

Commander's Call Topics



March 21, 2013

"Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower."

Steve Jobs (1955-2011)

Apple co-founder

Also in this issue...Developmental education application now open. Please see Personnel Issues, page 2....

The Highest Honor

Rewarding acts of individual gallantry is deeply imbedded in United States military history, but it wasn't until the Civil War that Senate Bill 82, containing a provision for a "Medal of Honor," was signed into law by President Lincoln in 1861. And it wasn't until 1990 that Congress proclaimed a single day—March 25—to be Medal of Honor Day.

There are two distinct protocols for awarding the Medal of Honor. First, and most common, is the nomination and approval through the service member's chain of command. The second is nomination by a member of Congress and approval by a special act of Congress. In both cases, the Medal is presented by the President on behalf of and in the name of Congress. Perhaps this is why the Medal of Honor is so often erroneously referred to as the "Congressional" Medal of Honor.

President Theodore Roosevelt is the only commander-in-chief to have received the Medal of Honor, but he didn't receive it while he was president. It was awarded posthumously almost 100 years after his legendary actions during the Spanish-American War, July 1, 1898, when Col. Roosevelt led the all-volunteer Rough Riders

in taking San Juan Hill, changing the course of history, ultimately opening the era of America as a global power.

Although the criteria for receiving the Medal of Honor is the same—uncommon gallantry and courage—each act of uncommon valor is unique.

Col. Edward V. ("Eddie") Rickenbacker was the first American fighter pilot to receive the Medal of Honor, which was awarded in 1930, years after the events that led to his selection. During World War I (1918), near Billy, France, while on voluntary patrol over the lines, then-Lieutenant Rickenbacker attacked seven enemy planes—five Fokker D VII's and two Halberstadt photographic planes. Disregarding the odds against him, he dived on them and shot down one of the Fokkers and one of the Halberstadts.

Maj. George Andrew Davis, Jr., is the first Air Force recipient of the Medal of Honor. Recognized for his actions during the Korean War, he was the only flying ace to be killed in action in Korea. According to the citation accompanying the Medal "...by his

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► TRENDING ...

"We're going to re-evaluate ([tuition assistance](#)) for fiscal 2014. We're going to do everything we can to offer a program in fiscal 2014, but realistically, we're going to have to reduce the parameters of the program to lessen the budgetary impact on our Air Force." -- [Lt. Gen. Darrell D. Jones](#), deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services, informed members of the House Armed Service Subcommittee on Military Personnel that the March 1-triggered sequestration and lingering continuing resolution, will undermined the Air Force's ability to train and equip Airmen.

► CURRENT ISSUES

[CMSAF discusses tuition assistance](#)

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James Cody took questions from Airmen on the decision to suspend military tuition assistance.

[Edwards AFB Airmen begin F-35 operational testing](#)

The F-35 Lightning II program entered a new phase of testing with the arrival of the first two operational test aircraft March 6.

► RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Airman magazine

<http://www.airmanonline.af.mil>

Air Force Outreach

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil>

Military OneSource

<http://militaryonesource.af.mil>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://mypers.af.mil>

<http://www.afpc.af.mil>

Air Reserve Personnel Center

<http://www.arpc.afrc.af.mil>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Veteran Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Website

<http://www.firstgov.gov/>

Employment Opportunities

www.usajobs.com

www.nafjobs.org

Air Force Association Scholarships

<http://www.afa.org/aef/aid/scholars.asp>

Air Force Safety Center

www.afsec.af.mil

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

March 21, 1962 - A black bear named "Yogi" became the first living creature ejected from a supersonic aircraft when the Air Force tested the B-58's escape capsule. Ejected at 35,000 feet from a B-58 flying at 870 mph, Yogi landed unharmed 7 minutes 49 seconds later.

March 22, 1976 - Davis-Monthan AFB received the first A-10 for operational testing and evaluation.

[Bombers show U.S. resolve to defend South Korea, spokesman says](#)

It isn't just American capabilities in South Korea that North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un has to consider -- capabilities based outside South Korea also figure in the strategic calculus, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said today.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Developmental education application windows open](#)

Eligible active duty officers and civilians are now able to apply for intermediate and senior developmental education opportunities, Air Force Personnel Center officials announced.

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[New automation process cuts Post-9/11 GI Bill claims processing times by more than half](#)

As part of its ongoing transformation from paper-based to electronic claims processing, the Department of Veterans Affairs has continued to improve the automated payment of benefits for Veterans participating in the Post-9/11 GI Bill education program.

[DOD announces pilot sites for Healthy Base Initiative](#)

Thirteen pilot sites will participate in the Healthy Base Initiative, a demonstration project for the Defense Department's Operation Live Well, Pentagon officials announced March 18.

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY

[Fly-By-Wire F-15SA makes first flight](#)

The U.S. Air Force and its prime contractor Boeing have completed a successful first flight of the new F-15SA advanced fighter aircraft for the Royal Saudi Air Force.

March 23, 1951 - In the Korean War's second airborne operation, and the largest to date in one day, 120 Air Force transports dropped more than 3,400 troops and 220 tons of materiel behind enemy lines at Munsan-ni, Korea.

March 24, 1992 - the last U.S. Air Force fighter aircraft to be stationed in Spain left the country. They had served in Spain for 26 years.

March 25, 1986 - The first all-female Minuteman crew stood alert at the 351 SMW, Whiteman AFB. This was the first time an all-female crew accomplished Minuteman combat crew duty under the gender-specific crew policy.

March 26, 1996 - The F-4 Phantom line retired from active service.

March 27, 1916 - 1st Aero Squadron aircraft started carrying mail and dispatches for the Mexican Punitive Expedition.

The Highest Honor (continued from p. 1)

indomitable fighting spirit, heroic aggressiveness, and superb courage in engaging the enemy against formidable odds, [Maj. Davis] exemplified valor at its highest.”

The first person to receive the specifically-designed Air Force Medal of Honor was Col. Bernard F. Fisher. Previously, Air Force recipients had received the Medal designed for the Army.

On March 10, 1966, during the Vietnam War, Col. Fisher led a two-ship element of Skyraiders to support troops in contact with the enemy. Six "Spads" were striking numerous emplacements when the A-1 piloted by Maj. D. W. "Jump" Myers was hit and forced to crash-land with Myers taking cover behind an embankment, while Col. Fisher directed the rescue effort.

Under the cover provided by the other A-1s, Col. Fisher landed in the valley, taxied to Maj. Myers' position, and loaded the downed airman into the empty seat. Dodging shell holes and debris on the steel-planked runway, Col. Fisher took off safely despite many hits on his aircraft by small-arms fire.

The Medal of Honor was presented to him by President Johnson in 1967 after Col. Fisher's return to the United States

The Medal of Honor, more often than not awarded posthumously, is the nation's highest honor—civilian or military—and it is a tribute forever.

*Martha J. Lockwood
Chief, Information Products, AFPRO*

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit <http://www.airforcehistory.af.mil>.

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