closest relatives for support.

In 2017, Swedish Juliette Ramberg de Ruyter, a Marine Corps spouse, founded the Foreign Military Spouse Association (FMSA) [www.foreignmilitaryspouse.com](http://www.foreignmilitaryspouse.com) whose mission is to provide a safe space where you can connect with others who share similar experiences and access essential resources no matter where the military takes you. All foreign spouses or fiancées of active duty, retired military and gold star can apply for membership in this online group, where no sensitive information is shared, no fundraising or advertising is allowed, and no legal

advice is given. The group currently has 4901 members from over 60 countries with 76% having college degrees. Their recent survey indicated that members' biggest challenges involve adapting to the culture, the process of immigration, and finding employment with 36% currently unemployed involuntarily. Some reasons for this occurs because degrees from their home countries were invalid in the U.S., being unfamiliar with the job market, employers not recognizing foreign work experiences, citizenship, or visa regulations that limit employment options, and language barriers.

After her Soldier husband retired, Lydia Owti-Otienoh born in Kenya with a law degree from there, did a fellowship with Blue Star Families. While performing research, she found her purpose advocating for foreign born spouses, so they don't have to endure the challenges she encountered. In 2022, she created *The Foreign-Born Military Spouse Network*, <https://fbmnetwork.com>. Her online *Playbook* offers step by step guidance and important information and resources to help spouses adapt and thrive. Among many useful chapters are Immigration with Legal Hurdles, Employment and Career Obstacles, Child-care and Family Support, and Cultural Adjustments.

While commanders and family support groups should be on the front line to welcome and help assimilate foreign born wives, these organizations have also stepped up to help.

My good friend from Verona, Italy shared thoughts about culture differences being a young bride in San Antonio

in 1966. She felt welcomed to the 'Tribe' even though everyone in their group drank coffee and smoked so she did this to fit in too. A neighbor drove her to the hospital for the birth of their first child when her husband was in OCS. She was enthralled by the vastness of the Texas countryside seeing cattle sunning under trees because in Italy cattle were kept in stables. She learned common expressions while watching TV. Early outings involved dressing up going to the Post Office to mail letters home. She was horrified when asked to make "Porcupine balls" calling for 2 pounds of meat thinking it called for real porcupines! and making her first whole turkey with dressing vs stuffing?? Casual dinners using paper plates and napkins vs Italian dinners using placemats and silver was an eye-opener too. She made adjustments but, in the end "You sacrifice, You learn, and all the while you can still stay true to your heritage and cultural pride," and she would not have ever traded it for anything. Our hope is for all our foreign-born spouses to feel the same.

*Judy Konitzer is the family forum editor for ARMY AVIATION; questions and suggestions can be directed to her at [judy@quad-a.org](mailto:judy@quad-a.org).*

### UPCOMING AAAA EVENTS

#### FEBRUARY 2025

11-12 **AAAA Luther G. Jones Army Aviation Depot Forum, Corpus Christi, TX**

25-26 National Uncrewed Aerial Vehicle Summit, San Diego, CA

#### MARCH 2025

27-29 36th Annual Women in Aviation International Conference, Denver CO

# AAAA Awards



## Order of St. Michael 11/31/24

### Silver

*Air Assault Chapter*  
COL Clinton R. Cody  
*Aloha Chapter*  
CW5 James Hill  
*Bayou Chapter*  
CW4 Jeffrey N. Ballew  
*Iron Mike Chapter*  
CW5 Jason K. Rayburn  
*Phantom Corps Chapter*  
SFC Phuong N. Dinh  
*Ragin' Cajun Chapter*  
CSM Christopher E. Burris  
*Rio Grande Chapter*  
CW5 Mark R. Villanueva  
*Show Me Chapter*  
CW4 Gregory D. Carter  
*Washington-Potomac Chapter*  
COL Brendan J. Cullinan

### Bronze

*Air Assault Chapter*  
SFC Joe T. Archer  
MAJ Matthew B. Conner  
1SG Wesley C. Shoemaker  
*Aviation Center Chapter*  
SFC Geoffrey Ehl  
MSG Jon Fagan  
COL Susan R.E. Fondy  
Susan Ginn  
CW3 Matthew H. Govan  
CPT Derek U. Hirsch  
MSG Robert F. McGee  
CW4 Matthew T. McGuffey  
CPT John "Logan" Meehan  
Clyde D. Smith  
MAJ Michael W. Stultz  
*Central Florida Chapter*  
CW4 Aaron E. Floyd  
*Colonial Virginia Chapter*  
SSG Rodney James Borja  
LTC Matthew L. Brown  
SSG Shanell L. Chablat  
SFC John A. Culqui  
CW4 Kyle O. Davis  
SSG Jeremiah Kulkay  
CPT Marie R. Ledon  
SFC Bernice Myers  
CPT David C. Piatt  
CW3 Marc L. Rothman  
MAJ David M. Shanahan  
SSG Robert Simpson  
SSG Adrian A. Thenstead  
CW5 Mark R. Tucker  
SSG Jazel A. Yadao  
*Flint Hills Chapter*  
CW4 Craig Bakies  
MAJ Michael A. Hurst

SGM Jeremy D. Weatherwax  
*Follow Me Chapter*  
CW2 Kenneth Robinson  
*Gold Standard Chapter*  
CW4 Joe Beaver Jr., Ret.  
*Iron Mike Chapter*  
CW2 Miguel Beltre  
SSG Jon Bodi  
CW2 Anthony Hackett  
MAJ Justin M. Lock  
SFC Christopher Miller  
CW4 Joshua Price  
SSG Mardi Topping  
SFC Marko E. Zarkovic  
CW4 Angel W. Zenon, Jr.  
*Jimmy Doolittle Chapter*  
LTC Jonathon L. Norris  
*Minuteman Chapter*  
CW4 Matthew F. Duggan  
MSG Asia Edwards-Jaeger  
CPT Anthony Fattman  
CPT Patrick J. Foley  
CW4 Ryan Georgenes  
MAJ James Gillespie  
CW3 Issac Gomez  
CW2 James Harney  
SGT Wesley LeBlanc  
SSG Greg Macleod  
SFC Richard Sokolowski  
CW3 Eric Varela  
CSM Clint Wilson  
*Morning Calm Chapter*  
CW4 Robert E. Bellisario  
CW3 Joshua A. Coate  
CPT Joseph A. Guy  
CPT Bradley T. Hornick  
*Mount Rainier Chapter*  
CW3 Luke M. Leineweber  
MAJ Kevin Robillard  
*Phantom Corps Chapter*  
SFC Johnny G. Bagwell  
CW2 Christopher A. Butler  
SFC Thomas A. Gorman  
CW3 Jarrel K. Kaaloo  
SFC Ruben Montalvo  
Prairie Soldier Chapter  
CW4 Richard Davis  
*Rising Sun Chapter*  
Kekua A. Aumua  
SSG Frederick G. Hofmeister  
CW2 Joseph Rowe  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
SFC Selwyn A. James, Jr.  
Gilbert (Mark) L. Murray  
MAJ Maria M. Orozco  
Daniel Suggs  
*Thunder Mountain Chapter*  
MAJ Matthew S. Ingerson  
SSG Anthony E. Soto  
*Thunderbird Chapter*  
CW5 Roy E. Brown III  
1SG Robert T. Calvert  
Julio Dominguez  
CW3 Brian K. Gage  
LTC Christopher K. Lackey  
CW5 Dustin L. McNeely  
*Utah Chapter*  
SGT Trevor Carson  
SFC Riley Ek  
CW4 Christopher Ryan  
CW4 Brant Wayment  
*Washington-Potomac Chapter*

CW3 Joy Byrnes  
CPT Samantha R. DeCapua  
John M. Jacocks  
LTC Orest W. Luciw  
CPT James D. Rood  
CW2 Mark A. Ward, Ret.  
**Order of St. Michael 12-31-24**  
**Gold**

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*Savannah Chapter*  
CW5 Wade C. Ziegler  
**Silver**  
*Aloha Chapter*  
LTC Bonnie L. Belobrajdic  
CW4 Charles Villanida  
*Colonial Virginia Chapter*  
SGM William C. Trost  
*Iron Mike Chapter*  
CW5 Bryan C. Elwood  
*Utah Chapter*  
CW5 Jared Jones  
*Washington-Potomac Chapter*  
COL Phillip Mazingo  
COL Mark Ott

### Bronze

*Air Assault Chapter*  
CPT Richard G. Fischl  
MSG Daniel R. Jetter  
CW4 Jerry Leehy  
*Aloha Chapter*  
CW4 Jody Jones, Ret.  
*Aviation Center Chapter*  
SFC Christopher Jung  
SSG James E. Lark, Jr.  
*Colonial Virginia Chapter*  
SSG Luis F. del Valle  
SFC Ivelis E. Ramirezandujar  
*Embry Riddle Eagle Chapter*  
CPT Patrick McGuire  
*Griffin Chapter*  
CW3 Patrick Rogers  
*Magnolia Chapter*  
MAJ Phillip D. Jones  
*Northern Lights Chapter*  
SSG Shane M. Outlaw  
*Phantom Corps Chapter*  
CW3 Jory M. Stauffer  
*Prairie Soldier Chapter*  
CW4 Dale L. Dishman  
*Rio Grande Chapter*  
CW3 Joseph G. Torres  
*Savannah Chapter*  
MAJ Peter J. Lofreddo  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
CW3 Christopher L. Burns  
*Washington-Potomac Chapter*  
1SG Harry Hall, Ret.  
SFC James K. Pierce  
1SG Jeremy J. Walker  
*Yellowhammer Chapter*  
LTC David G. Goodall

### Knight 11/31/24

*Aviation Center Chapter*  
COL Helen Mammino  
*Desert Oasis Chapter*  
CPT Jonathan G. Cowan



*Gold Standard Chapter*  
Angela K. Watkins  
*Minuteman Chapter*  
SFC Shannon Burkill  
*Morning Calm Chapter*  
CPT Benjamin Lalor  
CPT Daniel J. Tierney  
*Mount Rainier Chapter*  
LTC Xavier Brunson  
*Washington-Potomac Chapter*  
MAJ Darrel C. Owens  
CW2 Tiffany L. Woods  
12-31-24  
*Air Assault Chapter*  
MSG Brian A. Valley  
*Aviation Center Chapter*  
MAJ Benjamin T. Belich  
*Iron Mike Chapter*  
Mark E. Calvert  
LTC Michelle L. Elwood, Ret.  
*Magnolia Chapter*  
MG Janson D. Boyle  
MG Michael N. Cleveland  
MG Joe D. Hargett  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
Jennifer Rusak  
*Washington-Potomac Chapter*  
SGM Donna Chilson, Ret.

## Our Lady of Loreto 11/31/24

*Aviation Center Chapter*  
Cindy Holladay  
Marcia Rutland  
Suzie Sheppard  
Christie Lynn Whitehead  
*Colonial Virginia Chapter*  
Gwynne E. Warren  
*Griffin Chapter*  
Tess Dahl  
Amanda Rangitsch  
Shannon Thomas  
Merriah Wilson  
*Morning Calm Chapter*  
Catherine E. Howell  
Rebecka O'Neal  
*Phantom Corps Chapter*  
Dawn Baxter  
Angela D. Crow  
Wendi M. Graham  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
Melissa Marbut  
*Washington-Potomac Chapter*  
Rebecca Cullinan  
Julia I. Luciw  
12-31-24  
*Air Assault Chapter*  
Tiffany J. Ashley  
Jamie L. Hasan  
*Aviation Center Chapter*  
Holly Klich  
Heather R. Luna  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
Danielle P. Dermer  
Jennifer G. James  
Stephanie Shattuck





# AAAA

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## AAAA Legislative Report

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

[kevin.cochie@quad-a.org](mailto:kevin.cochie@quad-a.org)

### FY25 Authorizations - NDAAs Passage

The U.S. Congress has passed the annual defense authorization bill (NDA) by the end of the calendar year for over 60 years and despite some last-minute controversy on final policy provisions, the Republican controlled House and Democratic controlled senate came to a compromise and passed the FY25 NDA through congress with bi-partisan support. Fortunately for the Army and Army Aviation the controversy had nothing to do with helicopters or operational readiness. House Republicans insisted that a provision (Section 708) be included into the legislation that prohibits insurance coverage for "medical interventions for the treatment of gender dysphoria. This effectively prevents the DoD or Tricare for paying for treatments for children of service personnel that seek hormone therapy or other treatments to address psychological distress experienced by transgender people as it relates to their gender identity.

We can all agree that our Army Aviation enterprise focuses on warfighting and maintaining a high degree of readiness. The final NDA largely supported the President's budget request in areas of RDTE funding for future programs and procurement funding for ongoing modernization programs.

### FY25 Appropriations - CR-istmas Present

Each edition of the AAAA magazine is prepared about a month before it arrives in your mailbox. As we find ourselves on December 20th, just days before Christmas, most Americans are busy with last-minute holiday shopping and travel plans. Meanwhile, Congress was embroiled in a tense situation, facing a potential government shutdown right before the holidays.

Typically, annual appropriations should be finalized by September 30th of the fiscal year. However, due to ongoing political maneuvering in Washington, this timeline is rarely met. This year was no exception with the federal government already operating under a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) for three months. With a government shutdown threatening on December 20th, Congress scrambled to devise another temporary funding solution to keep the government running.

Speaker Johnson faced significant pressure, attempting three times in one week to secure a funding package for the House. He had to navigate the complexities of a narrowly controlled Republican Congress, a Democratic Senate, and a Democratic White House, all while managing the influence of incoming President Trump and his vocal supporters, including Elon Musk. Ultimately, Johnson succeeded; the House passed the short-term CR just before midnight, followed by the Senate shortly thereafter, averting a shutdown just in time for Christmas. Although Congress may view this as a success, it's important to remember that passing a CR-istmas is merely another stopgap measure, not the timely federal budget that the American people expect.

What stands out from the events on Capitol Hill leading up to Christmas is the "Elon Musk effect." In the final moments of negotiations, Musk tweeted his disapproval of the first stopgap funding measure, causing several House Republicans to withdraw their support, which led to several days of political turmoil. So, what about Army Aviation... as Musk plans to spearhead efforts to cut government spending, could we face potential impacts such as reductions to Army Aviation modernization programs and/or training budgets? The short answer is that there will be risks to all areas of the Army and DoD, but for us, we are fortunate to have top-notch aviation leadership with a lot of experience dealing with Congress and the executive branch. Maintaining high operational readiness of our aircraft and flight crews and by managing our acquisition programs effectively - staying on or below budget, schedule, and performance - we can avoid scrutiny from oversight bodies ranging from the White House to Capitol Hill. It's a collective effort that involves everyone in our enterprise, from flight line maintainers and crews to Pentagon generals, to navigate the political landscape successfully.

### Army Aviation Caucus 2025

In 2013, we were instrumental in the creation of the Army Aviation Caucus in the House of Representatives. A caucus is defined as a group of individuals who come together to advocate for a specific agenda. In this case, the

Army Aviation Caucus is a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers committed to the interests and welfare of Army Aviation. However, like many initiatives, engagement within the various caucus groups diminished during the COVID-19 pandemic as priorities shifted on Capitol Hill.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of AAAA Executive Director Bill Harris, the Army Aviation Caucus is undergoing revitalization, with planned meetings throughout 2025 involving our Army Aviation leaders. The bipartisan co-chairs of the caucus are well-respected members who have significant ties to Army Aviation based on their constituencies. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) represents the district of AAAA headquarters, home to several Army Aviation industry facilities. Meanwhile, Congressman Dale Strong (R-AL) represents Huntsville, AL, which houses Redstone Arsenal, a key center for Army Aviation modernization.



**Please Contribute to the AAAASFI Through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Program.**

The AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc. provides a variety of annual scholarships to hundreds of students seeking higher education: Soldiers, NCOs, warrant and commissioned officers and to their family members. Your tax-deductible donation helps make a difference to those looking to further their educational opportunities.

**Contribute to #10516.**

See your unit CFC representative for details on participating in the CFC Program.

**The AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc.**

593 Main Street, Monroe, CT 06468-2806  
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# People On The Move

## Flight School Graduates

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



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

**49 Officers**  
**December 12, 2024**  
**Class 25-004**

*Commissioned Officers*

- 1LT Hughes, Hannah S. -DG
- 2LT Cajigal, Alexandra M.\* -HG
- 2LT Erickson, Michael J.\* -HG
- 2LT Amaya Londono, Bryan A.
- 2LT Bea, Brandon W.
- 1LT Dalton, Christopher D.
- 2LT Doyle, Logan J.\*
- 2LT Dubrule, Kevin M.
- 2LT Fredericks, Jordan L.\*
- 2LT Gough, William M.\*
- 1LT Manthie, Zachery M.\*
- 2LT Martin, Samuel T.
- 1LT Murphy, Jack R.\*
- 1LT Pirrie, William M.
- 1LT Wallentine, Kaylee A.
- 2LT Whelpley, Caden L.\*

*Warrant Officers*

- WO1 Lewis, Kurt R.\* -DG
- WO1 Blake, John T. -HG
- CW2 Reinke, Brandon C. -HG
- WO1 Ross, Hunter R.\* -HG
- WO1 Vadasz, Joseph C.\* -HG



FSXXI Class 25-004

- WO1 Baudoin, Joshua M.
- WO1 Boedeker, Rachel M.\*
- WO1 Brittain, Clayton W.
- WO1 Cannon, Daniel T.
- WO1 Colver, Justin T.\*
- WO1 Dickey, Aidan J.
- WO1 Dixon, Jacob S.\*
- WO1 Dunson, Cohen L.\*

- WO1 Ferguson, Ryan C.\*
- WO1 Gogerty, Ryan P.
- WO1 Hudson, Taylor A.
- WO1 Malanowski, Samuel A.
- WO1 Mejia, Kevin S.\*
- WO1 Moran, Carlee E.
- WO1 Moran, John M.
- WO1 Perry, Tyler E.\*

- WO1 Redding, Joshua T.
- WO1 Reverts, Cameron R.\*
- WO1 Schaeffer, Austin R.\*
- WO1 Sernulka, Travis D.
- WO1 Shute, Daniel R.
- WO1 Sun, Nicholas
- WO1 Sutherland, Jerome M.
- WO1 Tague, Cyrus L.

- WO1 Temple, Matthew T.
- WO1 Waters, Carson J.\*
- WO1 Wida, Nicholas P.\*

-DG: Distinguished Graduate  
-HG: Honor Graduate  
\* = AAAAA Member



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## Non-Rated Warrant Officer Graduates



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

- 10 Graduates,**  
**6 March 2024**  
*Classes 001-002 2024*
- WO1 Michael Dunn\* -DG
  - WO1 Allen Laws -HG

- WO1 Taylor Pruss\* -DG
- WO1 Johnathon Rickman\* -HG
- LTC Ankit Sihag
- MAJ Harish Jakhar
- WO1 Roger Kim

- WO1 Christopher Booth
  - WO1 Joshua Latham
  - WO1 Luis Martinez
- \* = AAAAA Member



## People On The Move

### ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING (AIT) GRADUATIONS

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

#### AH-64 Attack Helicopter Repairer (15R)

*Class 038-24*

PFC Scott Jerome Bowman \* -DG

PV2 Ava Bryson

SPC Scott Lenz

PV2 Austin Shaw

PV2 Adolfo Velasco-Perez

*Class 039-24*

PV2 Crea River Chancellor \* -DG

PV2 Brice Evan Chugg

PV2 Enessia Krystelle Estrada

PV2 Dirk Joseph Hayhurst

PFC Carson Hernandez

PV2 Michael John Penello, III

PV2 Kylei Rae Powell

PV2 Udayaraj Shrestha

PV2 Jonathan Michael Tatum

*Class 040-24*

PFC Marcel Jan Huchwajda \* -DG

SPC Jesan Enchakattil Abraham

PV2 Jeremire D. Ball

PV1 Derron Dwayne Gaynor

PV2 Rayjay Jovan Howell

PFC Brandon Mason Jensen

PV1 Recordo Madray

PV2 Maria Paula Orjuela Melo

PV1 Austin Lee Shurden

SPC Owen Alexander Williams

*Class 042-24*

PV2 Jalen Wayne Priest \* -DG

PV2 Eric Lamont Epheriam, Jr.

PV2 Nobel Junior Fermin Villegas

PV2 Rayjay Jovan Howell

PFC Solace Matay Kilgour

SPC Austin Joseph Lippincott

PV1 Marvin Montes Martinez

PV2 Russell William Mengwasser

PV1 Hector Trujillo Llamas

PFC Gabriel Izac Varela

PV2 Devoye Winston Wellington

#### UH-60 Helicopter Repairer (15T)

*Class 074-24*

PFC Scott Jerome Bowman \* -DG

PV2 Trey Alston Ashworth

PV2 Spencer Ryan Bivens

SPC Joseph Paul Boyd

PFC Mitchell Aaron Davis

PVT Alvaro Alfonso De Leon Perez

SPC Carlos Alberto Dorantes Luna

PFC Ramon Ysidro Gonzalez

PV2 Nathaniel Andrew Horner

SPC Ulice Saul Molina

PV2 Darnell Mashaad Parrish

SPC Michael Valiant Roth \*

*Class 075-24*

PFC Noah Alexander Peterson \* -DG

PV2 Charlton Wayne Perkins

SPC Alan Geovany Ramirez

PFC Jose Ruben Rivas Godinez

PVT Daegan Cole Robinson

PFC Gavin Lane Rutan

PV2 Cesar Armando Servin

PV2 Ethan Wayne Shahan

PFC Caleb James Simpson

PVT James Donovan Stafford

PV2 Robert Cole Walker

PV2 Dillon Tomas Warren

*Class 076-24*

PFC Gracelynn Marie Shattuck \* -DG

PFC Zachary Robert Allen

PV2 Jan Paul Andino

PV2 Mario Cabanas-Jimenez

PVT Gregory David Calabretta

PFC Colton Keith Campbell

PFC Ethan Christopher Davis

SPC Christian Garcia

PFC Gabe Lee Gilman

PFC Elias Hernandez Ferral

PFC Benjamin Dean Howard

PFC Cage Michael Taylor

*Class 077-24*

PFC Freedom Emanuel Westfall \* -DG

PFC Jonathan Steven Lopez

PFC Ricky Don Murray, Jr

PFC Joel Ulises Perea Romero

PFC Raheem Kavanaugh Prescott

PVT Hunter Kyle Richmond

PV2 Charles Brandon Shatwell

PFC Leonardo Laureano Simon

PFC Luke Anthony Theriot

PV2 Xander Angelo Zack

*Class 078-24*

PV2 Isaac Landon Alvarado \* -DG

SPC Sandra Sara Biju

PV2 Zachary Todd Brown

PV2 Hunter Eugene Eaks

SPC Blake Patrick Hightower

**2025 AAAA SUMMIT, NASHVILLE**  
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# Golf Tournament

# 2025

**WHERE:** Gaylord Springs Golf Links . 18 Springhouse Lane, Nashville, TN 37214  
<http://www.gaylordsprings.com/>

**WHEN:** Tuesday, May 13th, 2025; Shotgun start 0730 (morning) and 1315 (afternoon)

**FORMAT:** 4 Person Scramble

Total 120 golfers for morning and 120 golfers for afternoon. Cost will cover green fees, cart with GPS system, breakfast, lunch, hors d'oeuvres and all standard golf amenities including range balls, club cleaning and bag handling. Rental clubs will be available, payment will be made on EZRegister.

**REGISTRATION:** <https://2025aaaagolftournament.ezregister.com>



# People On The Move

## AIT Graduations

*Continued*

SPC Maxwell Robert King  
 SPC Jacob Aaron Kowenski  
 PFC David Wayne Moss, III  
 SGT Steven Jeffrey Nash  
 SPC Jared Lee Ogilvie  
 PFC Alexander N. Perez De Tejada  
 PV2 Braden Michael Smith

## Cargo Helicopter Repairer (15U)

*Class 032-24*  
 PV2 Jackson Ryan Rielly\* -DG  
 SPC Izzabella Mari Brant  
 PFC Chai A. Hernandez  
 PV2 Dylan Lee Holeman  
 PV2 Shipley Michael Jenkins  
 PV2 Clayton Lloyd Mikels  
 SPC Joseph P. Montenegro  
 PV2 Miguel Antonio Ruiz  
 PFC Alexis Taylor Sapienza  
 SPC Mahlik Jacoy Thomas  
 PV2 Dontue Jerrell Tyler, Jr.  
*Class 033-24*  
 SPC Chanea E. P. Smith\* -DG

PV2 Chris Stevens Arana  
 PV2 Marc Kahlil Desadier  
 PV2 Julius Grayson  
 PVT Gavin Steven Kennedy  
 SPC William Phillip Lattanzi  
 SPC Philip Everett Pendleton  
 PV2 Mikeal Stephen Smith  
 PVT Barron Carter Womack  
*Class 034-24*  
 SPC Taylor Elean Dively\* -DG  
 PVT Dakota C. Bunch  
 PFC Anthony Granger, II  
 PV2 Jamal Maurice Kessler  
 SPC Grover Blake Mays  
 PFC David Suarez  
 PFC Efrain Uriah Velasquez  
*Class 035-24*  
 PV2 Colby Hunter Causey  
 PV2 Jason Gerard Dean  
 SGT Adam Kenneth Hottenstein  
 SPC Phillip Edwin Howe  
 SPC Bradon James Mason  
 SPC Michael J. Morales  
 PFC Dylan Peter Rosier  
 PFC Jacob Vaughn  
 Schwallier

## Aircraft Powerplant Repairer (15B)

*Class 008-24*  
 PV2 Jacob A. Fairey\* -DG  
 PV2 Barrington A. Gardner  
 PV2 Aidan Michael Hickson  
 PFC Alejandro J. De La Cruz  
 PFC Santana M. Mendez  
 PV2 Evans Otieno Owango

## Aircraft Electrician (15F)

*Class 013-24*  
 SPC Jaheim D. Murphy\* -DG  
 PV2 Jovani Juarez Montes  
 PV2 Brandon Lee Minshew  
 PV2 John Barilella Nyone

## Aircraft Structural Repairer (15G)

*Class 010-24*  
 PV2 Jill V. Willbourn\* -DG  
 PV2 Ethan Zane Brown  
 PFC Brian Lee Cain  
 PFC Avit Cruz  
 PV2 Collin James Gardner  
 PFC Timothy Marshall Grace

PVT Homroy Desta Grant  
 PFC Shaquill Oniel Leith  
 PVT Kervneel N. Narayan  
 PVT Kien Van Nguyen  
 SPC Jacob Paul Ring  
 PV2 Brandon W. Spencer  
 PV2 James Dawson Stapp

## Aircraft Pneudraulics Repairer (15H)

*Class 009-24*  
 PV2 Tanner James Herr  
 PVT Andy M. M. Gutierrez

## Avionic Repairer (15N)

*Class 014-24*  
 SPC Madison J. Worth\* -DG  
 PFC Van Alexander Bruin  
 PFC Jonatan Oscar Hartley  
 PFC Gaige Braxton Kistler  
 PFC Kemar F. Sterling  
 PFC Jazmin Claire Timpe  
 PFC Lenny R.T. Rodriguez  
*Class 015-24*  
 PV2 Michael M. Swanson\* -DG

PV2 Tripper James Bankston  
 PV2 Sean Marcus Ray Colvin  
 SPC Jeremy Hospital-Garcia  
 PFC Hakan Maras  
 SPC Garrett Christian Powers  
 PV2 Timothy Trent Seal, Jr.  
 CPL Taniela Piukala Sikala

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

*Class 013-24*  
 PFC Conner Z. Nelson\* -DG  
 PVT Anthony M. Anatala  
 PFC Masada Charles Bartley  
 PV2 Kevin Michael Boyer  
 SPC Ethan Edward Clarke  
 2LT Fajar Djunaedi  
 PFC Tristan William Edwards  
 SPC Jose Pablo Garcia  
 SPC Tyson S. Tabacco

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



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## People On The Move

### 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 Technician

- 11 Graduates, 15 November 2024
- WO1 Kolar Zbynek R. -DG
- WO1 Stewart Jazmine M. \* -HG
- WO1 Cooper Clayton
- WO1 Garman Aaron A.
- WO1 Isaacs Brian A.
- WO1 Kelley Austin G.
- WO1 Lejeune Michael J.
- WO1 Lussier Richard C.
- WO1 Post Brock C.
- WO1 Somsy Lonnie M.
- WO1 Yanes Jessie J.

#### UAS REPAIRER

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

#### Shadow UAS Repairer Course

- 5 Graduates, 01 November 2024
- SPC Hill Christopher Michael -DG
- SPC Boyer Patrick Daniel
- PFC Devaughn Chad William
- PVT Fisher Henry Carlton
- PV2 Larrabee Brody James

#### 6 Graduates, 21 November 2024

- SPC Smallbrock Alexander J. -DG
- SPC Johnson Trevor Scott
- PFC Leal-Gutierrez Daniel
- PV2 Robinson Jacob Anthony
- PFC Shafer Drake Wyatt
- SPC Szurly Stanley G.
- 5 Graduates, 16 December 24
- PVT Smith Grady Miles -DG
- PV2 Marquez Gonzalo
- PFC Riebe Jackson Thomas
- PFC Schraeder Morgan David
- SPC Troclair Travis Paul

#### Gray Eagle Repairer Course

- 8 Graduates, 01 November 2024
- PV2 Loucks Ashleigh N. -DG
- PFC Anderson Jace Dean
- SGT Boyle Traylor G.
- PFC Cunningham Chase Alexander
- PVT Keeley Riley Micheal
- PVT Osorigranadeno Jose A.
- PVT Sanders Mekiah Jerrod
- PVT Whitley Canyon Slade
- 6 Graduates, 16 December 2024
- PFC Ricardo Torres -DG
- PV2 Corbett Tyler A.
- PFC Decker Quinton William
- PV2 Flores Raul
- PVT Harton Matthew John
- PV2 Helmuth Jeremy Allen

#### 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

- 5 Graduates, 21 November 2024

- SSG Turner James G. -DG
- PFC Canale Dante Jeremiah
- SPC Fobb Eric Lejuan Jr
- SPC Lew Deonta Nujtsaim
- PFC Stock Cameron Wayne
- 6 Graduates, 11 December 2024
- PVT Carter Daniel Thomas
- PVT Cunningham Allen Lawrence
- PV2 Debose Shayla Hailey
- SPC Felts Anthony Allen
- PFC Tomplait Mason Andre Valsan
- PV2 Walter Isaiah Anthony

#### Gray Eagle Operators Course

- 12 Graduates, 19 December 2024
- PFC Cain Chapman -DG
- SPC Paul Jones -HG
- SGT Elijah Edge
- SPC Charles Copeland
- SPC Aidan Gould
- SPC Santiago Salcedo
- SPC Zachary Korbel
- PFC Damean Copsetta
- PFC Hunter Elrod
- PFC Caleb Tatum
- PV2 Ethan Lopez
- PV2 Nelson Jiang

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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](mailto:editor@quad-a.org).*

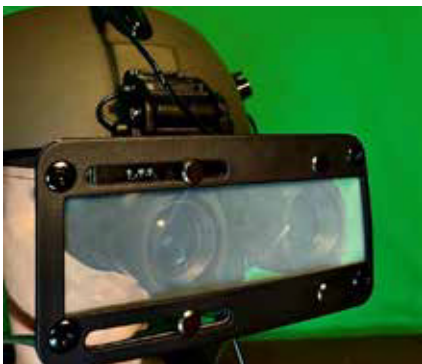
## Boeing Receives CH-47 Block II Order



U.S. ARMY PHOTO

The U.S. Army ordered three additional CH-47F Block II Chinooks from Boeing. The Lot 3 contract award, valued at \$135 million follows the U.S. Army's February announcement that it is moving forward with full-rate production of the CH-47F Block II program. To date, Boeing is under contract for nine of up to 465 aircraft in the Army's current fleet. The Army has also received funding from the Congress for three aircraft as part of the next production lot and awarded Boeing a contract last year for acquisition of long lead parts.

## ICARUS Receives AWR for NVG Visor



ICARUS Devices announced that its Night Vision Goggle Visor has been granted an Air Worthiness Release (AWR) by the US Army. The Instrument Conditions Awareness Recognition and Understanding System (ICARUS) is a smart view limiting device that allows Instructor Pilots to simulate Degraded Visual Environments (DVE) in the aircraft. ICARUS changes visibility and allows Instructor Pilots to dial in the visibility for dynamic scenario-based training.

## Bell Announces New Manufacturing Facility for FLRAA



BELL PHOTO

Bell announced on Dec. 17, a new 447,000 sq. ft. factory, located in the Denton County region of Fort Worth, Texas, will be dedicated to FLRAA component manufacturing. Bell plans to begin facility modification and equipment installation and achieve facility readiness for Low-Rate Initial Production (LRIP) by 2028. Following the U.S. Army's FLRAA contract award in December 2022, Bell has established several new state-of-the-art facilities to instantiate innovative manufacturing processes driving affordability, schedule and performance.

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

**Longbow LLC, Orlando, FL**, was awarded a \$10,696,220 modification to contract W58RGZ-22-C-0053 for Apache AH-64D/E fired control radar; work will be performed in Orlando, with an estimated completion date of Dec. 31, 2025. Fiscal 2025.

**M1 Support Services LP, Denton, TX**, was awarded a \$585,955,930 modification to contract W9124G-17-C-0104 for aviation maintenance; work will be performed at Fort

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Novosel, AL, with an estimated completion date of Jan. 15, 2026.

**PeopleTec Inc.,\* Huntsville, AL**, was awarded a \$261,125,292 cost-plus-fixed-fee contract for program management services, scientific services, engineering services, logistics services, financial services and ancillary services; work will be performed at Redstone Arsenal, AL; Fort Belvoir, VA; and Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD, with an estimated completion date of Dec. 5, 2027.

**Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin Co., Stratford, CT**, was awarded a \$375,937,755 modification to contract W58RGZ-22-C-0010 to provide full funding for UH-60M and HH-60M aircraft; work will be performed in Stratford, with an estimated completion date of Dec. 31, 2027.

## ARMY AVIATION *Upcoming Special Focus*



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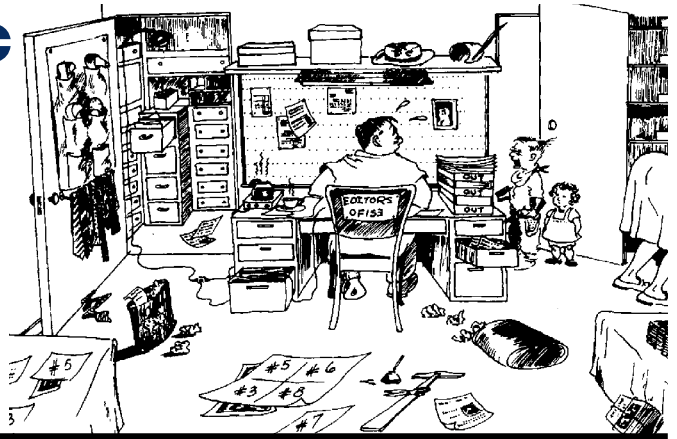
Contact: **Bob Lachowski, Erika Burgess or Carmen Tuohy**  
[AAAIndustry@quad-a.org](mailto:AAAIndustry@quad-a.org) 203. 268.2450 [ARMYAVIATIONmagazine.com](http://ARMYAVIATIONmagazine.com)

# 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

January 31, 2000

### Briefings: AH-64D Deliveries

The Army just accepted the 100th AH-64D Apache Longbow multi-mission combat helicopter. The Boeing Company is under contract to deliver 232 AH-64Ds through 2001. Boeing

is now in that period of final negotiations for an additional 298 Apache Longbows, to be delivered through the year of 2007, as part of a second five-year, multi-year contract with the Army.

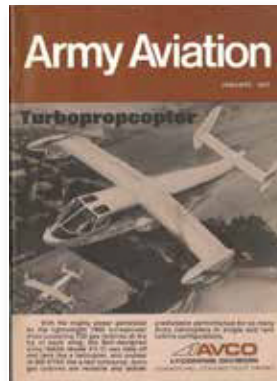
### Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD)

In only 177 days, the Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) completed the overhaul of this UH-60 Black Hawk from the 571st Medical Detachment, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Carson, Colorado. This helicopter is the first to be serviced within the prescribed 180-day window for such aircraft service. For fiscal year 1999, Black Hawks at the CCAD generate some \$1.6 million each if they are completed on time. Another fifteen are slated for fiscal year 2000.



### Aviation Center Chapter

Medal of Honor recipient, CWO4 Michael J. Novosel (Ret.), former Army aviator, is presented with a token of appreciation from Colonel Terry M. Peck, Aviation Training Center and Chapter President. Mr. Novosel gave a presentation at a recent member appreciation meeting concerning his book, *Dustoff: The Memoir of an Army Aviator*, at the U.S. Army Aviation Museum.



## 50 Years Ago

January 31, 1975

### Berlin

Headset on and chinstrap buckled, the wife of the new SHAPE commander, Mrs. Alexander Haig, is pictured in a UH-1H



from the Army Aviation Detachment, Berlin Brigade. The detachment had the pleasure of chauffeuring Mrs. Haig on an orientation flight of West Berlin and its historical sights.

### Civilian Assistance Missions

The 247th Medical Detachment, Fort Meade, Maryland, is no stranger to civilian assistance missions. One of their primary missions of mercy is the transport of premature infants to the Baltimore Neo-Natal Care Center from throughout the state of Maryland. The 247th serves as a back up to the state police helicopters. In this capacity, the medical detachment flies two to three such missions per month. Shown loading an incubator are SP5 John Barnosky (left) and SP5 Larry Burney (right).



### Lights! Camera! Action!

Film and sound crews busily record a scene of an AH-1 Cobra zooming into view. It is all part of the filming of a Nap-of-the-Earth [NOE] training film being produced at Fort Rucker, Alabama. Most of the filming, though, was shot at the Yakima, Washington Firing Center. The forty minute film is titled, "Down to Earth—NOE." It is produced by USAAAVS, with a tentative release date of March.





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](http://www.quad-a.org)

# Army Aviation Hall of Fame

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Chief Warrant  
Officer Four William  
“Willie” L. Ruf,  
U.S. Army Retired (Deceased)

*Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2018 Induction -  
Nashville, TN*

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A product of our nation’s “Greatest Generation,” CW4 (Ret.) Willie Ruf (Deceased) dedicated his life in the service of our country and contributed directly to the heritage of Army Aviation. He began military service in 1941, enlisting in the Army as an Infantryman. By the age of 22, he had risen to the rank of regimental sergeant major after serving 34 months in the Pacific.

His aviation career began in 1955 as the first warrant officer candidate to graduate from flight school at Fort Rucker, AL. He flew in excess of 16,000 hours, of which 1,200 hours were flown in combat in Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon and the Dominican Republic. In 1958, he was selected for assignment to the newly activated Presidential Flight Detachment. During this assignment, he flew Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. He also became the first pilot to fly a Presidential helicopter outside the continental United States during President Eisenhower’s 1959 world tour.

Upon retiring from active duty, CW4 Ruf continued his career as a civil service instructor pilot, retiring in 1993 with 52 years of total federal service. Always wanting to contribute more, he remained active as a civic volunteer and a tour guide for the Army Aviation Museum. He also served as the principal instructor for all Aviation Branch history classes, instilling in the next generation of Army Aviators their heritage and traditions.

As a pioneer, CW4 Ruf’s contributions are inextricably woven into the very fabric of Army Aviation and his legacy will live on forever.

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