

Commander's Call Topics



Jan. 15, 2010

"Perhaps someday, a world without armed conflict will no longer elude us; but, until then, this nation requires and values the efforts of its service men and women, and the love and support of their family members who sustain their efforts."

– Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, from [remarks](#) at the dedication for the Center for Families of the Fallen, Dover Air Force Base, Del.

FROM AIR FORCE SENIOR LEADERS

[Air Force secretary visits Lackland, addresses priorities](#)

Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley recently toured Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, and presided over the latest Basic Military Training graduation.

"Seeing Airmen all over the world, I'm continually impressed not only by the esprit and morale, but also the capabilities and skills being brought by our Airmen in support of the joint fight," Secretary Donley said. "Our Air Force is more capable than it has ever been. We provide important capabilities, in many different dimensions that in many respects are the glue of the joint warfighting effort (including) mobility, air refueling, ISR, aeromedical evacuation, and space-based capabilities."

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Gates will remain as secretary at least another year](#)

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates will stay in office for at least another year. Secretary Gates has worked to remake the way the Defense Department does business and another year in office will give him another opportunity to shape the department's budget.

[Ali Base drawdown in full swing](#)

Ali Base is in full drawdown mode following the presidential directive to reduce the American military presence in Iraq and to withdraw combat forces by December 2011. The Air Force presence at Ali Base will be less than one-third what it is today by the end of August.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[Airmen transition into new fitness program](#)

Officials published the new fitness program Air Force instruction ([AFI 36-2905](#)) to the Air Force Publications Web site Jan. 12, with an effective date of July 1. To learn more about the new fitness program and view scoring components that become effective in July, visit www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/affitnessprogram.

[Air Force officials announce enlisted board, promotion schedules](#)

The senior master sergeant and chief master sergeant boards are now Feb. 1 through 19 and Oct. 18 through 29, respectively. New testing dates for E-5 through E-9 are as follows: E-6/7 Feb. 1 through March 31; E-5 May 1 through June 15; E-9 Sept. 7 through 10; and E-8 Dec. 1 through 14. Promotion eligibility cutoff dates are: March 31 for E-5; Dec. 31 for E-6/E-7; Sept. 30 for E-8; and July 31 for E-9. For more information, view the Enlisted Program Promotion fact sheet at <http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/eprom>.

[Air Force officials restrict Portal access beginning Jan. 15](#)

Global Combat Support System-Air Force computer officials will begin restricting access to the Air Force Portal to only users with a common access card or valid public key infrastructure certificate Jan. 15. Air Force Knowledge Now began restricting access to CAC/ PKI users Jan. 1, and Air Force Personnel Center officials will begin restricting access to only CAC/PKI users Jan. 28.

[Laws change for military, overseas voters](#)

Servicemembers and overseas voters shouldn't assume they automatically will receive ballots for the 2010 elections. New laws require voters to submit federal postcard applications for absentee ballots on a yearly basis. Go to <http://www.FVAP.gov> for more information and specific state requirements.

GUARD AND RESERVE

[Budget for 2010 to help Guard equip, modernize](#)

Increased funding in the fiscal 2010 budget will allow the National Guard to modernize and equip its forces for state and federal missions. The Defense Appropriations Act's provisions include \$710 million in additional equipment funding; \$575 million for the Army Guard and \$135 million for the Air National Guard.

FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[No need to feel SAD during the winter](#)

Some people develop symptoms of depression due to seasonal affective disorder, or SAD. Symptoms begin in October or November and end in March or April and include oversleeping, daytime fatigue, carbohydrate craving, and weight gain.

Non-active duty Tricare beneficiaries can schedule a behavioral health care appointment and can receive the first eight behavioral health care outpatient visits per fiscal year -- Oct. 1- Sept. 30 -- from a Tricare provider without a referral or pre-authorization. To find out more about getting help, go to Tricare's Mental Health Resource Center at www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth.

[Podcast Series addresses post-deployment challenges](#)

Servicemembers and their families can get help coping with post-deployment stress through a new series of podcasts. "There and Back" podcast was created for afterdeployment.org, a Defense Department Web site developed by experts at the National Center for Telehealth and Technology and the [Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury](#).

[Toolkit helps answer servicemembers' health care questions](#)

To help servicemembers affected by a behavioral or other health conditions, Tricare officials created the Toolkit for wounded, ill and injured servicemembers. Located at www.tricare.mil/wii, the toolkit is a good resource for wounded servicemembers seeking information about health care. For more information about Tricare's behavioral health care resources, go to www.tricare.mil/mentalhealth.

[Tricare officials encourage eye exams](#)

Maintaining healthy eyes and vision is an important part of personal safety and quality of life. Active-duty family members can get a routine eye exam every year, and retirees and their family members enrolled in Tricare Prime can get one every two years. Find out more about Tricare vision benefits at the Tricare beneficiary portal at <http://tricare.mil/mybenefit>.

[Air Force officials announce holiday safety results](#)

The Air Force had the lowest recorded number of private motor vehicle fatalities during the Thanksgiving-to-New Year's time frame -- one -- to include the lowest number of automobile fatalities -- zero. It was also the first time in 13 years the Air Force did not have a single active-duty death due to any type of safety mishap during this time frame.

RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Air Force Community

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

Air Force Highlights

<http://www.afoutreach.af.mil/usafhighlights/index.asp>

Military OneSource

<http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

Military HOMEFRONT

<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>

Year of the Air Force Family

<http://www.af.mil/yoaff/index.asp>

www.MyAirForceLife.com

Air Force Personnel Center

<http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/>

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

Air Reserve Personnel Center

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

Department of Defense

<http://www.defense.gov>

Department of Defense News

<http://www.defenselink.mil>

TRICARE

<http://www.tricare.mil>

U.S. Government Web site

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

AIR FORCE HERITAGE TO HORIZONS

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Jan. 18, 2010

This federal holiday honors the life and legacy of the civil rights leader, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Established in 1983, and first observed in 1986, the holiday is observed the third Monday in January each year, near the time of King's birthday, January 15.

This Week in Air Force History

Jan. 15, 1957 – B-52 tail gunner, Airman 1st Class Eugene Preiss, is the first enlisted person to fly around the world backwards. He was aboard a B-52 on a mission called "Operation Power Flite" to showcase the endurance of the B-52. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his participation on the flight that lasted 40 hours and 10 minutes.

Jan. 16, 1991 – Senior Airman Lisa Wilson became the first enlisted woman to fly in a combat situation on an EC-130 when the aircraft departed for Iraq from a forward location. Although the majority of the night mission remains classified, the crew returned early the next morning.

Jan. 17, 1991 – The 2nd Bomb Wing launched B-52Gs from Barksdale Air Force Base, La., to the Iraqi combat zone, where they launched 35 cruise missiles on Jan. 17 against targets in Iraq and returned to Barksdale. This flight was the longest bombing mission in history to date. The war against Iraq started.

Jan. 17, 1991 - Capt Jon K. Kelk shot down a MiG-29 with an AIM-7 missile in the vicinity of Mudaysis, Iraq. Captain Kelk was a 58th Tactical Fighter Squadron F-15C pilot assigned to the 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing (Provisional).

Jan. 18, 1905 – The Wright Brothers opened negotiations with the government for procurement of one airplane.

Jan. 18, 1971 – Tech. Sgt. Leroy Wright received the Air Force Cross for the rescue attempt at Son Tay POW camp on Nov. 21, 1970. During the failed rescue he broke his ankle when the HH-3 helicopter landed hard. Despite danger of the helicopter exploding he ensured his entire crew was safely away before departing the aircraft and then led the Army combat troops advance towards their target.

Jan. 20, 1928 – President Calvin Coolidge presented the first Cheney Award to Master Sgt. Henry A. Chapman, 19th Airship Company, for bravery during the Roma airship disaster Feb. 21, 1922. It was the nation's worst air disaster up to that time.

Jan. 21, 1968 – Communists began a 77-day siege of the U.S. Marine Corps stronghold at Khe Sanh, South Vietnam, which resulted in a victory for U.S. airpower over enemy ground forces.

For more information on Air Force heritage, visit the Air Force Link heritage section at

<http://www.af.mil/information/heritage>.

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