

Commander's Call Topics



Sept. 3, 2010

"The nation's defense has always been in the hands of Americans who have put duty and service to country above all else, and have passed from generation to generation a nation both secure at home and respected abroad. Each and every day, I am reminded, and I am thankful, for the work you and others like you have done to help build the military we have today and pass it on to the current generation."

– Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley from [remarks](#) to the annual American Legion National Convention

FROM AIR FORCE SENIOR LEADERS

Labor Day Holiday Message

"Your family, friends, and fellow Airmen are counting on you to be there for them. Set a standard of zero tolerance for reckless behavior -- for yourself, your loved ones, and your wingmen. And, as you enjoy the remaining days of warm weather and the company of friends and family, please remember that safety requires conscious effort. It is no accident."

CSAF's Vector: The Way Ahead

"Since I became your Chief we have had to make some tough decisions, primarily focused on three challenges: restoring credibility to our nuclear enterprise, enhancing our contribution to today's fight, and recapturing acquisition excellence. As demanding as we will continue to be in those areas, I am pleased with the progress we've made to date; but also believe we must seize this moment and look ahead," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz.

Undersecretary visits AMC, discusses fuel efficiency, deployed Airmen, total force

Undersecretary of the Air Force Erin C. Conaton made an official visit to Air Mobility Command, Scott AFB, Ill. *"Of the top five priorities of the secretary (of the Air Force) and the chief (of staff of the Air Force), number one is supporting the joint fight today. The chief likes to say we are all in and I couldn't agree with that more. We see that throughout the Air Force in terms of the contributions that our folks are making both with air platforms and on the ground in support of the joint fight."*

► CURRENT ISSUES

Gates: War in Iraq over, U.S. transitioning to Iraqi forces

American forces are still participating in some counterinsurgency operations with the Iraqis, and they are training and advising and assisting Iraqi forces, but the United States is not at war in Iraq, said Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates.

U.S. forces transition to Operation New Dawn

The United States military marked a historic milestone Sept. 1 as it made the transition from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn. This transition signifies a formal end to U.S. military combat operations and reaffirms the U.S. military's commitment to the Iraqi Security Forces and the government and people of Iraq.

Air Force officials announce changes to space functions

Following the completion of a [review](#) of Headquarters Air Force space management and responsibilities, Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley issued a [memorandum](#) reinforcing some existing alignments and directed several changes to Air Force headquarters space organizations.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

Combat, hardship pays remain for troops serving in Iraq

The change from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn does not affect the pays and entitlements troops serving in Iraq receive. Servicemembers deployed to Iraq will still receive hostile fire/imminent danger pay, hardship-duty pay and incidental expenses.

[Enlisted force development initiatives approved](#)

The Force Management and Development Council approved an initiative that will enable the enlisted force to move forward in deliberately developing senior enlisted leaders. Changes include requiring NCO Academy attendance prior to pinning on technical sergeant to provide the leadership skills NCOs need earlier in their career. Enlisted members can also join discussions with fellow Airmen across the Air Force on a variety of initiatives and other professional development issues by participating in the discussion forums in My Enlisted Development Plan. Get more information via the Air Force Portal or by calling 703-692-5560.

[PCS orders approval centralized](#)

Airmen receiving permanent-change-of-station orders in September will have their orders approved at a centralized location as officials begin implementing procedures to close out the fiscal 2010 PCS budget. Active-duty Airmen with assignment report dates or a date eligible for return from overseas of January 2011 or earlier may be impacted by the new procedures. Airmen entering the service, separating or retiring are not affected.

[Toolkit helps separating servicemembers land jobs](#)

Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines separating from the military can get extra help in finding a job from a new [Defense Department](#) resource. The Career Decision Toolkit will help the 400,000-plus servicemembers who separate from the military each year have a smoother transition into civilian work.

[Air Force officials seek nominees for Ph.D. program](#)

The Air Force Chief of Staff Ph.D. program will allow officers to attend a top-tier university to complete their doctorate in studies such as history, political science, international relations, economics and philosophy. Nomination packages are due no later than Oct. 8. For more information, visit the [AFPC personnel services website](#) or call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102.

GUARD AND RESERVE

[Tricare Retired Reserve health coverage launches](#)

Effective Sept. 1 members of the Retired Reserve who are not yet age 60, the so-called "gray area" retirees, can purchase Tricare health coverage for themselves and their eligible family. Visit the [TRR website](#) for qualification and purchasing instructions.

CIVILIAN

[Officials seek nominations for civilian awards](#)

Air Force officials are soliciting nominations for the 2011 Air Force Association Outstanding Air Force Civilian Employees of the Year Award. Each year, four Air Force civilian employees are recognized for outstanding achievement in four categories. Nomination packages must be received by Feb. 15, 2011. For more information visit the [AFPC personnel services website](#) or call the Total Force Service Center at 800-525-0102.

FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[New Tricare Overseas Program contract begins](#)

Beginning Sept. 1, the new Tricare Overseas Program contract goes into effect, giving beneficiaries easier and greater access to health care outside the United States. Beneficiaries stationed overseas who want to keep up with the latest information about their health care benefits need to update their family's Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, or [DEERS](#), records as soon as possible.

FINANCES AND EDUCATION

[Virtual high school opens 'doors' to learning](#)

The [DOD Education Activity's virtual high school](#) is an accredited distance learning program for military students. The virtual school offers students 48 online courses in a wide range of disciplinary areas, including foreign language, math, science, social studies, language arts and physical education, as well as 15 advanced placement courses.

RESOURCES

AF.mil

<http://www.af.mil>

Airman magazine

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

Air Force Community

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

Air Force Outreach

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

Military OneSource

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

Military HOMEFRONT

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

Air Force Personnel Center

<http://gum.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

This Week in Air Force History

Sept. 4, 1945 – Maj. G. E. Cain set a Tokyo-to-Washington speed record of 31 hours, 25 minutes, when he delivered the film of the Japanese surrender ceremony to the United States.

Sept. 9, 1967 – Sgt. Duane D. Hackney was presented the Air Force Cross for bravery during the rescue of an Air Force pilot in Vietnam. He was the fourth enlisted man to receive the award.

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

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

The Defense Media Activity-San Antonio produces Commander's Call Topics weekly. For questions or comments about this or any other DMA-SA product, send e-mail to afproducts@dma.mil. To subscribe to Air Force news and information products online, go to www.af.mil/information/subscribe.