

Commander's Call Topics



September 13, 2012

"Sexual assault is a crime and is categorically unacceptable. It is incompatible with our core values, it is harmful to our people and it makes us a less effective fighting force. We need [to crack down](#) on this harder than ever to get this out of our culture." – Michael Donley, Secretary of the Air Force

► CURRENT ISSUES

[Silver Star presented for fallen Airman's 'gallantry in action'](#)

Maj. Gen. Lawrence Wells, 9th Air Force commander, presented the medal "on behalf of a grateful nation and even more grateful Air Force."

[F-35A reaches 'huge milestone' in program development](#)

Air Force officials begin their F-35A Lightning II Operational Utility Evaluation Sept. 10, an instrumental step in beginning Joint Strike Fighter pilot and maintenance training for the service.

► PERSONNEL ISSUES

[ACSC launches new distance learning program](#)

The Air Command and Staff College is launching a new version of the non-master's "correspondence" program during the last week of September. This comprehensive distance learning transformation is designed to enhance critical thinking skills and improve the educational value of professional military education for mid-grade officers and civilians, officials said.

► FAMILY, HEALTH AND SAFETY

[AF finishes strong at end of 'critical days of summer'](#)

The Air Force 2012 Critical Days of Summer campaign ended Sept. 4 with zero fatalities for the Labor Day weekend for the first time in five years.

[AF veteran shares wisdom with young paralympians](#)

The camaraderie of being part of a team is a draw to many athletes and can be traced to the origins of why many embarked on lengthy careers, staying the course even when things are not always going their way.

[Commanders share wing missions, kidney donation](#)

While total force integration has spawned many resource-sharing initiatives, two wing commanders at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, have taken it to a whole new, and very personal, level.

► ENVIRONMENT, SPACE, TECHNOLOGY

[Air Force continues pollution prevention efforts](#)

The Air Force joins the nation for Pollution Prevention Week on Sept. 17-24. The service continues its efforts to educate the public about pollution prevention and reducing the contamination of air, soil and water by eliminating pollution at its source.

► 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.>

Air Force Personnel Center

<https://gum-crm.csd.disa.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>

Department of Veterans 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>

Commentary: Happy Birthday—the U.S. Air Force turns 65

Most people born on the U.S. Air Force's first day as a separate service, Sept. 18, 1947, are, today, rapidly approaching retirement age. But as a service, the Air Force is considered the youngster, with the reputation as the service of modern technology.

Although the youngest, the Air Force at 65 has compiled quite a track record. Not a month old, the Air Force made its mark when Capt. Chuck Yeager took his Bell X-1 and became the first person to break the sound barrier. Before its first birthday, the Air Force made the history books, flying C-54 Skymasters over West Berlin, delivering close to 5,000 tons of food and supplies for nearly a year when the Soviet Union cut off road, railway and waterway access to the city.

During its first war as a separate service, the Air Force owned the skies over Korea with the F-86 Sabre, one of the early jets to be used in conflict. As the Cold War escalated during the late 1940s and early '50s, it was the long-range bombers like the B-36 Peacemaker and later the B-52 Stratofortress that would add to America's safety net. Later, the development of the Titan and Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missiles would provide additional security as we advanced into the nuclear age. The late '50s also saw the emergence of long-range reconnaissance aircraft with the deployment of the U-2 and, in 1964, the SR-71 Blackbird.

In space, the Mercury program, working toward a U.S. presence in space, was actually an Air Force mission until a fateful day in October of 1957, during which the Soviet Union launched the first satellite, Sputnik. This event changed the Air Force's course toward the development and launching of satellites as the primary goal in space.

Vietnam showcased the B-52 as the bomber of choice and the F-4 Phantom as the primary fighter. The KC-135 Stratotankers provided the Air Force with a way to extend their reach globally. It was the '70s that began to introduce many of the aircraft we still use today, like the F-15 Eagle, the F-16 Fighting Falcon and the A-10 Thunderbolt II. That decade also gave us more transport capabilities with the C-5A Galaxy and the C-141 Starlifter. It was during the '70s that we also acquired the first E-3 Sentry (AWACS), which greatly increased our early warning capabilities.

The next two decades would dramatically increase the Air Force's reach and air superiority. Stealth technology was at the forefront with systems like the F-117A Nighthawk, and the B-1 and B-2 bombers. The C-17 Globemaster III would become the latest in transport technology by the mid '90s, and the list of operations would dramatically increase. During the mid-90s, the Air Force would launch the Global Positioning System, or GPS, technology that would revolutionize our lives on a global scale. Starting with Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Air Force would find itself in the thick of things with operations such as Southern Watch, Provide Comfort, Provide Hope, Deny Flight, Provide Promise and Joint Endeavor.

With the terror attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and United Airlines Flight 93 on Sept. 11, 2001, the Air Force entered the 21st century with the next level of weapons technology—unmanned aerial vehicles. With names like Predator, Reaper and Global Hawk, UAVs would change the face of warfare in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. The first decade of the 21st century would also see the launching of the new fifth-generation fighter aircraft, the F-22 Raptor, and the development of the F-35 Lightning II.

The Air Force also added a main mission, in addition to air and space, with the challenge of protecting military and civilian attacks in the cyber world. The 24th Air Force became the service's cyber command, responsible for protecting computer networks from cyberattacks.

As we head into the second decade of the 21st century, the Air Force remains at the cutting edge of air and space technology. Currently the Air Force is developing a space fence, designed to track and catalog space objects considered orbital debris, and the X-37, a project that could develop into unmanned spacecraft for future long-term trips into space.

Happy 65th! May the next 65 be just as action-packed.

► THIS WEEK IN AIR FORCE HISTORY

September 14, 1944 - Col. Floyd B. Wood, Maj. Harry Wexler, and Lt. Frank Recford made the first flight into a hurricane to collect scientific data in a Douglas A-20.

September 15, 2001 - In the first five days after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, 35 Air National Guard fighter units supplied 603 sorties while the 18 ANG tanker wings flew 72 sorties to offload 3.2 million pounds of fuel during Operation Noble Eagle.

September 16, 1960 - From Cape Canaveral, Fla., a 1.5-ton reentry nose cone on an Atlas missile flew on a 5,000-mile test flight.

September 17, 1908 - Lt. Thomas E. Selfridge, flying as a passenger with Orville Wright, died when the Wright Flyer crashed at Fort Myer, Va. This event was the world's first fatal airplane accident and Lt. Selfridge was the first military casualty. Mr. Wright also received serious injuries.

September 17, 2002 - The last B-1B left the 116th Bomb Wing, Georgia Air National Guard, at Robins AFB, Ga., to the "bone yard" at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. Later the 116th merged with the U.S. Air Force's 93rd Air Control Wing to form the 116th Air Control Wing, the Air Force's first "blended wing," and fly the E-8C JSTARS.

September 18, 1967 - Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara approved production of a "thin" Nike-X and ballistic missile to give regions in the U.S. at least one battery of warhead interceptors.

September 19, 1972 - A Minuteman III completed its first operational test launch from a regular launch facility at Vandenberg AFB, Calif.

September 20, 1950 - The U.S. Air Force announced that planes would be tested by remote control with pilots viewing instrument panels from the ground by television.

September 21, 1982 - A B-52G from the 416th Bombardment Wing at Griffiss AFB, N.Y., conducted the first air-launched cruise missile operational test launch.

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

The Defense Media Activity produces *Commander's Call Topics* weekly. For questions or comments about this, or any other DMA 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.

When It Comes to Elections, You Can't Vote If You're Not Registered

As of today, there are 54 days until the presidential election, November 6, 2012, and, according to the U.S. Census, there are 206,072,000 Americans eligible to vote. Surprisingly, only about 71 percent—or 146,311,000—are registered. Whether one is of voting age or is eligible to vote is of little consequence unless one is actually *registered* to vote.

Throughout most of the U.S., deadlines for requests for absentee ballots occur during the month of October with few exceptions. To facilitate military personnel in registering to vote, the Department of Defense recently launched a mobile website for military service members, their voting-age dependents, and overseas citizens. DoD's Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) mobile website is accessible from any smartphone and can be downloaded from <http://www.fvap.gov/mobile/>.

In addition to the FVAP, *Commander's Call Topics* is publishing a three-part series containing specific state-by-state information about voter registration, absentee ballot requests, and ballot return deadlines. Each state's and territory's election website will also be included to facilitate up-to-the-minute information.

A graphic on the next page presents state-by-state deadlines. In each of the two *Commander's Call Topics* following this publication, Kansas through North Dakota (20 September CCT) and Ohio through Wyoming will be presented.

2012 Presidential Election Absentee Ballot Deadlines by State and Territory

Part I

Alabama through Iowa

	Deadlines			Election Website
	Registration	Absentee Ballot Request	Ballot Return	
Alabama	26-Oct	1-Nov	See ¹	www.sos.state.ala.us
Alaska	7-Oct	27-Oct	See ²	www.elections.gov
American Samoa	8-Oct	22-Oct	6-Nov	www.americansamoaelectionoffice.gov
Arizona	All deadlines: 1900 hrs., 6-November			www.azsos.gov
Arkansas	9-Oct	30-Oct	1700 hrs., 16-Nov	www.sos.arkansas.gov
California	22-Oct	30-Oct	2000 hrs., 6-Nov	www.sos.ca.gov
Colorado	9-Oct	30-Oct	14-Nov	www.sos.state.col.us
Connecticut	5-Nov	5-Nov	6-Nov	www.sots.ct.gov
Delaware	22-Oct	2-Nov	6-Nov	www.elections.delaware.gov
District of Columbia	9-Oct	30-Oct	Nov-16 ³	www.dcboee.us
Florida	9-Oct	31-Oct	Nov-16 ³	www.election.myflorida.com
Georgia	9-Oct	2-Nov	Nov-9 ³	www.sos.georgia.gov
Guam	26-Oct	2-Nov	6-Nov	www.gec.guam.gov
Hawaii	8-Oct	30-Oct	6-Nov	www.hawaii.gov/elections
Idaho	12-Oct	31-Oct	6-Nov	www.sos.idaho.gov
Illinois	not required	29-Oct	20-Nov	www.elections.il.gov
Indiana	27-Oct	29-Oct	6-Nov	www.state.in.us/sos
Iowa	none	mailed: 2-Nov; fax and email, 5-Nov	mailed: 12-Nov ⁴ ; fax/email, 6-Nov	www.sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation

¹ Absentee ballots for Alabama must be postmarked no later than 5 November and received no later than 6 November.

² Absentee ballots from within the United States must be received by 16 November; from outside the United States, by 21 November.

³ Although absentee ballots need not be returned until the date noted, they must be postmarked no later than 6 November.

⁴ Must be postmarked by 5 November.