

Commander's Call Topics



May 2, 2013

"A leader's most powerful ally is his or her own example. Leaders don't just talk about doing something; they do it."

John R. Wooden (1910-2010)
"The Wizard of Westwood"

Automatic life insurance enrollment no longer a sure thing for married service members.

Airmen Empowered to Help Air Force Save Money During Extreme Budget Cuts

Since May 1, Airmen have had a way to submit their cost-reducing ideas via the Airmen Powered by Innovation websites while at home, the office or on their smartphones. With budgets shrinking, Air Force leaders are calling on Airmen to share their best money-saving ideas through the "Every Dollar Counts" campaign.

Both uniformed and civilian Air Force members can participate in the month-long open call for ideas and share their creative and efficient ways to save money and time. In the wake of sequestration, the initiative marks a cultural shift that empowers Airmen to find and recommend areas for savings that may be used to support readiness needs, said Air Force Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Larry Spencer.

"When things get tough, Airmen figure out a way to get it done," Spencer said. "We have some of the most innovative folks in the world, so I know there are ideas about how we can do things better." Because of Spencer's resource management and budget-related background, he understands the urgency to mine those ideas.

"We stopped flying one-third of Air Force active-duty, combat-coded fighter squadrons in April, and we're projected to slow down or stop the flow of aircraft and engines in the depots," Spencer said. "Furthermore," he continued, "the Air Force must trim about \$11 billion in the last half of fiscal 2013. Additionally, our overseas contingency operations funding is almost \$2 billion short, so we have to make up that difference as well. And the challenge is compounded by the sequester timeline, which officially began March 1.

"We have to squeeze a year's worth of cuts into about six months," Spencer said of the Air Force budget. "So there's a

lot of money to be taken out of our budget in a short period of time ... I've never seen anything quite like it."

The general also noted that Airmen at every level should feel less encumbered by outmoded Air Force instructions or guidelines when brainstorming cost-cutting measures.

"Airmen Powered by Innovation' means go into that file of good ideas that were maybe 'too hard to do,' pull them out and submit them," Spencer declared. "If it's a good idea and requires an Air Force Instruction change, then we'll see if we can do that."

Spencer wants Airmen to submit their ideas regardless of its potential savings. "Whether it's \$500, \$1 million or \$30 million, we want to hear it because those dollars add up," he said. "We're taking every angle we can to manage our money and 'buy' as much mission as we can. In that sense, every Airman, whether they're at a wing or headquarters can help."

"The Centralized Asset Management Office at Wright Patterson manages the money we spend on flying hours, sustaining space operations and depot operations -- over \$16 billion -- so we're taking a close review of that account to determine how we can stretch those dollars.

"This is an opportunity to not only look at homegrown ideas, but broader ideas that affect the larger Air Force as well." The general expressed optimism in quickly finding solutions through ideas.

"Innovation is what we're all about," Spencer said. "This is our family and we're going to get through this because we've got great Airmen to help see us through this."

► TRENDING ...

"I have been immensely proud to serve these last four years with the men and women of the Navy and the Marine Corps, and I look forward to [being part of the Air Force family](#)." -- Under Secretary of the Air Force [Eric Fanning](#) after his swearing in April 29.

► 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/afef/aid/scholars.asp>

Air Force Safety Center

www.afsec.af.mil

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

May 2, 1977 – 1st Lt. Christine E. Schott became the first woman undergraduate pilot student to solo in the T-38 Talon.

May 3, 1930 - Laura Ingalls completed 344 consecutive loops. Afterwards, she tried again and accomplished 980 loops. In another flight later in the year, she successfully completed 714 barrel rolls, giving her a pair of records no one has cared to challenge.

May 4, 1979 - The A-10B flew its first flight at Edwards AFB, Calif.

May 5, 2004 - Two C-130s from the 146th AW (California ANG), equipped with the Modular Airborne Firefighting System, dropped 21,600 gallons of fire-retardant on the Cachuma fire in Santa Barbara County, Calif.

May 6, 1937 - The German dirigible Hindenberg burned while moored at

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Hagel to make furlough decision soon, press secretary says](#)

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel will make a decision soon on the scope of civilian furloughs in response to sequestration spending cuts, Pentagon Press Secretary George Little said today.

[USAFE fighter squadrons affected by sequestration](#)

Nearly half of the fighter squadrons in U.S. Air Forces in Europe-Air Forces Africa halted flying operations three weeks ago.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Total force readiness topic of Capitol Hill testimony](#)

Senior leaders from the active-duty Air Force, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve were on Capitol Hill April 24th to discuss the impact of sequestration on Total-Force readiness.

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[Family service members' group life insurance benefit changes](#)

Service members married to other service members are no longer automatically enrolled in the Family Service members' Group Life Insurance program, Pentagon officials said.

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE AND TECHNOLOGY

[SecAF: Hanscom enabling linked AF future](#)

Systems that help collect, process and push data to where it's needed quickly and securely are vital to Air Force operations, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley said.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit

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

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Lakehurst, N.J. Thirty-five people died in the fire.

May 7, 1945 – At Reims, the German High Command surrendered unconditionally, effective May 9.

May 8, 2001 – Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld made the Air Force the executive agent for the Pentagon's space activities.