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28



12



16



22



24

# Contents

March 31, 2026, Vol. 75, No. 3

## TO THE FIELD

- 12 This Is Your Army - Army National Guard Aviation**  
By Lt. Gen. Jon Stubbs
- 16 CCDEVCOM Tech Talk**  
Dr. Thomas L. Thompson
- 18 Ask the Flight Surgeon**  
By MAJ (Dr.) Jinyong Bae, CPT (Dr.) Trevor Scott, and MAJ (Dr.) Salvatore Bertucci

## SPECIAL FOCUS — Reserve Components Aviation Update

- 20 Our Missions Change. Our Responsibilities to Meet Them Never Will.**  
By BG Patrick Pollak

## SPECIAL FOCUS —Airspace Management

- 22 The Multi-Capable APX-128 Transponder – An Investment in Army Rotor Crew Safety**  
By: LTC Paul R. Flanigen and Brandon M. Douglass

## SPECIAL FOCUS —Fixed Wing Update

- 24 Fixed Wing Project Office and Army Fixed Wing Aviation – Acquisition Transformation in Action: A Tale of Two Programs**  
By COL Joe S. Minor and Ms. Tracey E. Ayres

## SPECIAL FOCUS — U.S. Army Best Warfighting Drone Competition

- 28 Drones, Dominance, and the Next Fight: Army’s Inaugural Warfighter Competition Takes Flight**  
By Ken Holder



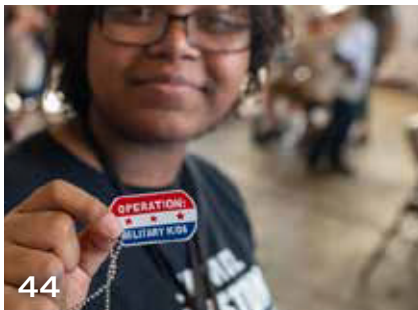
32



41



42



44



53

# Contents

March 31, 2026, Vol. 75, No. 3

## FROM THE FIELD

### 32 Annual Aviation Senior Leader's Forum Focus: Army Aviation-Transforming with a Vision

By Kelly Morris

### 34 A Bias for Training: Leveraging DSCA Missions to Prepare for LSCO

By 1LT Will Lynch and LTC Robbie Wells

## DEPARTMENTS

### AAAA NEWS

AAAA President's Cockpit.....	8
AAAA VP Chapter Affairs.....	40
Chapter News, OSMs.....	41
AAAA VP Membership.....	42
New Members.....	43
AAAA Family Forum.....	44
AAAA Legislative Report.....	48
AAAA SFI Scholarship.....	46
AAAA TLC.....	39

### ARMY AVIATION COMMUNITY NEWS

Advertisers Index.....	49
Advertiser Spotlight.....	51
Art's Attic.....	53
Briefings.....	6
Enlisted Spotlight.....	15
Hall of Fame.....	54
Historical Perspective.....	36
Industry News.....	49
In Memoriam.....	45
People on the Move.....	50
Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association.....	38

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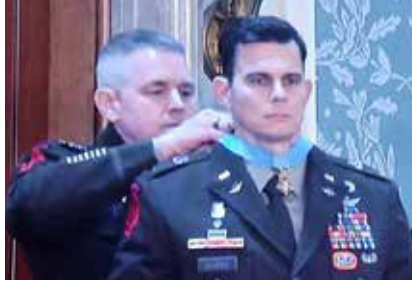
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## On The Cover

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# Briefings ▶

## President Presents Medal of Honor to Army Aviator



AP PHOTO

President Donald Trump awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor during the 2026 State of the Union address to CW5 Eric Slover, who was critically wounded during the January raid that captured Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro. During the pre-dawn operation, Slover piloted the lead CH-47 Chinook under heavy fire, absorbing multiple gunshot wounds to his leg and hip, yet continued flying and safely brought his helicopter and crew back from hostile territory. Trump highlighted Slover's perseverance and bravery in the face of severe injury as central to the mission's success.

## Army Marks Elevation of Futures and Concepts to Full Command



PHOTO BY SSGT MICHAEL SMITH

LTG Michael McCurry officiated an activation ceremony for the Futures and Concepts Command February 12th at Fort Eustis, VA, marking the headquarters' transition to full command status. The Futures and Concepts Command, or FCC, is charged with determining what the Army will look like years from now by developing how its units are organized, what kinds of capabilities they will need and how they will be expected to fight.

## TRICARE Covers Breast Cancer Screenings

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer in women in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's also the second leading cause of cancer death in women. Fortunately, getting preventive screenings can help detect breast cancer before you show any signs or symptoms. To stay current on your TRICARE plan and for helpful information just go to *Tricare.mil*.

## Joint Interagency Task Force to Bolster National Defense



COURTESY PHOTO

Army CSM Kellen Rowley, left, Army BG Matt Ross, Joint Interagency Task Force 401 director, right, visited the FBI's National Training Center for counter-small unmanned aircraft systems in Huntsville, AL, recently and met with FBI special agent Mike Torphy and FBI agent Aaron Snyder to solidify a strategic alliance to protect the nation from unmanned aerial threats. The engagement in Huntsville signifies a deliberate move to formalize and expand the working relationship between the department and federal law enforcement. Future efforts will include the JIATF 401's Joint Counter-Small UAS University in Fort Sill, OK, working closely with the FBI's National Training Center to execute this shared mission.

## Apache Helicopters Delivered to Australia



PHOTO BY CHRIS TAMMERS, AUSTRALIA

The Security Assistance Command has completed a foreign military sales case to deliver two out of 29 AH-64E Apache helicopters to partner country Australia. These attack helicopters will provide Australia with a significant component in the Australian Army's transformation into a force optimized for coastal maneuvers and long-range strikes. Australia plays a key role as a military partner to the U.S., but particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Delivery of the helicopters culminates another successful partnership resulting from USASAC's ongoing mission to increase military capabilities of countries that share similar security goals with the U.S.

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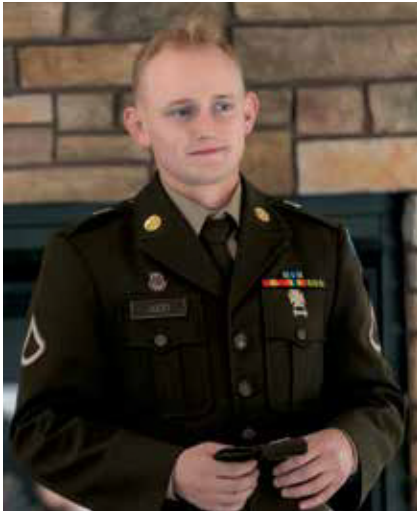
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# Continuing to Strengthen Army Aviation



ALL PHOTOS: JUBB PERSONAL PHOTOS

As we approach the 2026 AAAA Warfighter Summit next month and the halfway point of my tenure as your President, I am reflecting on three amazing organizations that protect our legacy and invest in our future. I know that at times I have taken them for granted.

Two of the three you know very well. They are the US Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker, AL, and the AAAA Scholarship Foundation.

Founded in 1956, the Museum preserves our legacy through education and displays and hosts over 100,000 visitors each year. The AAAA Scholarship Foundation Inc. was founded in 1963 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt entity and provides financial assistance to our AAAA members and families for college-level degrees. The SFI has awarded over \$11 million to nearly 7,000 applicants over the years.

The newest member of our team, the **Trade School, Licensing, and Certification Foundation (TLC)** was established just five short years ago. TLC is also a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charity. The difference is that the TLC financially supports our AAAA members and their families who are not attending college but are pursuing careers in the trades, licensing, and certification fields.

AAAA TLC has provided financial

assistance through free grants to dozens of our members and family members. When I looked at some of the recipients, I was amazed at the breath of these grants. Some examples are recipients like Luke Vesci (Master Pipe Fitter/Welder), Lucas Robinson (Welder), and both Paige Bradford, and Tanner Judd who needed Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs) to pursue their future business aspirations. Not surprisingly, we have also had several individuals who needed an Airframe and Powerplant License, including Nickolas Gutowsky, Ashadu Katende, and Austin Hostetter as well.

There were also a number of others that caught my attention. How about Cornelius Allen becoming a Professional Brass Instrument Repair Technician, Alexis Girvin realizing her dream of becoming a Licensed Esthetician, or Kaden Douglas earning a Scuba Certification to become a Diving Medical Technician? I have only mentioned a few of the awardees of these financial

*Cadet Tanner Judd applied for and received a TLC Foundation Grant, which provided him with the means to obtain his Commercial Driver's License, an essential step toward fulfilling his financial obligations while pursuing a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.*

grants here, but you get the idea of the breadth and depth of this program.

On the other side of the coin, we need our business partners that have skilled workforces to step up and collaborate with us by posting job opportunities on the AAAA Jobs Board. It costs no more than being an AAAA Corporate Member and only takes a moment. Whenever possible, we aim to connect grant awardees with companies that need their skills, possibly even hiring them as apprentices during their certification process. Clearly, we also need your corporate donations to the TLC so we can provide more opportunities for more of our members and their families.

The biggest ask we have is for more applicants. I was surprised when the current President of the AAAA TLC Foundation Inc. expressed his frustration about trying to give more free money away to support the future goals of so many of our AAAA members who could use the financial assistance.

**AAAA Chapter Presidents take note:**



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we have over 80 chapters but only 11 (13%) have taken advantage of this outstanding member benefit so far. We can do better than that. Make sure to get the word out to your chapter members and get those applications in! The leading chapter is the Keystone Chapter with four grant recipients, closely followed by the Tennessee Valley Chapter with three grant recipients. Well done.

Let's all engage on this latest member benefit and support the AAAA TLC Foundation, Inc. See page 39 for an additional article by Dan Curry on how TLC can help you and your family reach your goals.

Next subject is the United States Army's inaugural **Best Drone Warfighter Competition**. AAAA could not be more proud than to have sponsored this high-energy, three-day event. Held last month in Huntsville, AL, more than 200 elite small, unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operators from the Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard components competed before a crowd of more than 800 attendees demonstrating how rapidly drone technology is reshaping the modern battlefield.

I think MG Clair Gill said it best

when he noted that our drone operators are not only the best of the best, but that their demonstrated tactics, techniques, and procedures provide best practices we can adopt and proliferate across our warfighting skills. The excellent work accomplished by the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence and the United States Army Maneuver Center of Excellence was nothing short of phenomenal. Their leadership and execution allowed our drone operators to showcase to the world that the Army's UAS professionals are among the most skilled anywhere, while highlighting the growing importance of unmanned systems across the force. See page 28 for a complete wrap up with photos of this groundbreaking competition.

Events like this underscore why AAAA remains a critical part of Army Aviation's future. By connecting Soldiers, leaders, industry partners, and innovators, the AAAA helps ensure that emerging technologies move rapidly from concept to capability. Our association provides a forum where ideas are shared, partnerships are formed, and modernization is accelerated. As Army Aviation continues its technological

leap forward, AAAA will remain committed to supporting readiness, fostering innovation, and standing shoulder to shoulder with the Army as it shapes the next generation of all our warfighters in the third dimension of ground combat.

Let me close with this, if you haven't already, please finalize your plans now to attend the Army Aviation Association of America **2026 Army Aviation Warfighting Summit, April 15-17, 2026**, in Nashville, TN. This premier gathering is the only event where the entire Army Aviation community—leaders, Soldiers, industry partners, families, and veterans—comes together with a singular focus on the future of Army Aviation. Manned Aviation, AI, Unmanned Systems, Cyber and much more are all part of the solution. Whether you serve in uniform, support from industry, or stand alongside our Soldiers as family members, the Summit is your chance to connect, contribute, and help shape the next chapter of Army Aviation. See you there.

MG Wally Golden, U.S. Army Retired  
37th President, AAAA  
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## ▶ This Is Your Army!



U.S. ARMY NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY CPT ASHLEY GOODWIN

# Looking Back, Taking Stock, and Moving Forward

By Lt. Gen. Jon Stubbs

*3rd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment, conducts rappelling training with the German Bundeswehr, Oct. 10, 2025.*

Army National Guard Aviation is at the core of our promise to the nation: to be ‘Always Ready, Always There.’

In my role as Director, I bridge the gap between the Army’s senior leadership and the 54 Adjutants General throughout our states, territories, and District of Columbia, all while shaping the vision for our future force. That future is built on the unmatched aerial capabilities our aviators provide, whether in the crucible of war or in response to a crisis at home. Our highest priority remains clear: to strengthen and prepare these critical aviation assets for the challenges of tomorrow.

### Looking Back

This past year, our aviation units proved their value where it counts: in the field. In Kosovo, Michigan’s 3rd Battalion, 238th Aviation Regiment upheld our NATO commitment, conducting

security missions and air assault training. When Typhoon Halong struck Alaska with devastating force, the 207th Aviation Troop Command became the sole lifeline for isolated communities. Along our southern border, the multi-state 3rd Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment provided critical support to federal operations. These are not isolated events; they are the standard. They embody the unwavering spirit of service that defines the Army National Guard.

*CW5 Tim Brundage, CW4 Matthew Vennie, and CW3 Preston Blocker, Army National Guard, are recognized by U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Eric Bond and FBI Special Agent Justin Wilson for exemplary service during interagency training, Dec. 19, 2025.*

### Taking Stock

These successes underscore a fundamental truth: Army Guard aviation provides a decisive edge to combatant commanders overseas while serving as a vital lifeline for our governors and civilian partners during crises at home. It is our responsibility to continually assess and articulate the full spectrum of this capability.

But let me be clear: our true strength lies not in our airframes, but in our people. Our Soldiers, civilians, and



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ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD PHOTO BY SSG JOSEPH MOON

SGT Mary Miller, a flight medic assigned to B Company, 2nd Battalion, 211th Aviation Regiment, passes a bottle of water to a child while evacuating displaced Alaskans from Kwigillingok, Alaska, during recovery operations, Oct. 16, 2025.



PHOTO BY PACIFIC AVIATION DIVISION

CW5 Tim Brundage, CW4 Matthew Vennie, and CW3 Preston Blocker, Army National Guard, are recognized by U.S. Navy Lt. Cdr. Eric Bond and FBI Special Agent Justin Wilson for exemplary service during interagency training, Dec. 19, 2025.

contractors are the bedrock of this enterprise. They bring an unmatched level of skill and mission focus, all while remaining rooted in the very communities they swear to protect. They are citizen-soldiers in the truest sense, ready to answer any call, and they represent the absolute best of America.

This adaptability is not theoretical; it is proven. During Operation Flyswatter in 2025, South Carolina's 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 151st Aviation Regiment, decisively demonstrated the counter-UAS lethality of the AH-64E Apache. Working with our Marine Corps partners, they used the Apache's organic weapons - including Joint-Air to Ground Missile (JAGM) and Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) - to successfully engage and destroy medium-sized drones. This milestone adds a critical capability to the joint force and proves, once again, the ingenuity of our aviators.

Our purpose, therefore, is unwavering. We will continue to provide ready, relevant, and decisive air capabilities to our governors and combatant commanders. Whether for civil support, domestic security, or large-scale combat operations, we will apply our resources to master the challenges of today while preparing for the fights of tomorrow. That is our promise.

### Moving Forward

The character of warfare is changing, driven by technology, robotics, and ar-

tificial intelligence. But its nature as a human endeavor is not. A commander's eyes on the front line remain irreplaceable. We will always weigh risk to our people and the mission but make no mistake: manned aviation is essential to the future fight. Optionally crewed aircraft are a key part of the solution, giving commanders the flexibility to balance that risk.

Our operational environment is also expanding, pushing our reach upward to the edge of space and outward toward the Indo-Pacific. These shifts create capability gaps that we must bridge. The Army Guard is therefore exploring asymmetric innovations to close them. For example, integrating modern high-altitude balloons - a proven military capability since the Civil War - offers a low-risk, cost-effective way to regain the ISR advantage and fill a critical void.

We are reorienting our strategic focus to the homeland and the Indo-Pacific. While domestic operations are our bedrock, the tyranny of distance in the Pacific presents a new challenge. Army Guard aviation is meeting this head-on. Through targeted academic sessions, staff exercises, and direct engagement with key partners in the region, we are preparing our force for the unique demands of this theater.

As we look to the future with the Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft (FLRAA), we must preserve our proven legacy fleet. While the active component may transition fully,

the Guard's dual mission makes it imperative that we maintain a robust force of UH-60 and UH-72 airframes. Their smaller footprint, lower cost, and reduced downwash are not just advantages; they are essential for our state civil support mission.

To accelerate this change, we are acting decisively. We established the Army National Guard Innovation (ARGWERX) to accelerate innovation. We launched our first-ever Minuteman Campaign Plan to drive Army transformation across the Guard. And we have reorganized, merging our Air, Space, and Missile Defense branches into a single Air and Space Division, postured for the expanded environment and capabilities before us.

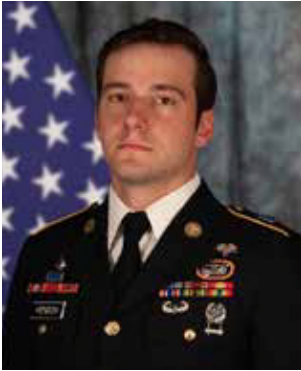
Change is not a choice; it is a strategic imperative. The war in Ukraine and the ambitions of our adversaries have made this non-negotiable. We will not shrink from this moment. Instead, we will lead this transformation and forge the Army National Guard of tomorrow - a force that is more lethal, more agile, and always ready. Our duty to our nation, and the trust placed in us by the American people, demands nothing less.

---

*LTG Jon Stubbs is the 23rd Director of the Army National Guard, National Guard Bureau, Herbert R. Temple Jr. Army National Guard Readiness Center, Arlington, VA.*

## ▶ Enlisted Aviation Soldier Spotlight

Each issue, we will feature a past AAAA National or Functional Enlisted or NCO Award winner as part of our ongoing recognition of the Best of the Best in our Aviation Branch.



ARMY PHOTO BY RBRE BIEZ

### Army Aviation DUSTOFF Flight Medic of The Year, 2024

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#### SSG Alex Henson

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

Staff Sergeant Alex Henson distinguished himself through exceptional medical expertise, leadership, and unwavering dedication while deployed to the CENTCOM theater of operations from October through December 2023. During multiple one-way UAS and missile attacks, he provided lifesaving care to 21 patients suffering from traumatic brain injuries and shrapnel wounds. As the sole medic for a force of more than 50 personnel amid an elevated threat environment, SSG Henson conducted over 20 Night Stalker First Responder training events, ensuring critical cross-training of non-medical personnel and strengthening unit readiness.

During the same deployment, he played a pivotal role in the resuscitation of two civilian contractors in cardiac arrest. His clinical skill and decisive actions directly contributed to one patient's full recovery following a myocardial infarction. After identifying areas for improvement during the initial response, SSG Henson proactively organized and led ACLS and BLS training with collocated medics, significantly enhancing team coordination and performance during the second cardiac emergency.

Following redeployment, he earned his Certified Flight Paramedic (FP-C), completed the CBRNE Course through the Mayo Clinic, and qualified as a Fast Rope Insertion and Extraction System Master. SSG Henson's combat medical care, leadership, and relentless pursuit of excellence exemplify the highest standards of Army Aviation and make him eminently deserving of the DUSTOFF Flight Medic of the Year Award.

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# Icing Certification Testing: Part 3 – Reporting

Dr. Thomas L. Thompson

In the third and final article of this series, we discuss how the results from icing certification tests are reported and how they are used to prove to airworthiness authorities that an aircraft is safe to fly within a given icing envelope.

In Parts 1 and 2, I introduced you to Lynn and Kim Hanks, a test pilot and test engineer from the Aviation Flight Test Directorate (AFTD), U.S. Army Redstone Test Center, Redstone Arsenal AL, who have worked with industry teams for nearly 30 years to certify military and commercial aircraft for flying in icing conditions. Lynn supported the first icing test of an Army aircraft, a UH-1, in 1973. Tests of more Army aircraft, including Apache, Black Hawk, and Chinook, and aircraft from other services, such as the CH-53 and V-22, were conducted for about the next 30 years. Since the early 2000s, Lynn and Kim have worked with national and international companies to test commercial rotorcraft, including the Sikorsky S-92, Leonardo AW101, AW139, AW169, AW189, and AW609, and Bell 525.

Icing certification involves a large investment in personnel, aircraft, and equipment to support months of testing to provide evidence to the authorities that the aircraft is safe to fly in these conditions. Phil Dunford, a retired test engineer and executive from Boeing, wrote in a 1982 American Helicopter Society paper that “demonstration of helicopter capabilities within a full icing envelope (as defined by FAR 25 or FAR 29) is difficult to achieve in a reasonable time and at reasonable cost with natural icing testing.” As we have discussed, artificial icing testing is an acceptable means to supplement natural icing testing and confirm that an aircraft is safe to fly in natural icing conditions. Ralph Woratschek, a retired Army icing tester, wrote in an unpublished report, “Natural icing tests confirm the results of the artificial tests. If the ice accretion and shedding characteristics observed in natural conditions are the same as in artificial conditions, the certification basis may also include the artificial results.”

Therefore, the industry team requesting approval for flight in icing conditions includes data from both types of tests when it reports results to the airworthiness authorities, who review photo and video evidence after aircraft immersion in artificial or natural clouds to identify where ice accretes (Photo) and if the ice is likely to contact or damage other parts of the aircraft when it is shed. Components such as wings, tail surfaces, propeller and rotor blades, engine inlets, and windshields will likely require ice protection systems



Ice accretion on UH-60 rotor blade.

U.S. ARMY REDSTONE TEST CENTER PHOTO

(anti-ice or deice) to sustain safe flight in moderate icing conditions. In addition, certifiers need assurance that critical instrumentation systems, such as airspeed and angle of attack sensors, will continue to provide reliable and accurate information for flight, and that rotor droop stops do not ice up during flight and fail to engage during engine shutdown.

Data from aircraft instrumentation is analyzed to quantify how icing affects flight performance, handling qualities, and vibration. For example, ice accretion on rotor blades, wings, and tails changes the aerodynamic shape of those surfaces, which increases drag and reduces lift. Power required increases, reducing flight performance, and aircraft handling may be sluggish due to decreased responsiveness of the aircraft to control inputs. Aircraft vibration may also increase due to mass imbalances as ice is shed asymmetrically from the main rotor blades. While these changes in flight characteristics may not be severe enough to prohibit safe flight, the airworthiness authorities may require that notes, cautions or warnings be included in the flight manual to inform pilots of these effects.

Recent developments in simulation of aircraft icing using computational fluid dynamics may offer ways to design better aircraft ice protection systems and reduce the time and expense required for testing. However, since integration and acceptance of these methods will be incremental, there will be an ongoing need for testers like Lynn and Kim Hanks to spend long winters certifying aircraft for icing.

---

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

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# Can I Take a Weight-Loss Shot, Doc?

By MAJ (Dr.) Jinyong Bae, CPT (Dr.) Trevor Scott, and MAJ (Dr.) Salvatore Bertucci

**Q.** Doc, I'm struggling with the tape test. I see commercials for weight-loss medications, and I know civilians who are losing a lot of weight on them. Can I take the weight-loss shot and keep flying?

**FS:** This is a question we've been getting frequently. The short answer for the Army aviator is currently no. You cannot take these medications solely for weight loss and perform flight duties. The caveat is that some waivers have been granted for the use of certain weight-loss injection medications (like GLP-1 agonists) in the treatment of diabetes, but not solely for weight management. While the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has a pathway for civilian pilots to use them for weight loss, the Army's policy remains stricter due to the unique demands of our tactical environment. Here is the breakdown of why these medications are a major hurdle for the cockpit.

## The Aeromedical Hazards

### Pancreatitis and Acute Kidney Injury (AKI)

Recent clinical data has linked GLP-1 agonists (such as semaglutide) to an increased risk of pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) and Acute Kidney Injury (AKI). Pancreatitis often presents as sudden, severe abdominal pain that can lead to incapacitation in flight. AKI can result from severe dehydration—a common risk in hot-weather tactical operations—exacerbated by the gastrointestinal side effects of these medications. Both conditions represent significant “medical surprises” that are incompatible with safe flight operations.

### New Potential Risk: Permanent Vision Loss (NAION)

Recent data has identified a rare but serious risk: Non-Arteritic Anterior Ischemic Optic Neuropathy (NAION), essentially a “stroke of the optic nerve.” Studies indicate that patients on semaglutide may have a 4 to 8 times higher risk of developing this condition. While this condition is a rare, emerging concern, the risk of sudden monocular blindness is significant enough to be deemed incompatible with aviation duties.

### Nausea and Vomiting

The most common side effects are nausea, vomiting, and stomach pain. These symptoms can range from distracting to incapacitating in flight. Furthermore, the spatial disorientation inherent to rotary-wing flight can trigger severe airsickness in a pilot whose threshold is already lowered by these drugs.

### Prolonged Grounding

The biggest logistical hurdle is the ground testing of new medications. Again, these medications are not currently ap-

proved for weight loss; however, generally speaking, Army Aeromedical Policy dictates that when starting a new prescription, you must be grounded for six half-lives of the medication to assess for side effects.

- Semaglutide has a half-life of approximately 7 days.
- 7 days × 6 = 42 days.
- You would be grounded for a minimum of 42 days.

If you experience side effects during the ground trial, you will require a “wash-out” period that can be equally long as the medication clears your system.

## The Bottom Line

GLP-1 agonists are currently not allowed by the Army for weight-loss purposes for aviators. If weight loss is a concern, ask your flight surgeon about seeing a dietician and consult the Army Wellness Center. A sustainable nutrition and exercise plan will yield longer-lasting results than a GLP-1 agonist that also puts your flight safety at risk.

The waiver authority for Army Aviation is the Army Aeromedical Activity (AAMA) at Fort Rucker AL. Current guidelines from AAMA clearly state that “hypoglycemic agents for weight loss are not authorized for any indication in any class. No waivers will be granted.”

## Action Item

If you are struggling with weight:

- Consult your flight surgeon before taking any medication.
- Request current guidance from your Flight Surgeon, as policies are evolving.
- Caveat: Waivers for using GLP-1 agonists to treat diabetes are possible.

If you are started on this medication for control of diabetes, your Flight Surgeon will need proof of stability and no side effects during a period of grounding to submit a waiver. The use of these medications in Army Aviation is not authorized for weight loss alone. Aviation is unforgiving of medical surprises. We're here to keep you healthy and flying - bring your questions to the clinic.

## Fly Safe!

### Questions for the Flight Surgeon?

If you have a question you would like addressed, email it to us; we'll try to address it in the future. See your unit flight surgeon for your personal health issues. The views and opinions offered are those of the authors and researchers and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position unless otherwise stated.

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*MAJ Jinyong Bae, M.D., CPT Trevor Scott, M.D., and MAJ Salvatore Bertucci, D.O., MPH, are flight surgeons working at the Dept. of Aviation Medicine and AAMA at Fort Rucker, AL supporting Army Aviation operations.*

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## Our Missions Change. Our Responsibilities to Meet Them Never Will. By BG Patrick Pollak

I am honored to assume command of the Army Reserve Aviation Command during a period of profound transition and possible future opportunity. Like many of you, I recognize the weight of this assignment. It is a bitter-sweet opportunity—to take the guidon of an organization defined by operational excellence and experienced professionals, while also overseeing one of the most consequential structural changes in Army Reserve Aviation history.

The Army Reserve has been directed to divest all rotary-wing formations and inactivate no later than September 2026. This decision, informed by ATI EX-ORD 22-225 and ARSTRUC 2028-32, reflects a strategic realignment of Total Army Aviation forces rather than any shortcoming in performance. Army Reserve aviators have answered every mission placed before them—combat, MEDEVAC, humanitarian relief, and homeland response—with distinction. Our missions change. Our responsibilities to meet them never will.

The ARAC began as the 11th Avia-

tion Command in 2007, with further transformation and taking on its current form in 2016. Born during a period of two major Middle Eastern conflicts, the ARAC and its subordinate units were in the midst of the USAR evolving to an operational reserve. We've never left CENTCOM, maintaining a perpetual fixed-wing detachment presence across the region, along with two decades of rotations of larger rotary wing units. Throughout our near constant support to CENTCOM, we converted Apache Battalions to Assault Battalions in 2016, established a second Aviation Brigade HQ, the 11th Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigade, Fort Carson, CO and maintained a forward-looking presence to ensure Army Reserve Aviation remained vital and necessary to the joint force.

I have witnessed all previous Reserve Aviation transformations personally and ATI is the most significant change we've ever faced. The requirements and impacts on the pilots, aircrew and service support personnel - both military and civilian - are the most profound in their

careers. There is no shortage of work and effort that will require our attention as we work to meet our inactivation timelines.

### Units Affected

Under current guidance, all affected units are scheduled for inactivation no later than September 2026. While that date marks a structural endpoint, our focus between now and then is disciplined execution - maintaining readiness, honoring commitments, and caring for our people throughout the transition.

It is now the primary focus of all Army Reserve rotary-wing units assigned to the Expeditionary Combat Aviation Brigades (ECABs), along with their headquarters, to clear their flightlines of our aging aircraft, transfer equipment to other units, find viable opportunities for our personnel (both aviation and support MOSs), and close down facilities. These formations span 10 locations across nine states, from Washington to Florida. The 11th ECAB and 244th ECAB comprise the core of Army Reserve rotary-wing capability.



Aircraft affected include the UH-60L Black Hawk, HH-60L and HH-60M MEDEVAC Black Hawk, and the CH-47F Chinook. The Army Reserve Aviation Command currently fields over 180 total helicopters. Some aircraft are already allocated for transfer to other government agencies; the final number entering the public market has not yet been determined. Our civilian maintenance backbone, led by our Aviation Program Manager (APM) is working a phased transfer plan with AMCOM.

### People First—Always

At its peak, Army Reserve Aviation represented one of the most experienced aviation forces in the Total Army. The Command anticipates inactivating approximately 3,200 personnel, including about 400 civilian employees. Just under 500 Active Guard-Reserve Soldiers will lose their position of assignment, roughly 60 percent of whom are pilots. An estimated 250 full-time aviators currently serve in staff and command positions. These numbers matter—but the people behind them matter more.

The Department of the Army and the Army Reserve are committed to retaining talent wherever possible. Soldiers are being supported through reassignment, reclassification, and retirement transi-

*Above left: Members of the Army Reserve Aviation Command conducted a large-scale formation at Fort Knox, Kentucky on Sept. 12, 2025. The formation consisted of 15 aircraft and celebrated the final formation flight for 8-229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, which will inactivate per ATI EXORD 222-25 no later than Sept. 15, 2026.*

*Above right: Members of the Army Reserve Aviation Command perform pre-flight operations before conducting a large-scale formation at Fort Knox, Kentucky on Sept. 12, 2025.*

tion options. Enlisted Soldiers may reclassify within their military occupational specialties, while many aviators are requesting—and receiving—conditional releases to continue service in other Army components, sister services, or federal agencies.

As this transformation concludes, we anticipate retaining approximately 800 personnel in a downsized headquarters, maintaining a Colonel-level command focused on a continued fixed-wing mission. While the command's structure will change and condense, its relevance and contribution to the Army Reserve will endure.

### Looking Forward

Army Reserve aviation has built a legacy defined by reliability, adaptability, and operational impact. That legacy is not erased by organizational change. It is preserved by the Soldiers, civilians, and families who served—and who will continue to serve—in new capacities.

My commitment as commander is straightforward: we will execute this transition with discipline, transparency, and dignity. We will maintain readiness through the final day of rotary-wing operations, support every Soldier and civilian affected, and ensure that Army Reserve Aviation remains a respected contributor to the Total Force.

I look forward to engaging with aviators, families, industry partners, and stakeholders as we navigate this chapter together. Thank you for your professionalism, resilience, and continued support of America's Army Reserve aviators.

Rise Above.

*BG Patrick Pollak is the commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve Aviation Command, headquartered at Fort Knox, KY.*





COURTESY PHOTO

## The Multi-Capable APX-128 Transponder – An Investment in Army Rotor Crew Safety

By: LTC Paul R. Flanigen and  
Brandon M. Douglass

*U.S. Army software integration lab Enterprise Platform Innovation and Conformance Center (EPICC) CH-47 evaluation device used in transponder evaluation.*

**T**he Army charged the Assured Airspace Access Systems (A3S) Product Office with a fundamental and non-negotiable mission: ensure every Army aircrew can operate safely and effectively in any airspace, at any time. For A3S, the APX-128 transponder is a plan that not only achieves compliance but delivers a generational leap in safety and tactical capability for Warfighters.

### The Mandate and the Modernization Gap

From a product management perspective, the Army's current state of surveillance technology is unsustainable. While most Army aircraft already possess ADS-B OUT, the lack of an integrated ADS-B IN capability creates a significant situational awareness gap for aircrews. As an interim fix, Army Aviation provided over 1,300 portable tablets to display ADS-B IN data to aircraft in high-traffic areas. This rapid measure immediately reduced risk to aircrews but falls short of the fully integrated "behind the glass" cockpit solution and a growth path to future Aircraft Collision Avoidance System (ACAS) X software.

Further amplifying the risk, the leg-

acy APX-123A transponder is facing increasing sustainment challenges. A3S projects a critical shortfall just as demand is set to surge. This confluence of known and emerging mission requirements, a self-funded modernization environment, and an aging hardware inventory compelled the move toward a holistic, long-term solution.

### The Solution: The APX-128 as a Strategic Cornerstone

Developed by A3S through a deliberate and collaborative partnership between the Army and industry partners, evaluated in an Army software integration lab environment, and on glidepath to meet certification requirements, the APX-128 is the cornerstone of the Army's modernization strategy. Far beyond a simple one-for-one replacement, it is a system with myriad capabilities designed to solve three critical challenges simultaneously.

First, the APX-128 delivers the full ADS-B IN and OUT functionality to safely operate in the national airspace with improved situational awareness. It is designed as a backwards-compatible, form-fit replacement for the legacy transponder, as it dramatically simplifies the integration logistics across

the Army's diverse and aging fleets. Crucially, the high-fidelity GPS data broadcast through its ADS-B OUT function provides a pure, reliable surveillance feed for Army Fixed Base Air Traffic Control systems. This ensures that as the national airspace system evolves, Army aircraft and controllers speak the same digital language, enhancing safety and efficiency within the airspace they manage.

Second, the APX-128 provides a vital enhancement to tactical safety and interoperability through its integration of Mode 5 Level 2 Broadcast (M5L2-B). This encrypted, secure NATO protocol enables friendly aircraft to broadcast their precise position and velocity directly to one another, independent of any ground-based radar infrastructure. In a contested or communications-degraded environment, this creates a secure digital "bubble" of situational awareness, drastically reducing the risk of mid-air collisions and fratricide. This is a purely military requirement that moves beyond simple compliance and into the realm of enhanced warfighting capability.

Third, and most strategically, the APX-128 is designed to be the foundation for the Army's future as the designated host for the ACAS X. This next-

generation system shifts a paradigm in aviation safety, moving from passive situational awareness to active, automated collision prevention. By processing data from ADS-B and M5L2-B, ACAS X can provide automatic resolution advisories, directing pilots with clear “climb” or “turn” commands to deconflict their flight path. By fielding the APX-128 now, the A3S office is solving today’s problem and building the essential foundation for a safer and more capable force tomorrow.

**Fielding Strategy: A Deliberate, Phased Approach**

A fleet-wide retrofit is a complex undertaking. Therefore, the A3S team mapped out a multi-phased fielding strategy to deliver this capability. The plan begins in FY27 by providing immediate situational awareness, installing new APX-128 transponders, and connecting them to existing cockpit tablets. Following this, the FY29-FY31 effort will pivot to full “behind the glass” integration, embedding the data directly onto the native cockpit displays of the UH-60, AH-64, and CH-47 fleets. In parallel, the fielding of the ACAS X software will transform the system

from a passive information display into an active, life-saving guardian for both crewed and uncrewed platforms.

**Conclusion: A Stark Choice for Army Aviation’s Future**

The APX-128 modernization plan represents a comprehensive and decisive solution. It resolves a looming sustainment crisis and most importantly, equips our aviators with the unparalleled situational awareness needed to dominate an increasingly congested airspace. This is more than an upgrade; it is a fundamental investment in the safety of our crews and the very future of Army Aviation. The time to secure that future is now.

*LTC Paul R. Flanigen is the Assured Airspace Access Systems (A3S) Product Manager. Mr. Brandon M. Douglass is the A3S Deputy Product Manager. The A3S Product Office resides in the Aviation Mission Systems and Architecture (AMSA) Project Office, within the Capability Program Executive – Aviation Office, Redstone Arsenal, AL.*



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## Fixed Wing Project Office and Army Fixed Wing Aviation - Acquisition Transformation in Action: A Tale of Two Programs

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



Legacy C-12 Cockpit



Digital C-12 Cockpit.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE FIXED WING PROJECT OFFICE

**A**s my tenure as the Project Manager for Fixed Wing concludes, I have had the privilege of witnessing transformative changes, not only within the project office but across the entirety of Army Acquisition. Since arriving at Fixed Wing in the summer of 2022, I have overseen the divestment of the legacy turboprop aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (A-ISR) fleet, which served our nation honorably for over 54 years, and the dawn of a new era of acquisition reform.

In November 2025, the Department of War (DoW) unveiled an acquisition strategy marking a fundamental shift in how the Army develops, procures, and fields new

*Above top: HADES is a blueprint for future acquisition-----*

*Above right: The Garmin G1000 NXi integrated flight deck replaces legacy analog gauges in the C-12 with a consolidated digital interface.*

capabilities. The guiding principle is now “speed to capability,” a mandate to accelerate the delivery of decisive tools to the Warfighter. For the past five years, the Fixed Wing Project Office has been a vanguard of this principle, reinvesting in next-generation A-ISR platforms and spearheading a new program of record: the High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES).

## Executing Acquisition Transformation: A Tale of Two Programs

In an era of renewed global competition, the mandate from the DoW is clear: move faster, think smarter, and rebuild our arsenal with unprecedented urgency. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth's "Acquisition Transformation Strategy" provides the blueprint for overhauling this process. This directive is a call to action—to break from bureaucratic inertia and embrace a new model of speed and innovation. The Army's HADES program and the C-12 King Air modernization initiative serve as compelling and complementary case studies in its successful execution.

### HADES: Defining the Future of Acquisition

The team behind the HADES program is not merely aligning with the DoW's acquisition strategy; it is proving its core tenets in the field. By strategically using contractor-owned, contractor-operated bridging A-ISR aircraft, the team is validating platform and sensor capabilities in real-world environments, effectively de-risking the formal HADES program of record.

### Pillar 1: Rebuild the Arsenal of Freedom

The defense industrial base must be rebuilt with creativity and commercial savvy. HADES exemplifies this on multiple fronts. In a groundbreaking move, the program integrator, SNC, acquired Bombardier Global 6500 aircraft that will become the first production HADES aircraft, reducing the timeline for fielding. This "commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS)-first" mentality permeates the program as the HADES team accelerates capability delivery by procuring subsystems directly from suppliers, bypassing the traditional prime contractor model where possible.

### Pillar 2: Empower the Acquisition Workforce

True empowerment requires granting program managers the authority to make critical, Warfighter-focused decisions. HADES actualizes this through its Enterprise Integrated Product Team (E-IPT), a dedicated decision-making body uniting the program office with key operational and resourcing stakeholders. This E-IPT structure enables rapid adjustments and direct configuration management, ensuring the system evolves

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with the threat without layers of bureaucratic delay. It is a model of decentralized execution and direct accountability.

### **Pillar 3: Maximize Acquisition Flexibility**

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of HADES is its deliberate use of flexible acquisition authorities. The program employs a novel strategy with four separate Middle Tier of Acquisition (MTA) pathways, posturing the program for a rapid fielding decision as early as FY27—years ahead of traditional schedules. Proactive engagement with the Army Test and Evaluation Command (ATEC) and the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation (DOTE) make the program agile, resulting in a fully endorsed test strategy.

### **Pillar 4: Develop High-Performance Systems**

Speed cannot come at the expense of performance. HADES ensures technical excellence by building on a mature, Modular Open Systems Approach (MOSA) compliant digital backbone. This open framework fosters a competitive vendor ecosystem where new technology is rapidly integrated, preventing vendor lock and future-

proofing the platform. The program has also masterfully used COCO aircraft like the Army Theater-level High Altitude Expeditionary Next-generation A-ISR (ATHENA) as real-world testbeds. This allows the team to refine the core HADES design and its associated Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy (DOTMLPF-P) considerations.

### **Pillar 5: Improve Lifecycle Risk Management**

The HADES team is mitigating long-term sustainment risk from day one. By leveraging the extensive, proven global maintenance and supply chains of commercial partners like Bombardier and Rolls-Royce, HADES bypasses the need for a costly, purpose-built logistics network. This approach, managed by the same E-IPT that empowers the workforce, ensures higher fleet availability and lower lifecycle costs, a cornerstone of smart, sustainable acquisition.

### **C-12 Modernization: Enhancing Readiness and Reducing Costs**

In parallel with developing revolutionary new capabilities, the Army is applying the same strategic principles

to modernize its enduring fixed wing transport fleet. The upgrade program for the Beechcraft King Air C-12, a proven and versatile airframe, demonstrates a focused effort to enhance safety, improve efficiency, and reduce long-term operational costs.

### **Enhancing Safety and Operational Capability**

The C-12 modernization initiative addresses pilot workload and flight safety through two key technological integrations. A new autothrottle system provides automated power management across all phases of flight, while the Garmin G1000 NXi integrated flight deck replaces legacy analog gauges with a consolidated digital interface. This combination substantially reduces pilot workload, adds capability, mitigates human error, and allows for increased focus on mission management. Crucially, the system provides robust flight envelope protection against under-speed and over-speed events.

### **Improving Efficiency and Lifecycle Management**

The upgrades have tangible benefits for the fleet's lifecycle cost profile. The autothrottle system optimizes engine



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performance, yielding measurable improvements in fuel efficiency, while its Full Authority Digital Engine Control (FADEC)-like protection prevents engine over-torque and over-temperature events. This engine stress mitigation extends component life, may increase time-between-overhauls, and lowers sustainment costs. Furthermore, replacing legacy avionics yields a weight reduction of approximately 250 pounds per airframe, allowing for greater flexibility in payload and fuel loading.

### A Unified Strategy for a Modern Force

The HADES program and the C-12 modernization initiative, though vastly different in scale and scope, are two sides of the same strategic coin. Both serve as powerful validation of the Acquisition Transformation Strategy. HADES delivers groundbreaking capability at the speed of relevance through rapid development and commercial integration. The C-12 upgrade exemplifies a parallel commitment to smart, sustainable lifecycle management, enhancing the readiness of the enduring fleet while exercising fiscal discipline. Together, they form a comprehensive blueprint for the future, proving that a culture of acqui-

sition excellence builds a more lethal, modern, and resilient force.

### A Final Call Before Departing the Pattern

On a personal note, as I conclude my four years leading this remarkable organization, I am immensely proud of what the Army Fixed Wing team has accomplished as an enterprise. It has been an honor to serve alongside such dedicated and innovative professionals. As I retire and hang up my Army flight suit, I look forward to trading the complexities of managing a global fleet for the simple, hands-on joys of flying my personal Mooney. The only budgets and timelines I'll be worrying about now will be my own. To the entire Fixed Wing community, thank you for an incredible final chapter.

*Clear skies and tailwinds.*

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





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# Special Focus ▶

## U.S. Army Best Drone Warfighting Competition



# Drones, Dominance, and the Next Fight:

## Army's Inaugural Warfighter Competition Takes Flight

By Ken Holder

**T**he United States Army recently crowned the winners of its inaugural Best Drone Warfighter Competition, a high-energy, three-day showdown that brought together more than 200 of the Army's most skilled small, unmanned aircraft system (UAS) operators. Held February 17–19 in Huntsville, AL, the event drew more than 900 attendees and highlighted how rapidly drone technology is reshaping the modern battlefield.

"I am enthused about the participants in this competition. They are not only the best of the best, but their demonstrated tactics, techniques, and procedures will provide best practices that we can adopt and proliferate across our warfighting skills. This competition is challenging with three lanes – Best Drone Operator, Best Tactical Squad, and Best Unit Innovation – in pursuit of excellence. These three lanes embody what our warfighters

*Two Neros Archer drones on the start and finish landing pads for the competition. Neros donated more than 30 Archers that were used by competitors.*

*Above photos: Soldiers demonstrating capability on the hunter/killer tactical squad course and on the innovation course.*

need to do to dominate this space," said MG Clair Gill, Commanding General United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Rucker, AL.

Hosted by the United States Army Aviation Center of Excellence and the United States Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, the competition was sponsored by the Army Aviation Association of America in partnership with the University of Alabama in Huntsville, AL. The collaboration underscored the Army's commitment to blending operational expertise, institutional training, and industry and academic partnerships to accelerate innovation.

Across three demanding lanes, competitors demonstrated speed, precision, teamwork, and ingenuity. In the Best Drone Operator event, Soldiers raced Neros Archer first-person-view (FPV) drones through a complex obstacle course that tested reflexes and technical mastery. The Tactical Squad lane paired



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SGT Javon Purcher, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX – Best Drone Operator



Ssg Angel Caliz and SPC Jonah Burks, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, Vilseck, Germany – Best Tactical Squad

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1LT Ryan Giallonardo, CW3 Robert Reed, CW2 Nathan Shea, and SFC Brent Wehr, 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard – Best Innovation.

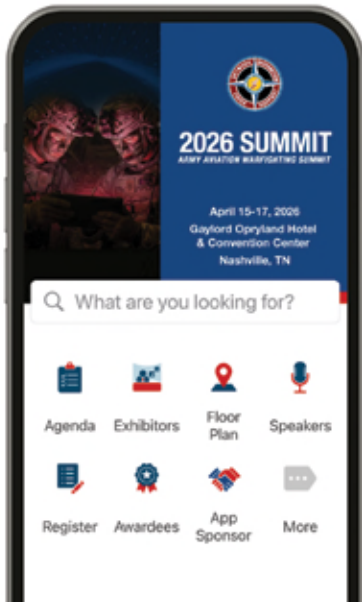


Secretary of the Army, Dan Driscoll, addresses attendees at the closing ceremony.



AAAA National Executive Group members with competitors from 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX stand in front of the obstacle course.

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operators in cross-country hunter-killer missions requiring target identification, tracking, and simulated neutralization under time pressure. The Innovation lane placed Soldier-designed technologies before a panel of experts, focusing on improvements to survivability, lethality, and battlefield adaptability.

When the dust settled, the 2026 winners represented a cross-section of the Total Army. SGT Javon Purcher of the 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX, earned the title of Best Drone Operator. SSG Angel Caliz and SPC Jonah Burks of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, Vilseck, Germany, claimed Best Tactical Squad. In the Best Innovation category, 1LT Ryan Giallonardo, CW3 Robert Reed, CW2 Nathan Shea, and SFC Brent Wehr of the 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, took top honors for their forward-leaning concepts known as Project RED or Recovery Exploitation Drone.

Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll was on hand to congratulate the winners for their achievements and address the attendees at the closing session.

But the competition was about more than trophies. Leaders emphasized that the true value lies in identifying and rapidly spreading effective tactics, techniques, and procedures across the force. As small-UAS capabilities become in-

creasingly central to reconnaissance, targeting, and force protection, the Army is investing in operators who can adapt quickly in contested environments.

By bringing together Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard Soldiers in a shared arena of competition and innovation, the Best Drone Warfighter Competition signaled a clear message: unmanned systems are no longer a niche capability. They are a decisive element of modern combat power – and the Army is determined to dominate this space.

AAAA National Senior Vice President stated, “We at the Army Aviation Association of America are incredibly proud to be part of this inaugural Best Drone Warfighter Competition. It is an honor to stand alongside the United States Army at the cutting edge of this technological leap into the future of warfare. We are especially grateful to our partners across industry for their tremendous support – not only of this competition, but of AAAA and Army Aviation as a whole. Thanks also to the University of Alabama Huntsville team without whom this event would not have been possible as well as the city of Huntsville for their support.”

*This article was written by Ken Holder, Editor of Army Aviation magazine, compiled from various sources.*

# Annual Aviation Senior Leader's Forum Focus: Army Aviation- Transforming with a Vision

By Kelly Morris

**A** rmy Aviation leaders from across the globe descended on Fort Rucker for the annual Aviation Senior Leader Forum Jan. 27-29.

Approximately 200 Aviation brigade commanders, brigade command sergeants major and senior warrant officers, and current and former Army and Army Aviation leaders from across all Army components received updates and provided feedback on initiatives supporting the warfighter and Army aviation transformation.

The theme of this year's event was "Army Aviation: Transforming with a Vision." In his Aviation branch update, event host MG Clair A. Gill, Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, reflected on the Chief of Staff of the Army's visit to Fort Rucker a year ago, when he challenged the Center to develop a vision for the future.

"He challenged us on a number of things we were thinking about. He had already made up his mind on where we're going with Army transformation," Gill said. "He said ... think about the current application of technology, the way you're going to train warfighters, and I want you to come back to me with what that is going to look like."

Gill reflected on a busy year in 2025, including the rollout of the Army Transformation Initiative, amidst force design updates. "A lot of goodness to



U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY KELLY MORRIS

*MG Clair A. Gill, Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker commanding general, and BG Phillip J. Kiniery, Infantry School commandant at the Maneuver Center of Excellence, speak during the Aviation Senior Leader Forum at Fort Rucker, AL.*

that, but a bit of a shock to the system about how fast we were going to move some things. It's had some effect on your formations," Gill said.

"We cranked out the vision, and then the Secretary of War released his acquisition reform directive and called all the acquisition folks together." Gill noted the Army is the first service to establish Portfolio Acquisition Executives. Gill will now take on new responsibilities as the Portfolio Acquisition Executive-Maneuver Air, in addition to his job as the Aviation branch chief and Fort Rucker senior commander.

The vision focuses on being able to "deploy, fight and win, provide land-focused air capability, conducting combined arms operations, leveraging technology both manned and unmanned by well-trained aviation Soldiers, underpinned by everything about that warfighter culture," Gill said.

Gill's branch updates were sorted into four main bins—formations; the environment—including the proliferation of Unmanned Aircraft Systems and aviation in Large Scale Combat Operations; future development—including the MV-75 tiltrotor aircraft; and people.

Gill clarified that while restructuring efforts will remove more than 6,500 aviation authorizations, the majority of those positions are currently vacant. The actual number of impacted personnel

is approximately 100 commissioned officers, 200 warrant officers and 1,300 enlisted personnel.

Gill said the Center looks to revamp its flight school model to deliver a more proficient aviator in the future through a commercially owned and operated initial flight training program, followed by training in the Army advanced aircraft at Fort Rucker. He noted the current flight school model utilizing the UH-72 Lakota for initial training produces aviators who are "good systems managers but not good stick and rudder pilots." The COCO model would potentially increase the amount of flying time the students get during Initial Entry Rotary Wing training, an opportunity to solo, and come at a significant cost savings for the Army.

Among the many ongoing transformation efforts, the branch plans to train 2,000 Soldiers in the new 15X military occupational specialty. "I think of them as combined arms maneuverists that are going to be out there advising commanders, helping formations, training them, building, planning, facilitating, integrating in the formations," Gill said. "I'm very proud of this."

Gill explained the need for transformation now. "We have always been a decisive element of the combined arms fight for the Army," Gill said. "In the Global War on Terror era, the one we grew up in, we never really had to justify our existence because if you asked



any brigade commander in the Army what they could have more of, they didn't ask for more fires, they didn't ask for more squads, they wanted more air. Air was that asymmetric capability that gave them that ability to outmaneuver anywhere on any of the battlefields. I think Sergeant Major of the Army (Michael) Weimer said, 'that was combat, that wasn't war'."

Gill said for the future fight Army aviation must be more adaptive to the battlefield. "That means what worked for us isn't necessarily going to work of the future. So our branch has to be ready to adapt whatever way that warfare allows. What we can't do is wait. We've got to adapt, we've got to transform now."

GEN David M. Hodne, commanding general of U.S. Army Transformation and Training Command, explained T2COM's focus on force generation, force development and force design, at about 100 days into the command's existence.

He described the formation of the new command as "bold, historic and decisive," and lauded the hard-earned reputations of the former Army Training and Doctrine Command and Army Futures Command.

The T2COM supports Army service components commands, from the generating force up through the operational force. "From recruits to robots, transformation and training command is responsible for delivering capability

*Above top left: LTG Michael C. McCurry, commanding general of Futures and Concepts Command, speaks during the Aviation Senior Leader Forum at Fort Rucker, AL.*

*Above far right: MG Clair A. Gill, Aviation Center of Excellence commanding general, congratulates 1LT Cooper Gentry, a student aviator who recently completed Ranger School while in a flight school hold status, as the Hon. Michael A. Obadal, Under Secretary of the Army looks on via video teleconference during the Aviation Senior Leader Forum at Fort Rucker, AL.*

*Above lower left: LTG Michael C. McCurry, commanding general of Futures and Concepts Command, conducts a Q&A session during the Aviation Senior Leader Forum at Fort Rucker, AL.*

to the operational force," Hodne said.

The forum's three-day lineup of guest speaker sessions included updates from LTG Michael C. McCurry, commanding general of Futures and Concepts Command; MG Lori L. Robinson, who commands Aviation and Missile Command; and BG Phillip J. Kiniery, Infantry School commandant at the Maneuver Center of Excellence.

Joining virtually to provide updates were the HON Michael A. Obadal, Under Secretary of the Army and former Army aviator; and LTG Joel B. Vowell, deputy commanding general for U.S. Army Pacific. Attendees also received updates from Human Resources Command.

The forum included a panel session with the Aviation branch leadership based at Fort Rucker: Gill led the updates on imperatives the branch is working; CSM Kirk R. Coley, Aviation branch command sergeant major, emphasized initiatives across the branch including continuous transformation in AIT and PME; and CW5 Robert S. Slider, chief warrant officer of the Aviation

branch, reiterated the important role the warrant officer will play in the future as the Army transforms.

Daily breakout working groups tackled problem sets and briefed their findings. Topics included solving airspace management in complex environments, leveraging Artificial Intelligence and machine learning to improve outcomes and conditions-based maintenance and sustainment related issues, with Coley noting that they were able to flesh out some items the branch has been talking about for years.

"Thanks to the working groups for helping us focus with a vision on some of the things we need to fix from a maintenance standpoint, and all the different topics we've had. I think it was a great session," Coley said.

Slider added that as the Army continues to modernize, he wants the branch to continue to build upon what the groups accomplished during the forum.

*Kelly Morris is an award-winning journalist with the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence and Fort Rucker, AL.*



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY 10TST AIRBORNE DIVISION PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## A Bias for Training: Leveraging DSCA Missions to Prepare for LSCO

By 1LT Will Lynch and LTC Robbie Wells

In late September 2024, Hurricane Helene swept through the southeastern United States, leaving a wake of damage and a long road to recovery. The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) was uniquely prepositioned to help those affected. Elements from both the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade (101st CAB) and the 2nd Mobile Brigade Combat Team (2nd MBCT) were rapidly re-tasked to Western North Carolina to provide support. The 101st CAB leveraged this opportunity to provide Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA), while simultaneously training for Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO). Maintaining a bias for training, regardless of the task at hand, serves as an example for units looking to maximize our most limited training resource: time.

In early October, units from across the 101st were preparing for a division-level training exercise. Late on October 4th the order was received to shift efforts from the exercise, to support relief efforts in Western North Carolina. With time being the critical factor to help those in need, the Division modified aspects of the original exercise, framing the mission as an air assault operation tailored to disaster response.

Less than 18 hours after notification, Task Force Shadow, comprised of 20 helicopters and 155 personnel, enabled OPERATION HUMANITARIAN STRIKE, a Large-Scale, Long-Range Air Assault (L2A2) of 2nd MBCT to provide relief support from Fort Campbell, KY to Western North Carolina. The operation enabled the infill of cohesive elements from the 2nd MBCT into previously inaccessible restrictive terrain - task organized to provide support to civilian agencies. Over the next four days and three nights Soldiers from Task Force Shadow would work with 2nd MBCT to deliver 662 Soldiers, 61 vehicles, and thousands of pounds of supplies to support relief efforts.

Over the past 24 months, the 101st trained for LSCO focusing on developing, refining, and training the next evolution of vertical envelopment, through the application of L2A2s. In the execution and after-action review of HUMANITARIAN STRIKE, numerous similarities between previous training events and the DSCA mission were observed. Three broad similarities, centralized planning with decentralized execution, sustainment operations, and command and control (C2) will be discussed in this article.

*CH-47 crews from Company B and Company G, 6-101 Aviation Regiment conduct sling load operations of Field Litter Ambulances for 2MBCT "Strike" during Hurricane Helene relief efforts*

### Centralized Planning with Decentralized Execution

The air assault originally scheduled for the beginning of October was planned at the Division level. When the mission changed, the Division maintained centralized planning, while subordinate units executed parallel planning within the Commander's intent. Division and Brigade handled up-and-out interactions with Joint and community partners, while battalion and below focused on tactical mission planning. COCOM and Joint staff, from the LSCO fight, were replaced with Interagency Departments and State Government Leaders, during DSCA support.

"Tactically" flight companies began route planning upon receipt of the warning order, while Division and Brigade planners coordinated staging locations. Route planning was iterative, with crews receiving routing restrictions as higher headquarters refined running estimates and conducted Intelligence

Preparation of the Operating Environment (IPOE). Temporary flight restrictions and areas overwhelmed by the disaster were treated similarly to enemy air defense locations and Air Control Measures during LSCO. The freedom for leaders at echelon to exercise initiative within the commander's intent allowed for execution well within the 96-hour Air Assault Planning Process. Higher headquarters coordination to approve night operations further increased training value and reduced risk, deconflicting military with civilian aircraft operating during periods of light.

### Sustainment Operations

LSCO demands fuel and maintenance assets be expeditionary and flexible. To ensure survivability, staging locations are positioned in semi-permissible locations. In LSCO this can be defined as outside the range of enemy medium to heavy rocket artillery. For DSCA operations, semi-permissible is outside the periphery of disaster areas, assuring supporting forces have minimal impact on the local populace. With the surge in aviation support to the region came a corresponding strain on a fuel supply chain impacted by the hurricane.

To mitigate this strain, the 101st deconflicted refuel support, across multiple civilian airfields. This practice mirrored LSCO strategies of staging mission support sites (MSS) along routes outside the objective. Prioritization of refueling was a collective effort. Higher headquarters "pushed" fuel, by coordinating with airfields outside the affected area to assess capacity and approve use. Task Force Shadow assigned these airfields as "FARPs" for each serial. The Aviation Task Force Commander and Air Mission Commander (AMC) synchronized FARP rotations based on near real-time updates of aircraft executing the mission.

An equally important sustainment consideration was maintenance. To mitigate the loss of efficiency due to distance and dispersion, a tailored team of aviation maintenance professionals deployed to MSS Greenville, capable of conducting unit maintenance in non-standard, semi-permissive environments. Aircraft requiring higher level maintenance were forecasted and cycled back to Fort Campbell, KY serving as the Division Rear Area.

### Command and Control

During Operation HUMANITARIAN STRIKE the Air Battle Net (ABN)

was the primary network used to deconflict aviation assets. Traditionally, ABNs use a line-of-sight radio as the primary form of communication between serials. However, when aviation assets entered the mountainous terrain of Appalachia, line-of-sight communications were limited. With the LSCO environment requiring the employment of rotary-wing aircraft across a deeper battlefield, it is increasingly relevant to focus on the future of over-the-horizon (OTH) communication platforms, such as the Integrated Tactical Network (ITN).

During the mission air and ground units leveraged the ITN to maintain real-time communications and accountability through voice and digital systems. Each serial utilized Android Tactical Awareness Kit (ATAK) tablets coupled with experimental Aircraft Data Kit (ADK) network capabilities to maintain digital awareness and communication. The ITN network and supporting ADKs enabled digital air-ground interoperability and product sharing, with greater agility compared to legacy systems.

To reduce our logistical footprint Task Force Shadow employed an expeditionary command post at the Greenville Municipal Airport. The command post maintained 24-hour operations, employing OTH and LOS radios as well as digital Secure-But-Unclassified-Encrypted (SBU-E) communications. Starshield was used for network transport of Windows Tactical Awareness Kit (WINTAK) and encrypted Microsoft Office apps over VPN. Operating primarily over digital means enabled Task Force Shadow to mask our electro-

magnetic signature within the clutter of the civilian populace.

In every air assault, the fight isn't won at the pickup zone (PZ), but it can be lost there. This concept remains true in DSCA missions. Well-trained and rehearsed PZ crews enabled the success of the operation. Validated SOPs and pre-mission inspections ensured loads were properly prepared. The 2nd MBCT PZ Control utilized standard air assault mission planning products such as Air Load Tables, Air Movement Tables, and PZ Control Boards to synchronize operations. In subsequent operations, the 101st CAB and 2nd MBCT experimented with an ATAK-based PZ application that continues to streamline operations.

### Moving Forward

Leaders often view external support requests as training distractors. However, building a culture that leverages every opportunity for training ensures the unit is postured for success at a moment's notice. A bias for training within the world's only Air Assault Division prepared the 101st CAB for their current deployment to CENTCOM. As Army Aviation leaders we must be opportunistic and build a bias for training, enabling our forces to deploy into any environment, fight, and win.

*1LT Will Lynch is a Platoon Leader in Company G, 6th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment and LTC Robbie Wells is the commander of 6th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment. Both are assigned to Ft. Campbell, KY.*



A promotional poster for the 'Golf Tournament 2026'. The background shows a golfer in mid-swing on a green field. The text on the poster includes: '2026 AAAA SUMMIT, NASHVILLE AAAA SFI, INC &amp; AAAA TLC, INC BROUGHT TO YOU BY AIR ASSAULT CHAPTER' on the left; 'WHERE: Gaylord Springs Golf Links .18 Springhouse Lane, Nashville, TN 37214 http://www.gaylordsprings.com/'; 'WHEN: Tuesday, April 14, 2026; Shotgun start 0730 (morning) and 1330 (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.'; and 'REGISTRATION: https://2026oogolftournament.ezregister.com'. There are two circular logos at the bottom: one for the Air Assault Chapter and another for the Air Assault Association.

# Compagnie d'Aerostier – the French Aerostatic Corps

By Mark Albertson

The *Compagnie d'Aerostiers*[1] appeared 67 years before Thaddeus Lowe's Balloon Corps. The French, then, orchestrated the first true attempt at aerial observation/reconnaissance.

**August 1793**, Lazare Carnot proclaimed *Levee en Masse*. [2] What had begun as the French Revolution climaxed into the French Revolutionary Wars, as the monarchs of Europe endeavored to slay this attempt to repeat the success of the American Revolution on the Continent; [3] this in the face of the "isms" unleashed by the Age of Reason/Enlightenment—liberalism, democracy, republicanism, secularism, socialism, nationalism, parliamentarianism...

**April 2, 1794**, the Committee of Public Safety, [4] decreed the founding of the *Compagnie d'Aerostiers*; followed, in turn, with the founding of the first school of military aeronautics, *Ecole Nationale Aerostatique* at the Chalais-Meudon. France, then, had the world's first air force. Jean-Marie Coutelle, noted scientist and advocate of aeronautics, was placed in command. Attached, too, was Nicholas-Jacque Conte, a most talented inventor who produced the envelopes and built the brick kilns to manufacture the needed hydrogen gas.

**Spring 1794**, Coutelle reported to the headquarters of General Jean-Baptiste Jourdan, commander of the French Revolutionary Army of the North. With Coutelle was his balloon *L'Entreprenant* (Enterprise). Jourdan, holding the town of Maubeuge against the combined forces of Austrians and Dutch, expressed reservations as to Coutelle's claims of assistance by virtue of aerial observation.

**General Jourdan relented. June 2, 1794**, Coutelle and an assistant shared the basket of *L'Entreprenant* above the battlefield. Observations of the opposing Austrian and Dutch armies were noted on a pad. The pad was placed in a pouch attached to one of the static lines and lowered to the ground. A reply was penned by those on the ground and the pouch was raised to the basket. Such was modern communications between an aircraft in the air with those on the ground in 1794. Flags, too, were used to send and receive messages. The Austrians and Dutch resorted to small arms and artillery to down the intruder. Coutelle simply signaled for more cable and sought the safety of the skies. Once more history had been made: Anti-aircraft fire. June 23,



PHOTO COURTESY WIKIPEDIA COMMONS SANDSTEIN (THE BERN FILES)

One of the balloons from the *Compagnie d'Aerostiers*, *Intrepide*, the oldest surviving aircraft in Europe, at the Heeresgeschichtliches Museum in Vienna.

Coutelle and his 23-man crew were in action at the siege of Charleroi. Three days later, *L'Entreprenant* was thrown into the battle of Fleurus, Belgium.

Here the Army of the First Republic faced the combined forces of Britain, Dutch Republic, Austria and German troops from Hanover. General Antoine Morlot joined Coutelle in the basket above the fray. The two remained aloft for upwards of ten hours.

The communications pouch was up and down with the rapidity of a yo-yo. Much of the drama below had been directed by the two men above. Again, history had been made: Aerial observation had proved decisive in battle. Victory at Fleurus led to the expansion of the *Compagnie d'Aerostiers*. Three more balloons were added—*Celeste*, *Hercule* and *Intrepide*.

A second balloon company was formed and trained. Republican France continued to wield its airpower with its military campaigns in 1795 and in *Aerostiers* appeared in such battles as Mayence and Mannheim and in 1796, at Ramstadt, Stuttgart and Donauwerth.



Chalais-Meudon, site of the first "air force" academy to train aeronauts for the *Compagnie d' Aerostiers*.



Jean-Marie Coutelle, chief of the *Compagnie d' Aerostiers*

## Napoleon sees the advantage of Aerostiers

Napoleon employed the *Aerostiers* in Egypt in 1798. Here the French Air Force incurred a set back at the battle of Aboukir, when British troops captured and destroyed *Aerostiers'* equipment.

Unfortunately for the *Aerostiers*, Napoleon was not concerned with the losses incurred by the French Air Force. He, like a number of reactionary French commanders, was not a proponent of aerial observation; believing, instead, that cavalry was that arm of reconnaissance and shock. When he returned to France, he helped close down the *Compagnie d' Aerostiers*.

Such champions of lighter-than-aircraft like Nicolas Conte and Major Nicholas Lhomond, urged the intriguing notion of using balloons to ferry French troops in a cross-Channel invasion of the British Isles. But just as quickly did Emperor Napoleon dismiss such entreaties as mere flights of fancy; opening the door for history to repeat itself.[5]

**1940, with Operation: SEA LION**, [6] Adolf Hitler prepared to invade Britain with a heavy dose of *Fallschirmjagers*[7] from the Luftwaffe. But like the French conqueror before him, the Fuhrer recoiled from a cross-Channel invasion, instead, he hurled the Reich's resources against Russia.

For both dictators, the vastness of the Russian steppes proved their undoing. Both lacked the naval power to successfully challenge Britain's first line of defense, the Royal Navy. And both lacked the necessary appreciation of airpower to offset their deficiency in sea power. Instead, the historical parallels marking the strategic deficiencies that led to the downfall of these two totalitarians are striking.

## Endnotes

[1] Company of Aeronauts.

[2] Conscriptio of an entire population and economy for war. Such will dominate warfare out to 1945.

[3] The French Revolution commenced in 1789. In 1792, the French Revolutionary Wars, 1792-1802, will eventually give way to the Napoleonic Wars. This author subscribes to the Great French War consisting of the French Revolutionary Wars, 1792-1802 and the Napoleonic Wars, 1803-1815. Wars that help to pave the way for the extinction of monarchical dominance by 1919.

[4] The "Twelve of Apostles" who oversaw the French Revolution, which included Lazare Carnot.

[5] The inimitable Benjamin Franklin offered a thought or two as to the prospects of airpower following the success of the Montgolfier Brothers free flight across Paris in 1783. He

noted that the balloon could "possibly give a new turn to human affairs. Convincing sovereigns of the folly of wars may perhaps be one effect of it; since it would be impracticable of the most potent of them to guard his dominions. Five-thousand balloons, capable of raising two men each, could not cost more than five ships-of-line; and where is the prince who can so afford to cover his country with troops for its defense as that ten thousand men descending from the clouds might not in many places do an infinite deal of mischief before a force could be brought together to repel them?" This has airborne warfare written all over it. The cognitive powers of this colonial sage never cease to amaze. See Chapter 24, page 702, Vol. 1, *Benjamin Franklin*, by Carl Van Doren.

[6] Code name for Hitler's invasion of the British Isles.

[7] *Fallschirmjager* or paratrooper. Commanded by General Kurt Student, German paratroopers were Luftwaffe ground troops. In the convoluted world of Nazi court politics, command of ground troops gave Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, that much more political power in Berlin. This, though, did nothing to distract from the professionalism of the German paratrooper. Under the able leadership of General Student, the *Fallschirmjager*—man-for-man—was arguably the best soldier in the Wehrmacht; and, provided a model for British and American airborne efforts.

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

# Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association Special Feature



## A Bad Day at the Office

By Brooks "Jay" Setzer

**T**he U Minh Forest is a scary place. It was deadly for the French and not much better for us. In 1952, five hundred French paratroopers were dropped in there and never heard from again. The Human Forest as I think of it: sort of a Marvel anti-super hero. Some of the biggest skirmishes I witnessed in-country were in or near there. It was a bad place to visit and probably worse to live there.

I believe it was May 3, 1970. I was flying with Russel Parish (Linus), who was the AC, on some ash and trash mission in Ca Mau. I remember it was near the end of the day. We were flying around with an advisor. He was either a Captain or a Major. He wanted us to go into an obviously dangerous area without gunship support. Linus was having none of it, except the advisor said there were wounded that needed to be evacuated. That put a different light on the matter, so Linus and I discussed it. Neither of us was wild about the idea, but at the same time, neither of us felt right about abandoning the critically wounded, so we agreed to go.

It went about as smoothly as you'd expect to get into a tight LZ. No one fired at us. We picked up the wounded, who were ambulatory and didn't appear to be critical, as we'd been led to believe. *But I'm not a doctor, nor do I play one on TV.* The advisor hopped out to talk to the ground commander. We were ready and believe me, we were rarin' to go, but we couldn't leave without this guy. We sat there possibly as much as five minutes. It was a very long time as in, "come for the wounded, stay for the picnic."

Not soon enough, we did depart, taking off over the tree line and quickly gaining altitude. Pop-pop-pop, the firing started up just behind us. Linus glanced over his shoulder and at that instant, a 50-cal started firing in front of us. Now that, my friends, is fearsomely scary. There is really no mistaking those rounds and like any self-preserving pilot, I would do anything to get away from them. I said, "Linus, .50 cal ahead!" He immediately did an amazing turn heading right down to the tree tops... right into the small arms fire we'd just crossed. Linus was a damn good pilot, but there was simply nowhere else to go that didn't put us nearer the 50-cal.

We were just about thru it when my left foot went flying up. I felt like someone had jammed a hot poker right thru my foot. Of course, I knew what had happened and my immediate thought was to grab the controls. I mean I'd recently turned 21 and was invulnerable. If they hit me, they must have slaughtered everyone else in the aircraft. As it turns out, that was the only round that hit the aircraft. Guess I'm not invulnerable.

I told Linus I'd been hit and I remember him saying, "That settles it. We're going to Binh Thuy." I was glad of that as I

wasn't particularly interested in, say, dinner and a movie. The pain was exquisite. Feet have a lot of nerves and they were all screaming. Honestly, I don't remember too much about that flight, except that it was very long. If I hadn't been watching, I'd have thought we were taking the scenic route. I almost passed out, but fought it. Odd as this might sound, I realized that however terrible, this was a unique experience and since I was "already committed," *I might as well stay awake and experience it all. I remember thinking that, but perhaps I was hysterical.*

We got to Binh Thuy and they put me on a stretcher, into the emergency room, cut off my boot, and eventually after an interminable amount of time, gave me a pain killer shot. The relief was palpable, so much so that I think I might have been hallucinating.

There's not much more to add. Anything else is a recovery story which is somewhat separate in my mind. So that, my friends, is how the "Human Forest" took a bite out of me.

---

*Brooks "Jay" Setzer 121 AHC 70-71, is a lifetime member of the VHPA living in Woodbine, WA.*

**April 17, 2026 Friday, 5PM**  
**Vietnam/Korean Veterans and Family**  
**& Golden Eagles (50 Year and Above Members)**  
**Appreciation Reception**



If you are a Vietnam or Korean War veteran, and/or a Golden Eagle, you and your family are invited to a special reception in your honor with members of the National Executive Group, just before the Soldier Appreciation Dinner Concert on the final day of the Army Aviation Warfighting Summit, Nashville TN.

Come and join other veterans of these two conflicts and experience the unique camaraderie once again as AAAA celebrates you and your family's service.

***Thank you for your service! We hope to see you there!***



# Breaking Barriers and Empowering Dreams: How the Trade School, Licensing, and Certifications (TLC) Grant Program Helps Families Build Careers and Reach Their Goals

By CW5 (Ret.) Dan Curry

**F**or many Soldiers and their families, the journey after high school can feel overwhelming. The pressure to attend a four-year college is high, and the cost and time required often make it difficult. Introduce the Trade School, Licensing, and Certifications (TLC) Grant Program, a transformative initiative that offers financial support for vocational training and certifications, helping families pursue meaningful careers.

### A Program That Opens Doors

The TLC program was developed to address a rising need: skilled tradespeople and professionals who keep our communities thriving. From healthcare and technical fields to beauty and construction, these careers provide stability and earning potential that match or surpass many traditional degrees, without the heavy debt.

### A Testimonial of Success

COL Michael Girvin, Commander of the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, knows firsthand the impact of the TLC program. His daughter, Alexis, received a TLC grant to attend trade school as an Esthetician, a decision that changed her life. “The TLC program was a simple and efficient process for my daughter to receive a substantial grant towards her post-high school trade school pursuit,” Girvin shared.

The process was seamless, with no challenges during registration or funding. Alexis used the grant to cover tuition, which included all the tools and supplies she needed to train in her new field. She graduated with honors and is now actively seeking employment, with a dream of opening her own beauty salon.



*Alexis Girvin proudly displays her certificates of Completion and Achievement upon completing her training to become an Esthetician. Girvin used the AAAA TLC program to help her accomplish her goals.*

### Why TLC Matters

Girvin believes the TLC program fills a critical gap: “The TLC program supports what our Nation needs, skilled tradespeople. For many families, a four-year college investment does not make sense based on costs. This program supports our Soldiers and families getting the required certificates and training to earn as much, if not more, in annual salary than a four-year degree.”

He also shared a personal insight: “In her senior year, there was a lot of pressure from school administrators and peers to attend college. After many discussions, she decided to pursue the trade she was passionate about. Had she pursued college, she may have gone the long way around chasing her life’s purpose.”

### Advice for Families

Girvin’s advice is clear: “Do it! Take advantage of a program with almost no red tape. In weeks, you can be awarded a grant to attend a trade school that can change your life. The more passionate a person is in pursuing their dreams, the easier it is to submit a letter to receive a grant.”

### The Bigger Picture

The TLC program is more than financial aid; it’s a lifeline for families seeking practical, rewarding careers. It empowers Soldiers and their loved ones to follow their passions, achieve economic independence, and contribute to the workforce in meaningful ways.

### Ready to take the next step?

Visit [www.quad-a.org](http://www.quad-a.org) today and explore how the TLC grant can help you or your family build a future filled with opportunity.

CW5 (Ret.) Dan Curry is a member of the AAAA TLC Foundation Board of Governors.





# AAAA

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## AAAA Chapter Affairs By COL (Ret.) John Broam

*I greatly appreciate the support from COL Jason Celletti, Land of Lincoln Chapter President, for authoring and sharing this information with our membership.*

# The Land of Lincoln Chapter



CHAPTER COURTESY PHOTO

The Land of Lincoln Chapter, based in Illinois, is an Army Aviation Association of America (AAAA) chapter experiencing renewed growth through a deliberate focus on recognition, engagement, and inclusion.

Established in 1996, the chapter supports a diverse membership of Active, Reserve, and National Guard Soldiers, industry partners, retirees, and Friends of Army Aviation. At its core, the chapter seeks to build a lasting tradition rooted in the four AAAA pillars: Network, Recognition, Voice, and Support.

Just one year ago, the chapter's membership stood at 22. Participation was uneven and long-term sustainability uncertain. Today, membership has grown to 79—an increase of more than 250 percent in twelve months. This turnaround was not driven by additional funding or aggressive recruiting campaigns, but by a deliberate shift in how the chapter values, recognizes, and engages its members across all components of Army Aviation.

Central to this effort was a restructuring of chapter leadership to better reflect the breadth of the Illinois Army Aviation community. The chapter established three Vice President positions dedicated to Active, Enlisted, and Retiree (Gray Beard) Affairs. Each Vice President actively engages their respective population, promotes AAAA initiatives, and elevates issues and concerns to the state and national levels. This structure ensured representation across generations and career stages, reinforcing that every member's experience matters.

Recognition became the cornerstone of the chapter's revitalization. Rather than limiting awards to a narrow set of aviation achievements, the Land of Lincoln Chapter emphasized consistent, visible acknowledgment of service, professionalism, and legacy. Experience—both past and present—was treated as a strategic asset, reinforcing pride in service and strengthening the bond between current Soldiers and those who paved the way.

Historically, the chapter presented only a small number of awards annually. Over the past year, the chapter presented 11 awards to deserving Warrant Officers, significantly expanding recognition efforts. By empowering the Vice Presidents for Active, Enlisted, and Retiree Affairs, recognition extended across the full spectrum of Army Aviation contributors, strengthening engagement and reconnecting former members.

Looking ahead, the chapter is focused on reestablishing traditions that reinforce unity across the Illinois Army Aviation community. Planned events include an Illinois Aviation Ball and a Golf Outing, designed to bring together Soldiers, retirees, families, and industry partners. By leading these events, the chapter aims to restore continuity and foster shared ownership of AAAA's mission statewide.

Retiree involvement remains central

*The Order of St Michael is being presented to Illinois Army National Guard Soldiers during the Illinois Warrant Officer Symposium (pictured L to R: CW3 George Frimpong, CW2 Andrew Hager, CW4 Jamie Hubner, CW3 Jason Lillie, CW3 Brennon Links, CW3 Matthew Strohmeyer, and CW3 Daniel Wentworth).*

to this strategy. Actively engaging retired aviators and senior leaders preserves institutional knowledge, mentorship opportunities, and historical continuity. Industry partners are also being integrated deliberately, strengthening professional networks and reinforcing AAAA's role as a bridge between Soldiers, veterans, and the aviation enterprise.

The Land of Lincoln Chapter's experience demonstrates how intentional leadership and recognition-focused engagement can reverse decline and restore relevance. By treating recognition and retiree involvement as strategic priorities, the chapter has become a growing, inclusive organization with renewed purpose.

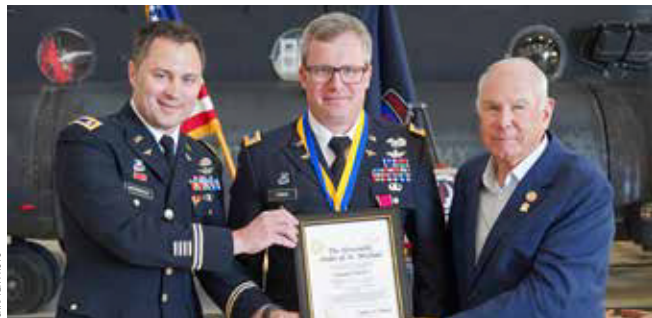
### Contact Us!

Feel free to contact me or Chelsea Jarvis, our AAAA Assistant Director of Member Engagement, if you need help with your Chapter, Executive Board support, would like your chapter featured in the AAAA magazine, or to obtain clarification of National procedures. Chapters are the backbone of AAAA. I can be reached at [john.broam@quad-a.org](mailto:john.broam@quad-a.org). I look forward to working with you and supporting AAAA.

*COL (Ret.) John Broam  
AAAA VP for Chapter Affairs  
[john.broam@quad-a.org](mailto:john.broam@quad-a.org)*

## ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL INDUCTEES

### AIR ASSAULT CHAPTER



CHAPTER PHOTO

**CW3 Daniel Parker**, MH-47 Pilot, SIMO, 160th SOAR(A), was recently inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael in a ceremony held at the General Bryan “Doug” Brown Complex, Fort Campbell, KY. LTC Ryan E. McDonald, Director, SIMO was joined by COL (Ret.) Henry C. Ruth III, President, Air Assault Chapter to present the award to CW3 Parker.



PHOTO BY SCOTT HOLLINGSWORTH

**LTC Brandy L. Fields** was recently inducted into the Silver Honorable Order of St. Michael in a ceremony held recently at Campbell Army Airfield, Fort Campbell, KY by COL Tyler B. Partridge, Commander, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade and COL (Ret.) Henry C. Ruth III President, Air Assault Chapter. LTC Fields commanded the aviation battalion consisting of both UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and CH-47 Chinook helicopters spread over five locations in support of Operation Inherent Resolve and Operation Spartan Shield over a ten-month deployment.

### WASHINGTON-POTOMAC CHAPTER



CHAPTER PHOTO

The Army Aviation Brigade took the opportunity to induct four of their best into the Bronze Honorable Order of St. Michael during their annual Winter Ball. **MAJ Adrian Hill**, S-3 12th Army Aviation Battalion, **MSG Benito Villegas**, S-3 NCOIC, U.S. Army Priority Air Transport Battalion, **MSG Andrew Hernandez**, Operations NCO, The U.S. Army Aviation Brigade, and **1SG Alex Borja**, U.S. Army Priority Air Transport Battalion were inducted into the Order by CW5 Pat Curran, Command Chief Warrant Officer, the U.S. Army Aviation Brigade, CSM Scott Campbell, Command Sergeant Major, the U.S. Army Aviation Brigade, and COL Andy DeForest, Commander, the U.S. Army Aviation Brigade.

## AAAA CHAPTER NEWS

### SoCal AAAA Chapter partners with Greater Los Angeles Chapter of AUSA to host a Dining In



The Commander and Command Sergeant Major of 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation Regiment, LTC Clark Theodore and CSM Emmanuel Marquez, partnered with the SoCal Chapter of AAAA and the Greater Los Angeles Chapter of AUSA to host a Dining In for their Soldiers, alumni, and distinguished guests at The Grand Event Center, Long Beach, CA in late January. The evening kicked off with a warm welcome, an amazing gift (a custom Longknife First Blood Belt Buckle) and an hour where Soldiers and old friends re-connected, hugged, told stories and shared fond memories of years and accomplishments past. When the Dining In began, a formal welcome was given by LTC Theodore followed by an amazing highlight video that recognized each company, their accomplishments, and of course some good “ribbing” and poking of fun. The night continued with a wonderful dinner. It was a night of great fun, camaraderie, reflection, and memory making. Approximately 10 new members signed up and joined the SoCal AAAA Chapter as a result of the evening’s activities.





**YOUR NEXT MISSION**  
Nashville AAAA 2026

Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center  
April 16, 2026

Come participate in the American Freedom Foundation's nationwide initiative to help Veterans and Military Families find jobs!

Want to network with some Veteran friendly companies ready to hire?

Attendance is Free for Veterans, Military Servicemembers and Military Families!



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## AAAA **Membership** Update By COL (Ret.) Liz Martin

# Dedication & Commitment to Excellence – Key Foundational Attributes for Success

In reflection of over two decades in Active Army Aviation, AAAA Member LTC Lindsay Ryan is no stranger to elite challenges and has centered her personal & professional life around dedication and commitment to excellence.



LTC Lindsay Ryan and her family pose for a keepsake photo moment



LTC Lindsay Ryan

As she prepares to retire this summer after 21 years of service, Lindsay finds the “people, networking, personal / professional growth, and events so valuable as an AAAA Member.”

She attributes sports as her initial introduction to the military as a career. After heavy recruitment to sign with various service academies, she chose West Point where she excelled as a Cadet and as a USMA Women’s Basketball Division I Captain & Power Forward.

Lindsay commissioned into Army Aviation in 2005 after graduation; she felt the calling to join the Army Aviation community to support the ground force from the air.

Upon completion of Flight School and UH-60 qualification course, Ryan has led a dynamic Army career. Her assignments include 4th Infantry Division, Combat Aviation Brigade, Fort Hood & Fort Bliss, TX, VIP Helicopter Platoon Leader, Company A, 2nd Brigade, 4th General Support Aviation Battalion; she was the S1 when they deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2008. As the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade’s S3 Plans Officer deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom in 2010 and as the commander of Company A, 404th Aviation Support Battalion (later reflagging to Company A, 127th

ASB). She served as the Brigade Aviation Element Officer for 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team (Fort Bliss) before serving as the 2nd Brigade, 82nd Assault Helicopter Battalion XO and later Battalion S3 in support of a Global Reaction Force at Fort Bragg, NC. She returned to Fort Bliss to serve as the Brigade Modernization Command, later Joint Modernization Command, Future Operations Chief, in charge of integrating new technology into Joint Warfighting Assessments in support of USINDOPACOM & USEUCOM Defender Exercises. She returned to Fort Hood as the 3rd Brigade, 351st Training Support Battalion S3 and later as the 166th Aviation Brigade S3 charged with providing observer/controller and tailored exercise training support, partnering and assistance for mobilizing Army Components 2 & 3 units for worldwide deployment. She served at the Pentagon in DAMO-Aviation as the Future Vertical Lift Desk Officer and Test Fleet Synchronizing Chief.

Ryan commanded the 1st Brigade, 58th Airfield Operations Battalion from 2023-2025, leading simultaneous tactical ATS deployments deployed across five locations (including three countries) within Africa for nine months. In her last assignment, Lindsay serves as

Deputy G5 at Fort Rucker, AL where her duties spanned vast efforts across the Aviation portfolio including Strategy & Plans, UAS Initiatives & Strategy, Battlefield Coordination & Airspace and Strategic Events.

Her academics achievements include: Command & General Staff College graduate, B.S. - Behavioral Sciences & Leadership (U.S. Military Academy) and M.S. - Adult & Continuing Education (Kansas State).

Lindsay and her husband, fellow Army Aviator COL Nick Ryan (currently TLLM-UAS Chief), will retire from the Army in 2026. She is proud to have been able to lead tremendous Soldiers while deployed across multiple, complex environments.

In retirement, she is eager to enjoy future endeavors centered on health, fitness, outdoor activities and spending time with family & friends. She is thankful for the unwavering support by her parents, sisters, mentors and family and grateful to have served the Nation as an Army Aviator and a dual-military couple, while raising three incredible kids.

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



**New AAAA Life Members**

*Free Dominion Chapter*  
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*Keystone Chapter*  
 CPT Keegan John Coffield  
*MacArthur Chapter*  
 CW4 Justin Paul Wocel  
*Mid-Atlantic Chapter*  
 CDR Tom McCormick, USN Ret  
 Tarheel Chapter  
 MSG Ryan Aderman  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
 CW3 Keith E. Stilwell, Ret.  
*Utah Chapter*  
 MAJ William R. Grimshaw

**New AAAA Members**

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 CW5 Jason Hyer  
 Ms. Katie Kennedy  
 CPT Benjamin M. Wuthrich  
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 SGM Roger J. Goodwin  
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 2LT Won Gi Lee  
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 2LT Aiden M. Rice  
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 W01 Anthony J. Tombasco  
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 CW2 Matthew Hunt  
 SFC Paul Karg  
 CW4 Darrel Leutung  
 SSG Keifer Martin  
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 W01 Patrick McDonald  
 SFC Brian Newton  
 MAJ Alan Payne  
 SFC Zachary Porter  
 CPT Jamin Pyatt  
 SPC Jesse Richey  
 CPT Alex Schmersahl  
 1SG Rebecca Shiflett  
 SGT Aden Simler  
 SGT JOHN SKAGGS  
 SSG Nicholas Smith  
 W01 travis smith  
 CPT Tyler Ussery  
 CW2 Morgan Walters  
 SGT Dylan Warnock  
 CW3 Charles Wood  
 SGT Zachary Wood  
 SPC Jason Young  
*Southern California Chapter*  
 Mr. Joey Arora  
 Ms. Melody Barker  
 Mr. Tom Berger  
 PV2 TY Lucas Bingham  
 Mr. Nick Duncan  
 CW3 Marc Guimarin  
 Mr. Jacob Kishineff  
 Mr. Mark S. Kula  
 Mr. Lew Lewis  
 Mr. Brad Schamel  
 CPT James Speck  
 SFC Daniel Tellez  
 Ms. Sofie Vance  
 SGT Robert Zaragoza  
*Tarheel Chapter*  
 MSG Ryan Aderman

Mr. David Hubler  
 Mr. Adam Kozel  
 Mr. Jason Piechowiak  
 Mr. Ross Rozansky  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
 Mr. Taylor Abington  
 Dr. Ashley Akenson  
 Mr. Jesse Allen  
 MAJ Jaryd Bailey  
 PFC Jackson Cole Barbin  
 Mr. Thomas Billig  
 LTC Michael J. Carroll  
 Mr. Scott Dennis  
 Mr. Aaron Eichhorn  
 Mr. Matthew Hall  
 Dr. Christine Harvey  
 CW3 Joshua Jackson  
 Mr. James Lackey  
 Ms. Lizzie Lewis  
 Mrs. Sherry Miller  
 Mr. Michael Phillips  
 Mr. Seth Reesh  
 CPT Kristen R. Rice  
 Mr. Christopher Simpson  
 Ms. Olivia Sinclair  
 MAJ Timothy Snider  
 SMSgt Chip Sutfin  
 Mr. Robert Thomas  
 Mr. Jamie Waller  
 PV2 Joshua Gene Sanderson  
 Mr. Drew Yarbrough  
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 SSG Jacob A. Loyd  
 SGT David Ortega  
 SFC Stephan Ringsmuth  
*Thunderbird Chapter*  
 Mr. Michael Haire  
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*Utah Chapter*  
 SSG Jeremy Brown  
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 Ms. Hannah Reeder  
 Ms. Rebecca Thomas  
 SGT William Thornton  
 Mr. Tyler Ware  
 Ms. Patricia Ziff  
*Wright Brothers Chapter*  
 Mr. Matt Connolly  
 SGT Omarie M. Dokie  
 Mr. Bob Niederluecke  
 Ms. Maria Payne  
*Yellowhammer Chapter*  
 Mr. Dutchey Lane  
 Ms. Lana Smith  
*Zia Chapter*  
 CW2 Christopher Oelerich  
*No Chapter Affiliation*  
 Mr. Maitnah Al-Ali  
 Mr. Mohammad Alawneh  
 Mr. Rolland Delorme  
 Mr. James Dwyer  
 Ms. Ora Elharar Soffer  
 Mr. Stephen Hamilton  
 Mr. William Ryan  
 MAJ Jeroen van Asperen  
 Mr. Mark Walcott  
*North Country Chapter*  
 CW2 Edmond Nachbauer



# AAAA Family Forum By Judy Konitzer

## Celebrating the Month of the Military Child

April is designated as the Month of the Military Child by the DOW (Department of War), and installations worldwide will be planning events to celebrate it.



Installations plan for many activities, but it is equally important for families not living geographically near them to be able to be celebratory in other ways as well:

**Wearing Purple on Purple Up Day (April 15).** Purple represents a blend of colors (blue, green, and red) of each branch (Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, and Veteran) of the military as one unit. This is a visible way for everyone to show support and thank military children for their strength, resilience, and sacrifices.

**Publicize Installation/ Community Events.** Use the school website or newspaper to provide information about Month of the Military Child and look for ways schools can contribute to some activities. Parents, along with teachers, can volunteer to set up information or activity booths to publicize resources and promote interest for the civilian community.

**Salute to Military Children at Sporting Events.** Have an announcer make a special pronouncement before, during, or after sporting events recognizing all military children. Have them raise the flag, sing the national anthem, or recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Teachers Salute Military Children.** Ask your child's teacher to acknowledge military children in their classroom by creating a conversation, a picture, journaling, or anything creative that ties into the month's celebration.

The following resources should prove helpful for providing ways to improve the needs of our military children facing challenges:

**Military One Source:** [www.military-onesource.mil](http://www.military-onesource.mil) or 1-800-342-9647. This DOW program operates 24-7 with live support and online tools. It provides personalized support services, benefits, and services including Parenting Resources (like Child and Youth Advocacy, Child and Youth Programs, Special Needs), Financial and Tax Consultation, Education and Career Services, and confidential non-medical counseling through their Military Family Life Counselors Support (MFLCS) program.

**Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC):** [MilitaryChild.org](http://MilitaryChild.org). By collaborating with School Liaison Officers, EFMP coordinators, MIC3, and state level organizations, MCEC provides programs, resources, and training for military student counselors, students, Student 2 Student, parents, and education professionals. In addition to regular podcasts and helpful information, their website provides free and helpful downloads (posters, yard signs, certificates of recognition etc.) for use in communities for Month of the Military Child.

**Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3):** [www.mic3.net](http://www.mic3.net) or 859-244-8000. The Compact deals with transitional educational challenges (eligibility, enrollment, placement, graduation, and extracurricular activities) encountered by school aged children attending public and DOW schools located within states and foreign countries. It allows for equal treatment as military children transfer between school districts

in member states. For a listing of state commissioners: [mic3.net/interactive-map](http://mic3.net/interactive-map).

**National Military Family Association (NMFA):** [www.militaryfamily.org](http://www.militaryfamily.org). Advocates for military families by being a go-to-source for members of Congress and other government officials wanting to understand the issues facing military families who can follow up with legislation.

**Blue Star Families:** [bluestarfam.org](http://bluestarfam.org). A digital community with virtual and in person events within local chapters designed to help military families connect with their local communities. Military Family Life Surveys gather statistics identifying ways that can improve inclusion, and their Books Program donates them to children, libraries, and schools.

**Sesame Street:** [Sesameworkshop.org](http://Sesameworkshop.org). Provides education and activities for preschool aged children to help them cope with challenges like deployments, homecomings, health, grief, and self-expression.

**Our Military Kids:** [ourmilitarykids.org](http://ourmilitarykids.org). Offers \$300 for extracurricular activities i.e. sports, fine and performing arts, camps, STEM, tutoring, etc. for children ages 1-18 of deployed National Guard and Reserve, or those combat wounded veterans from any branch of service.

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

## IM MEMORIAM



### CW4 (Ret.) Joe Wade

We were deeply saddened to learn that our teammate and dear friend, Joe Wade, passed away on Saturday, 24 January 2026.

Joe was a proud founding member of the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation (AAHF), joining on 1 August 1998 as Member #110. His devotion to the organization and to Army Aviation never wavered. In 2009, he was honored as AAHF Member of the Year, a recognition that reflected his tireless work ethic, quiet leadership, and enduring commitment to preserving the legacy of Army Aviation for future generations.

A retired CW4 and a 42-year member of the Alabama Army National Guard, Joe was instrumental in securing one of the foundation's most treasured aircraft. In January 2003, he led the effort to acquire Huey 624 from the Alabama Guard. Because of his credibility, relationships, and reputation within the Guard, the AAHF had the inside track to obtain the aircraft. Joe proudly shared stories of his many hours flying 624, each one reflecting his deep love for Army Aviation and the Soldiers with whom he served.

Throughout his distinguished career, Joe was rated in an extraordinary number of Army rotary-wing aircraft: the OH-23 B, C, and D models; the Bell OH-13 M, G, and S models; the UH-19 C and D models; the Bell UH-1 B, D, and H models; the OH-6; and ultimately the UH-60 A and L models, where he concluded his flying career. Over the course of that remarkable journey, he accumulated more than 5,000 total flight hours.

## AAAA Awards



### Order of St. Michael Inductees Silver

*Air Assault Chapter*  
LTC Brandy L. Fields  
Gary W. Good  
*Arizona Chapter*  
COL Peter E. Huble  
*Aviation Center Chapter*  
CW4 Robert D. Mitchell, Ret.  
Black Knights Chapter  
LTC Ashlie I. Christian  
*Colonial Virginia Chapter*  
CW5 Jason J. Anderson  
CW5 Mark R. Tucker  
*Desert Oasis Chapter*  
CW4 Steven C. Wright  
*Jimmy Doolittle Chapter*  
CW5 Daniel S. Petik  
*Mount Rainier Chapter*  
CW4 Jen Collins  
*Phantom Corps Chapter*  
Brian P. Papp  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
CW5 Steven D. Fara  
**Bronze**  
*Air Assault Chapter*  
CW2 Patrick Bradford

MAJ Jason W. Bredlau  
SFC William L. Fitzpatrick  
CW2 Luis E. Martinez  
MSG Tomas R. Montanez  
CW5 Michael E. Parreco  
*Aloha Chapter*  
SSG Alexis Thirkield  
*Arizona Chapter*  
CSM Martin Chavez  
*Aviation Center Chapter*  
CW4 Jason Bostic  
CW3 Zachary T. Jenkins  
CW4 Jason Owens  
CW4 Zachary S. Pyburn  
CW4 Jason F. Skelton  
*Badger Chapter*  
MAJ Doug E. Denson, Ret.  
MAJ Sarah Latza  
CPT Meredith L. Porter  
*Bavarian Chapter*  
CPT Joshua Cox  
CPT Christopher Feigenbaum  
SSG Stephanie Nakamoto  
CPT Michael Palomino  
CW4 Josiah Reuter  
*Central Florida Chapter*  
Curt Read  
*Colonial Virginia Chapter*  
SSG Yancy J. Armenta  
SFC Rachel E. Aubuchon  
LTC Jonathan P. Ewing  
SFC M. Craig Francis  
SFC Vincent Giallombardo  
CW3 Christian C. Grimm  
1SG Andrzej Kupinski  
SFC Caleb Lawson  
SFC Raffael Maloney  
CW2 Aubrey T. Meekins  
SFC Jamee Mobley  
SFC Shania Myers

CW5 Matthew T. Pike  
LTC Brandon Resor  
*Connecticut Chapter*  
LTC Hellmut A. Haffner  
SFC Raymond Maselek  
CW3 Adam Soderberg  
*Flint Hills Chapter*  
CW4 James T. Bowman  
MAJ Russell M. Cameron  
SFC Richard Copeland  
CW3 David Edwards  
LTC Heather M. Eide  
1SG Christian Hinrichsen  
1SG Jacob Leech  
CW3 Ryan Newell  
CW3 David Ogden  
1SG Maria Painter  
CW3 Jonathan Scholberg  
CW3 William Sloan  
CSM Timothy Templeton  
1SG Nicholas Wesson  
*Follow Me Chapter*  
MSG Andrew Six  
*Gold Standard Chapter*  
SFC Brandon N. Vitito  
*Jimmy Doolittle Chapter*  
SFC Precious M. Wells  
*Mount Rainier Chapter*  
CW3 Brad K. Silva  
*Phantom Corps Chapter*  
MAJ Garrett R. Jennings  
1SG Brandon M. Sutton  
*Pikes Peak Chapter*  
1SG Devon M. Nier  
Rio Grande Chapter  
CW3 John A. Ayuyu  
CW3 Corey Billizone  
SFC Patrick J. DeLeon  
SFC Michael R. Skolnick  
CPT Adam J. Stepan  
*ShowMe Chapter*  
CSM Lawrence R. Welty  
*Tarheel Chapter*

CSM Andrew B. Barbee  
1SG Charles G. Fitzpatrick  
CW4 Shane A. Glass  
CW5 John M. Hurley Jr.  
CW4 Gregory W. Lee  
1SG Justin R. Lloyd  
SSG Donald W. Money  
CW5 Garry D. Perry  
CW5 J. Daniel Piland  
SFC Christopher H. Robins  
CW4 Bruce F. Scharbius  
CW4 Thomas A. Underwood  
CW4 James C. Watkins  
CW4 Andrew L. Whitten  
1SG Deana L. Zeugner  
*Thunderbird Chapter*  
CW4 Kyle L. Frazier  
CW5 Steven T. Phillips



### Knight Inductees

*Air Assault Chapter*  
Ruth Farwell  
CW2 Roberto X. Velasco  
*Aloha Chapter*  
CH (MAJ) James Murray  
*Aviation Center Chapter*  
BG Jonathan Byrom  
SFC Orlando J. King, Ret.  
Cassandra R. Layne  
SFC Verniko Y. Randle, Ret.  
CPT Christian Vega  
*Bluegrass Chapter*  
MSG Carrie A. Payne  
*Flint Hills Chapter*  
SFC Joel M. Costello  
1SG Julio C. Morales

1SG Courtney M. Parks  
*Gold Standard Chapter*  
COL Peter Demos



### Our Lady of Loreto Inductees

*Air Assault Chapter*  
Melinda Parker  
Leslie S. Parreco  
*Aloha Chapter*  
Ashley Murray  
*Rio Grande Chapter*  
Nazgul Andrews  
Kristin M. Ayuyu  
Rasamillian Jackson  
Kaily J. Jones  
Kelsey N. Stepan  
*Tennessee Valley Chapter*  
Kari E. Lewis  
*Thunderbird Chapter*  
Judy Rau

### AAAA Salutes The Following Departed...

BG David L. Funk, Ret.  
*Deceased 2/6/2026*

BG Harry M. Roper, Jr., Ret.  
*Deceased: 12/27/2025*

MAJ John B. Swift, Ret.  
*Deceased 1/20/2026*



## AAAA Scholarship Foundation

### Small Businesses, Big Impact: How Industry Giving Shapes the Future of Army Aviation

By Mrs. Beth N. Kramer

For more than six decades, the Army Aviation Association of America Scholarship Foundation, Inc. (AAAA SFI) has quietly but powerfully invested in the future of our Army Aviation Branch’s families.

Founded in 1963 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, the Foundation provides essential financial assistance for higher education to AAAA members, their spouses, unmarried siblings, children, and grandchildren, including the families of our fallen heroes.

What makes AAAA SFI exceptional is its unwavering commitment to stewardship: 100 percent of every donated dollar, less investment brokerage fees, goes directly to scholarships or endowed principals. Because AAAA covers all administrative and overhead costs (excluding minimal brokerage fees), donors have the absolute certainty that their contributions directly impact a student’s life.

One standout example of this synergy is DigiFlight, Inc., a technology firm deeply rooted in the Army Aviation ecosystem. Supporting PEO Aviation, combat capabilities, technology development, and Cybersecurity. DigiFlight views its commitment to the Foundation not as a corporate obligation, but as an essential reinvestment in the “human capital” that makes Army Aviation successful.

At the heart of DigiFlight’s culture is a simple but powerful value: Create an environment that inspires great things from great people. That ethos extends beyond the workplace and into the community. By supporting the next generation of Aviation leaders, we ensure the mission remains in capable hands long after our own service concludes.

That commitment is personal for Stan Oliver, CEO of DigiFlight, Inc., a former Army UH-60 Black Hawk Aviator and AAAA SFI BOG Member. As someone who has lived the Army Aviation experience, Oliver knows the sacrifices families make to keep the fleet in the air and the mission on track. Transitioning from the cockpit to industry has not changed the fundamental mission: we must develop future Army Aviation Warfighters and support the families who stand behind them. Through our contributions to AAAA SFI, we are helping turn educational aspirations into reality for those families.

The Foundation is now actively encouraging new donors, especially small businesses, to get involved. The process has been streamlined to ensure that making a difference does not require a massive administrative lift:

- **Quick Contributions:** Online donations can be made in minutes, or via check.
  - **Corporate Matching Funds:** Establishing a matching fund allows businesses to multiply the value of their contributions. Furthermore, scholarship applicants affiliated with the corporation may be given preference in the selection process.
  - **Small Business Incentives:** New giving incentives are being implemented to recognize the critical role corporate supporters play in the Foundation’s growth.
- For small businesses looking to make a meaningful, lasting difference, the opportunity is clear. When small businesses step up, futures open. Through the AAAA Scholarship Foundation, every dollar truly takes flight.

#### How to Give

Donate Online by copying and pasting this link into your browser: <https://quad-a.ejoinme.org/MyPages/DonationPage/tabid/224843/Default.aspx>

Donate by Check:  
AAAA Scholarship Foundation, Inc  
593 Main Street  
Monroe, CT 06468

For questions or to get involved: Email: [scholarship@quad-a.org](mailto:scholarship@quad-a.org) Phone: (203) 268-2450

Plant the seed  
and watch  
the talent  
harvest grow.

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LEARN MORE AT  
[WWW.QUAD-A.ORG/  
SCHOLARSHIP](http://WWW.QUAD-A.ORG/SCHOLARSHIP)







*Mrs. Beth N. Kramer, Fund Raising Committee Chair for AAAA Scholarship Foundation.*

# Thank You to Our Scholarship Fund Donors



AAAA recognizes the generosity of the following individuals, chapters and organizations that have donated to the Scholarship Foundation, Inc. from February 2025 through February 2026. 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).

<p>The 13 Cares Foundation AAAA Air Assault Chapter AAAA Aloha Chapter AAAA Arizona Chapter AAAA Arizona Chaptel'lr AAAA Aviation Center Chapter AAAA Badger Chapter AAAA Big Sy Chapter AAAA Central Florida Chapter AAAA Connecticut Chapter AAAA Corpus Christi Chapter AAAA Delaware Valley Chapter AAAA Free Dominion Chapter AAAA Gold Standard Chapter AAAA Griffin Chapter AAAA Grizzly Chapter AAAA Idaho Snake River AAAA Idaho Snake River Chapter AAAA Keystone Chapter AAAA Lindbergh Chapter AAAA Lindbergh Chapter's AAAA MacArthur Chapter AAAA Minuteman Chapter AAAA Mohawk Chapter AAAA North Star Chapter AAAA North Texas Chapter AAAA Oregon Trail Chapter AAAA Phantom Corps Chapter AAAA Prairie Soldier Chapter AAAA Southern California Chapter AAAA Tennessee Valley Chapter AAAA Thunderbird Chapter AAAA Volunteer Chapter AAAA Voodoo Chapter AAAA Washington Potomac Chapter AAAA Washington-Potomac Chapter Scott R. Alpeter-IHO Ingrid Strange Army Otter Caribou Association Inc. 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# Thank You to Our TLC Fund Donors



AAAA recognizes the generosity of the following individuals, chapters and organizations that have donated to the Trade School Licensing and Certification Foundation, Inc. from December 2024 through December 2025. The list includes donations received for all grants, 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 Trade School Licensing and Certification Foundation goes directly towards grants as a result of the Army Aviation Association of America subsidizing all administrative costs (minus investment brokerage fees). For more information about the Foundation or to make a contribution, go online to [www.quad-a.org/tlc](http://www.quad-a.org/tlc); contributions can also be mailed to AAAA Trade School Licensing and Certification Foundation, Inc., 593 Main Street, Monroe, CT 06468-2806.

<p>IHO – In Honor Of Army Aviation Association of America AAAA Air Assault Chapter AAAA Old Tucson Chapter Army Aviation Publication Inc. Danny Adams Arthur Agnew and Jennifer Wells-IHO Gordon T. Wells Michael Durant-Durant Family Fund</p>	<p>Dillon Aero Inc.-Emerald Sponsor Raymon Faust-IHO Emma Garfola Kerri Garcia Stephen Gayton GE Aerospace-William Morris Matching Douglas Green Bill Harris-IHO Emma Garfola Brian Hauke Spencer Jones</p>	<p>James Kiine Noma Martini Stephen T. Mauro Joey McKenzie Steve Mundt- BG (ret) Stephen and Betsy Mundt Fund Joe Pisano Amanda Plotner Jennifer Potts- IHO MG Anthony W. Potts Grant</p>	<p>Rick Rhodes Kenneth Royar Elizabeth Ryan Justin Ryan Talmadge Ryan John Schey Scott Schisser Gerald Schneider Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC)- Ruby Sponsor</p>	<p>Peter Smart Janice Hays Smith Marian Spencer Team Apachee-IHO TVC Memorial Grant COL Joseph "Joe" Hoecherl Textron- Sapphire Sponsor Jim Thomson Rob Wolfe Jessica Wright</p>
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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)

## Compressed Markups and Aviation Policy Crosswinds: FY27 and the ROTOR Act

The defense committees are moving forward toward markup of the FY27 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), but once again the process is unfolding later than is healthy for deliberate lawmaking. While leadership in both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees remains committed to advancing the annual defense bill, compressed timelines are becoming a recurring feature of the budget cycle.

Late submission of the President's Budget Request (PBR) has cascading effects. Members and professional staff rely on early visibility into topline numbers, program adjustments, and new initiatives to develop legislative responses. When the request arrives late and markup windows narrow, offices have significantly less time to analyze changes, coordinate with stakeholders, draft legislative language, and vet potential amendments.

The NDAA is not merely an authorization document; it is the primary policy vehicle shaping acquisition authorities, force structure decisions, modernization priorities, and oversight mechanisms across the Department of Defense. Reduced deliberative time increases the risk that complex issues receive abbreviated debate, that necessary corrections are deferred, or that unintended consequences emerge in conference.

For Army Aviation, compressed markups matter. Aviation portfolios involve intricate relationships among procurement, RDT&E, sustainment, and training accounts. Adjustments to one line can affect industrial base stability, depot workloads, pilot throughput, and long-term modernization pacing. When Members and staff lack sufficient time to examine these interdependencies, strategic alignment becomes more difficult. While it is easy to place blame on Congress for late legislation, we must also acknowledge that delayed submission of the President's Budget Request does little to help lawmakers meet their timelines or effectively execute their responsibilities.

## The ROTOR Act: Policy, Politics, and Practical Implications

Complicating this year's environment is the debate surrounding the ROTOR Act. What began as an aviation regulatory issue stemming from the tragic mid-air collision between an Army Black Hawk and civilian airliner last year has evolved into a broader political and procedural dispute between the House and Senate and, notably, within the House Republican Conference itself. Differences between some House GOP Members and Speaker Johnson over process and scope have amplified attention on the bill.

At the center of the debate is Automatic Dependent Surveillance–Broadcast (ADS-B), a satellite-based surveillance system that broadcasts an aircraft's position, altitude, velocity, and identification to air traffic control and nearby aircraft. ADS-B enhances civil aviation safety and has been mandatory for most civilian aircraft operating in controlled airspace since 2020.

The question for military aviation is not whether ADS-B improves safety; it does. Rather, the issue is how, when, and under what conditions military aircraft should comply, and at what cost. Army aircraft routinely operate in the National Airspace, and many legacy platforms were not designed with integrated ADS-B architectures, so retrofitting our fleets could require substantial avionics upgrades. These are not simple plug-and-play installations. Integration with existing flight management systems, airworthiness certification, and platform-specific engineering modifications all carry cost and schedule implications.

For aging aircraft with complex wiring and mission systems, retrofit costs can quickly escalate. Across a large fleet, aggregate costs could

reach into the hundreds of millions of dollars when procurement, installation labor, testing, and downtime are considered. That funding must come from somewhere, either new appropriations or internal tradeoffs within already constrained aviation accounts.

Beyond cost, operational considerations are central to the debate. We often train in emission-controlled environments and may conduct missions where continuous broadcasting of identity and position is inconsistent with survivability or operational security. Tactical flexibility sometimes requires the ability to limit electronic signature. Mandating universal, always-on ADS-B transmissions without appropriate operational carve-outs raises legitimate operational security questions.

The Senate and House appear to differ on the degree of flexibility and exemption authority that should apply, while internal House GOP disagreements have added a procedural dimension to the policy debate. For Army Aviation stakeholders, the politics are less important than the outcome. The final legislative language will determine compliance timelines, funding responsibilities, and operational latitude.

## Policy and Budget Are Intertwined

The FY27 NDAA timeline and the ROTOR Act debate illustrate a broader truth: policy decisions cannot be separated from budget realities. If ADS-B becomes mandatory across major Army fleets without dedicated funding, modernization programs may face reprogramming pressure. Training, sustainment, or future upgrades could be deferred to absorb compliance costs. If compressed markup timelines limit careful examination of implementation details, the Army could find itself navigating statutory requirements that require subsequent technical corrections or funding fixes. This is why timing matters. Deliberative markups allow committees to examine cost estimates, evaluate operational impacts, consult with service leadership, and craft balanced solutions. Late cycles compress that deliberation and increase risk.

## Looking Ahead

As the defense committees proceed toward FY27 markups, Army Aviation stakeholders should expect a dynamic legislative environment. The committees remain committed to advancing the NDAA, but compressed schedules and high-profile policy debates will require disciplined engagement by MG Gill and team that will undoubtedly be spending a lot of time on Capitol Hill in the near term. As we enter another late-cycle authorization season, Army Aviation once again finds itself managing crosswinds. The runway is there, but conditions require careful handling.

## Breaking News

As of late February 2026, the VA faced significant backlash and legal challenges over an interim final rule that would have reduced disability ratings by allowing examiners to consider the stabilizing effects of medication. Following strong advocacy efforts, including engagement by AAAA, the VA rescinded the rule. We will provide a more in-depth analysis next month.



## ARMYAVIATION

**April/May 3 Opportunities for the Price of 1 Ad**

Army Aviation Warfighting Summit  
Army Aviation Leadership State of the Enterprise  
AAAA Chapter Directory  
2025 Photo Contest Winners

**CONTACT: Bob Lachowski / Erika Burgess / Carmen Touhy**  
[AAAAIndustry@quad-a.org](mailto:AAAAIndustry@quad-a.org) 203.268.2450

# 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.*

## TTTECH North America wins contract to upgrade U.S. Army's HADES ISR digital backbone

TTTECH North America, Andover MD, is proud to announce its selection to deliver advanced Time-Sensitive Networking (TSN) solutions to the U.S. Army's High Accuracy Detection and Exploitation System (HADES) aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) program. This milestone highlights TTTECH's continued competence in providing cutting-edge, MOSA-compliant, data networking solutions for mission systems as well as integrated, modular avionics (IMA) for aerospace and defense applications. The HADES program will overhaul US government-furnished Bombardier Global 6500 jets with advanced, deep sensing capabilities for multi-domain ISR operations at speeds, ranges, and altitudes not previously achievable by the US Army's retiring turboprop aircraft fleet.



## Department Seeks Counsel of Industry Leaders to Advance Arsenal of Freedom



The War Department is asking industry experts to help the department better work with the defense industrial base, eliminate bureaucratic bloat in the acquisition process and more quickly field weapons to warfighters. "For far too long, the Pentagon's acquisition process valued paperwork over outcomes and performance," Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said in a video released to social media today. "This created a bureaucratic maze that stifled production and delayed critical deliveries to our warfighters when they needed them most. Well, I'm here today to tell you that era of managed decline is over." Today, as part of Business Operations for National Defense program, more commonly referred to as the BOND program, more than 70 former

corporate officers are serving alongside the War Department's leaders to advance the Arsenal of Freedom initiative.

## ESW Launches MissionReady365™ to Accelerate Microsoft 365 Staffing for Government Projects



ESW today announced MissionReady365™, a specialized service that enables government agencies and contractors to rapidly deploy experienced, full-time Microsoft 365 professionals for mission-critical projects. MissionReady365™ addresses a persistent challenge in government IT: securing qualified Microsoft 365 resources quickly enough to meet project timelines and funding cycles. The service provides immediate access to vetted, full-time M365 consultants who integrate seamlessly into government and contractor teams. Unlike traditional staff augmentation, MissionReady365™ prioritizes continuity by maintaining consistent full-time resources throughout each engagement. The service is purpose-built for regulated environments where execution quality, security, and resource consistency are paramount.

## DOW Strengthens Domestic Production of Critical Display Technologies

The Department of War (DOW) announced today two September 19, 2025 investments totaling \$24.5 million to bolster the U.S. supply chain for advanced optical displays. This announcement was delayed due to the government shutdown. The projects, funded through the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War for Industrial Base Policy (OASW(IBP))'s Industrial Base Analysis and Sustainment (IBAS) Program, were awarded this summer to Kopin Corporation of Westborough, MA and Tectus Corporation of Cupertino, CA. They will focus on developing and validating a cost-effective manufacturing process for MicroLED displays that are essential for next-generation weapon systems.

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

**Exyte US Inc., Albany, NY**, was awarded a firm-fixed-price contract for CH-53K aircraft bed down and construction. The amount of this action is \$96,248,142. Bids were solicited via the internet with four received. Work will be performed in Israel, with an estimated completion date of March 23, 2029. Fiscal 2026 Foreign Military Sales (Israel) funds in the amount of \$96,248,142 were obligated at the time of the award. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Middle East District, is the contracting activity (W912ER-26-C-A013).

**Boeing Distribution Services Defense, O'Fallon, Missouri**, has been awarded a maximum \$270,000,000 fixed-price with economic-price-adjustment, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract for industrial product support at Corpus Christi Army Depot, TX. This was a competitive acquisition with three responses received. This is a five-year base contract with one five-year option period. The location of performance is Texas, with a July 31, 2031, performance completion date. Using customer is Army. Type of appropriation is fiscal 2026 through 2031 defense working capital funds. The contracting activity is Defense Logistics Agency Weapons Support, Richmond, VA (SPE4AX-26-D-0005).

## Advertisers Index

Airbus Helicopters.....	1
AREZIA.....	23
Army Aviation Museum Foundation ...	52
Bell.....	13
CAE.....	56
Coastal Seat Cushions.....	25
Dallas Avionics.....	15
David Clark Company.....	5
Enstrom Helicopter Corporation.....	26
Greenwood Aerospace.....	55
M1 Support Services.....	2
Marvin Test Solutions, Inc.....	7
Phantom Products Inc.....	17
PIC Wire & Cable.....	25
S.A.F.E. Structure Designs, LLC.....	19
Silvus Technologies.....	29
SKEDCO, Inc.....	27
True Blue Power.....	9
Tyonek.....	11
Yulista Holdings LLC.....	10



## People On The Move

### Undergraduate Flight Training 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 AAAA's **SUPPORT** for the U.S. Army Aviation Soldier and Family.



AAAA congratulates the following officers graduating from Undergraduate Flight Training at the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence, Fort Rucker, AL.

#### 45 Officers, February 5, 2026 Class 26-007

##### Commissioned Officers

- CPT Scott, Austin J. \* -DG
- 1LT Lerner, Isaac D. \* -HG
- 1LT Stuber, Aubrey M. \* -HG
- 2LT Wallace, Elijah C. \* -HG
- 1LT Weathers, Brady W. \* -HG
- 1LT Boothe, Caitlin M.
- 2LT Castillo del Muro, Gabriel E. \*
- 2LT Clarke, Adam M. \*
- 1LT Cone, Stephen R.
- 2LT Davis, Andrew W. \*
- 1LT Eno, Christopher W.
- 2LT Gibson, Anthony M. \*
- CPT Hogan, Thomas L. \*
- 1LT Knox, Cade \*
- 1LT Marshall, Eli S.
- 1LT Moon, Shinkwang
- 1LT Nemecek, Zachary C.
- 1LT Paraiso, Ethan S.
- 2LT Stowell, Samuel W. \*
- 1LT Ucock, Erden
- 2LT Watkins, Colin D.
- 1LT Wentling, Nicholas A. \*
- 1LT White, Austin R. \*
- CPT Wilson, Grant M.

##### Warrant Officers

- WO1 Ames, Jake D. \* -DG
- WO1 Applebee, Michael W. \* -HG
- WO1 Endracke, Austin C. -HG
- WO1 Cahill, Matthew W.
- WO1 Greer, David \*
- WO1 Gutierrez, Justin A.
- WO1 Henderson, Mason R. \*
- WO1 Johnson, Pacey H.
- WO1 Kirwan, Ronan T.
- WO1 Lindley, Joshua T.
- WO1 Manhart, Jarrett J.
- WO1 Marshall, Cameron J.
- WO1 Melendrez, Brian C.
- WO1 Morrison, Tyler J.
- WO1 Nguyen, Dylan Q.
- WO1 Nogle, Ian A.
- WO1 Padrazo, Michael D.
- WO1 Redden, Spencer M.
- WO1 Rivera Rivera, Leean L.
- WO1 Talbott, Evan J.
- WO1 Weems, Thomas J. \*

#### 29 Officers, February 19, 2026 Class 26-008

##### Commissioned Officers

- 1LT Baldwin, Samuel G. \* -DG
- 1LT Frazier, Thomas A. \* -HG



UFT Class 26-007



UFT Class 26-008

- 1LT Hill, Charles R. \* -HG
- 1LT Turner, Cameron S. -HG
- 1LT Atkinson, Nicholas E. \*
- 1LT Aycock, Samuel F. \*
- 1LT Benavides, Peter X. \*
- 1LT Bone, Zachary T. \*
- 1LT Budi, Paul D. \*
- 1LT Buffington, Jackson T. \*
- 1LT Carr, Aidan B. \*
- 1LT Curran, Margaret A. \*
- 1LT Elbert, Kyle A. \*

- 1LT Johantges, Adam D.
- 2LT McWain, Christian M.
- 1LT Pavelko, Garrett D. \*
- 2LT Rivera-Laracuente, Gamal E. \*
- 2LT Smith, Kenneth J. \*
- Warrant Officers**
- WO1 Mihailovic, Marc M. -DG
- WO1 Knutson, Jack R. -HG
- WO1 Alfeiri, Matthew P. \*
- WO1 Barraza, Paul Z. \*
- WO1 Driscoll, Timothy K.

- WO1 Hebert, Nathaniel E.
- WO1 Hornaday, Matthew R. \*
- WO1 Hyman, Evan P. \*
- WO1 Marsh, Nicholas J. \*
- WO1 Palacios, Martin J.
- WO1 Smith, Robert M. \*

-DG: Distinguished Graduate  
-HG: Honor Graduate

\* = AAAA 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 051-25  
 PVT Brianna Lizeth O. Flores \* -DG  
 PFC Julio Alberto Aponte  
 PFC Dax Ivan Hartle  
 SPC Emmanuel Leonardo-Hernandezascencio  
 SPC Treven Austinpatric Houghton  
 PFC Tyler Christian Knuth  
 SPC Jace Conner Larsen  
 PFC Nicholas Alexander Melvin  
 PFC Caleb Taiwan Nycere Murray  
 PVT Benjamin Clay Pannell  
 PV2 Ethan Michael Stanton  
 PV2 Justin Gerald Thames  
 Class 053-25  
 PV2 Ty Lucas Bingham \* -DG  
 PV2 Landon Zane Berg  
 SPC Katelyn Isabel Brighton  
 PVT Ryan Warner Gates  
 SPC Phillip Michaelscot Gielish  
 PV2 Aliyah Rose Gray  
 PFC Rodrigo Vidal Santiago  
 PFC Cameron James Smith  
 PV2 Madison Grace Williams

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

- Class 110-25  
 PV2 Amanda Jo Bonn \* -DG  
 PV2 Mason Hooten Bock  
 PFC Elijah Alfredo Chaves  
 PFC Denise Crystal Everley  
 PFC Dominic Elijah Foster  
 PV2 Robert Monroe-Clark Hainline  
 PFC Sung Jik Lee  
 PVT Rajah Leroy Mondell McNair  
 PV2 Hunter Ray Scott  
 PFC Christian Solis-Flores  
 PFC Matthew Velez  
 PFC Nathan L. Warnemunde  
 Class 111-25  
 SPC Wyatt Neil Martinez \* -DG  
 PV2 Xander Ryan Ackley  
 PFC Philip Quentin Allen  
 PFC Holden Mitchell Bedwell  
 PFC Dylan James Bettendorf  
 PV2 Carlos Fernando Blanco  
 PV2 Neel Rajesh Dixit  
 PFC Kaiden Michael Fleming  
 SPC Armaan Khurana  
 PV2 Aidan Conner Nicholson  
 PFC William Oswald Wharton  
 PV2 Gavin Derek Yankanin  
 Class 112-25  
 PFC Kevin Willian Silva Perez \* -DG  
 PVT Mason Bailey Barrett  
 PFC Thomas Paul Albert Bredlau  
 PFC Erik A.C. Hernandez  
 PV2 Bradon James Eby  
 PV2 Matt Deegan Bord Edrosolan  
 SPC Isaiah Alexander Felix

## 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 Officers October 3, 2025

Class 001-002

- WO1 Andrychowski, Samuel-DG  
 WO1 Stanfield, David-DG  
 WO1 Kirk, Charles-HG  
 WO1 Bowers, Michael-HG  
 WO1 Barna, Marc

- WO1 Jackson, Tommy  
 WO1 Senatore, Shena  
 WO1 Youngson, Ryan  
 WO1 Diaz Otero, Jorge  
 WO1 Murphy, Mackenzie

- PFC Caden James Spann  
 PFC Walker Haze Alexander Taylor  
 PV2 Garrett Jaymes Wrathner  
 PV2 Seth Jacob Yaeckel  
 PV2 Kenneth Yoder  
 Class 113-25  
 SPC Keith William Burton \* -DG  
 PFC Israel Almaraz  
 PFC Joshua Benjamin Boatwright  
 PFC Haley Jade Esser

- PFC Mackenzie Marie Hayes  
 SPC Jonathan Jossue Lira Toledo  
 PV2 Ghaliya Tiare Morita  
 PFC Robert Elias Neeley  
 PV2 Yianni Nikolaos Neofotistos  
 PV2 Gabriel Jose Rosario Rivas  
 PV2 Benjamin Claude Runner  
 PV2 Gage Michael Sharp

Continued on next page

## ARMY AVIATION Advertiser Spotlight

### Leonardo



Leonardo Helicopters performs research, design, development, production, marketing, and customer support for its extensive range of modern helicopters serving commercial, public service, law enforcement, security, and defense operations. The company's U.S. facilities, located in Philadelphia and Florida, deliver AW139 and AW119 helicopters to customers around the world and feature a training academy, 24-hour fleet operations center, warehouse, and logistics center. Leonardo also provides completion and MRO services to customers throughout the Americas.

Categories: Manufacturing

Size of Company: Large, 1,000 Employees and Up

<https://usa.leonardo.com/en/helicopters>

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



# AAAA

## People On The Move

### AIT GRADUATIONS

*continued*

#### Cargo Helicopter Repairer (15U)

*Class 047-25*

PFC Ean Eric Adams \* -DG  
 PFC Kennedy Diane Byron  
 PFC Lukas Eric Conn  
 PFC Luis Manuel Gonzalez  
 PFC Nathan Alexander Gower  
 PV2 Racari Coryelle Jones  
 PFC Rodney Si'itu Faaolatag Live  
 PFC Emil Nahun Lopez Ventura  
 PV2 Brody Kenneth Palmer  
 PFC Stanley Alexander Rolinski  
 PV2 Jesus Treyes Mendoza  
*Class 048-25*  
 PFC Jackson Cole Barbin \* -DG  
 PV2 David Dean Damaske  
 PFC Isaac Adan Edenfield  
 PFC Hayden Parish Ginsberg  
 PV2 Brady McGraw Hutchinson  
 PFC Logan Michael Pixley  
 PVT Alexander Antoni Sandoval  
 PFC Grant William Solberg  
 PFC Thomas James Spengler  
 PFC Elisabeth Lily Vance  
 PFC Ryder Kingston Yount

#### Aircraft Powerplant Repairer (15B)

*Class 010-25*

PFC Jackson Allen Roberson \* -DG  
 PFC Jody Anthony Campbell  
 SPC Pedro Alexis De Ona  
 PV2 Yakeenie Alexsie Dobson  
 PV2 Christopher Guevara  
 SPC Batuhan Gul

PV2 Xavier Jamal Malcolm  
 PFC Bailey Joseph Perrodin  
 PFC Darby Norma Lu Rennhack  
 PVT Curt John Rodrigues  
 PV2 Jared Marvin Abodurin Thomas  
 PV2 Kaela Mahiaihoolauae Wong

#### Aircraft Powertrain Repairer (15D)

*Class 010-25*

PV2 James Jordan Johnson \* -DG  
 PV2 Markus Anthony Barkley  
 PFC Braedon Charles Collins  
 PV2 Dayton Lee Jones  
 SSG Steven Chase Jordan  
 PV2 Evan Uriah Lowman  
 PV2 Richard Mendoza  
 SPC Benjamin Herve Njoh  
 PV2 Kaden Joseph Obrien  
 SPC Ojeir G. Richards  
 SPC Travis Dean Runkle  
 PV2 Bryant Ramses Verdugo

#### Aircraft Electrician (15F)

*Class 019-25*

PFC Abbie Marie Golden \* -DG  
 SPC Sandra Raquel Frydell  
 PFC Khyre Tydriq Hathaway  
 PFC Kien Russell Jamieson Obrien  
 PV2 Andre Courtley Richards  
 PV2 Claire Omoteniola Tunwashe

#### Aircraft Structural Repairer (15G)

*Class 012-25*

PV2 Colin Lance Lovdahl \* -DG  
 SPC Jacob Daniel Benttinen  
 PFC Jordan Campbell

SPC Jaxon Ryker Carpenter  
 SPC Adan Gomez  
 PVT Hope Julia Hanson  
 PV2 William Michael Hay  
 PV2 Haiden James Lapid  
 PFC Emma Grace Leber  
 SPC Gunner Zane Mayer  
 SPC Barbara Emily Rausch  
 PV2 Alexey Steven Scheid  
 PV2 Benjamin Tuff Shaw  
 SPC Nathan Dantel Stickels  
*Class 013-25*  
 PV2 Joshuwa Gene Sanderson \* -DG  
 PFC Jordan Alante Green  
 PFC Justin Thomas Mirelez, Jr.  
 PFC Gavin Michael Serrano  
 PVT Kamryn Allen Lee Taylor  
 PFC Riley James Tiner  
 PFC Mace Alexander Winkler

#### Aircraft Pnedraulics Repairer (15H)

*Class 011-26*

PV2 Sean Lucas Mondello \* -DG  
 SPC Steven Parker Daniels  
 PV2 Jose Dariel Espina-Rodriguez  
 PV2 Jackson Ron Fatheree  
 PFC Daniel Figueroa, Jr.  
 SPC Zhengyun Guo  
 PFC Samuel Thomas Kemp  
 PVT Catcher James Koboldt  
 PV2 Jackson William Meyer  
 PFC Johan Mauricio Prada  
 PV2 Alexander Christopher Versteegh

- DG: Distinguished Graduate

- HG: Honor Graduate  
 \* = AAAA Member

### Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Graduations

#### UAS REPAIRER

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

#### Shadow UAS Repairer Course

*8 Graduates, 12 January 2026*

SGT Quinn Prosser-DG  
 PFC Kayden Anders  
 PFC Edward Barragan  
 PV2 Mathew Edwards  
 PV2 Cody Gibbs  
 PFC Brycen Hernandez  
 PV2 Ayden Peirce  
 PV2 Lucas Schmidt

#### Gray Eagle Repairer Course

*8 Graduates, 15 January 2026*

PV2 Arturo Grimaldo-DG  
 PV2 Jaden Anderson  
 SPC Abraham Evans  
 PV2 Austin Mccoy  
 PFC Carter Ransom  
 PFC Kelvin Santiago-Ortiz  
 PV2 Riley Thruston  
 PFC Gabriel Vega

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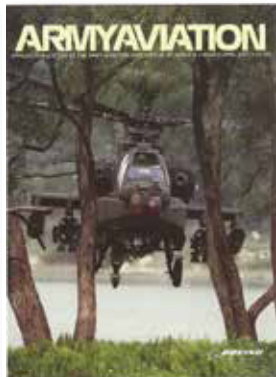
[WWW.ARMYAVIATIONMUSEUM.ORG](http://WWW.ARMYAVIATIONMUSEUM.ORG)

# 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, March 2001

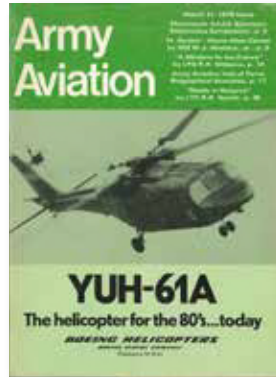
### Briefings

Texas: Not far from Waco, an all-night torrential storm washed out a stretch of highway. Trapped in the maelstrom was a school bus, carried by the storm

waters into a nearby river. Aviators from the 507th Medical Company from Fort Hood answered the call. Pilot, C.W.2 Derek Mitchell; co-pilot, 1st Lieutenant Angie Presnell; crew chief, P.F.C. Brente Towne and flight medic Sergeant Michael Thomas, retrieved the occupants of the stricken bus—the driver and three children, of which there was a five-year old girl and two boys ages seven and eleven. None was seriously injured; but, all were treated for minor cuts and bruises.

### AAAA/AUSA Aviation Symposium

The 2001 Army Aviation Symposium, co-sponsored by the AAAA and the Association of the United States Army, was held January 8-10 at the Sheraton Premier Hotel, Vienna, Virginia. More than 200 attendees packed the banquet hall and took in the remarks by the Honorable Paul J. Hoeper, assistant secretary of the Army, acquisition, logistics and technology; Major General Anthony Jones, Aviation Branch Chief; Major General Al Sullivan, Commanding General of AMCOM and, Major General Joe Bergantz, P.E.O. Aviation. Keynote speaker: Lieutenant General John Riggs, Commanding General U.S. First Army (pictured). Dinner speaker: General Jack Keane, vice chief of staff. A.U.S.A is to be congratulated for planning and organizing the event, which was well-received by the attendees.



## 50 Years Ago, March 1976

### Marines

Marine Corps personnel attended Air Traffic Control training at Fort Rucker, Alabama. In the foreground is Sergeant John Berga; in the background, Sergeant Larry Grove, of Cherry Point, North Carolina. Both are qualified A.T.C.s undergoing radar-scope instruction. Sergeants Berga and Grove are the first Marines to take the A.T.C. course at FT Rucker.



### The First!

Congratulations to First Lieutenant Joseph Craig. During the first U.S.A.A.V.N.C. Cobra Qualification Course, Lieutenant Craig became the first student to score a bullseye with a demo missile at a range of 2,380 meters . . . the sole demo missile allocated to his class.



### New Flight Simulator

Now in Phase 1 construction at Fort Rucker, Alabama, is the CH-47C FS and AH-1Q FS flight simulator. Accelerated construction progress may result in building efforts being completed prior to the December 19 target date for completion.

### Filling a Void

Army Aviation has and should continue to fill voids created by the natural proclivity of the Air Force to move to larger, faster, more sophisticated aircraft. Such was among the Ground Forces' motivation to create the Air Observation Post in World War II. When the Air Force introduced the C-123, C-124 and C-133, the Army developed the helicopter. Then the Air Force went with the C-130, C-141 and C-5A. To which the Army went with larger helicopters such as the CH-47 and the Caribou as shown to address its tactical needs. Of course, the latter was taken over by the Air Force and phased out of service.





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

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

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

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

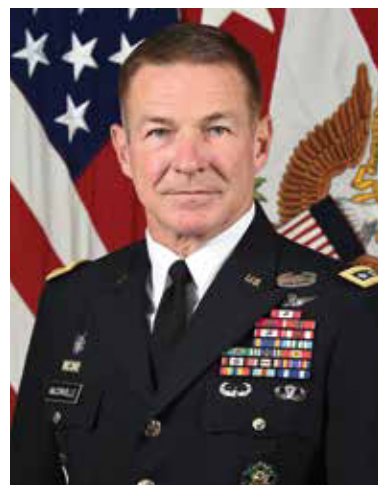
# Army Aviation Hall of Fame

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## General James Charles McConville

*Army Aviation Hall of Fame 2024 Induction -  
Denver, CO*

---



U.S. ARMY AVIATION PHOTO

A combat leader who has served at every level from platoon to commanding the famed “Screaming Eagles” of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and in assignments ranging from the Chief of Congressional Liaison, operations, and plans staff work, to personnel management, logistics, and even serving in one of our special mission units, GEN (Ret.) Jim McConville has done it all.

After graduating from Flight school at then-Fort Rucker, Alabama in 1982, he spent a great deal of his operational career in the cavalry, earning his spurs and in assignments including the 1st Cavalry Division and the 9th, 10th, and 17th Cavalry Regiments, and is a veteran of multiple combat tours to include Afghanistan and Iraq.

He is a Master Aviator who has amassed over 2,500 total hours in every Army attack and scout aircraft to include the AH-1 Cobra, OH-58D Kiowa Warrior, AH-64D Longbow Apache, and the Special Operations AH-6 Little Bird.

He served as the commanding general of the 101st Airborne from 2011 to 2014, the CG of the Combined Joint Task Force-101, during Operation Enduring Freedom, then following his assignment as the Army G-1, he became the Army’s 36th Vice Chief of Staff overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Army, and on August 9, 2019, he was appointed the 40th Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army.

Through it all, people remained his number one priority. Famously, GEN McConville has repeatedly stated that “People are the Army. Without our people, we’re just a bunch of combat equipment sitting in motor pools, hangars, and arms rooms.”

First Army Aviator Chief of Staff, Master Army Aviator, combat commander, special operator, consummate people-first visionary leader, there is no doubt that General James C. McConville has more than earned his place in the Army Aviation Hall of Fame.

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